Blackstone Valley Vocational Regional District School Committee
Minutes of Regular Meeting
June 11, 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
Gerald M. Finn of Millville – Zoom
Joseph A. Broderick of Blackstone
Mark J. Potter of Douglas
Anthony M. Yitts of Grafton
Edward D. Cray, III of Mendon, 6:01 p.m.
Paul J. Braza of Milford
Jan P. Hanratty of Millbury
Jeff T. Koopman of Northbridge
James M. Mitchell of Sutton
Tyler D. Bartlett of Upton – Zoom

Members Absent:
Mitchell A. Intinarelli of Hopedale
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
Robert Dolegiewicz, Facilities Manager
Kerri Baltramaitis, Vocational Director/Co-Op Coordinator
Bryant Laflamme, Vocational Director/Co-Op Coordinator
Isla Koopman, Student Council Representative
Madison Denise, Student Council Representative
Anthony Faath, Hopedale Resident
Elise Bogdan, Recording Secretary

Item 1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by the Chair, Mr. Hall. Mr. Steele reported that Mr. Intinarelli, Mr. Ebbeling, and Mr. Pilla would be absent from the meeting. Mr. Finn and Mr. Bartlett participated remotely via Zoom. Mr. Cray arrived at 6:01 p.m.

Also present was Anthony Faath of Hopedale. Mr. Steele informed the Committee that Mr. Faath is interested in running for the BVT Hopedale School Committee seat and has pulled nomination papers.

Item 2. Secretary's Report – A. Yitts

2.1. Mr. Yitts moved to waive the reading of the May 21, 2026, regular School Committee meeting minutes and approve them as written. The motion was seconded by Mr. Hanratty and passed unanimously.

Item 3. Treasurer's Report – C. Pilla

3.1. The Treasurer's Report dated April 30, 2026, was presented by Business Manager Nicole Ferguson on behalf of Treasurer Christopher Pilla, reflecting an ending balance of $2,474,903.63 in Total Funds, including 1,247,602.52 in Project Funds and 1,227,301.11 in Local Funds. On a motion by Mr. Hanratty, seconded by Mr. Braza, the Committee voted unanimously to approve the report as presented.

3.2. The School Committee was presented with the right-to-borrow paperwork. On a motion by Mr. Koopman, seconded by Mr. Braza, the Committee voted to allow the District Treasurer to be authorized under the provisions of General Laws, Chapter 71, Section 16(G) as amended by Chapter 134 of the Acts of 1972, and with approval of the Chair of the Blackstone Valley Vocational Regional District School Committee, to borrow money from time to time in

anticipation of revenue for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2026, and to issue a note as may be given for a period of less than one year in accordance with General Laws Chapter 44, Section 17. The motion passed unanimously.

Item 4. Student Council Representatives - Isla Koopman & Madison Denise

The Student Council (STUCO) Representatives provided an update on recent and upcoming activities. Topics discussed included class elections held on May 29, with six STUCO members volunteering to count ballots; volunteering at Community Harvest in Grafton; planning for student retreats and welcome events; and ordering spirit shirts for incoming freshmen. The student representatives wished the Committee a good summer. Mr. Steele and members of the Committee thanked the students for their service and work throughout the year.

Item 5. Vocational Director's Update – B. Laflamme & K. Baltramaitis

5.1. End-of-Year Vocational Report (Spring 2026):

Vocational Directors Kerri Baltramaitis and Bryant Laflamme presented the end-of-year vocational report. A Cooperative Education Report for Spring 2026 was distributed, which included the following Class of 2026 Cooperative Education placement data: 191 participating students, 150 participating employers, 98,563 total hours worked, $1,736,618 earned, and representation from 17 vocational shops.

The presentation also included photographs and descriptions of students participating in vocational projects and community outreach efforts, including work completed for the Millville Police and Highway Departments, the Upton Police Department and VFW, the Sutton Highway Department, the Blackstone Valley Heritage Corridor, and various in-house projects at BVT.

5.2. Career Signing Day (5/15/26):

The 6th annual Career Signing Day was held on May 15, 2026. The ceremony recognized the senior Co-Op and career placement students, who proudly announced their career or military plans and signed commitment letters to work with their employers after graduation. The Class of 2026 produced record-setting Co-Op numbers with 180 students participating in the program. Since March of 2025, students have worked more than 75,0000 hours and earned a combined total of more than $1.3 million in wages. The Co-Op experience is made possible through partnerships with a growing number of local businesses that support students each year, demonstrating the program's positive impact on the local workforce and community. Career Signing Day reflects a growing upward trend of students pursuing employment over post-secondary education.

The Committee discussed the importance of promoting community partnerships and municipal projects through social media and local outreach efforts, especially during budget season. Mr. Steele noted continued efforts to highlight district contributions to member towns and also praised the growth of Co-Op participation.

Item 6. Business Manager – N. Ferguson

6.1. Donation Approval(s):

a. On a motion by Mr. Braza, seconded by Mr. Broderick, the Committee voted to approve the donation of a Bose Bluetooth Speaker from Peter Moynihan, to be used for fundraising efforts at the 27th Annual Golf Tournament. The motion passed unanimously.

b. On a motion by Mr. Broderick, seconded by Mr. Finn, the Committee voted to approve the donation of a 2003 Toyota Camry from Theresa Duffy, to be used for instructional and training purposes in the Automotive Technology program. The motion passed unanimously.

6.2. FY26 Donation Total:

Mrs. Ferguson reported that FY26 year-to-date donations totaled approximately $388,618, including both cash and in-kind contributions.

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

7.1. Facilities Department 2026 Summer Projects & Maintenance:

Facilities Manager Robert Dolegiewicz presented the Facilities Department 2026 Summer Projects and Preventive Maintenance Plan, including proposed capital projects such as renovations to the boys' locker room, continued site work behind the MRS building, baseball field irrigation, an Automotive Technology air system upgrade, phone and fire alarm system upgrades, the HVAC building project, Science Room 305 renovation, Culinary Arts renovation, and a 60,000 sq. ft. roof replacement project.

The Committee asked whether students would be assisting the Facilities Department over the summer. Mr. Dolegiewicz reported that 12 students would be employed through summer work projects. Mr. Steele and members of the Committee thanked Mr. Dolegiewicz for his report and praised the Facilities staff for the extensive summer project schedule.

7.2. Graduation Report (5/26/26):

Dr. Connors reported that the Class of 2026 Commencement Ceremony was held at the DCU Center, Worcester, MA, on May 26, 2026. The evening ceremony celebrated the accomplishments of the graduates. A copy of the graduation program was shared with the Committee. Dr. Connors also noted that the DCU Center continues to effectively accommodate the district's large graduating classes.

7.3. End-of-Year Procedures:

Dr. Connors informed the Committee that end-of-year procedures for seniors had been completed. The last day of school was scheduled for June 15, 2026, after which summer projects, building cleaning, and preparations for the return to school would begin.

Item 8. Principal's Report – M. Denise

8.1. Mrs. Denise reported that Senior Class Day and Memorial Scholarship Night were held on May 21, 2026.

a. A 2026 Scholarship Report was shared with the Committee. The report showed a grand total of 2026 dollars awarded at $3,723,107 with a total renewable value of $11,839,871. Principal Denise praised Scholarship Coordinator Jodie Tandy for extensive coordination efforts.

8.2. Mrs. Denise reported that the Spring Sports Awards Night honoring student-athletes was held at the school on May 27, 2026, and shared highlights from the season. Highlights included participation by 265 students in spring athletics; track athletes advancing to Districts, All States, New England, and National championships; the softball team winning the State Vocational Championship; and the baseball, volleyball, and lacrosse teams qualifying for postseason play. Mrs. Denise also noted student-athlete participation in community fundraising initiatives, including support for the Fight Like a Kid and Morgan's Message, which focus on

raising awareness, student support, and mental health advocacy within the athletic community.

8.3. Annual Wellness Assessment Report:

Mrs. Denise presented the Annual Wellness Report for the 2025–2026 school year and commended cafeteria staff for their work throughout the year. The presentation included staff updates, new menu items, kitchen improvements, professional development, and safety training. Annual Body Mass Index (BMI) comparison data were also shared with the Committee. The Committee discussed the interpretation of wellness participation data and related trends.

Item 9. Signatory Authorizations - J. Hall

9.1. On a motion by Mr. Braza, seconded by Mr. Finn, the Committee voted to empower the Superintendent-Director, Anthony E. Steele, II, as an authorized signatory for the Regional School District commencing July 1, 2026, through June 30, 2027, as it pertains to Blackstone Valley Vocational Regional School District purchase orders, contracts, grants, and other legally binding documents between the District and any/all outside agencies. The motion passed unanimously.

9.2. On a motion by Mr. Braza, seconded by Mr. Bartlett, the Committee voted to empower the Business Manager, Nicole M. Ferguson, as an authorized signatory for the Blackstone Valley Vocational Regional School District commencing July 1, 2026, through June 30, 2027, as it pertains to Blackstone Valley Vocational Regional School District purchase orders, contracts, grants, and other legally binding documents between the District and any/all outside agencies. The motion passed unanimously.

10. Budget Report – J. Mitchell

10.1. FY27 Budget Update:

Mr. Mitchell provided an update on the FY27 Budget. He reported that all of the district's thirteen member towns voted to approve the FY27 Budget, resulting in unanimous approval of BVT's FY27 operating budget.

10.2. Annual Town Meeting Status Report(s):

a. Mr. Steele attended the annual town meeting in Bellingham on May 27, 2026, during which BVT's FY27 Budget was approved.

b. Mrs. Ferguson attended the annual town meeting in Blackstone on May 26, 2026, during which BVT's FY27 Budget was approved.

Superintendent Steele reported that the FY27 budget was approved by all thirteen member towns. He further noted that several district towns passed operational overrides for local budgets and that no opposition to the BVT budget was raised during town meetings. He additionally noted that Millbury credited BVT's conservative assessment in relation to its ability to balance their local budget.

Members of the Committee acknowledged the Administration, the Budget Subcommittee, and Mr. Mitchell for their work during the budget development process.

Item 11. Admissions Update – A. Steele

11.1. Mr. Steele provided an admissions update. He reported that the state-mandated

lottery admissions process had resulted in unintended consequences involving the separation of twins and siblings, creating geographical hardships in certain cases. He noted that this issue has been identified statewide, and that the state has invited districts to submit appeals to address these circumstances.

Mr. Steele stated that he would be asking the Committee for its consideration to submit an appeal on behalf of four twin students who were not admitted under the prior lottery policy, but their twin siblings were admitted, thus splitting four sets of twins. He explained that the appeal, if approved by the state, would request limited twin sibling consideration using available seats and would not impact existing waitlists or previously established admissions outcomes. He further noted that the request would apply only to the FY26 admissions cycle. The Committee discussed the legal and logistical implications of the proposed appeal.

11.2. Appeal Consideration:

On a motion by Mr. Braza, seconded by Mr. Hanratty, the Committee voted to authorize the Superintendent-Director, Anthony E. Steele, II, to submit an appeal to DESE requesting a waiver of 603 CMR 4.03(6)(D), which limits admission policies to three enumerated criteria, in order to permit the application of a sibling preference whereby the sibling of an accepted twin may be placed at the top of the admissions waitlist. The motion passed unanimously.

Item 12. Superintendent-Director's Report – A. Steele

12.1. Mr. Steele presented the Committee with a handout titled Superintendent's FY26 Year in Review. The summary outlined major accomplishments and initiatives during the year, including the implementation of lottery admissions and apportionment, unanimous approval of the FY27 budget by all member towns, settlement of the BVTA FY2027–2029 contract, negotiated health insurance premiums for active employees, successful launch and expansion of adult education through BVTi, management of the MSBA Accelerated Roof Repair and Ventilation project, and the Excess & Deficiency resolution process.

12.2. The BVT Annual Golf Tournament was held on June 8 and June 9, 2026, at Highfields Golf and Country Club in Grafton. Mr. Steele reported that the two-day event was successful and supports educational opportunities and athletic activities for BVT students.

12.3. An FY26 Grant Update as of May 26, 2026, was shared with the Committee. The update showed a total FY26 year-to-date amount of $2,027,075 with a total of $1,000 dollars approved for future years.

12.4. The Class of 2020 Five-Year Alumni Study was shared with the Committee for review. The report provided updated data on post-graduation outcomes and career pathways for graduates five years after completion. Committee discussion included: A continued increase in graduates entering the workforce directly after high school, strong and ongoing alignment between vocational training programs and employment outcomes, and the value of maintaining and expanding longitudinal tracking data to better understand long-term student success and program effectiveness.

12.5. A copy of the Superintendent-Director's FY26 Goals was shared with the Committee. On a motion by Mr. Koopman, seconded by Mr. Cray, the Committee voted to accept the Superintendent-Director's successful completion of his FY26 performance goals and

approve a 3% base salary increase, effective July 1, 2026, in accordance with his negotiated contract. The motion passed unanimously.

12.6. Notification of Resignation(s) & Retirement(s):

a. A Notification of Resignation letter dated May 18, 2026, from Erika Teague, Administrative Assistant, with an effective date of June 30, 2026, was accepted.

b. A Notification of Retirement letter dated June 1, 2026, form Marcia MacWilliams, Human Resources Director, with an effective date of June 30, 2026, was accepted. Mr. Steele noted profound appreciation for her 23 years of service to the District.

Item 13. New Business

Potential Donation (Plywood Plus):

Mr. Steele and Mr. Dolegiewicz discussed a potential large-scale donation from local business Plywood Plus, which is closing operations. The potential donation may include lumber, paint, hardware, and shop materials. On a motion by Mr. Braza, seconded by Mr. Broderick, the Committee voted to authorize Mr. Steele and Mr. Dolegiewicz to review and evaluate the potential donation and to report back to the Committee with a recommendation regarding acceptance at a future meeting.

Memorandum of Agreement (MOA):

Mr. Steele reported on a follow-up item from collective bargaining regarding the implementation of revised language related to steps and levels on the salary grid. As part of the negotiated changes, thirteen (13) employees were identified for review and placement on the salary grid in accordance with updated contract language around licensure requirements.

Mr. Steele stated that the review and analysis of the affected employees have been completed. He further reported that a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA), reviewed by attorney Marc Terry, has been executed by the Association and requires School Committee signatures. The MOA documents the parties' agreement regarding the review and placement of the thirteen employees on the salary grid, at the Superintendent-Director's discretion, in accordance with the negotiated terms.

In response to a question regarding executive session, it was clarified that no additional executive session discussion was required, as the matter had been addressed through prior negotiations.

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' individual review.

Item 15. Next Regularly Scheduled School Committee Meeting - J. Hall

The next regularly scheduled School Committee meeting will be held on August 20, 2026, at 6:00 p.m.

Item 16. Meeting Closure:

16.1. The Chair, Mr. Hall, declared the meeting closed at 7:33 p.m.

16.2. On a motion by Mr. Broderick, seconded by Mr. Braza, the Committee voted to adjourn the meeting at 7:33 p.m.

Listing of Materials Used in the Meeting:
Item 2.1. Regular Meeting Minutes of May 21, 2026
Item 3.1. Treasurer's Report dated April 30, 2026
Item 3.2 Suggested Motion – BVVRSD Treasurer's Right-to-Borrow
Item 5.1. Vocational Report Spring 2026
Item 6.1.a. Donation: Bose Bluetooth Speaker, P. Moynihan
Item 6.1.b. Donation: 2003 Toyota Camry, T. Duffy
Item 7.1. Facilities Department 2026 Summer Projects & Maintenance
Item 7.2. Class of 2026 BVT Graduation Program (shared at meeting)
Item 8.1.a. Class of 2026 BVT Scholarship & Awards Report $11,839,871
Item 8.3. Annual Wellness Assessment Report
Item 9.1. Suggested Motion – BVVRSD Signatory Authorization Anthony E. Steele, II
Item 9.2. Suggested Motion – BVVRSD Signatory Authorization Nicole M. Ferguson
Item 10.1. FY27 Budget Score Card
Item 11.1. Request for Waiver Letter – Twin Preference in Admission
Item 11.2. Suggested Motion – BVVRSD Admissions Appeal
Item 12.1. Superintendent's FY26 Year in Review
Item 12.3. FY26 Grant Listings
Item 12.4. Class of 2020 Five-Year Alumni Study
Item 12.5. Suggested Motion – BVVRSD Superintendent-Director Performance Review/Goals
Item 12.6.a. Resignation: Erika Teague, Administrative Assistant
Item 12.6.b. Retirement: Marcia MacWilliams, HR Director
Item 14. Items for the Good of the Committee

Respectfully submitted,

Anthony M. Yitts
Secretary

Signed original on file in Central Office