

Carlisle School Committee
Minutes
Wednesday, August 12, 2020
12:30 p.m.
Remote Meeting Via Zoom

Present Via Zoom – School Committee: Christine Lear - Chair, Amanda Comperchio, Jack Huntress, Eva Mostoufi, Sara Wilson.

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

Meeting Documents:

Minutes of August 5, 2020		
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Note: Per Governor Baker’s order suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A sec. 20, the public was not allowed to physically access this School Committee meeting. Members of the Public were able to access this meeting via live stream at:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89745702652?pwd=WkxFaE1VVWhVNDRpS3pCeFVaMnIzZz09>

Meeting ID: 897 4570 2652

Passcode: =#c4fk

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 12:31 p.m. Ms. Lear stated that the meeting was being recorded. Ms. Lear reviewed the meeting rules stating that this is a Carlisle School Committee (CSC) meeting during which members are discussing issues and others are witnessing the meeting. Later in the meeting, as stated on the agenda, there will be time for public comments. Ms. Lear asked people who have spoken before to wait until new speakers have had a chance to speak. People may ask a question and the CSC may or may not be able to answer it. People will have a three minute speaking limit because the Committee has lots of work to do. She recognized that every comment is valuable, but asked people not to repeat what has already been said.

II. Review/Approve Minutes. Ms. Comperchio made a motion to approve the minutes of August 5, 2020; Ms. Wilson 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.

III. Information/Discussion Items

- A. School Reopening Discussion. Mr. O'Shea said since we met on Monday, the reopening plans are still being fine tuned. He noted that the School is trying to make a functional decision that will work for as many people as possible. He asked families to please complete the survey if they haven't done so already. So far 475 people have responded. 18% of families are choosing family choice remote (FCR); some of our school resources will be dedicated to support that program. We have a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) that was created by our attorney, so that in conjunction with the Carlisle Teachers' Association (CTA), faculty can opt to take a year of absence with no pay. This provides faculty and staff with options. The CTA will vote on that tomorrow. We are also working on adjusting the 2020-2021 school calendar. Our start day was supposed to be September 2 but that has changed. Mr. O'Shea is sharing a copy of the proposed new calendar with Linda Vanaria, president of the CTA, and she will share it with the faculty. Now the proposed first day of school is September 15. The State has communicated that the mandated days for attending school has been reduced from 180 days to 170. Carlisle will use 9 of those days at the beginning of the school year for planning and curriculum work. At least 2 professional days would be able to be used elsewhere in the school year. Also every Wednesday will be a half day morning remote instruction day for any of the models. There will no longer be Tuesday early release days. Mr. Huntress asked the rationale for using the 10 days at the beginning of the school year. Mr. O'Shea answered that the it was recommended by the Commissioner of Education. It provides time for faculty and staff to learn the safety protocols, work on curriculum, and put all of the mechanisms in place so school can start on September 15. Vacations will remain as is. Mr. Huntress asked if small groups of students could be brought in for walk throughs on those days. Mr. O'Shea answered that they are gathering and considering ideas like that. Ms. Mostoufi asked if we will provide webinars for parents so they understand how to help teach their kids at home and plan. Mr. O'Shea agreed that it is important to keep people connected with information. Ms. Comperchio voiced support for the webinar idea. It could show what parents should look for when they are monitoring students at home, and what expectations they should have for their kids. Mr. Huntress added that teachers can help parents become teachers if we are in the family choice remote or hybrid model; such knowledge will be welcome. Ms. Wilson noted the importance of parents watching middle school students on one to one devices. Dr. Mehler added that Google Classroom will be used for grades 5-8 and resources will be available for parents. Ms. Mostoufi asked to discuss holiday travel for families during vacation weeks. Mr. O'Shea answered that pre-COVID, one of the ideas was if we should just have one vacation in March. But we are not considering that at this time, because sometimes those breaks allow the sicknesses to happen and provides time for people to get healthy again. Mr. O'Shea said that the expectation and request is that if families travel, they will quarantine for 14 days. Mr. O'Shea shared that yesterday Laurie Hunter was in touch with Emerson Hospital to see if we can get baseline testing for faculty, staff and students. Ms. Lear asked if we should share this with a larger group of decision makers in town; specifically, do we want to invite the

Board of Health (BOH) and Board of Selectmen (BOS) to Monday night's meeting so they fully understand our direction? Other members supported this idea. Mr. Model, speaking as the representative to the CSC and the BOH, deferred to Chairman Lewis, who said although it is short notice, he can arrange for the meeting.

IV. Members'/Committee Reports as Needed

CCRS: Ms. Wilson reported that there have been a lot of regional meetings and they have started discussing policies. MASC has released some policies related to COVID and recommended that Districts look at existing policies related to this issue. CCRSD had a subcommittee meeting and put together a first reading of the policies with recommended language changes but haven't voted on them yet. Concord has a town meeting on September 13 where they will hopefully pass a revised budget. There are additional Chapter 70 and CARES Act funds. Carlisle's burden that may be less. They had an interesting discussion about progress with inclusiveness in curriculum and staffing, and every gain they have made on that front in the last couple of years. She suggested Carlisle look at what's happened there in terms of curriculum because it would be nice if there was some alignment for when students get to the high school. More information is on Concord's website. They voted on their opening plan and calendar. Ms. Mostoufi added that there will be a walk through this Monday for students so they can see the environment for students and faculty. Mr. Huntress addressed the MASC guidelines with policies on facemasks, remote learning, emergency measures, and more. These guidelines are related to additional measures that can be taken by schools during the pandemic. Mr. O'Shea said that the School is currently addressing anti-racism. One of our teachers is running a book group this summer after which faculty and administration will look at our curriculum and how we respond and implement enhancements. Mr. O'Shea will meet with Laurie Hunter and Emerson Hospital staff about testing, costs, how testing works with health insurance, and we will then make an informed decision. Dr. Mehler said we are in the process of creating a pledge for students to sign referencing CDC recommendations. Ms. Wilson voiced support for such a comprehensive document. She noted a lot is going on behind the scenes; people are engaged in a thoughtful, intellectual journey.

V. Warrants

The following warrant was added after the agenda was posted:

- A. Accounts Payable Warrant #1021; \$29,545.51

VI. Action Items

Ms. Wilson and Ms. Comperchio will connect about policies. Ms. Lear will distribute information about the Commissioner's reports. Ms. Anderson will send the Monday agenda to Ms. Lear to distribute to the BOS and the BOH.

VII. Public Comments

In the interest of time, Ms. Lear stated that new speakers will have three minutes to speak and repeat speakers will have one minute to speak. Ms. Comperchio addressed that if school starts in a remote model, how will the school address the needs of students who can't get the education they need in an online environment. She added that we need to have a clear path to going back to school in person. It is important to test students who have regressed, and recognize the social

emotional piece for all students. She also proposed students to sign a pledge to focus on education when they are on their devices. Mr. O'Shea added that equity is a major consideration for our most vulnerable students in a remote program. Our plan will include metrics for decision making on what we do and when we do it. There have been multiple conversations about assessing students at the start of the year; it is a priority to see where they are and how they have grown or regressed. Ms. Bruce added that the middle school has two solid programs to get us baseline data; Aleks for Math, and Star Renaissance for Language Arts. For Elementary, assessments are age-based. For example, the entire Grade 1 population could be screened because they weren't as active in remote learning. She noted that there is a list of students that are in need of testing which has been given to special educators and she is hoping to test those students before school starts. She is also looking to screen ELL students. Dr. Mehler added that in the past, administrators and teachers have reviewed MCAS data to provide some of this information, but since MCAS was cancelled, there is an absence of data. He would like to do baseline testing for middle school reading and math; then the data can inform instruction. Dr. Sidell added that when assessing younger students, it is important to have balance. Some young students are extremely anxious at the start of the year. Dr. Sidell will work with teachers and be flexible; some assessments may be done right away and some may wait until trust has been established with teachers. Mr. Huntress asked how to address 5th graders in the middle school model. Dr. Mehler explained that typically in middle school, students get assigned a home room, have advisory, meet in small groups and focus on routines. They have a lot more freedom. In the past students went to different classes in cohorts, but now students will remain in classrooms and different teachers will come to them. There has to be a focus on social emotional for kids; this is traumatic and we want to support kids with this transition. Dr. Sidell added that the 5th grade team is well established and a strength of our school; they understand this transition, and know how to help students adjust to new routines. 5th grade is considered more middle school than elementary. They go through the year with a couple of teachers then transition to four teachers in 6th grade. Ms. Mostoufi asked about the EDCO liaison for homeschooling and if it was beneficial to the Carlisle community. Mr. O'Shea commended EDCO for developing a program to support families and act as a liaison for those that choose homeschooling. We can provide families with the EDCO connection if they want to learn more. Ms. Mostoufi asked about the FCR model, saying the State has come out with a remote program, and if we would purchase licenses to access a curriculum. Mr. O'Shea felt that the FCR families are looking to have a connection to Carlisle, so he did not feel that option would be what families want. He added that one parent identified a micro school where a couple of families got together to find people to provide instruction. Ms. Comperchio added that this may be worth exploring because families are looking to coordinate with each other during the school year. Attendees were then called upon to comment. Camelia Rosca thanked everyone for their hard work. Her comments centered on teachers taking a year without pay. She feels Carlisle's greatest resources are our teachers and asked if there was a possibility to create a plan where teachers would have an opportunity to work; possibly teaching across grades or across subject levels, so the fewest teachers take the year off. Kristen Amanti addressed the pods and explained that some families are trying to split time between parents or hire someone to help their children follow a virtual program, because they need an adult facilitating that kind of learning. Carrie Patel spoke in support for baseline testing for Carlisle community. She also spoke in support of bringing an anti-racist curriculum to at least the Middle School. Kim Boschi mirrored Ms. Patel's comments. She also has talked about pods, and is looking to brainstorm with other 8th grade

families about how we can reduce the isolation for these kids; possibly an after school program or games on line; is there a way to get kids “together” to play outside of school. Judy and Jen Weinstock asked about the rationale behind the Monday-Thursday and Tuesday-Friday groupings in the hybrid model. Jim answered that the configuration addressed consistency in teachers seeing children; there would not be large gaps between when teachers see their students. Dr. Sidell added that for younger kids to be away from their teacher for a week would be like starting over each week. It was designed so kids get in a routine. Dr. Mehler added that many schools are just dividing the alphabet but Carlisle wanted to be more thoughtful about creating the groups of students. It will be designed keeping in mind families that have students in different grade levels or kids at CCHS. Ms. Bruce added that research supports this thoughtful approach, there is less separation anxiety for little kids. Kathleen Hauser, 36 Daniels Lane, shared that her child struggled with remote learning in the spring; it was a horrible experience for him. How is the proposed remote program different and how will specials happen. Mr. O’Shea answered that there is more description coming about the proposed remote plan, and it will mirror more of a school day, but it is still being revised. He added that many people share that experience. Rebecca Kerr, 295 East Riding Drive, echoed other parent concerns and added that parents pay for a full day Kindergarten. Is the Kindergarten curriculum going to be for ½ day. Dr. Sidell answered that the Kindergarten curriculum is presently being addressed and depending on what model is chosen, he will communicate with all parents on what that means. Catherine Fink said it is really important for her to know who is teaching her 8th grade son. She does not want to send her child to school in a pandemic with a substitute teacher. She will not be able to make a decision until she knows which teachers are teaching. Ms. Lear said that the CSC will meet again on Monday at 7:30. She encouraged people to send questions or comments to the Committee.

VIII. Adjourn Meeting

Ms. Mostoufi made a motion to adjourn the meeting; Ms. Comperchio 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 2:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Nancy Anderson
Assistant to the Superintendent