

**Blackstone Valley Vocational Regional District School Committee  
Minutes of Regular Meeting  
September 15, 2022**

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:

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|---|---|
| Joseph M. Hall of Bellingham, Chair     | Dr. Michael F. Fitzpatrick, Superintendent-Director |
| Mark J. Potter of Douglas               | Christopher C. Pilla, Treasurer                     |
| Anthony M. Yitts of Grafton             | Leonard O'Neil, Social Studies Teacher              |
| Paul J. Braza of Milford                | Ellie Poitras, Student Representative               |
| Chester P. Hanratty, Jr. of Millbury    | Tyler Bartlett, Candidate for School Committee      |
| Gerald M. Finn of Millville, Vice Chair | James Mitchell, Candidate for School Committee      |
| Julie H. Mitchell of Sutton             | Diana Pedersen, Interim Recording Secretary         |
| James H. Ebbeling of Uxbridge           |   |

Members Absent:

Joseph A. Broderick of Blackstone  
Mitchell A. Intinarelli of Hopedale  
Edward D. Cray, III of Mendon  
Jeff T. Koopman of Northbridge  
David R. Bartlett of Upton

Item 1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Chairman Hall. Dr. Fitzpatrick said he was notified in advance that Messrs. Bartlett, Broderick, Cray, and Koopman would be unable to attend. He also noted that the principal and business manager were also unavailable, and that Mrs. Pedersen was filling in for the recording secretary, who is on vacation this week.

Item 2. Public Comment

2.1. Two announced School Committee candidates, James Michael Mitchell of Sutton and Tyler Bartlett of Upton, were introduced to the School Committee members. Mr. Mitchell advised that he is a 2014 graduate of the Electrical program and has served on the Electrical Advisory Committee since 2015. He indicated that he would be a write-in candidate on the November ballot. Mr. Bartlett said that he was a 2014 graduate of the Carpentry program with a degree in business from Nichols College and that he now operates a landscape design company. He noted a long family history with the school and is looking forward to the opportunity to serve on the Committee. Dr. Fitzpatrick thanked both of the candidates for their willingness to serve.

Item 3. Secretary's Report – A. Yitts

3.1. On a motion by Mr. Yitts seconded by Mr. Hanratty, it was unanimously voted to waive reading of the minutes of the regular School Committee meeting of August 18, 2022 and to accept the minutes as written.

Item 4. Treasurer's Reports – C. Pilla

4.1. The Treasurer's Report, dated July 31, 2022, was approved during the August 18, 2022, School Committee Meeting. However, the Treasurer had noticed a discrepancy with the beginning balances of the Treasurer's Report dated July 31, 2022 as he presented it during that

meeting and said that he would submit a revised report at the September 15, 2022 School Committee meeting. Therefore, a July 31, 2022 revised report was presented with the beginning balances corrected. On a motion by Mr. Hanratty, seconded by Mrs. Mitchell, it was unanimously voted to approve the revised July 31, 2022 Treasurer's Report as presented.

4.2. The Treasurer's Report was presented dated August 31, 2022. The report reflected an ending balance of \$8,891,167.86 for Total Funds, including \$1,176,459.81 in Project Funds, and \$7,714,708.05 in Local Funds. On a motion by Mr. Hanratty, seconded by Mr. Braza, it was unanimously voted to approve the August 31, 2022 Treasurer's Report as presented.

4.3. The PARS Annual Client Review report was shared. Treasurer Pilla called attention to several items within the report and explained the various investment options available. He reported that the District's account is currently invested in the balanced option and he recommends staying there. Discussion regarding the actuarial projections and the impact of changes to the discount rate followed. Dr. Fitzpatrick asked for the Treasurer's recommendation on investing additional operational funds and the advice was to maintain the amount currently budgeted but not to increase that at this time. Mr. Finn said he was skeptical about adding more funds now due to market volatility. The possibility of a future state bailout was also raised by Mr. Hanratty.

#### Item 5. Comments by Student Representative - Ellie Poitras

Student Council Representative Ellie Poitras provided an update on Council activities. She indicated that her colleague, Bradley Lyon, was unable to attend due to another commitment. She reported that the first two council meetings of this school year went well. They are planning for Homecoming Week, which begins October 17. Their main goal is to return the school to its pre-Covid spirit and there is much enthusiasm for that. The superintendent extended thanks to the Student Council members who serve as good examples and role models for new students.

#### Item 6. Business Manager - L. Mangano

6.1. Dr. Fitzpatrick reported in Ms. Mangano's absence that the anticipated approval of a donation to the Automotive Collision Repair program has been postponed to a future meeting as the details were not yet available..

#### Item 7. Assistant Superintendent-Director's Report - A. Steele

7.1. Out-of-State trip approvals were presented by the superintendent in the absence of Mr. Steele.

a. On a motion by Mr. Hanratty, seconded by Mrs. Mitchell, it was unanimously voted to pre-approve European travel to London, Paris, and Barcelona for a proposed trip during April vacation 2024. Dr. Fitzpatrick noted that this pre-approval was necessary to enable fundraising to begin, and that final approval of the trip would be requested closer to the date of travel.

b. On a motion by Mrs. Mitchell, seconded by Mr. Hanratty, it was unanimously voted to approve the Model UN's request for an out of state field trip to Yale University in New Haven, CT from January 19 – 22, 2023.

Item 8. Superintendent-Director's Report - Michael F. Fitzpatrick

8.1. On behalf of Ms. Mangano, Dr. Fitzpatrick shared an FY22 district financial audit update. The audit began on August 8, 2022, by Hague, Sahady & Co. audit firm (BVT auditors since FY16). Audit testing and information requests were provided at the end of July and throughout August. The auditors were on site on August 8th and 9th, doing fieldwork and reviewing selected information. The balance of the audit is being conducted remotely, and their targeted completion is the end of October. However, they were on campus for a scheduled follow-up meeting on August 31, 2022. Dr. Fitzpatrick noted that the auditors were complimentary and he is unaware of any audit findings at this point in the audit. As a result, preliminary financials have been submitted to the state for certification of E & D funds. Mr. Yitts asked if there were any plans for making changes to the accounting software. He was advised that the software for student record keeping is in transition from iPass to PowerSchool, but there are no changes to the financial software at this time.

8.2. Dr. Fitzpatrick had spoken about the Delineation of Subcommittees for Fiscal Year 2023 at the School Committee meeting on August 18, 2022. He had indicated with the pending November 2022 election that there would be vacancies to fill and, at the request of the Committee, provided an updated/revised document to alert members to the specific vacancies. Mr. Potter indicated he would be interested in serving on the Capital/Expansion Planning and/or Facilities Subcommittee. Mr. Finn agreed to fill an existing vacancy on the Capital/Expansion Planning Subcommittee.

8.3. A 5-year graduate survey of the Class of 2016 alumni was conducted and shared with the Committee. Out of 281 graduates, 176 responded and shared more information about which shop they were in at BVT, where they furthered their education and degrees earned, current employment, title, employer, and salary. The questionnaire also asked how the skills learned at BVT, both technical and interpersonal, helped in the field of study at college, work, or in the military. Dr. Fitzpatrick reported that this was done via a grant-funded stipend position. Mr. Finn noted that 56% of the respondents said their current job is related to the field they studied at BVT. He indicated it would be helpful to have comparative data from other voc-tech systems.

8.4. An FY23 Grants To Date (as of September 2, 2022) document was shared with the Committee. The FY23 total to date is \$1,061,814 with an additional \$73,633 in progress.

8.5. Dr. Fitzpatrick shared a Capital Skills Grant update. He noted that the Governor has announced a new Capital Skills grant opportunity with a maximum amount of \$5 million. BVT intends to apply for one of these grants. Details of working sessions to prepare the proposed grant application for a \$6.5 million project (with \$1.5 million in BVT matching funds) were shared. The letter of intent is due 9/22/22 and the final application is due on 10/22/22. Dr. Fitzpatrick said he envisioned this as a multiple resource driven endeavor, including grant and bond funding and MSBA reimbursement.

8.6. Dr. Fitzpatrick reported that he sponsored a \$600 foursome and participated in a Blissful Meadows golf tournament. The Blissful Meadows Company Open event usually awards

BVT approximately \$5,000. For the record, the BVT team won the tournament.

8.7. Members were provided with the Superintendent's draft goal themes for FY23. He shared a brief history of his goal development over the years and noted that the goals are now linked to DESE standards.

8.8. FY23 Team Leader Appointments were shared with the Committee.

8.9. The Committee is in receipt of a sample letter and the listing of 2022-23 Solicitations for Van Subsidies. Dr. Fitzpatrick noted that a commitment in marketing of community charitable funds through solicitation helps offset transportation and maintenance costs of student vans during the school year.

8.10. The Committee received the Alumni Newsletter at the meeting.

Item 9. New Business

Dr. Fitzpatrick noted that the Committee should anticipate a request to authorize him to send a Statement of Interest (SOI) to the Massachusetts School Building Authority. He is awaiting the required official SOI wording from MSBA.

Item 10. Items for the Good of the Committee:

The monthly compilation of news clippings and correspondence packet was made available at the meeting for members to review individually.

Item 11. Next Regularly Scheduled School Committee Meeting - J. Hall

The next regularly scheduled School Committee meeting will be held on October 20, 2022 at 6:00 p.m.

Item 12. \*Executive Session Per MGL Chpt. 30A, Section 21(a) #1

On a motion by Mr. Braza, seconded by Mr. Yitts, a roll call vote was taken to go into executive session at 7:02 p.m. because discussion of this subject in open session could be detrimental to the School District. The roll call was as follows:

|                  |                    |                     |
|------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| Mr. Hall - Yes   | Mr. Braza - Yes    | Mr. Finn - Yes      |
| Mr. Potter - Yes | Mr. Hanratty - Yes | Mrs. Mitchell - Yes |
| Mr. Yitts - Yes  |                    | Mr. Ebbeling - Yes  |

On a motion by Mrs. Mitchell, seconded by Mr. Yitts, a roll call vote was taken to come out of executive session at 7:03 p.m. The roll call was as follows:

|                  |                    |                     |
|------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| Mr. Hall - Yes   | Mr. Braza - Yes    | Mr. Finn - Yes      |
| Mr. Potter - Yes | Mr. Hanratty - Yes | Mrs. Mitchell - Yes |
| Mr. Yitts - Yes  |                    | Mr. Ebbeling - Yes  |

Item 13. Decide: Release Status of Exec. Session Minutes of August 18, 2022

On a motion by Mr. Hanratty, seconded by Mr. Yitts, it was voted to approve the release of the Executive Session Minutes of August 18, 2022. The roll call was as follows:

Mr. Hall - Yes  
Mr. Potter - Yes  
Mr. Yitts - Yes

Mr. Braza - Yes  
Mr. Hanratty - Yes

Mr. Finn - Yes  
Mrs. Mitchell - Yes  
Mr. Ebbeling - Yes

Item 14. Meeting Closure:

14.1. The meeting was declared closed by the Chair at 7:04 p.m.

14.2. On a motion by Mr. Yitts, seconded by Mrs. Mitchell, it was voted to adjourn at 7:04 p.m.

Listing of materials used in the meeting:

- Item 3.1. Minutes of Meeting of August 18, 2022
- Item 4.1. Treasurer's Report (revised) dated July 31, 2022
- Item 4.2. Treasurer's Report dated August 31, 2022
- Item 4.3. PARS Year-End Review
- Item 7.1.a. Out-of-State Field Trip Approval European Travel April Vacation 2024
- Item 7.1.b. Out-of-State Field Trip Approval Yale University Jan 19-22, 2023
- Item 8.2. Delineation of FY23 Subcommittees
- Item 8.3. BVT Alumni 5 Year Graduate Survey Results Class of 2016
- Item 8.4. Summary FY23 Grant listing dated September 2, 2022
- Item 8.5. Capital Skills Grant Update
- Item 8.6. Donation acknowledgment of \$600
- Item 8.7. FY23 Superintendent Draft Goals
- Item 8.8. FY23 Team Leader Appointments
- Item 8.9. Van Letters
- Item 8.10. Alumni Newsletter
- Item 10. Items for the Good of the Committee

Respectfully submitted by,

Anthony Yitts, Secretary