

## Coventry School Committee Adopts FY13 Budget

Committee members also voted to ratify a contract with the CTA.

By [Tracy Proulx](#) | March 5, 2012



The Coventry School Committee adopted the fiscal year 2013 budget on Thursday night and decided how to earmark the \$156,533 surplus.

Robin Pelletier, director of business and finance for the Coventry School Department, told the council they had an obligation to get the school department's budget to the Town Council by Wednesday. She suggested the committee earmark the 1 percent surplus to help offset

the deficit in the school lunch program.

When Pelletier was hired in 2009 the lunch program had a deficit around \$400,000. Since that time Pelletier said they have tried to close the gap with cost containment and the goal is to get back to the breakeven point with the lunch program.

The surplus of \$156,533 would go to repay the obligation the school committee has to pay down the debt owed to the town for the lunch program deficit.

School Committee Member Thomas A. Hetherman (D-1) asked Pelletier if there was a line item where the surplus could be placed until after the election with the referendums seeking funds for capital repairs for the schools. He said if none of the referendums are passed the money will need to go elsewhere such as roofing.

"I understand the balance needs to be paid down but we have [roofs that need to be fixed](#)," said Hetherman. "I don't feel confident saying pay (down the debt). My priority is the roof over debt."

"We need about \$5 million to do the roofs. The only way we would get that is to come out in a bond referendum," Hetherman went on to say. "Two-hundred thousand dollars isn't enough to patch a roof. We have been band-aiding for 10 years."

The committee agreed to create a line item for capital needs and/or school food service program. The school committee adopted the Fiscal Year 2013 budget with the \$156,533 earmarked for either capital needs and/or the school lunch program. The total budget is \$64,134,389.

Pelletier said the proposed budget is in line to make a \$600,000 reduction.

"I want to make clear this is no increase," said Frank Hyde.

In other business, the School Committee unanimously voted in favor of ratifying a contract with the [Coventry Teachers' Alliance](#).



School Committee Member Judith Liner (D-5) said it was wonderful that the town council, school committee and teachers' union worked collaboratively to reach an agreement.