

Carlisle Select Board

Minutes of Tuesday, January 13, 2026

Clark Room, Town Hall

66 Westford St, Carlisle MA 01741

Hybrid Meeting

The Select Board met on Tuesday, January 13, 2026 at 7:00 p.m. in the Clark Room of Carlisle Town Hall, 66 Westford St. In attendance were Barney Arnold, Travis Snell, Christine Stevens, David Model, and Scott Triola.

Staff Present: Town Administrator Ryan McLane;

Others:

This meeting was livestreamed, the recording may be viewed here: [Town of Carlisle MA - YouTube](#)

The meeting packet is available on our website:
carlislema.gov/DocumentCenter/View/8173/SB_01-13-26_Packet

Call to Order

Chair Scott Triola called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Arnold, Model, Snell, Stevens, and Triola were present.

Item 1: Community Input

The Chair opened the meeting for community input. Eric Balles of Nowell Farm Road spoke in person to endorse Yutaka Ishizaka for appointment to the Fire Station Building Renovation Committee. He also confirmed that the Environmental Sustainability Committee unanimously supports Keith Therrien's appointment to the DPW Building Renovation Committee as the ESC representative.

John Ballantine of 268 Fiske Street spoke via Zoom to thank the Board for their work balancing budgets and addressing town challenges. He raised the topic of housing strategy, referencing discussions from the December meeting about taxes and budgets. He noted that the strategic plan had indicated potential for up to 300 more housing units in Carlisle over time, and suggested that adding 100 units in 5 years could generate approximately \$1,500,000 in revenue, helping balance budget issues. He recommended developing a sensible housing strategy and policy going forward, noting that the Housing Trust would coordinate through the Select Board liaison and work with the Planning Board on this initiative.

Item 2: Appointments

The Board considered several appointments to town committees.

For the DPW Building Renovation Committee, the Board first addressed the appointed representatives from other committees:

Motion: David Model moved to appoint Travis Snell as the Municipal Facilities Committee representative to the DPW Building Renovation Committee. Second: Barney Arnold Vote: Approved unanimously

Motion: Barney Arnold moved to appoint Keith Therrien as the Environmental Sustainability Committee representative to the DPW Building Renovation Committee. Second: Christine Stevens Vote: Approved unanimously

The Board discussed the remaining at-large seat for the DPW Building Renovation Committee. They noted there were three applicants for the position: Tom Bilotta, Marc Bernstein, and Andrew Ostrom. The Board discussed whether Andrew Ostrom's position as an abutter to the DPW might constitute a conflict of interest. After deliberation about the candidates' qualifications and the possibility of amending the committee charter to potentially include more seats in the future, the Board decided to proceed with one appointment now.

Motion: Barney Arnold moved to appoint Tom Bilotta as the at-large member of the DPW Building Renovation Committee. Second: Travis Snell Vote: Approved unanimously

For the Fire Station Building Renovation Committee:

Motion: Christine Stevens moved to appoint Yutaka Ishizaka as an at-large member of the Fire Station Building Renovation Committee. Second: David Model Vote: Approved unanimously

Town Administrator Ryan McLane notified the Board that he had appointed Richard Annese of Carlisle to serve as interim Building Commissioner. He explained that a local inspector can serve in a building commissioner role on a temporary basis to provide coverage or to seek the building commissioner's license over a year. McLane noted that Rich is looking just for this temporary position to help the town out.

McLane also notified the Board that the Fire Chief had appointed Bonnie Greco (reappointment) and Greg Ascrizzi as firefighters.

Item 3: Select Board FY26 Goals Review Discussion

Chair Scott Triola noted that the Board was now in the "back nine" of the fiscal year and wanted to review progress on the FY26 goals set in July to prioritize the agenda for the remainder of the year.

The Board discussed progress on various initiatives:

- Fire Station and DPW Building Projects: Both committees are now operational. The Fire Station project timeline remains ambitious for Town Meeting in May. The DPW project is on track for design funding at Town Meeting.
- Bog House: Work is ongoing with updates in the Town Administrator's report. The Housing Trust plans to submit a request for CPA funds.
- Highland Building: The School Committee will be deliberating on the Highland Building at their meeting the next day and taking a vote on a recommendation to the Select Board at their following meeting.
- Benfield: The Board plans to schedule a tour of Benfield for the Select Board, followed by a summit to discuss issues with stakeholders.
- CPA: Scheduled for discussion later in the meeting.
- Trust Funds: Christine Stevens reported progress with the committee and indicated they would be ready to present at a meeting in the near future.
- Volunteer Support: The Town Administrator reported ongoing training for new volunteers and processes being put in place. The Board discussed developing a code of conduct for volunteers.
- Shared Services: Scheduled for discussion later in the meeting.
- Long-term Building Capital Planning: Ryan McLane noted that this goal has been completed through the financial forecast and capital planning documents presented earlier.
- Road/Pathway/Culvert Management Plan: Discussion scheduled for later in the meeting.
- Transparency and Communication: Ongoing work with more discussion planned for the next meeting.
- Conservation Land Management: The Board plans to organize a joint meeting between the Select Board, Conservation Commission, and Land Stewardship Committee to discuss concerns and recommendations.
- Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP): The report is finalized and the working group is pursuing action grants.
- Climate Leader Grants: The Municipal Facilities Committee is working on an accelerator grant application for spring for up to \$1 million for Grant/Robbin's HVAC systems, and a design grant for Town Hall for the roof and RTU.

The Board agreed that substantial progress had been made on most goals, with plans to address the remaining items in the second half of the year.

Item 4: Road Maintenance Plan Discussion

Ryan McLane presented an overview of the road maintenance plan, explaining that it is organized by paving years rather than fiscal years. The white items in the presentation were from the Nitsch Engineering paving plan and prioritization, while yellow items were priorities identified by DPW Superintendent Jim Hall. The "fuchsia" or peach-colored items represented "parity roads" prioritized based on community feedback.

The Board discussed the budget implications of the plan, noting that funding levels would need to be adjusted during the budget process. The current plan for 2026 would require more than the projected available funding. McLane noted that the state would be funding the repair of Bedford Road (about \$500,000), which would provide some budget relief for future years.

Marc Gabriel from Nitsch Engineering presented the findings from the Audubon Lane study. The investigation revealed that the northwest corner of 7 Audubon Lane acts as a natural low point receiving runoff from Concord Street and adjacent private properties. The study recommended:

- Installing concrete curbing to redirect flow north towards Buttrick Pond
- Raising the entrance to Audubon Lane slightly
- Potentially installing an inlet at the intersection if the first two measures prove insufficient
- Maintenance on the existing culvert south of the property

Karen Shahinian, the affected homeowner, expressed concerns about the effectiveness of just adding curbing and preferred a drainage solution to remove water from the surface. She noted significant erosion and tree loss along Audubon Lane in recent years.

After discussion, the Board determined they would proceed with having Nitsch Engineering conduct a further study to ensure the proposed solution would not create problems for properties to the north.

Item 5: Shared Services Discussion

The Board reviewed a 2024 report on shared services in Carlisle, recognizing that pursuing shared services could be a way to provide services more efficiently and potentially improve some services.

The Board identified several potential areas for shared services:

- Internal shared services with Carlisle Public School (finance, HR, facilities)
- Superintendent's union with Concord (particularly with the upcoming superintendent vacancy)
- Public safety dispatch
- Health services
- Building inspection services

The Board discussed how regionalizing some services could help address budget pressures while maintaining service levels. Ryan McLane indicated he would apply for grant funding to study the five identified areas further.

Brian Waterson from the School Committee noted that with the strategic planning process beginning, this was good timing to consider these options. He mentioned that the upcoming departure of the superintendent created an opportunity to explore different organizational structures.

Item 6: Community Preservation Act Funds Discussion

Barney Arnold presented a list of anticipated CPA funding requests for FY27:

- Gleason Library - Approximately \$300,000-\$500,000 for additional funding for the interior renovation project due to cost increases. The original grant was for \$767,000.
- Highland Building - Potentially \$30,000-\$40,000 for a study of infrastructure including water and septic connections.
- Town document digitization/preservation - Amount to be determined.
- Carlisle Conservation Foundation - Approximately \$25,000 for legal expenses for the conservation restriction for the Woodward land.
- Amenities Building at Concord Carlisle High School - Approximately \$462,000 (Carlisle's portion of a \$1.85 million project). Brian Waterson noted that Concord is moving forward with using CPA funds for their portion.
- Affordable Housing - Housing Trust considering an application for approximately \$200,000.
- Rental Assistance - \$50,000 to renew the rental assistance program for Carlisle residents.

The Board discussed the current CPA fund balance of approximately \$3.1 million, with \$2.3 million in undesignated funds. They debated whether to consider reducing the CPA surcharge from its current 2% level, reviewing data that showed the average single-family home would save about \$169 annually if the surcharge were reduced to 1%. The Board also discussed the need to identify future capital needs that could qualify for CPA funding to determine appropriate fund balances.

Item 7: Town Administrator Evaluation

Triola presented the annual evaluation of Town Administrator Ryan McLane, noting that the Select Board had provided a universally excellent review. McLane earned an average score of 4.7 out of 5, which is in the outstanding/exceptional range. Triola summarized that McLane continues to set the standard for leadership and management within town government, effectively pushing forward on redefining and improving the culture, processes, and services of Town Hall and overall town governance.

Barney Arnold presented the results of a staff feedback questionnaire regarding the Town Administrator. Responses were overwhelmingly positive, highlighting McLane's skills as a

communicator, teacher, mentor, and listener. Staff appreciated his support for professional growth and implementation of training. Some constructive feedback noted concerns about burnout, occasional fast-paced implementation of changes, and office space utilization decisions.

McLane expressed gratitude for the positive feedback and commitment to addressing any concerns, emphasizing that no one should have to work in an environment where they feel uncomfortable or unsupported.

Item 8: ATM Discussion

The Board confirmed Monday, May 18, 2026, at 6:00 PM as the date and time for the Annual Town Meeting. They agreed to reserve Tuesday, May 19 as a second night if needed, acknowledging that with multiple building projects on the warrant, the meeting might require two sessions.

Item 9: Town Administrator Report

Ryan McLane presented his report, highlighting:

- He held a coffee hour with one guest and is considering holding a publicly announced coffee hour at the DPW to bring people to that facility.
- The Fire Department had promoted David Newman to Captain/EMS Coordinator and Lloyd Burke to First Lieutenant.
- The annual staff review process has begun, with all department heads having completed their initial self-evaluations.
- Route to Sustainability Day has been set by the ESC for Sunday, May 3 at 1 PM.
- The Council on Aging and Human Services and other resident service departments received a grant from the Mass Broadband Institute for 30 internet-enabled devices and assistive technology.
- Updates on capital projects included:
 - The elevator project will begin in spring with the CPS elevator in the Grant Building scheduled first
 - Town Hall bathroom renovation expected to begin within the next month
 - Cemetery mapping progress continuing
 - Diamond Park study contract finalized with Lula Designers
 - Cranberry Bog Dam #1 repairs proceeding with phase 1 work to be bid out soon
- Building project updates included:
 - Library renovation project awaiting a decision from the Massachusetts Architectural Access Board
 - Police station renovation on budget with solutions found for water table issues
 - Fire station renovation committee now meeting regularly with wetland delineation being a potential timeline challenge

McLane also noted upcoming meetings including a dog nuisance hearing that would need to be scheduled.

Item 10: Review of Warrants and Minutes

Motion: David Model moved to approve the December 16, 2025 minutes as written.
Second: Barney Arnold
Vote: Approved unanimously

Item 11: Cemetery Deeds

Motion: Barney Arnold moved to transfer land in the public burial ground at the Green Cemetery as described: Deed 863, lot C 55a, grave 1 to Scott Evans of 199 Heald Road; Deed 864, lot D 165, graves 1, 2, 3, and 4 to William Ho of Acton, formerly of 54 Noel Farm Road; and Deed 865, lot D 329, grave 3 to Lynn Xu of 136 Wolf Rock Road. Second: Christine Stevens
Vote: Approved unanimously

Item 12: Liaison Reports

There were no liaison reports presented.

Item 13: Community Input

There were no community comments.

Item 14: Adjournment

Motion: Barney Arnold moved to adjourn. Second: Travis Snell
Vote: Approved unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:30 PM.

Prepared by

G. Gallimore

Appendix A – Barney Arnold’s Summary of Staff Feedback for TA Evaluation

January 13, 2026

To: Carlisle Select Board

Fr: Barney Arnold, SB Vice Chair

Re: Staff input for Town Administrator evaluation

Notes:

- 50% of staff who received voluntary questionnaire responded (15 of 29 staff)
- Unionized staff members and all Carlisle Public School staff were **not sent** the questionnaire
- This is the first effort to solicit feedback from staff as part of the annual TA evaluation
- Each respondent’s questionnaire is confidential; per counsel, they will be filed as municipal documents not subject to records requests; not to be shared with anyone, including TA and HR Director
- Summary and comments below were solely prepared by Barney Arnold

Question #1

How would you describe your interactions with the Town Administrator and his effectiveness as a manager?

The staff responses to this question were overwhelmingly positive and complimentary. Many noted Ryan’s skills as a communicator, teacher, mentor, and listener and appreciated his support for individual professional growth and implementation of staff training. Several described Ryan’s ability to help them navigate challenging, stressful situations they have encountered in their town hall role. Other adjectives used to describe Ryan are calm, patient, supportive, collaborative, approachable, flexible, fair minded, and interested in the opinion of others.

Some noted that Ryan’s efforts to professionalize the staff and his encouragement to innovate and improve department functions have resulted in “enhanced operational efficiencies” and improved resident services.

Some appreciated the increase in staff social events and Ryan’s evident caring for his staff.

One liked his public recognition of individual staff and that he appreciates their hard work; one felt that recognition by the TA was not a good management practice and leads to bad feelings and a competitive staff environment

A few quotes from individual staff members:

- *“It has always been done this way” is a phrase seldomly used in Town Hall, and I credit that to the TA’s leadership style.*
- *Of 4 Town Administrators, “Ryan is the most effective I have ever worked for...”*
- *The way he treats others has resulted in a friendly, positive atmosphere at Town Hall and he is respected by employees.*

Question #2

What concerns, if any, do you have about his staff leadership and what suggestions do you have for how to address them?

While the individual appreciates the TA effort to professionalize the HR and personnel functions, including better management and training, “Ryan sometimes moves too quickly for departments to react.”

One staff person criticized the lack of consultation by the TA about office changes and space utilization.

One described a “toxic work environment” and noted the high number of staff turnovers, terminations, and resignations under this TA.

Several staff noted their concern that Ryan will burn out; he is “available almost 24/7”

One mentioned that they were initially intimidated by the TA’s manner “...until I got to know him.”

Two mentioned that the town should have more equitable, fair salaries across departments.

Several are concerned that we are not preparing for his successor.

A few quotes from individual staff members:

- *Sometimes my comments are misinterpreted or overanalyzed; now I have a better understanding of how Ryan processes information.*
- *I see him doing his utmost to make time to meet with staff one-on-one...to be available to all staff when they want or need (him). But he also has a lot to do, and I don’t know how that can fit in his schedule.*

Question #3

What other feedback would you like to share with me about the Town Administrator’s performance?

There were fewer comments for this question. Those that wrote responses were all positive, for example: promotes positive environment, is a strong leader, shows honesty and transparency, and has a long-term vision to improve town services.

A few quotes from individual staff members:

- *It is unusual to find a TA as competent as he is who is dedicated to helping departments and the town rather than exercising control and pursuing their own agenda.*
- *Ryan is very focused on the overall well-being and growth of the community while maintaining a fair focus on long-term sustainability.*