

Coventry Board of Education
Coventry, Connecticut

Board of Education Regular Meeting
Approved Minutes of Thursday, January 25, 2024
Administration Building Conference Room

Board Members Present:

Jennifer Beausoleil, Chairperson
Eugene Marchand, Vice Chairperson
Mary Kortmann, Secretary
Emma Eaton
Courtney Rossignol
Christina Williams

Board Members Absent:

Joseph Cleary

Administrators Present:

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

Also Present:

Mya Ransford, Student Board of Education Representative

Audience: Pat Cox, Athletic Director; Michele Mullaly, Director of Teaching and Learning; Heidi Davis, CGS Principal; Jennifer DeRagon, GHR Principal; Ross Sward, CNH Principal; Joseph Blake, CHS Principal; Christian Marcinczyk, CNH Assistant Principal; William Trudelle, Director of Physical Plant and Facilities; Cathie Drury, Director of Educational Technology; Dr. Beth Giller, PSSS Director; and Jennifer Trueman, CHS Assistant Principal.

I. Call to Order

J. Beausoleil called the meeting to order at 7:01 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 the Superintendent

J. Beausoleil announced that Dr. Petrone will be receiving UCONN's 2024 Outstanding Superintendent of the Year award. Dr. Petrone thanked the Board and administrators for being a part of the team. There were congratulations from all.

Dr. Petrone reported on various events taking place in-district, regionally, and state-wide.

IV.A. Information: Athletics "Teams vs Clubs"

Dr. Petrone introduced Mr. Cox, who shared a presentation on differences between teams and clubs, which is available on the district's website via the BoardBook portal.

E. Marchand asked about the participation rate at the high school. Mr. Cox said at CHS it is just under 60%. E. Marchand said athletics is such an important learning experience for our students. He commended Mr. Cox for his diligence and dedication to the program.

Mr. Cox explained cooperative sports that Coventry participates in with other towns - Hockey, Girls Swim Team, and Football.

IV.B. Information: District Technology Plan Visioning and Planning (Goal 1.7)

Dr. Petrone introduced Ms. Drury who shared an update on the development of the District Technology Plan, which is available on the district's website via the BoardBook portal.

C. Williams discussed her concern with chasing technology for our youngest students. Ms. Drury said the technology used at this level is to complement and support the fundamentals. C. Williams continued with her concern about children and too much screen time. She also suggested that the team look at other countries who are excelling and see what they are doing. Dr. Petrone explained that they do examine best practices worldwide.

IV.C. Information: Board of Education Student Representative Report

Miss Ransford reported on happenings taking place at the high school including picking classes for next year and an Albert Schweitzer Club fundraiser.

V. Report of the Chairman

J. Beausoleil reported on a CABE Board Chair "check in" meeting and a SDE Reading Forum that was not handled well by the State organizers.

VII. VOTE: Approval of Minutes

VII.A. Approve Minutes of January 18, 2024

MOTION: To approve the minutes of January 18, 2024

By: C. Williams

Seconded: E. Marchand

Result: Motion passes 5-0-1 (E. Eaton abstained)

VIII. Old Business

VIII.A. Discussion and Possible VOTE: FY2025 Budget

J. Beausoleil reviewed the new pieces of information that were available, including one-time expenses and varying insurance rates and how those affect the bottom line.

Dr. Petrone reported on the elimination of Freshman Basketball and that the funds for uniforms and the coach were already expended. He also said an error in the price of a program at CGS was adjusted, which brought the overall FY25 budget increase to 4.98%.

J. Beausoleil suggested the one-time expenses for a possible discussion.

M. Kortmann suggested removing the Food Service pension cost from the operating budget as there are funds in the Food Services account to cover that. There was consensus from the Board to move the \$32,019 to Food Service.

M. Kortmann suggested moving the cost of the CrowdStrike software (\$62,540) to the current FY24 Operating Budget. There was consensus from the Board to do that.

C. Rossignol asked if the Wrestling Mats could be taken out of the Building Use fund. M. Kortmann said they don't fit the criteria for that fund.

Mr. Carroll said with reducing the Pension amount and the CrowdStrike amount, that brings us to a 4.66% increase.

C. Williams reviewed her concerns regarding the buildings and infrastructure needs vs what we are spending on technology. However, she said she would vote on the 4.66% right now.

J. Beausoleil asked if the Board wanted to review the insurance rates and talk about adjusting that. Dr. Petrone reviewed where we are now in the process. M. Kortmann confirmed that we are already below the suggested amount and she said she would not want to go below that. C. Williams agreed.

There were no more questions.

MOTION: To approve a FY25 budget request of \$30,974,700 to send to the Town Council

By: C. Williams

Seconded: M. Kortmann

Discussion: C. Rossignol expressed her concerns related to the technology costs and that those expenses are taking away from the building and infrastructure needs.

Result: Motion passes unanimously

IX. New Business

IX.A. Negotiation Committee Assignments

IX.A.1. Administrators (3)

M. Kortman, C. Williams, E. Eaton volunteered for this committee.

IX.A.2. Custodians (3)

J. Beausoleil, C. Rossignol, and E. Marchand volunteered for this committee.

IX.A.3. Para-Educators (3)

M. Kortmann, C. Rossignol, and E. Marchand volunteered for this committee.

IX.A.4. Secretaries (3)

E. Eaton and J. Beausoleil volunteered for this committee and J. Cleary was assigned.

X. Adjournment

MOTION: To adjourn the meeting at 8:30 p.m.

By: C. Rossignol

Seconded: C. Williams

Result: Motion passes unanimously

Respectfully Submitted:

Kimberlee Arey Delorme
Board Clerk

Approved: February 8, 2024