



Thursday, August 24, 2023
School Committee Meeting: 6:00 p.m.

Coventry Town Hall 1670 Flat River Road, Coventry, Rhode Island 02816

Please click the link below to join the webinar:

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Call to Order/Roll Call

Meeting called to order by Chairperson Pierson 6:02 pm. **(6:00 p.m.)**

Roll Call Vote:	James Pierson, Chairperson	<u>Aye</u>
	Ana Isabel dos Reis-Couto,	<u>Aye</u>
	Vice-Chairperson	<u> </u>
	David Florio, Member	<u>Aye</u>
	John Cambio, Jr., Member	<u>Aye</u>
	Bradford Mayer, Member	<u> </u>
	Don Cowart	<u>Aye</u>
	Christopher DeVerna	<u> </u>

Vote to Go Into Executive Session

Motion No. 23-15-1 by Member Florio, seconded by Member dos Reis-Couto that the Committee recess into Executive Session at 6:02 p.m. to consider matter(s) relating specifically to:

- Student Matters: R.I.G.L. §42-46-5 (a)(8) (Homeschool Requests)
- Litigation: R.I.G.L. §42-46-5(a)(2) (Carlos v. Coventry)
- Litigation: R.I.G.L. §42-46-5(a)(2) (E.A. v. Coventry)

- Approval of Executive Session Minutes 8/10/2023, the following items were discussed: 1.) Student Matters: R.I.G.L. §42-46-5(a)(8) (Homeschool Requests), 2.) Approval of Executive Session Minutes 7/27/2023, 3.) Collective Bargaining: R.I.G.L. §42-46-5(a)(2)(Discussion on SRP Contract)

Motion passed 4/0.

Reconvene Open Session

The Open Meeting reconvened at 6:31 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance/Moment of Silence/Safety Notification/Reading of Mission Statement

Vote to Seal Minutes of Executive Session

Motion No. 23-15-2 Member Florio, seconded by Member dos Reis-Couto, that the records of the Executive Session be kept closed pursuant to Sections §42-46-4 and §42-46-5. Motion passed 4/0.

Executive Session Report

In executive session two votes were taken, the first to approve homeschool requests and the second to approve executive session minutes of 8/10/2023. Both motions passed. Litigation of Carlos V. Coventry and E.A. v. Coventry.

Approval of Minutes 8/10/2023

Motion No. 23-15-3 by Member dos Reis Couto, seconded by Member Cambio, to approve the minutes of 8/10/2023 as presented. Motion passed 4/0.

Citizens Comments on Topics Listed on the Agenda

Chairperson Pierson stated they were changing the citizens comments format to balance meeting times. Chairperson Pierson opened for comments. There was none. No public comment.

Pre-K Restructure Presentation: Discussion

Mr. Cowart said that the pre-k department has been restructured. He introduced the team and what their roles are. The team consist of Alison Robey, Sara Bogdon, Joy Marshall, and Lisa Neil. One of the items they are working on is creating a pre-k handbook. They will also be using Early Bird, a game based platform, which is paid by a grant. Chairperson Pierson opened for comments. Question and answer session followed. No public comment.

Facilities Summer Work Update: Discussion

Don gave credit to Mr. Hill and his department for all their work from the day they open until the day they close. Mr. Hill thanked Mr. Cowart. Summer went well and thanked his department. He reviewed projects that have been completed at the high school and middle school. A list was provided to the committee. He also reviewed projects done District Wide. Cafeteria tables were given to the District by North Smithfield School District. His workers attended asbestos training. Mr. Cowart stated that the conference room was updated. There were many other projects that were completed that aren't on the list. We are developing a rotation so items are maintained. Chairperson Pierson opened for comments. Questions and answer sessions followed and the committee thanked him for his great work. No public comment.

Technology Security Update: Discussion

Mr. Cowart introduced Mr. Murphy to speak. Mr. Murphy received a notification of a security threat. He had the user reset password and reset the system back to factory settings. Security measures worked and the threat was detected before there was a problem. Monitoring has continued since this incident. Mr. Murphy stated that cybersecurity training is provided to all employees. Fishing tests go out monthly. Weekly scans are done to make sure the District is not vulnerable. Chairperson Pierson opened for comments. Comments session followed. No public comment.

Suicide Prevention Policy, First Reading: Discussion and Vote

Legislation required us to look at the policy. The state provided a lot of material and reviewed other districts policies at well. Ms. Anzaolone said it is broken up into three areas and reviewed those three areas. Ms. Anzaolone's wants to be sensitive in rolling this policy out. Chairperson Pierson opened for comments. Question and answer session followed. No public comment.

Motion No. 23-15-4 Member dos Reis-Couto, seconded by Member Cambio, to approve the first reading of the Suicide Prevention Policy. Motion passed 4/0

Finance Report: Discussion

Mr. Cowart said Mr. DaVerner and Ms. Magnerili have been working together on the finance department. They are working to have a standardized template and have been working on the

CTA and SRP contracts as well as their impact statements. Mr. Cowart introduced Mr. DeVerana to speak. Mr. DeVerna reviewed his transition plan and provided a copy of the plan to the committee. He gave background information on the new senior accountant. He reviewed the annual audit. He said the field work is done for the 2022 year on the school side. He shared the 2022 report. The report shows a preliminary deficit. Mr. Cowart reviewed items that contributed to the deficit. He said they are working together to address these issues. The Attorney General's office has given a verbal go ahead to submit to them a formal letter. The letter for the Attorney General's office will need to be approved at the next meeting and then will need to be submitted. Mr. DeVerna said they reviewed fiscal year 2023 and closed it this summer. There is a preliminary deficit which is unadjusted. Capital funds were expected to transfer from the town; the District will formally request the funds. There are grants that need to be closed out and line items adjusted. The District expects to breakeven for 2023. All items discussed were provided in a report to the committee. After Reviewing the last three years there is projected deficit for 2024. Mr. Cowart said they looking on how to right the ship by sharing a preliminary plan. Chairperson Pierson opened for questions. No questions or comments at this time. Mr. DeVerana said they are working with the town and are constantly reviewing and updating as they work with the town to answer their questions. Chairperson Pierson opened for comments. Questions and answer session followed. No public comment

Superintendent Report: 1.) District Focus: The 4 Ps-Positivity, Pride, Perseverance, and Professionalism

Mr. Cowart asked, how to change our culture? What can we do? It was included in the welcome back letter and will be part of opening day as well as being part of weekly emails to staff.

Positive- it is hard to be positive. We chose our attitude.

Pride-having pride means we need to be proud to be an educator and proud to be part of your school. Mr. Cowart said Ms. Macomber always shows pride in the high school,

Professionalism-we have so many great staff members and we need to celebrate that. If we fall into a negative mindset it affects the professionalism. Let us celebrate professionalism. We need systems. We need to improve the structure so we are more accountable and will have more professionalism.

The theme will be interwoven throughout many things throughout the year. Chairperson opened for comments and questions. Question and session followed. No public comment.

Citizens' Comments

No comments.

Scheduling of the Next Meeting

Motion No. 23-15-5 by Member dos Reis Couto, and seconded by Member Cambio, to schedule the next meeting for September 14, 2023 at 6:00 p.m. Motion passed 4/0.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion No. 23-15-6 by Member Florio, and seconded by Member dos Reis-Couto, to adjourn at 7:55pm. Motion passed 4/0.