

Coventry Board of Education
Coventry, Connecticut

Board of Education Regular Meeting
Approved Minutes of Thursday, January 9, 2025
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 (arrived at 7:20 pm)

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

Tammy Anderson, Lancaster Road – requested that the Board reconsider what counts toward the high school math 4-year program. J. Beausoleil responded that the policy was recently updated to allow middle school math classes to count toward the high school math requirement. While this applies to the Class of 2027, the principal will consider allowing this change to start for the Class of 2026. T. Anderson also asked to consider allowing the financial literacy class to count as a math graduation requirement.

IV. Report of the Superintendent

Dr. Petrone reported several updates for the month, including recognizing John Ryan and Scott Rhoades for their generous contribution towards the Robert Plaster Field sign. He also stated that plans are underway for a ribbon-cutting ceremony on opening day of the

upcoming baseball season. Dr. Petrone attended a legislative committee meeting and participated in new teacher orientation sessions, thanking all teachers for their hard work leading up to the December break. He also attended the CABE Area 3 Legislative Breakfast. Two student focus groups were held at both the middle school and high schools, where the topic of limiting cell phone use in schools was discussed. Additionally, Dr. Petrone addressed issues affecting EASTCONN.

E. Marchand inquired about per-pupil expenditures. Dr. Petrone explained that while per-pupil expenditures are increasing, this trend is not significantly impacting Coventry. He also provided an overview of how other districts are experiencing similar increases and the challenges they are encountering as a result.

IV.A. Information: Board of Education Student Representative Report – Lillian O’Neil

Miss O’Neil provided an update on various high school activities. She highlighted that mid-term exams are scheduled for next week. The girls’ and boys’ basketball teams are performing well, with the girls’ team currently undefeated. Additionally, the track and wrestling teams are excelling, with a meet scheduled for this Friday at UConn. She also mentioned upcoming chorus and band concerts, as well as ongoing junior planning meetings.

IV.B. Information: Technology Plan Progress – Ms. Drury (Driver: Deeper Thinking & Learning)

Ms. Drury presented the District Technology Plan Mid-Year Update, which is available on the district’s website via the BoardBook portal.

The highlights included the district’s key goals, which focus on the integration process, professional development, infrastructure and operations, project implementations, and community engagement.

M. Kortmann inquired whether the GPA is weighted, to which Dr. Petrone confirmed that it is. M. Kortmann suggested adding this information to the website for clarity.

Regarding the applications page, M. Kortmann asked who uses that page. Ms. Drury explained that, by state legislation, all applications used by the district must be posted publicly. Currently, this is done through a spreadsheet, which meets the legal requirement. She also reviewed how students access these applications.

J. Beausoleil asked whether the state requires the information to be provided to parents or the community. Ms. Drury responded that the district is required to communicate and post the information for parents. She also stated that she would double-check to ensure the district is in full compliance regarding whether the information should be posted specifically for parents or for the broader community.

V. Report of the Chairman

J. Beausoleil reported that Mr. McGrath, the physics teacher, participated in PJ Day by dyeing his hair. The Town Council’s budget meeting date is set for March 10th at 6:30pm. The CABE legislative breakfast was informative, particularly regarding the state’s

appropriations committee, which is beneficial for Coventry as it provides access and feedback on funding issues arising from legislation. J. Beausoleil also met with Dr. Petrone and Representative Ackert to discuss issues affecting Coventry, specifically related to excess cost and special education expenses. She also reported that EASTCONN is implementing a mid-year service price increase, but since Coventry does not use EASTCONN for special education services, this will not affect the district. Coventry does use EASTCONN for special education transportation, but due to an existing contract, the district will not see an increase in costs for those services. Finally, J. Beausoleil acknowledged that today was a day of national commemoration for President Jimmy Carter.

VI. Communications

There were none

VII. VOTE: Approval of Minutes

VII.A. Approve Minutes of December 12, 2024

Edits: Review recording for minutes for X.C.1., C Williams paragraph to capture the discussion on bonding.

Correct IX.B.1-2 from 'second read' to 'vote'

MOTION: To approve the Minutes of December 12, 2024

By: C. Rossignol

Seconded: G. Marchand

Result: TABLED until next meeting

VIII. Old Business

VIII. A. Discussion and Possible VOTE: Approve New Policy

1. New 4116.22 Code of Ethics

MOTION: To approve policy 4116.22 as presented

By: E. Eaton

Seconded: E. Marchand

Result: Motion carries unanimously

VIII.B. Discussion and Possible VOTE(s): Approve Policy Revisions

1. 1231 Non-Discrimination – Community

2. 4116.1 Non-Discrimination – Personnel

3. 4116.2 Prohibition of Sex Discrimination, Including Sex-Based Harassment (Personnel)

4. 5122.2 Non-Discrimination – Students

5. 5131 Prohibition of Sex Discrimination, Including Sex-Based Harassment (Students)

MOTION: To approve policy 1231, 4116.1, 4116.2, 5122.2, 5131 as presented

By: E. Eaton

Seconded: E. Marchand

Result: Motion passes unanimously

6. 3120-3160 Board Budget Procedures and Line Item Transfers

MOTION: To approve policy 3120-3160 as presented

By: E. Eaton

Seconded: M. Kortmann

Result: Motion passes unanimously

7. 4110 Employment and Student Teacher Checks

MOTION: To approve policy 4110 as presented

By: E. Marchand

Seconded: E. Eaton

Result: Motion passes unanimously

8. 4116.11 Section 504 and ADA (Personnel)

MOTION: To approve policy 4116.11 as presented

By: E. Eaton

Seconded: J. Cleary

Result: Motion passes unanimously

9. 4151.2 Family and Medical Leave

MOTION: To approve policy 4151.2 as presented

By: C. Rossignol

Seconded: E. Eaton

Result: Motion passes unanimously

10. 5112 Admission to the Public Schools At or Before Age Five

MOTION: To approve policy 5112 as presented

By: E. Eaton

Seconded: C. Rossignol

Result: Motion passes unanimously

11. 5127 Graduation Requirements

MOTION: To approve policy 5127 as presented

By: E. Eaton

Seconded: J. Cleary

Discussion on implementing in 2027 or before. All were in agreement that it could be implemented in 2026

Result: Motion passes unanimously

12. 5127.1 Improve Completion Rates of FAFSA

MOTION: To approve policy 5127.1 as presented

By: C. Rossignol

Seconded: E. Eaton

Result: Motion passes unanimously

13. 5141.21 Administration of Medications in Schools

MOTION: To approve policy 5141.21 as presented

By: E. Eaton

Seconded: E. Marchand

Result: Motion passes unanimously

14. 5144 Student Discipline

MOTION: To approve policy 5144 as presented

By: E. Eaton

Seconded: C. Williams

Result: Motion passes unanimously

IX. Report of Board Members

IX.A. Fiscal Committee Report, Meeting of January 9, 2025 – M. Kortmann and Ms. Bradshaw-Hill

M. Kortmann reported that the district is still facing challenges with the management report, as it remains upside down, although some progress is being made. Additionally, there are ongoing struggles with obtaining timely information for capital and special funds from the town.

1. Information: HVAC Project Inspection Costs – Town Council Discussion

M. Kortmann reported that the HVAC project includes an inspection component required as part of the project. State law mandates air quality standards for all schools. She reviewed the costs associated with completing both the HVAC work and the state-required air quality report together, which would result in savings and help ensure that equipment doesn't fail in the future. The Town Council was asked for \$60,000 to cover the costs, and they agreed to contribute half, with the district's portion amounting to \$30,000. C Bradshaw-Hill noted that there is currently \$162,000 available in the 2% fund. C. Williams inquired about any earmarked costs being taken from the 2% fund.

MOTION: To modify the agenda to add a vote related to using the 2% account for the Board share of the HVAC inspection

By: E. Marchand

Seconded: M. Kortmann

Result: Motion passes unanimously

MOTION: Move that the Board agrees to fund half of the additional costs to finish the fresh air inspection from the 2% account for \$30,000, once we receive confirmation from the town

By: J. Cleary

Seconded: C. Williams

Result: Motion passes unanimously

X. New Business

X.A. Information: FY2026 Budget Presentation – Dr. Petrone

J. Beausoleil reviewed the budget process and asked that members email any questions to Dr. Britton, copying his assistant on the email. She also requested that staff members not be emailed individually.

Dr. Britton presented the superintendents recommended FY 2026 budget, which is available on the district's website via the BoardBook portal.

The total proposed budget is \$32,340,806, reflecting a 5.27% increase over the FY2025 budget.

J. Beausoleil reviewed the budget book and highlighted the sections that are most helpful for understanding the components of the budget.

C. Williams asked for clarification on special education overall spending, to which it was confirmed that the services are provided in-house. C. Bradshaw-Hill will send out placement numbers for further clarity.

The GHR band position is currently listed as 1.0. There is a speech and language pathologist assistant position being developed, which will be geared toward the school with the greatest need. The plan is for the assistant to float between schools, with the position requiring different certification than a speech-language pathologist.

For the PSSS support assistant position, there was a question about the qualification required and whether a secretary could fill the role. Dr. Petrone clarified that this position would fall under the teacher contract and would require special qualifications.

A question was raised about the special education teacher position, which was not included in the budget this year, as it was not hired. The CNA assignment was also addressed, confirming that CNAs are assigned to one particular student and there is no need for changes.

Dr. Petrone assured that all proposals put forward by staff have been moved forward, and he reviewed the current strategies for curriculum and staffing.

E. Eaton asked if there are any additional resources the Board can provide for staff professional development opportunities beyond what is already planned to support the Wit and Wisdom curriculum. Dr. Petrone responded that the district will do its best to provide professional development over the summer. He also explained what has been effective in the past for training sessions, ensuring that staff receive the support they need for successful implementation.

C. Rossignol inquired about the numbers used to calculate net current expenditures per pupil. Dr. Petrone explained that the calculated number is based on the Education Funding System (EFS), where the district sends student data to the state, and the state calculates the expenditure. Dr. Petrone also mentioned that Coventry's increase is likely to be the same as or lower than that of other districts. J. Beausoleil then reviewed the issues contributing to the increased costs.

C. Williams asked about the elimination of the security grant and whether the district is doing enough to stay ahead in terms of security. Dr. Petrone responded that it will be a decision for the board to make regarding whether to expand security measures, but he emphasized that the district currently has the necessary equipment and is in a good position with regard to security.

J. Beausoleil explained that there will be further discussion on the budget at the next meeting.

XI. Possible VOTE: Executive Session (bargaining unit negotiations)

There was no executive session

XII. Open Session

There was none

XI. Adjournment

MOTION: To adjourn the meeting at 9:10 p.m.

By: E. Eaton

Seconded: C. Williams

Result: Motion carries unanimously

Respectfully Submitted:

Tricia Dean
Board Clerk

Approved: January 23, 2025