Blackstone Valley Vocational Regional District School Committee
Minutes of Regular Meeting
June 20, 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
Joseph A. Broderick of Blackstone
Anthony M. Yitts of Grafton
Paul J. Braza of Milford
Chester P. Hanratty, Jr. of Millbury
Gerald M. Finn of Millville, Vice Chair
Jeff T. Koopman of Northbridge
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
Matthew Urquhart, Assistant Principal
Skye Bomba, Assistant Principal
Christopher C. Pilla, Treasurer, Zoom
Nicole M. Ferguson, Business Manager
Sosie DerKosrofian, Student Council Representative
Zabel DerKosrofian, Student Council Representative
Elise Bogdan, Recording Secretary

Members Absent:
Mark J. Potter of Douglas
Mitchell A. Intinarelli of Hopedale
Edward D. Cray, III of Mendon

Item 1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by the Chair, Mr. Hall. Dr. Fitzpatrick was notified in advance that Mr. Potter, Mr. Intinarelli, and Mr. Cray would be unable to attend.

Item 2. Secretary's Report – A. Yitts

2.1. On a motion by Mr. Yitts seconded by Mr. Koopman, it was unanimously voted to waive the reading of the minutes of the regular School Committee meeting of May 16, 2024 and to accept the minutes as written.

2.2. Review Exec. Session Min. for Possible Declassification: Item 2.2. A review by central office personnel suggested that legal matters and collective bargaining referenced within the executive session minutes of September 19, 2013; December 19, 2013; January 23, 2014; March 6, 2014; April 17, 2014; May 22, 2014; and June 19, 2014, have reached closure and will not impact the District by their public release. On a motion by Mr. Yitts, seconded by Mr. Broderick, and at the recommendation of Dr. Fitzpatrick, it was agreed to delay the release and hold the non-released executive session minutes at this time. The motion failed to carry by a majority vote, and the minutes shall not be released.

Item 3. Treasurer's Report – C. Pilla

With advance notice, it was agreed that the Treasurer's Report would be delayed until later in the meeting; Mr. Pilla joined the meeting via Zoom (at 7:26 p.m.) to present the Treasure's Report:

3.1. The Treasurer's Report was presented dated March 31, 2024. The report reflected an ending balance of $3,807,838.34 for Total Funds, including $1,577,800.94 in Project Funds, and

$2,230,037.40 in Local Funds. On a motion by Mr. Braza seconded by Mr. Broderick, it was unanimously voted to approve the March 31, 2024 Treasurer's Report as presented.

3.2. The Treasurer's Report was presented dated April 30, 2024. The report reflected an ending balance of $6,440,754.51 for Total Funds, including $1,541,544.21 in Project Funds, and $4,899,210.30 in Local Funds. On a motion by Mr. Braza seconded by Mr. Broderick, it was unanimously voted to approve the April 30, 2024, Treasurer's Report as presented.

3.3. The May 31, 2024, Treasurer's Report was not ready to be presented.

3.4. The School Committee was presented with the right-to-borrow paperwork. On a motion by Mr. Finn, seconded by Mr. Hanratty, it was voted to move to allow the District Treasurer authorization under the provisions of General Laws, Chapter 71, Section 16(G) as amended by Chapter 134 of the Acts of 1972, and with approval of the Chair of the District Committee, to borrow money from time to time in anticipation of revenue for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2024, and to issue a note as may be given for a period of less than one year in accordance with General Laws Chapter 44, Section 17.

Item 4. Comments by Student Council Reps - Sosie DerKosrofian & Maddison Dos Santos

Before providing an update on Student Council activities, Sosie informed the Committee that Maddison could not attend the meeting due to a work conflict. Sosie asked her sister, Zabel, the vice president of the Central District of the Massachusetts Association of Student Councils, to join her in presenting the student council report. Sosie shared that at the appreciation meeting, they had Kona Ice, a shaved ice truck, where students could flavor their own Kona Ice to recognize and celebrate their members. The Council members volunteered at the Community Harvest Project in Grafton on Thursday, June 6, 2024. It was an amazing time, and together, they planted over 1,000 vegetables to fight food insecurity. Zabel reported that council members recently volunteered to help the assistant principals with the class elections and will move Sporty's Closet over the summer and at the start of the school year into a larger space near the competition center. Mr. Yitts asked about preparation for the start of the school year with the freshmen cookout. The representatives responded that the Council is also preparing over the summer to assist with welcoming the incoming freshman class at the cookout and orientation.

Item 5. Student/Community Recognition(s) - A. Steele

5.1. Mr. Steele informed the Committee that he had been notified in advance that Michael Borowski could not attend the student recognition. He was proud to recognize Michael Borowski, President of BVT's Class of 2024 and a graduate of the Multimedia Communications program, sponsored by the American Legion Post 92 in North Grafton, was one of 52 youths to advance to the National Oratorical Contest. Having participated in and won the American Legion Oratorical Contest at the post and state level, he competed nationally in Michigan on May 17th. The contest exists to develop deeper knowledge and appreciation for the U.S. Constitution among high school students.

5.2. Principal Steele formally recognized Steve Christy Sr., President of LEI Corporation, presenting him with the MassCTE Certificate of Recognition - Friend of Vocational Technical

Education Award. Mr. Christy accepted the award, which was given in recognition of his assistance with improving the golfer conditions at BVT. Principal Steele shared that Mr. Christy also contributed his professional knowledge to help shape the simulator room. The meeting briefly adjourned at 6:13 p.m. at his suggestion to walk outside the school to view the completed baseball field and a photo opportunity. At 6:27 p.m., the members returned to the school cafeteria, and the meeting resumed.

Item 6. Vocational Directors Update – M. Denise, Dr. M. Connors, K. Baltramaitis

6.1. Principal Steele presented the end-of-year vocational report on behalf of the Vocational Directors. He shared a handout that the vocational directors prepared and summarized highlights starting with the Co-Op placement data for the Class of 2024, an overview of the Co-Op office operations, and a recap of Career Signing Day. The handout included pictures of students working on Co-Op, vocational projects, and community outreach. Some examples of community projects included a sign for Heritage Park in Upton, painting and murals at the Massachusetts State Police Barracks in Millbury, and signage for the Blackstone Valley Veterans Association in Northbridge. In addition, work continues at the CCC Camp Administration Building in Upton and the American Legion Hall in Mendon. The report concluded with the vocational work conducted at BVT, including painting, murals, shop logos, and HVAC/R maintenance, addressing minor issues with many rooftop units. In conclusion, it was a productive school year for vocational projects.

Item 7. Business Manager – N. Ferguson

7.1. Donation Approvals:

a. On a motion by Mr. Braza, seconded by Mr. Hanratty, it was unanimously voted to approve the donation of a 2013 Volvo XC90 from Jennifer Murphy of Milford. The vehicle will be used for instructional and valuable training purposes in its automotive programs.

b. On a motion by Mr. Finn, seconded by Mr. Broderick, it was unanimously voted to approve the donation of miscellaneous tools & equipment from Marlborough High School, which will be used in BVT's Engineering and Robotics Department.

For the Committee's benefit, Mrs. Ferguson mentioned that the auditors will be on site from Monday, July 29, 2024, to Friday, July 31, 2024; they will take all information with them and complete the work remotely.

Item 8. Assistant Superintendent-Director's Report - A. Steele

8.1. Principal Steele shared a Facilities Department 2024 Proposed Summer Projects handout with the Committee. Mr. Steele spoke about some of the proposed planned projects, which include installing a batting cage with retaining wall and drainage; slice seeding the athletic fields; renovating the long-jump area; paving the back courtyard; reconfiguring school vehicle parking, subdividing office space in counselor wing; locker room renovation in Cosmetology; relocating Sporty's Closet to a larger space; painting all exterior doors; in addition to many other annual projects, routine maintenance, and inspections.

8.2. The Senior Class Day and Memorial Scholarship Night were held on May 28, 2024.

a. A Scholarship Report was shared with the Committee. The report showed a grand total of 2024 dollars awarded at $2,546,853.00 with a total renewable value of $9,029,622.00.

8.3. Mr. Steele reported that the Class of 2024 Commencement Ceremony was held at the Hanover Theatre & Conservatory for the Performing Arts, Worcester, MA, on May 30, 2024. The evening ceremony celebrated the accomplishments of 306 graduates with all the pomp and circumstance they deserve. Mr. Steele shared graduation programs with the Committee. The Hanover Theatre was at capacity, BVT continues to investigate other venues and costs for future graduations. At this juncture, it looks like this coming school year will be at BVT on the field.

Regarding graduation, we had a rare scenario occur, and this is an appropriate time to inform you that we have a new valedictorian. Principal Steele formally recognized and commended Igor Freeman of Hopedale for his exceptional dedication and hard work, which led to the remarkable achievement of the Class of 2024 Valedictorian. Mr. Steele explained that a GPA calculation at the close of the 11th term determines the class valedictorian and salutatorian in preparation for graduation exercises per school policy. At that time, Igor was neither the valedictorian nor the salutatorian; he was fourth in the class. However, after the GPA was recalculated with 12th-term grades, Igor ascended to number one in the class. From a statistical analysis, Igor's situation is rare, but it is possible nonetheless. An advanced placement class carried both significant credits (2 credits) and a level one course designation (+20 points on top of an A+ course grade) used to calculate GPA. Achievement in this high-level course was sufficient to move this student from the fourth position in Term 11 to the highest position by the 12th term, with a difference of .09 over the next highest student.

8.4. Mr. Steele reported that Spring Sports Awards Night honoring its student-athletes was held at the school on June 11, 2024.

8.5. Mr. Steele informed the members that the end-of-year procedures for seniors have been completed. The last day of school on June 14th kicked off with the Last Day Wave, which means the summer projects are underway – summer cleaning and preparing the building for a return to school.

8.6. The assistant principals, Mr. Matthew Urquhart and Ms. Skye Bomba gave a PowerPoint presentation on school culture. The assistant principals are instrumental in developing and maintaining a school culture that reflects BVT's philosophy of promoting professionalism, including respect, responsibility, innovation, adaptability, diversity, equity, inclusion, and emotional, physical & social wellness. They work collaboratively to oversee the activities for each grade level, which allows for the development of positive relationships with each class, and the continuity promotes smoother transitions through each grade level. To ensure a safe and positive environment for all students during their high school experience, they facilitate, coordinate, and implement numerous programs, including a peer mentor program, school safety and security, and student discipline. They encourage open communication with students and their parents to ensure success in each student's personal and professional development.

As ambassadors of school culture at BVT, the Assistant Principals track discipline trends and continually work on improving the school's culture, which centers on respect. They work with the incoming freshmen regarding expectations and school culture. The freshmen learn through peer mentors (juniors) to respect their environment and themselves and take pride in the building and their work. The assistant principals have noticed a change in students, Gen-Alphas (2010-2024). There is more inquiry into why and how to understand themselves and how to get

along with others. The assistant principals spoke about professionalism, respect across the curriculum, and creating respect across the curriculum subcommittee to meet the students where they are and to get feedback from students on the committee. They also utilize a tiered model intervention with targeted support. They work closely with the conflict resolution center and the conflict resolution coordinator, an extension of their office, to resolve conflicts, which ties back to professionalism in the workplace. They work with campus/school security and have increased supervision with overlapping shifts of campus safety officers. When successfully applied by staff to frustrating situations, the district restraint training program, which is based on verbal de-escalation skills, has helped reinforce school-wide expectations. Goals for next year focus on proactive interventions, with a significant focus on the sophomores, increased junior peer mentor participation, and parent informational meetings.

Mr. Finn asked for measurable results. The assistant principals agreed that reportable data (year-to-year) could be pulled from in-house data tracking (surveys and PowerSchool), showing decreased corrective behavior results, and shared at a future meeting. In closing, they agreed to return with tracked data in the fall.

Item 9. Signatory Authorizations - J. Hall

9.1. On a motion by Mr. Finn, seconded by Mr. Koopman it was unanimously voted to empower Superintendent-Director, Dr. Michael F. Fitzpatrick, as an authorized signatory for the Regional School District for the school year as it pertains to District contracts, grants, and other legally binding documents between the District and any/all outside agencies.

9.2. On a motion by Mr. Braza, seconded by Mr. Finn, it was unanimously voted to empower Business Manager, Nicole M. Ferguson, as an authorized signatory for the Regional School District for the school year as it pertains to District purchase orders, contracts, grants, and other legally binding documents between the District and any/all outside agencies.

Item 10. Budget Report – G. Finn

10.1. The FY25 Budget/Bond status report of June 11, 2024, was available at the meeting. At this juncture, all thirteen sending towns have approved the budget at their annual town meeting and have supported the bond request. Presently, there is a debt exclusion ballot action pending in the Town of Douglas (July 30, 2024), and preliminary information from Millbury suggests a Millbury Board of Selectmen meeting on June 25, 2024, proposes a possible special town meeting date of September 3, 2024.

10.2. Annual Town Meeting Status Report:

a. **Milford**: At the town meeting in Milford on 05/20/2024, BVT's FY25 budget and bond request were approved.

b. **Hopedale**: At the town meeting in Hopedale on 05/21/2024, BVT's FY25 budget and bond request were approved. In addition, the action for a stabilization fund was also approved.

c. **Bellingham**: At the town meeting in Bellingham on 05/22/24, BVT's FY25 budget and bond request were approved.

d. **Blackstone**: Dr. Fitzpatrick briefly addressed the gathering and reaffirmed previous presentations to the Finance Committee and Capital Planning Committee. Mr. Broderick reported that he was in attendance at the town meeting in Blackstone on 05/28/24, during which BVT's FY25 budget and bond request were approved with no opposition.

Item 11. Policy Subcommittee Report - C. Hanratty

11.1 **Revised Policies**:

a. On a motion by Mr. Hanratty, seconded by Mr. Braza, it was voted to approve the 2024-2025 BVT Athletic Handbook handout and accept the revised policies as presented.

b. On a motion by Mr. Hanratty, seconded by Mr. Braza, it was unanimously voted to approve the 2024-2025 Practical Nursing Student Handbook as presented.

c. On a motion by Mr. Hanratty, seconded by Mr. Braza, it was unanimously voted to approve the 2024-2025 Practical Nursing Faculty Handbook as presented.

d. On a motion by Mr. Hanratty, seconded by Mr. Braza, it was unanimously voted to approve the 2024-2025 Practical Nursing Financial Aid Handbook as presented.

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

12.1. The BVT Annual Golf Tournament was held on Monday, June 10, 2024, at Highfields Golf and Country Club in Grafton. It was a fun-filled fundraiser to enhance educational opportunities and athletic activities for BVT students. A full field of 144 golfers participated with several sponsors making contributions.

12.2. The School Committee is in receipt of the FY24 Grants-to-Date summary as of June 4, 2024, with an FY24 grand total to-date listed as $1,083,522. It was noted that multiple applications for funding were submitted and are awaiting approvals.

12.3. On a motion by Mr. Finn, seconded by Mr. Koopman, it was unanimously voted to approve the successful completion of the Superintendent's FY24 performance goals and the compensation received as a result of this goal attainment is expected to be pension eligible as it is regular, reoccurring, and consistent with long-term past practice.

12.4. Dr. Fitzpatrick shared with the Committee a letter addressed to Senator Moore, dated December 27, 2023, which formally requests assistance in securing some $88,000 in state funding from FY25 discretionary funds for two new HVAC units at BVT.

12.5. A letter dated May 21, 2024, submitted by Joseph M. Hall, Chair, to the Resolutions Committee C/O MASC, was shared with the Committee as a notice of his support of establishing a MASC resolution strengthening the position of Chapter 74 programs and their students statewide.

12.6. Dr. Fitzpatrick shared with the Committee a notification letter dated May 28, 2024, from the New England School Development Council (NESDEC). The letter informed the District that it had received a $5,000 NESEC Professional Development Grant to support a leadership retreat for BVT school leaders.

12.7. Dr. Fitzpatrick informed the Committee that the District received a $3,390 grant from a Toshiba America Foundation for a project that will occur in FY25. The critter project will explore oscilloscope use and electrical engineering by illuminating stuffed animal eyes in Chapter 74 Engineering & Robotics Project Lead the Way digital electronics course.

12.8. The bankHometown Scholarship plans to offer one, $500 annual award to a student continuing their education or going into their trade was shared with the Committee.

12.9. Notification of Resignation(s)/Retirement(s):

a. The Committee is in receipt of a notification of retirement letter dated May 22, 2024, from Martha Pellegrino, Nutrition Educator/Healthy Meals Planner, which gave formal notice of intention to retire on September 27, 2024.

b. The Committee is in receipt of a notification of retirement letter dated May 13, 2024, from Susan Theriault, Assistant Food Services Manager, which gave formal notice of intention to retire on August 29, 2024.

c. The Committee is in receipt of a notification of resignation letter dated June 6, 2024, from Jonathan Bram, Construction Technology Instructor, which gave formal notice of intention to not return in the 2024-2025 school year.

12.10. The Freshmen Newsletter, the Bridge (Summer 2024) was available at the meeting.

Item 13. New Business

There was no new business to report from the School Committee members. Dr. Fitzpatrick welcomed back Mr. Hanratty and made the following announcements:

Dr. Fitzpatrick shared with the Committee that after 30 years with the Upton Police Department, Chief Michael Bradley has announced that he will leave the department on August 16 to become executive director of the Massachusetts Chiefs of Police Association. On behalf of the District School Committee, Dr. Fitzpatrick conveyed his appreciation and best wishes to Chief Bradley.

Dr. Fitzpatrick also formally recognized and commended Igor Freeman of Hopedale for his exceptional dedication and hard work, which led to the remarkable achievement of the Class of 2024 Valedictorian.

Dr. Fitzpatrick told the Committee that he had nominated Advanced Manufacturing & Fabrication instructor James "Woody" Woodward for the MIT/UMass Lowell Curriculum Reviewer/Developer project through MAVA. Mr. Woodward recently accepted the nomination.

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 August 15, 2024 at 6:00 p.m.

Item 16. Meeting Closure:

16.1. The meeting was declared closed by the Chair at 7:56 p.m.

16.2. On a motion by Mr. Braza, seconded by Mr. Broderick, it was voted to adjourn at 7:56 p.m.

Listing of materials used in the meeting:
Item 2.1. Minutes of Meeting of May 16, 2024
Item 2.2. Review of CONFIDENTIAL Non-Released Executive Session Minutes
Item 3.1. Treasurer's Report dated March 31, 2024
Item 3.2. Treasurer's Report dated April 30, 2024
Item 3.4. Suggested Motion - BVVR, Treasurer's Right-to-Borrow
Item 6.1. Cooperative Education Report-Spring 2024
Item 7.1.a. Donation for Approval: 2013 Volvo XC90
Item 7.1.b. Donation for Approval: Tools & Equipment
Item 8.1. Proposed Summer Projects 2024
Item 8.2.a. 2024 Scholarship Report
Item 9.1. Suggested Motion – BVVRSD Signatory Authorization for Superintendent
Item 9.2. Suggested Motion – BVVRSD Signatory Authorization for Business Manager
Item 10.1. BVT FY25 Budget/Bond Status Report
Item 11.1.a. 2024-2025 BVT Athletic Handbook
Item 11.1.b. 2024-2025 Practical Nursing Student Handbook
Item 11.1.c. 2024-2025 Practical Nursing Faculty Handbook
Item 11.1.d. 2024-2025 Practical Nursing Financial Aid Handbook
Item 12.2. Summary FY24 Grant to Date
Item 12.3. Suggested Motion – BVVRSD Superintendent-Director FY24 Goal Attainment
Item 12.4. Letter to Senator Moore
Item 12.5. MASC Resolutions Committee Expansion in Capacity Chap 74 Voke Tech Programs
Item 12.6. NESDEC Professional Development Grant ($5,000)
Item 12.7. Toshiba American Foundation Grant - The Critter Project Initiative ($3,390)
Item 12.8. bankHometown Scholarship ($500)
Item 12.9.a. Retirement: Martha Pellegrino, Nutrition Educator/Healthy Meals Planner
Item 12.9.b. Retirement: Susan Theriault, Assistant Food Services Manager
Item 12.9.c. Resignation: Jonathan Bram, Construction Technology Instructor
Item 12.10. Freshmen Newsletter – The Bridge
Item 14. Items for the Good of the Committee

Respectfully submitted by,

Anthony M. Yitts, Secretary