

**Coventry Board of Education**  
Coventry, Connecticut

**SPECIAL Board of Education Meeting**  
Unapproved Minutes of January 21, 2021  
Remote/Electronic

Board Members Present:

Jennifer Beausoleil, Chairman  
William Oros, Vice Chairman  
Eugene Marchand, Secretary  
Mary Kortmann  
Barbara Paré  
Robert Williams

Board Members Absent:

Christina Williams

Administrators Present:

Dr. David J. Petrone, Superintendent of Schools  
Robert Carroll, Director of Finance and Operations

Others Present: Michele Mullaly, Director of Teaching and Learning; Beth Giller, Pupil and Staff Support Services Director; William Trudelle, Director of Physical Plant and Facilities; Cathie Drury, Director of Educational Technology; Ronda Carrie, CGS Principal; Jennifer DeRagon, GHR Principal; Dena DeJulius, CNH Principal; and Joseph Blake, CHS Principal.

**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. Old Business**

**A. Discussion and Possible VOTE: FY2022 Budget**

J. Beausoleil introduced Dr. Petrone and asked for an update on budget items since last week's meeting.

Dr. Petrone said heating oil and diesel fuel rates have been locked in. He added that a retirement has been received since last week; this will be an opportunity to identify vacancy savings.

Dr. Petrone said the vacancy savings could be in the neighborhood of about \$20,000. He said there could be more as time progresses.

Mr. Carroll noted that the assumption was \$2.09 a gallon for both heating oil and diesel. He said we are locked in now at \$1.85 for diesel and \$1.82 for heating oil. He said this will save us \$9,600 for diesel and \$9,450 in heating.

M. Kortmann asked if there is an update in health insurance. Dr. Petrone said not yet. He said he recommends we move forward with the current number as we move through the budget process, until we are deeper in the process. M. Kortmann said she agreed with that logic and leaving it at 10%. She said she is leery at cutting it lower than 10%.

Mr. Carroll said there was a reduction in claims for April - June, but they are starting to pick up again.

J. Beausoleil asked for a consensus to adjust the heating and diesel based on the locked in price - there was consensus.

J. Beausoleil discussed the vacancy savings item. She asked for consensus to modify the certified salary line by \$20,000. M. Kortmann said, at this point, she was comfortable, while not always her favorite thing to do. There was consensus.

J. Beausoleil said she agrees it is too early to adjust the insurance line.

J. Beausoleil noted the pension line and that we are waiting for public information on that.

M. Kortmann asked regarding the assumption page and the excess cost number; is it lower than we have usually seen. Mr. Carroll said it is the number from last [this] year = 71%.

J. Beausoleil asked for any questions.

E. Marchand asked for an explanation regarding the drop in enrollment numbers. Dr. Petrone said this year is definitely different due to the pandemic. He said we believe that some families have decided to keep incoming kindergarteners at home. He added that there was a significant number of families who decided to unenroll their children and homeschool students during the pandemic. Dr. Petrone said we have been on target with our projections, overall. He said we believe we will be back right where we are supposed to be.

R. Williams asked why the enrollment projection is down after this year. Mr. Carroll explained the different enrollment projection methods.

The Board discussed enrollment figures and if the budgeted resources will be enough if more students come back next year. Dr. Petrone said he believes we will be able to work within the requested resources.

R. Williams asked about the racial survey and the Open Choice numbers. Dr. Petrone said we have not dedicated seats yet for Open Choice, but we are optimistic that we will be able to have spots available. He noted that the report is for October 2020, when we did not have any Open Choice students.

B. Paré reviewed her outlook on working through the budget process. She noted items such as new programs versus what is already in place, how the town perceives the budget,

student comfort, and staffing. She added that she supports new initiatives for students. She said she does not have any specific questions at this time.

J. Beausoleil referred to the forms for "new items" which notes justification for any new requests.

M. Kortmann noted that the magnet school students were moved out of the high school, and were spread to the schools of the grades they are; she said it is helpful.

W. Oros gave credit to the administrative team for the work on the budget related to developing remote learning and surviving as a school district during a pandemic. He said, while this is a higher percent budget increase than usual, he believes the investment is necessary or there will be higher costs later. E. Marchand agreed.

J. Beausoleil asked for questions for specific sites, starting with the Coventry Grammar School.

B. Paré said she noted savings in areas that were made to offset other areas out of your control.

E. Marchand asked about the reduction in supplies on page 10 and line 641, workbooks. Mr. Carroll said it is a summary of all schools. Ms. DeJulius reviewed the reduction at CNH in this area; ELA and agenda books for students.

There were no questions for the G. H. Robertson School.

Capt. Nathan Hale School:

R. Williams noted page 51; Athletics & Field Trips, Student Activities -Transportation and asked if this amount will really be necessary. Ms. DeJulius said this is a tough one to predict; we want to maintain services and we believe we will be back on line eventually. Dr. Petrone noted that traditional field trips are not covered in this line; this is for band trips, athletic trips, competition trips, etc.

R. Williams noted page 55 and the decrease in line Cultural Enrichment (Chinese, etc.). Dr. Petrone said this is due to the cancelation of the China trip. Ms. DeJulius said we hope to get back to traveling, but we don't know when. Dr. Petrone said this program will continue, it won't go away. Ms. DeJulius said the programming is still there.

R. Williams noted the professional development decrease. Ms. DeJulius said this was due to not having a speaker annually.

B. Paré said she was surprised with the special education/non-certified salaries FTE reduction. J. Beausoleil said the special education costs are based on actual needs. Mr. Carroll said there was a shift in resources.

Coventry High School:

R. Williams noted a typo on page 62 and 100% increase to the Pear Deck.

R. Williams noted page 68 and the increase. Mr. Blake said that is an increase in referee costs, due to their new contract.

J. Beausoleil asked about the athletic equipment concerns expressed by students and if those items were addressed in the budget. Dr. Petrone said the field issue has been

addressed by Mr. Trudelle's department. Mr. Blake said the other item, wrestling mats, is a storage issue.

B. Paré noted page 62 and the increase in the first line. Mr. Carroll said the majority is due to an increase in the copier costs.

#### Pupil and Staff Support Services:

J. Beausoleil noted the proposal in this department is based on current need; there are no placeholders. She said the number could change at any time due to student need and it is important that we support that need; we do not have a lot of flexibility. She added that there has been a great increase in in-house services, which has reduced cost and has been a benefit to our students.

#### Warehouse:

M. Kortmann asked about the LED savings and if it included the loan payment. Mr. Carroll said, it has not started, but it is our hope that will be the savings.

B. Paré asked about the copier costs here as well. Mr. Carroll said it was a district-wide increase, due to the new contract. He said it includes a per copy cost; as we go forward the projection gets better. Dr. Petrone talked about the work that went into decreasing the copying costs overall.

E. Marchand asked about work time related to copying changes. Mr. Carroll explained that it can be more efficient now, with maybe only a slight delay.

B. Paré talked about the increase in maintenance and custodial supplies. Mr. Trudelle said we are trying to keep up with the demand due to the pandemic.

The Board discussed identifying COVID-19 related expenses in the budget.

#### Central Office:

M. Kortmann confirmed that the computer labs are in the CIP. It was confirmed.

B. Paré said this is where increases happen that we don't have much control over. She asked about tuition reimbursement. Mr. Carroll said Central Office should be thought of system-wide. He added that the tuition reimbursement is part of the teachers' agreement, which is a negotiated amount.

B. Paré noted page 96, Contracted Services, Administrative Technology. Ms. Drury talked about having to prepare to continue remote learning; these increases are associated with contracted software services. B. Paré said this is an area that is necessary and we would want to make sure that is known.

#### Miscellaneous:

R. Williams asked about devices noted in the obsolescent plan and asked for a separate counting of devices in use. Ms. Drury explained what items are counted in the counts provided.

The Board discussed devices used at HEEC and shared services between HEEC and the BOE budget.

There were not any further questions for the evening.

J. Beausoleil thanked everyone for their time.

**V. Adjournment**

**MOTION: To adjourn the meeting at 9:19 p.m.**

**By: B. Paré**

**Seconded: E. Marchand**

**Result: Motion passes unanimously**

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Respectfully submitted,

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Kimberlee Arey Delorme  
Board Clerk

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_