

Coventry Board of Education
Coventry, Connecticut

Regular Board of Education Meeting
Approved Minutes of February 11, 2021
Remote/Electronic

Board Members Present:

Jennifer Beausoleil, Chairman
William Oros, Vice-Chairman
Eugene Marchand, Secretary
Mary Kortmann
Barbara Paré
Robert Williams

Board Members Absent:

Christina Williams

Also Present:

Emma Murphy, Student Board of Education Representative

Administrators Present:

Dr. David J. Petrone, Superintendent
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.

I. Call to Order

J. Beausoleil called the meeting to order at 7:07 p.m.

II. Salute to the Flag

J. Beausoleil led the salute to the flag.

III. Audience of Citizens

J. Beausoleil read the email provided by parent Tara Wesoloskie, which is attached to these minutes.

IV. Report of Superintendent

Dr. Petrone reviewed various regional and state meetings he participated in over the past few weeks.

Dr. Petrone continued, recognizing the high school for their acceptance into the National Business Honors Society.

A. Information: Student Board of Education Representative Report

Emma reviewed various things taking place at the high school; hockey has started again; FPS received the results for the state qualifiers.

V. VOTE: Consent Agenda

A. Accept the Retirement of Nancy Gwozdz, CGS Teacher

B. Accept the Retirement of Stephen Merlino, CHS Assistant Principal

E. Marchand asked that the retirement of Steve Merlino be moved off.

MOTION: Approve the consent agenda as presented

By: E. Marchand

Seconded: R. Williams

Result: Motion passes unanimously

MOTION: Accept the Retirement of Stephen Merlino with regret

By: B. Paré

Seconded: E. Marchand

Discussion: E. Marchand said he is happy for Mr. Merlino, but it will be a big loss for the high school. He said that Steve cares for kids passionately, and it shows. He added that Mr. Merlino spearheaded the start of the wrestling team. He thanked him and noted that he will be missed.

M. Kortmann seconded E. Marchand's comments.

Result: Motion passes unanimously

VI. Report of Chairman

J. Beausoleil thanked W. Oros for his assistance for acting as Chair at the last meeting. She added that the Town Council sent a letter to the state legislature advocating for additional funding for the schools' ventilation systems. She noted she was disappointed to read of the Region 14 Board members who moved to the head of the line for vaccinations. She said our Board members will not receive special treatment. She said she is proud to be a part of a Board who understands leadership.

J. Beausoleil recognized Coventry resident Sandra Aster-Stave for donating \$75,000 to the Booth and Dimock Library.

VIII. VOTE: Approval of Minutes

A. Approve Minutes of January 28, 2021

MOTION: To approve the minutes of January 28, 2021

By: E. Marchand

Seconded: B. Paré

Result: Motion passes 5-0-1 (J. Beausoleil abstained)

IX. Old Business

A. Information: COVID-19 Update

Dr. Petrone shared information from the DPH that the UK variant of the virus will most likely be the dominate variant by March. He added that it could lead to schools shutting down.

Dr. Petrone thanked the parents for their cooperation and for being cautious when children are not feeling well.

He added that the remote learner numbers are holding steady.

E. Marchand asked about covering staff absences. Dr. Petrone said this has been challenging; teachers are doing an excellent job of following the protocol.

E. Marchand talked about the UCONN nursing students who will be interning and how great that is for the district.

Dr. Petrone reviewed the new Executive Order from the Governor related to leave time for staff.

B. Discussion and Possible VOTE: Approve FY2022 Budget

J. Beausoleil noted this is the last scheduled meeting to review the budget.

Dr. Petrone we believe we will realize a vacancy savings of \$51,621 from the two new retirements.

Dr. Petrone noted the ESSER II Grant spreadsheet, which suggests how to use the funds we will receive. He said the funds can be used for the current year's budget, but he believes it would be more beneficial to push it out to FY22 and FY23. He reviewed the spreadsheet, which includes items that could be removed from the general operating budget and be funded by ESSER II funds instead.

Dr. Petrone said this would reduce the FY22 operating budget by \$289,865 and if we account for the vacancy savings for the two retirements, it would bring our increase down to 2.02%. He said he believes this will position the district for success.

J. Beausoleil said the timing of this is very fortunate as we can use it in our budget discussions. She recommends that the discussions involve the FY22 budget figures.

J. Beausoleil asked for consensus to use the proposed vacancy savings to reduce the certified salary line. There was consensus.

J. Beausoleil opened the floor to questions related to the ESSER II grant.

E. Marchand agreed with using the ESSER II funds this way - great idea.

R. Williams asked about the software included in the ESSER II grant and if there were any others. Dr. Petrone said the items must be specific to a need we did not have before the pandemic, so this is the software that qualifies.

M. Kortmann said the administration did an awesome job and this is exactly what she envisioned.

B. Paré thanked Dr. Petrone for his thorough review; she said the proposal is wonderful. She asked if the administration discussed using it all for this year. Dr. Petrone said it was discussed at length and he reviewed what has taken place so far this year, noting we are cautiously optimistic that we will be okay this year. B. Paré added that she likes the plan and wonders where the pushback will be.

J. Beausoleil said spreading these funds out over two years is not pushing a problem out.

B. Paré said a 2.02% increase is aligned with our community and our town.

W. Oros said the administration did a good job preparing this. He likes the idea of looking ahead. He added that he would be willing to make the motion to approve this process.

E. Marchand asked how the community would be informed of the new lower budget increase %. Dr. Petrone said through all of the phases of the budget that still need to take place.

R. Williams asked for clarification regarding the retirements. Dr. Petrone reviewed how those positions are filled and how funds can be realized.

J. Beausoleil asked for consensus to apply \$289,865 from the ESSER II grant to the operating budget. M. Kortmann verified this is the plan at the moment, and she realizes that there may be adjustments to the items included, but not the bottom line.

There was consensus.

B. Paré asked what the risk is of not using it all now. Dr. Petrone said it is not needed at this point, but we will have the option to access it if needed.

Dr. Petrone reiterated that he is cautiously optimistic that we will end the year positively.

MOTION: Approve the FY2022 Budget of \$28,430,819 a 2.02% increase over the FY21 budget

By: E. Marchand

Seconded: W. Oros

Discussion: J. Beausoleil said, given the uncertain times, fate and hard work by staff, brings us a budget with a 2.02% increase when we did not expect it. She said this budget provides services for students. She added, nice job everyone.

Result: Motion passes unanimously

X. Report of Board Members

A. Information: School Building Committee Updates

W. Trudelle said the building committee has been busy; they are optimistic the work will be done this summer; he reviewed the planning work that is being done.

B. Information: Fiscal Committee Report Meeting of February 11, 2021

W. Oros reported that the Management Report reflects we are reducing our deficit, which is down by \$50,000. He continued and reviewed other items discussed at the Fiscal Committee meeting, including Transportation and the use of the 1% account.

1. Possible VOTE: 1% Non-Lapsing Account

MOTION: To authorize the Superintendent to send a letter of request to the Town Council to access the 1% non lapsing account in the amount of \$6,300 to cover the cost of the GHR Unit Ventilator Controls

By: M. Kortmann Seconded: R. Williams

Result: Motion passes unanimously

XI. Possible VOTE: Executive Session (Superintendent Evaluation)

MOTION: Pursuant to CGS-1-200(c)(6)(A), the Board of Education will go into Executive Session for discussions related to the Superintendent's evaluation at 8:31 p.m.

By: B. Paré Seconded: E. Marchand

Result: Motion passes unanimously

XII. Open Session

The Board returned to Open Session at 8:48 p.m.

XIII. Adjournment

MOTION: To adjourn the meeting at 8:49 p.m.

By: W. Oros Seconded: B. Paré

Result: Motion passes unanimously

Respectfully submitted,

Kimberlee Arey Delorme
Board Clerk

Approved: February 25, 2021

From: [Tara Wesoloskie](#)
To: [audienceBOE](#)
Subject: [EXTERNAL] PJ Day 2020
Date: Thursday, January 28, 2021 7:09:43 PM

Parents, students, teachers, PTO leadership and administrators,

PJ Day 2020 was a record smashing success, measured in many forms. Statewide over \$364,000 was raised with donations still rolling in! In our tiny little town, where this event had its humble beginnings, over \$18,000 was raised! Participation soared, including both in person and virtual participants.

To date a staggering \$1.3 million dollars has been raised that will help give children fighting cancer new hope, in the form of new, more effective, less toxic treatments. All funds from PJ Day help fund life saving research, clinical trials and care at Connecticut Children's. Through my experiences as both a nurse at CCMC and a parent I can tell you these funds are benefiting real children in our area and giving them a chance at life.

This tremendous cumulative act of selflessness and generosity is one of the true highlights of 2020. And all of this in the midst of a pandemic, carried out by individuals living through EXTREMELY stressful times themselves!

Every school broke previous fundraising records. I will share the staggering totals to the school social media accounts. The online donation platform made donating easier and was truly impactful. Special events occurred at many of the schools, including teachers participating in dance challenges, shaving heads and beards, dyeing their hair and even giving homework holidays!

The sentiments expressed by the families and children truly fueled this event along. There was a point where I wasn't sure we could carry this event out in Covid times! Our little community rallied and proved that in tough times ... we were tougher, standing firm for what we believe in!

Thank you to everyone who supported and believed in this "little idea" that has now become a statewide phenomenon, that has weathered one of the greatest times in our history!

Respectfully submitted,

Tara Wesoloskie