

Coventry Board of Education
Coventry, Connecticut

Regular Board of Education Meeting
Approved Minutes of January 28, 2021
Remote/Electronic

Board Members Present:

William Oros, Vice Chairman
Eugene Marchand, Secretary
Mary Kortmann
Barbara Paré
Christina Williams
Robert Williams

Board Members Absent:

Jennifer Beausoleil, Chairman

Also Present:

Dr. David J. Petrone, Superintendent of Schools
Robert Carroll, Director of Finance and Operations
William Trudelle, Director of Physical Plant and Facilities
Ted Opdenbrouw, District Security Specialist

I. Call to Order - 6:00 p.m.

W. Oros called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

II. Possible VOTE: Executive Session (School Security)

MOTION: Pursuant to CGS-1-200(c)(6)(A), the Board of Education will go into Executive Session for discussions related to school security with the Superintendent, Director of Physical Plant and Facilities, District Security Specialist, and the Director of Finance and Operations Present

By: E. Marchand

Seconded: C. Williams

Result: Motion passes unanimously

III. Open Session

The Board returned to Open Session at 7:04 p.m.

Also present:

Emma Murphy, Student Board of Education Representative

Administrators present:

Dr. David J. Petrone, Superintendent of Schools
Robert Carroll, Director of Finance and Operations

Others present: Michele Mullaly, Director of Teaching and Learning; Beth Giller, Pupil and Staff Support Services Director; William Trudelle, Director of Physical Plant and Facilities; Cathie Drury, Director of Educational Technology; Ronda Carrie, CGS Principal; Jennifer DeRagon, GHR Principal; Dena DeJulius, CNH Principal; and Joseph Blake, CHS Principal.

IV. Salute to the Flag - 7:00 p.m.

W. Oros led the salute to the flag.

V. Audience of Citizens

There were none.

VI. Report of Superintendent

Dr. Petrone reviewed various items taking place around the district, region, and state.

A. Information: Securly Software Update

Dr. Petrone introduced Ms. Drury, who shared a presentation regarding the Securly software.

There was clarification regarding as to when this was put in place and if it could be connected to Say Something. Dr. Petrone noted the two systems would not speak to each other but the data could be compared.

B. Paré asked for clarification on what Securly is scanning. Ms. Drury explained it scans items in the Google Drive including the email system.

B. Information: Student Board of Education Representative Report

Emma talked about her experience as a remote student due to quarantine. She said, basically it is the same, just following the schedule at home. She said it was very easy and the teachers are doing great.

R. Williams asked about remote lab classes. Miss Murphy said she doesn't have a lab class, but believes the system in place works well.

E. Marchand asked how students are doing when they have to quarantine. Emma said she believes everyone is taking it seriously.

VII. VOTE: Consent Agenda

A. Accept the Retirement of Joanne Comerford, CNH Teacher

MOTION: Approve the consent agenda as presented

By: E. Marchand

Seconded: R. Williams

Result: Motion passes unanimously

VIII. Report of Chairman

W. Oros noted the budget vote is scheduled for February 11, 2021.

W. Oros reviewed items that are under review at the State legislation. He noted the pandemic and that its effects will be with us for some time to come.

X. VOTE: Approval of Minutes

A. Approve Minutes of January 14, 2021

MOTION: To approve the minutes of January 14 2021

By: B. Pare

Seconded: E. Marchand

Result: Motion passes unanimously

B. Approve Minutes of January 21, 2021

MOTION: To approve the minutes of January 21, 2021

By: M. Kortmann

Seconded: B. Pare

Result: Motion passes 5-0-1 (C. Williams abstained)

XI. Old Business

A. Information: COVID-19 Update

Dr. Petrone said we will look at this impacting us into the next school year.

He reported that we are having to address on average one case a day. He said overall, parents are doing very well and are keeping their children home when there is a question.

Dr. Petrone said at this point we are unsure what proms will look like, but it will probably be a last minute decision.

Dr. Petrone noted, at one of his meetings this week, a state representative said that Coventry has one of the highest enrollments at the preschool. He reviewed HEEC's current numbers.

Dr. Petrone reviewed the current percentages of students learning remotely.

W. Oros asked about the expenses of COVID-19.

Dr. Petrone said the ESSER II grant will be out soon. Dr. Petrone continued saying that Coventry is in the same situation with other districts in having issues obtaining substitute teachers.

E. Marchand asked how the nurses are doing. Dr. Petrone said they are super and are doing an outstanding job.

M. Kortmann asked about the contact tracing at K-5 and if anything was traced back to an outside event where we might know if we are curving down.

Dr. Petrone said the cases seem to be connected back to a relative, not necessarily an event.

B. Discussion and Possible VOTE: FY2022 Budget

W. Oros recognized the attached budget questions and related answers that were worked on this week. He added that the updated budget pages were delivered to the Board members' homes.

Dr. Petrone reviewed the major budget drivers, which drive the percentage increase: 3.39%.

He said the top three are the certified salaries, health insurance, and pension negotiations.

W. Oros asked for further questions. He said, in his experience, he does not see any room for reductions; we want to see that what the students have is enough.

Dr. Petrone said many other districts are starting to come in higher than us. He added that our budget includes the important work that needs to be done.

E. Marchand said the administrators have done a great job at developing the budget; it was easy to follow and the presentation was succinct.

B. Paré asked about the proposed carpenter position. Dr. Petrone said we are taking a current role and making it more robust to match the skillset. B. Paré said this is great and it is good to see the situations for staff improve.

C. Williams talked about the per pupil expenditures in Mansfield compared to Coventry. She said Mansfield offers much more; she is not against an expanded BOE budget for additional services. She said she did not see that in the budget increase and instead saw an increase in technology. She would like to see the technology put away during school. She said she hopes next year to see an expanded budget.

Dr. Petrone said the comparison to Mansfield is - imagine what Coventry could do with those additional funds. Dr. Petrone said his job is to help the district move forward but develop a budget that the community will support. He added, that it is in the Board's prerogative to add or take away from what was presented.

C. Williams said her biggest request is to reduce the technology and increase the hands on.

E. Marchand said there are a lot of things we would like to see added to our school system. He said if we could convince others in the community we could do that; it has been a struggle year after year to get higher budgets passed, even the low percentage ones. He said he would like to see items put back in the budget that were lost; it will be a real challenge beyond the Board.

M. Kortmann said she likes and will fight for all of the technology in the budget. She said she will continue to fight for the technology; students need to and are learning how to use technology.

R. Williams thanked everyone for the work done on the budget. He continued and commented on technology and the need to limit how much students sit in front of the screen.

W. Oros said this is an exceptional year due to the pandemic; we have to rely more on technology. He continued as time goes on we can continue the blend of technology and hands on. He added that students do not come in and rely on the computer all of the time.

Dr. Petrone said they will continue to update the Board as more information comes to light regarding the budget.

XII. Adjournment

MOTION: To adjourn the meeting at 8:16 p.m.

By: B. Pare

Seconded: C. Williams

Result: Motion passes unanimously

Respectfully submitted,

Kimberlee Arey Delorme
Board Clerk

Approved: February 11, 2021