

Coventry Board of Education
Coventry, Connecticut

Board of Education / Town Council Joint Special Meeting

Approved Minutes of Tuesday, February 10, 2026

Administration Building Conference

Board of Education Members Present:

Jennifer Beausoleil
Mary Kortmann
Emma Eaton
Megan Boshuyzen (arrived at 6:09 p.m.)
Joshua Clark
Mark Larson
Courtney Rossignol

Town Council Members Present:

Lisa Thomas, Chair
Peter Larson, Vice-Chair
Matt Kyer, Secretary
Julie Blanchard
Robyn Gallagher
Jonathan Hand
Mike Wheaton

Also Present:

Dr. David J. Petrone, Superintendent of Schools
James Drumm, Town Manager
Charmaine Bradshaw-Hill, Director of Finance and Operations
Cherie Trahan, Director of Finance
Thomas Kowalchik, USI Representative

Audience: One person was in the audience.

I. Call to Order

J. Beausoleil called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m. and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

II. Information: Presentation on Health Insurance Options beyond ECHIP

Mr. Kowalchik talked about the market analysis that was done on the district and town health insurance.

M. Boshuyzen arrived at 6:10 p.m.

Mr. Kowalchik continued the presentation and talked about the pros and cons of being self-insured and compared the different options available: Cigna Direct, Anthem, UHC, Aetna, or the State Plan. Mr. Kowalchik recommendation was to go with Cigna Direct.

The Board and Council asked some general questions which were answered by Mr. Kowalchik. Topics covered included: wellness programs, EAP options, benefit comparisons, HSA contributions, possible options for either joining or creating another collaborative, the ECHIP exit process, a recommended amount that should be in a reserve with the new program, the unknowns of going with the State Plan, the amount that would be available once ECHIP disbands, the quality of the benefits of the State Plan vs others, what would happen if the State Plan increase was a double-digit percentage, the reserve amounts - BOE vs Town, having to form a subcommittee to manage the details of being self-insured, comparing the premium costs for families, and the timeframe for a decision.

Ms. Bradshaw-Hill talked about the timeline, noting that a meeting is scheduled for tomorrow and the cycle's start date is July 1. Mr. Kowalchik said March 1 is when we really need a decision, so other timelines can be met. Both Dr. Petrone and Mr. Drumm said a decision would really be needed tonight if there would be a carrier change. L. Thomas noted concern that it sounds like there really isn't a choice at this point. J. Beausoleil said the decisions have been morphing as time has moved forward; ECHIP is already dissolving.

R. Gallagher asked for recommendations from the administration of both the Town and BOE.

Mr. Drumm recommended Cigna Direct and didn't think the State Plan was safe or stable. He added sticking with Cigna would be easier with the unions.

Ms. Trahan agreed with Mr. Drumm. She added that the State is not sustainable and they can't subsidize where they are forever. She said she favors a self-insured plan.

Dr. Petrone agreed with Mr. Drumm and Ms. Trahan. He added that the transition from one carrier to another is a very complex process and, in this timeline, would not be favorable. He said we have had great success with being self-funded and he recommends continuing that path.

Ms. Bradshaw-Hill said departing from ECHIP is happening. She also agreed with what has been said so far. She said there is an option to change our path next year, if desired, but if we go with the State Plan, we are locked in for 3 years. She said she is leaning toward Cigna Direct. She added, we already have the infrastructure in place. She continued and said she believes a reserve fund is still needed, even if the State Plan was chosen.

Mr. Kowalchik said he would share information to compare benefits, the State Plan increases over 5-10 years, example(s) of how other towns manage the details once self-funded, the rebate amounts, and the reserve fund amounts.

III. Discussion and Possible VOTE: Leave ECHIP and Become Self-Insured

J. Beausoleil said it sounds like the Town Council may not be ready to make a decision tonight. She added the Board may be more ready and could possibly decide on Thursday. L. Thomas discussed the timeframe on the Council's side.

Both the Board and the Town Council decided to add this to their own future independent meeting agendas.

IV. VOTE: Adjourn

MOTION: To adjourn at 7:47 p.m.

By: E. Eaton

Seconded: C. Rossignol

Result: Motion passes unanimously

Respectfully submitted:

Kimberlee Delorme
Executive Assistant

Approved: February 26, 2026