

**Blackstone Valley Vocational Regional District School Committee  
Minutes of Regular Meeting  
January 15, 2026**

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  
Anthony M. Yitts of Grafton  
Edward D. Cray, III of Mendon  
Paul J. Braza of Milford  
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

Anthony E. Steele II, Superintendent-Director  
Dr. Matthew J. Connors, Assistant Superintendent  
Michele S. Denise, Principal  
Nicole M. Ferguson, Business Manager  
Christopher C. Pilla, Treasurer  
Miranda Dolegiewicz, Administrative Assistant  
Isla Koopman, Student Council Representative  
Elise Bogdan, Recording Secretary

**Members Absent:**

Joseph A. Broderick of Blackstone  
Mark J. Potter of Douglas  
Mitchell A. Intinarelli of Hopedale

**Item 1. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 6:01 p.m. by the Chair, Mr. Hall. A quorum was present.

**Item 2. Secretary's Report – A. Yitts**

2.1. On a motion by Mr. Yitts, seconded by Mr. Koopman, the Committee voted to waive the reading of the December 18, 2025, regular School Committee meeting minutes and approved the minutes as written. Mr. Yitts not in attendance at the December 18, 2025 meeting abstained.

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

3.1. The Treasurer's Report dated November 30, 2025, was presented. The report reflected an ending balance of \$3,114,033.27 in Total Funds, including \$1,027,300.59 in Project Funds and \$2,086,732.68 in Local Funds. On a motion by Mr. Braza, seconded by Mr. Cray, the Committee voted to approve the Treasurer's Report as presented.

**Item 4. School Committee Officers Elections/Appointments for 2026**

At the request of the Chair, Mr. Hall, the Superintendent-Director, Mr. Steele, led the School Committee through the election/appointment process. Terms of service began in January 2026 and would end at the regular meeting held in January 2027.

4.1. Chair: On a motion by Mr. Finn, seconded by Mr. Hanratty, the Committee voted to elect Mr. Joseph M. Hall as the Blackstone Valley Vocational Regional District School Committee Chair.

4.2. Vice Chair: On a motion by Mr. Yitts, seconded by Mr. Bartlett, the Committee voted to elect Mr. Gerald M. Finn as the Blackstone Valley Vocational Regional District School Committee Vice Chair.

4.3. Secretary: Applying his prerogative as the School Committee Chair, Mr. Hall appointed Mr. Anthony M. Yitts as the Blackstone Valley Vocational Regional District School Committee Secretary on a motion by Mr. Finn, seconded by Mr. Bartlett.

4.4. Assistant Treasurer: Applying his prerogative as the School Committee Chair, Mr. Hall appointed Mr. Paul J. Braza as the Blackstone Valley Vocational Regional District Assistant Treasurer on a motion by Mr. Finn, seconded by Mr. Koopman.

4.5. Payroll/AP Warrant Signer (one required): Applying his prerogative as the School Committee Chair, Mr. Hall appointed Mr. Edward D. Cray, III as the Payroll/AP Warrant Signer for the Blackstone Valley Vocational Regional District on a motion by Mr. Braza, seconded by Mr. Bartlett.

Alternate Payroll/AP Warrant Signers (two required):

4.6.a. Alternate Payroll/AP Warrant Signer #1: Applying his prerogative as the School Committee Chair, Mr. Hall appointed Mr. Tyler D. Bartlett as an Alternate Payroll/AP Warrant Signer #1 for the Blackstone Valley Vocational Regional District on a motion by Mr. Braza, seconded by Mr. Hanratty.

4.6.b. Alternate Payroll/AP Warrant Signer #2: Applying his prerogative as the School Committee Chair, Mr. Hall appointed Mr. James H. Ebbeling as an Alternate Payroll/AP Warrant Signer #2 for the Blackstone Valley Vocational Regional District on a motion by Mr. Braza, seconded by Mr. Bartlett.

**Item 5. Student Council Representatives - Maddison Dos Santos & Isla Koopman**

A Student Council report was presented by Isla Koopman outlining recent activities and upcoming events. The report included preparation for the Massachusetts Student Council Conference in March, the submission of several award nominations, and planning for future events, including participation in a Polar Plunge fundraiser to benefit the Special Olympics with a fundraising goal of approximately \$100 per participant.

The report also noted that the Student Council is conducting a bottle and can drive to raise funds for the LEAD Conference in Washington, D.C. As of the date of the meeting, more than 700 bottles and cans had been collected.

Mr. Steele asked general questions regarding the Student Council's nomination for Gold Council status at the state conference and potential faculty participation in the Polar Plunge fundraiser. Mr. Steele congratulated the Student Council's past streak of gold medals and wished them success this year.

**Item 6. Business Manager – N. Ferguson**

6.1. Donation Approvals:

a. On a motion by Mr. Koopman, seconded by Mr. Hanratty, the Committee voted to approve the donation of louver sets, u-weld kit, and miscellaneous hose/fittings from J. Fournier, to be used for instructional and training purposes in the Auto Collision program.

b. On a motion by Mr. Finn, seconded by Mr. Bartlett, the Committee voted by the Committee to approve the donation of a 2011 GMC Sierra 2500 from S. Antinarelli, to be used for instructional and training purposes in the Auto Technology program.

c. On a motion by Mr. Finn, seconded by Mr. Bartlett, the Committee voted to approve the donation of a 2016 Ford Fiesta from P. Alberto, to be used for instructional and training purposes in the Auto Technology program.

d. On a motion by Mr. Hanratty, seconded by Mr. Bartlett, the Committee voted to approve the donation of a 2011 Hyundai Sonata from K. LaFleur, to be used for instructional and training purposes in the Auto Technology program.

e. On a motion by Mr. Koopman, seconded by Mr. Ebbeling, the Committee voted to approve the donation of a 400KW CAT Generator, from J. Pereira, to be used for instructional and training purposes in the Auto Technology program. Prior to the vote, the Committee discussed the background of the donation. Mr. Steele highlighted the ongoing generous and collaborative relationship with Milton CAT.

#### 6.2. Line-Item Transfer:

a. Nicole Ferguson moved to transfer FY26 budgeted funds as follows: \$88,500 from Coordinator Professional Salaries (1000.13.2110.100.4) and \$1,250 from Coordinator Conferences/Professional Development (1000.13.2110.680.4) to Assistant Superintendent Professional Salaries (1000.12.1220.100.8) in the amount of \$85,000, Superintendent Professional Salaries (1000.12.1210.100.8) in the amount of \$3,500, and Superintendent Conferences/Professional Development (1000.12.1210.680.8) in the amount of \$1,250, to align budget accounts with administrative realignment and state reporting requirements. On a motion by Mr. Finn, seconded by Mr. Hanratty, the Committee voted to approve the line-item transfer as presented.

#### Item 7. Assistant Superintendent-Director's Report – Dr. M. Connors

7.1. A report was presented regarding the recent launch of the BVTI adult education program. The first day of BVTI instruction was Monday, January 12, 2026. As of the date of the meeting, 108 participants were registered. Six courses launched initially, including four grant-funded courses and two career enrichment courses. A total of 28 courses are available for registration. Enrollment thresholds were met for the plumbing course, allowing the program to proceed and qualify for grant funding. Some personal enrichment and plumbing courses are scheduled to begin later in February and March. All courses are expected to conclude by the end of the school year in June. Of the 108 registrations, 75 participants are enrolled in grant-funded courses, and 33 participants are self-paying. Continued outreach efforts are underway, including a radio advertising campaign and a targeted digital marketing campaign targeting the 18–24 age

demographic. Course offerings and schedules are available on the school website. Committee members were invited to ask questions or provide comments. An end-of-course follow-up survey was requested, and the Committee was informed that it is part of the process and results will be shared at future meetings.

7.2. An exploratory status report for the Class of 2029 was shared with the Committee. 92.79% of students received a top-three shop choice (283 students). 7.21% of students received a shop choice lower than the top three (22 students). An interesting data point: 162 students (53.1% of the freshman class) changed their top choice at some point between the initial shop selection and the November Career Night. The handout also included charts of the first-choice shop selections for the Class of 2029 and trends by Class from the Class of 2026 to the Class of 2029.

At this point in the meeting, Mr. Steele requested an update from Mrs. Denise regarding freshman applicants for the upcoming admissions lottery. Mrs. Denise reported that, just prior to the start of the meeting, 694 lottery applications had been received. She also noted that evidence and documentation are required as part of the application process in advance of the lottery, which may have contributed to an increase in applications received prior to that evening's application deadline.

#### Item 8. Vocational Program Presentation

8.1. Mr. Steele invited the Committee to attend a vocational program presentation in the Advanced Manufacturing & Fabrication shop. Instructors James Woodward, Roland Barrett, and Jonathan Fiore provided an overview of the program, which offers students a foundation in machining, metal fabrication, and welding. Through presentations, live customer projects, and advanced laboratory simulations, students learn to program and operate manual and computerized numerical control equipment. The tour also examined the fabrication and metal joining projects, skills taught, and equipment on the opposite side of the shop.

Committee members toured the shop, observed student projects, and had the opportunity to ask questions. At the conclusion of the presentation the Committee returned to the school cafeteria for the remainder of the meeting. A quorum was present at 7:02 p.m.

#### Item 9. Principal's Report – M. Denise

##### 9.1. Out-of-State/Overnight Field Trip(s):

a. On a motion by Mr. Braza, seconded by Mr. Ebbeling, the Committee voted to approve the out-of-state Ski & Snowboard Club field trip request to Loon Mountain in Lincoln, NH on March 8, 2026 as presented.

b. On a motion by Mr. Finn, seconded by Mr. Hanratty, the Committee voted to approve the overnight Culinary Arts field trip request to attend the ProStart Competition in Foxborough, MA from February 9, 2026 to February 10, 2026.

9.2. Senior Calendar/Graduation: Mrs. Denise shared an important update regarding BVT's Class of 2026 graduation ceremony.

**Background:** Graduation dates are secured at least one year in advance through signed contracts. The Class of 2026 graduation was originally scheduled for **Thursday, May 28, 2026**, at the DCU Center.

**Update:** In late December, the administration received confirmation of a statewide convention that will require exclusive use of the DCU Center on the originally scheduled date. As a result, the graduation date has been moved to Tuesday, May 26, 2026. The location remains unchanged. Parents and students have been informed. The DCU Center provided the District with a reimbursement for the inconvenience of the date change.

**Next Steps:** A full senior calendar of events, reflecting this date change, will be released in the coming weeks. The Class of 2026 will graduate on **Tuesday, May 26, 2026**.

**Action:** No action is required; this item was presented for informational purposes.

Item 10. Budget Subcommittee Report – J. Mitchell

10.1. First Round Line-Item Series: 3000, 4000: Mr. Mitchell, Budget Subcommittee Chair, informed the Committee that the Budget Subcommittee met on January 8th, and 15th and has reviewed the 3000 and 4000 series.

Item 11. Superintendent-Director's Report – A. Steele

11.1. An FY26 Grants to Date document was shared with the Committee. The FY26 total to date listed, as of January 5, 2026, was \$2,019,937, with an additional \$151,316 in progress.

11.2. An updated School Committee Member Directory was shared with the Committee.

11.3. MSBA Roof Project: Member Mr. Braza moved that the School Committee of the Blackstone Valley Vocational Regional School District, having convened in open meeting on January 15, 2026, and in accordance with its charter, bylaws, and applicable ordinances, authorize the Superintendent-Director, Anthony E. Steele II, to execute and approve on behalf of the District all documentation required for participation in the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) Accelerated Repair Program, including but not limited to Project Funding Agreements, as referenced in the MSBA cover letter dated December 29, 2025, and any related construction or project documentation. Member Mr. Finn seconded the motion. The motion carried by a unanimous vote.

a. The Project Funding Agreement for the Accelerated Repair Program was shared with the Committee.

11.4. Updates:

a. The Committee was informed that the District is in the process of submitting an FY26 earmark request to Senator Moore to provide assistance with additional storage/projects to meet the growing storage needs of the school.

11.5. The Committee was informed that requested informational updates to the website were completed, including: the addition of School Committee members' e-mail addresses, the posting of the Regional Agreement (a public document), and the publication of the teachers' contract, which is now accessible online.

Item 12. New Business

12.1. On a motion by Mr. Finn, seconded by Mr. Braza, the Committee voted to approve the overnight Student Council field trip request to attend the MASC Conference in Hyannis, MA from March 4, 2026 to March 6, 2026.

12.2. On a motion by Mr. Finn, seconded by Mr. Hanratty, the Committee voted to approve the overnight DECA field trip request to attend the DECA State Competitions in Boston, MA from March 12, 2026 to March 14, 2026.

**Examination of Executive Session Minutes:** Mr. Yitts inquired whether prior Executive Session meeting minutes had been examined and whether they would be presented for review. Mr. Steele informed the Committee that his office has been examining minutes for possible release.

**BVT's 10-Year Plan:** Mr. Finn asked about BVT's plan. Mr. Steele reported that the District maintains a functional 10-year plan and suggested the next steps be referred to the Capital Planning Subcommittee for review prior to full committee consideration to finalize a new 10-year plan.

**State Ethics and Municipal Training:** Mr. Finn reminded the Committee of the State Ethics Training requirements and noted that members should ensure they are up to date with municipal training.

Item 13. Items for the Good of the Committee:

The monthly compilation of news clippings and correspondence packet was provided at the meeting for members' individual review.

Item 14. Next Regularly Scheduled School Committee Meeting - J. Hall

The next regularly scheduled School Committee meeting will be held on March 12, 2026, at 6:00 p.m.

Item 15. Meeting Closure:

15.1. The Chair, Mr. Hall, declared the meeting closed at 7:27 p.m.

15.2. On a motion by Mr. Braza, seconded by Mr. Koopman, the Committee voted to adjourn the meeting at 7:27 p.m.

Listing of Materials Used in the Meeting:

Item 2.1. Regular Meeting Minutes of December 18, 2025

Item 3.1. Treasurer's Report dated November 30, 2025

Item 4.1. Suggested Motion: District School Committee Chair

Item 4.2. Suggested Motion: District School Committee Vice Chair

Item 4.3. Appointment: District School Committee Secretary

Item 4.4. Appointment: District School Committee Assistant Treasurer

Item 4.5. Appointment: District School Committee Payroll/AP Warrant Signer

Item 4.6.a. Appointment: District School Committee Alternate Payroll/AP Warrant Signer 1


Item 4.6.b. Appointment: District School Committee Alternate Payroll/AP Warrant Signer 2

Item 6.1.a. Donation: Louver Sets, U-Weld Kit, Misc. Hose/Fittings

Item 6.1.b. Donation: 2011 GMC Sierra 2500 for Auto Technology

- Item 6.1.c. Donation: 2016 Ford Fiesta for Auto Technology
- Item 6.1.d. Donation: 2011 Hyundai Sonata for Auto Technology
- Item 6.1.e. Donation: CAT Generator, Auto Technology
- Item 6.2.a. Suggested Motion: Departmental Realignment–Salary and PD Funds Transfer
- Item 7.2. Exploratory Status Report – Class of 2029
- Item 9.1.a. Out-of-State Field Trip: Ski Club Loon Mt, Lincoln, NH
- Item 9.1.b. Overnight Field Trip: Culinary Arts – ProStart Comp; Foxborough, MA
- Item 11.1. Grant Listings FY26
- Item 11.2. School Committee Member Directory
- Item 11.3. Suggested Motion: MSBA Roof Project
- Item 11.3.a. Project Funding Agreement Accelerated Repair Program
- Item 12.1. Overnight Field Trip: Student Council MASC Conference, Hyannis, MA
- Item 12.2. Overnight Field Trip: DECA State Competitions, Boston, MA
- Item 13. Items for the Good of the Committee

Respectfully submitted,



Anthony M. Yitts  
Secretary

