

**Carlisle School Committee**  
Minutes  
Wednesday, January 20, 2021  
7:00 p.m.  
Carlisle School Cafeteria  
and Zoom Remote Access

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

Present– School Administration: James O’Shea, Superintendent

Present – School Administration via Zoom: Matt Mehler, Middle School Principal; Dennet Sidell, Elementary School Principal; Lori Bruce, Director of Student Support Services; Anne Mahan, Business Manager; Rob Fortado, Supervisor of Buildings and Grounds; 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/82416450344?pwd=c3ZvaHhjalhyb0hqN2ZVb0IwNWxJQT09>

Meeting ID: 824 1645 0344

Passcode: 058808

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 7:01p.m. and stated that the meeting was being recorded.

**II. Review/Approve Minutes**

- A. Meeting of January 6, 2021. Mr. Huntress made a motion to approve the minutes of January 6, 2021; Ms. Comperchio 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. Student/Faculty Presentation.

Dr. Mehler said that some eighth grade students will share their experiences regarding civil discourse this evening and their ELA teacher, Marcella Pixley, will share some slides to provide context into the methodology. Dr. Mehler provided some history; the School previously worked with an organization called Facing History and Ourselves, that conducted workshops with middle school teachers about how to lead Civil Discourse topics such as anti-bias and anti-hate. Ms. Pixley began with the topic of how the country witnessed the riots at the Capitol earlier this month; the challenge was how to support kids and make them feel safe. She shared some civil

discourse guidelines that included; what should I do if I disagree, create a contract in the classroom so kids know how to listen to each other, list the rules for civil discourse, speak from your head and your heart, speak for the purpose of being heard, call on someone who has a different opinion than you, seek common ground, find areas where people agree. Then test your understanding of the opposing viewpoint by summarizing, take a deep breath before you react, and be civil kind and empathetic. The following students shared their experiences:

Ada Sprong said that during the classroom discussions, she felt like she was being heard, and felt safe and respected. People were careful not to make generalizations. She knew how the discussion was going to play out because she knows her class and her community. She was pleased with the civil discourse her peers could maintain during the discussion.

Benjamin Pixley started by pointing out that the exercise was a discussion, not a debate, and that pushed people to be respectful. Civil discourse is important to have in any discussion, and added “It’s only when we can discuss with opposing viewpoints can our knowledge grow and adapt.” Everyone came out having heard different sides. Everyone felt supported and accepted. We all came in frightened and confused, and we all came out passionate and knowledgeable.

Nafeesa Hoda shared that as a brown Muslim girl, she was afraid. Once she knew a teacher was in the room, she felt more comfortable. Students feel tension talking about politics, but people discussed passionately. They created a safe environment to talk and listen, it was a powerful privilege.

Wren Worobey shared that on the day she watched the news, she made generalized ideas about the people breaking into the Capitol. She had had debates before, conversations where two people were arguing over each other and couldn’t listen. Some of the things she had said before this conversation were generalizations and wrong. She learned that you can’t put people into two boxes. She thought it was moving they could have this discussion. She said, “It has shaped me as a person to come up with how I see the world.” Mr. Huntress said that adults could take a lot of lessons from these four students. Ms. Mostoufi thanked them for this work. Mr. O’Shea added that he had the opportunity to sit in on some discussion and witnessed the way teachers could create lessons so students could share their thoughts. He said it was impressive, thoughtful and great a representation of our students.; a tribute to the Carlisle students and Marcella Pixley.

- B. State and Local COVID Dashboard. Mr. O’Shea shared that there was one positive COVID case reported this past weekend. As a result, the 6<sup>th</sup> grade is remote through Friday. The Carlisle total positive case count in the last 14 days is 14. As of January 14, 2021, the State test positivity rate is 7.9%. Mr. O’Shea thanked the Fire Department for providing testing. Ms. Lear added her thanks to everyone working to keep people safe.
- C. Pooled Testing. Mr. O’Shea reported that the State rolled out a pooled testing initiative for K-12 schools. This is a way to save on testing resources; it allows you to create a group, conduct one PCR test for the group, and if one result is negative, the they all are negative. If one result is positive, you conduct further tests. Mr. O’Shea attended a webinar last week to learn more about the process. For the initial 6 week period, the State will provide the resources for schools participating in the pooled testing program. You can be involved for this initial 6 weeks and then terminate, or pay for services if you

continue. There is some expectation that districts should provide resources for purchasing these services. He added that Carlisle is on the list. Mr. O'Shea doesn't know the costs or how disruptive this process will be for staff and students. We are eligible to participate in the program because we are in-person. Other details were provided about pooled testing; they mix roughly 10-25 samples or swabs together in a batch or pool, then test the pooled sample with a PCR test. Tests are performed once per week on a short swab and results are available in 24-48 hours. The test can be administered by any trained school staff. Students in certain age groups can take their own samples under supervision. If pooled result is negative, all are presumed negative. If the result is positive, all individuals in the pool are retested individually. Mr. O'Shea will attend another webinar on Friday. Mr. O'Shea noted that there are not many positive COVID cases at the Carlisle School. Ms. Mostoufi added that there was no evidence of any transmission from students. Mr. Huntress asked what participation in the program would do for the School; should we weigh it against other precautions we could take? Are we making students safer from a risk perspective or are there other alternatives? He wants to be aware of the cost of participating in this program for the long term, but he knows families and staff want peace of mind on the topic. Ms. Wilson noted the benefit of finding the asymptomatic people in pooled testing. She added that at CCRSD, they were going to test twice a week. They are looking for consistent testing with a critical mass within a one week cycle. Mr. O'Shea voiced some challenges; how intrusive is the testing? If we go 6 weeks and we don't see cases, is there a value? However, 6 weeks also gets us through the winter period. The vaccine is imminent. He noted that we are still gathering information. He said we will ask our teachers and families, if we offered pooled testing, would you participate? We need consent and people to opt in. Ms. Mostoufi asked what happens with siblings? Ms. Wilson answered that if a child tests positive in a pool, the sibling is not yet a positive case. Mr. Huntress added that if there is testing, and a positive case is found, then an antigen test can be done in 15 minutes. If all antigens come back negative, then all of the participants need PCR testing. Ms. Wilson added that the pool test cost is covered by DESE, as is the rapid antigen follow up, but if there needs to be another PCR test, is that covered? Mr. O'Shea doesn't believe the State would cover that next test. Ms. Wilson said we need to know the economic impact; what would families pay, what would district pay, and what would the Town pay. Ms. Lear asked what if a family did not give permission for their child to participate in this program and the pooled test for that child's classroom came back positive. Catherine Fink, was recognized and clarified that if you had a child that was with a positive case, that child would be considered a close contact and would have to follow protocols. Ms. Sawyer, School Nurse, shared that Carlisle is quarantining entire classrooms as a precaution. Ms. Lear summarized that Mr. O'Shea would reach out and survey families and staff. Mr. O'Shea added that Ms. Sawyer is communicating with other schools about what they are doing about pooled testing. Mr. O'Shea said we will continue to explore this program with no commitment. When asked about cost, Mr. O'Shea said based on initial data, the cost was approximately \$5 per swab, which could total \$40,000-\$50,000 cost for the District. Mr. Huntress volunteered his help with the process. Ms. Mostoufi asked what happens if a test comes back inconclusive. Ms. Fink clarified that if you get an inconclusive result, it is always considered potentially positive and you would have to retest. Then the process would be to test the people in the pool sample with the antigen

test and if that was positive, it would move to PCR testing. Ms. Wilson voiced support for Mr. O’Shea and Ms. Sawyer creating the sample pools if it becomes necessary. Ms. Fink added that there are a limited number of pooled tests available. This will be a sampling. The actual testing takes place at a centralized lab.

- D. Recreation Commission Use of the Brick Building. Mr. O’Shea stated that the Recreation Commission uses the Brick Building, but the building is under the control of CPS. The windows are being replaced. Ms. Mansfield at the RecCom wants to do additional plumbing and HVAC work that the RecCom will fund. There is currently a signed 3 year agreement between the RecCom and the School, and RecCom would like a 5 year agreement before they invest more money in that space. Mr. O’Shea noted that the School has not had design on that space for a number of years. RecCom programs at the Brick Building support the whole community. Ms. Wilson asked if there were space challenges in School that might warrant School use of the Brick Building. Mr. O’Shea answered that for security reasons we put all students back in the School building. It was noted that the Brick Building may be used for vaccinating faculty and staff. Mr. O’Shea will work with RecCom and move forward extending the lease.
- E. Budget Presentation. Mr. O’Shea and Ms. Mahan presented the budget. The budget was level funded with FY20 for FY21. Reductions made to reach level funding included elimination of placeholders, line item reductions, and less contractual obligations. FY20 actual savings included \$214,000 returned to the Town due to, among other items, reduced transportation costs and reduced stipend pay. Also \$396,000 was used to prepay FY21 expenses. Reopening costs were offset by CARES and ESSER funds received from the state, and these funds were put toward furniture costs, PPE and new positions that had to be created due to remote learning. Budget drivers and considerations include the Mission and Vision of the District, salary increases of a 2.25% COLA (\$171.2K), step/lane increases of 4% (63.1K), other COLA/Steps (\$127K), enrollment/class size considerations, and the technology transfer of \$80,000 from Long Term Capital. It was noted that a large part of the budget is due to contractual agreements. There are also proposed staffing changes including maintaining a 5<sup>th</sup> grade teacher, restructuring a SLP position in Pre-K, hiring a Special Education teacher to support a new sub-separate program, two additional part time paraprofessional positions and maintaining custodial support added this year. There may be an additional elementary school teacher hired to address elementary class sizes and the reinstatement of the math specialist position. The FY22 total budget request is \$12,424,348. This represents a 7.34% increase for this year from last year. Salaries comprise 80.2% of the budget and transportation comprises 4.5%. Enrollment trends are other drivers of the budget. The current enrollment is 599 and the projected enrollment for next year is 609. For grades K-4 next year, it is expected there will be 4 levels at each grade except one grade will have 3 levels. For middle school, there will be 16 sections; a dyad in grade 5 and the continued middle school model in grades 6 through 8. Ms. Mostoufi wanted to point out the funds that were returned to the Town last year. Mr. Huntress added that there are a limited amount of adjustments we can make to the budget due to the contractual obligations, and feels that the proposed staffing can support the student body moving forward. Ms. Lear commended Ms. Bruce for building the special education program to fit the needs of the Carlisle students. Ms. Mostoufi said it is so important to keep students here in the community school; there are important social lessons they learn from being with their

peers, and they don't have to travel to an outside district, and there are many benefits to having the correct supports for those students and families. Mr. O'Shea said the system in place allows us to all benefit. Ms. Mostoufi said we should not lose sight of the fact our students have had some interrupted services; all of our students may need help next year. Mr. O'Shea added that while we do have most of our students here in person, the remote students will return, and we want flexibility with smaller classes to address the challenges to come. Mr. Model was recognized. His advice to the committee was to be clear on the separate issues that are going on, there was able to be a level budget because of the prepay and the current budget has zero prepays. He recognized these were normal increases in running the school, and commended everyone for keeping the school open and running. His advice was to make sure the three pieces are kept in balance; the school voluntarily took away prepay leverage close to 4%, the contractual piece, and the cost of running the school. He supports the budget. Scott Triola from FinCom was recognized, and he is aware of the various factors. He said a big portion of the ask is maintaining services. He clarified that the Town portion of the previous budget was level funded, but there was also funding from DESE and CARES. FinCom recognizes that expenses last year were not flat. He said if Carlisle receives Federal or State aid, it could offset the percent increase. He noted there were no DESE or CARES funds in the budget overview, and asked if this was assuming there would be no additional COVID expenses. Mr. O'Shea answered that this budget assumes we are in a post COVID world. There may be some costs for PPE and hand sanitizer. If the State mandates we offer FCR, that will be an added cost. Mr. Triola suggested adding a slide with current unknowns and to make clear what factors are driving the costs. Mr. O'Shea said we will have a Budget Hearing. The budget will be discussed more at a meeting on Monday. FinCom will listen to the budget requests from all Town departments and then discuss them with the SelectBoard. Guidance will come out from FinCom in mid-February. Mr. Model would like to see feedback from the FinCom and the SelectBoard before the School presents the budget in a Hearing. Mr. Triola said the budget may be revised so people need to remain flexible. Mr. Triola said that CSC support of the proposed budget would be helpful. Mr. Triola will send Mr. O'Shea and Ms. Mahan specific budget questions before the Monday meeting.

- F. School/Superintendent Update. Mr. O'Shea thanked Ms. Pixley and her students for the presentation this evening. He shared that required flu shots are no longer required. There will be a meeting with FinCom on January 25 about the budget. He attended an encouraging meeting with LEPC learning that Carlisle could be getting vaccines shortly. The Brick Building will probably be used as a vaccine site. 8<sup>th</sup> grade transition planning is underway. There is a high school transition webinar tomorrow night; he thanked Ms. Reid, Dr. Mehler and CCHS for pulling the program together. The first meeting of the Calendar Committee is tomorrow. The Policy Subcommittee met today and the Special Education Subcommittee meets on Friday.
- G. Carlisle Community Engagement. This was moved to the next meeting.

#### **IV. Members'/Committee Reports as Needed**

Policy Subcommittee: Ms. Comperchio shared that the Committee has reviewed all of the policies on this year's list except Sexual Harassment, which will be reviewed at the next meeting. The Committee will have something to present to the entire CSC after that.

Special Education Subcommittee: Ms. Mostoufi shared that this committee will meet Friday at 7:30 AM.

CCRS: Ms. Wilson said that they are having many conversations about diversity and hiring. The vaccination station at the high school is up and running; first responders in 5 towns have been vaccinated. There is lots of collaboration. The Carlisle School nurses Lauren Sawyer and Lori Desjardin got vaccinated too. There have been cases of COVID in the schools in Concord but no transmissions. Schools are still operating. The numbers are trending down; people are following protocols.

#### **V. Communications/Correspondence**

There were no communications or correspondence.

#### **VI. Warrants**

- A. Accounts Payable Warrant #4621; \$76,066.96
- B. Payroll Warrant #4421; \$359,922.12

#### **VII. Action Items**

There were no action items.

#### **VIII. Public Comments**

There were no public comments.

#### **IX. Adjourn Meeting to Executive Session pursuant to MGL Chapter 30A, Section 21(a) with no intent to return to open session for the following purpose:**

##### **Purpose 3, To discuss strategy with respect to litigation.**

Ms. Comperchio made a motion to adjourn the meeting to executive session with no intent to return to open session for purpose 3, to discuss strategy with respect to litigation; 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 9:17 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Nancy Anderson  
Assistant to the Superintendent

#### List of Documents Viewed or Reviewed:

Draft Minutes of January 6, 2021

Warrants

Accounts Payable Warrant #4621; \$76,066.96

Payroll Warrant #4421; \$359,922.12

Carlisle Community Engagement

Carlisle School Committee Goals