

**COVENTRY BOARD OF EDUCATION
APPROVED MINUTES
MEETING OF THURSDAY, JANUARY 14, 2010**

Members Present: Larry Pietrantonio, Chairman
Cheryl Trudon, Vice Chairman
Mary Ann Emanuele, Secretary
John Barrett
Jennifer Beausoleil
Mary Kortmann
Mark Malcolm

Also Present: Robert Joyce, Student Representative

Administrators Present: Dr. Donna Bernard, Superintendent
Judith Richard, PSSS Director

Also present were David Petrone, GHR Principal; Troy Hopkins, CHS Principal; Marybeth Moyer, CGS Principal; Michele Mullaly, CNH Principal; Sean Tomany, CHS Assistant Principal; Scott Sadinsky, CNH Assistant Principal; Paul Noel, Director of Physical Plant and Facilities; Katie Baumgartner, Payroll Clerk; Beth Pratt, Food Service Coordinator; Debby Page, CNH Teacher; several Coventry High School students; and a couple of citizens. All motions are directed to the Coventry Board of Education.

I. CALL TO ORDER

By: Chairman, L. Pietrantonio at 7:34 p.m.
Place: Town Hall Annex

II. SALUTE THE FLAG

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by L. Pietrantonio.

III. AUDIENCE OF CITIZENS

There were none. Audience of Citizens was closed.

IV. REPORT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

A. Information: Food Service Department Update – S. Sadinsky, S. Holmes, and B. Pratt
Dr. Bernard publically commended Scott Sadinsky and Beth Pratt for the improvements made this year in the Food Service Department.

Mr. Sadinsky referred to the paperwork which was included in the Board packets. He began by discussing the new procedures in the department, including the new monthly meetings held with the kitchen managers. He continued with noting the increase in breakfast service, new menu items, and maintaining the high volume items. He talked about a cash donation, which was made to students who are on reduced lunch. He said there are high school students who are on a “work study” program working in the school cafeteria. He mentioned the new Point of Sale (POS) system. He commended Ms. Pratt for the excellent job she has done with the transition.

Ms. Pratt talked about the monthly meetings with the kitchen managers and how proactive those meetings are. She commended the managers and their efforts.

Dr. Bernard asked if Food Services is in better shape financially at this time this year compared to last year at this time. Ms. Pratt said yes and she believes that they will

end the year “in the black.” Dr. Bernard said we are really seeing some nice site-based variations in the program.

M. Kortmann asked about the new POS system and the credit/debit card portion. Ms. Pratt said parents will be able to sign-in online and see what their children buying. She said it will make the system run smoother and more efficiently.

M. Malcolm asked if there has been feedback from parents at the Coventry Grammar School and the G. H. Robertson School. Ms. Pratt said she has not heard any negative comments and that all feedback has been positive.

J. Beausoleil asked if the parents have been surveyed. Ms. Pratt said not yet, but that it could happen and possibly it could be on the website.

C. Trudon suggested the survey be attached to a lunch menu also. In addition, she noted that she has heard positive comments about the department and the comments have been continual.

M. Malcolm asked if there are similar metrics for lunch as there are for breakfast. Ms. Pratt said the lunch numbers are a bit lower than in the past, which could be contributed to lower enrollment and the economy. She said the same metric is kept for lunch.

M. Malcolm asked if any fees were incurred with the delay in installing the POS system. Ms. Pratt said no extra fees were incurred.

C. Trudon asked about the nutritional value of donuts which are available to students at breakfast. Ms. Pratt responded they are a low-fat, oven baked, fortified donut. She said it meets the healthy standards and is different than the average donut you would find in other locations.

M. Emanuele asked if breakfast was served at all sites. Ms. Pratt responded yes and that it is open to everyone – students and staff. M. Emanuele asked if the thumbprint stays with a child from school to school. Ms. Pratt said yes.

J. Beausoleil asked about the State’s healthy food standard and related rebate. She said some schools are leaving that program and asked if Coventry is evaluating that yearly. Ms. Pratt said Coventry is participating and that it was discussed with Dr. Bernard. Dr. Bernard noted that if the rebate amount fell too much, the district would evaluate whether it was worth continued participation.

J. Beausoleil asked regarding the POS, if there is an “opt out” for students for the thumbprint. Ms. Pratt said there is an “opt out,” but it should not be a concern and she hopes to explain the details of the thumbprint in the letter to parents.

J. Barrett asked about the increase in breakfast numbers. Ms. Pratt said more time has been given for breakfast and in addition, in some cases students are allowed to bring the breakfast to class. There was discussion about the “work study” program and J. Barrett suggested possibly opening it up to eighth grade students as well.

J. Barrett asked about the thumbprint part of the POS and if students will be able to continue using a pin number as well. Ms. Pratt said she would have to check into that.

J. Barrett said the Board was not aware of the thumbprint option when it was originally discussed and he may not have been keen on the idea. J. Beausoleil agreed and said thumbprints are like social security numbers and she is hesitant regarding that item.

Ms. Pratt said it is not the same as a legal fingerprint and that the legal system cannot come in and use that print for verifying crimes and such. Dr. Bernard asked if other

districts are using it. Ms. Pratt replied Tolland has been using the same system for quite a few years.

M. Emanuele asked when the thumbprint would be deleted from the system. Ms. Pratt said the student's whole account and related information would be deleted when the student has left the school system.

J. Barrett noted the transaction fee for debit/credit card use. He said usually the merchant absorbs those fees. He verified that parents will have to pay to use the option. Ms. Pratt said it would be a flat transaction fee. She said parents are still able to send in cash or check for the accounts.

J. Barrett noted the revenue report. He asked if this is the fund that is supervised by the town. Dr. Bernard said yes, and it is solely the proprietary of the food service operation.

M. Malcolm asked why breakfast wasn't noted on the revenue sheet. Ms. Pratt noted that the label "lunch" covers everything. She said it is the "label" they put to the account.

J. Barrett asked if the Board could discuss the thumbprint at length.

L. Pietrantonio said it could be brought back with more information. He noted as long as there is an "opt out" clause, it may not be the best use of time for the Board. J. Beausoleil asked if biometrics is used in other places in the district. L. Pietrantonio said probably no.

J. Barrett said he wants to have the conversation as a Board. He added that banks have used biometrics and then had to remove the systems after difficulties.

Dr. Bernard asked if Mr. Sadinsky and Ms. Pratt could do homework on the subject and bring back further information. L. Pietrantonio said the item could possibly come back after budget.

B. Information and VOTE: "Approve the Adequate Yearly Progress School Improvement Plan: G. H. Robertson School" – D. Petrone

Mr. Petrone said the plan has come before the Board before. He explained "safe harbor" and portions of the AYP process. He talked about GHR's School Improvement Plan and noted the plan is for math and reading (copies were included in the Board's packets). He said he believes the school will make safe harbor this year; scores are improving. He went into detail reviewing the math and reading plans and the work that has gone into developing them. He commended his staff for the work they have done and said some amazing things have been accomplished.

M. Malcolm asked when does the district receive the state results as to whether we are on "safe harbor." Mr. Petrone said they usually come out in August. M. Malcolm asked if the spring testing results are configured into the state's decision on "safe harbor." Mr. Petrone said it is hard to confirm that with a straight answer, because the State cannot give him a straight answer. He continued explaining, even as the District Testing Coordinator, he could not look at the 2009 special education student testing results until November. He said, even then, the results were very limited in what data was received.

M. Malcolm noted the tour he took at GHR and all of the programs that are happening there. He said what he saw was, a principal having to be even more innovative than he already was. Mr. Petrone said when he started at GHR, he and the staff had to accept the fact this was a school issue. He said once the staff was able to do that, things really started to improve.

M. Emanuele would like to know specifically about the strands. Mr. Petrone said he could email the answers.

M. Emanuele asked if the plan was for special education students alone. Mr. Petrone said the state mandates that the plan be developed to address the area of concern. He said the area of concern here is the subgroups of special education math and special education reading. He continued saying that he and his staff still looked at the issue as a whole, as a school.

M. Emanuele said there is a lot more that is being done that should be on this piece of paper. She said more detail could be added to the plan, because it is happening. She asked, in relationship to the reading, how are you using the strategies here in relationship to other aspects, such as science reading and social studies reading. Mr. Petrone agreed saying there is so much more that could be included. He said the reading in social studies and science has increased greatly. He also noted that with everything that is happening, the plan could be unending. He said the State asked that the plan address the strands specifically.

M. Emanuele asked what evaluation is happening with the different programs. Mr. Petrone said there are assessments built into each of the programs and initiatives. He said there are checks and balances in place for each.

J. Beausoleil said the metric levels for NCLB are a moving target. She commended all four principals for the progress they are making. She said seeing the vertical collaboration is phenomenal.

C. Trudon agreed with J. Beausoleil and said the vertical work is impressive and is paying off. She said there is great variety in students' homework and she is pleased with what she is seeing.

Mr. Petrone noted, in closing, he appreciates that the Board noticed all of the work that has been done. He said in ten years, this is the best that the Administrators have all worked together and he appreciates everyone's efforts.

MOTION: To Approve the Adequate Yearly Progress School Improvement Plan for the G. H. Robertson School.

By: C. Trudon Seconded: J. Barrett

Result: Motion passes unanimously.

VI. REPORT OF CHAIRMAN

L. Pietrantonio asked that members not get too detailed with budget questions tonight, as there will be discussions for the weeks to come.

VIII. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. VOTE: Approve Minutes of December 3, 2009

MOTION: To Approve the Minutes of the Special Meeting of December 3, 2009

By: C. Trudon Seconded: M. Kortmann

C. Trudon noted page 5, first paragraph under VI. A., the second to last sentence be change to, "She said the way the Transfer form was laid out, the transfers that were from the budget vs. what actually needed to be transferred, needed to be separated."

C. Trudon noted under VI. A, the third paragraph, the second sentence should read, "She said the State does not have the numbers up on their website yet."

C. Trudon noted under VI. A., the second line from the bottom, a dollar sign be added in front of 180,000.

C. Trudon noted page 6, paragraph 7, which begins Mark Malcolm. C. Trudon said she was not sure how that paragraph ties in and perhaps something was missing. The group asked that the tape be checked for clarification.

J. Beausoleil noted page 2, under committee assignments, that number 6 and number 7 should be liaison, not "committee."

J. Beausoleil noted page 2, under Teacher Negotiation Committee, the fourth sentence, should be clarified. It was agreed it would read as follows, "He said, during actual teacher negotiations when in Executive Session, it will consist of the seven Board members; the clerk and Dr. Bernard would not be included."

J. Beausoleil noted page 4, second paragraph up from the bottom, the first sentence should read, "J. Beausoleil said if we use out of state vendors, they will use sub-contractors that will require an increase in the prices."

J. Beausoleil noted page 6, second paragraph. She said J. Barrett had also commented on whether the Board needed to go to the Town or not if the appropriated expenses did not exceed what the Board needed. It was asked that the tape be checked and those comments be included.

M. Emanuele asked that the spelling of her name be checked and corrected throughout the minutes.

M. Emanuele noted page 3, the first paragraph under item B, six lines up from the bottom, the word "refuse" be changed to "recuse."

M. Emanuele noted page 5, the last paragraph before Report of Board Members, and asked that the actual vendor names be noted as the final three.

The minutes were tabled to the next regular meeting.

B. VOTE: Approve Minutes of December 10, 2009

MOTION: To Approve the Minutes of December 10, 2009

By: J. Barrett Seconded: C. Trudon

J. Barrett noted page 5, third paragraph, second sentence, the word "that" be changed to "the."

J. Barrett noted page 5, fourth paragraph, first sentence, the phrase "in appropriate" should be "inappropriate."

Result: Motion to approve the minutes with noted changes passes unanimously.

X. NEW BUSINESS

A. VOTE: Approve CNH November 2010 Field Experience to Philadelphia and Washington, DC

MOTION: Approve CNH November 2010 Field Experience to Philadelphia and Washington, DC

By: C. Trudon Seconded: M. Malcolm

J. Beausoleil asked if they are traveling by bus and if there is an itinerary. Mr. Sadinsky said the trip will mirror this year's trip. M. Mullaly said the itinerary will be similar to this year's.

C. Trudon said the curriculum details included were very nice.

M. Emanuele asked about the number of 130 to attend and was it limited to that number. Mr. Sadinsky said all are welcome. M. Emanuele asked why the students, who don't go, don't go. Ms. Page said most of those who don't go would be because of parental decisions, not due to financial concerns. She said there are scholarships and financial assistance available. M. Emanuele said she would sponsor a child and challenged others to do the same.

Result: The motion passes 6-1 (J. Beausoleil opposed).

J. Beausoleil said the trip has included an itinerary in previous years and she was not comfortable approving it without reviewing one.

B. Information: Budget Presentation

1. Presentation of FY11 Budget – Dr. Bernard

Dr. Bernard referenced the Cost Savings Initiatives and Efficiencies document, which was included in the packets. In addition she mentioned the *Getting More From Less* article also included in the packets. The article was written by economists at UCONN and it noted that Coventry was listed as having a good efficiency score. She moved on to the actual budget books and talked about the Assumptions page and also the Addition/Reduction Analysis page. She said she has had many conversations with the administrators and supports wholeheartedly their requests, but has to look at what is reasonable for Coventry and its residents. She said it is a complicated budget and the complications are state-wide, not just here in Coventry.

2. Coventry High School – T. Hopkins

Mr. Hopkins said he appreciated the opportunity to advocate for Coventry High School's 2010-11 budget. He reviewed the proposed budget and reviewed his memo, which is included in the budget book.

3. Capt. Nathan Hale School – M. Mullaly

Ms. Mullaly said she was glad to present the Capt. Nathan Hale School 2010-11 budget to the Board. She reviewed the budget, which came in at a 0% increase. She noted items in her related memo and the dedication her staff have in teaching students.

4. G. H. Robertson School – D. Petrone

Mr. Petrone said he came in at 0% and there was under \$1,500 moved around compared to last year's budget. He said a budget was developed with three priorities and he reviewed the G. H. Robertson School budget and his related memo.

5. Coventry Grammar School – M. Moyer

Ms. Moyer said the Coventry Grammar School proposed budget is a unified effort to make modest and reasonable spending proposals. She reviewed the budget and her related memo.

6. Physical Plant & Facilities – P. Noel

Mr. Noel noted that in the facilities budget area the increases are in utilities and energy. He said the remainder of the budget has little change.

7. Central Office – Dr. Bernard

Dr. Bernard said that the Central Office budget is pretty self explanatory and the Board can address questions as discussions progress.

8. Pupil & Staff Support Services – J. Richard

Ms. Richard began by saying the PSSS budget is extremely complex. She noted that several lines showed no increases, but others mandated a small increase. She said the proposed budget enables students to reach their maximum potential.

Dr. Bernard suggested Board members email budget questions to Ms. Baumgartner and copy the whole Board.

M. Malcolm asked if the Board could receive the location summaries electronically. Dr. Bernard said that could happen.

There was discussion on the Addition/Reduction Analysis sheet and which column was used for figures in the book. Dr. Bernard said the Superintendent's proposed budget figure of a 2.94% increase was used.

XI. REPORT OF BOARD MEMBERS

VOTE: Selection of Architects/Engineers for Roofing Projects

L. Pietrantonio reviewed the Roof Replacement Quote Summary, which was included in the Board packets.

J. Barrett noted that all three studies go over the \$25,000 allotment by the Town. L. Pietrantonio said we can edit it down and customize the study work that needs to be done. J. Barrett asked if the Board could supplement and get all of the study work done. L. Pietrantonio said the numbers are fairly flexible.

The group discussed the different figures on the spreadsheet. M. Malcolm asked if we can ask the companies if they would do the job for the \$25,000. L. Pietrantonio said we would have to ask that of all three.

M. Malcolm noted that he heard good things on the street about Jacunski. C. Trudon said she heard good things about Lawrence. J. Barrett said it comes down to the numbers. J. Beausoleil said it does not just come down to numbers; the Board is investing quite a bit in what the vendor is going to provide and she would like to see an interview happen. J. Barrett said the Board has already qualified the three finalists.

M. Malcolm said there is no reason to delay the process. C. Trudon said she would like to see the person we are going to write the check to face to face. J. Beausoleil said she would like to see interviews happen. J. Barrett said they are just going to come in and tell us what we want to hear and we won't learn anything new from what they presented in their paper packets. He said we cannot delay this process anything longer.

MOTION: To select Jacunski Humes Architects, LLC to be the engineer for the roofing project.

By: J. Barrett

Seconded: M. Malcolm

M. Kortmann said the Board did discuss interviewing the vendors. M. Malcolm said there will be meetings before they start the project.

Result: The motion passes 4-1-1 (C. Trudon against, J. Beausoleil abstains. L. Pietrantonio recused himself.)

J. Beausoleil noted that there was information presented about the Fox 61 Student News Program at the last meeting. She wanted it noted that the program is still in existence, but it is the awards ceremony that is being eliminated.

J. Beausoleil said that all principals offered an open house/tour of the schools to Board members. She said what she saw on the tour was phenomenal. The time and effort spent to plan and execute the tour was fantastic.

J. Barrett noted that the make up of the party affiliations of the Board has changed. He said after 30 years as a republican he is now an unaffiliated.

XII. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Pursuant to CGS-1-200(c)(6)(A), the Board of Education will go into Executive Session for discussions of the Custodian/Maintenance Negotiations and Teacher Negotiations

MOTION: Pursuant to CGS-1-200(c)(6)(A), the Board of Education will go into Executive Session for discussions of the Custodian/Maintenance Negotiations and Teacher Negotiations with the Superintendent at 10:06 p.m.

By: C. Trudon Seconded: J. Barrett

Result: Motion passes unanimously.

XIII. OPEN SESSION

The Board of Education returned to Open Session at 10 :55 p.m.

VOTE: To approve the Memorandum of Understanding with the Education Association of Coventry regarding the Coventry Board of Education Retirement Plan as presented.

MOTION: To approve the Memorandum of Understanding with the Education Association of Coventry regarding the Coventry Board of Education Retirement Plan as presented.

By: C. Trudon Seconded: M. Kortmann

Result: The motion passes 6-0-1 (M. Malcolm abstained.)

M. Malcolm said his reason for abstention was as follows: He said the Board had been given all of the information about 15 minutes prior to vote. He said he had not had an opportunity to weigh the cost benefit of the retirement plan. He continued, considering the length of service of some of the employees, there was a good chance some of those individuals would have retired on their own.

XIV. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: To adjourn the meeting at 10:56 p.m.

By: J. Barrett Seconded: C. Trudon

Result: Motion passes unanimously.

Respectfully submitted:

Kimberlee Michaud
Board Clerk

January 28, 2010

Approved