

Blackstone Valley Vocational Regional District School Committee
Minutes of Regular Meeting
August 15, 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
Mitchell A. Intinarelli of Hopedale
Edward D. Cray, III of Mendon
Chester P. Hanratty, Jr. of Millbury
Jeff T. Koopman of Northbridge
James M. Mitchell of Sutton
Tyler D. Bartlett of Upton
James H. Ebbeling of Uxbridge

Members Absent:

Mark J. Potter of Douglas
Paul J. Braza of Milford
Gerald M. Finn of Millville, Vice Chair

Dr. Michael F. Fitzpatrick, Superintendent-Director
Anthony E. Steele, Asst. Superintendent/Principal
Michele Denise, Vocational Director
Dr. Matthew Connors, Vocational Director
Matthew Urquhart, Assistant Principal
Eddie Evans, Academic Curriculum Coordinator
Nicole M. Ferguson, Business Manager
Christopher C. Pilla, Treasurer, Zoom
Robert Dolegiewicz, Facilities Manager
Martha Pellegrino, Nutrition Educator
Lisa Ciarametaro, Nutrition Educator
Sosie DerKosroffian, Student Council Representative
Maddison Dos Santos, Student Council Representative

Item 1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by the Chair, Mr. Hall. Dr. Fitzpatrick said he was notified in advance that Mr. Braza, Mr. Finn, and Mr. Potter 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 June 20, 2024 and to accept the minutes as written.

Item 3. Treasurer's Report – C. Pilla

With advance notice, it was agreed that the Treasurer's Report(s) would be presented remotely. Mr. Pilla joined the meeting via Zoom and presented the following report(s):

3.1. The Treasurer's Report was presented dated May 31, 2024. The report reflected an ending balance of \$2,130,322.18 for Total Funds, including \$1,367,606.55 in Project Funds, and \$762,715.63 in Local Funds. On a motion by Mr. Hanratty, seconded by Mr. Intinarelli, it was unanimously voted to approve the May 31, 2024 Treasurer's Report as presented.

3.2. The Treasurer's Report was presented dated June 30, 2024. The report reflected an ending balance of \$1,467,809.86 for Total Funds, including \$1,321,305.09 in Project Funds, and \$146,504.77 in Local Funds. On a motion by Mr. Intinarelli, seconded by Mr. Koopman, it was unanimously voted to approve the June 30, 2024 Treasurer's Report as presented.

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

Dr. Fitzpatrick informed the Committee and the Treasurer, Mr. Pilla, that earlier in the day, his office had received notification from the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) as part of the due diligence process for the Accelerated Repair Program (ARP) to schedule a virtual staff study meeting with the District (scheduled for Monday, August 19, 2024), which would provide the MSBA an opportunity to hear from us about building issues firsthand, as included in our previously submitted Statement of Interest (SOI) for the ARP. MSBA representatives are interested in hearing about previous repairs to building systems, understanding the assessed value of the building, and District participation in Rebate or Utility programs. MSBA staff will also be interested in hearing about the District's plan to gain support and appropriate funding for a potential project. Other topics will include the current use of the facility, whether any sections of the school are vacant or being used for non-educational purposes, and any programmatic challenges caused by failing building systems. As part of this meeting, we will also discuss expectations, schedule, and logistics for conducting a site visit to our school on Tuesday, August 27, 2024. This meeting is not an invitation to work with the MSBA but is part of the due diligence review phase of the MSBA Accelerated Repair Program SOI process and will serve as an opportunity for further discussion of the next steps in the due diligence process.

Item 4. Student Council Representatives – Sosie DerKosroffian & Maddison Dos Santos

The Student Council Representatives reported that the Council was excited about the return to school and the planned welcoming activities. They had members volunteering at the Freshmen Cookout on the evening of August 14, 2024, greeting families and handing out Freshmen T-shirts. Council members also volunteered as mentors for the Freshmen Orientation Days on August 15 and 16, 2024. The Council created and placed personalized paper stars with each student's name on appropriate homeroom doors to make the new students in the Class of 2028 feel welcome.

Item 5. Annual Wellness Assessment Report – M. Pellegrino

Martha Pellegrino, who will retire on September 27, 2024, introduced the Committee to Lisa Ciarametaro, the newly hired Nutrition Educator, before presenting the annual end-of-year cafeteria and wellness report. The goals and objectives for the 2024-2025 school year were provided, including student and employee wellness and initiatives. Dr. Fitzpatrick, Mr. Hall, and Principal Steele thanked Martha for her skill set and contributions to positive change throughout her career.

Item 6. Business Manager – N. Ferguson

6.1. The Business Manager, Nicole Ferguson, shared an FY24 district financial audit update. The audit began on July 1, 2024, by sharing reports and data with the Hague, Sahady & Co. audit firm (BVT auditors since FY16) and throughout August. While working with the same firm, Mrs. Ferguson shared that she is working with a new field auditor who works remotely. The audit is being conducted remotely at their request, and an onsite meeting is scheduled for Monday, August 26, 2024, with the Business Manager and Dr. Fitzpatrick. As of today, we do not anticipate any audit findings. Everything is going smoothly, and they are very thorough, but we are in good shape overall and targeted to complete the audit by the end of August. Other

external financial reports are to be completed, including the Department of Revenue Reports (for certifying Excess & Deficiency) targeted for September and the DESE End of Year Report due by September 30, 2024. The Treasurer, Mr. Pilla, said Nicole has been doing a great job.

Item 7. Assistant Superintendent-Director's Report – A. Steele

7.1. Mr. Steele reported on the 2024-25 school year opening, which began on Monday, August 12th, with new staff orientation. However, Mr. Steele indicated that the vision for the school year starts with the work and planning conducted during the leadership retreat. On Tuesday, August 13th, all staff returned to campus. On Wednesday, August 14th, the Class of 2028 attended the freshmen cookout with near-perfect attendance. Today was Day 1 of Freshmen Orientation. It was a full school day; students rotated through their seven exploratory shops and met vocational teachers. Students had lunch and practiced the bus routine. Tomorrow is Day 2 of Freshmen Orientation. Again, it will be a full day of school. Students will meet administrators, faculty, staff, and academic teachers by walking through their academic schedules. August 19th is the first day of school for all of BVT. The new school year is off to a very smooth start.

7.2. Mr. Steele introduced Robert Dolegiewicz, Facilities Manager, who presented the prepared 2024 School Building Enhancement Summary List (Item 7.2). The list included summer projects and preventative maintenance. Mr. Dolegiewicz spoke about the tasks completed over the summer break: The sports fields (baseball, softball, and football) were slice-seeded, sod repair on worn playing fields, room 625 renovated into two offices and conference space for the assistant principals, guidance office renovated to create an office and ADA accessible space, custom cabinets installed in Cosmetology, insulated and soundproofed ceiling above room 300, rebuilt main entrance pillar, relocated Sporty's Closet, reconfigured school vehicle parking, sink replacement in nurses office, numerous painting projects, completed the final installation of the sawdust hopper in Construction Technology, renovated the softball and baseball dugouts, and installed safety padding in the old gym. The field projects are being addressed with the in-house talent, helping keep costs low. Mr. Steele and Mr. Dolegiewicz were proud of the work completed over the summer and the effort of their crew, which included student workers.

Dr. Fitzpatrick and Mr. Hall expressed their appreciation to Principal Steele and Mr. Dolegiewicz for their efforts in maintaining the campus.

7.3. The School Committee members received an updated new personnel listing of FY25 Appointments and complimented the Human Resources department on their recruitment process.

7.4. The 2024-25 Student Handbook was distributed to School Committee members.

7.5. Mr. Steele reported that the SkillsUSA competition series' third and final stage was held in Atlanta, Georgia from June 24 to June 28, 2024. The National Conference resulted in two silver medals and a National Officer. It is the first time that BVT has had a student elected to serve as the national president.

Item 8. Academic Curriculum Coordinator Updates – E. Evans

8.1. The Academic Curriculum Coordinator, Mr. Eddie Evans, presented the Committee with an overview of the District Improvement Plan (DIP). The DIP is a three-year plan for the 2024-2025 school year through the 2027-2028 school year. It was created through self-evaluation from the NEASC visiting report (2023), influenced by DESE feedback and informational surveys, when pulled together through a collaborative process that culminated in the improvement plan. Each section of the DIP corresponds to one of our five core values. Each section of the DIP includes the same six goals. The document is 67 pages, but the sample page reflects each initiative's goals, strategies, and desired outcomes with a timeline to hold ourselves accountable. Respect and responsibility quantify and define the benefits of our Respect Across the Curriculum initiative, which will impact the school climate for years to come. We are leaning into AI to remain relevant and viable in any age. The next few years will ensure our community is thriving here.

Dr. Fitzpatrick thanked Mr. Evans and the leadership team for dovetailing mandated state efforts into our mission of doing things we would be doing anyway for efficiency and clarity of direction.

8.2. Institutional Self-Evaluation: Over the summer, the leadership team participated in a review of data points to ensure that all students have access to everything we offer here at BVT. It was a robust undertaking to identify many findings. The team identified several actions in the DIP to ensure positive change for years to come.

Item 9. Superintendent-Director's Report – Michael F. Fitzpatrick

9.1. Dr. Fitzpatrick shared the School Committee Member Directory and asked if any member needed to make any changes to the information listed in the directory that they inform his office of the changes.

9.2. The Delineation of FY25 Subcommittees draft was shared with the Committee members for their review and consideration of service on a subcommittee.

9.3. Correspondence:

a. Dr. Fitzpatrick shared his annual welcome back letter with the Committee. He shared that while the school committee was aware that the 2024-2025 school year would be his final year as superintendent-director, the letter conveyed to staff his decision to retire which was made collaboratively with the district school committee and with forward-thinking and advanced planning with the leadership team for continued success.

b. The Committee is in receipt of a sample letter and the listing of 2024-25 Solicitations for van subsidies. Dr. Fitzpatrick noted that a commitment in marketing of community charitable funds through solicitation helps offset transportation and maintenance costs of student vans during the school year.

9.4. An FY25 Grants To Date (as of July 16, 2024) document was shared with the Committee. The FY25 in-progress total is \$2,190,571.

9.5. Summer Professional Development Update:

a. Dr. Fitzpatrick attended the M.A.S.S. Executive Institute event, which took place in Mashpee on July 15–18, 2024. The Institute program features three days of keynote speakers, various presentations, collegial meetings and evening social activities.

b. The Leadership Retreat on July 22–24, 2024, was well attended. The annual retreat centers on campus-wide improvements, technology upgrades, recruitment of new personnel, and structural enhancements.

9.6. A draft of the FY24 Annual Report was shared with the Committee. It was noted that a vote on the multiple page report was not needed.

9.7. A letter dated July 18, 2024, from DESE, was shared with the Committee. The correspondence notified Dr. Fitzpatrick that the District was selected to participate in the 2024-2025 administration of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). The NAEP Field test assesses grades 4, 8, and 12 students in mathematics and reading as part of a transition to administering NAEP using school computers and the Internet. Participating schools will help ensure that upcoming digitally based NAEP assessments continue to be a reliable, meaningful, and efficient measure of student achievement. Results will not be publicly released.

9.8. The Committee is in receipt of an invitation to attend the MASC/MASS Joint Conference in Hyannis on November 6–9, 2024. The list of suggested session topics are included for your reference. The planning team welcomes other session topics that align with the overall conference theme of Building a Climate of Positive Outcomes through Leadership, Collaboration and Trust. Dr. Fitzpatrick informed the Committee that Central Office Administrative Assistant Nicole Powers registered for the available professional development training scheduled for this conference.

9.9. The Fall 2024 Parent Newsletter – The Link was available at the meeting.

9.10. Dr. Fitzpatrick shared that while the proposed bond for major roof repairs received unanimous support (at the town meetings and, in all cases to date, at the town election), a debt exclusion ballot action pending in the town of Douglas on July 30 (the ballot action passed) and is pending in the town of Millbury on September 3, 2024.

9.11. The proposed 2025 School Committee Meeting calendar was shared at the meeting.

9.12. A position paper titled, The LPN Scope of Practice in Massachusetts by Judith M. Pelletier, MSN, RN, CNE and Joann Monks, MBA, MSc, RN-BC, RMA was shared with the Committee. Joann Monks is BVT's Practical Nursing Program Coordinator.

9.13. Dr. Connors, at the request of Dr. Fitzpatrick, informed that Committee that the collective effort of our students and staff, year after year, has resulted in national recognition from the nonprofit organization Project Lead the Way (PLTW). BVT has been a 2023-2024 PLTW Distinguished School for the seventh consecutive year, a testament to our shared

commitment and dedication.

9.14. Superintendent-Director Dr. Fitzpatrick, having announced his intention to retire from the superintendent-director position after the 2024-2025 school year on June 30, 2025, indicated to the Committee that consistent with the prescribed procedure of the MTRS he has a retirement letter to share with them at the September meeting. Mr. Hall shared with the Committee that the District School Committee, informed by legal, can search internally for the next superintendent-director of the Blackstone Valley Vocational Regional School District. Mr. Hanratty voiced his recommendation for an internally capable candidate without a search. Mr. Cray asked Dr. Fitzpatrick if he would assist them by providing them with his recommendation for the next superintendent-director of the Blackstone Valley Vocational Regional School District at the appropriate time. Dr. Fitzpatrick indicated that he would be glad to do that.

Item 10. New Business

Dr. Fitzpatrick informed the committee that Skye Bomba resigned from the Assistant Principal position effective August 9, 2024.

Item 11. 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 12. Next Regularly Scheduled School Committee Meeting – J. Hall

The next regularly scheduled School Committee meeting will be held on September 19, 2024 at 6:00 p.m.

Item 13. Meeting Closure:

13.1. The meeting was declared closed by the chair at 7:24 p.m.


13.2. On a motion by Mr. Broderick seconded by Mr. Hanratty, it was voted to adjourn at 7:24 p.m.

Listing of materials used in the meeting:

- Item 2.1. Regular Meeting Minutes of June 20, 2024
- Item 3.1. Treasurer's Report dated May 31, 2024
- Item 3.2. Treasurer's Report dated June 30, 2024
- Item 5.0. Wellness Committee End of Year Report (SY 2023-2024)
- Item 7.2. 2024 School Building Enhancement Summary List, available at meeting
- Item 7.3. FY25 Appointments
- Item 7.4. 2024-2025 Student Handbook, available at meeting
- Item 7.5. BVT SkillsUSA National Conference Medal Results
- Item 9.1. BVT School Committee Member Directory
- Item 9.2. Delineation of FY25 Subcommittees
- Item 9.3.a. Welcome Back Letter
- Item 9.3.b. Van Letters
- Item 9.4. FY25 Grant Listings
- Item 9.6. FY24 Annual Report Draft
- Item 9.7. DESE National Assessment of Educational Progress Selection

- Item 9.8. MASC/MASS 2024 Joint Conference: 11/6/24-11/9/24
- Item 9.9. Parent Newsletter – The Link Fall 2024
- Item 9.11. School Committee Meeting Proposed 2025 Calendar
- Item 9.12. Position Paper: The LPN Scope of Practice in Massachusetts
- Item 9.13. BVT 2023-2024 Project Lead the Way - Distinguished School
- Item 11. Items for the Good of the Committee

Respectfully submitted by,



Anthony M. Yitts, Secretary