

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

Present– School Committee: Christine Lear - Chair, Amanda Comperchio, Jack Huntress, Sara Wilson

Present-School Committee via Zoom: Eva Mostoufi

Present– School Administration: James O’Shea, Superintendent

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

Present – Students via Zoom: Nafeesa Hoda, Gretchen Hedlund

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/86383043383?pwd=RExKUmJ2Z3BpalVkV1JrRm5sdFZnUT09>

Meeting ID: 863 8304 3383

Passcode: 616390

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 7:00 p.m. and stated that the meeting was being recorded.

II. Review/Approve Minutes

- A. Meeting of March 17, 2021. Ms. Wilson made a motion to approve the minutes of March 17, 2021; Ms. Comperchio seconded the motion. There was no discussion. The following votes were taken in roll call: Comperchio, aye; Huntress, aye; Lear, aye; Wilson, aye.

III. Information/Discussion Items

- A. Student/Faculty Presentation. Nafeesa Hoda reported that pool testing has gone smoothly. The Early Act Worthy Village fundraiser raised over three times the goal of \$500.00. Disability Awareness Week will be from April 12-16. Gretchen Hedlund explained that it will be a virtual disability awareness week taking place after school with Zoom meetings and other activities. The goal is to educate middle school students about physical and emotional disabilities. Dr. Mehler introduced 6th grade Science teacher Becky Gianopoulos, who recently impressed him and the 6th grade team with a dissection

activity that took place in person and over Zoom. Ms. Gianopoulos shared that the project was called “Where have all the Creatures Gone.” Students had to figure out why the lake trout population declined in Michigan in the 1970’s. An invasive species of lamprey came into the Great Lakes after the canals were built. It was discovered that the lamprey didn’t have any natural predators, so nothing kept this population under control. In the process of learning this, the students dissected a fish, either a lamprey or a perch. Students wore goggles and gloves and used surgical tools. For the remote students, Ms. Gianopoulos sent home a dead fish and gloves, and she Zoomed with these students demonstrating the dissection process. Comments from students included: the dissection was awesome but it smelled for two days, everything I ate tasted like eel guts, fish was stinky but the dissection was fun, and the process provided a new view of an animal. The kids enjoyed it and it was the highlight of the year for Ms. Gianopoulos, who thanked the 6th grade team for letting her stink up their classrooms. Ms. Levy, the K-4 Visual Art Specialist, presented next. She shared visuals from the Grade 1 project on cityscapes at night, the Grade 2 starry night project and the Grade 3 fish tank project. She showed a picture of the cart she brings to classrooms for art activities. She is also exploring diverse artists and showcased Lillian Blades who helped inspire 3rd graders to work on a board creating assemblages. Grade K was introduced to Alma Thomas, an artist who was inspired by nature and the Apollo moon landing in the 60’s. Kids then created outer space elements in their projects. Grade 4 is working on medieval castles and engineering with Nick Greenwood; Mr. Greenwood is doing 3D printing of the castles. She noted all K-4 art students have online portfolios through Artsonia. Ms. Levy has made over 280 YouTube videos. Art kits were provided for all remote students, who are learning the same things as their in-school grade level peers. Ms. Levy also talked about the spring fundraiser where parents can buy products featuring kids’ artwork. Ms. Lear said that we are fortunate to have such great teachers in Carlisle. Mr. O’Shea added that we have been proud to bring our students into school, and know that the educational experiences in school and at home are outstanding. He thanked the presenters for their time and efforts. Ms. Mostoufi thanked Ms. Levy for introducing artists of color that aren’t usually represented.

- B. State and Local COVID Dashboard. Mr. O’Shea reported that there have been 6 positive COVID cases in the School community since March 17; 5 of these had no close contacts in School. All classes are in person as of today. Follow up testing from the latest quarantined group was negative. The total positive case count in the Carlisle community (last 14 days) is 16 (data as of 4/1/21.) The test positivity rate for Carlisle is 2.94%. The State 14 day test positivity rate is 2.36% (data as of 4/1/21.) It was noted that there does not appear to be any in-school transmissions. Mr. O’Shea reported on pooled testing. In weeks 1-4, there were all negative results. In week 5, there was one positive pool and one identified positive case. In week 6, 36 staff and 180 students were tested with all negative results. The State of Massachusetts will cover the cost of pooled testing through the end of the school year. Every faculty member who wants a vaccine is either partially or fully vaccinated. Mr. O’Shea said as we move toward a return to normalcy at the school, we will be looking to slowly unwind selected protocols. This includes looking at learning pods, after school activities, quarantine guidelines and identification of close contacts. Ms. Sawyer, School nurse, was recognized and added that other schools are reconsidering the practice of quarantining large groups because they have not found

positive cases, with a move toward quarantining those people that were in contact up to 6 feet. This would mean that entire classes would not be quarantined. Carlisle is considering these ideas after April break. The School wants to move slowly toward a normal state while still being safe. Mr. O'Shea said the School is also planning for the 2021-2022 School year. There will be no options for Family Choice Remote and School will be a return to pre-COVID operations, with middle school students changing classrooms, having 4 sections of ELA, Math, Science and Social Studies, along with World Language, electives, Tier II support and homework club. Other changes include increasing the numbers of students on the bus and operating the lunchroom with minimum distancing. Mr. O'Shea thanked the parents who have been driving their children to and from school and thanked everyone for their flexibility. Ms. Mostoufi asked when there are positive cases in Carlisle, are these tests going to the State to gather information on the specific COVID variant? Ms. Sawyer answered that they are not specifically testing for the variants but assuming variants are present. Ms. Mostoufi noted that they have increased the time for COVID quarantining for variants. Ms. Sawyer said we are currently quarantining for 10 days per the guidance, and will ask this question at her next meeting with the State on Friday.

- C. School/Superintendent Update. Mr. O'Shea reported that the FinCom shared its draft guideline that aligns with the proposed School budget. He noted that any additional funding received from the State or Federal government will go toward reducing the budget request. He noted that the current FY22 guideline budget includes \$318,000 for long term capital requests that include the School's well and sewer pumps, filtration system and a new tractor. HVAC is not included. There will be a Professional Day on Friday, May 28 with no school for students. Ms. Thomforde had a "Super Happy Awesome News" choral performance via Zoom last week. The PTO book fair took place during the week of March 22. For the water update, Mr. O'Shea reported that a camera has been inserted into the well to identify where the manganese was coming from. The well and the seal look good. We will need to install a filtration system by using two tanks to remove the manganese and the uranium. This plan must be approved by the DEP. Mr. Huntress asked if it was possible to dig a new well. Mr. O'Shea will explore that option.
- D. Planning Board Proposal to Ban Marijuana Establishments in Carlisle. Madeleine Blake, co-chair of Planning Board, presented. She said that this spring the Planning Board will propose banning all marijuana establishments in Carlisle, specifically retail stores in the town center. She reviewed some costs and benefits to this proposal. One challenge is the prominent amount of residences in Carlisle. A benefit is that retail stores are allowed to apply their own 3% sales tax above the other state tax. A million dollar sale would result in \$30,000 profit. But there are also reasons not to allow these establishments. The first reason is the proximity to the School and where kids congregate. State law states that marijuana establishments have to be 500 feet away from school property. The second reason involves public safety issues for retailing cannabis. It was felt that items like edibles and vapes could result in confusion with other products. Ms. Blake noted that marijuana is still illegal at the federal level. The third reason not to allow such establishments is that while there is business zoning in Carlisle, businesses are a fraction of the overall property. These businesses are in close proximity to residential areas. There are also parking and traffic implications. The Planning Board does not think there

are places in our town suited to these establishments. Ms. Blake asked for CSC support. Ms. Mostoufi did not believe the CSC endorsed this proposal from the Planning Board in the past. Ms. Blake said it didn't pass the last time it was presented at Town Meeting. Mr. Huntress thanked Ms. Blake for her thoroughness in gathering the information. He added that the Town is on septic systems, has an abundance of neighborhoods, there is limited economic viability, and there safety issues for kids, so he did not support allowing for these establishments. Ms. Lear agreed that the establishment would be too close to the school and added that Carlisle is too small and not the right setting. Ms. Mostoufi did not feel that she should speak on this subject because she knows that the Master Plan is still looking at ways Carlisle can sustain itself. The decision was left to Town Meeting to decide and she supports that again. She cited a couple of towns in western Massachusetts that earned between \$200,000 and \$500,000 in tax revenues from retail marijuana establishments, and feels people living in town should make that decision. Ms. Lear said the CSC should speak on behalf of the children. Are we comfortable with a retail marijuana shop in the center of Carlisle? How close is too close to kids? Ms. Mostoufi said that we keep coming back to the community to support the School and she did not want to sway the community's decision on this issue. Mr. Huntress felt the CSC should take a position but felt the committee has to learn more about economic viability, which would be helpful to the process. Ms. Wilson asked for clarification if the CSC was being asked to take a position on marijuana establishments in the center of Carlisle or in the Town of Carlisle. Ms. Blake answered that she was just asking for feedback, but asked specifically if there is a public safety impact for an establishment selling marijuana in the Town center. Ms. Blake added that currently there is a 500 feet buffer zone and establishments could locate in Carlisle but not near the school. The Town could also change the buffer zone. The proposal is to ban all establishments in all of Carlisle, but she asked for feedback about one in the town center. Ms. Mostoufi noted that the presentation included Bedford Road as well. Ms. Blake clarified that there are three separate zoning districts in Town; the Town center, Bedford Road and residential areas. Ms. Blake said she would provide the CSC with more material on the subject. Ms. Wilson questioned if the CSC could back a motion in part while not voting on the entire motion. Mr. Huntress said the CSC could say that it does not support a marijuana establishment within 1000 feet of the school. Ms. Lear said the CSC will look more deeply into the proposal. Mr. O'Shea suggested talking to counsel. Ms. Mostoufi would like more data; Ms. Blake said that there are maps, FAQ and more information on the Planning Board website. She acknowledged that some towns make a lot of revenue because of marijuana establishments, but what would the impacts be of a large store that would generate that kind of revenue? Ms. Blake will develop and share more information on the potential tax impact. Ms. Lear said that the CSC will explore how to move forward on this subject.

- E. Pooled Testing in Carlisle. Mr. O'Shea reported that the State originally was going to cover the cost of pooled testing for 6 weeks, which for Carlisle was through April vacation. Now the State will pay for it through the end of the school year. Should Carlisle continue with pooled testing? Ms. Wilson asked if it puts additional strain on School resources. Mr. O'Shea answered that it does take some of the nurses' time. Ms. Sawyer does contact tracing, but she is in favor of continuing pooled testing. It was noted that students are out of class for 3-10 minutes for this testing. Mr. O'Shea does not

want one child with a positive case to force a whole grade level to go remote. He added that the contact rule is if you are within 6 feet of a positive case for 15 minutes or more, you are a close contact. Ms. Wilson asked, even with no in school transmission, does this help lessen the spread overall? Mr. O'Shea said there has been one positive pool in 6 weeks and it hasn't been that disruptive. It allows the School to have confidence as we look to modify the quarantine procedures. Ms. Bruce asked to speak for Ms. Sawyer, with whom she communicates regularly. When pooled testing first started, Ms. Sawyer said it would be a lot of work. There is now a system in place, and Ms. Sawyer feels that if the State is paying for it, we should continue with it. The EMTs are very helpful, the weather is better so testing can be outside. Recently we were able to identify someone through the pooled testing and nobody else in the class tested positive; close contacts stayed home but never went to school. We can think of it as a service to the community. Ms. Comperchio added that this could give us more information as we move toward planning for next year. The CSC members are supportive of continuing pooled testing.

- F. 2021-2022 School Calendar. After feedback from the CSC about the placement of professional development/parent conference days in relation to early release days, Mr. O'Shea reconvened the calendar committee to discuss possible changes to the 2021-2022 school calendar. Mr. O'Shea explained that the committee made a couple of changes, and decided to pilot some conference days on a Friday. While there is a possibility that some parents might not attend conferences before a weekend, the School will gather data on this next year. He noted that parent teacher conferences were done differently this year, often via Zoom, and maybe this practice could continue next year so parents could attend conferences remotely. Mr. O'Shea explained that three Tuesday Professional Days/Wednesday Early Release days were changed to Thursday Early Release days/Friday Professional days. Ms. Wilson supported this change as a pilot year. Mr. O'Shea added that the Committee was open to new ideas and the School will gather data on the impact of these changes.
- G. School Fees. Ms. Mahan reviewed some of the current fees; the Preschool fee of \$5200/year, the Full Day Kindergarten fee of \$1450/year, and the Grade 7-8 Bus fee of \$395/year. It was noted that there was a decrease in transportation revenue earned this past year due to limiting the number of students on the bus due to distancing rules. Ms. Mahan noted that these fees are used to supplement the revenue stream. She added that SuperEdNet publishes fees of different districts and full day Kindergarten tuitions are published by Strategies for Children. Some communities charge a lot more for fees and some districts do not charge fees at all. It was noted that Carlisle is on the low side for fees. Mr. Huntress asked if the numbers are showing what parents pay for a full day Kindergarten in a hybrid schedule. Mr. O'Shea explained that Districts are required to provide half day kindergarten for all students. Ms. Mahan said the Kindergarten fee has been in place for several years at least dating back to 2012. Ms. Wilson and Mr. Huntress would like to see historical data on when the fee started, how many afternoons children attended Kindergarten and how much was charged. It was believed that there was no fee for the first year when afternoons were offered for Kindergarten students. The next year, there was a fee, and when all afternoons were added, the fee increased. Mr. Huntress would like to examine what Carlisle charges related to other towns. Ms. Mahan said one way to develop a fee is to analyze the number of additional staff it requires to service students for the afternoons, and pass along that fee to the families. Ms. Mostoufi asked if

Ms. Mahan could do a simulation on what an increase would look like if we paid what it would cost to offset salaries. Ms. Wilson is curious about the history of the fees. Mr. Huntress feels an adjustment could be made but wants to explore what the increase would be and when it should be implemented. Ms. Mahan noted that schools may charge a fee for activities “not expressly provided for in Chapter 71.” She added that the recommended fees for next year are the same as this year. These fees are identified in communications with families. Mr. O’Shea asked if we should we start the trajectory now. Ms. Lear asked if cost of living increases should apply to fees. Mr. O’Shea said that the School will gather data, examine what is a reasonable increase, and make incremental changes. He and Ms. Mahan will bring information to the next CSC meeting about the fee history and a proposed plan. Ms. Mostoufi asked about families who cannot pay the fee; Ms. Mahan answered that families who qualify for free and reduced lunch do not pay fees. Ms. Bruce added that if special education students in Preschool have more than one service on their IEPs, the School is required to provide them Preschool at no cost. Other students attend Preschool for 4 ½ days and pay the fee. The 5th day is just for students on IEPs to receive their services.

- H. Superintendent Evaluation. Ms. Comperchio said that everything the members need to complete is included in the current Superintendent Evaluation form, which will not be modified. Ms. Anderson will add Mr. O’Shea’s goals to the form and a timeline for completion of the form will be established.
- I. School Committee Meeting Schedule. Mr. O’Shea proposed the following meeting dates based on tasks that need to be accomplished; April 28, May 19 and June 9. Mr. O’Shea will present a report about his progress at the May 19 meeting and his evaluation will be shared on June 9. There will also be one meeting in the summer to discuss goals. Mr. Huntress believes more meetings may be needed. A summer meeting schedule will be established in June. Mr. O’Shea said the Committee can continue to meet at School and also offer Zoom access to the meetings.

IV. Members’/Committee Reports as Needed

CCRS: Ms. Wilson reported that the committee had a conversation last week about the new Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion position, asked for community feedback and fielded questions. There will be a special education presentation next week. There was also discussion of LLI and a concern about racist content in the curriculum; Dr. Martin will explore the curriculum in regards to cultural competence. There will be a SEPAC awards ceremony on May 6. People want to thank the special educators that service students.

Special Education Subcommittee: Ms. Comperchio reported that this committee met on March 26 and talked about goals. Ms. Bruce is putting out a post IEP survey starting in May or June. Ms. Mostoufi added that Ms. Bruce will present about special education achievements to CSC before the end of the year. Mr. O’Shea added that there will be a comprehensive presentation from Ms. Bruce that includes information from the Special Education review, special education services, and the changing special education demographics. He added that there will also be an upcoming presentation from Kathi Macklis about delivering supports to students.

V. Communications/Correspondence

Ms. Lear circulated the correspondence to members.

VI. Warrants

- A. Accounts Payable Warrant #6221; \$126,324.49
- B. Payroll Warrant #6021; \$405,574.03
- C. Accounts Payable Warrant #6521; \$37,966.71
- D. Payroll Warrant #6321; \$401,996.78

VII. Action Items

- A. Vote School Choice. Mr. O'Shea said that some people believe that participating in School Choice would bring diversity to the School. He clarified that METCO and School Choice are not the same thing. Ms. Lear questioned if this is the time to opt for School Choice. She feels that we have asked a lot from our faculty in the last year. Ms. Wilson added that there is also the space issue, noting that a percentage of our population has gone to alternative placements and will likely be returning next year. There is uncertainty about class sizes next year. Mr. O'Shea said that Schools can be precise about what openings they offer for School Choice but if students are added, they remain in Carlisle until 8th grade. He noted there will be a large 5th grade class next year. There are a number of factors to consider when identifying where possible spaces could be for additional students. Mr. O'Shea said that METCO is designed to bring diversity to schools. School choice gives families an option to go to another school. A school receives \$5000 for each School Choice student it accepts. Ms. Wilson has researched School Choice, and added that if people look at school choice participants, they can see how many students are in the program and where they attend school. Most students attend a school over the border from their town. Families also have transport their children to a School Choice school. Concord doesn't participate because Concord can't provide transportation to these students so they don't think it's providing an equal education to all. Mr. Huntress questioned adding anything else to the School operation at this time, and wanted to clarify what problems are being solved by participating in School Choice. Ms. Wilson will circulate links on School Choice so members can have more information on the topic. Mr. O'Shea will talk in more detail about it with each member. The School Choice vote was postponed.
- B. Vote Technology Discard List.
Mr. Huntress made a motion to accept the Technology Discard List; Ms. Mostoufi seconded the motion. The following votes were taken in roll call: Comperchio, aye; Huntress, aye; Lear, aye; Mostoufi, aye; Wilson, aye.

VIII. Public Comments

Deepa Chungi thanked everyone who helped with the Book Fair. She reported that Carlisle was the only live book fair that the vendor has seen this year. She thanked everyone for supporting it.

IX. Adjourn Meeting

Mr. Huntress made a motion to adjourn the meeting; Ms. Wilson seconded the motion. The following votes were taken in Roll Call: Comperchio, aye; Huntress, aye; Lear, aye; Mostoufi, aye; Wilson, aye. The public meeting was adjourned at 9:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Nancy Anderson
Assistant to the Superintendent

List of Documents Viewed or Reviewed:

Draft Minutes of March 17, 2021

Planning Board Proposal to Ban Marijuana Establishments in Carlisle

2021-2022 School Calendar

Superintendent Evaluation Document

Warrants

Accounts Payable Warrant #6221; \$126,324.49

Payroll Warrant #6021; \$405,574.03

Accounts Payable Warrant #6521; \$37,966.71

Payroll Warrant #6321; \$401,996.78

Technology Discard List