

**Blackstone Valley Vocational Regional District School Committee**  
**Minutes of Regular Meeting**  
**April 16, 2020**

The regular meeting of the Blackstone Valley Vocational Regional District School Committee was held remotely by livestream through the Zoom platform. The following members, staff and others were present:

Joseph M. Hall of Bellingham, Chairman  
Joseph A. Broderick of Blackstone  
Anthony M. Yitts of Grafton  
Mitchell A. Intinarelli of Hopedale  
Dennis P. Braun of Mendon  
Paul J. Braza of Milford  
Chester P. Hanratty, Jr. of Millbury  
Gerald M. Finn of Millville  
Jeff T. Koopman of Northbridge  
Julie H. Mitchell of Sutton  
David R. Bartlett of Upton  
James H. Ebbeling of Uxbridge

Dr. Michael F. Fitzpatrick, Superintendent-Director  
Anthony Steele, Asst. Supt./Principal  
Kurtis Johnson, Asst. Supt. For Finance and Operations  
Barbara Auger, Treasurer  
Amy Sutherland, Recording Secretary

**Members Absent:**

John C. Lavin, III of Douglas

Dr. Fitzpatrick started the meeting by explaining that the student representative, Logan Keefe, created a video which was on social media highlighting BVT's instructional support staff members. It was impressive. Each staff member offered words of encouragement to the students.

**Item 1. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 6:04 p.m. by Chairman Hall.

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

2.1. On a motion by Mr. Yitts, seconded by Mr. Intinarelli, Committee members individually reported out their votes from their remote stations and the vote was unanimous to waive the reading of the minutes of the regular meeting of March 5, 2020 and to accept them as written.

**Item 3. Treasurer's Report – B. Auger**

There were two Treasurer Reports presented.

3.1.a. Treasurer Auger presented a report dated February 29, 2020. The report reflected an ending balance of \$7,424,495.69 for Total Funds, including \$1,486,579.60 in Project Funds and \$5,937,916.09 in Local Funds.

On a motion by Mr. Hanratty, seconded by Mr. Bartlett, Committee members individually reported out their votes from their remote stations and the vote was unanimous to approve the Treasurer's report as presented for February 29, 2020. (*Note: The attachment referenced a date of February 28, 2020 but should indicate the date of February 29, 2020. That correction was noted prior to the School Committee's voted action.*)

3.1.b. Treasurer Auger presented a report dated March 31, 2020. The report reflects an ending balance of \$6,708,430.02 for Total Funds, including \$1,405,343.73 in Project Funds and \$5,303,086.29 in Local Funds. The Chapter 71 supplemental money was received in the amount of \$42,954.00. The interest line has a negative amount reported since there was a loss in the investment of the OPEB money.

The market has taken a significant hit in the month of March. There is anticipation that there will be another decline in the report for next month. Hopefully, the market will stabilize. This is not earnings on any of the real cash in the bank, these are investments for long term.

On a motion by Mrs. Mitchell, seconded by Mr. Hanratty, Committee members individually reported out their votes from their remote stations and the vote was unanimous to approve the Treasurer's report as presented for March 31, 2020.

A question was asked if there will be any direct expense costs due to COVID-19 for the remainder of the school year and, if there are, should a separate category be created within accounting since those fall outside the normal budget. Kurtis Johnson and Lorna Mangano are already tracking what the district has expended due to COVID-19. A procedure is in place for recording what has been donated to date by BVT. This list will continue to be compiled to submit to FEMA. It was noted that the school is looking at some savings since not in session. BVT still needs to meet the net school spending requirements such as transportation.

#### Item 4. Assistant Superintendent for Finance/Operations – K. Johnson

4.1. Project Funding-MSBA Roof Project – Mr. Johnson explained that the School Committee is required to vote the total roof project costs as defined in the Project Funding Agreement [Form 3011]. In order to meet the funding requirement of \$1,486,419, Mr. Johnson requested a transfer from the Project Facility Expansion Capital Project Fund. The motion to transfer those funds was provided to the Committee. Mr. Johnson further explained that repayment would be made when the MSBA reimburses the District for its share of eligible costs.

4.1.a. Fund Transfer Request (Interfund Borrowing) – On a motion made by Mr. Hanratty, seconded by Mr. Braza, Committee members individually reported out their votes from their remote stations and the vote was unanimous to approve and initiate the transfer request of \$769,797 from the Project Facility Expansion Capital Project Fund to the Roof Repair Capital Project Fund. (Motion attached hereto)

4.1.b. Approve Project Funding for MSBA Roof Replacement – On a motion made by Mrs. Mitchell, seconded by Mr. Koopman, Committee members individually reported out their votes on April 16, 2020 from their remote stations and the vote was unanimous to move that BVT appropriate \$1,486,419.00 for the purpose of paying costs for the replacement of roofs at BVT. (Motion attached hereto)

The Committee is aware that the MSBA grant program shall not exceed the lesser of (1) fifty-five percent (55%) of eligible, approved project costs, as determined by the MSBA, or (2) the

total maximum grant amount determined by the MSBA, and that the amount of the appropriation authorized for the project pursuant to this vote shall be reduced by any grant amount set forth in the Project Funding Agreement that may be executed between the District and the MSBA.

4.2. Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Transportation Contract – The Committee is in receipt of a letter dated April 16, 2020 from Kurtis Johnson which provides information relative to the District’s position on making payments to our bus contractor, Vendetti Motors, Inc., during the period of time where bus services have been halted due to superimposed events. The Commissioner of Education (DESE) and the Federal Office of Management and Budget (OMB), have encouraged Districts to make payments for transportation services. In addition to the fact that Vendetti continues to incur fixed costs relative to our current contract obligations, they also continue to pay their drivers for the daily regular routes to ensure availability to transport students when [and if] the school resumes daily instruction. The School Committee was asked to support a contract payment rate of 82.5 percent which acknowledges the removal of certain variable costs. Mr. Johnson explained that 100% of the contract payment would be made in FY20 to ensure cash flow to Vendetti, while the value of the reduced contract rate (for non-transport days) would be calculated and amortized over the contract term in FY21. The attached MOU will create a favorable impact to transportation expenses in FY21, when revenues are expected to be impacted by the COVID-19 event.

On a motion made by Mrs. Mitchell, seconded by Mr. Finn, Committee members individually reported out their votes from their remote stations and the vote was unanimous to approve the Memorandum of Understanding between Blackstone Valley Vocational Regional School District and Vendetti Motors, Inc. through June 30, 2020.

#### 4.3. Roof Contract Award

4.3.a. Bid Award Summary – The School Committee is in receipt of seven (7) vendors who submitted bids for the MSBA/Roof Replacement. The bids closed on April 9, 2020. The bids were opened in a virtual public setting (using Zoom) and were reviewed for compliance. A variety of stakeholders were also present. All required bid forms were properly completed and signed. The Committee was made aware that the HVAC Field Bid opening was conducted on April 2, 2020 and that there were two bidders.

4.3.b. Motion to Award Bid Contract – On a motion made by Mr. Intinarelli, seconded by Mr. Finn, Committee members individually reported out their votes from their remote stations and the vote was unanimous to accept the bid from Capeway Roofing Systems, Inc. with a total bid of \$823,900.00, inclusive of the base bid plus the HVAC Sub-Bid.

#### Item 5. Budget – J. Mitchell

Mrs. Mitchell indicated that at this point many of the towns have suspended and postponed their Annual Town Hall meetings to a date yet to be determined. The Budget Subcommittee has been proactive in providing virtual presentations. Mrs. Mitchell communicated that they have not been able to be in front of the Town of Sutton but that a video was shared with all District towns and that the Town of Sutton appeared to be in full support of the presented budget.

5.1.a. Dr. Fitzpatrick presented to the Town of Douglas on March 10, 2020. There were questions asked and BVT has since supplied the Town of Douglas with detailed responses to those questions.

5.1.b. Mr. Bartlett and Dr. Fitzpatrick presented to the Town of Upton on March 11, 2020. As of this date the Town of Upton is looking to have a \$1.2 million-dollar (or greater) override for the Mendon-Upton schools. Surprisingly, and obviously with disappointment, the additional \$57,000 BVT is seeking is scheduled to be blended within the massive Mendon-Upton School System override question. If Upton residents vote yes for the proposed override, Upton's assessment within the Valley Tech budget would be approved.

5.1.c. Mr. Finn and Dr. Fitzpatrick presented to the Board of Selectmen in Millville on April 7, 2020 as part of a Zoom meeting. The first part of the presentation focused on the return on investment which BVT offers to the town. The presentation next covered the facts and figures that make BVT students so successful. A Zoom meeting is scheduled with the Millville Finance Committee on April 29, 2020. The reception from the Town of Millville appeared to be favorable.

5.1.d. Mr. Yitts and Dr. Fitzpatrick took part in a virtual Zoom meeting on April 8, 2020 in the Town of Grafton. There were several questions and one in particular was in regard to if the school will be looking to have a full-time grant writer. The Finance Committee saw value in having this position. The meeting went well, and it appeared they support the presented budget.

School Committee members are coordinating FY21 budget information from their home based member community. Mr. Hanratty reported that he has reached out to his home base of Millbury and is waiting to hear back from them.

#### Item 6. Assistant Superintendent-Director's Report – A. Steele

6.1. Distance Learning Plan – Mr. Steele explained the BVT Distance Learning Plan. Since the last meeting, the School Committee approved time to have staff prepare for a Distance Learning Plan scenario. In-house training for this scenario was accomplished on Friday, March 13, 2020 and most schools within the Commonwealth were closed on or about March 16, 2020 for what was to be a two-week shutdown through March 27, 2020. This shutdown timeframe was then extended until May 4, 2020. BVT worked hard to create a Distance Learning Plan which was launched ahead of schedule on April 6, 2020. This has been going very smoothly. The school is getting positive feedback from parents, students, and faculty that Distance Learning is working well. There is a page on the BVT website providing detailed information about Valley Tech's Distance Learning Plan. Many staff members have stepped up to make this possible.

6.1.a. Assistant Superintendent-Director/Principal, Anthony Steele, explained that since the students are taking part in Distance Learning, it is in their best interest to continue working through April vacation to maintain continuity and not have an unnecessary break when the Distant Learning is gaining momentum for the students. The Teachers Association and school

Administration also share in this favorable rationale for working through April vacation. BVT is currently collaborating with some of the licensing agencies regarding their flexibility in counting attainment of competency needed for hours earned within shop classes.

On a motion made by Mr. Intinarelli, seconded by Mr. Hanratty, Committee members individually reported out their votes from their remote stations and the vote was unanimous to amend the school calendar to allow continued work through the planned vacation week scheduled for Tuesday, April 21, 2020 through Friday, April 24, 2020 (with the understanding that the current school year end date would be amended from June 22, 2020 to June 16, 2020).

#### Item 7. Policy Subcommittee Report – C. Hanratty

Mr. Hanratty informed the School Committee that the Policy Subcommittee had met several times and proposed the revised policies as presented. The members were in receipt of the policies with tracked changes noted in red. All of the changes are regulatory edits to bring the school into alignment with things which have changed at the federal level. These were also recommendations from auditors. The Title I regulations have changed and those needed to be updated. There was clarification on how students are classified within Title I.

##### 7.1. Revised Policies

- a. Student Activity Accounts - JFF
- b. Organization of Instruction - IE
- c. Support Services Programs - IGB
- d. Compensatory Education (Title I) - IHBD

On a motion made by Mr. Hanratty, seconded by Mr. Bartlett, Committee members individually reported out their votes from their remote stations and the vote was unanimous to accept the revised policies for Student Activity Accounts, Organization of Instruction, Support Services Programs and Compensatory Education (Title I) as presented.

#### Item 8. Student-Director's Report – M. Fitzpatrick

8.1. COVID-19 – Currently, BVT is working to manufacture face shields with the school's 3-D printers. This has been part of a coordinated effort by many. The school has been able to make and distribute over 100 face shields. BVT supplied the Milford Hospital with multiple cleaning and medical supplies. Members of the BVT School District prepared and packed gloves, wipes, masks, disposable cover-ups, goggles, and face shields. It was decided that since these items were not currently needed at the school, they would be better served at Milford Hospital.

##### 8.2. Notifications of Retirement

- a. Michele Boucher – Teacher Assistant: BVT is in receipt of a letter dated March 11, 2020 from Michele Boucher regarding her retirement effective the last day of the school year 2020.
- b. Walter Ramsey – IT Instructor: BVT is in receipt of a letter dated April 8, 2020 from Walter Ramsey regarding his retirement effective the last day of the school year 2020.

c. Kyle Polselli – Career Enrichment Teacher: BVT is in receipt of a letter dated March 6, 2020 (received by H.R. on 4/14/20) from Kyle Polselli regarding his resignation effective the last day of the school year 2020.

#### Item 9. New Business

9.1. School Lunch Price Increase – School Committee members were informed that the last time school lunches were increased was two years ago. It is a federal regulation that there is a strict calculation which must be followed. Results of the required calculation showed the need for a 15¢ increase (setting the new cost for school lunches to \$3.15). This will not affect the price of lunches for students that qualify for free or reduced lunches. The student handbook will be updated in accordance with the vote.

On a motion made by Mr. Hanratty, seconded by Mr. Bartlett, Committee members individually reported out their votes from their remote stations and the vote was unanimous to increase the cost for school lunches to \$3.15 (an increase of 15¢) as required under Section 205 of the Health Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 (Public Law 111-296).

#### Item 10. Items for the Good of the Committee

The monthly compilation of news clippings and correspondence was made available for the School Committee's review.

#### Item 11. Next Regularly Scheduled School Committee Meeting – J. Hall

The next regularly scheduled meeting will be held on May 21, 2020 at 6:00 p.m. in the Three Seasons Restaurant.

#### Item 12. Meeting Closure

12.1. The meeting was declared closed by the Chair at 8:04 p.m.

12.2. On a motion by Mr. Broderick seconded by Mr. Finn it was voted to adjourn at 8:04 p.m.

#### **Listing of Materials Used in the Meeting:**

- Item 2. Minutes of Regular Meeting of March 5, 2020
- Item 3.1.a. Treasurer's Report February 29, 2020
- Item 3.1.b. Treasurer's Report March 31, 2020
- Item 4.1.a. Fund Transfer Request for Roof Repair
- Item 4.1.b. Approve Project Funding for MSBA Roof Replacement
- Item 4.2. Introductory Letter & MOU (School Transportation)
- Item 4.3.a. MSBA Roof/Replacement Bid Summary
- Item 4.3.b. Motion - Award Construction Contract for Roof Repair
- Item 6.1. Distant Learning Plan
- Item 6.1.a. Proposed Amendment to April Vacation
- Item 7.1. Revised Policies
- Item 7.1.a. Student Activity Accounts
- Item 7.1.b. Organization of Instruction
- Item 7.1.c. Support Services Program

**Listing of Materials Used in the Meeting (continued):**

- Item 7.1.d. Compensatory Education Title 1
- Item 8.2.a. Notification of Retirement Michele Boucher – Teacher Assistant
- Item 8.2.b. Notification of Retirement Walter Ramsey – IT Instructor
- Item 8.2.c. Notification of Resignation Kyle Polselli – Career Enrichment Teacher
- Item 9.1. Motion - School Lunch Increase
- Item 10. Items for the Good of the Committee

Respectfully submitted by,

Anthony M. Yitts, Secretary