

Coventry Board of Education
Coventry, Connecticut

Board of Education Regular Meeting
Approved Minutes of Thursday, November 14, 2024
Administration Building Conference Room

Board Members Present:

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

Board Members Absent:

None

Administrators Present:

Dr. David J. Petrone, Superintendent of Schools
Charmaine Bradshaw-Hill, Finance Director

Also Present:

Lillian O'Neil, Student Board of Education Representative

I. Call to Order

J. Beausoleil called the meeting to order at 7:00 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

Dr. Petrone reported that on November 5th, professional development was held for all staff. He also attended the State Teacher of Year ceremony with Coventry Teacher of the Year winner Jessica Harris. On Veterans Day, school was in session and used as an opportunity to honor the holiday with activities at each school. The HVAC meeting with the town also took place, and the chiller and DOS are on track to be delivered on time. Additionally, Dr. Petrone highlighted the successful conclusion of the Coventry Lake Community Rowing Club's season. The team participated in the world's largest three-day regatta, with both current and past students taking part in the event.

C. Rossignol shared that this was the team's first trip as a full group. She provided an overview of the rowers, noting some had disabilities, and highlighted the diversity of the other teams, which included older rowers. She also shared statistics on the team's placement in the events.

IV.A. Recognition: CNH Boys and Girls Soccer Teams – Northeast Middle School Athletic Conference Champions

Dr. Petrone was excited to announce that both the girls' and boys' teams finished the season with a 10-1 record and both won the Northeast Middle School Athletic Conference championship. The team coaches shared their thoughts on the players' achievements and teamwork.

J. Beausoleil remarked that this is a strong feeder program for the high school, highlighting how it showcases the positive things happening in the district and the excellent way they are representing Coventry.

IV.B. Information: Fund for Teachers (Driver: Deeper Thinking & Learning) – Matt Kyer, CGS Library Media Specialist

Dr. Petrone introduced Matt Kyer, who provided an overview of the program he participated in and shared his experience. The presentation is available on the district's website via the BoardBook portal. Mr. Kyer explained that the program is a fellowship designed for teachers who work to support student success, enrich their own practice, and strengthen their schools and communities.

J. Cleary inquired about the tribal different languages and how they differ.

J. Beausoleil commented that the grant Mr. Kyer applied for seemed like an excellent opportunity for the Board to learn about. She also noted how he is incorporating his fellowship experience into his work with the Coventry community, while continuing to give back to the community where he completed his fellowship.

IV.C. Information: Board of Education Student Representative Report – Lillian O'Neil

Miss O'Neil reported on various topics taking place at the high school including the Charter Festival, the band's participation in the Symphonic Band, the ECE French class's visit to UCONN, Football Senior Night, the fall drama production, and that she looks forward to attending the CABE/CAPSS Convention this weekend.

V. Report of the Chairman

J. Beausoleil reported on the recent quarterly joint fiscal meeting, where she shared updates on the pending CIP requests. She also highlighted the strong achievements of the district's sports teams, noting the successful end-of-season results for the two soccer teams and the volleyball team's advancement to the championships. She commended the students for their dedication and accomplishments, emphasizing what they can achieve when they are passionate about something. She informed the Board about the upcoming CABE convention and reminded everyone about the Town Budget Hearing scheduled for March 4th, followed by the annual Town Meeting on April 26th. She mentioned that the district

has been busy working on draft budgets and expressed her gratitude for the staff's hard work, recognizing the positive impact they have on students every day.

VI. Communications

There were none

VII. VOTE: Approval of Minutes

VII.A. Approve Minutes of the Special Meeting of October 30, 2024 (6:00 p.m.)

MOTION: To approve the Minutes of the Special Meeting of October 30, 2024

By: E. Marchand

Seconded: C. Williams

Result: Motion carries, with two abstentions by J. Cleary and E. Eaton

VII.B. Approve Minutes of the Regular Meeting of October 30, 2024 (7:00 p.m.)

Edit by C. Williams, pg. 2, second paragraph; strike 'last meet' and replace with "in their conference."

MOTION: To approve the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of October 30, 2024, as amended

By: E. Marchand

Seconded: C. Rossignol

Result: Motion carries, with two abstentions by J. Cleary and E. Eaton

VIII. Old Business

VIII.A. Information and Possible VOTE: Name the CHS Baseball Field the Robert F. Plaster Athletic Field Complex

Dr. Petrone provided an overview of the process the committee followed to decide on naming the complex, which is available on the district's website via the BoardBook portal. The committee, along with Mrs. Plaster, was present in support of the decision. Dr. Petrone mentioned that the cost of the signage would be \$963.10 and expressed that it's a meaningful way to honor Bob's legacy. He also noted that Mrs. Plaster taught in Coventry for 45 years.

A committee member shared that Bob grew up Coventry, played sports here, went on to college, and then returned to Coventry to teach for his entire career. Another committee member spoke about Bob's long-standing history in the town.

J. Beausoleil remarked that gathering 100 signatures for this cause is an impressive achievement and noted the overwhelming support through signatures and letters, which has been incredible.

G. Marchand commented that this recognition is a wonderful honor for a wonderful man, emphasizing his ongoing respect for the work that teachers and coaches do. He believes this honor is truly deserved.

J. Beausoleil mentioned that a dedication ceremony will be held in the near future.

MOTION: To approve naming the CHS Baseball Field the Robert F. Plaster Athletic Field Complex

By: E. Marchand

Seconded: C. Williams

Result: Motion carries unanimously

IX. New Business

IX.A. VOTE: Approve the Board of Education Meeting Dates for 2025

MOTION: To approve the Board of Education Meeting Dates for 2025 as presented

By: C. Rossignol

Seconded: C. Williams

Result: Motion carries unanimously

X. Report of Board Members

X.A. Information: Fiscal Committee Report, Meeting of November 14, 2024 – M. Kortmann and Ms. Bradshaw-Hill

M. Kortmann stated the district's financial situation has improved in terms of the deficit. Charmaine is working to ensure that all the figures behind the numbers are solid and accurate

J. Beausoleil reviewed the Capital Improvement Plan sheet and explained the color-coding system. She highlighted that high-priority items are related to security, safety and the systems that support them. Some of these items are either at risk of failure or already pending failure. She cautioned the Joint Finance Committee that the BOE request for funding will likely be larger than usual due to immediate needs that can't be delayed.

There was a discussion regarding the HVAC inspection charge, the prioritization of items, and the possibility of including certain items in the bonding plan.

C. Rossignol inquired about the carpet replacement and whether it could be covered under the building use account. Since this was only discussed at the joint meeting this evening, the CIP narrative had not been updated yet. It will be revised for the December meeting.

J. Beausoleil stated that she doesn't see the benefit of installing window units while the district is already working on the HVAC system. It doesn't seem to make sense to consider them a priority 1 item. E. Eaton agreed, calling it a waste of money and noted that they've communicated to the Town Council that window units are not a priority and will be pushed out by one year. J. Cleary countered, explaining that the lack of air conditioning during the hot months was unbearable for both students and teachers, and he didn't think it should be completely removed from the list. Dr. Petrone added that there is a lot involved in installing the window units, making it a complex decision.

M. Kortmann reiterated that the highest priority should be security-related items. The Board discussed whether air conditioning units should remain a current priority 1 item.

E. Eaton suggested keeping them on the list but pushing it out one year. The paging system was also discussed and confirmed as a priority 1 item.

C. Williams inquired about the district's fleet vehicles, requesting a status update on each one, including their current condition, what they are used for, and the total number of

vehicles in the fleet. Dr. Petrone responded by providing details on the condition of each vehicle, noting that some are unreparable or no longer usable. He also explained the current use for each vehicle in the fleet. There was further discussion about the possibility of utilizing other fleet vehicles, rather than purchasing new ones, to meet the district's needs.

C. Williams also inquired about the IT network enhancements and upgrades, asking whether they are necessary to that magnitude. Dr. Petrone explained that these upgrades are in line with the Opalescence Plan, and the funding requested each year is necessary to keep the district's technology current.

X.A.1. Information and VOTE: HVAC Inspection and Commissioning

Dr. Petrone shared that the cost for the required commissioning is \$48k. The company is willing to conduct the inspection for the components that are not part of the HVAC Project for an additional cost of \$60k. If the district chooses to wait and only do the commissioning, the cost for the inspection at a later date would be approximately \$120k. By being proactive and doing both now, the district would save approximately \$50k.

To proceed, the Board would need to authorize the Superintendent to send a letter to the Town Council requesting approval for this approach.

J. Beausoleil noted that during the joint finance meeting, the Town Finance committee didn't agree that they would fund the project but suggested sending a formal request for funding.

M. Kortmann stated that the high school is the one worth considering for this type of inspection. If the district can secure funding from the Town Council for the high school, they can then wait for the state's decision on whether the other buildings need to be done.

MOTION: To authorize the Superintendent to send a letter to the Town Manager and Town Council requesting funding of the CHS HVAC inspection to be done to save money.

By: J. Cleary

Seconded: E. Marchand

Result: Motion carries unanimously

XI. Adjournment

MOTION: To adjourn the meeting at 8:24 p.m.

By: C. Williams

Seconded: E. Eaton

Result: Motion carries unanimously

Respectfully Submitted:

Tricia Dean
Board Clerk

Approved: December 12, 2024