Thursday, October 23, 2025
School Committee Meeting: 6:00 PM

Call to Order/Roll Call

Meeting called to order by Chairperson Pierson at 6:06 PM

Roll Call Vote:	James Pierson, Chairperson	Aye
	Ana Isabel dos Reis-Couto, Vice-Chairperson	AYe
	Amanda Carlow, Member	Aye
	John Cambio, Jr., Member	Aye
	Bradford Mayer, Member	Aye
	Cody Reidl, Member	Absent
	Dorothy Jackvony	Aye
	Don Cowart	Aye

Vote to Go into Executive Session

Motion No. 25-19-1 by Member Mayer , seconded by Member Jackvony that the Committee recess into Executive Session at 6:06 p.m. to consider matter(s) relating specifically to

- Student Matters: R.I.G.L. §42-46-5 (a)(8) (Homeschool Requests)
- Approval of Executive Session Minutes 10/09/2025: the following items were discussed: 1) Student Matters (Homeschool Requests): R.I.G.L. §42-46-5(a)(8)(3) Approval of Executive Session Minutes 9/11/2025 3)Review of School Crisis Emergency Plans: R.I.G.L

Motion passed 5/0.

Reconvene Open Session

The Open Meeting was reconvened at 6:12 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance/Moment of Silence/Safety Notification/Reading of Mission Statement

- *Pledge of Allegiance*
- *Moment of Silence to consider the work before the Committee this evening*
- *Safety Notifications Superintendent Cowart notifies the public of emergency exits*
- *Member Cambio read the Mission Statement: The mission of Coventry Public Schools is to*

inspire, support, and challenge all students in an inclusive community to be critical thinkers, effective communicators, reflective learners, responsible individuals, and global citizens.

Executive Session Report

In the executive session 2 votes were taken, the first to approve homeschool request, the second to approve executive session minutes of 10/9/2025. Both passed 6/0.

Vote to Seal Minutes of Executive Session

Motion No. 25-19-2 by Member Mayer, seconded by Member dos Reis Couto, that the records of the Executive Session be kept closed pursuant to Sections §42-46-4 and §42-46-5. Motion passed 6/0.

Approval of Minutes: 10/09/2025

Motion No. 25-19-3 by Member dos Reis Couto seconded my Member Mayer, to approve the minutes of 10/09/2025 as presented. Motion passed 6/0.

Citizens' Comments on Topics Listed on the Agenda

There were no citizens' comments.

Regional Career and Technical Center Tour (Not Broadcast on Zoom)

Mr. Chase took the School Committee and members of the public on a tour showcasing the Career and Technical program at the High School.

CTE Post Graduation Data Presentation: Discussion

Mr. Chase shared that 70% of high school students are enrolled in programs earning certification or licenses immediately upon graduation. Participation continues to grow each year, with 80% of freshmen currently involved. The high school now offers 13 career pathways and 22 AP courses.
He highlighted many areas of the CTE program, showcasing student successes and testimonials. Mr. Chase noted that alumni often return to speak with current students.

Member dos Reis Couto thanked Mr. Chase and commented on how impressive the program is. Chairperson Pierson echoed those sentiments, noting that the statistics were eye-opening.
Mr. Cowart discussed the effort to resurrect the school's radio station and establish a communications pathway. Mr. Chase mentioned that students have gone on air to promote CTE programs. Mr. Cowart added that Coventry is the only public school with an FM station. Member dos Reis Couto suggested adding barbering and encouraging female participation. Member Carlow inquired about the possibility of adding an equine program, noting parental interest. Mr. Chase responded.

Fiscal Year (FY) 2026 Quarter 1 Year to Date: Discussion

Mr. Cowart noted that several fiscal items were connected on the agenda. Mr. DeVerna reported on financial figures for July, August, and September, noting that revenues are comparable to last year, though state aid is slightly lower and shows a lag similar to previous summers. Mr. DeVerna stated that expenses are currently lower than last year, resulting in a larger current surplus. There were no questions from the committee.

FY 2026 Monthly Budget Update

Mr. DeVerna spoke to the September monthly update had been added and that the district remains on track. There were no questions from the committee.

FY 2025 Year End Budget Estimate: Discussion

Mr. DeVerna provided a year-end budget estimate, sharing positive news that the district expects approximately a $1 million surplus, in addition to the $140,000 previously allocated by the town toward the deficit plan. This surplus will be applied directly to the deficit. He noted a $333,000 reserve buffer remains for contingencies during the audit process.

Mr. Cowart spoke to the surplus due to increased revenues, Pre-K tuition, CTE tuition, and Medicaid reimbursements and reduced expenses, lower salary and purchasing costs.

Mr. Cowart also discussed the next agenda item will have this incorporated into the financial projections. Member Mayer remarked that this was great news. Chairperson Pierson thanked everyone for their hard work, acknowledging the extensive behind-the-scenes efforts that made the positive results possible.

5 Year Budget Projection: Discussion &Vote

Mr. Cowart spoke to contractual rates and their financial effects. Mr. DeVerna presented the original five-year projection from the summer and a newer versions reflecting the nearing completion of the audit and potential raises. Mr. Cowart emphasized the financial implications of each version and the need to select one for committee action.

Chairperson Pierson asked why the timing fell in October, and Mr. Cowart responded. Member Mayer asked if any surplus must go toward the deficit. Mr. Cowart responded. Member Mayer also questioned whether healthcare savings were already built into the deficit plan and expressed concern about any unbudgeted amounts while awaiting contract ratification. Member dos Reis Couto inquired about billing for contingency reserves. Mr. Cowart and Mr. Dever responded. Chairperson Pierson asked the members which version should be voted on and presented in December. Member Mayer asked if both could be presented to the council, and if not, whether a vote was required. Chairperson Pierson responded. Member Carlow expressed concern that the contract might be low on the town council's priority list and expressed planning for the worst. Member Jackvony asked whether both versions could be adopted. Chairperson Pierson and Mr. DeVerna responded.

Motion 25-19-4 by Member Mayer, seconded by member dos Reis Couto, to approve 5 Year Budget Projection Version 1.1. Motion passed 6/0

NJROTC Field Trip to New Hampshire: Discussion & Vote

Mr. Cowart spoke to needing approval for a one-day ROTC trip outside the 100-mile radius.

Motion 25-19-5 by Member Jackvony, seconded by member dos Reis Couto, to approve NJROTC Field Trip to New Hampshire. Motion passed 6/0

Title IX Policy 1st Reading: Discussion & Vote

Mr. Cowart spoke to the **Civil Rights Review** during the spring. A recommendation was made to amend Policy to reflect the updated grievance procedure language provided by the state.

Motion 25-19-6 by Member Mayer, seconded by member dos Reis Couto, to approve Title IX Policy 1st Reading. Motion passed 6/0

Student Dress Code- JICA- 2nd Reading

Second reading of dress code policy. Member Jackvony asked if the policy applied K–12 or just to the high school. Mr. Cowart responded. Member Carlow questioned why hats are permitted at the high school but not in grades K–8. Mr. Cowart responded. Member Cambio raised concerns about the "Philosophy" section referencing gender neutrality and gender identity. Chairperson Pierson responded. Member Jackvony asked whether this was a full policy revision or limited to dress code updates. Chairperson Pierson responded.

Motion No. 25-19-7 by Member dos Reis Couto, and seconded by Member Mayer, to approve Student Dress Code- JICA Second Reading. Motion passed 6/0

Superintendent Report: 1) CTE Open House 2) Gym Grand Re-Opening 3) Western Elementary Water Update 4) Update from Auditor General

Mr. Cowart reported that the CTE Open House was a great success. Mr Cowart spoke to the gym grand re-opening, provided an update on Western Water, and a briefing from the Auditor General.

Chairperson Pierson noted that changes to the town's audit schedule will affect the frequency of joint meetings. Mr. Cowart responded.

Citizens' Comments

There were no public comments.

Scheduling of the Next meeting

Motion No. 25-19-8 by Member dos Reis Couto, and seconded by Member Mayer, to schedule the next meeting for November 13, 2025 at Coventry Administration Office. Motion passed 6/0

ADJOURNMENT

Motion No. 25-19-9 by Member dos Reis Couto, and seconded by Member Jackvony, to adjourn at 8:43 PM Motion passed 6/0.