

**Carlisle School Committee
Emergency Joint Meeting with Board of Health**

Minutes

March 12, 2020

Carlisle School Corey Dining Room, Carlisle Schools, 83 School Street, Carlisle, MA 01741
6:00 PM

Present – School Committee: Christine Lear - Chair, David Model, Eva Mostoufi, Sara Wilson, Shannon May Lavery.

Present – School Administration: James O’Shea, Superintendent; Matt Mehler, Principal; Denet Sidell, Principal; Lori Bruce, Director of Student Support Services; Nancy Anderson, Assistant to the Superintendent.

I. Call to Order

Chair Christine Lear called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m. Ms. Lear announced that the meeting is being live streamed on Facebook.

II. Information/Discussion Items.

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Discussion. Mr. O’Shea has attended numerous meetings about the coronavirus. It is clear that this crisis has to be addressed in a way that no other situation has in the past. Considering many factors including Department of Public Health (DPH) recommendations, conversations with Mass Superintendents, other school districts, town leaders, and representatives at the state level, Mr. O’Shea’s priority is to think about what’s best for the community; children, parents, staff, and citizens of Carlisle. The thought is to close school for students as of tonight through Friday, March 20. This is an initial phase and there is a high probability this closure will be extended. At this point, Mr. O’Shea will reassess the situation by Wednesday at the latest, and inform everyone by Thursday if the plan will be changed. Mr. O’Shea will communicate to parents tonight about the plan. The building will continue to be cleaned and the faculty will be in tomorrow at 9 a.m. to create educational plans for students. Husky Home Day Learning is already established, and this distance learning plan will be modified as needed. It is a fluid situation on when we bring students back; because when we close the doors, we are not sure what the criteria is for reentry. Mr. O’Shea will continue to work with the DPH and our local health agent to guide us moving forward. It is difficult to make a long term plan at this point in time. It is confirmed that there are currently no presumptive or confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Carlisle. Mr. O’Shea was asked if we will encourage social isolation and answered yes. Mr. Model asked to hear guidance from Linda Fantasia, the Carlisle Health Agent. The following people from the Board of Health (BOH) were in attendance: Todd Thorsen, Cathy Galligan, Tony Mariano and Lee Storrs. She speaks for the Board and supports what the school is doing. The Town Hall and Library are both closing as well. Carlisle is being proactive and this will have an impact on protecting public health. Mr. Model asked what the mechanism is if someone learns he or she had contact with someone who has tested positive for the virus. Ms. Fantasia answered that she would get a call if there was either a confirmed case by the CDC via a lab test or a presumptive case. MAVEN (Massachusetts Virtual Epidemiological Network – a web-based disease surveillance and case management system) or our public health nurse would do a follow up. The BOH would make sure the person maintained

isolation. If someone suspects he or she has a case, it is a voluntary notification to the BOH. People would be advised to take their temperature and watch for symptoms. People wondered if that protocol was known in the Town. If someone is under self-quarantine, what about the other family members? The BOH would ask to isolate the other family members; use common sense. It was asked if non-contractual school employees would be compensated during the school closure. Mr. O'Shea answered yes to this question, adding that depending on a person's role, he or she might be asked to do other tasks during the closure. Mr. O'Shea added that he wants to keep people whole and paying them is the right thing to do. Mr. O'Shea acknowledged that anxiety levels are elevated. As the School moves forward, there will be conditions in place to address continued health concerns. People feel that townspeople are confused about where they can access information about the coronavirus and procedures. Ms. Lavery said that the Mosquito can help communicate news. Kate Reid from the Board of Selectmen added that there is a Town website. Police can send emergency notifications to the town. It was asked if there was thought of cancelling April vacation or extending the school year to make up for this time out of school. Mr. O'Shea answered that at this time, there have not been conversations about cancelling April vacation. It has been determined that Carlisle will not be in session after the 185th day of the school calendar, which is June 22. Mr. O'Shea acknowledged that the closure does leave us with a deficit in education and we are taking it one week at a time. There is some home learning, and there are inequities, but it's the plan right now. Mr. O'Shea said that the home learning for students would start next Tuesday, March 17th. He added that this is uncharted water. Mr. O'Shea may set up intermittent times for staff to come in and grab supplies. He will attend an Emergency Response Team meeting Monday. Tony Mariano, from the BOH, added that it is important we be cognizant of the long-term decisions we make, as this situation could continue for awhile. People brainstormed ideas for communication to the community and ideas included a community Facebook page and a community brochure that included links about symptoms. It was felt that parents running a new Facebook page could create hysteria, as would the delivery of flyers. In context of preventing the spread of germs it was felt there should not be a brochure. Catherine Fink shared that the Town of Concord has been using Town Hall and the police department to disseminate information as it has to come from an official source. Social media sites are not official. Mr. Model suggested that people access the official sites to learn information. Ms. Mostoufi added that the Superintendent needs accurate data to communicate, and questioned what has BOH has done to quarantine the elderly and sick. Linda Fantasia answered that the BOH took immediate steps with the elderly, including cancelling their programs, sending the public health nurse to Benfield farms, and speaking with management companies of the elderly housing facilities to ramp up cleaning. They are working on a procedure to get food to the elderly. Ms. Fink asked there was anything people can do to help. Mr. O'Shea appreciates the offer and will let the community know. It was suggested that the Carlisle website post help needed announcements so citizens can help. It's important to respect privacy. The BOH cautioned that people still have to be careful about moving around too much; if people get too helpful, the town doesn't isolate. The citizens of Carlisle can sign up on the Town website to receive email from Town committees. In his communication, Mr. O'Shea will ask parents and guardians if there are ongoing needs that the school fulfills, please reach out to the designated person at the school to ask questions.

III. Citizens' Comments

Kate Reid said they might be relaxing the rules on open meeting.

XI. Adjourn Meeting

Ms. Lear said that the Town website is a great resource, that citizens can email School Committee members with questions, and people should sign up for breaking news from the Mosquito. Ms. Moroney reported that 60 people have been watching this gathering on Facebook. Mr. Model made a motion to adjourn the meeting; Ms. Lavery seconded the motion. All members present voted in favor. The public meeting was adjourned at 6:57 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Nancy Anderson".

Nancy Anderson
Assistant to the Superintendent