Blackstone Valley Vocational Regional District School Committee
Minutes of Regular Meeting
September 19, 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
Mark J. Potter of Douglas
Anthony M. Yitts of Grafton
Mitchell A. Intinarelli of Hopedale
Edward D. Cray, III of Mendon – 6:08 p.m.
Paul J. Braza of Milford
James M. Mitchell of Sutton
Tyler D. Bartlett of Upton
James H. Ebbeling of Uxbridge

Dr. Michael F. Fitzpatrick, Superintendent-Director
Michele Denise, Vocational Director
Dr. Matthew Connors, Vocational Director
Matthew Urquhart, Assistant Principal
Nicole M. Ferguson, Business Manager
Christopher C. Pilla, Treasurer
Sosie DerKosrofian, Student Council Representative
Zabel DerKosrofian, Student Council Representative
Elise Bogdan, Recording Secretary

Members Absent:
Gerald M. Finn of Millville, Vice Chair
Chester P. Hanratty, Jr. of Millbury
Jeff T. Koopman of Northbridge

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. Finn, Mr. Hanratty, and Mr. Koopman would be unable to attend and that Mr. Cray would be delayed. Mr. Cray arrived at 6:08 p.m.

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 August 15, 2024 and to accept the minutes as written.

Item 3. Treasurer's Report – C. Pilla

3.1. The Treasurer's Report was presented dated July 31, 2024. The report reflected an ending balance of $4,139,193.29 for Total Funds, including $1,294,303.47 in Project Funds, and $2,844,889.82 in Local Funds. On a motion by Mr. Braza, seconded by Mr. Intinarelli, it was unanimously voted to approve the July 31, 2024 Treasurer's Report as presented. Mr. Pilla shared that the Federal Reserve cut the interest rate this week, which means we will see a decline in our money market accounts. The positive is that we should see favorable interest rates when we borrow for the roof.

3.2. The August 30, 2024, Treasurer's Report was not ready to be presented.

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

Maddison was unable to attend the meeting. Sosie, joined by Zabel, provide an update on the Student Council activities. First, this year's homecoming is a weeklong celebration that

begins on September 23rd and includes the following spirit days: Monday is Comfy Cozy Day; Tuesday is "Doc"elganger Day; Wednesday is Student-Teacher Swap Day; Thursday is Neon Day; and Friday is Class Color Day. The celebration includes a bonfire, pep rally, and dance with the theme "Out of this World," culminating on September 28th with a day of athletic competitions. Coming out of spirit week, the Council will plan for their turkey drive and regional conference. Dr. Fitzpatrick thanked the students and the Council for their effort in preparing for these school-wide celebratory events.

Item 5. Business Manager – N. Ferguson

5.1. The Business Manager, Nicole Ferguson, shared an FY24 district financial audit update, which began on July 1, 2024, sharing reports and data with the Hague, Sahady & Co. throughout August. As of today, we still do not anticipate any audit findings. Everything is going smoothly. They met with the Business Manager and Dr. Fitzpatrick on Monday, August 26, 2024, and everything is right where it should be. We are preparing the financial statements, which we hope to present at the November meeting. Mrs. Ferguson informed the committee that the auditors are inclined to (potentially) write off the 2013 & 2014 State delayed billing pension liability through E&D and will provide an update as that progresses. The Department of Revenue Reports (for certifying Excess & Deficiency) was filed on September 12. As of September 16, our DOR rep said it was being moved to the supervisor and close to the max. We are still working on the End of Year Report due by September 30, 2024, and it will be filed on time.

5.2. Donation Approval(s):

a. On a motion by Mr. Intinarelli, seconded by Mr. Cray, it was unanimously voted to approve a donation of musical instruments (two Resona 200 flutes with cases and one Resona Piccolo with case) from Daniel Carlo, which will be used for instructional and training purposes in the music department.

b. On a motion by Mr. Intinarelli, seconded by Mr. Broderick, it was unanimously voted to approve the vehicle donation (a 2006 Ford Escape) from Jeffrey Garcia, which will be used for instructional and training purposes in the automotive programs.

c. On a motion by Mr. Intinarelli, seconded by Mr. Broderick, it was unanimously voted to approve the vehicle donation (a 2002 KIA Rio) from Scott Godowski, which will be used for instructional and training purposes in the automotive programs.

d. On a motion by Mr. Intinarelli, seconded by Mr. Broderick, it was unanimously voted to approve the vehicle donation (a 2002 Toyota Camry) from Christopher Sinacola, which will be used for instructional and training purposes in the automotive programs. Dr. Fitzpatrick thanked the donor, Mr. Sinacola, who used to work for the T&G and would write very favorable articles about quality vocational education and the success of Blackstone Valley Tech.

Item 6. Assistant Superintendent-Director’s Report – A. Steele

Vocational Director Michele Denise agreed to stand in for Principal Steele, who could not attend the meeting due to a family issue at home.

6.1. Dr. Connors reminded the Committee that at the last meeting, he had informed them that the school had earned national recognition from Project Lead the Way (PLTW), named a PLTW Distinguished School, for seven consecutive years. PLTW has since reconfirmed that BVT is the only school in Massachusetts to earn this honor seven times. Dr. Connors proudly announced that Mr. Brian Rhodes has been named the PLTW National Engineering Teacher of the Year for 2024-2025! He will be recognized nationally from coast to coast at BVT and at the PLTW Summit in San Diego in just a few weeks in front of thousands of PLTW teachers and administrators from across the country. Dr. Fitzpatrick thanked Dr. Connors and congratulated the entire department on this prestigious award.

6.2. The Academic Curriculum Night for parents of students in Grades 10 and 12 was on September 11, 2024, and for Grades 9 and 11 on September 18, 2024. The well-attended evening events allowed parents to follow their teen's academic schedule, visit the classrooms, meet the teachers, and learn more about the expectations and coursework.

6.3. Ms. Denise informed the Committee that a letter from Mr. Steele regarding the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Title I Regulatory Alert was in their packets. The letter explains that for the 2024-25 school year, the district will allocate $74,198 for direct Title I services.

6.4. Ms. Denise shared a Homecoming 2024 master schedule of events. The handout shared with the Committee included the Spirit Theme Days, Thursday night barrel fires, Friday pep rally and evening dance details, and Saturday's schedule of the athletic events.

6.5. The Worcester Telegram & Gazette (T&G) newspaper has a new Student of the Week initiative to highlight the academic achievements of area students, similar to the way their Athlete of the Week program highlights student-athletes. We have been invited to participate. We will work with our staff on a mechanism for them to make and send in our nominations. Our nominated student(s) will be part of the T&G voting process. So be on the lookout for some of those throughout the year.

6.6. On a motion by Mr. Braza, seconded by Mr. Intinarelli, it was unanimously voted to pre-approve the out-of-state field trip request for foreign travel to Scotland/Ireland from June 16, 2026 to June 27, 2026.

6.7. Vocational Director Michele Denise spoke with the Committee about the newly designed school website, which was launched at the start of the school year. She pointed out the site's enhanced features and compliance functionality and thanked the staff members who worked on this massive undertaking.

Item 7. Superintendent-Director's Report – Michael F. Fitzpatrick

7.1. An FY25 Delineation of Subcommittees was shared with the members.

7.2. The Committee was provided with Dr. Fitzpatrick’s draft goals for FY25.

7.3. The vocational office listing of the FY25 team leader appointments were shared with the Committee.

7.4. An FY25 Grants to Date listing (as of September 10, 2024) was shared with the Committee.

7.5. The proposed 2025 School Committee Monthly Meeting Calendar was presented for the Committee's approval. On a motion by Mr. Intinarelli, seconded by Mr. Broderick, it was unanimously voted to approve the calendar as presented.

7.6. The Class of 2018 five-year graduate study was shared with the Committee.

7.7. The Moonlight Program in Practical Nursing will host a site visit for continuing accreditation of its adult evening post-secondary nursing program by the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN) from October 1, 2024, to October 3, 2024.

7.8. The superintendent provided an overview of recent school business, visits, and tours:

a. The District has secured 100 percent of the needed endorsement from its sending towns for major capital improvements. The recent ballot action in Millbury on September 3rd confirmed 13 town meeting approvals and six debt exemption actions by the member communities, which will undoubtedly strengthen BVT's subsequent status with the Massachusetts School Building Authority reimbursement initiative. Dr. Fitzpatrick expressed appreciation to all who assisted and contributed in supporting this milestone endeavor.

b. As part of the due diligence process for the Accelerated Repair Program (ARP), the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) invited Dr. Fitzpatrick who was joined by Nicole Ferguson, Business Manager; Anthony Steele II, Assistant Superintendent-Principal; and Robert Dolegiewicz, Facilities Director to participate in a virtual staff study meeting on August 19, 2024. The virtual meeting allowed the MSBA to hear about building issues firsthand, as included in the Statement of Interest (SOI) that the District submitted for the ARP before the on-site visit on August 27, 2024.

c. Dr. Fitzpatrick had invited the members of the Millbury Finance Committee to visit and tour the school with him, Principal Steele and Vocational Directors Michele Denise and Dr. Connors on August 29, 2024. Dr. Fitzpatrick shared an e-mail that he had received from the Chairman of the Finance Committee, in the correspondence it was said that the tour provided with a newfound perspective on the critical role that vocational education plays in the community and the impact it has on preparing students for successful careers.

7.9. The Superintendent-Director provided an overview of events:

a. Dr. Fitzpatrick indicated that he plans to attend and play in the Blissful Meadows Company Outing Fundraiser in Uxbridge on September 20, 2024. The annual event which supports education is an opportunity to network and has resulted in donations to the school.

b. BVT plans to welcome the members of the National Defense University International Fellows program on September 25, 2025.

c. Dr. Fitzpatrick indicated that he plans to participate in the NESDEC Board of Directors meeting on October 2-3, the MAVA General Membership meeting on October 24, and the MAVA Leadership Academy event on November 6.

7.10. Notification of Resignation:

a. The Committee is in receipt of a notification of resignation letter dated August 26, 2024, from Robert D. Beaven, Permanent Academic Substitute, which gave formal notice of intention to not return effective immediately.

Item 8. Superintendent-Director – J. Hall

8.1. The Chair, Mr. Hall, informed the members that consistent with the required MTRS steps for retirement, the Committee is in receipt of a notification of retirement letter dated September 12, 2024, from Superintendent-Director Dr. Michael F. Fitzpatrick, which indicates his plan to retire effective June 30, 2025.

a. The formal notice officially confirms the Superintendent-Director's intention to retire. As a professional courtesy, Dr. Fitzpatrick had given advanced notice and verbal agreement during the January 2024 School Committee meeting to provide one and a half years of advanced planning to assure continuity of leadership direction for the District.

b. For reference purposes the FY94 Superintendent-Director Job Description was shared with the Committee.

c. An updated FY25 Superintendent-Director Job Description was shared with the Committee to reflect the current needs.

d. The Chair, Mr. Hall, provided a status report on the School Committee Superintendent Search Subcommittee. The Chair has 8 parties interested and will make a determination on appointments to review the job description and proceed from there.

Item 9. New Business

There was no new business to report.

Item 10. 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 11. Next Regularly Scheduled School Committee Meeting – J. Hall

The next regularly scheduled School Committee meeting will be held on October 17, 2024 at 6:00 p.m.

Item 12. Meeting Closure

12.1. The meeting was declared closed by the Chair at 6:55 p.m.

12.2. On a motion by Mr. Braza, seconded by Mr. Broderick it was voted to adjourn at 6:55 p.m.

Listing of materials used in the meeting:
Item 2.1. Regular Meeting Minutes of August 15, 2024
Item 3.1. Treasurer's Report dated July 31, 2024
Item 3.2. Treasurer's Report dated August 30, 2024 (available at meeting)
Item 5.2.a. Donation: Musical Instruments – Daniel Carlo
Item 5.2.b. Donation: 2006 Ford Escape – Jeffrey Garcia
Item 5.2.c. Donation: 2002 Kia Rio – Scott Godowski
Item 5.2.d. Donation: 2002 Toyota Camry – Christopher Sinacola
Item 6.3. ESSA Title I Regulatory Alert
Item 6.6. Out-of-State Field Trip Request: Foreign Travel to Scotland/Ireland
Item 7.1. Delineation of FY25 Subcommittees
Item 7.2. Superintendent Draft Goals
Item 7.3. FY25 Vocational Team Leader Appointments
Item 7.4. FY25 Grants to Date
Item 7.5. Proposed School Committee Meetings for Calendar Year 2025
Item 7.6. BVT Alumni Survey Results – Class of 2018
Item 7.8.c. Correspondence from Chair of Millbury Finance Committee
Item 7.10.a. Notification of Resignation Letter – Robert D. Beaven
Item 8.1.a. Notification of Retirement Letter – Dr. Michael F. Fitzpatrick
Item 8.1.b. FY94 Superintendent-Director Job Description
Item 8.1.c. FY25 Updated Superintendent-Director Job Description
Item 10. Items for the Good of the Committee

Respectfully submitted by,

Anthony M. Yitts, Secretary