

Carlisle School Committee
Minutes
Wednesday, January 6, 2021
7:00 p.m.
Carlisle School Cafeteria
and Zoom Remote Access

Present– School Committee: Christine Lear - Chair, Amanda Comperchio, Jack Huntress, Eva Mostoufi

Present – School Committee via Zoom: Sara Wilson

Present– School Administration: James O’Shea, Superintendent

Present – School Administration via Zoom: Matt Mehler, Middle School Principal; Denet Sidell, Elementary School Principal; Lori Bruce, Director of Student Support Services; Anne Mahan, Business Manager; Nancy Anderson, Assistant to the Superintendent.

In order to adhere to social distancing guidelines, 5 members of the public were allowed access to this meeting in the cafeteria at the Carlisle School. Per Governor Baker’s order suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A sec. 20, members of the public who could not access this meeting in the cafeteria were able to access it via live stream at:

<https://carlisle-k12-ma-us.zoom.us/j/81592978732?pwd=eHlwdC93d3NqWHhiM1cwdkgzLzRiUT09>

Meeting ID: 815 9297 8732

Passcode: 328706

Public comments were posted via the chat box. Questions/Comments were read and answered by the School Committee via live stream.

I. Call to Order

Ms. Lear called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. and stated that the meeting was being recorded.

II. Review/Approve Minutes

- A. Meeting of December 16, 2020. Ms. Comperchio made a motion to approve the minutes of December 16, 2020; Mr. Huntress seconded the motion. There was no discussion. The following votes were taken in roll call: Comperchio, aye; Huntress, aye; Mostoufi, aye; Lear, aye; Wilson, aye.

III. Information/Discussion Items

- A. State and Local COVID Dashboard. Mr. O’Shea reported that there have been no new COVID cases since before the winter break. There are currently a few members of the School community in quarantine due to exposure or travel. The total positive case count in the Town of Carlisle in the last 14 days is 27. The State test positivity rate is 6.5%. Mr. O’Shea noted that there were 3 positive cases in School in December.
- B. School/Superintendent Update. Mr. O’Shea reported that a few elementary students moved from Family Choice Remote to In-Person instruction on Monday. It was noted that the School was able to maintain the 6 feet distancing with this additional number of

students. The Fire Department continues to offer COVID testing. Other testing options for faculty and staff have been identified and people are encouraged to contact Lauren Sawyer for details. He urged everyone to continue to follow State guidance. Ms. Lear stated that it is remarkable we are in school, and thanked the faculty and staff. Mr. O'Shea added that it's due to the community staying vigilant, and added his thanks. Mr. O'Shea introduced Social Justice Committee chair Madeleine Lydon. Ms. Lydon shared a PowerPoint presentation about Diversity, Equity and Inclusion at CPS. The book group comprised of 60 staff members read the book White Fragility. In the fall, a Community Book Club was started with over 20 people. There were many discussions with resulting implications on teaching practice and school culture. In the fall, there will be an in depth discussion for the larger Carlisle Community on anti-bias and anti-racism. Ms. Lydon had asked for feedback from participants and shared some of what was said. One staff member said because we read the book as a staff, she was able to speak up when problematic content was found in the curriculum. Teachers are working to revamp their own thinking and teaching practice. A community member said it was a way to start the process of learning about anti-racism and to connect with others. Ms. Lydon is pleased with the feedback and the hard conversations that have taken place. She added that the Social Justice Committee is comprised of over 20 people; one subgroup focuses on culture, the other on curriculum. This committee is partnering with the Read Across America team and the National Educational Association to celebrate a nation of diverse readers. Ms. Lydon added that there was a Carlisle College course called Diverse Books Matter offered in the fall. It addressed how educators can improve their teaching practice by bringing in a more diverse library. Maya Bery is doing a diversity audit of our school library, checking to make sure there is a good representation of books, specifically, that we have windows and mirrors for all of our students. Books should allow all students to see themselves and others in our curriculum. Next on the agenda for the Staff Book Club this winter is How to be an Antiracist. The Community Book Club will read this book in the spring. Ms. Lear thanked Ms. Lydon for this informative presentation. Ms. Wilson asked if Ms. Bery's spreadsheet is accessible to the community if families are looking for certain books. Ms. Lydon answered that they are building a website to chronicle all of the books available and will also offer some virtual readings of books. It will be a resource moving forward that people can access. Mr. O'Shea continued and gave an update on the water situation at the School. He provided the history of when the elevator failed, hydraulic fluid was leaked into the soil, contaminants were identified in the water supply, and a new water supply and system had to be created. A filtration system was installed that included a GAK that filtered the TPH contaminants but not radon. We currently have to change the medium so it doesn't get radioactive. There were also heightened levels of uranium in the water; the School didn't exceed state levels, but there was need for a mitigation system for that too. Through capital funding we should be able to install the system. Through testing, TPH is no longer being detected. It is thought that Omni Environmental will confirm that the GAK system is no longer needed. Mr. Fortado is currently working with Omni and our insurance company. Insurance has paid to date for the changes to the medium but we are reaching the maximum on the claim. Mr. O'Shea continued with the update and stated that if there is a snow day with unsafe travel conditions, the School will have a remote learning day. The intramural basketball program will start next week. The date for required flu shots has been extended to

February 28. The National Register process for the Brick Building is moving forward. The School is meeting with the Select Board on January 12 to discuss capital planning and other collaborative efforts. The Finance Committee (FinCom) special budget meeting is on January 25. The LEPC is working on a vaccine rollout plan. There is currently a regionalized plan and vaccines will be given at CCHS. A structure for vaccine distribution has been also ordered for Carlisle. Ms. Wilson said that currently, the vaccine is being offered to just Concord and Carlisle first responders. Going forward, other surrounding towns have their own plans for phases 2 and beyond. Mr. O'Shea voiced thanks on behalf of the faculty and staff because each town employee received a \$25 gift card to Ferns from the CSC and the Select Board. The gift was well received.

- C. Initial Budget Discussion. Anne Mahan presented. Scott Triola from FinCom was also on the call. Ms. Mahan said that the FY22 Budget is being developed. The budget is being looked at both post pandemic or remaining in pandemic mode. The School is still working on defining the final budget number. Primary Budget drivers include: the CPS mission and vision, salary increases of a 2.25% COLA, step increases of 4.0%, Enrollment/Class Size, high quality instruction, and regular and special education costs. Class sizes have remained within recommendations; grades K-2 have less than 18 students and grades 3-8 have less than 21 students. Carlisle is maintaining high quality instruction. Funding considerations include: prior year level funding with a deferred increase to FY22, local funding available, circuit breaker funds were less over FY21, FY21 pre-pays with FY20 funds. There is a built in deferment of expense. Mr. O'Shea added several points including that the School had to make a level funded budget in FY21 due to COVID, and it was not an easy task. There were cuts to professional development, other line items, sacrifices were made and we were able to sustain the School. State relief funds were then made available and the School returned some funds to the Town. School expenditures were well over \$11.5 million; closer to \$12.1 million. Contractual obligations will be higher than in recent years. Historically the School was given funds from Long Term Capital and now those costs are in the School budget. Ms. Mahan added that we had some savings from last year noting the agreement with Bedford Charter that saved on transportation costs. Ms. Mahan continued with funding considerations; the School now has additional cleaning and sanitizing protocols, a temporary custodian has been hired, the cost of additional PPE (approximately \$30,000), the addition of a contract custodian in the evening, and the question of whether there will be more federal or State funding coming to Schools. There was also the State mandate that said schools had to provide remote learning in the COVID environment. This impacted this year's staffing by 3 teachers because replacement teachers were hired for the teachers that transitioned to teaching remote classes, and an additional section was added to 5th grade to accommodate the necessary distancing for the number of students. The School budget is primarily made up of salaries, and about half of staff are at the top step. Step increases get 4-5% increases and COLA. The best estimate at the current time is a budget of \$12,283,995. The budget timeline is: January 18: FinCom budget questionnaire; January 20: preliminary budget presentation to CSC; January 25: meeting with FinCom; February: budget guidelines will be received; March: final Town budget recommendations. Scott Triola added that the budget process will work the same way as previous years on an express timeline, based on assumptions of a normal April Town Meeting. Fincom will meet with all departments on January 25 and 27. FinCom voted to

dissolve the Long Term Capital Committee; now FinCom makes those recommendations. Ms. Mahan thanked the administrative team and said the School will continue to refine the budget and will present more definitive numbers in a couple of weeks. Ms. Mostoufi asked when we would know how much money might be coming from the State. Mr. O'Shea answered if the federal or state government were to give us funds it would be good to know, but we can't rely on it. Carlisle wants to continue to provide an outstanding education to all of our students. The School is the largest cost factor in the town so we want to be as frugal as possible with the town's funding; we want to do what's right by the Town and for our students. We will continue to work with the budget numbers and we will explain how we got to those numbers. Mr. Huntress added that we will continue to scrutinize and refine the budget. Mr. O'Shea added that it is difficult to predict where the School will be; will we still have an element of COVID where we will offer FCR and distancing; or will it be post-COVID where we can go back to where we were in previous years. Mr. Triola acknowledged that will be an issue across the board and there are challenges to plan a budget. The School realizes the impact on taxpayers, but is optimistic about the ability to create a budget.

IV. Members'/Committee Reports as Needed

Special Education Subcommittee: Ms. Mostoufi reported that this Subcommittee met and set up dates for upcoming meetings. Lori Bruce provided updates about all of the work that has been done in Special Education, including collaborative work with the principals on Tier 1 and Tier 2 supports for students. The survey results were reviewed. Mr. O'Shea explained that Ms. Bruce created a survey for families with children in special education, and results are still being gathered. The School is looking at the profile of our students in the younger grades and the benefits of having a sub separate program in our school to meet their needs rather than sending them out of District. The goal is to keep Carlisle students in Carlisle. Ms. Bruce added that after the survey was sent a second time, and the number of responses increased to 31 out of 110. There will be more in depth discussion at the joint meeting with SEPAC on January 26.

CCRS: Ms. Wilson said, as previously mentioned, there is a vaccination tent at CCHS. Running the vaccination for first responders will teach us how to run mass vaccinations for the teachers. Ms. Lear added that the Board of Health has been doing flu shot clinics for seniors. Ms. Wilson said Concord and Carlisle are very well coordinated and the Committee meets again next week.

Policy Subcommittee: Ms. Comperchio said that the Committee met and discussed changes to the Non-contractual Handbook. Members also reviewed the Digital Resources, Empowered Digital Use and Web Page policies.

Mr. Huntress continues to work on the budget.

Ms. Lear has attended one informative meeting for the Highland Building. The committee is exploring all options and will have something to present at Town Meeting.

Ms. Mostoufi added that Concord Carlisle Community Education offers popular programs such as armchair travel, and Zoom has added a new way to access this programming. CC Community Ed met in December and is collaborating with other committees across the state to offer more programming. Booklets of offerings are in people's mailboxes. Ms. Mostoufi sits on this Committee as a liaison for the Region.

V. Communications/Correspondence

Ms. Lear referenced a thank you note to the Committee.

VI. Warrants

- A. Accounts Payable Warrant #4321; \$120,168.39
- B. Payroll Warrant #4121; \$394,587.39

VII. Action Items

There were no action items.

VIII. Public Comments

Linda Vanaria, CTA president, voiced her thanks and appreciation from the staff for the gift of a Fern's Gift Card from the CSC and the Select Board. She said it was a lovely treat, very unexpected and generous.

IX. Adjourn Meeting

Ms. Comperchio made a motion to adjourn the meeting; Ms. Mostoufi seconded the motion. There was no discussion. The following votes were taken in Roll Call: Comperchio, aye; Huntress, aye; Lear, aye; Mostoufi, aye; Wilson, aye. The public meeting was adjourned at 8:29 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Nancy Anderson
Assistant to the Superintendent

List of Documents Viewed or Reviewed:

Draft Minutes of December 16, 2020

Warrants

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Payroll Warrant #4121; \$394,587.39

Carlisle School Committee Goals