

**Blackstone Valley Vocational Regional District School Committee**  
**Minutes of Regular Meeting**  
**March 13, 2025**

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  
Jan P. Hanratty 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

**Members Absent:**

Paul J. Braza of Milford

Dr. Michael F. Fitzpatrick, Superintendent-Director  
Anthony E. Steele, Asst. Superintendent-Director/Principal  
Christopher C. Pilla, Treasurer  
Nicole M. Ferguson, Business Manager  
Jacquenet Raad, Assistant Business Manager  
Michele Denise, Vocational Director  
Dr. Matthew Connors, Vocational Director  
Kerri Baltramaitis, Vocational Director  
Yvette Martin, Director of Student Services  
Eddie Evans, Academic Curriculum Coordinator, 6:45 p.m.  
Matthew Urquhart, Assistant Principal, 6:53 p.m.  
Brad DiDio, Upton Men's Club Representative  
Nate Hahn, Upton Men's Club Representative  
Andy MacDonald, Upton Men's Club Representative  
Matt Ronzio, Upton Men's Club Representative  
Sosie DerKosroffian, Student Council Representative  
Zabel DerKosroffian, National Honor Society Representative  
Christopher Joiner, National Honor Society Representative

**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. Braza, Maddison Dos Santos, and Senator Moore could not attend. A moment of silence was held in remembrance of Lester P. Shea (September 5, 1931 – February 20, 2025), BVT Graphic Arts Instructor from 1972 to 1992.

**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 January 16, 2025 and to accept the minutes as written.

**Item 3. Treasurer's Report – C. Pilla**

3.1. The Treasurer's Report was presented dated December 31, 2024. The report reflected an ending balance of \$2,747,861.16 for Total Funds, including \$948,053.39 in Project Funds, and \$1,799,807.77 in Local Funds. On a motion by Mr. Intinarelli, seconded by Mr. Broderick, it was unanimously voted to approve the December 31, 2024 Treasurer's Report as presented.

3.2. The Treasurer's Report was presented dated January 31, 2025. The report reflected an ending balance of \$3,966,048.02 for Total Funds, including \$912,637.91 in Project Funds, and \$3,053,410.11 in Local Funds. On a motion by Mr. Intinarelli, seconded by Mr. Broderick, it was unanimously voted to approve the January 31, 2025 Treasurer's Report as presented.

Item 4. Comments by Student Representatives

4.1. Student Council – Maddison Dos Santos was unable to attend. Sosie and Zabel DerKosroffian provided an update on Council activities, which included the following activities. A winter day of service was held on February 2, 2025 at Maynard High School; attending members made blankets for disabled veterans and first responder appreciation baskets. Nineteen members attended the statewide MASC annual leadership conference in Hyannis from March 5, 2025, to March 7, 2025, participated in workshops, and learned how to become better leaders. The Council won the Top 10 Project award and was named a Gold Council of Excellence, and Ms. Cann was recognized for 15 years of being a student council advisor. The Council participated in the annual MASC Polar Plunge supporting MA Special Olympics and raised over \$5,000, and Vice Principal Mr. Urquhart took the plunge with them. The Council also organized Sporty's closet and replenished toiletries. The Council is looking forward to upcoming events, which include attending the Spring Conference at Oakmont on April 16, 2025. Ryan Benoit from the BVT Student Council will run for the position of vice president on the Central Massachusetts Regional Board, and BVT council members will help him campaign. The NASC Council of Excellence results are expected in early April. Lastly, the BVT student council e-board election nominations open at the end of March.

4.2 National Honor Society (NHS) and the National Technical Honor Society (NTHS) – On behalf of the NHS & NTHS societies, Christopher Joiner and Zabel DerKosroffian provided an update on its efforts to hold a Color Run at the school on April 12, 2025, from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. There will be a twenty-five-dollar participant fee and one dollar for general admission. The 5K event course will be the cross-country trail, where participants can run, jog, or walk at their own pace. NHS & NTHS members positioned along the course will throw colored powder at the participants' white t-shirts, which are provided. This event will help support future NHS & NTHS initiatives with associated costs. The NHS & NTHS Color Run fundraising efforts include seeking event sponsorship – \$100 Gold Level Sponsor, \$50 Purple Level Sponsor, or \$25 Friend of NHS/NTHS Sponsor, in addition to gift basket donations that will go to the top three finishes on the male and female groups. Additional information and updates will be shared on the NHS & NTHS Instagram @bvt NHS.

Item 5. Student Recognition(s) – Dr. M. Fitzpatrick & A. Steele

Dr. Fitzpatrick invited Principal Steele to join him for the following student recognitions:

5.1. On behalf of the District School Committee and Principal Steele, Dr. Fitzpatrick formally recognized Braedon Ando of Blackstone, a senior in the Culinary Arts program at BVT and a member of the Co-op (with Grafton) Varsity Swim Team. Dr. Fitzpatrick congratulated Braedon on his contributions and success as a MIAA Division 2/Boys Swim & Dive Champion. Braedon earned Individual State Championship titles in the 200 Individual Medley, setting a new meet record, and the 500 Freestyle. His impressive performance has also earned him qualification for All-American consideration.

5.2. On behalf of the District School Committee and Principal Steele, Dr. Fitzpatrick formally recognized Christopher Joiner of Grafton, a senior in the Biotechnology program at BVT, as the 2025 U.S. Presidential Scholars Candidate. Senator Moore prepared a citation which

will be presented to Christopher Joiner at a later date.

Item 6. July 4th Festivities Presentation (6/21/25) – Brad DiDio

Mr. Brad DiDio, representing the Upton Men's Club, requested the use of BVT's facilities on Saturday, June 21, 2025, for its annual July 4th festivities. On a motion of voiced support made by Mr. Intinarelli, seconded by Mr. Koopman, the Committee voted unanimously to endorse the Upton Men's Club's request to host the July 4th family-friendly festivities at the school on June 21, 2025.

Item 7. Upton Men's Club Athletic Field Use Request – Matt Ronzio & Nate Hahn

Mr. Matt Ronzio and Mr. Nate Hahn, representing the Upton Men's Club, requested the use of BVT's athletic field on Saturday, June 7, 2025, for its annual cornhole tournament. On a motion of voiced support made by Mr. Koopman, seconded by Mr. Intinarelli, the Committee voted unanimously to endorse the hosting of the twenty-one-plus cornhole tournament at the school on June 7, 2025.

Item 8. Business Manager – N. Ferguson

8.1. On a motion made by Mr. Intinarelli, seconded by Mr. Koopman, it was unanimously voted to approve the transfer \$750,000 from the District's Certified Excess & Deficiency Fund (Account #1000-00-0302-000-0) into the Program and Facility Expansion Capital Projects Fund (Account # 6100-00-0498-000-0). The vote is being taken per authorization of the annual budget as presented and voted by the School Committee and its 13 member towns. Per the FY25 Budget Book Page A-1a (Green Sheet):

As shown on page A-1, the District applied \$100,000 of available reserve funds to reduce the assessment impact to its municipal partners. Additionally, within its FY25 financial planning, the District expects to self-fund several potential activities that could not be supported within the identified revenues, or which fall into such categories as unanticipated fiscal deficiencies, emergencies, new state mandates, capital grant matching requirements, facility/campus renovations, and capital equipment. Therefore, and with full disclosure, the District alerts local stakeholders of (potential) FY25 utilization of up to \$750,000 of Department of Revenue Certified E&D funds.

Many necessary operational and capital expenditures were intentionally excluded from the FY25 budget, pending feasibility review and final determination of absolute necessity. These items include, but are not limited to, capital repairs, capital equipment/technology upgrades to modernize skilled trade programs (Chapter 74 Construction Technology, Electrical, and Electronics) and significantly advance direct care skill development (Chapter 74 Dental Assisting & Health Services) academic and vocational classroom/workroom updates, enhancements to building security, extraordinary health insurance expenses and technology infrastructure upgrades.

Analysis of E&D:

\$ 1,484,462 - Certified E&D (10/1/2024)

\$ 750,000 - Vote Per Item 8.1

\$ 734,462 - Certified E&D After Vote

8.2. Donation Approval:

a. On a motion made by Mr. Koopman, seconded by Mr. Intinarelli, it was unanimously voted to approve the donation of a 2004 Chevy Silverado with a Kelley Blue Book value range

of \$3,855-\$7,062. The vehicle will be used for instructional and valuable training purposes in BVT's automotive programs.

Item 9. Assistant Superintendent-Director's Report – A. Steele

9.1. Admissions Discussion – Principal Steele provided the Committee with two handouts. The first handout included the official website of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, the Governor's Office of Constituent Services social media links, and their phone number. The second document, Proposed Amendments to Regulations on Vocational Technical Education, 603 CMR 4.00, was presented to the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education for initial action on March 10, 2025. Final action by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education is anticipated to be on May 20, 2025.

Principal Steele updated the Committee on various aspects of vocational-technical admissions at the state level. The Board of Education recently asked the Department of Education for proposed legislation to amend statewide policy for Massachusetts vocational school admissions. The Healey-Driscoll Administration proposed updated regulation changes on March 10, 2025, to the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education to improve access to career technical education (CTE) programs across Massachusetts. These changes incorporate feedback the administration received over the last month from the Board and public, including the number of countable absences and demonstrated interest in CTE. These proposed regulations could impact the admission of students beginning with the 2025-2026 admissions cycle, for students entering Fall 2026, where there are more applicants than seats, students shall be accepted for admission by a lottery conducted by the career technical education school or program.

There was a brief discussion with shared comments about the implications and challenges of the proposed legislation to amend statewide policy for Massachusetts vocational school admissions presents if a blind lottery is forced upon vocational schools and the multitude of scenarios that could be anticipated. Mr. Hanratty and Dr. Fitzpatrick shared their disappointment with the Governor's Office in its interference and open disregard in usurping the District's "home rule" relationship with our member communities in attempting to mandate an unproven lottery admissions. Principal Steele shared that he had been impressed by the Board of Education, which voted to seek public comment on regulations that aim to strengthen CTE schools' and programs' access to sending middle schools and require lottery admissions at all CTE schools and programs with a waitlist. Members of the public can submit public comments through the Governor's Office of Constituent Services.

9.2. The Class of 2025 Practical Nursing graduation and pinning ceremony took place at BVT in the Competition Center on January 27, 2025. There were 15 graduates in the last cohort.

9.3. The School Committee received the 2025 Senior Calendar. The anticipated graduation date is May 29, 2025 at the DCU Center in Worcester. All were reminded that the dates and times are subject to change.

#### 9.4. Out-of-State/Overnight Field Trip Requests:

a. On a motion made by Mr. Intinarelli, seconded by Mr. Cray, it was voted to approve the proposed out-of-state/overnight field trip request to the DECA ICDC National Competition in Orlando, FL from April 26, 2025, to April 30, 2025.

b. On a motion made by Mr. Intinarelli, seconded by Mr. Broderick, it was voted to approve the proposed overnight field trip request to the SkillsUSA State Competition in Marlborough, Massachusetts from May 1, 2025, to May 3, 2025.

c. On a motion made by Mr. Intinarelli, seconded by Mr. Broderick, it was voted to approve the proposed Cosmetology out-of-state day trip to travel to the Bodhi Spa in Providence, Rhode Island on May 12, 2025.

d. On a motion made by Mr. Intinarelli, seconded by Mr. Koopman, it was voted to approve the proposed out-of-state/overnight senior class field trip request to Lancaster, Gettysburg, and Hershey, Pennsylvania from May 14, 2025, to May 17, 2025.

e. On a motion made by Mr. Intinarelli, seconded by Mr. Hanratty, it was voted to approve the proposed AT/AC/PDT/EG out-of-state day trip to travel to the New England Dragway in Epping, New Hampshire on May 30, 2025.

#### Item 10. Negotiation Subcommittee – J. Hall

10.1. Superintendent-Director Contract: On a motion made by Mr. Intinarelli, seconded by Mr. Yitts, it was unanimously voted to accept the agreement as presented and approve the contract for Mr. Anthony E. Steele II, the new permanent superintendent-director of the Blackstone Valley Vocational Regional School District, effective employment for the period of July 1, 2025, through June 30, 2028. The specifics of the three year agreement were shared with the members of the School Committee but not openly discussed. On behalf of the Negotiation Subcommittee, Mr. Yitts spoke about the many discussions the subcommittee had to ensure the future of the school and its long-term legacy in coming to this conclusion as a group. Principal Steele thanked the Committee.

#### Item 11. Budget Subcommittee Report – G. Finn

11.1. Mr. Finn shared a status report about the First Round Line-Item Series 2000 with the Committee and gave a brief update on the public hearing. Mr. Finn thanked the Budget Subcommittee.

11.2. A status report about the Budget Public Hearing was presented – Mr. Finn thanked those involved with the FY26 budget-building process. Mr. Hall shared with the Committee that a quorum vote approved the FY26 proposed budget at the public hearing.

11.3. Mr. Hall asked Mr. Steele to share the results of the School Council Vote with the Committee. Mr. Steele reported that the School Council voted unanimously to support the FY26 budget request for the Blackstone Valley Vocational Regional School District at their February 25, 2025 meeting.

11.4. On a motion made by Mr. Finn, seconded by Mr. Intinarelli, it was unanimously voted to approve the use of \$450,000 from the District's Certified Excess & Deficiency Funds

(E&D) as a funding source for the FY26 proposed budget. The District's commitment to identification of alternative revenue streams and fiscal austerity contributes to its ability to generate E&D. This valuable resource provides a revenue source that creates a reduction to member town assessments. Analysis of E&D:

\$ 1,484,462 - Certified E&D (10/1/24)

\$ 750,000 - Transfer to Capital Projects (3/13/25 Vote Item 7.1.)

\$ 734,462 - Available Certified E&D (after Vote Item 7.1.)

\$ 450,000 - Requested for FY26 Budget (3/13/25 Vote Item 10.4.)

\$ 284,462 - Remaining Certified E&D after Vote

Anticipated additional \$394,971 in Pension Relief funding will flow through E&D (50% in October 2025 and 50% in October 2026) that is not included in the above figures.

11.5. Adopt FY26 Budget: On a motion made by Mr. Finn, seconded by Mr. Intinarelli, following the public hearing held earlier today, the Blackstone Valley Vocational Regional District School Committee unanimously voted to accept the FY26 \$32,225,637 Budget as set forth by the Budget Subcommittee and approved by the School Council on February 25, 2025.

11.6. Finance/BOS Committee Meetings/Presentations – Dr. M. Fitzpatrick:

a. Millbury (2/24/25) – Dr. Fitzpatrick reported that he and Mr. Steele attended the Millbury Finance Committee meeting on February 24, 2025 for the District's FY26 budget presentation. Mr. Hanratty could not attend due to a travel conflict but had voiced his support prior to traveling. The Finance Committee presented Dr. Fitzpatrick with a cake to celebrate his years of service. It was a smooth presentation.

b. Mendon (3/5/25) – Mr. Cray reported that he joined Dr. Fitzpatrick and Mr. Steele for the District's budget presentation to the Mendon Finance Committee on March 5, 2025. It was supported via positive feedback.

c. Douglas (3/11/25) – Dr. Fitzpatrick reported that he and Mr. Steele attended the District's budget presentation to the Douglas Finance Committee on March 11, 2025. It was a professional exchange.

d. Grafton (3/12/25) – Mr. Yitts shared that he joined Dr. Fitzpatrick and Mr. Steele for the District's budget presentation to the Grafton Finance Committee on March 12, 2025. Mr. Yitts conveyed that the discussions went well, with minimal comments and questions asked and answered for Grafton's future planning.

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

12.1. Dr. Fitzpatrick informed the Committee that at the School Council Meeting on February 25, 2025, the School Council recommended that the School Committee not adopt a School Choice policy for the 2025-2026 school year. On a motion made by Mr. Yitts, seconded by Mr. Intinarelli, it was unanimously voted not to adopt School Choice for the 2025-2026 school year.

12.2. Recent Activities (from Grant Listing) - A document was shared with the Committee with an FY25 to date total of \$2,865,616 as of March 3, 2025 with an additional in progress total of \$1,010,494.

## 12.3. BVT Visits/Tours

a. Dr. Fitzpatrick informed the Committee that the Town Administrator of Mendon, Jeremy Stull visited BVT on February 28, 2025 for a tour of the building.

b. Dr. Fitzpatrick shared that the Secretary of Labor and Workforce Development, Lauren Jones toured the school on March 4, 2025 to celebrate Women in Construction Week and presented a citation.

c. Dr. Fitzpatrick notified the Committee that a Day of AI with the former Massachusetts Commissioner of Education, Jeffrey C. Riley will be held at BVT on August 12, 2025.

12.4. Dr. Fitzpatrick shared that the Football Awards Ceremony was held at BVT on February 11, 2025. He extended compliments to Athletic Director Mike Denise for smooth organization of the event.

12.5. Dr. Fitzpatrick shared that the Winter Sports Awards Ceremony at BVT on March 11, 2025. It was a well-attended event.

## 12.6. Updates:

a. BVT has completed all of the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) Module 1 Prerequisites for MSBA review. MSBA communication of February 12, 2025, invited the district to proceed to the Scope Definition section (Modules 2-5). MSBA assigned an OPM and designer to the project. The district is working to finalize both contracts and other required documentation by the MSBA deadline of March 12, 2025. Upon MSBA approval of such documents, the schematic design process can begin. The district must also work with the OPM and contractors to finalize a project budget estimate during that time. Once a final project bid is awarded, the district will enter into a project funding agreement with the MSBA, which will define the total project cost and the MSBA reimbursement percentage.

b. The district has been informed that they are the recipient of a \$44,000 local public safety earmark of legislative funding in 2025 which will used to purchase a hot water system.

## 12.7. Notification of Retirements:

a. The Committee is in receipt of a retirement letter dated January 24, 2025 from Stephen Grabowski, Assessment Coordinator, which was accepted with an effective date of June 30, 2025.

b. The Committee is in receipt of a retirement letter dated January 30, 2025 from Michael Carey, Plumbing Instructor, which was accepted with an effective date of June 30, 2025.

c. The Committee is in receipt of a retirement letter dated March 5, 2025 from Kathy Pichel, School Nurse, which was accepted with an effective date of June 17, 2025.

12.8. On a motion made by Mr. Finn, seconded by Mr. Broderick, it was unanimously voted to change the date of the next regularly scheduled April School Meeting from Thursday, April 17, 2025, to Thursday, April 10, 2025.

12.9. The School Committee is in receipt of the Parent Newsletter, the Link (Spring 2025) and the Alumni Newsletter, the Connect (Spring 2025).

Item 13. New Business

There was no new business to discuss.

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 April 10, 2025 at 6:00 p.m.

Item 16. Meeting Closure:

16.1. The meeting was declared closed by the Chair at 7:46 p.m.

16.2. On a motion by Mr. Broderick, seconded by Mr. Intinarelli, it was voted to adjourn at 7:46 p.m.

Listing of materials used in the meeting:

Item 2.1. Minutes of Meeting of January 16, 2025

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

Item 3.2. Treasurer's Report dated January 31, 2025

Item 6.0. BVT Use of School Form for the Upton Men's Club July 4th Festivities

Item 7.0. BVT Use of School Form for the Upton Men's Club Cornhole Tournament

Item 8.1. Suggested Motion: Certified E&D Transfer

Item 8.2.a. Vehicle Donation: 2004 Chevy Silverado

Item 9.3. 2025 Senior Calendar

Item 9.4.a. Out-of-State Field Trip: DECA National Competition Orlando, FL

Item 9.4.b. Overnight Field Trip: SkillsUSA State Competition Marlborough, MA

Item 9.4.c. Out-of-State Field Trip: Cosmetology Bodhi Spa, Providence, RI

Item 9.4.d. Out-of-State/Overnight Senior Class Field Trip: Hershey, PA

Item 9.4.e. Out-of-State Field Trip: AT/AC/PDT/EG NE Dragway, Epping, NH

Item 11.3. FY26 Budget Approval - School Council

Item 11.4. Suggested Motion: E&D Authorization

Item 11.5. Suggested Motion: Adopt FY26 Budget

Item 12.1. School Choice Memorandum

Item 12.2. FY25 Grants to Date

Item 12.7.a. Notification of Retirement: Stephen Grabowski, Assessment Coordinator

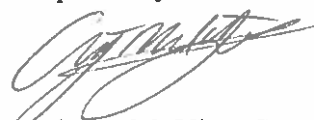
Item 12.7.b. Notification of Retirement: Michael Carey, Plumbing Instructor

Item 12.7.c. Notification of Retirement: Kathy Pichel, School Nurse

Item 12.8. Spring 2025: Parent Newsletter the Link; Alumni Newsletter the Connect

Item 14. Items for the Good of the Committee

Respectfully submitted by,



Anthony M. Yitts, Secretary