

**Carlisle School Committee**  
Minutes  
Wednesday, June 9, 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; Nancy Anderson, Assistant to the Superintendent

Present – School Administration via Zoom: Lori Bruce, Director of Student Support Services; Dennet Sidell, Elementary Principal; Matt Mehler, Middle School Principal, Anne Mahan, Business Manager

Present – Students via Zoom: Nafeesa Hoda, Gretchen Hedlund

In order to adhere to social distancing guidelines, 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:

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://carlisle-k12-ma-us.zoom.us/j/87671686651?pwd=aVRBdVQ5ZHK1Q0FRcUlwem1ZbWc0Zz09>

Meeting ID: 876 7168 6651

Passcode: 768074

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 700 p.m. and stated that the meeting was being recorded.

### **II. Review/Approve Minutes**

- A. Meeting of May 19, 2021. Ms. Wilson made a motion approve the minutes of April 28, 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. School Committee Recognitions. Mr. O’Shea said that Christine Lear has served on the Carlisle School Committee for 4 years, and she has brought joy and positivity to the role. He thanked her for her service and presented her with gifts. Mr. Huntress thanked Ms. Lear for stepping up and providing a level of continuity for himself and Ms. Comperchio. Ms. Comperchio thanked Ms. Lear for all of the beneficial advice and training. Ms. Wilson added that Ms. Lear welcomed her onto the CSC and brought joy, humor and sensitivity. Ms. Mostoufi added her thanks for working so well with people who had different views and ideas. Ms.

Anderson thanked Ms. Lear for helping her navigate the meeting details, and for having such a positive spirit and great sense of humor through it all. Ms. Lear replied that she was happy to serve on the CSC. She admired the people that came before her on the Committee and appreciated their counsel. She added that everyone helped the School to make it through this past year and acknowledged the faculty and staff, Ms. Vanaria, Ms. Anderson, Ms. Sorn and Mr. O'Shea. She noted that Mr. O'Shea is an outstanding Superintendent who is always willing to listen.

B. Student/Faculty Presentation.

1. Student Presentation. Nafeesa Hoda spoke about the activities for 8<sup>th</sup> graders. Today there was a very informative presentation about CCHS. On June 11, there will be a trivia game, a Shakespeare performance, a kickball tournament, and an ice cream truck. On Monday, June 14, there is a field trip to Kimball's in Westford, on Tuesday there is the treasury celebration and the campus clean up. Wednesday will be the yearbook signing, a final graduation rehearsal, and then graduation. She noted that some students are sad there is no trip to Washington D.C., but students are grateful they have all had a good school experience. Gretchen Hedlund spoke about the school climate. On hot days, the temperatures vary from room to room. She noted her homeroom was warm but not unbearable. She added that Ms. Hoda and she will present the class gift at graduation.
2. Youth Risk Behavior Survey. Mr. O'Shea said that students participated in this survey last year at the beginning of the pandemic. Dr. Mehler said that he, Ms. Laughlin, Ms. Sawyer and Ms. Reid would be giving a comprehensive presentation on the YRBS. Dr. Mehler noted that students were out of school on March 13, 2020 so the data was delayed in getting back to member districts. This is a biannual survey and Carlisle chose to have students participate in it. Parents were notified in advance and could opt-out. It is anonymous and given to students in grades 6, 8 and at the high school level. The survey results have given the mental health educators information to reflect on. Topics include well-being, bullying, sexual activity, alcohol, drug use, social media, self-harm and other risk behaviors. 150 students were surveyed; the current 9<sup>th</sup> grade class and the current 7<sup>th</sup> grade class. Carlisle is small relative to other participating districts. Kim Reid presented some areas of concern. The first was trusted adults. We want students to have at least one trusted adult with whom they could talk if they had a problem. 23% of last year's 8<sup>th</sup> graders felt they had no trusted adult in their lives. Ms. Reid said we want our kids to be valued and respected, and want kids to disclose concerns and trust us. But students are also becoming more independent. It was noted the majority of students indicated they have at least 1 trusted adult in their lives. Stress and Students' Lives was another area of concern. Kids were asked about sleep, homework, physical activities and cell phone use. It was noted that the amount of sleep declines as kids get older, and the amount of screen time and homework increases. Ms. Reid says the staff checks in with kids so they are cognizant of how much time students are spending on these activities. 65% of middle school students said school is the greatest source of stress, but they are high achieving students. Students are reporting that they are using positive ways to deal with stress, such as exercise, watching TV, eating, using relaxation strategies or doing nothing to manage stress. Students suffer from self-injury, depression and suicidal thoughts, and results were comparable to the aggregate for the 6<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade students last year. Data indicates that 8<sup>th</sup> grade students talk about suicide; 30% said they were told someone was thinking about hurting themselves or suicide. Ms. Reid added that the staff knows these kids and are checking in on them. She added that the Signs of Suicide program is presented

annually and if a student reaches out, we can help. Social Media was presented by Meghan Laughlin, Health teacher. Between grades 6 and 8 there is an increase in the use of social media. Nearly half of 8<sup>th</sup> graders reported their use is not monitored. 10% of 6<sup>th</sup> graders and 13 % of 8<sup>th</sup> graders said they have an account their parents do not know about. As Internet use increases, risky behavior increases. 9% of 6<sup>th</sup> and 28% of 8<sup>th</sup> graders have had face to face interactions with someone they met on the internet. Another area of concern is body image. There is an increase in body image concerns and weight loss behaviors among students in grade 8 compared to those in grade 6. 8<sup>th</sup> graders more reported weight loss behaviors, exercise or adjusting the way they eat. Prescription medication misuse is another area of concern. Carlisle middle school students are more likely to misuse prescriptions than they are to use illegal drugs. Students reported misusing a variety of medications, such as taking more than prescribed for a variety of reasons but in 2020, it was mostly done to help complete school work. Vaping, marijuana use and alcohol consumption were discussed by school nurse Lauren Sawyer. Students are more likely to vape than smoke cigarettes. Most students don't vape, but those who do vape flavored nicotine or marijuana/THC products. The sources of these products were friends, classmates, parents or other adults, and some were through stores and online. 50% of students got products from friends and peers. 6<sup>th</sup> grade use was higher than the aggregate; 8<sup>th</sup> grade use was lower. Marijuana is legal for adult use; and there was concern about accessibility for students. Carlisle students indicated their use of marijuana and related products is minimal. Alcohol consumption was discussed next; drinking by minors was found to be common, with the highest numbers in the high school population. However, 26% of 8<sup>th</sup> graders and 11% of 6<sup>th</sup> graders have reported taking more than a few sips of alcohol. Students said they drank at home with parent permission. How will the School address these concerns? Ms. Laughlin said we have had conversations and discussed an action plan. Our middle schoolers will take place in morning meetings to address stress and identify trusted adults, we will continue to screen our 7<sup>th</sup> graders for self-harm and depression, we will continue to address safe and responsible use of the internet and have healthy body image discussions. Prescription use and misuse is addressed in the health curriculum, as is education about vaping and tobacco use. Each year 8<sup>th</sup> graders are screened through state mandates; the results are confidential but staff has the opportunity to refer students for additional support. Ms. Comperchio asked about the frequency of the survey; Dr. Mehler answered that it is done every two years. Last year's 6<sup>th</sup> grade class will be surveyed again in when they are in 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Currently, we have no longitudinal data because this is our first time participating. Dr. Mehler said there are meetings with Emerson staff to give input on designing the survey. Ms. Lear asked if the staff was surprised by the data. Dr. Mehler said the most surprising thing for him was the amount of students that reported they didn't have a trusted adult in their life. He understands that kids want more independence, but adults want to be there. Dr. Mehler advocates for a more robust advisory program for social emotional learning. Mr. Huntress asked how Carlisle compared to the aggregate? Dr. Mehler answered that all of data has just been released; and complete data is available on the Emerson website. Mr. Huntress asked what was the major takeaway from the survey? Dr. Mehler answered that students in Carlisle are sheltered; he sees innocence extending into 6<sup>th</sup> grade. He noted larger districts have more opportunities to observe risky behavior. Mr. O'Shea added that it's important to look at the data so we know if kids are having thoughts about self-harm, if they are exhibiting risky behavior such as meeting people online, and we want to make sure our health curriculum addresses these issues. Kids may be

in crisis. It is noted that some troubling behaviors are happening here. Mr. Huntress said that in the past, the sheltered kids went to college and it was a big leap. He asked about the transitional plan to high school for these students. Ms. Reid answered that we communicate with high school guidance counselors, social workers, we tell them that kids will benefit from check-ins and supports. We are in communication with CCHS about concerns. Ms. Lear asked if 7<sup>th</sup> graders could be surveyed. Dr. Mehler answered that Carlisle just started participating in this program. Over time, as we have greater numbers of students and track trends, we may explore expanding it. Ms. Mostoufi questioned about the test at the end of the presentation. Ms. Sawyer answered that SPIRT is required by the Mass Department of Health and is done every year. Guardians can opt out. It was not conducted this year with COVID. We have been doing it for our 8<sup>th</sup> graders, and they are screened again in high school. It is confidential; Ms. Reid and Ms. Sawyer sit down one on one with a student, ask a series of questions, and follow up as needed. Mr. O'Shea and Ms. Lear thanked everyone for the presentation.

C. State and Local COVID Dashboard. Mr. O'Shea reported that there were no active cases in school. Carlisle had 3 positive cases in May and one in June. The State has a very low incidence of cases. Next week is the last week of pooled testing. This week all pools were negative. Student vaccinations are taking place. The State communicated recent changes to practices that include: adults are not required to wear masks outdoors if they can distance and masks are optional for adults after students are dismissed. There was discussion about planning for a school population where some are vaccinated and some are not. We want to be careful not to create a dynamic where people are treated differently due to their vaccine status. Mr. O'Shea has had conversations and is aware of other schools that give students rewards if they are vaccinated. The DESE communicated that all precautions will be lifted for the 2021-2022 school year. There will be no Family Choice Remote option at school. There will be a return to pre-COVID operations. Middle school students will change classes and science lab tables will return. Bus capacity will be full. We are awaiting guidance on what lunch will look like. The School bought a lot of furniture last year and custodians will be working to break down this furniture, store it, and return furniture that was used previously. It was noted that for the summer program, Ms. Bruce will ask staff and students to wear masks inside and distance.

D. School/Superintendent Update. Mr. O'Shea reported that Town meeting approved the School budget of \$12,056,751. Weather and temperature has been an issue and the School is looking at a new HVAC system for the Wilkins building. The last day of school is June 18. Faculty and staff evaluations are taking place. People are honoring CPS retirees Bill Gale, Sue Ross, Sue Foley and Nancy Anderson. Ms. Lear is also leaving her position on the CSC. We continue to have water issues; dealing with TPH, uranium, manganese, and PFAS. Mr. Fortado is reaching out to get the School a filter for each of these components. The search for a new business manager is underway. There is a diversity, equity and inclusion community group meeting on June 16 at 8:45 a.m. at Clark Farm market. There will be a middle school band concert tomorrow on the plaza. The Lillian Award ceremony for students is on Friday at 8:00 a.m. Faculty recipients of the Lillian Award are Lauren Sawyer and Lori Desjardin. 8<sup>th</sup> grade activities include a visit to CCHS, Shakespeare in the Park, Kimball's, the Writing Treasury, the Yearbook Signing and Graduation.

E. Election of new Carlisle School Committee Chair. This is tabled until after Town elections.

F. Gift to Carlisle Public School Library. Mr. O'Shea reported that earlier this year, Cynthia Sorn and Paul Anagnostopoulos donated a gift of \$250.00 to the library to purchase books and

materials that depict diversity. Their letter stated how challenging it is to find books that give a window and mirror to blended families. He extended his thanks to Ms. Sorn and Mr. Anagnostopoulos for the generous gift.

G. End of Year Budget Update/Discussion. Ms. Mahan presented an end of year budget update. She said the FY20 prepays of \$396K, the COVID school reopening grant of 128K, and the CARES-Town funds of 196K, all totaling \$720K, helped the School get through the year. The FY21 Grants totaled \$733,539; some grants offset salaries, some came through the federal government and some came through the state. Finishing off the year budget items include summer payrolls/stipends, professional development reimbursement, tuitions, transportation costs, technology, EDCO agreement (approximately \$72K), supplies and facilities. The FY21 budget was \$11,559,266 and the year to date actuals are \$11,409,685 which leaves the School with a balance of approximately \$150K. (Actual number is \$149,581). Offsets and savings of \$390K include a large circuit breaker of \$290K, out of district transportation savings of \$72K, and fewer stipends in the amount of \$28K. Additional costs of \$240K include the EDCO assessment of \$72K, and Operations/Technology costs of \$168K. Ms. Mahan reviewed the work done in human resources that included 55 new hires, FMLA, FFCRA, the New Insurance Plan – BCBS for Town employees and the new Dental Plan. It was noted that 37 substitutes were part of the 55 new hires this past year. Ms. Mostoufi asked about circuit breaker funds were reimbursed to the District. Ms. Mahan explained that circuit breaker is based on out of district tuitions and also other special education services that are provided to students. She noted that reimbursement for FY20 included a residential tuition. A district has two years to spend circuit breaker reimbursement. Mr. O’Shea thanked Ms. Mahan for all of her work, and also thanked Nancy Donnelly. He added that Dr. Sidell, Dr. Mehler and Ms. Bruce worked hard in this very challenging year as well. Mr. Huntress discussed prepays, which typically can be in the \$180-320K range. His concern is there is no mechanism with an emergency fund. Ms. Mahan said there is an opportunity to create a special education stabilization fund, but it can only be used for special education, and you have to vote to access the funds. Ms. Mahan will send information on this to the CSC members. Mr. O’Shea said the only contingency in the FY22 budget is one out of district placement. If the School needs more funding, they ask the Town. Ms. Mostoufi asked if there are different ways a K-8 District can build contingencies into a budget. Ms. Mahan answered that we do have revolving accounts that don’t have to be approved by School Committees or town appropriation; we have transportation, Kindergarten, a gift account, and those are places we can go to offset the budget. Mr. Huntress asked Scott Triola, from FinCom, when the last time was that the School came to the Town for an emergency. Mr. Triola answered that it happened with the catastrophic elevator failure, and there was a reserve funds transfer from Town with the majority of a FinCom vote. Mr. Huntress asked how close should the School get with a budget. Mr. Triola said in general, FinCom expressed support for a contingency fund for unexpected variations in the budget; where you don’t use it unless you have to. FinCom is not as comfortable with prepays. He noted that FinCom has access to the reserve fund; if there is an unexpected expense, the Town can cover it. If there is a deficit, we could do something at Town meeting with fund transfers for a legitimate expense. We need to have ongoing discussions about a contingency fund. He noted that returning excess funds to the Town goes in free cash, and then the Town could cover shortfalls. Mr. Triola said in a normal year we don’t use the reserve fund, so it is available for a catastrophe. Mr. O’Shea said that what he is hearing is that as we build a budget, it should be razor thin with a contingency built in. Mr. O’Shea appreciates the budget being funded. Ms. Mostoufi expressed concern about a new

business manager building a budget. Ms. Mahan said administrators were all involved in building the budget, administrators are aware of their numbers, and they will be able to manage it. It is not solely the business manager, it's a team effort. Ms. Mostoufi asked when circuit breaker funds are available. Mr. O'Shea said the School receives quarterly installments. In July we will get another circuit breaker number that we can put into the budget for the following year. Mr. Triola said he believes there should be a contingency fund as a part of a budget. Mr. O'Shea said we didn't expect to have any surplus this year. There will be an ongoing discussion next year to figure out the best way to address the unpredictability of the school budget, and to insure that if you are taking money out it is for a valid reason. There may be unexpected expenses, but there will be funds available to address them. We will put something in place moving forward. Mr. Triola said that if the \$150K is returned to the Town, it can address the EDCO cost, though mechanically it goes to free cash. Mr. Huntress asked if we could use part of it to purchase the tractor for the School. Mr. Triola said that they could support the tractor purchase contingent on other Boards. He noted the tractor is on the capital plan. Mr. Huntress will attend the FinCom meeting on Monday and participate for that discussion. Ms. Mostoufi asked about white boards and Mr. O'Shea said that the School is currently working on replacement cycles for white boards and other technology items. Mr. Triola added that technology is part of the operating budget. Mr. Triola ended by thanking Mr. O'Shea, the teachers and administrators for all of their hard work this past year. He has never been happier to live in Carlisle.

H. Superintendent Evaluation. Ms. Comperchio, after reviewing her evaluation, wants to change two of her ratings. She will email Ms. Anderson the changes. Ms. Lear summarized the ratings under each of Mr. O'Shea's goals. CSC members read their comments. Ms. Lear stated that the reason children in Carlisle were able to go to school is because of Mr. O'Shea. She added that the School was fortunate to have Mr. O'Shea there for all of us. Mr. Huntress said that when the crisis hit, he was thankful for everything that Mr. O'Shea, as the Superintendent and leader of the School, put in place. He heard many times that Mr. O'Shea listened, gathered the information, and found a way to move forward. It was a near impossible task to open a school this year and Mr. O'Shea's work was tremendous. If we don't give him an exemplary rating now, when would we do it? Ms. Comperchio echoed the comments of the other members and added that because of Mr. O'Shea's leadership, we did not have disruption in educating our kids. Ms. Wilson said the slow roll entry was the best thing we could have done and a great way to get everyone in the building. She added that it was Mr. O'Shea's confidence that helped make that happen, and that comes from the years of being involved with so many committees; Mr. O'Shea has fantastic relationships with everyone he works with and there is mutual respect. Ms. Mostoufi said it takes a lot of courage to take chances and be unpopular when there is not a lot of guidance from the State and you are dealing with an ever changing situation. She said Mr. O'Shea always think of kids first. She noted Carlisle was the only district that brought special ed kids to School over the summer. It took dedication, heart and care in the middle of a pandemic. She was grateful that families were provided supports. Mr. O'Shea appreciated hearing these positive comments, but said the reality is that the leadership team, faculty and staff all did an incredible job. He said we've all been through a lot this year, but it has come together because of a shared effort. Mr. O'Shea appreciated the positive feedback.

I. Summer Meeting Schedule. The next CSC meeting will be on July 21 at 9:00 a.m. We will change the Special Ed Subcommittee meeting, which was tentatively scheduled for that same date and time. This will most likely not be the only CSC meeting in the summer.

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

CCRS: Ms. Mostoufi reported there was a review of district goals at the Region and an update about a 9<sup>th</sup> grade program.

Special Ed Subcommittee: Information on this will be shared at an upcoming meeting.

Town Communication: Mr. Huntress plans to host an open meeting with other Town groups such as the COA. Mr. Huntress received correspondence that many people do not know what's going on at the school, and he wants to open the doors to these people. Mr. Huntress will set a date in September for an October meeting. Ms. Lear said that if only two CSC members attend the meeting, it is not a quorum and the meeting does not have to be posted. Mr. Huntress would like to possibly have one meeting in the fall and one in the spring. He will ask townspeople what they want to talk about and also ask them what issues the CSC should be aware of.

Ms. Mostoufi said that because we are coming out of pandemic, the CSC members should strive to be visible to families at school. One idea is to have a CSC member at all school events. She wants the CSC to be approachable. Ms. Lear asked that members put their pictures on the School website..

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

Communications were shared.

#### **VI. Warrants**

- A. Accounts Payable Warrant #7721; \$120,942.58
- B. Accounts Payable Warrant #7921; \$53,281.33
- C. Payroll Warrant #7521; \$460,277.36 and in addition, two more just received yesterday:
- D. Accounts Payable Warrant #8221; \$25,158.81
- E. Payroll Warrant #8021; \$392,151.41

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

- A. Vote Superintendent Evaluation. Ms. Comperchio reviewed her changes to Mr. O'Shea's evaluation. Under Standard 2, Management and Operations, section 2B, the NI will be changed to P. Under Standard 4, Professional Culture, the NI will be changed to P. Ms. Wilson made a motion to waive the usual practice of discussing an item at one meeting and voting on it at the next; Ms. Comperchio seconded the motion. The following votes were taken in roll call; Comperchio, aye; Huntress, aye; Lear, aye; Mostoufi, aye; Wilson, aye. Ms. Mostoufi made a motion to accept Mr. O'Shea's Superintendent Evaluation with the discussed edits; Ms. Wilson seconded the motion. All members present voted in favor of the motion. It was noted that after the changes to the evaluation are made, the vote to approve the final evaluation will be held at the next meeting.
- B. Ms. Wilson made a motion to accept the gift to the School Library; Ms. Comperchio seconded the motion. All members present voted in favor of the motion.

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

Carrie Patel, Tophet Road, thanked Christine Lear for her service. She said there aren't enough words to thank her enough. Ms. Lear recruited Ms. Patel onto the PTO Board, and she became a big part of the school and acknowledged that the School was a big part of her. Ms. Sorn, Rutland

Road, was recognized. She said that a lot of reporting for the Mosquito occurred when the Mosquito staff was invited into the school for events. She asked that this practice be instituted again moving forward, because these special events can bring the School to the public.

**IX. Adjourn Meeting**

Ms. Mostoufi made a motion to adjourn the meeting; Ms. Comperchio seconded the motion. All members present voted in favor of the motion. The public meeting was adjourned at 9:47 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Anderson  
Assistant to the Superintendent

List of Documents Viewed or Reviewed:

- Draft Minutes of May 19, 2021
- Youth Risk Behavior Survey Presentation
- End of Year Budget Summary
- Superintendent Evaluation
- Draft of CSC Summer Meeting Schedule
- Warrants
  - Accounts Payable Warrant #7721; \$120,942.58
  - Accounts Payable Warrant #7921; \$53,281.33
  - Payroll Warrant #7521; \$460,277.36
  - Payroll Warrant #6921; \$373,102.63
  - Accounts Payable Warrant #8221; \$25,158.81
  - Payroll Warrant #8021; \$392,151.41