

Blackstone Valley Vocational Regional School District

Budget Subcommittee Meeting Minutes January 8, 2026

Members in Attendance

Gerald Finn of Millville
James Mitchell of Sutton
Joseph Hall of Bellingham

Anthony E. Steele II, Superintendent-Director
Matthew Connors, Assistant Superintendent
Nicole Ferguson, Business Manager
Christopher Pilla, District Treasurer
Jacqueline Raad, Assistant Business Manager
Jaime Patriarca, Assistant Business Manager

Members Absent

Joseph Broderick of Blackstone
Tyler Bartlett of Upton

Guests in Attendance

Michele Denise, Principal
Michael Denise, Athletic Director
Robert Dolegiewicz, Facilities Manager
Dawn Naff, Administrative Secretary/Facilities

Call to order

The meeting was called to order at 4:34 p.m. by Mr. Mitchell in the Superintendent's Conference Room.

Approval of minutes from prior meeting

Mr. Mitchell asked members to review minutes from the December 18, 2025 meeting.

Motion: On a motion moved by Mr. Hall seconded by Mr. Finn; it was unanimously voted to approve the Budget Subcommittee meeting minutes of December 18, 2025, as written.

Agenda items

The meeting opened with Mr. Denise's presentation of the Athletic and Student Activity budget components of Other School Services (3000 series). This section of the budget increased by a total of \$54,848 or 10.73% from the prior year. Significant components of the change consisted of:

- \$23.1K *Athletic Officials*: increase in mandated rates for officials and game administration
- \$17.7K *Athletics Dues/Fees*: increase in various dues and registrations, and removal of prior year reductions
- \$10.5K *Athletics Supplies*: increase due to the removal of prior year budget constraints
- \$ 9.5K *Athletics Contract Services*: increase in transportation costs (number of trips, mileage, and rates)
- (\$ 3.0K) *Student Activity Audit Expense*: decrease for external audit, required every 3 years
- (\$ 3.0K) *Student Activity Graduation*: decrease in anticipated facility and equipment costs due to venue change

A lengthy discussion ensued, as the Subcommittee discussed Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA) and Central Massachusetts Athletic Conference (CMAC) mandated increases for officials, and increases in transportation expenses due to the number of trips made, distance travelled, and minimum trip fees. Mr. Finn asked the Subcommittee to develop potential strategies to offset ongoing expenditure increases year over year. The topics of raising athletic fees, fundraising, and gate fees were discussed as possible revenue offsets to rising operating costs. Mr. Steele offered that proposed solutions will come later in the budget building process, after all initial department requests have been brought forth, in an effort to look at the budget as a whole and make adjustments accordingly.

Mrs. Ferguson then presented the Health Center, Transportation and Security budget components of the Other School Services (3000 series), which had an overall decrease of \$6,884 or 0.24% compared to the prior year budget. Significant components of the change consisted of:

- \$ 88.6K *Transportation Contracted Day*: increase in contracted rates (Year 5 of 5)

- \$ 48.0K SPED Transportation: specialized transportation services required by an Individualized Education Program (IEP), offset with anticipated partial grant funding
- \$ 11.0K School Security (Tech Software & Hardware): new visitor management system
- \$ 10.8K Transportation Supplemental: increase in contracted rates (Year 5 of 5)
- \$ 1.2K Health Center Tech-Contract Services: increase for cloud hosting fee for SNAP program
- \$ 1.1K School Security Conferences: initial restraint training certification in addition to recertification
- \$ 0.8K School Security Travel: increase for restraint training initial certification accommodations
- (\$168.4K) Health Center Contract Services: decrease mainly due to school nurses transitioning to employees instead of being outsourced, offset by slight increase in costs to run the School Based Health Center through Milford Regional Medical Center

Next, Mr. Dolegiewicz and Mrs. Ferguson reviewed the Facility (4000 series) budget which had a \$111,288 or 9.06% increase from the prior year budget. Significant components of the change consisted of:

- \$73.6K Utilities: Gas, Electric, Telephone: estimated increase of 10% to gas and electric rates, with level funded usage, offset by a minor reduction in telephone costs based on contractual obligations
- \$10.0K Equipment Maintenance Vehicles: increase in fuel usage for athletic events and ongoing 7D van maintenance to adhere to IEP requirements
- \$ 9.0K Facilities Dues/Fees/Subscriptions: new annual subscription fee for paint robot, offset with savings in paint supply and labor
- \$ 7.4K Facilities Contract Services: additional storage needs, fire extinguisher inspections, and sawdust hopper maintenance offset by removal of portable A/C units and transfer porta potties to Grounds Contract Services
- \$ 6.0K Utilities -Water/Sewer/HazMat: estimated 3% increase to water and sewer in addition to estimated increase in hazardous materials (chemicals, tires, oil, etc) recycling and removal
- \$ 4.4K Grounds Maintenance Contract Services: new wetting agent for fertilizer program and transfer porta potties from Facilities Contracted Service
- \$ 0.9K Facilities Professional Development: increase in number of candidates for 7D training to meet IEP requirements and provide backup coverage

Mrs. Ferguson moved on to review the School Choice (9000 series). She informed the Subcommittee that DESE had not yet published the preliminary school choice winter rosters and related tuition, which is usually done in December. She indicated that presentation will occur at a future meeting when data is available.

In closing, Mrs. Ferguson directed attention to the Budget Summary for items reviewed to date which reflected a preliminary increase of 6.93% from FY2026. She reminded the Subcommittee that the remaining budget presentations consist of Instructional, Technology, and Capital. The next scheduled meeting is set for Thursday January 15, 2026 at 5:00 in the Superintendent's Conference Room.

Special Note: Consistent with the District's standard budget building process, the Budget Subcommittee will continue to receive and review all departmental budget requests. Once fully collected, the Subcommittee will explore and investigate all options (including grants and donations) to secure requests prior to including them in the FY2027 final proposed budget, with local municipal assessment consideration.

Adjournment

Motion: to adjourn made by Mr. Hall at 6:16 p.m.; seconded by Mr. Finn; motion voted and unanimously approved.

Respectfully submitted by,
Jaime Patriarca, Recording Secretary