

Blackstone Valley Vocational Regional District School Committee
Minutes of Regular Meeting
November 19, 2020

The regular meeting of the Blackstone Valley Vocational Regional District School Committee was in the BVT School Cafeteria and remotely via Zoom. The following members, staff and others were present:

Joseph M. Hall of Bellingham, Chairman	Dr. Michael F. Fitzpatrick, Superintendent-Director
Gerald M. Finn of Millville, Vice Chairman	Barbara Auger, Treasurer
Anthony Yitts of Grafton, Secretary	James Brochu, Director of Const./Facilities
Paul J. Braza of Milford (Remote)	Anthony Steele, Asst. Supt.-Dir./Principal (Remote)
Chester P. Hanratty, Jr. of Millbury	Lorna Mangano, Business Manager (Remote)
Jeff Koopman of Northbridge	Amy Sutherland, Recording Secretary (Remote)

David R. Bartlett of Upton

Julie H. Mitchell of Sutton

Joseph A. Broderick of Blackstone

Members Absent:

Mitchell A. Intinarelli of Hopedale

James H. Ebbeling of Uxbridge

John C. Lavin, III of Douglas

Dennis Braun of Mendon

Item 1. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Chairman Hall.

Item 2. Secretary's Report

2.1. On a motion by Mrs. Mitchell, seconded by Mr. Hanratty, it was unanimously voted to waive the reading of the minutes of the regular meeting of October 15, 2020 and to accept the minutes as presented.

Item 3. Treasurer's Report – B. Auger

3.1. The Treasurer's report was presented dated October 31, 2020. The report reflects an ending balance of \$8,535,409.91 for Total Funds, including \$893,561.85 in Project Funds, and \$7,641,848.06 in Local Funds. On a motion by Mrs. Mitchell, seconded by Mr. Hanratty, it was unanimously voted to approve the October 31, 2020 Treasurer's Report as presented.

3.2. School Committee members are in receipt of the account level operating statement for the Little Beaver Enrichment Center Revolving Account for a period from July 1, 2020 through October 31, 2020. The current balance in this account is \$1800.00.

Item 4. Comments by Students Representatives – Isabella Caccavelli & Emma Conkey

Student representatives explained that the school took part in several activities over the last month. A Turkey Run Bingo event was held and enjoyed by all. Additionally, \$900 was raised to provide 10 families with Thanksgiving dinner. The Central District MASC Conference will take place virtually on November 22, 2020. Members of Student Council wrote and delivered letters to Veterans. There will be a holiday toy drive held on December 1, 2020 through December 18, 2020.

Item 5. Director of Construction/Facilities Report – J. Brochu

5.1. Mr. Brochu provided an update on the MSBA roof project. He was happy to announce that the school has completed its 4th self-funded roof project. The project, which has only \$3,000 in change orders, is not a lot for a million-dollar project. Two amendments are anticipated with change orders which will require the OPM to stay on the project until completion. This project will then be closed out. The committee was made aware that a section of the roof in the 100 wing needs to be replaced. A restoration project was completed back in 2007, but it is now time for a full replacement. The project will be done in phases.

5.2. Mass Capital Skills Project Renovations – BVT School Committee members were able to view the conceptual renderings of the biotech and chemistry labs. This is very exciting project. Tower Construction is the contractor. The cost for this renovation is \$864,000. The school will complete the electrical portion of the project; saving the District approximately \$200,000. This will be done by the District's Electrician, Tim Collins. The project should be completed by the beginning of February 2021.

5.3. COVID-19 Facility Precautions – The school continues to make sure that all safety precautions are being followed by providing products and items for sanitations for staff and students. This has been in place since the Governor declared a State of Emergency on March 13, 2020.

Item 6. Business Manager's Report – L. Mangano

6.1. The FY20 Audit Report – Hague, Sahady & Co., P.C. representatives presented the financial audit report via Zoom. It was reported that the audit came back with no exceptions. Preparation of the audit began in June 2020 and the final report was implemented in late August. Although there was discussion with GADSBY about changing the audit format, due to COVID-19 it remained the same. The general fund balance increased \$115,000 from the prior year and encumbrances remained stable. The economic factors on next year's budget will be noted on the statements due to COVID-19. The Governor has continued to fund Chapter 70, however, most municipalities did not receive an increase in unrestricted aid. Fixed assets, short term, long term debt and OPEB liability were noted in the report. The school does a great job reconciling on a daily, monthly, and annual basis. The District does not have enterprise funds but instead trust funds. There will be a change to student activity funds which is now a special revenue fund. Cash investments have been a rollercoaster regarding the stock market due to the pandemic. In relation to debt, all appropriate payments are being made and there has been no additional debt added. There is a 5-year payment plan to cover the remaining debt. The School was commended for its record keeping. The school has received almost \$2,000,000 in grants. In conclusion, the independent auditing firm was very complimentary of the manner in which the District handled its finances and their records. They reiterated that there were no findings in the FY20 financial audit.

6.2. Donation Approvals – No donations were received.

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

7.1. Biotech Program DESE Status Update – The school received a grant from the state for a new Biotech Program. The first part of the instructional application is due on November 20, 2020. The second part of the application is due in January 2021. The final decision of the new program approval will be in June 2021. The goal is to have this program in place for the Fall 2021 school year. An advisory committee will be formed and a job posting will be released for a licensed teacher. There is

significant interest in this program. It will be included as part of the exploratory program for the Class of 2025.

7.2. Tier Status Update – Assistant Superintendent Steele provided a report via zoom. Information was gathered from parents, students, and staff. The report, dated November 6, 2020, provides the information. This report, which is a working document, changes daily due to information mandates and regulations which are generated from the state. The report included information on the analysis of transportation. There were only three (3) confirmed cases of COVID-19 at the school until last week. The school has increased its numbers and there are now 40 people are in quarantine. Of those 40 cases, 13 are staff members. The school is now temporarily at Tier 1. It is recommended to go to Tier 2 if the school can maintain the sustainability of the model. Dr. Fitzpatrick informed the Committee that MIAA will be meeting on November 20, 2020 to discuss the status the winter sports. The plan is to have pod or subsets for small competition among the towns. This would follow strict guidelines as set forth. The Committee was asked for their opinion. Member Hanratty expressed that his goal is to have all students back in academic areas before athletics. Member Bartlett agreed to put sports off for now since numbers are increasing. Several members communicated that it should be left up to the school's leadership team to make the determination.

On a motion made by Mr. Braza, seconded by Mr. Broderick, it was voted in majority to allow the administration authority to let the leadership team determine the decision regarding sports after the MIAA guidelines are released.

7.3. School Cancellation List – The School Committee members are in receipt of the school cancellation list. This was updated by the Commissioner of Education allowing remote learning to be permissible as snow days.

7.4. National Honor Society Induction Ceremony Report – The National Honor Society was initially scheduled to take place on November 18, 2020 but, due to COVID, has been postponed. There would have been 96 new students inducted into National Honor Society.

7.5. Abigail Adams Award Ceremony Report – The ceremony for the Abigail Adams Awards was also postponed. There were 86 seniors who earned this scholarship.

7.6. Curriculum Night Report – The school conducted a virtual curriculum night on November 12, 2020. This was a successful night with almost 400 parents participating.

7.7. Parent Applicant Night – Staff Member Michelle Denise is working on creating a new format for the parent applicant night for the parents and forthcoming new recruits. This will be designed in a virtual format with virtual interfacing. Parent Applicant Night will be held on Wednesday December 9, 2020.

7.8. Vocational Career Night Update – Vocational Career Night, scheduled for March 3, 2021, will look a little different this year. This event, which is still under discussion, will be a semi virtual or hybrid model.

Item 8. Budget Subcommittee Report

School Committee Member Julie Mitchell was appointed as Chairperson of the Budget Subcommittee. The Subcommittee held their first meeting on November 19, 2020. The calendar for upcoming meetings has been established.

Item 9. Superintendent-Director's Report – M. Fitzpatrick

9.1. FY21 State Budget Status – The Committee was informed that the state budget will be decided on Monday, December 1, 2020. It appears the budget will be less than the projected House number for Chapter 70. The Chapter 70 budget number appears to have increased. The Committee was also informed that the Town of Douglas has recently adopted the BVT assessment within their approved budget.

9.2. Regional Budget Process Publication – The School Committee is in receipt of a document entitled “Regional School Budget, Gearing Up for Your Marketing & Approval Process.” This publication includes information about how to build a budget strategically while acknowledging local concerns. It also explains the need to demonstrate fiscal responsibility by securing external resources.

9.3. DESE Admissions Study – A DESE Admissions Study is underway to look at the admissions criteria for selection of students. There are advocates who have issues with how students are selected. The Commonwealth is looking at alternative admissions criteria.

9.4. Visit Tours(s)

- a. Paul Viera, Douglas Schools Superintendent came to visit BVT on October 22, 2020.
- b. Karen Crebase, Hopedale Schools Superintendent came to visit BVT on November 19, 2020.
- c. Karen Ares, Executive Director of BV Education Hub came to visit on November 19, 2020.

9.5. Financial Donations:

- a. Millbury Credit Union – BVT is in receipt of a donation in the amount of \$3,500 from Millbury Federal Credit Union for the school's passenger van.
- b. Charles River Bank – BVT is in receipt of a donation of \$1,000 from Charles River Bank to sponsor the school student van.

Dr. Fitzpatrick informed the Committee that the school will be writing to pharmaceutical companies seeking donation for the Biotech program.

9.6. MAVA Leadership Academy I Presentation – The Superintendent shared a presentation to MAVA on Thursday, November 5, 2020.

9.7. FY2020 Annual Report – The School Committee received the now finalized booklet of the BVT 2020 Annual Report.

Item 10. New Business

Member Finn wanted to discuss the evaluation performance criteria for Superintendent Fitzpatrick. There was a suggestion to include language about making these goals measurable. It was mentioned that some of the goals as noted may not be achievable due to COVID-19.

Item 11. Items for the Good of the Committee

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

Item 12. Next Regularly Scheduled School Committee Meeting – J. Hall

The next regularly scheduled meeting will be held on December 17, 2020 at 6:00 p.m.

Item 13. Meeting Closure

13.1. The meeting was closed as declared by Chairman Hall.

13.2. On a motion by Mr. Broderick, seconded by Mr. Koopman, it was voted to adjourn the meeting at 7:28 p.m.

Listing of Materials Used in the Meeting:

- Item 2.1. Minutes of Regular Meeting of October 15, 2020
- Item 3.1. Treasurer's Report dated October 31, 2020
- Item 3.2. Little Beaver Enrichment Center Revolving Account Update
- Item 6.1. FY20 Audit Report from Hague, Shady & Co., P.C.
- Item 7.2. Tier Status Update
- Item 7.3. School Cancellation Contacts
- Item 9.2. Regional Budget Process Publication
- Item 9.5.a. Donation from Charles River Bank \$1,000
- Item 9.5.b. Donation from Millbury Federal Credit Union \$3,500
- Item 9.7. Annual Report Booklet
- Item 11. Items for the Good of the Committee

Respectfully submitted by,

Anthony M. Yitts, Secretary