

Coventry Board of Education
Coventry, Connecticut

Regular Board of Education Meeting
Approved Minutes of Thursday, September 24, 2020
Remote/Electronic

Board Members Present:

Jennifer Beausoleil, Chairman
Mary Kortmann
Barbara Paré
Christina Williams (arrived at 7:41 p.m.)
Robert Williams

Board Members Absent:

William Oros, Vice-Chairman
Eugene Marchand, Secretary

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:

Pat Cox, Athletic Director and Student Maria Bachiochi and Parents

I. Call to Order

J. Beausoleil called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

II. Salute to the Flag

J. Beausoleil led the salute to the flag.

III. Audience of Citizens

There were none.

IV. Report of Superintendent

A. Information: Recognition of Student Maria Bachiochi Winner of Senator Murphy's 2020 Annual Martin Luther King Jr. Essay Contest

Dr. Petrone introduced student Maria Bachiochi, who was present virtually. The Board congratulated Maria on this recognition.

B. Information: Student Board of Education Representative Report

Emma Murphy noted it has been a month since they started school and the big talk lately is that all students will come back together on Monday. She also mentioned that seniors are working on college applications.

Dr. Petrone continued his report reviewing other items such as various meetings that have taken place; question and answer sessions he held for staff; he said they will follow the same guidelines for middle school sports as high school; only parents will be able to attend home games; going forward with full in-person instruction, there will be no extracurricular activities, but there will be academic support after school as needed.

Dr. Petrone reviewed the Years of Service presentation, which is shared with staff at the beginning of the year. He announced staff names who have years of service beginning with 15 years and continuing in 5 year increments.

Dr. Petrone shared the Most Valuable Patriot award winners for 2019-2020: Liz Murphy (HEEC); Eileen Hosey (CGS); Nora Jones (GHR); Michelle Trani (CHS); and Tech Team (DW).

J. Beausoleil thanked Dr. Petrone for sharing the staff recognition items.

C. Information: Superintendent's 2020-2021 Goal Presentation

Dr. Petrone thanked the Administrators for the work they are doing every day and he appreciates their support. He shared his Goal Presentation for the 2020-2021 school year, which is available on the District's website.

(Christina Williams arrived at 7:41 p.m.)

M. Kortmann asked about the Associates Degree program from Goodwin College. Dr. Petrone said the structure is incredibly intense, beginning in the summer before their junior year.

R. Williams asked about goal 1.9 and the enrichment programs for the higher grades. Dr. Petrone explained that there is the Challenge and Enrichment Program and also the AP program at the high school.

M. Kortmann talked about the outside tuition students and if there were any enrolled this year. Dr. Petrone said yes. B. Paré said she appreciated the detail provided.

J. Beausoleil commented about the 6-12 STEM track for girls. She said it is such an important time to engage young women in this track.

C. Williams asked Emma Murphy if there has been an increased emphasis on science. Emma Murphy said yes, the teachers are really good at engaging quick and keeping students engaged. She said she is passionate about science and it is due to the teachers.

R. Williams talked about the SEL [Social Emotional Learning] and what the feedback was on how it went. Emma Murphy said the teachers are good at keeping students engaged and she said some are doing a "calm moment" for students. She said it has been promoted well and she believes it is helping this year.

M. Kortmann talked about Ted Opdenbrouw the new District Security Specialist and if a police department person would still be assigned as a school liaison. Dr. Petrone said, yes.

R. Williams asked about goal 2.1 and if the support systems have focused on students. Dr. Petrone said this goal is specifically for students. Dr. Petrone said it is just the fourth week of school and there will be opportunities throughout the school year.

C. Williams talked about goal 2.5 and the removal of the Columbus Day holiday. Dr. Petrone said this came out of the Executive Committee work and noted there is a lot of negativity surrounding this particular holiday. J. Beausoleil said the choppiness of the calendar is also an issue. C. Williams asked if there are other days that are being addressed for choppiness. J. Beausoleil said when the teachers' contract allows.

Dr. Petrone explained the history of adjusting the calendar to allow for more continuous learning.

C. Williams asked if there could be more work done with early teacher conferences and not have so many half days. J. Beausoleil said this is an area that is reviewed annually. She said there has been improvement and parent input.

C. Williams asked what Columbus Day would be replaced with. Dr. Petrone said that is part of that goal's work that would be done this year.

J. Beausoleil said she appreciated the goal surrounding para-educator training.

R. Williams asked about goal 3.9 and the wording "using student cultures as a basis for student learning." He said he is worried about students being uncomfortable with sharing. Dr. Petrone said this is a goal for staff and opening up our staff to working with students of all cultures.

J. Beausoleil commented on the accolades received for the G. H. Robertson School receiving the recognition of the National Blue Ribbon School Award.

V. Report of Chairman

J. Beausoleil again noted the GHR National Blue Ribbon School Award. She welcomed Ted Opdenbrouw to the system. She thanked the work of staff for the ability to open full in-person on Monday. She also thanked the community for taking safety precautions seriously so it was possible.

VI. Communications

VII. VOTE: Approval of Minutes

A. Approve Continued Minutes of August 26, 2020

MOTION: To approve the minutes of August 26, 2020

By: M. Kortmann

Seconded: R. Williams

Discussion: J. Beausoleil noted that these minutes are being reviewed again, with additional information provided by R. Williams. M. Kortmann requested on page 6, paragraph 5, the third and fourth sentences be replaced with, "M. Kortmann,

Dr. Petrone, and J. Beausoleil explained that these numbers were averages and were difficult to compare to other schools since Coventry not only allows, but encourages all students to challenge themselves by taking AP classes; many other districts allow only top students into AP classes; this policy results in lower averages; continual improvement in results for all students taking AP classes is always the goal.”

B. Paré asked for clarification of this approval procedure. J. Beausoleil said that R. Williams provided a few sentences that he wanted added to the minutes under this discussion and since it had M. Kortmann's name attached to it, she should be able to clarify those statements.

C. Williams said, if M. Kortmann is allowed to include more information, than R. Williams should be able to also.

R. Williams said he wholeheartedly believes only 4s and 5s [AP test results] will count for college acceptance.

J. Beausoleil called for the vote; all those in favor of accepting the additional wording provided by M. Kortmann.

Result: Motion fails 2-3 (M. Kortmann, J. Beausoleil YEAS and B. Paré; C. Williams, R. Williams NAYS)

J. Beausoleil said the minutes would come back.

B. Approve Minutes of September 10, 2020

MOTION: To approve minutes of September 10, 2020

By: M. Kortmann

Seconded: C. Williams

Result: Motion passes unanimously

VIII. Old Business

A. Information: COVID-19 Update/Opening of the 2020-21 School Year

Dr. Petrone said we are going all students all days on Monday. He talked about the positive conversations he has had with many parents this week to answer questions and ease concerns.

Dr. Petrone continued and talked about some students still learning remotely and what that will look like. He noted that there will be specific teachers [grades 1-5] dedicated to teaching the remote learners and he believes this is a good solution. He noted that the class sizes look good. He talked about various procedures and routines that have been reviewed in preparation.

M. Kortmann asked about the remote learners and those teachers. Dr. Petrone said the remote learners are assigned to those teachers. He continued to explain how that learning will work.

C. Williams asked about students using the school buses. Dr. Petrone said the response was just over 50% of students would be riding the buses.

At approximately 9:00 p.m. the meeting experienced technical difficulties and had to pause.

At approximately 9:27 p.m. everyone rejoined via Zoom and the meeting continued.

Dr. Petrone continued his review. The Board discussed the plan for kindergarteners. C. Williams said she is concerned that the kindergarteners who are learning remotely will be forgotten or left behind and is there something else we can do. Dr. Petrone said resources and staff have been reviewed and this is the program we can provide at this time. He added that our kindergarten teachers are great and they will actively engage these students. He said they will not be forgotten. He added it is a less than ideal situation.

R. Williams asked about how many are remote-learning from CHS. Dr. Petrone said it is about 10% and they will attend their regular classes remotely.

C. Williams asked as we pivot between learning models will the hybrid model be improved. Dr. Petrone said yes they will be adjusting what that model looks like.

1. Athletics Update

Dr. Petrone said not too much has changed. He said cross country and soccer will begin. He said football will not play but will condition and when cross country and soccer ends, so will football. He said the only spectators will be parents of athletes at home games only. He said they are starting to look at how volleyball could possibly happen.

B. Information and VOTE: Policies up for Revision

J. Beausoleil reviewed the procedures. She asked if there were objections to voting on the policies as a block. There was no objection.

MOTION: To approve the following policies that are up for revisions 1251; 3541; 5131.7; 5131.71; and 5144

By: M. Kortmann

Seconded: C. Williams

Result: Motion passes unanimously

C. Information and VOTE: COVID-19 Series C-19 Temporary Policies

J. Beausoleil reviewed this special policies series related to COVID-19.

MOTION: Approve Temporary COVID-19/Series C-19 Policy Packet which will remain in effect up to and including June 30 2021 unless otherwise noted in the individual policy - COVID-19 - Temporary Policies and Regulations Related to the COVID-19 Pandemic; COVID-19 - Health and Safety Protocols Related to the COVID-19 Pandemic; COVID-19 - 4000 Families First Coronavirus response ACT (FFCRA); 1241; 1250; 1330; 3514; 3541; 4110; 4118.5; 5110; 5131.2; 5131.4; and 5144

By: M. Kortmann

Seconded: C. Williams

Discussion: B. Paré noted policy 5144 Student Discipline and commented on students who may fall short of new guidelines and has it been considered to put someone in charge to oversee these situations as they come up. Dr. Petrone explained how discipline is handled for various offenses, which often includes

educational components related to the offense. B. Paré said there will be a lot of challenges already and she wanted to put the concern out there. J. Beausoleil said regarding expulsions, there are state regulations and many procedure in place where mitigating factors would be taken into consideration.

C. Williams asked about the student absenteeism related to COVID-19. Dr. Petrone said the State just came out with a list of codes; a code needs to be applied to the appropriate absence.

Result: Motion passes unanimously

D. Discussion and VOTE: Open Choice Program

MOTION: To take the necessary steps for Coventry to join the Open Choice program with the start of the 2021-22 school year and give the Superintendent authorization to do so

J. Beausoleil talked briefly about the process for becoming an Open Choice district.

There were no questions.

By: B. Paré

Seconded: R. Williams

Result: Motion passes unanimously

IX. New Business

A. Information and VOTE: Rescind Board 2014 Action to Turnover the District's Wells

MOTION: To hereby rescind the September 11, 2014 vote of the Board of Education to turnover the District's wells in exchange for participation in the Town's water project development and to authorize the Superintendent to take any and all actions necessary to carry out the resolution and ensure that the Board retains control over its wells

By: M. Kortmann

Seconded: R. Williams

Discussion: J. Beausoleil explained the reason behind the original discussion and vote regarding turning over the wells for a town water project.

She continued that the project did not go forward and it is important to rescind the vote and be sure the district has control over the wells.

M. Kortmann asked what John Elsesser thinks the status of the project is. Dr. Petrone said he can't speak for John.

B. Paré asked if there is an urgency right now. J. Beausoleil said she doesn't like leaving the jurisdiction of the wells with an entity that no longer exists; if a new company or organization wants to begin discussions again, we can revisit this.

B. Paré asked about the Superintendent's role in rescinding the action. J. Beausoleil said this wording is used often, which allows the Superintendent to

act on the Board's behalf; it would not entitle him to have control over the wells or make agreements about them without the Board.

B. Paré asked again if the Town Manager is working on other deals. J. Beausoleil said he is looking for other companies; she reiterated that the Board would have to vote again to give authority to a new company.

The Board discussed the original proposals and the specific proposal with the original company.

B. Paré wanted to be sure the Board would not be unraveling work that is being done. M. Kortmann said she believes the water project committee has been disbanded. J. Beausoleil said it would not unravel anything in process.

C. Williams said she would like to find out more about the Town's water project. C. Williams said she is not familiar with this subject and she is taking at face value what is being relayed here. She said there is not enough information for her to be educated to make an informed vote.

J. Beausoleil called for the vote.

Result: Motion fails 2-3 (M. Kortmann and J. Beausoleil YEAS; B. Paré, C. Williams, and R. Williams NAYS)

X. Report of Board Members

A. Information: Transportation Committee Update

B. Paré reviewed the current status of the district's Transportation. She said a meeting was scheduled last week, but there was no new business that required a meeting. Dr. Petrone said since last week a new request has come in and a new meeting will be scheduled.

B. Paré added that the Wellness Committee will be meeting in October with a focus on mental health this year.

XI. Possible VOTE: Executive Session (Bargaining Unit Negotiations)

MOTION: Pursuant to CGS-1-200(c)(6)(A), the Board of Education will go into Executive Session for discussions related to Bargaining Unit Negotiations with the Superintendent and Director of Finance and Operations Present at 10:22 p.m.

By: B. Paré

Seconded: C. Williams

Result: Motion passes unanimously

XII. Open Session: Possible VOTE - Approve Administrator Contract

The Board came out of Executive Session and returned to Open Session at 10:40 p.m.

MOTION: To approve the Agreement between the Coventry Board of Education and the Coventry Administrative Association 2021-2024

By: M. Kortmann

Seconded: C. Williams

Result: Motion passes unanimously

XIII. Adjournment

MOTION: To adjourn the meeting at 10:42 p.m.

By: C. Williams

Seconded: R. Williams

Result: Motion passes unanimously

Respectfully submitted:

Kimberlee Arey Delorme
Board Clerk

Approved: October 08, 2020