

Coventry Board of Education
Coventry, Connecticut

Board of Education Regular Meeting
Approved Minutes of Thursday, April 24, 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

Board Members Absent:

None

Administrators Present:

Dr. David J. Petrone, Superintendent of Schools

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 provided several key updates for the month. He announced the appointment of Jennifer Hammer as the new CGS principal, set to start on July 1st. Additionally, Dr. Petrone attended the Capstone Legislative Committee meeting and the PTO officer meeting. Plans for end-of-year celebrations are underway, including the junior and senior proms. He recently met with the team from UConn to discuss air purifiers, and the data on their effectiveness was highly impressive. A town meeting is scheduled for this Saturday at 10 a.m., and baby chicks are being hatched at Hale.

E. Marchand shared that on Tuesday night, the Connecticut High School Coaches Association announced the All-State team, and two athletes from Coventry, Hailey Mayo and Jianna Foran, were selected.

IV.A. Information: Vernon Regional Adult Based Education (VRABE) Overview – Melissa Iles, Director of VRABE

Melissa Iles provided an overview of the Vernon Regional Adult-Based Education (VRABE) program. She distributed the spring catalog, highlighting various offerings including the GED program, a credit diploma program, and a national external diploma program. VRABE serves 14 towns, and Ms. Iles reviewed additional programs available. Enrollment has increased from 300 students last year to 450 this year, with retention rates improving from 80% to 97.6%. The program currently boasts a measurable skill gain of 43%. Serving individuals aged 17 and up, the program is completely free for students. In addition to GED preparation, there are also outreach opportunities for individuals to learn new skills.

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

Miss O’Neil provided several updates, including that the band and choir concert will be held on May 2nd. She also shared that during their recent trip to Virginia Beach, the band received a Superior Rating, while the choir earned a Good Rating. The senior prom is scheduled for May 10th, and ninth and tenth graders will be taking math tests this week.

IV.C. Information: Challenge and Enrichment Programming – Future Problem Solvers – Marybeth Murdoch

Marybeth Murdoch, Mr. Sward, and the CNH FPS class students presented an overview of the Future Problem Solvers Program, which is available on the district’s website via the BoardBook portal.

C. Williams shared that she had the opportunity to volunteer and was impressed by the amazing work the students do.

J. Beausoleil remarked on how great it was to witness the evolution of the program since its beginnings at Coventry High School.

E. Eaton reflected that when her student first entered 6th grade, it felt like a foreign language to her as an adult, but she was impressed by how quickly the 6th graders embraced the program and excelled. It was wonderful to see them applying these skills.

IV.D. Information: School Climate Presentation – Principals

Principals Dr. Giller, Ms. DeRagon, Mr. Sward, Ms. Marcinczyk (VP), Mr. Blake, and Ms. Trueman (VP) presented an overview of Coventry’s School Climate, which is available on the district’s website via the BoardBook portal.

E. Marchand commended the impressive work being done by administrators. He requested further clarification on the Wall Activity at the high school and how staff members build connections with students who have been identified as not having established relationships with staff. C. Williams suggested implementing the Wall Activity in all the schools, to which it was confirmed that all the schools in the district already participate.

C. Williams asked if the culture surveys and action plans have been addressed. Dr. Petrone explained that the current efforts were a direct response to the climate surveys, and this presentation served as a follow-up. She noted that other issues had also been highlighted in the survey. Dr. Petrone emphasized that the presentation focused on the key actions taken in response to the survey results. C. Williams further inquired about staff and employee

relationships, as she had noticed some comments on this topic in the survey. Dr. Petrone reiterated that the information presented tonight was in response to those survey results.

V. VOTE: Consent Agenda

V.A. Approve the May 2025 GHR Field Experience to Sturbridge MA

MOTION: To approve the May 2025 GHR Field Experience to Sturbridge MA

By: E. Eaton

Seconded: C. Rossignol

Result: Motion carries unanimously

VI. Report of the Chairman

J. Beausoleil highlighted several recent and upcoming events. She encouraged looking for PTO opportunities related to grade transitions, as they are in the process of electing new officers. Parent orientations are scheduled as follows: Kindergarten will be held on May 8th, 3rd grade on May 7th, and 6th grade on May 6th. The annual town meeting will take place on Saturday at 10 a.m., featuring a brief presentation on the budgets followed by a Q&A session. A town-wide referendum is scheduled for May 6th. She also provided an update on the state's budget cycle and shared details about the budget items and timeline. Additionally, J. Beausoleil is serving on the Teacher of the Year selection committee.

VII. Communications

There were none.

VIII. VOTE: Approval of Minutes

VIII.A. Approve Minutes of the Special Meeting of April 10, 2025 (6:00 p.m.)

MOTION: To approve the Special Minutes of April 10, 2025

By: E. Eaton

Seconded: C. Rossignol

Result: Motion carries unanimously

VIII.B. Approve the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of April 10, 2025 (8:00 p.m.)

Edit: page 2, agenda item V. 5th sentence, Coventry Scholarship Organization should read Coventry Scholarship Foundation.

MOTION: To approve the Regular Minutes of April 10, 2025, as amended

By: E. Eaton

Seconded: C. Williams

Result: Motion carries unanimously

IX. Old Business

IX. A. Information: FY26 Budget

J. Beausoleil stated there were no new updates, aside from the upcoming town meeting and town-wide referendum.

X. New Business

X.A. Discussion and Possible VOTE: Review Last Day of School (24-25) for CHS Students

It is within the Board's purview to waive a day, as we are still within the 180-day in-school requirement. The rest of the district's last day of school is June 11th. Staff will still be working a full day. C. Rossignol requested that Hale be included in the day waiver, as their last day is also the 12th. J. Beausoleil noted that this would need to be addressed at the next board meeting, as it was not listed on the current agenda. Dr. Petrone suggested polling the parent population first, as Hale operates differently and is a paid service provided to parents. E. Eaton inquired about payment for June and suggested the family survey be used to decide at the May 8th meeting for Hale. Dr. Petrone added that waiving the day for CHS would benefit the district by saving on busing costs. C. Williams shared her experience of Hale being in session while the rest of the district was not, which led her to pull her child out. It was decided that parents of Hale would be surveyed, and the issue would be included as a future agenda item.

MOTION: To approve waiving one day, 6/12/25, for CHS Students

By: E. Marchand

Seconded: M. Kortmann

Result: Motion carries, with one abstention by C. Rossignol

X.B. Information and VOTE: Participation in the Healthy Food Option

MOTION: Pursuant to C.G.S. Section 10-215f, the Coventry Board of Education certifies that all food items offered for sale to students in the schools under its jurisdiction, and not exempted from the Connecticut Nutrition Standards published by the Connecticut State Department of Education, will comply with the Connecticut Nutrition Standards during the period of July 1, 2025, through June 30, 2026. This certification shall include all food offered for sale to students separately from reimbursable meals at all times and from all sources, including but not limited to school stores, vending machines, school cafeterias, culinary programs, and any fundraising activities on school premises sponsored by the school or non-school organizations and groups.

By: E. Eaton

Seconded: M. Kortmann

Result: Motion carries unanimously

X.C. Information and VOTE: Allow for Combined Food and Beverage Exemptions

MOTION: The Coventry BOE will allow the sale to students of food items that do not meet the Connecticut Nutrition Standards and beverages not listed in Section 10-221q of the Connecticut General Statutes provided that the following conditions are met: 1) the sale is in connection with an event occurring after the end of the regular school day or on the weekend; 2) the sale is at the location of the event; and 3) the food and beverage items are not sold from a vending machine or school store. An "event" is an occurrence that involves more than just a regularly scheduled practice, meeting, or extracurricular activity. For example, soccer games, school plays, and interscholastic debates are events but soccer practices, play rehearsals, and debate team meetings are not. The "regular school day" is

the period from midnight before to 30 minutes after the end of the official school day. "Location" means where the event is being held and must be the same place as the food and beverage sales.

By: E. Eaton

Seconded: E. Marchand

Result: Motion carries unanimously

XI. Possible VOTE: Executive Session (Superintendent's Evaluation)

MOTION: Pursuant to CGS-1-200(c)(6)(A), the Board of Education will go into Executive Session for discussion related to superintendent's evaluation at 8:27 p.m.

By: J. Cleary

Seconded: E. Eaton

Result: Motion carries unanimously

XII. Open Session

The Board of Education returned to Open Session at 9:25 p.m.

XIII. Adjournment

MOTION: To adjourn the meeting at 9:26 p.m.

By: E. Eaton

Seconded: J. Cleary

Result: Motion carries unanimously

Respectfully Submitted:

Tricia Dean
Board Clerk

Approved: May 8, 2025