

Blackstone Valley Vocational Regional School District

Budget Subcommittee Meeting Minutes January 9, 2025

Members in Attendance

Joseph Broderick of Blackstone
Edward Cray of Mendon
Tyler Bartlett of Upton
Gerald Finn of Millville
Dr. Michael F. Fitzpatrick, Superintendent-Director

Anthony Steele, Asst. Superintendent-Principal
Nicole Ferguson, Business Manager
Jaime Patriarca, Assistant Business Manager
Jacquenet Raad, Assistant Business Manager

Members Absent

Christopher Pilla, District Treasurer
Joseph Hall of Bellingham

Guests in Attendance

Michele Denise, Vocational Coordinator
Mark Conley, Technology Coordinator

Call to order

The meeting was called to order at 4:33 p.m. by Mr. Finn in the Superintendent's Conference Room.

Approval of minutes from prior meeting

Mr. Finn asked members to review minutes from the January 2, 2025 Budget Subcommittee meeting.

Motion: On a motion moved by Mr. Fitzpatrick, seconded by Mr. Cray, it was unanimously voted to approve the Budget Subcommittee meeting minutes of January 2, 2025, as written.

Agenda items

Mr. Conley opened the meeting with a review of the District-Wide Technology budgets which showed a total increase of \$32,192 or 20.79% from the prior year budget. Significant components of the change consisted of:

Technology Hardware [\$6.0K increase]

- \$ 3.5K *Humanities*: Addition of 4 iPads (2 per class) reduced from prior year request for 2 full class sets
- \$ 2.5K *Information Technology*: Increased for docking stations and Network Attached Storage (NAS)

Technology Software [\$26.2K increase]

- \$17.5K *Math*: Pre-Calculus digital subscription (required every 3 years)
- \$ 7.0K *Science*: Added subscriptions to Kahoot, Quizlet, Teachers Pay Teachers
- \$ 6.3K *Vocational DW*: Increase mainly driven by alignment with industry standards per updated DESE curriculum frameworks across all shops, including assessments and competency tracking
- \$ 4.5K *Engineering*: Addition of Solid Professor, includes Auto CAD, Inventor, Revit and SolidWorks
- \$ 1.5K *SPED*: Addition of Ori Learning, a transition curriculum that was previously grant funded
- \$ 1.5K *Foreign Language*: Doubled the users for Talk Abroad (online pen pal program piloted in prior year)
- \$ 1.4K *Painting & Design*: Addition of Aurora Graphics and Pro Vehicles Outlines
- \$ 0.6K *English*: Annual increase in Commonlit Essentials Pro
- (\$14.1K) *Academic DW*: Reduced for software no longer being used (Nearpod) and moved Teachers Pay Teachers to Science

Next, Mr. Conley presented the Technology Department budget which had an overall increase of \$76,575 or 11.19% from the prior year budget. Mr. Conley explained the major components of the budget change as follows:

- \$ 25.8K Bldg. Network/Maintenance: Addition of MimeCast (email security and training) and annual price increases across various services already in place, offset by eRate reimbursement increase (based on enrollment)
- \$ 22.2K Tech Dept. (Tech-Hardware): Driven by the 5 year replacement plan for obsolete devices, including additional increase for device replacements that were grant funded in the prior year
- \$ 12.0K Tech Dept. (Tech-Software): Mainly driven by the addition of Magic School (AI software) and annual increases for various platforms
- \$ 11.9K Classroom Instructional (Tech-Software): Mainly driven by the addition of Securly Classroom and Securly Pass, bundled with the existing Securly web filtering software
- \$ 8.9K Tech Prof Development and Travel: Addition of PowerSchool University and META Training
- \$ 2.0K DW Info Management & Tech Software: Annual increase for PowerSchool (Student Information System) and all associated plug-ins
- (\$ 6.3K) Tech Dept Contract Services: Reduced PowerSchool training by 50% and realized savings with transition from Public School Works to ArxED for mandatory training

Mr. Conley directed attention to the next budget area for review which was Fixed Assets (7000 series). The Fixed Asset budget request totaled \$122,500 or 100% from the prior year budget. Please note that the prior year's budget addressed its capital requests via grants and donations. Mr. Conley, with assistance from Mr. Steele, explained that this budget request consists of upgrading more than 90 wireless access points including cloud licenses for all, materials, engineering and installation. Mr. Conley also presented a 6 year plan for other technology infrastructure needs going forward, so the District has time to prepare.

Mr. Finn requested an updated on the outstanding follow up items from previous meetings, to which Mrs. Ferguson replied that those requests are currently being researched and evaluated.

In closing, Mrs. Ferguson directed attention to the Budget Summary for items reviewed to date, which reflected a preliminary increase of 8.43% from FY2025. She reminded the committee that the remaining budget presentations consist of the instructional series.

Special Note: Consistent with the District's standard budget building process [at this juncture] the Budget Subcommittee will continue to receive and review all departmental spending requests. Once fully collected the Subcommittee will explore and investigate all options (including grants and donations) to secure the item prior to including it within local municipal assessment consideration.

The next scheduled meeting is set for Thursday, January 16, 2025 at 5:00 p.m.

Areas for follow-up:

- Mr. Pilla will reach out to UniBank for consideration of changing credit card machine vendors
- Mr. Finn requested more information from Mr. Denise regarding Indoor Track, including how many other Vocational-Technical and sending schools offer it as sport, and their associated logistics and costs.
- Mr. Steele requested analysis from Mr. Denise regarding the sports fees that the District charges, inquiring when was the last time it was increased and how much do other Vocational-Technical schools charge.
- Mr. Finn requested a breakdown from Mr. Dolegiewicz of the expense tracking for custodial supplies, including year over year trend lines and current fiscal year to date spending.
- Mr. Hall requested a 5 year schedule from Mr. Dolegiewicz of planned facilities equipment repairs.

Adjournment

Motion: to adjourn made by Mr. Finn at 5:53 p.m.; seconded by Mr. Fitzpatrick; motion voted and unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted by,
Jacqueline Raad, Recording Secretary