

**Blackstone Valley Vocational Regional District School Committee
Minutes of Regular Meeting
October 17, 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	Dr. Michael F. Fitzpatrick, Superintendent-Director
Joseph A. Broderick of Blackstone	Anthony E. Steele, Asst. Superintendent/Principal
Mark J. Potter of Douglas	Nicole M. Ferguson, Business Manager
Anthony M. Yitts of Grafton	Michele Denise, Vocational Director
Mitchell A. Intinarelli of Hopedale	Matthew Urquhart, Assistant Principal
Edward D. Cray, III of Mendon	Yvette Martin, Director of Student Services
Gerald M. Finn of Millville, Vice Chair	Cyra Hathaway, former PAC President
Jeff T. Koopman of Northbridge	Jenine Grabau of Grafton, current PAC President
James M. Mitchell of Sutton	Maddison Dos Santos, Student Council Representative
Tyler D. Bartlett of Upton	Jan Hanratty of Millbury
James H. Ebbeling of Uxbridge	Elise Bogdan, Recording Secretary

Members Absent:

Paul J. Braza of Milford

Item 1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:01 p.m. by the Chair, Mr. Hall. Dr. Fitzpatrick was notified in advance that Mr. Braza would be unable to attend. A moment of silence was held in remembrance of Chester P. Hanratty, Jr. of Millbury (April 30, 1951 – September 21, 2024), who served as member of the School Committee from 2000 to 2024.

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 September 19, 2024 and to accept the minutes as written.

Item 3. Treasurer's Report – C. Pilla

3.1. Dr. Fitzpatrick informed the Committee that it was agreed in advance that he would present the Treasurer's Report dated August 31, 2024, on behalf of Mr. Pilla, who could not attend the meeting. The report reflected an ending balance of \$4,411,714.68 for Total Funds, including \$1,153,332.87 in Project Funds, and \$3,258,381.81 in Local Funds. On a motion by Mr. Broderick, seconded by Mr. Koopman, it was unanimously voted to approve the August 31, 2024 Treasurer's Report as presented.

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

Maddison provided an update on Student Council activities. First, the Homecoming pep rally celebrated Dr. Fitzpatrick's career with the presentation of a crown. The Council is sponsoring a bus for BVT students to experience a Friday Night Lights football game on October 25, 2024, BVT vs. Assabet. The Council is planning a turkey drive fundraising event with Turkey Bingo and is hosting its regional conference at BVT. Dr. Fitzpatrick thanked Maddison.

Item 5. Student Recognition - Dr. Michael F. Fitzpatrick

5.1. On behalf of the District School Committee, Dr. Fitzpatrick formally recognized Lacey Coffman of Milford, a senior in the Multimedia Communications program at BVT, for being named a Commended Student in the 2025 National Merit Scholarship Program. Dr. Fitzpatrick congratulated Lacey on her academic achievement and her outstanding performance on the Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT®) in 2023.

5.2. On behalf of the District School Committee, Dr. Fitzpatrick formally recognized Dylan Leeds of Northbridge, a senior in the Engineering & Robotics program at BVT, for being named a Commended Student in the 2025 National Merit Scholarship Program. Dr. Fitzpatrick congratulated Dylan on his academic achievement and his outstanding performance on the Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test (PSAT/NMSQT®) in 2023.

Item 6. Parent Advisory Council Updates – Y. Martin

6.1. Yvette Martin, Director of Student Services, informed the Committee that the Parent Advisory Council (PAC) has had a change in leadership. President Cyra Hathaway is stepping away from the role as her son has graduated and introduced Jenine Grabau of Grafton, the current PAC President. The former President Cyra Hathaway provided an update on PAC activities, including efforts to increase membership, mandated by the state, recruit parent involvement at parent-teacher night and basic rights presentations. There is high involvement at the high school level. There is always room for improvement – the PAC President is informed of integrated monitoring – and meets with students, faculty, liaisons, and the PAC to talk about things to improve or resolve problems.

Item 7. Business Manager – N. Ferguson

7.1. The School Committee was presented with the District's proposed FY26 Budget Subcommittee Meeting dates. The first meeting is scheduled for November 21, 2024, at 5:00 p.m. This meeting will include electing the Chair of the FY2026 Budget Subcommittee and verifying subsequent meeting dates, and review Debt (8000) function. There were no questions about the proposed calendar.

7.2. Donation

a. The Committee was informed of the acceptance of a \$10,000.00 monetary donation from Lee McLeod of Blackstone. The generous donation will significantly impact the lives of BVT students and help the school further its mission of providing quality technical education and training.

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

8.1. The Committee received the preliminary BVT enrollment comparison by town and grade as of October 1, 2024. While there is an ebb and flow to the enrollment data, students continue to hold strong interest in attending the school.

8.2. Mr. Steele informed the members that Homecoming 2024 was a weeklong celebration. It began on September 23rd and included spirit days, a bonfire (postponed to

October due to weather), a pep rally, and a dance. The celebration culminated on September 28th with a day of athletic events. Principal Steele shared a program of the 2024 Homecoming athletic events with the Committee.

8.3. Vocational Director Michele Denise shared a Program Advisory update with the Committee. The Program Chairs Advisory first meeting of this school year was held on Tuesday, September 17, 2024. The Fall Program Advisory Dinner will be held at the school on October 30, 2024.

8.4. Vocational Director Michele Denise shared with the Committee an Admissions Policy document, which shows track changes, and presented an overview on the proposed admissions policy revisions. On a motion by Mr. Koopman, seconded by Mr. Intinarelli, it was voted to approve the admissions policy revisions as presented.

8.5. 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 the PLTW Summit in San Diego in front of thousands of PLTW teachers and administrators at a VIP reception and awards ceremony. Principal Steele also reminded the members that they are invited to attend the surprise award presentation and reception with local government, school, and PLTW officials to celebrate Brian's accomplishment on October 22, 2024.

8.6. Out-of-State/Overnight Field Trip Requests

a. On a motion by Mr. Intinarelli, seconded by Mr. Broderick, it was voted to approve the proposed out-of-state field trip request from the Painting & Design program to attend a college tour of the New England Institute of Technology, Greenwich, Rhode Island campus on October 29, 2024.

b. On a motion by Mr. Intinarelli, seconded by Mr. Broderick, it was voted to approve the proposed DECA field trip to Charlotte, North Carolina, from November 15, 2024, to November 17, 2024, to attend the DECA conference.

c. On a motion by Mr. Intinarelli, seconded by Mr. Broderick, it was voted to give initial approval of the proposed Culinary Arts field trip request to visit multiple destinations in and around Portland, Maine, from April 14, 2025, to April 16, 2025.

d. On a motion by Mr. Intinarelli, seconded by Mr. Broderick, it was voted to approve an overnight field trip request for the golf team to attend the MIAA Division 2 states to practice round in Pittsfield, Massachusetts. The team will leave on Sunday, stay overnight at the Yankee Inn in Lenox, and return on Monday. Principal Steele apologized for the late notice, which was unavoidable given the team had just qualified to attend this event.

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

9.1. The approved 2025 School Committee Monthly Meeting Calendar was shared with

the Committee.

9.2. With the passing of Chester P. Hanratty, Jr., there is a vacancy for the Millbury seat on the District School Committee and BVT subcommittee vacancies. Dr. Fitzpatrick shared a letter dated October 1, 2024, from him to the Chair of the Millbury Board of Selectpersons, in which, as a professional courtesy, he shared the prescribed process put forth in the regional agreement to address an unexpired term. Dr. Fitzpatrick informed the Committee that Mr. Jan Hanratty had expressed his interest in serving on the District School Committee and was in attendance.

a. Chester P. Hanratty, Jr., served on the following subcommittees: the Budget Subcommittee, the Negotiation Subcommittee, the Policy Subcommittee, the Teacher Sick Leave Bank Advisory Subcommittee, and the Support Staff Sick Leave Bank Advisory Subcommittee. All of these subcommittees now have vacant seats for the 2024-2025 school year. The members were asked to consider filling these vacancies.

b. School Committee Officer Election/Assistant Treasurer Appointment for the remainder of 2024 - On a motion made by Mr. Koopman, seconded by Mr. Intinarelli, it was voted to appoint Mr. Joseph A. Broderick as Assistant Treasurer for the Blackstone Valley Vocational Regional District. The term of office shall commence in October 2024 and conclude at the regular meeting held in January 2025. On a motion made by Mr. Koopman, seconded by Mr. Intinarelli, Mr. Joseph A. Broderick was appointed as the Assistant Treasurer Appointment for the remainder of 2024.

9.3. Excess & Deficiency as of 7/1/24

E&D Certification: The School Committee is in receipt of a certification letter from the Massachusetts Department of Revenue (DOR). The letter certified that the amount of excess and deficiency, or "E&D" as of July 1, 2024, for Blackstone Valley is: General Fund \$1,484,462.00. This certification is in accordance with the provisions of G. L. Chapter 71, §16B½, as amended. The unencumbered funds certified above in excess of five percent of the operating budget and budgeted capital costs for the succeeding fiscal year must be applied to reduce the current fiscal year's assessment in accordance with the joint guidance issued by the Division of Local Services and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education dated May 2023. For the District, this excess amount equals \$0.00. E&D funds are attributable to BVT's aggressive and successful grant pursuits and numerous cost-saving techniques. Dr. Fitzpatrick gave the Committee an overview of some of the recent and upcoming cost-saving initiatives.

9.4. Dr. Fitzpatrick shared a healthy listing of the FY25 Grants to date (as of October 9, 2024) with the Committee. The total FY25 in progress tally is \$1,845,380.

9.5. Events/Updates

a. Dr. Fitzpatrick participated 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 past and anticipated donations to the school.

b. Dr. Fitzpatrick joined other leadership team members in welcoming the members of the National Defense University (NDU) International Fellows program on September 25, 2025, and led a group tour that day. Our students served as school representatives and spokespersons and delivered professional presentations. Dr. Fitzpatrick received a letter of appreciation from the NDU Class President regarding their visit, which he shared with the Committee.

c. Dr. Fitzpatrick informed the Committee that its adult evening post-secondary nursing program hosted a site visit for continuing accreditation by the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN). During the ACEN site visit, members of the public were invited to meet with the visiting team on October 2nd from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m. in the café annex and share their comments about our nursing program.

d. Dr. Fitzpatrick participated in the NESDEC Board of Directors Connecticut-based meeting on October 3rd and plans to attend the MAVA General Membership meeting on October 24th and the MAVA Leadership Academy event on November 6th.

e. There was a Police Chief's Breakfast at BVT on October 16, 2024, in the Three Seasons Restaurant. The annual event was held in partnership with the interim Chief of Police in Upton, Chief Peter McGowan, and welcomes all thirteen sending-town Police Chiefs and School Resource Officers to attend. It is a network of partnership and support and a well-attended event.

f. Dr. Fitzpatrick informed the Committee that the annual Bus Driver Appreciation Breakfast will be held on October 18, 2024, in the Three Seasons Restaurant.

g. Dr. Fitzpatrick shared that BVT, as an Action for Healthy Kids Healthy Meals Incentives grant recipient, has three staff members who accepted an all-expense-paid invitation to represent us at the Fall 2024 Summit in Las Vegas, Nevada, from October 21 to October 23, 2024.

9.6. Notification of Resignations

a. A Notification of Resignation letter dated October 7, 2024, from Erin Foley, Main Office Secretary, with an effective date of October 18, 2024, was accepted.

b. A Notification of Resignation letter dated October 6, 2024, from Deanna Pavone, Full-Time Nursing Instructor, with an effective date of October 31, 2024, was accepted.

9.7. The 2024 Blackstone Valley Tech Annual Report was given to all members.

Item 10. New Business

Dr. Fitzpatrick informed the Committee that financial representatives had approved monetary donations to help support the school's passenger vans during the 2024-2025 school year. The District has received funds from Country Bank and UniBank. The District has applied for the local cultural council mini-grants and is waiting for a status update. The members who

expressed interest in serving on the Superintendent Search Committee were asked to stay after the meeting for a quick update on the next steps.

Item 12. 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 November 21, 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. Intinarelli, it was voted to adjourn at 7:25 p.m.

Listing of materials used in the meeting:

Item 2.1. Minutes of Meeting of September 19, 2024

Item 3.1. Treasurer's Report dated August 31, 2024

Item 7.1. Proposed FY26 Budget Subcommittee Meeting Dates

Item 7.2.a. Monetary Donation Acceptance Letter, Lee McLeod

Item 8.1. October 1 Preliminary Enrollment Headcount available at meeting

Item 8.4. Admission Policy Revision, October 17, 2024

Item 8.6.a. Field Trip Request: P&D to NE Tech, Greenwich, RI

Item 8.6.b. Field Trip Request: DECA to Conference, Charlotte, NC available at meeting

Item 8.6.c. Field Trip Request: Culinary Arts to Portland, ME

Item 9.1. 2025 School Committee Monthly Meeting Calendar

Item 9.2. School Committee Vacancy, Millbury Board of Selectpersons letter October 1, 2024

Item 9.2. 2024-2025 Subcommittee Vacancies

Item 9.2.b. Suggested Motion: BVVRD School Committee Assistant Treasurer Appointment

Item 9.3. Excess & Deficiency Certification Letter as of July 1, 2024

Item 9.4. FY25 Grants and Donations as of October 9, 2024

Item 9.5.b. Appreciation Letter from National Defense University dated October 2, 2024

Item 9.6.a. Notification of Retirement Letter from Erin Foley, Main Office Secretary

Item 9.6.b. Notification of Retirement Letter from Deanna Pavone, Full-Time Nursing Instructor

Item 11. Items for the Good of the Committee

Respectfully submitted by,

Anthony M. Yitts, Secretary