

**Coventry Board of Education**  
Coventry, Connecticut

**Board of Education Regular Meeting**  
Approved Minutes of Thursday, December 12, 2024  
Administration Building Conference Room

Board Members Present:

Jennifer Beausoleil, Chairperson  
Eugene Marchand, Vice Chairperson  
Mary Kortmann, Secretary  
Joseph Cleary (arrived at 7:15 pm)  
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 7:03 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 several highlights for the month, including new teacher orientation meetings, department budget meetings, the professional development day on December 6<sup>th</sup>, the PTO craft fair, and weather challenges due to snow and wind. The budget will be presented to the Board on January 9<sup>th</sup>. He provided an update on the HVAC project, noting that the new pole and transformer will be independent of the current one, ensuring a much smoother transition. Dr. Petrone also attended the URSA/NASA Superintendent monthly meeting and shared that the CGS library media specialist will serve on the 2027 Elementary Nutmeg Selection Committee.

#### **IV.A. Recognition: CNH Girls Cross Country Team – Northeast Middle School Athletic Conference Cross Country Champions**

Dr. Petrone shared that the team finished the season with a perfect 6-0 record. The girls' team captain, Bella, spoke about the positive aspects of her cross-country experience. Mr. Sward offered words of congratulations to the team.

#### **IV.B. Information: Board of Education Student Representative Report – Lillian O'Neil**

Miss O'Neil reported on various activities taking place at the high school, including the start of winter sports, the first track meet on December 1<sup>st</sup>, the PTO craft fair, the band concert held on December 10<sup>th</sup>, the chorus concert scheduled for tonight, PJ day tomorrow, and the upcoming winter break.

#### **IV.C. Information: K-5 Behavior Support Programming (Collective & Individual Identity) – Ms. Zurell**

Dr. Petrone reviewed that when the program was initially proposed, there was an immediate need for a K-5 behavior program. However, there is no longer an immediate need for the 3-5 component. The focus will now be on implementing the program solely at CGS. Ms. Zurell presented the K-5 Behavior Support Program, which is available on the district's website via the BoardBook portal. She emphasized that the program will initially focus on K-2. Key highlights included the program components, proposed timeline, best practices, and the cost to develop and implement the program in Coventry.

Dr. Petrone and Ms. Zurell answered questions regarding the social work services being provided in-house, noting that our full-time psychologist and social worker already have strong relationships with students and families. They explained that student entrance and exit are determined by individual needs, with a functional behavior assessment guiding decisions about entry and exit from the program.

Given the current space, the program can accommodate 3-4 students. There is no specific teacher-to-student ratio required, but it is important to have a safe space. Dr. Petrone noted that, for now, the program will be kept at a smaller scale to ensure it is well-established. Some students may transition in and out of the program as needed. If demand increases, the situation will be reassessed, including the potential costs and necessary adjustments.

Dr. Petrone addressed the seclusion and restraint numbers, reporting a total of 37 incidents since the start of the school year. He did not have a comparison to other districts in the state. The seclusion rate from the past years was reviewed, and it was noted that statistically, the outcomes tend to be better if a student enters the program at a younger age.

Ms. Zurell addressed whether an internal hire would be made for the special education teacher for the program. She explained that the position has been posted for a month, but there has not been a suitable internal candidate.

Additionally, it was noted that some general education classes may experience less disruption as a result of having this program in place. Dr. Petrone emphasized that the size of the program is based on what the district and the budget can sustain. It was also

highlighted that having this program in-house is more cost-effective than outplacing a student, while also providing the student with a consistent environment.

## **V. Report of the Chairman**

J. Beausoleil reported that the PTO craft fair was a fantastic opportunity for the community to support our schools. She highlighted that PJ day is tomorrow and shared the following budget dates: the March 4<sup>th</sup> Town Hearing at 7 pm and the March 10<sup>th</sup> Board presentation to the Town Council. The CABE Legislative Breakfast will be held on January 3<sup>rd</sup> at 8 am at RHAM. She also expressed her appreciation for the school's weekly updates, particularly enjoying the information on the Lego Coding Club. E. Eaton provided an update on the upcoming PJ Day activities.

## **VI. Communications**

There were none

## **VII. VOTE: Approval of Minutes**

### **VII.A. Approve Minutes of November 14, 2024**

**MOTION: To approve the Minutes of November 14, 2024**

**By: E. Marchand**

**Seconded: J. Cleary**

**Result: Motion carries unanimously**

## **VIII. Old Business**

### **VIII. Possible VOTE: Adopt Coventry's Final Educator and Leader Evaluation Plan 2024-25**

Dr. Petrone informed the Board that the state requested only minimal changes to the originally submitted plan. Although the Board had already approved the plan, they now need to approve the revised version with the changes requested by the state.

**MOTION: To adopt Coventry's Final Educator and Leadership Evaluation Plan 2024-25**

**By: E. Eaton**

**Seconded: M. Kortmann**

**Result: Motion carries unanimously**

## **IX. New Business**

### **IX.A. Information: FY2026 Budget Planning Dates**

Dr. Petrone stated that the dates have been submitted and noted the special meetings for the Board. C. Williams mentioned that the first budget presentation on January 9<sup>th</sup> coincides with the chorus concert date. As a result, the agenda will be adjusted to have the budget discussion at the end of the agenda to accommodate this conflict.

**IX.B. Discussion: Review of Policies – First Reading (To Be Warned for a vote at a future meeting.)**

**1. Discussion: Review New Draft Policy**

**a. NEW 4116.22 code of Ethics**

**Consensus to move forward to a vote**

**2. Discussion: Review Policy Revisions**

**a. 1231 Non-Discrimination – Community**

Minor Language changes for title IX, which has been vetted through Shipman.

**Consensus to move forward to a vote**

**b. 3120-3160 Board Budget Procedures and Line Item Transfers**

References made for the 2% account

**Consensus to move forward to a vote**

**c. 4110 Employment and Student Teacher Checks**

Incorporates state law

**Consensus to move forward to a vote**

**d. 4116.1 Non-Discrimination – Personnel**

Minor Language changes for title IX, which has been vetted through Shipman.

**Consensus to move forward to a vote**

**e. 4116.2 – Prohibition of Sex Discrimination, Including Sex-Based Harassment (Personnel)**

**Consensus to move forward to a vote**

**f. 4116.11 Section 504 and ADA (Personnel)**

Minor Language changes for title IX, which has been vetted through Shipman.

**Consensus to move forward to a vote**

**g. 4151.2 Family and Medical Leave**

Updated language for accrued sick leave

**Consensus to move forward to a vote**

**i. 5122.2 Non-Discrimination – Students**

Minor Language changes for title IX, which has been vetted through Shipman.

**Consensus to move forward to a vote**

**J. 5127 Graduation Requirements**

Changes made to reflect state statute

**Consensus to move forward to a vote**

**k. 5127.1 Improve Completion Rates of FAFSA**

Change to FAFSA date

**Consensus to move forward to a vote**

**l. 5131 Prohibition of Sex Discrimination, Including Sex-Based Harassment (Students)**

Minor Language changes for title IX, which has been vetted through Shipman.

**Consensus to move forward to a vote**

**m. 5141.21 Administration of Medications in Schools**

Changes to reflect state statute

**Consensus to move forward to a vote**

**n. 5144 Student Discipline**

Includes state statute changes. Discussion included the term ‘viable threat’, and it was determined that the word ‘viable’ does not need to be incorporated into the policy, as a threat is a threat regardless of its viability. Additionally, the meaning of the unauthorized publication of another individual’s information was clarified.

**Consensus to move forward to a vote**

**X. Report of Board Members**

**X.A. Information: Technology Liaison Update – E. Eaton**

E. Eaton reported that during the last meeting, several topics were discussed, including the reading screener, the pilot of the Magic School program, a presentation on AI for all school staff, and the interactive program of studies at the high school, which allows students to search by criteria on the website. Additionally, the expansion of PickUp Patrol from K-5 to K-12 was mentioned, along with enhancements to the high school report cards to include GPA’s.

C. Williams shared insights on how colleges are evaluating GPA and class rankings.

E. Eaton also shared that the internet use policy has been finalized and implemented. Additionally, Family Steam night will be held on March 31<sup>st</sup>.

Dr. Petrone announced that a key note speaker has been confirmed to discuss AI at the next Convocation.

**X.B. Information: Wellness Committee Liaison Update – C. Rossignol**

No report due to scheduling issues for the meeting.

**X. C. Information: Fiscal Committee Report, Meeting of December 12, 2024 – M. Kortmann and Ms. Bradshaw-Hill**

M. Kortmann stated that they are on track with most line items, except for the general fund, which is currently facing a deficit due to outplacements. J. Beausoleil provided an overview of the food service program.

**1. Discussion and Possible VOTE: Capital Improvement Plan FY26-FY30**

M. Kortmann stated that no changes were made to the plan at the fiscal committee, and the priority list presented will be moving forward. It was also shared that the Town Council is working on a bond package that may include some of our larger safety items. However, we must still present these items in our plan as if they will not be included.

J. Beausoleil reviewed the priority listing.

C. Rossignol expressed her concerns about listing the maintenance van as a priority one, arguing that the lecture hall seating would be more beneficial to students, as we already have other vehicles in the fleet. Dr. Petrone explained the rationale for needing the new vehicle and clarified the roles of the existing vehicles in the fleet. He also confirmed that the budgeted amount for the vehicles aligns with the quoted cost based on the identified need.

C. Williams inquired whether the exterior door replacements should be moved to priority one. Dr. Petrone explained that while the doors are nearing the point of needing replacement, they do not currently pose a security risk. However, they have included them on the list to keep them on the radar for replacement within the next year.

The paging systems at GHR, CGS, and CHS were reviewed. Dr. Petrone stated that they are all functioning intermittently, and replacement parts are hard to obtain.

Dr. Petrone mentioned that the paging system and fire alarms may be included in a potential town bond. Bill has provided the following estimates to Town Manager Jim for consideration: GHR paging system \$100k, CGS paging system \$100k, CHS paging system \$180k, GHR fire alarm \$155k, and CGS fire alarm \$155k.

M. Kortmann stated that there is still an outstanding question regarding whether the fire pump was included. It is unclear whether Jim didn't request more information on the item because it was not necessary, or if the fire pump needs to be added to the list.

J. Beausoleil mentioned that during the fiscal committee meeting, they asked Dr. Petrone to follow up with the town manager to clarify the status of the fire pump.

C. Williams asked if the Board was comfortable submitting the paging system as a lower priority item, or if it should be grouped with the fire alarms and marked in yellow. J. Beausoleil stated that there would be no harm in marking it yellow for the fiscal committee.

**MOTION: To Approve the Capital Improvement Plan request FY26-FY30**

**By: E. Marchand**

**Seconded: M. Kortmann**

**Result: Motion carries with 6 in favor and 1 opposition by C. Rossignol.**

## **XI. Adjournment**

**MOTION: To adjourn the meeting at 8:58 p.m.**

**By: E. Eaton**

**Seconded: M. Kortmann**

**Result: Motion carries unanimously**

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Respectfully Submitted:

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Tricia Dean

Board Clerk

Approved: January 23, 2025