

**Coventry Board of Education**  
Coventry, Connecticut

**Board of Education Regular Meeting**  
Approved Minutes of Thursday, May 29, 2025  
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  
Charmaine Bradshaw-Hill, Director of Finance and Operations

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**

Annabelle Raymond, student – expressed her request that Mrs. Phillips' position not be eliminated.

Emma Fillmore, student, asked that the enrichment programs not be cut.

Megan Boshuyzen, 41 Margaret Drive – spoke in support of maintaining a dedicated librarian in each school.

Mia Boshuyzen, student – spoke in support of the library program.

Shawn Fillmore, 236 Old Tolland Turnpike - spoke in support of the Board of Education budget, and expressed concerns about specific members of the Town Council.

Kristine Dennis, 9 Oak Leaf Drive – spoke in favor of the Talented and Enrichment Program.

Patrick Walstrom, 51 Edgewater Drive - spoke in favor of the Talented and Enrichment Program as well as Special Services, and encouraged the Board not to proceed with additional cuts.

Ryan Jones, 43 Twin Hills Drive – spoke in support of the Board of Education budget and advocated for preserving the Talented and Enrichment Program.

Jessica Lapointe, 105 North Farms Road – spoke in support of the Library Media Specialist and Enrichment Programs.

Ms. Clark, 104 Leslie Lane – spoke about the polarizing political climate and urged the Board not to cut the Enrichment Program or the Media Specialist position.

Scott Kenderson, 153 Lakeview Drive – spoke in favor of the Board of Education budget

#### **IV. Report of the Superintendent**

Dr. Petrone provided several key updates for the month, including a joint fiscal finance meeting, the district-wide art show, a school security forum, CNH chorus and band concerts, CGS Family Fun Night, and focus groups held at each school. He also mentioned the CAPSS legislative committee meeting and the UCONN summit meeting. Additionally, he listed all the concerts and special events that have taken place over the last two weeks. Coventry was invited to participate in the Bradley Airport Art Program. CHS will be livestreaming their graduation, with the link available on the district website. Lastly, the district sent a package to apply to perform at the CABE/CAPSS conference and hopes to be selected.

#### **IV.A. Recognition/information: Board of Education Student Representative (Last Meeting) – Lillian O’Neil**

Miss O’Neil provided updates on recent school happenings, including Coventry hosting the NCCC conference for track and field and the final event for Best Buddies. She also reported on tennis, the NHS induction ceremony, and the completion of junior and senior proms. Finals are coming up, and all AP exams have been completed. Additionally, the summer reading program has also officially kicked off.

J. Beausoleil commended Miss O’Neil for speaking out at the Town Council meeting in advocacy for her peers regarding the budget. She also acknowledged that Miss O’Neil is a member of the National Honor Society and congratulated her on this achievement.

#### **IV.B. Information: HEEC Literacy Instruction (Deeper Thinking & Learning; Authentic Work) – Dr. Hasty**

Dr. Hasty presented the HEEC Literacy Instruction program, which is available on the district's website via the BoardBook portal.

#### **V. VOTE: Consent Agenda**

##### **V.A. Accept the Retirement of Linda Tomaszewski, Physical Therapist**

E. Eaton asked to remove item V.A. from the consent agenda

**MOTION: To accept the retirement of Linda Tomaszewski, Physical Therapist**

**By: E. Eaton**

**Seconded: G. Marchand**

**Result: Motion carries unanimously**

E. Eaton shared that Ms. Tomaszewski has been with the district for 40 years and commended her for her dedicated service, talent, and skill.

## **VI. Report of the Chairman**

J. Beausoleil reported that Senior Awards Night awarded a phenomenal amount of \$84,000 to seniors. She expressed gratitude to the community and staff for their support of the students. She also praised the Grade 10 Passage Projects, calling them incredible, and thanked the CHS staff for supporting student growth. The “Pedal for a Purpose” event recently took place, and interviews were conducted for the student representative to the Board of Education. Graduation is scheduled for June 7<sup>th</sup> at 10 am. Years of service and retirement celebrations were held, and J. Beausoleil recognized Dr. Petrone’s significant contributions to Coventry, its staff, students, and Board members, thanking him for his dedication.

E. Eaton noted that the Coventry Scholarship Foundation is largely funded by family donations. This week, the PreK-5 families will participate in the “Coins for College” donation drive, with the funds raised going toward their own child’s senior graduation pool.

## **VII. Communications**

J. Beausoleil explained that the Board sent a letter to the Town Council, which was forwarded to the Parks and Recreation Commission, regarding the Patriots Park plan developed for the town. The concern was that one of the buildings housing the 18-22-year-old program was not included in the plan. The Board requested that this building be included, as it may have been an oversight. Although funding for the plan is likely several years away, they wanted to communicate their concerns because the program is required by law. E. Eaton noted that the program’s location is intentionally separate from the schools and emphasized that it is a shared service between the district and town.

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

### **VIII.A. Approve Minutes of May 8, 2025**

Edit: page 1, the third audience of citizen member was Maya Michel

**MOTION: To approve the Minutes of May 8, 2025, as amended**

**By: E. Eaton**

**Seconded: C. Rossignol**

**Result: Motion carries unanimously**

## **IX. Old Business**

### **IX.A. Information and Possible VOTE: FY2026 Budget**

J. Beausoleil thanked parents for advocating for the budget and noted that once the referendum date is set, the Board cannot publicly advocate for the budget. She shared that she plans to ask Dr. Petrone to conduct an end-of-year audit to identify potential funds to restore some of the items cut, based on parent feedback. However, this cannot happen until the budget is passed. She assured the community that their voices have been heard.

J. Beausoleil provided an update that the Town Council reduced the appropriation request by \$62,500. Additionally, due to Council actions, the remaining \$35,000 in the CIP request for technology was eliminated. While alternative funding options were discussed, no action was taken by Council.

Two items are currently over budget based on updated estimates. The special education transportation contract is projected to be short by \$88,413. Additionally, there is an increase in the cost of the audit, which is a shared contract with the town. The contract extension includes a 15% increase-approximately \$12,000-above what was initially estimated in the proposal. These issues will need to be addressed before the proposal is submitted to the Town Council on Thursday.

There are three items currently in the black: a merit increase for the Director of the Preschool, vacancy savings for a Coventry Academy teacher, and staff updates at Hale based on actual teacher assignments and what is covered by grant funding. These adjustments result in a \$61,202 savings to the Board's operating expenses, which will be covered by the Hale operating budget. The next amount that needs to be managed and decided on before next Thursday is \$83,774.

C. Rossignol thanked the administration for including the Hale account and making adjustments that had been previously discussed. However, she expressed concern that the listed items do not represent functional changes. She feels that additional, more impactful adjustments could be made to preserve teaching positions and better position the district for the upcoming year.

The group discussed the list of budget options. One option considered was eliminating a bus route; however, the bus company indicated that doing so would impact student ride times. The discussion included weighing the possibility of extending ride times to preserve other items that are currently slated for cuts.

There was discussion regarding several budget areas, including health insurance, an employee who volunteered to reduce their hours, uniforms, and subsidies for athletics. Middle school sports were also discussed, with the possibility of level-funding those programs. C. Rossignol did not participate in the discussion due to a conflict related to one of the proposed cuts. E. Marchand noted that while these options may not be ideal, the Board is working to make the most responsible decision possible.

C. Williams expressed that the K-5 Challenge and Enrichment program impacts a larger number of students compared to the middle school program. She emphasized the importance of restoring the K-5 program, noting that the middle school offers other opportunities for acceleration. She stated her desire to explore ways to reinstate these programs once the budget is passed. J. Beausoleil and Dr. Petrone agreed with the importance of discussing potential program restoration if feasible.

**MOTION: To approve the reduction of the following items: Contracted Services/Athletics, supplies for uniforms, reduction in staff hours, and health insurance.**

**By: M. Kortmann**

**Seconded: E. Marchand**

There was discussion regarding the reduction of athletics subsidies. C. Rossignol responded to Miss O'Neal's question on how the proposed reduction would impact the regatta. E. Eaton proposed a friendly amendment to the motion: to preserve funding for crew by eliminating the restoration of middle school athletic subsidies, and to allocate the remaining \$99 toward the health insurance line. This amendment did not pass. There was further discussion on alternative options. The amended motion was as follows:

**MOTION: To approve the reduction of the following items:**

- **CHS Contracted Services/Athletics (430-3200) Ice Hockey with Vernon \$3,500**
- **CHS Supplies (611-3200) Uniforms (delay by one year) \$11,500**
- **CO/Tech Reduction in Staff Hours (.93 FTE to .75 FTE) \$6,164.60**
- **CO/Health Insurance USI Recommendation for Board Share as of 5/9/25 (Reduction from 9% to 8.5%) \$62,609.40**

**By: M. Kortmann**

**Seconded: E. Marchand**

**Result: Motion carries, with one abstention by C. Rossignol due to a conflict of interest.**

## **IX.B. Discussion and Possible VOTES: Policies**

### **1. Discussion and Possible VOTES: Policies**

#### **A. 5131.911 CT School Climate Policy**

**MOTION: Approve Policy 5131.911 CT School Climate Policy**

**By: C. Rossignol**

**Seconded: E. Marchand**

**Result: Motion carries unanimously**

#### **B. 5131.9 Restorative Practices**

**MOTION: Approve Policy 5131.9 Restorative Practices**

**By: C. Rossignol**

**Seconded: E. Marchand**

**Result: Motion carries unanimously**

### **2. Possible VOTE: Approve Policy Revisions**

#### **A. 1350 School Security and Safety**

**MOTION: Approve Policy 1350 School Security and Safety**

**By: E. Marchand**

**Seconded: M. Kortmann**

**Result: Motion carries unanimously**

#### **B. 1250 Visitors and Observations in Schools**

**MOTION: Approve Policy 1250 Visitors and Observation in Schools**

**By: E. Marchand**

**Seconded: M. Kortmann**

**Result: Motion carries unanimously**

### **3. Possible VOTE: Approve Policy Deletions**

#### **A. 5131.7 Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy**

There was discussion on whether the policy must be deleted. The legal opinion confirmed that deletion is required.

**MOTION: Approve the deletion of Policy 5131.7 Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy**

**By: M. Kortmann**

**Seconded: E. Marchand**

**Result: Motion carries 5-1 (C. Williams against)**

## **B. 5131.71 Safe School Climate Plan**

### **MOTION: Approve the deletion of Policy 5131.7**

**By: M. Kortmann**

**Seconded: E. Marchand**

**Result: Motion carries 5-1 (C. Williams against)**

## **X. New Business**

### **X.A. Information and Possible VOTE: Approve the Special Education Transportation Contract 2025-26 through 2027-28**

Two bids were received, one from EASTCONN and one from DATTCO. Based on staff recommendation, it is advised to proceed with DATTCO's bid, despite it being approximately \$3,000 higher. Dr. Petrone provided a brief explanation of the reasoning behind this recommendation without needing to enter executive session.

### **MOTION: To approve the selection of DATTCO as the Special Education Transportation Contract 2025-26 through 2027-28**

**By: E. Eaton**

**Seconded: K. Kortmann**

Discussion: C. Williams inquired about the total final offer and the excess cost, specifically asking why the excess cost reimbursement percentage is higher for DATTCO compared to EASTCONN. C. Bradshaw-Hill explained that the difference is based on the number of students requiring the respective services and provided an overview of how the reimbursement figures are calculated.

**Result: Motion carries unanimously**

## **XI. Report of Board Members**

### **XI.A. Information: Scholarship Committee, Report Meeting of May 13, 2025**

J. Beausoleil noted that this is the final year the committee will be selecting scholarship recipients for the J. Leroy Schweyer Scholarship. Moving forward, the selection process will be managed through the Dollars for Scholars program. She shared that the awards ceremony was touching to witness, highlighting the community members who generously give scholarships in honor of family members.

### **XI.B. Information: Evaluation and Projection Committee, Report Meeting of May 21, 2025**

The committee discussed touring facilities and expressed a desire to obtain CIP project cost estimates for K-5 projects. The next meeting is being scheduled for June. Dr. Petrone shared that he will update the numbers from the last presentation. He also noted that the land was donated specifically for school, and that the existing building is too old to be renovated as new.

### **XI.C. Information: Student Cell phone Use Task Force, Report Meeting of May 28, 2025**

J. Beausoleil reported that a good mix of staff members, parents, and community members participated in discussions to develop a cell phone policy. The next step is for a subgroup to draft the policy for the full group to review and refine. There was discussion noting that while the state is endorsing the idea, it is not mandating that a policy be implemented.

E. Eaton emphasized that as the policy is developed, it is important to understand that there will be exceptions for students who require phones for medical reasons.

## **XII. Adjournment**

**MOTION: To adjourn the meeting at 9:25 p.m.**

**By: E. Eaton**

**Seconded: C. Rossignol**

**Result: Motion carries unanimously**

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Respectfully Submitted:

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Tricia Dean  
Board Clerk

Approved: June 12, 2025