

**Blackstone Valley Vocational Regional District School Committee
Minutes of Regular Meeting
March 14, 2024**

The regular meeting of the Blackstone Valley Vocational Regional District School Committee was held in the school cafeteria. The following members, staff and others were present:

Joseph M. Hall of Bellingham, Chair
Anthony M. Yitts of Grafton
Mitchell A. Intinarelli of Hopedale
Edward D. Cray, III of Mendon
Chester P. Hanratty, Jr. of Millbury
Gerald M. Finn of Millville, Vice Chair
James M. Mitchell of Sutton
Tyler D. Bartlett of Upton
James H. Ebbeling of Uxbridge

Dr. Michael F. Fitzpatrick, Superintendent-Director
Anthony E. Steele, Asst. Superintendent/Principal
Christopher C. Pilla, Treasurer
Nicole M. Ferguson, Business Manager
Eddie Evans, Academic Curriculum Coordinator
Mr. Brad DiDio, Upton Men's Club representative
Ellie Poitras, Student Council Representative
Sosie DerKosroffian, Student Council
Representative Elise Bogdan, Recording Secretary

Members Absent:

Joseph A. Broderick of Blackstone
Mark J. Potter of Douglas
Paul J. Braza of Milford
Jeff T. Koopman of Northbridge

Item 1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:06 p.m. by the Chair, Mr. Hall. Dr. Fitzpatrick was notified in advance that Mr. Broderick, Mr. Potter, Mr. Braza, and Mr. Koopman would be unable to attend.

Item 2. Secretary's Report – A. Yitts

2.1. On a motion by Mr. Yitts seconded by Mr. Intinarelli, it was unanimously voted to waive reading of the minutes of the regular School Committee meeting of January 18, 2024 and to accept the minutes as written.

2.2. On a motion by Mr. Yitts seconded by Mr. Intinarelli, it was unanimously voted to waive reading of the School Committee special meeting minutes of February 15, 2024 and to accept the minutes as written.

Item 3. Treasurer's Reports – C. Pilla

3.1. The Treasurer's Report was presented dated December 31, 2023. The report reflected an ending balance of \$1,821,621.88 for Total Funds, including \$940,117.59 in Project Funds, and \$881,504.29 in Local Funds. On a motion by Mr. Hanratty, seconded by Mr. Intinarelli, it was unanimously voted to approve the December 31, 2023 Treasurer's Report as presented.

3.2. The Treasurer's Report was presented dated January 31, 2024. The report reflected an ending balance of \$3,699,599.38 for Total Funds, \$925,621.60 in Project Funds, and

\$2,773,977.78 in Local Funds. On a motion by Mr. Hanratty, seconded by Mr. Ebbeling, it was unanimously voted to approve the January 31, 2024 Treasurer's Report as presented.

Item 4. Comments by Student Council Representatives - Ellie Poitras & Sosie DerKosroffian

The Student Council Representatives provided an update on Council activities. First, Sosie reported that members attended the statewide MASC annual leadership conference in Hyannis from March 6th to March 8th. The students participated in the 2024 MASC Polar Plunge, supporting Special Olympics Massachusetts. Sosie and her siblings proudly raised over \$2,300 and were recognized for their contribution. The BVT Student Council collectively raised \$6,026. They also received the National Gold Council of Excellence Award. Then Ellie reported that the Student Council met last evening with Ms. Bomba, Ms. Denise, and the Respect Across the Curriculum student group to discuss maintaining a positive school culture. It was a great open conversation. Ellie shared that the Student Council delegates brought great ideas for leadership activities back from the conference.

Item 5. Student Recognitions - Dr. M. Fitzpatrick

Dr. Fitzpatrick recognized the following students who recently earned the highest award in Boy Scouts of America (BSA), the Eagle Scout Award:

a. Jacob Giancola of Upton (BSA Troop 132) a senior in the Engineering & Robotics program. Jacob's Eagle Scout project involved constructing a Bocce Ball Court at Saint Gabriel's Church.

b. Brandon Spiller of Northbridge (BSA Troop 155) a senior in the Electronics & Engineering program. Brandon worked on revamping and improving the West River Nature Trail at West Hill Dam, Uxbridge, for his Eagle Project. He cleaned up the neglected hiking trail and replaced old posts and signs with new ones.

c. William Naff of Milford (BSA Troop 4) a senior in the Automotive Technology program. William's Eagle Scout project involved a courtyard enhancement project at BVT.

d. Josh Maillet of Milford (BSA Troop 4) a senior in the Automotive Technology program. Josh built a bench swing and a pathway at West Hill Dam, Uxbridge, for his Eagle Project.

Item 6. July 4th Festivities Presentation (06/22/24) – Brad DiDio

Mr. Brad DiDio, representing the Upton Men's Club, requested the use of BVT's facilities on Saturday, June 22, 2024, for the Annual July 4th Festivities. On a motion of voiced support made by Mr. Bartlett, seconded by Mr. Intinarelli, the Committee voted unanimously to endorse the hosting of the July 4th festivities at the school on June 22, 2024.

Item 7. Business Manager - N. Ferguson

7.1. Certified E&D Transfer to Capital Projects – On a motion made by Mr. Hanratty, seconded by Mr. Finn, it was unanimously voted to approve the transfer of \$650,000 from the District's Certified Excess & Deficiency Fund (Account #1000-00-0302-000-0) into the Program and Facility Expansion Capital Project Fund (Account # 6100-00-0498-000-0). The vote was taken per authorization of the annual budget as presented and voted by the School Committee and its 13 member towns per the FY24 budget book page A-1a (Green Sheet).

7.2. Transfer Regional (Chapter 71) – On a motion made by Mr. Finn, seconded by Mr. Intinarelli, it was unanimously voted to approve the transfer of \$340,000 of Chapter 71 Transportation Reimbursement revenues from the General Fund to the Regional Transportation Reimbursement Fund in accordance with M.G.L. c.71, Section 16 C. The transfer represents a portion of the difference between estimated (budgeted) Chapter 71 Reimbursements and final Cherry Sheet allocations, and will be used as a revenue source to offset transportation expenses as detailed in the FY25 Operational Budget.

7.3. Donation Approvals:

a. Vehicle (D. Lovejoy) – On a motion made by Mr. Intinarelli, seconded by Mr. Cray, it was unanimously voted to approve the donation of a 2003 GMC Sierra 2500 HD Extended Cab with a Kelley Blue Book value range of \$2,000 - \$5,135.

b. Manufacturing Technology Supplies (Allied Machine Products)) – On a motion made by Mr. Intinarelli, seconded by Mr. Cray, it was unanimously voted to approve the donation of various supplies, which will be used for instructional and valuable training purposes in BVT’s Manufacturing Technology program. The estimated value of the donated materials are \$12,825.

c. HVAC Equipment Supplies & Materials (Peter Edwards)) – On a motion made by Mr. Intinarelli, seconded by Mr. Hanratty, it was unanimously voted to approve the donation of HVAC components, which will be used for instructional and valuable training purposes in BVT’s HVAC&R program. The estimated value of the donated materials are \$2,687.

d. HVAC Equipment: Heat Pump System & Components (E. Swan c/o E. Bouchard) – On a motion made by Mr. Intinarelli, seconded by Mr. Cray, it was unanimously voted to approve the donation of a multi-zone heat pump system and components, which will be used for instructional and valuable training purposes in BVT’s HVAC&R program. The estimated value of the donated system and components are \$4,945.

Item 8. Academic Curriculum Coordinator – E. Evans

8.1. Mr. Evans presented the District's proposed Student Opportunity Act (SOA) plan. On a motion made by Mr. Hanratty, seconded by Mr. Cray, the Committee voted unanimously to approve the District's proposed SOA plan as presented and to proceed with the written plan to be submitted to the state by the April 1st deadline. In summary, the District identified and addressed state-wide objectives within the proposed SOA plan that will improve students' educational outcomes through increased availability of the Learning Lab at BVT and access to social-emotional development and mental health supports through Cartwheel Care telehealth services. The District had already budgeted for and planned to implement the outlined initiatives included in the plan.

Dr. Fitzpatrick thanked Mr. Evans for complying with the rules and regulations of the Student Opportunity Act. Mr. Hanratty and Dr. Fitzpatrick voiced disappointment that there were additional responsibilities added to the system without additional financial support from the state to address student learning challenges.

8.2. Mr. Evans provided an update on the spring 2024 English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics MCAS exam testing schedule and preparation for the sophomores. The ELA

MCAS primary testing window is scheduled for Tuesday, March 26th, and Wednesday, March 27th. In the event of extreme weather or other unexpected circumstances, the testing would move to Thursday, March 28th and/or Friday, March 29th. The Mathematics MCAS primary testing window is scheduled for Tuesday, May 21st, and Wednesday, May 22nd. In the event of extreme weather or other unexpected circumstances, the testing would move to Thursday, May 23rd and/or Friday, May 24th. An ELA MCAS Boot Camp for sophomores was held in February and March. A Math MCAS Boot Camp for sophomores will be held in April. Breakfast will be provided for students on each testing day before the exam begins. The students will take the exams on their school-issued laptops.

Item 9. Assistant Superintendent-Director's Report - A. Steele

9.1. Senior Calendar – The School Committee received the 2024 Senior Calendar. The anticipated graduation date is May 30, 2024. All were reminded that the dates and times are subject to change.

9.2. Out-of-State/Overnight Field Trip Requests:

a. European Trip (London, Paris, & Barcelona) – April 12-21, 2024 - On a motion made by Mr. Hanratty, seconded by Mr. Cray, it was unanimously voted to give final approval for the field trip as requested.

b. Varsity Softball Games, Western MA – April 16-18, 2024 - On a motion made by Mr. Hanratty, seconded by Mr. Ebbeling, it was unanimously voted to approve the field trip as requested.

c. SkillsUSA State Competition, Marlborough, MA – April 25-27, 2024 - On a motion made by Mr. Hanratty, seconded by Mr. Intinarelli, it was unanimously voted to give initial approval for the SkillsUSA field trip as requested.

d. Culinary Arts Senior Trip, Cape Cod – May, 2-4 2024 - On a motion made by Mr. Intinarelli, seconded by Mr. Hanratty, it was unanimously voted to approve the field trip as requested.

e. Aerospace Robotics Competition for NE, St. Anselm College, Goffstown, NH – May 4, 2024 - On a motion made by Mr. Hanratty, seconded by Mr. Intinarelli, it was unanimously voted to approve the field trip as requested.

f. Energy Expo 2024, Uncasville, CT – May 21, 2024 - On a motion made by Mr. Hanratty, seconded by Mr. Intinarelli, it was unanimously voted to approve the field trip as requested.

g. NHRA Youth Education Day, Ebbing, NH – June 1, 2024 - On a motion made by Mr. Intinarelli, seconded by Mr. Ebbeling, it was unanimously voted to give initial approval for the NHRA Youth Education Day field trip as requested.

Item 10. Budget Subcommittee Report – G. Finn

10.1. Mr. Finn shared a status report about the First Round Line-Item Series 2000 with the Committee. A review of the District-Wide/Principal/Coordinator/Student Services budget showed an overall decrease of \$6,500, or 2.75%, from the prior year's budget. Due to various needs, the Guidance and Special Education budget showed an overall increase of \$74,258, or 36.89%. A review of the Academic department budgets reflected an overall increase of \$94,407 or 56.02% from the prior year's budget. A review of the vocational budget request reflected an increase of \$49,442, or 9.05%, from the preceding year's budget. However, after reviewing needs and rationale and investigating alternative revenue streams, grants, and donations, we have a

decrease in the instructional function from the previous year, which proved to be an interesting exercise.

10.2. A status report about the Budget Public Hearing was presented – Mr. Finn thanked those involved with the FY25 budget-building process. Mr. Hall shared with the Committee that a quorum vote approved the FY25 proposed budget at the public hearing.

10.3. Mr. Hall asked Mr. Steele to share the results of the School Council Vote with the Committee. Mr. Steele reported that the School Council voted unanimously to support the FY25 budget request for the Blackstone Valley Vocational Regional School District at their February 27, 2024 meeting.

10.4. E&D Authorization – FY25 Budget: On a motion made by Mr. Finn, seconded by Mr. Hanratty, it was voted to approve the use of \$100,000 from the District’s Certified Excess & Deficiency Funds (E&D) as a funding source for the FY25 proposed budget. The District’s commitment to the identification of alternative revenue streams and fiscal austerity contributes to its ability to generate E&D. This valuable resource provides a revenue source that creates a reduction in member assessments.

10.5. Adopt FY25 Budget: On a motion made by Mr. Hanratty, seconded by Mr. Intinarelli, it was unanimously voted to accept the FY25 budget as set.

New Business: As it related to the FY25 Budget already being discussed, Dr. Fitzpatrick asked the Committee to take up new business at this point in the meeting to address the following related budgetary items at the request of some of the District Finance Committees with the Committee members:

FY25 E&D Authorization – On a motion made by Mr. Hanratty, seconded by Mr. Intinarelli, it was unanimously voted to approve the potential use of up to \$750,000 from the District’s Certified Excess & Deficiency Funds (E&D) for potential use in FY25.

Rescind Previous Stabilization Account Action – On a motion made by Mr. Hanratty, seconded by Mr. Intinarelli, it was unanimously voted to rescind the following article, which was approved by the District School Committee on September 14, 2023: To see if the Town will vote to approve the creation of a stabilization account, voted by the Blackstone Valley Vocational Regional District School Committee on September 14, 2023, which will enable the Regional District to address capital improvement items via self-funding and avoid dependence upon operational budget funding.

This action was simply taken to demonstrate the Committee’s “good faith” style of working consistently with its member Town officials.

Accelerated Repair Project – On a motion made by Mr. Intinarelli, seconded by Mr. Cray, the Committee unanimously voted to approve the following member town article as presented by Intinarelli: VOTED: That the Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical School District (the “District”) appropriate the amount of Ten Million Dollars (\$10,000,000) for the purpose of paying costs of roof reconstruction and the replacement of rooftop HVAC units at the District high school, located at 65 Pleasant Street, Upton, including the payment of all costs incidental or related thereto (the “Project”), which proposed repair project would materially extend the useful

life of the school and preserve an asset that otherwise is capable of supporting the required educational program, and for which the District has applied for a grant from the Massachusetts School Building Authority (“MSBA”), said amount to be expended under the direction of School Committee (the “Committee”). To meet this appropriation the Treasurer, with the approval of the Chair of the Committee, is authorized to borrow said amount under M.G.L. Chapter 71, s. 16(d), or pursuant to any other enabling authority. The District acknowledges that the MSBA’s grant program is a non-entitlement, discretionary program based on need, as determined by the MSBA, and if the MSBA’s Board of Directors votes to invite the District to collaborate with the MSBA on this proposed repair project, any project costs the District incurs in excess of any grant that may be approved by and received from the MSBA shall be the sole responsibility of the District; and that, if invited to collaborate with the MSBA on the proposed repair project, the amount of borrowing authorized pursuant to this vote shall be reduced by any grant amount set forth in the Project Funding Agreement that may be executed between the District and the MSBA. No amounts shall be borrowed or expended pursuant to this vote unless and until the District shall have been awarded a grant from the MSBA on account of this project.

FURTHER VOTED: That within seven (7) days from the date on which this vote is adopted the Secretary be and hereby is instructed to notify the Boards of Selectmen or Select Boards, as the case may be, of each of the District’s member towns, as required by the District Agreement and by G.L. c. 71, s. 16(d).

Mr. Pilla shared that the District put forth the amended bond authorization wording, as confirmed by the bond counsel, and that the script complies with appropriate borrowing procedures. He indicated that we anticipate it would be met favorably by the finance committees at the local level.

Item 11. Finance/BOS Committee Presentations/Meetings – Dr. M. Fitzpatrick

11.1.a. Milford (2/14/24) – C. Pilla: Mr. Pilla shared that he joined Dr. Fitzpatrick and Mr. Steele for the District’s budget presentation to the Milford Finance Committee on February 14, 2024. Mr. Pilla shared that it was a professional presentation.

11.1.b. Millbury (2/26/24) – C. Hanratty: Mr. Hanratty reported that he joined Dr. Fitzpatrick and Mr. Steele for the District’s budget presentation to the Millbury Finance Committee on February 26, 2024. Mr. Hanratty shared that at the meeting he observed a difference in opinion on how a vocational school should operate. Nevertheless, overall he felt the presentation was well received.

11.1.c. Douglas (2/27/24) – M. Potter: Dr. Fitzpatrick reported Mr. Potter joined him for the District’s budget presentation to the Douglas Finance Committee on February 27, 2024 was supported via positive feedback.

11.1.d. Millville (3/4/24) – G. Finn: Mr. Finn reported that he joined Dr. Fitzpatrick and Mr. Steele for the District’s budget presentation to the Millville Finance Committee on March 4, 2024. The information shared was positively received. There was an assessment reduction with the same amount of students. There was a positive response from the Chair.

11.1.e. Hopedale (3/11/24) – M. Intinarelli: Dr. Fitzpatrick reported that he was joined by Mr. Steele who gave the District’s budget presentation to the Hopedale Finance Committee on March 11, 2024.

11.1.f. Northbridge (3/13/24) – J. Koopman: Dr. Fitzpatrick reported that Mr. Koopman, due to family obligations alerted him that he could not join in the District’s budget presentation to the Northbridge Finance Committee on March 13, 2024. Dr. Fitzpatrick and Mr. Steele were present for the District’s budget presentation, which was held at the new Northbridge fire station.

Item 12. Superintendent-Director's Report - Michael F. Fitzpatrick

12.1. Dr. Fitzpatrick informed the Committee that at the School Council Meeting on February 27, 2024, the School Council recommended that the School Committee not adopt a School Choice policy for the 2024-2025 school year. On a motion made by Mr. Hanratty, seconded by Mr. Intinarelli, it was unanimously voted not to adopt School Choice for the 2024-2025 school year.

12.2. Recent Activities (from Grant Listing) - A document was shared with the Committee with an FY24 to date total of \$887,942 as of March 5, 2024 with an additional in progress total of \$246,770.

12.3. Practical Nursing Graduation Report: 1/22/24 - The Class of 2024 Practical Nursing graduation and pinning ceremony took place at BVT in the Competition Center on January 22, 2024. There were 17 graduates in the last cohort.

12.4. Notification of Resignations & Retirements:

a. Resignation: The Committee is in receipt of a resignation letter dated January 30, 2024 from Stephen O’Connor – Evening Custodial Supervisor, which was accepted with an effective date of February 14, 2024.

b. Retirement: The Committee is in receipt of a retirement letter dated February 26, 2024 with an effective date of May 31, 2024 from Chris Clifford – Cashier, 27 years.

12.5. The School Committee is in receipt of the Parent Newsletter, the Link (Spring 2024).

Item 13. New Business

Out-of-State Field Trip Request: On a motion made by Mr. Intinarelli, seconded by Mr. Ebbeling, it was unanimously voted to approve the field trip as requested for twelve Painting & Design Technology students and an instructor to go to the Newport Mansion Preservation Society in Newport, Rhode Island on April 30, 2024.

Dr. Fitzpatrick shared that the state budget take action in May, following committees, before we enter the next Fiscal Year.

Item 14. Items for the Good of the Committee:

The monthly compilation of news clippings and correspondence packet was provided at the meeting for members to review individually.

Item 15. Next Regularly Scheduled School Committee Meeting - J. Hall

The next regularly scheduled School Committee meeting will be held on April 11, 2024 at 6:00 p.m.

Item 16. Meeting Closure:

16.1. The meeting was declared closed by the Chair at 7:34 p.m.

16.2. On a motion by Mr. Ebbeling, seconded by Mr. Intinarelli, it was voted to adjourn at 7:34 p.m.

Listing of materials used in the meeting:

- Item 2.1. Minutes of Meeting of January 18, 2024
- Item 2.2. Minutes of Special Meeting of February 15, 2024
- Item 3.1. Treasurer's Report dated December 14, 2023
- Item 3.2. Treasurer's Report dated January 18, 2024
- Item 7.1. Suggested Motion: Certified E&D Fund Transfer
- Item 7.2. Suggested Motion: Regional Transportation (Chapter 71) Fund Transfer
- Item 7.3.a. Vehicle Donation: 2003 GMC Sierra 2500 HD Extended Cab
- Item 7.3.b. Donation of Manufacturing Technology Supplies
- Item 7.3.c. Donation of HVAC Components
- Item 7.3.d. Donation of Heat Pump System and Components
- Item 9.1. 2024 Senior Calendar
- Item 9.2.a. Out-of-State Field Trip: European Trip (London, Paris & Barcelona)
- Item 9.2.b. In-State Field Trip: Varsity Softball Games, Western MA
- Item 9.2.d. In-State Field Trip: Culinary Arts Senior Trip, Cape Cod
- Item 9.2.e. Out-of-State Field Trip: Aerospace Competition, St. Anselm College, Goffstown, NH
- Item 9.2.f. Out-of-State Field Trip: Energy Expo 2024, Uncasville, CT
- Item 10.3. FY25 Budget Approval – School Council
- Item 10.4. Suggested Motion: E&D Authorization
- Item 10.5. Suggested Motion: Adopt FY25 Budget
- Item 12.1. School Choice
- Item 12.2. FY24 Grants to Date
- Item 12.3. Class of 2024 Practical Nursing
- Item 12.4.a. Notification of Resignation: Stephen O'Connor, Evening Custodial Supervisor
- Item 12.4.b. Notification of Retirement: Chris Clifford, Cashier
- Item 12.5. Parent Newsletter: The Link, Spring 2024
- Item 13. Out-of-State Field Trip Request: Painting & Design Technology
- Item 14. Items for the Good of the Committee

Respectfully submitted by,

Anthony M. Yitts, Secretary