Thursday, August 13, 2026
School Committee Meeting: 6:30 PM

Call to Order/Roll Call

Meeting called to order by Chairperson Pierson at 6:02 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	Aye
	Dorothy Jackvony	Absent
	Don Cowart	Aye

Vote to Go into Executive Session

Motion No. 26-15-1 by Member Mayer, seconded by Member Cambio that the Committee recess into Executive Session at 6:03 p.m. to consider matter(s) relating specifically to

- Student Matters: R.I.G.L. §42-46-5 (a)(8) (Homeschool Requests)
- Pursuant to R.I.G.L. §42-46-5 (a)(2) to discuss potential litigation
- Approval of Executive Session Minutes 7/23/2026 the following items were discussed: 1) Student Matters: R.I.G.L. § 42-46-5 (a)(8) (Homeschool Requests); 2) Pursuant to R.I.G.L. § to 42-46-5 (a)(2) discuss potential litigation; 3). Pursuant to R.I.G.L. § 42-46-5 (a)(2) to discuss potential litigation; 4) Pursuant to R.I.G.L. § 42-46-5(a)(2) to discuss Declaratory Judgment Order D.O., 25-01A; 4) Approval of Executive Session Minutes of 6/11/2026; 5) Approval of Executive Session Minutes of 7/15/2026

- Motion passed 6/0

Reconvene Open Session

The Open Meeting was reconvened at 6:22 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 Mayer 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 executive session 2 votes were taken, the first to approve homeschool requests, the second to approve executive session minutes of 07/23/2026. Both passed 6/0

Vote to Seal Minutes of Executive Session

Motion No. 26-15-2 by Member Jackvony, 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.

Citizens' Comments on Topics Listed on the Agenda

No Comments.

Approval of Minutes: 7/23/2026

Motion No. 26-15-3 by Member Mayer, seconded by Member dos Reis Couto to approve the minutes from 7/23/2026 as presented. Motion passed 6/0.

Five minute Recess taken for Technical Issue.
Resumed meeting at 6:30 PM there will be not Youtube stream/video as it was not working.

Introduction of Andrew Longo, assistant Principal at Coventry High School: Discussion

Mr. Cowart introduced Andrew Longo, the new Assistant Principal at Coventry High School. Mr. Cowart expressed his excitement about Mr. Longo joining Coventry Public Schools.

Mr. Longo introduced himself to the School Committee and stated that he was honored to be working in the district. He explained that he conducted research before applying for position and expressed that he was very happy to be joining Coventry.

Member Cambio welcomed Mr. Longo and offered their congratulations asking what drew him to Coventry. Member Reidl offered his congratulations and asked what he was most looking forward to learning and where he hoped to have the greatest impact.

Member Dos Reis Couto thanked Mr. Longo and welcomed him to the district. Members Mayer and Member Carlow also offered congratulations and welcomed him to Coventry.

Chairperson Pierson congratulated Mr. Longo and stated that he was looking forward to seeing the positive things that come from Coventry High School.

Western Well RFP Presentation: Discussion

Mr. Cowart introduced Bob Ferrari to provide an update on the Coventry High School well project. Mr. Cowart stated that the project was long overdue and recognized Mr. Ferrari's assistance in securing grant funding, noting that the project will no longer be funded through the bond.

Mr. Ferrari discussed the evaluation of the school conducted in 2012–2013, noting that the well was already in poor condition at that time. He described the project as a lengthy process and thanked the administration for its support. Approximately three years ago, the district began discussions with the Rhode Island Department of Health and the Rhode Island Infrastructure Bank, which opened opportunities for project funding.

Mr. Ferrari reviewed the objectives of the project. He explained that the new well will be located on school property and reviewed the plans for its installation. He also discussed the current budget status, construction schedule, public bidding process, and anticipated project phases.

Member Reidl thanked Mr. Ferrari for his time and effort and asked whether drilling the new well would affect the timing or use of the playground. Mr. Ferrari responded.

Member dos Reis Couto expressed excitement about the project moving forward and asked about the new PLC monitoring and control system, including how the well would be monitored and protected from cybersecurity threats. Mr. Ferrari responded.

Member Carlow asked about the magnesium currently present in the water and whether it originates from the piping or the existing water source. Mr. Ferrari responded. Member Carlow also asked whether changing the well location would affect the amount of magnesium in the water. Mr. Ferrari rewsponded.

Member Carlow asked how any remaining project funds would be used. Mr. Cowart responded.

Chairperson Pierson thanked Mr. Ferrari for the presentation and for his work on the project over the years.

ROTC Navy Letter: Discussion

Mr. Cowart notified the School Committee of the district's interest in pursuing a nationally recognized JROTC program. He reviewed the application process and the steps required to receive approval.

Chief Abel discussed the differences between the program before and after national approval, particularly regarding funding and which expenses would be covered.

Mr. Cowart explained that the district plans to begin with one instructor for the upcoming school year, with the possibility of expanding to a second instructor as the program grows. He also discussed recruitment efforts.

Member Carlow asked whether there would be an opportunity for the district to decline participation in the program. Chief Abel responded.

Chairperson Pierson asked whether students participating in the program would be permitted to wear fatigue uniforms during the school day. Chief Abel responded.

Chairperson Pierson congratulated those involved and expressed enthusiasm about seeing the program grow.

School Related Personnel MOU: Discussion & Vote

Mr. Cowart discussed a request that had been raised years ago for the School Committee to consider creating a foreman position within the maintenance department. He recognized the support and leadership provided by the maintenance staff over the past several years and discussed the increasing number of projects currently underway.

Mr. Cowart explained that the proposed position would not be an administrative position and would not include responsibility for conducting employee evaluations. He stated that the position is needed to provide additional leadership and coordination for the department's work and projects.

Member Mayer agreed that the position was needed and asked about the Class II license requirements. Mr. Cowart responded.

Chairperson Pierson noted a vote is not neede on this item.

FY 2027 Budget: Discussion & Vote

Mr. Cowart presented an update to the FY 2027 budget. He explained that the budget was initially approved in February and updated in April but had not been updated since that time.

Mr. Cowart discussed recent retirements and other changes affecting the budget. Mr. DeVerna explained that, as the district moves into the new school year, additional information has become available and certain items have been updated and amended accordingly.

Member Reidl asked about the increase in the curriculum development line item. Mr. Cowart and Mr. DeVerna responded.

Chairperson Pierson thanked Mr. Cowart and Mr. DeVerna for the update.

Motion No. 26-15-4 by Member dos Reis Couto, seconded by Member Mayer, to approve FY 2027 Budget. Motion passed 6/0

School Meal Price Increase: Discussion & Vote

Mr. Cowart discussed a meeting between Mr. DeVerna and the food service operation and noted that food costs were higher during the previous year. He explained that the district had not implemented an increase in meal prices and discussed the need to address rising costs.

Chairperson Pierson asked whether the district could determine how much it could reasonably increase meal prices. Mr. Cowart responded.

Chairperson Pierson also asked about strategies to encourage more students to purchase school lunch. The committee discussed vending machines, which had been brought back for consideration. Mr. Cowart responded.

Member Mayer commented that increased student participation in school lunch might be possible with restrictions on cell phone use during lunch.

Member Dos Reis Couto asked about the vending machines and whether food waste would be evaluated as part of the food service presentation and follow-up discussion. Mr. Cowart responded.

Motion No. 26-15-5 by Member dos Reis Couto, seconded by Member Riedl, to approve School Meal Price Increase. Motion passed 6/0

Approval of Preschool Student Handbook: Discussion & Vote

Mr. Cowart and Chairperson Pierson discussed the handbook and the process of voting as a block.

Mr. Cowart noted that the handbook had been provided to the committee well in advance of the meeting and included a red-line version identifying the proposed changes.

Motion by Member Mayer, seconded by Member Reidl to approve Preschool Student Handbook.. Motion passed 6/0.

- **Approval of Elementary Student Handbook: Discussion & Vote**
- **Approval of Elementary Code of Conduct: Discussion & Vote**
- **Approval of Middle School Student Handbook: Discussion & Vote**
- **Approval of Middle School Code of Conduct: Discussion & Vote**
- **Approval of High School Student Handbook: Discussion & Vote**
- **Approval of High School Code of Conduct: Discussion & Vote**

These Agenda were voted on as a block by the committee.

Motion No. 26-15-6 by Member Reidl, seconded by Member Carlow, to approve Handbooks and Code of Conducts.. Motion passed 5/1

Approval of Athletic Student Handbook: Discussion & Vote

Motion No. 26-15-7 by Member Reidl, seconded by Member dos reis Couto, to approve Athletics Student Handbook. Motion passed 5/1

SSuperintendent’s Report: 1) Building Committee Update 2) Transportation Update

Mr. Cowart provided updates regarding the Building Committee and transportation.

He reviewed work completed over the summer, including transportation changes and the number of buses that had been eliminated. He also discussed the anticipated timeline for establishing the new bus schedule.

Member Carlow asked about communicating the progress to the entire community. Mr. Cowart responded.

Member Carlow also asked about issues at the high school. Mr. Cowart provided an update.

Citizens' Comments

Robert Chiardio Jr
Westerly, RI

Scheduling of the Next Meeting

Motion No. 26-15-8 by Member Mayer, and seconded by Member Cambio, to schedule the next meeting for September 10, 2026 at Coventry Public Schools Administrative Office. Motion passed 6/0

ADJOURNMENT

Motion No. 26-15-9 by Member Reidl, and seconded by Member dos reis Couto, to adjourn at 8:18 PM Motion passed 6/0.