

**COVENTRY BOARD OF EDUCATION
UNAPPROVED MINUTES
MEETING OF THURSDAY, JUNE 12, 2008**

Members Present: Larry Pietrantonio, Chairman
 Kathleen Ryan, Vice Chairman
 Cheryl Trudon, Secretary
 Mary Kortmann
 Michael Whitham
 Richard Williams

Members Absent: John Barrett

Also Present: Fred North, Board of Education Student Representative

Administrators Present: Dr. Donna Bernard, Superintendent
 Sherry Holmes, Fiscal Services Director
 Judith Richard, Pupil and Staff Support Services Director

Also present were Paul Noel, Director of Physical Plant and Facilities; Carol Brigham, Director of Food Services; Troy Hopkins, CHS Principal; Michele Mullaly, CNH Principal; David Petrone, GHR Principal; Raymond Grasso, CGS Principal; Retirees and their families; and several citizens.

Dr. Bernard welcomed all present this evening for the official Board of Education Retirement Recognition event. The retirees together served 185.5 years at Coventry Public Schools. She stated it is an integrated support system, which allows an employee to give that amount of time and effort to an employer. Representative Joan Lewis was present to present citations to each employee who served 25 years or more to Coventry schools. In addition, each retiree received a gift card to Barnes & Nobel and a Coventry pottery pitcher from the Board. Cake was served.

I. CALL TO ORDER

By: Chairman, L. Pietrantonio Time: 7:45 p.m.
Place: Administration Building Conference Room

II. SALUTE THE FLAG

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by L. Pietrantonio.

III. AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS

Pam Sewell of Flanders Road said she was present to talk about the eighth grade trip to New York City and she heard everything went well. She said her concern is over the Field Trip policy that is up for consideration. She hopes that future trips will be approved so families are aware of detailed cost information as soon as possible. She continued by saying perhaps other travel companies could be looked at so cost comparisons could be made and in addition, maybe some fundraising could be done. She stated there was a significant amount of students who did not go to NY due to costs and the last minute notice.

Harvey Barrette of Avery Shores spoke regarding his concern with the latest newspaper headlines announcing the use of security dogs in our schools. He wanted to know if there

was a condition here in Coventry that was not elsewhere. He handed out copies of newspaper articles to the board members. Additionally he wanted to know what happened to the DARE program.

Dr. Bernard responded saying many high schools are using drug sniffing dogs and it is a common preventative practice for many schools. She said there are many wellness and substance abuse awareness programs and related information for our students, including Coventry's involvement with NECASA (Northeast Communities Against Substance Abuse). She suggested anyone with concerns could make appointments and meet with the building principals for further information. She added that today was the first day the drug sniffing dogs came to the schools and she was proud to report nothing was found. She said the students had been noticed a surprise search would happen. She added beyond what is happening in homes and neighborhoods, drugs will not be permitted on school campuses.

Mr. Barrette asked how current is the problem? Dr. Bernard responded by saying Coventry does not have any more of an issue in this area than any other town. She said the schools cannot disregard the potential for some young people to make bad choices and added Coventry's situation is much less of a worry than many other communities.

Mr. Barrette asked what happened to the DARE program.

L. Pietrantonio said it was cut years ago by the Town Council, because the cost of the program to the police department could not be funded.

Dr. Bernard added that the schools continue to implement a variety of substance abuse preventative measures and programs and have been very assertive in providing afterschool activities.

Mr. Barrette wanted to know if the Board had the power to reapply for DARE.

There was discussion as to whether the DARE program was even in existence any longer.

Ms. Mullaly spoke up saying the work the middle school is doing with NECASA is quite extensive. Mr. Barrette said the schools should go to the newspapers to reinforce all of the positive things that are happening.

Mr. Barrette had one additional comment regarding a petition going around by parents and citizens to film the Board meetings like they do the town council meetings. He said that would be a very good idea.

IV. REPORT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

A. Recognition: Fred North Board of Education Student Representative

Dr. Bernard said she would like to take a moment to recognize Fred North our current Board of Education Student Representative and that Fred is a very fine upstanding student. There was a round of applause and Fred was presented with a gift card and certificate of appreciation.

B. Information: 2007-2008 Administrative Goal Achievement Update

Dr. Bernard reiterated to the Board that the Administrators would be doing just the "executive summaries" of their goal achievement this evening. She said individual administrators would be available to meet for consultations and visitations. In addition, she noted members have the written goal achievement documents in their packets.

1. Coventry Grammar School

Under Educational Achievement, Mr. Grasso noted his goals to continue curriculum alignment and to oversee the fall and spring administrations of the newly-mandated Kindergarten Readiness Inventory. He added a *Welcome to Kindergarten* slideshow was in development for the summer website. The slideshow shows kindergarteners showing the way to kindergarten at the Coventry Grammar School. He stated he believed Coventry is the first district in the state to have this kind of information on the website. He noted his Community Relations goals and that the welcoming school environments portion has been accomplished and maintained. His Management of Resources goal regarding the new science curriculum will debut in August. Since the grant funding for summer reading at the primary level did not develop as hoped, he met with the Booth & Dimock Library and CGS will dovetail with their program and both sites' books will be accepted at either site.

2. G. H. Robertson School

Mr. Petrone spoke to his Educational Achievement goals and his continuing work on Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), which GHR was recognized for in special education. In that area, GHR has worked with the PSSS department, teachers, and teams to develop a plan of action, which has met all of the state requirements. Additional goals included continuing the curriculum alignment through *A Balanced Curriculum* and expanding instructional opportunities utilizing in-house staff and resources in addition to outside agencies. Under Community Relations, GHR has advanced the school's website, worked with the PTO to re-institute the GHR cultural arts program, and supported the school enrichment projects and programs. For Management of Resources, GHR continued to focus on increasing staff knowledge and use of technology for management, instruction, and assessment. The Expanding Horizons program also continued for students in grades 3-6. In closing, Mr. Petrone thanked Mr. Grasso for all of his support over the years and said he would miss his expertise and advice.

3. Capt. Nathan Hale School

Ms. Mullaly talked about her goals under Educational Achievement, which included using the *A Balanced Curriculum* web-based curriculum writing program, continuing to clearly redefine the curriculum's scope and sequence and further aligning curriculum and assessments to state and national standards. One result of this goal was collaboration with the high school to establish a "fast track" math class for eighth grade students to be taught in the high school. Additionally they are looking at aligning their schedule with the high school for 2009-10. Regarding Community Relations, they continued effective outreach by maintaining a welcoming school environment. For Management of Resources, CNH sought grant funding, alternative resources, and opportunities for authentic learning to support the achievement of all students.

4. Coventry High School

Mr. Hopkins spoke to his goals in Educational Achievement: Continue to clearly articulate our curriculum using the *A Balanced Curriculum* web-based curriculum template including alignment with standards and to facilitate the increase in academic, social, and civic expectations within the school and develop opportunities for increased personalization for the education of the students. Mr. Hopkins goals under Community Relations were to maintain and enhance positive community relations by ensuring a welcoming school environment and improving the practices of communication and to

create opportunities for parents to stay informed and support their students in the high school and to seek school community input in establishing a shared vision for Coventry High School. Regarding Management of Resources, CHS was to continue to refine student support services to become the best possible resource for students and families and to further develop funding sources to improve our existing programs and develop new educational opportunities for students.

5. Pupil and Staff Support Services

Ms. Richard began by saying under Educational Achievement, she and Mr. Petrone shared the same goal in reference to the AYP status at GHR in special education. Her next goal in that area was to refine district procedures for the identification and programs for gifted and talented students by expanding programming to the elementary level. She commented that Carla Kennedy has done wonderful things with this program this year. Regarding Community Relations, completing the preschool NAEYC accreditation project in conjunction with the Coventry Early Childhood Center has been a daunting task. In addition, she noted the Board would remember the second goal in this area: to implement a preschool facility feasibility study for future program development. The PSSS goals for Management of Resources included monitoring refinements in the reauthorization of the Individuals with Disability Education Act (IDEIA) 2004, as it relates to state data collection and increasing collaboration with outside agencies and district group homes in order to meet options for students who require alternative educational resources.

6. Fiscal Services

Ms. Holmes spoke to her goals under Educational Achievement which included: Continue to improve technology infrastructure, equipment and e-mail; continue filing state paperwork as it relates to the asbestos abatement project and the water compliance project; and collaborate with Food Services Director in regards to the district Wellness Program. Under Community Relations Ms. Holmes noted she continues to serve on the CASBO Board of Directors as a liaison; the Business Office portion of the Coventry schools' website is up and running; and she has been collaborating with the Town Finance Director to improve financial and technical operations between the schools and the town. With regards to Management of Resources, Ms. Holmes said she has collaborated with Webster Insurance to promote Health Savings Accounts (HSA) and she has coached new administrators on budget and contract responsibilities.

7. Food Services

Ms. Brigham said her Educational Achievement goal to get the website up and running has made progress. In addition, the Food Service Department continued its leadership in the area of student wellness and district fundraising. She noted the area of Community Relations saying her department has continued to work with the community through cooperative events and local partnerships. For Management of Resources she noted the goal of continuing to increase sales and revenue whenever possible while keeping a very close eye on expenses, constantly trying to find ways to economize.

8. Physical Plant and Facilities

Mr. Noel noted his goals in the area of Educational Achievement: used training resources to refine technical skills and meet regulatory, which included personally completing the certification program from the University of Hartford's Construction Institute. His goals in the area of Community Relations included continuing to develop welcoming

atmospheres for the facilities to promote community pride and user friendly access; continuing safety initiatives aimed at regulatory compliance; and using technology to improve availability of facility information. Under Management of Resources, Mr. Noel collaborated with Town departments and volunteer groups to provide for district needs and continued to assist the School Building Committee with information and access needs for the Water System Upgrade.

Dr. Bernard said what the Board heard this evening was just a sampling of the work that is going on.

C. Trudon asked if there was a way the water sold at GHR could be sold cold. Mr. Petrone replied saying they did address this issue, and will continue to do so. At this point, he said there just is not enough room on the line to keep it cold while it is out, but they have been trying to put it out closer to serving time.

M. Whitham asked if it was possible to get a list of what the improvements in technology and infrastructure were and the related costs. Ms. Holmes said she could do that.

M. Whitham said he was impressed with extracurricular activities that are going on and stressed his agreement with their importance to students. He asked what the increase was in these activities. Mr. Petrone responded that there really weren't any to speak of at GHR when he came three years ago. Ms. Mullaly said the activities have just blossomed at CNH.

M. Kortmann spoke to letters the seniors were just given that they wrote to themselves when they were in 5th grade. She said that it was a wonderful idea and strongly suggested it be kept going. Mr. Petrone said the 5th grade students do continue to do it, as GHR has a room full of boxes of letters from over the years.

C. Trudon asked if any feedback was received from the NAEYC visit, especially as it relates to the facility. Ms. Richard said if there are any issues it will be with the facilities.

L. Pietrantonio said he is so impressed with the improved communication between the high school and the middle school and it must continue for the schools to progress. In addition, he thanked the administrators for doing a great job, as always.

VIII. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. VOTE: Approve Minutes of May 20, 2008

MOTION: To Approve the Minutes of May 20, 2008

By: K. Ryan

Seconded: M. Kortmann

Result: Motion passes unanimously.

B. VOTE: Approve Minutes of May 29, 2008

MOTION: To Approve the Minutes of May 29, 2008

By: K. Ryan

Seconded: M. Kortmann

Result: Motion passes unanimously.

C. VOTE: Approve Minutes of June 2, 2008

MOTION: To Approve the Minutes of June 2, 2008

By: K. Ryan

Seconded: M. Kortmann

Result: Motion passes unanimously.

B. Information and VOTE: Increase of School Lunch Prices – C. Brigham

MOTION: To Increase the School Lunch Prices for 2008-09 as presented in the June 5, 2008 memo prepared by Carol Brigham.

By: K. Ryan Seconded: M. Whitham

Ms. Brigham handed out a survey of area towns and their lunch prices. Dr. Bernard commented saying it is very difficult for small towns to make ends meet in this economy. R. Williams asked what the bottom line increase will be. Ms. Brigham said it would depend on how many students choose not to take lunch because of the increase, but could be about \$50,000. She added it is a calculated guess, but the department may break even. K. Ryan said it looks like it will be very tough and the increase may not be enough when looking at the rising costs. M. Kortmann asked about ala cart lunch at the high school. Ms. Brigham said the district has to be careful, because funding reimbursement requirements state the district has to serve full lunches. She did add that the students can buy the separate parts of the lunches, if they choose.

Result: Motion passes unanimously.

C. Information: Energy Cost Analysis – S. Holmes

Sherry Holmes handed out the Utility Cost Analysis information to the Board members, which compared 06-07 costs to 07-08 costs by square footage per building/site. She said Coventry is part of a consortium and because of that is paying a cheaper rate. Ms. Holmes added that 07-08 June's figures were not available, so she did not include June of 06-07 in the comparison.

M. Whitham said this seems to be the total opposite from the information that was discussed during budget season. Ms. Holmes agreed saying at the time she thought the district would be under funded.

M. Whitham added that it looks like the district is actually saving money, especially at the high school where the KWH is almost half this year compared to last.

M. Kortmann asked if anyone actually looks at the bills month to month and does comparisons. Ms. Holmes said yes, those figure are put into a spreadsheet.

M. Kortmann asked what kind of meters are being used.

P. Noel said the high school has dial in meters and staff can go on-line and use tools to see exactly where the district is on a daily basis.

M. Whitham said Mr. Noel and his team are doing a good job in controlling the usage. He asked if the Board could see comparison back to 2005-06 and if a similar study could be done of oil and diesel. Ms. Holmes said yes.

D. Discussion: Board of Education Summer Meeting Schedule

Dr. Bernard said usually the Board would meet on an "on needed" basis through July and the first scheduled meeting of August. K. Ryan said she would like to see the same procedure followed. It was agreed that the Superintendent and the Chairman would discuss the needs and call a meeting if necessary.

