

**Blackstone Valley Vocational Regional District School Committee  
Minutes of Regular Meeting  
November 16, 2023**

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	Dr. Michael F. Fitzpatrick, Superintendent-Director
Joseph A. Broderick of Blackstone	Anthony E. Steele, Asst. Superintendent/Principal
Mark J. Potter of Douglas – 6:16 p.m.	Matt Urquhart, Assistant Principal
Anthony M. Yitts of Grafton	Michele Denise, Vocational Director
Edward D. Cray, III of Mendon – 6:01 pm	Eddie Evans, Academic Curriculum Coordinator
Chester P. Hanratty, Jr. of Millbury	Joseph Ursoleo, Career Enrichment Team Leader
Gerald M. Finn of Millville, Vice Chair	Nicole M. Ferguson, Business Manager
James M. Mitchell of Sutton	Lorna M. Mangano, Retired Business Manager
Tyler D. Bartlett of Upton	Elise Bogdan, Recording Secretary
James H. Ebbeling of Uxbridge	

Members Absent:

Mitchell A. Intinarelli of Hopedale  
Jeff T. Koopman of Northbridge  
Paul J. Braza of Milford

Item 1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by the Chair, Mr. Hall. Dr. Fitzpatrick said he was notified in advance that Mr. Pilla, Mr. Intinarelli, Mr. Koopman, and Mr. Braza would be unable to attend while Mr. Cray and Mr. Potter would be delayed. Mr. Cray arrived at 6:01 p.m. Mr. Potter arrived at 6:16 p.m. The Superintendent informed the Committee that there would be a brief recess (6:07 p.m. to 6:15 p.m.) to allow the Committee members to transition to the Competition Center where the Superintendent would address the BVT Fall Sports teams briefly: Boys & Girls Soccer, Boys & Girls Cross Country, Field Hockey, Girls Volleyball, Golf, and Cheer during their Athletic Awards Night. The Chair, Mr. Hall, had informed the Superintendent in advance that he would recess to attend the awards ceremony. Mr. Hall rejoined the school committee meeting at 7:15 p.m.

Dr. Fitzpatrick thanked the District's recently Retired Business Manager, Lorna M. Mangano, for her years of service and shared the following MAVA Recognizes Retirees for Distinguished Service recognition with the Committee: Lorna M. Mangano, Business Manager, Blackstone Valley Vocational Regional School District. Ms. Mangano, hired in 2010, has worked for the Blackstone Valley Vocational Regional School District for 13 years. Six years as Assistant Business Manager/Financial Aid Coordinator before being appointed Business Manager in 2016. As Business Manager, Ms. Mangano successfully coordinated fiscal and budgetary matters with the District Treasurer, the Superintendent-Director, and the District School Committee. A proven detail-oriented financial leader, accomplished in financial planning and reporting while working cross-functionally, she was a role model for others in her department.

Item 2. Secretary's Report(s) – A. Yitts

2.1. On a motion by Mr. Yitts seconded by Mr. Broderick, it was unanimously voted to waive reading of the minutes of the regular School Committee meeting of October 12, 2023 and to accept the minutes as written.

Item 3. Treasurer's Reports – C. Pilla

3.1. The Treasurer's September 30, 2023 Report was delayed until the December 14, 2023 meeting.

3.2. The Treasurer's October 31, 2023 Report was delayed until the December 14, 2023 meeting.

Item 4. Comments by Student Council Representatives - Ellie Poitras & Sosie DerKosrofia

Dr. Fitzpatrick informed the Committee that he was notified in advance that the Student Council Representatives could not attend the School Committee meeting due to competing that evening in national events – DECA Conference and CDMASC Fall Conference, respectively.

Item 5. Student Recognition - Dr. Michael F. Fitzpatrick

5.1. On behalf of the District School Committee, Dr. Fitzpatrick and Mr. Steele formally recognized Vanessa Lizotte of Bellingham, a senior in the Information Technology program at BVT, for receiving the College Board's National African American Recognition Program award. Dr. Fitzpatrick congratulated Vanessa on her academic achievement and her performance on College Board assessments.

***\*There was a brief intermission (6:07 p.m. to 6:15 p.m.) to allow for Dr. Fitzpatrick to address the fall sports teams during their awards ceremony in the Competition Center.\****

Item 6. Academic Department Presentation – Career Enrichment (Joseph Ursoleo)

Mr. Ursoleo, the Career Enrichment (CE) Team Leader, gave a PowerPoint presentation on the Career Enrichment curriculum, which began with an overview of the department members. Full-time CE Teachers: Ariel Funari, Erika Gervais, Jerry Polselli, Kyle Polselli, Jacob Ramos, and Nicole St. Hilaire. CE/Electives Teachers: Colton Cox (Music) and Yakaira Bell (Spanish). The overview focused on Employability, Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E), Technology, Financial Literacy, and Career Planning and the scope of the curriculum from freshman through senior year.

The Financial Literacy Program began with grant funding and a crash course with planting the seeds at the freshmen level and building the program through purposeful content application over sophomore, junior, and senior years. This approach has seen our students express an interest in their financial health. Mr. Finn asked Mr. Ursoleo what measurements were being used to assure the Committee that the Financial Literacy Program was effective. Mr. Ursoleo explained that project-based learning with a budgeting project where students allocate money toward needs and wants with class discussion around key takeaways has proven effective. Mr. Finn also wanted to know when students are introduced to financial terminology, and Mr.

Ursoleo explained that it happens during sophomore year. Freshman year strongly focuses on technology as most students transition from using Google to a Microsoft Office school — the emphasis on technology is done alongside Exploratory. BVT applications include Canvas, Naviance, PowerSchool, Microsoft Office, and Zoom. The focus is on professional correspondence, file management & organization, local vs. cloud storage, creating folders & naming files, and digital citizenship. This learning helps all departments and empowers students to use the tools they will need at BVT, which are universal workplace skills. The sophomore year focuses on employability: resume writing, part-time employment search, job applications, and interviewing. Then, in junior year, there is increased efficiency with resumes, cover letters, and virtual interviews. By senior year, our curriculum is a student-focused approach to preparing for post-graduation with support focused on financial literacy, networking, informational interview(s), scholarships, and shop portfolio support as they prepare for what comes next and how to pay for their education/adult life/budgeting, building credit, using credit, it is an education that will power them to get ahead in life.

Dr. Fitzpatrick thanked Mr. Ursoleo and congratulated him and the department for their invaluable contributions. He also reminded Mr. Ursoleo that the thirteen sending communities we serve have banks and financial institutions we rely on for annual contributions to complement the budget and offset transportation costs. In the spirit of building relationships and providing financial literacy information to our students, please continue to include the local banks and credit unions in the curriculum when reasonable.

#### Item 7. Business Manager - N. Ferguson

7.1. A Hague, Sahady & Co., P.C. representative presented the FY23 Audit Reports. The Committee members received two reports: The Blackstone Valley Vocational Regional School District Basic Financial Statements for the Year Ended June 30, 2023, and a Single Audit Report (federal expenditures) for the Year Ended June 30, 2023.

a. The representative presented the District Financial Audit Reports, which were available at the meeting. The audit came back with no findings, which was great news. The independent auditing firm was very complimentary of how the District handled its finances and records, reiterating that there were no findings in the FY23 financial audit. In conclusion, the District qualified as a low-risk auditee.

Dr. Fitzpatrick thanked The Hague, Sahady & Co., P.C. representative for their professionalism. He asked the representative if it were accurate to say that the delayed billing from the State is considered a liability. The representative said that was correct, and once the District secures the requested documents from the State, liability could be removed from the books following the process of a review by the auditors, confirmation that it is not a liability, and processing through the Department of Revenue and made available through E&D.

7.2. Donations for approval: Mrs. Ferguson presented two donations: a 2010 Ford Focus from Krista L. Felaco and a 2013 FRHT Sprint Van from Southworth Milton Inc. Both vehicles would be used for instructional and valuable training purposes in the automotive programs at BVT. On a motion by Mr. Hanratty, seconded by Mr. Ebbeling, it was voted to accept the donations as presented.

Item 8. Budget Subcommittee Report –M. Finn

8.1. Mr. Finn informed the School Committee that the Budget Subcommittee held its first meeting at 5:00 p.m. on November 16, 2023, in the Superintendent's Conference Room. There was no quorum, so the agenda, which included electing the Chair and Vice Chair of the FY2025 Budget Subcommittee, verifying meeting dates, and the first review of the Debt function (8000), will occur at the next scheduled meeting of the Budget Subcommittee on December 7, 2023, at 4:30 p.m.

Item 9. Assistant Superintendent-Director's Report - A. Steele

9.1. The annual General Advisory Dinner was held at the school on October 25, 2023. The Culinary Arts program prepared a Southern comfort food-themed dinner. It was a great evening and a well-attended event.

9.2. Eighty-five BVT students were recognized as 2024 John & Abigail Adams Scholar recipients during a brief ceremony during school on November 2, 2023.

9.3. There was a Police Chief's Breakfast at BVT on November 7, 2023, in the Three Seasons Restaurant. The annual event was held in partnership with Upton Police Chief Michael Bradley and welcomes all thirteen sending-town Police Chiefs and School Resource Officers to attend. It is a network of partnership and support and a well-attended event.

9.4. The annual Admissions Open House was held on November 8, 2023. The many visitors who toured the school filled the BVT parking lot with overflow at Nipmuc. The evening event saw many alums with children return to tour the school or speak in shops. The application portal is open, and many students are interested in attending BVT. Also, last night was vocational curriculum night for the freshman parents. It is an opportunity for parents to visit the top choice shops before their student selects their shop placement preference. Approximately 200 of the 318 students were in attendance.

9.5. The Fall Sports Awards Ceremony was held on the evening of November 16, 2023, in the Competition Center. The ceremony recognized the following fall sports teams: Boys & Girls Soccer, Boys & Girls Cross Country, Field Hockey, Girls Volleyball, Golf, and Cheer.

9.6. Out-of-State Field Trip Approval:

a. On a motion by Mr. Hanratty, seconded by Mr. Mitchell, it was unanimously voted to approve the HVAC/R program's out-of-state field trip request as presented to attend the OESP Exposition in Uncasville, CT, from May 21, 2024, to May 22, 2024.

Item 10. Superintendent-Director's Report - Michael F. Fitzpatrick

10.1. Dr. Fitzpatrick shared the District's Open Meeting Law Approach with the Committee from 12/16/10. The Blackstone Valley Vocational Regional School District Committee voted during their regular school committee meeting of 12/16/10 to adopt the alternative open meeting posting method allowed for regional school districts, which allowed the District to meet Open Meeting Law posting requirements by posting meeting notices on the District's website.

10.2. The Superintendent provided the Committee with a Public Safety Earmark notification dated November 2, 2023, of fully executed funding of \$83,000 for the Underground Oil Tank Reimbursement from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

10.3. Notification of Resignation and Retirement:

a. A Notification of Resignation letter dated October 17, 2023, from Kerri-Lyn Abbruzzese, Health Services Instructor, with an effective immediate date of 10/17/23, was accepted with disappointment.

b. A Notification of Retirement letter dated November 7, 2023, from Lois Collins, Practical Nursing Administrative Secretary, gave formal notice of intention to retire in June 2024, was accepted with regret as Lois has been a pleasure to work with over the years.

10.4. The School Committee members were provided with a summary of the FY24 Grants to Date (as of November 7, 2023) there is a grand total of \$818,032.00 to date.

10.5. BVT Van Donation(s):

a. BVT is in receipt of a financial donation supporting a school passenger van from Millbury Federal Credit Union in the amount of \$3,000.

10.6. Dr. Fitzpatrick shared a letter dated October 25, 2023, from Abundant Hope Pregnancy Resource Center with the Committee. The letter conveyed appreciation for a custom-built set of cabinets the Carpentry program donated to the Center. Also within the letter was a notification that the Center received a small grant allowing them to contribute \$100 toward a pizza order for the Carpentry students who contributed to the cabinet project as a token of their appreciation.

10.7. The Parent Newsletter, the Link (Winter 2023) was available at the meeting.

10.8. Event:

a. The Superintendent attended a reception for Senator Michael Moore at Russo's Restaurant on October 24, 2023.

b. The Superintendent accepted the Blissful Meadows Golf Club 2023 Company Open donation on behalf of the District on November 9, 2023, at Blissful Meadows. The District will apply the donation (\$6,784) to professional development opportunities — such activities to focus on providing staff with updated skills to serve the workforce.

#### Item 11. New Business.

There was no new business.

#### Item 12. Items for the Good of the Committee:

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

#### Item 13. Next Regularly Scheduled School Committee Meeting - J. Hall

The next regularly scheduled School Committee meeting will be held on December 14, 2023 at 6:00 p.m.

Item 14. \* Executive Session Per MGL Chpt. 30A, §21(a) #2 and #3

On a motion by Mr. Hanratty, seconded by Mr. Cray, a roll call vote was taken to go into executive session at 7:15 p.m. because discussion of this subject in open session would be detrimental to the School District. The roll call was as follows:

Mr. Hall – Yes	Mr. Broderick – Yes	Mr. Finn – Yes
Mr. Cray – Yes	Mr. Potter – Yes	Mr. Yitts – Yes
Mr. Hanratty – Yes	Mr. Mitchell – Yes	Mr. Bartlett – Yes
Mr. Ebbeling – Yes		

On a motion by Mr. Hanratty, seconded by Mr. Potter a roll call vote was taken to come out of executive session at 7:31 p.m. The roll call was as follows:

Mr. Hall – Yes	Mr. Broderick – Yes	Mr. Finn – Yes
Mr. Cray – Yes	Mr. Potter – Yes	Mr. Yitts – Yes
Mr. Hanratty – Yes	Mr. Mitchell – Yes	Mr. Bartlett – Yes
Mr. Ebbeling – Yes		

Item. 15. Executive Session Items

15.1. Decide: Release Status of Exec. Session Minutes of June 15, 2023:

On a motion by Mr. Yitts, seconded by Mr. Ebbeling, it was voted not to release the minutes of the executive session of June 15, 2023 because discussion of this subject in open session would be detrimental to the School District.

15.2. Act Upon Deliberations Conducted During Executive Session: was not needed as the action occurred in Item 15.1.

Item 16. Meeting Closure:

16.1. The meeting was declared closed by the Chair at 7:34 p.m.

16.2. On a motion by Mr. Broderick, seconded by Mr. Cray, it was voted to adjourn at 7:34 p.m.

Listing of materials used in the meeting:

Item 2.1. Minutes of Meeting of October 12, 2023

Item 7.1 BVVRS Basic Financial Statements and a Single Audit Report each for FY23  
[available at meeting]

Item 9.6.a. Out-of-State Field Trip Request: OESP Exposition May 21-22, 2024 (Uncasville, CT)

Item 10.1. Open Meeting Law Approach

Item 10.2. Underground Oil Tank Reimbursement from Commonwealth

Item 10.3.a. Notification of Resignation: Kerri-Lyn Abbruzzese, Health Services Instructor

Item 10.3.b. Notification of Retirement: Lois Collins, Practical Nursing Administrative Secretary

Item 10.4. FY24 Grants to Date

Item 10.5.a. BVT Van Donation: Millbury Federal Credit Union

Item 10.6. Abundant Hope, \$100 Grant

Item 10.7. Parent Newsletter [available at meeting]

Item 12. Items for the Good of the Committee [available at meeting]

Respectfully submitted by,

Anthony M. Yitts, Secretary