

Blackstone Valley Vocational Regional School District

Budget Subcommittee

Meeting Minutes
December 11, 2025

Members in Attendance

Gerald Finn of Millville
Tyler Bartlett of Upton
James Mitchell of Sutton
Joseph Hall of Bellingham

Anthony E. Steele II, Superintendent-Director
Matthew Connors, Assistant Superintendent
Nicole Ferguson, Business Manager
Jacquenet Raad, Assistant Business Manager
Jaime Patriarca, Assistant Business Manager

Members Absent

Joseph Broderick of Blackstone
Christopher Pilla, District Treasurer

Guests in Attendance

Michele Denise, Principal

Call to order

The meeting was called to order at 4:38 p.m. by Mr. Bartlett in the Superintendent's Conference Room.

Approval of minutes from prior meeting

Mr. Steele asked members to review minutes from the November 20, 2025 meeting.

Motion: On a motion moved by Mr. Hall seconded by Ms. Ferguson, it was unanimously voted to approve the Budget Subcommittee meeting minutes of November 20, 2025, as written.

Agenda items

Mr. Steele opened the meeting advising that Mr. Cray needed to withdraw from the Budget Subcommittee and would not be able to serve as chair. Mr. Steele made a recommendation to accept nominations for Chair. Mr. Hall nominated Mr. Mitchell for chair, seconded by Mr. Finn. Hearing no other nominations, the motion was voted and unanimously carried.

Mrs. Ferguson reviewed the Administration budget (1000 series). This budget series increased \$19,708 or 10.6% from the prior year budget. The most significant fluctuations to the Administration budget were explained as follows:

- \$10.1K School Com. Contract Services – Addition of scanning services to archive paper records
- \$ 6.4K School Com. Audit Expense – Rate increase based on negotiated contract
- \$ 1.6K Tech Contract Services – Annual increase for Infinite Visions financial management software
- \$ 1.3K Supt Conference/Professional Development – Increase to include Assistant Superintendent
- \$ 1.0K Supt Travel – Increase to include Assistant Superintendent
- \$ 0.9K School Com. Dues & Subscriptions – Based on trend
- (\$ 1.6K) Bus. Office Dues/Subscriptions – Reduction to one MASBO membership for the District

Next for review was the Fixed Charge/Benefits budget (5000 series) which increased \$466,486 or 7.45% over the prior year budget. The major components of this change consisted of:

- \$201.4K Retiree Medical – Increase driven by a combination of additional retirees, Medicare eligibility and other state GIC (Group Insurance Commission) plan adjustments
- \$159.0K Active Employee Medical – Rate increase based upon experience and trends
- \$ 69.3K Medicare and Unemployment Insurance – Directly related to FY27 proposed gross wage base
- \$ 25.8K Retirement Contributions – Estimated 'pay as you go' cost for Non-MTRS retiree benefits
- \$ 10.5K Property, Casualty, and Workers Comp Insurances – Increase FY26 actual amounts by 8% based on projections and experience ratings

The active-employee health plan increase was indicative of medical experience and trends provided by the District's health insurance broker. The change reflects a rate increase of 3.95% for both Harvard Pilgrim HMO and high-deductible plans. It was also noted that Group Insurance Commission (GIC) health costs for professional retirees in MTRS are challenging to predict due to GIC plan adjustments. At this juncture, the District assumed the same rate increase as the prior year at 13.2%.

The discussion shifted to the final area of review, the Salary and Wage budget, which was higher than the prior year by \$1,127,280 or 5.96%. Mr. Steele opened by noting staffing changes reflective of varying needs and elaborated on the increase. Mrs. Ferguson demonstrated to the Subcommittee that anticipated pay increases made up the majority of the increase; while to a lesser extent, level changes and the net impact of other staffing changes (i.e. new, eliminated, or replacement positions) made up the balance of the increase. Mr. Steele noted that the ongoing contract negotiations with the BVT Teachers' Association will have an impact on these figures. The FTE comparison document included in the meeting materials showed the net overall full-time equivalent (FTE) would remain the same as the prior year.

In closing, Mrs. Ferguson directed attention to the Budget Summary for items reviewed to date which showed a preliminary increase of 7.57% from FY2026. At this juncture, the percentage increase reflects initial department requests that will be further evaluated after all requests have been presented. Recommendations will be developed to balance the budget with anticipated revenues at a later date. The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday December 18, 2025 at 5:00 in the Superintendent's Conference Room.

Adjournment

Motion: to adjourn made by Mr. Hall at 6:32 p.m.; seconded by Mr. Finn; motion voted and unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted by,
Jaime Patriarca, Recording Secretary