

Carlisle School Committee

Minutes

Wednesday, August 5, 2020

8:30 a.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; Nancy Anderson, Assistant to the Superintendent.

Meeting Documents:

Minutes of July 29, 2020	Payroll Warrant #0521	Accounts Payable Warrant #0721
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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/82114215210?pwd=UVcvUUE5dU5wZStPd0kxVU9URFNuZz09>

Meeting ID: 821 1421 5210

Passcode: nzQq6d

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 8:32 a.m. Ms. Lear stated that the meeting was being recorded. Ms. Lear addressed the School Committee meeting last night. It was felt that an in-person meeting was needed to discuss all of the current school opening issues. Realizing that there would be a lot of feedback on Zoom at an in-person meeting, Ms. Lear arranged for Minuteman Media Network to set up for a live broadcast, so residents could click on the link and view the meeting in real time. Ms. Lear didn’t address people signing into Zoom before they could share the link, so there was a population of people who were not able to access the meeting. Ms. Lear assured everyone that no decisions were made at last night’s meeting; it was simply a forum for people to talk about the school reopening models. No questions were asked or answered. The videographer is in the process of editing the recording, and will send it to Mr. O’Shea so it can be posted on the website for all to access.

II. Review/Approve Minutes. Ms. Wilson made a motion to approve the minutes of July 29, 2020; 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.

III. Information/Discussion Items

- A. School Reopening Update and Plan. Mr. O'Shea also apologized for the problems accessing last night's meeting but assured everyone that the recording will be posted on the school website. By August 10, Districts have to finalize a comprehensive reopening plan and submit it to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). The initial plans were shared with the Back to School Task Force (BTSTF), Board of Health (BOH), and Carlisle School Committee (CSC), for feedback and comments. Public Health nurse Trish McGean presented an update on COVID-19 in the community to the faculty last week. She will provide another presentation for families and the public. Last Thursday, at the weekly meeting with Linda Vanaria, representing the Carlisle Teachers' Association (CTA), it was determined that Carlisle will look at implementing 6 foot distancing for an in-person model. On Monday, there was a walk-through of classrooms and the bus for the CSC, BOH and BTSTF. Thanks to Orna Miles at Bedford Charter for supplying the bus for the walk-through. Many people felt that the students in bus seats were too close so more distancing on the bus will be discussed. Similar walk-throughs will be offered again. Thanks to Laura Marshall, Special Educator, for attending the CSC meeting on Tuesday night and sharing experiences about working in the Summer Program. Mr. O'Shea then shared initial thoughts on identifying a framework for deciding which of the three models to implement. He presented a draft operating framework, which provides the school a structure on which informed decisions can be made. The metric for the framework will be established locally in conjunction with the BOH. Preliminary reopening framework data includes the number of positive cases in Massachusetts and the number of positive cases in Carlisle. It was noted that if people are within 6 feet of a confirmed positive case for an extended period of time, it would lead to quarantine. Discussions are based on this framework, which exceeds DESE guidelines.

Carlisle Draft Operating Frameworks for 2020-2021 school year

Carlisle Framework-Exceed DESE Guidance

	School Comm.	OR Carlisle	OR State
	750	5,100	6.9M
	Positive Cases*	Positive Cases*	Positive Cases*
Full Time 4.5 days a week	0-4 (0-0.5%)	0-5 (0-0.1%)	0-6860 (0-0.1%)
Hybrid 2 days in-person, ½ day remote	4 (0.5-0.7%)	6 (0.1-0.2%)	NA
All Remote 5 days, shortened days	>5 (>0.7%)	6+ (>0.2%)	>6860 >0.1%

*Positive cases represent 14 day rolling windows

We exceed DESE guidance: 6' separation of desks, masks for everyone PreK-8, anyone in classroom for more than 15 minutes with positive case will be quarantined.

Reopening Plan highlights include: Full in-person model with risk reduction measures including 6 foot distancing, Hybrid with risk reduction measures, Full Remote with more robust instruction and the Plus Model which is remote for families that choose it. DESE has released guidance to assist Districts with the identification of remote models. The Risk Reduction Plan includes: no visitors, 6 foot distancing, and safety barriers in offices. For Transportation, the distance between children will be one child per seat with children sitting on every other seat. Hot prepared meals will be offered from our dining room. The DESE gave schools additional days for planning. Next steps include: the School website will be updated with State and District information, there will be a faculty meeting tomorrow to discuss the Hybrid model, Trish McGean will give a presentation to the community on COVID, new surveys will be distributed to families and staff, a new start date of school will be identified, and the School reopening plan will be selected. Faculty and staff return to school on August 31. Ongoing questions include: what will remote learning look like, what options are available for faculty who may be at an increased risk, and what will be the impact of physical distancing on classroom instruction and student experience. Mr. Huntress asked when we will know the plan. Mr. O'Shea said parents should know by August 12. Mr. O'Shea noted that depending on what model is chosen, it still might change before school starts. Mr. Huntress addressed the Hybrid plan for community clarity. There will be 2 cohorts; one will attend School Monday/Thursday, and one will attend Tuesday/Friday, with a half morning remote instruction for all on Wednesdays. On the off days for students in the cohorts, there is no instruction, no remote learning, and no new material is covered. This plan is effectively 2 days of full in person instruction and ½ day of remote

instruction for students. Mr. O'Shea confirmed this is true. When students are home, they are working on independent tasks. Ms. Wilson asked to what extent the School is working with Carlisle Kids House (CKH) to align plans? Mr. O'Shea answered that the School has had communication with CKH, and CKH is looking to follow our lead and support us. Ms. Wilson asked if there has been discussion about Tier II supports. Mr. O'Shea answered that there is a great deal of consideration about this topic. One concern is the need to assess students so we know where they are academically, and identify students that need additional support. Dr. Mehler, Dr. Sidell and Ms. Bruce are working on this. Ms. Mostoufi asked if there are differences in terms of safety between the models. Mr. O'Shea answered that the most cautious approach is remote, where the risk of transmitting the disease is zero. For the in-person model, we will have 6 foot distancing for all students and teachers in the classroom. For the hybrid model, there is a little more distancing, but faculty and staff still exposed to all children through the week. For children, they have less risk in the hybrid model because they are exposed to less students. The BOH said if we are in either model of in-person instruction, the risk is similar for faculty and staff. Mr. Huntress noted that it can't be stated enough about the level of work being done in Carlisle on the School reopening; the level of transparency, the surveys, the studies, the discussions; he noted that we should all be grateful for the thoughtful approach. Carrie Patel was recognized and asked who is monitoring the busses, do we have a plan for students passing in the halls, how will the Nurses' office operate; will there be a maximum number of kids allowed in there at a time; who will monitor kids if nurses get called elsewhere, what instruction will kids get who are in quarantine and what will teachers do if they teach multiple grades? She thanked everyone and read a statement that included the following: she can't send her boys back to school in good conscience, we expect a lot from our teachers but asking them to risk their health is not what they signed on for, she can't imagine putting teachers in harm's way, though a lot of people were not happy with remote learning, do not underestimate what our wonderful teachers can do. Mr. O'Shea addressed the questions. We are looking at having monitors on the bus, because current conditions are too much for drivers to manage. We need employees or volunteers to expand our base of supervision. We are looking to change the hallways, and are designing plans for having kids move from one place to another. For the Nurses' office, we are establishing a satellite office for students with symptoms that will be closed off to others. We will work with Ms. Sawyer and Ms. Desjardin on how we manage during a rush. If we have a person with a positive case, we would quarantine that cohort and the teacher would transition to remote learning for those students. Specialists see many children and we are taking steps to limit those numbers. If we have a hyper exposure, we would possibly instruct remotely from a classroom to limit contact. Ms. Patel noted that we have problems getting subs and having less people but needing more supervision is an issue. Mr. O'Shea answered that we may hire people because we need additional support. In-person instruction requires additional people. Mr. Huntress offered to help in any way he can in the first 1 ½ hours of the day. Ms. Lear added that we are looking for people who can come in and help consistently. Mr. Model was recognized and thanked Mr. O'Shea on the frameworks presentation and the data driven approach. He asked if there was thought on systematic testing because the Region has such an arrangement. Ms. Mostoufi added that there may be capacity at a local lab similar to the way college

campuses are monitoring students. Mr. O'Shea said the School is exploring the possibility but pricing is extraordinary. Kathleen McDonald was recognized and asked how the decision will be made on what model is chosen, what is the position of Carlisle teachers and how is that made visible to the community? Ms. Lear answered that the CSC makes the final decision on the model. The decision will be made next Wednesday or Thursday; Mr. O'Shea will make a recommendation and the CSC will vote. Linda Vanaria was recognized about the faculty question. Ms. Vanaria answered that she did not have a statement, but there are strong feelings about reopening. The Staff is extremely apprehensive about returning to School in September. She is meeting with faculty membership this afternoon and will share those feelings with administrators tomorrow. Ms. Wilson wanted to clarify that the reopening model is a CSC decision and not a Superintendent call. Mr. O'Shea referenced a communication from the Massachusetts Association of School Committees (MASC) that it is a CSC decision. Josh Danker was recognized. He asked about risk differentiation. He said that we need data from our community; he believes that whether we are in a full time or hybrid model, we need to ask families if their children go to any childcare center. He noted that as an engineer, he didn't understand how these models were equivalent risks. Mr. O'Shea answered that the BOH can provide us with documentation on the risks. Mr. Danker would like to know the likelihood of occurrence and impact. He felt that the impact is higher with the full in-person model. Mr. O'Shea welcomed additional insights; one challenge is getting resources so we can get answers to questions. Glen Patashnick was recognized. Mr. Patashnick is a teacher and is teaching an in person fall semester. His school is making him prepare two curriculums; one for in-person and one for remote. He doesn't want that for his kids. He wants to make everything remote and stop worrying about the extra problems associated with in-person models. He shared the difficulty as a teacher; all he wants to do is know what his fall term will look like so he can prepare. What Carlisle looks at as flexibility, he sees as disruption. Vanessa Moroney was recognized. She is concerned about the CSC referring to anecdotal discussions people who are not involved with our school, she has concern about the volunteers on the BOH and their qualifications to impart knowledge. She is looking for what information the BOH is using to guide their opinions on the safety for all of us. She is not being critical of the volunteers that are serving on the BOH but is looking for expert guidance. Along the same line, Ms. Mostoufi asked what sources are members accessing to guide decisions and should they be shared with the community? The CSC is serious about acquiring the best information. What can we do to help people understand our resources? Ms. Lear said the Committee has to strike a balance between citing references and discussing the reopening issues. Mei Shang was recognized. She appreciates how much work everyone has done and echoes Mr. Patashnick's comments. It's important to focus on the back to school topic. There are still a lot of unknowns. We are all doing our best, but if we switch models back and forth, the families and our children have to adapt and adjust. This is about the overall effectiveness of what our children are learning. By spring we should have a better handle and understanding of the virus. For now, we should focus on the online remote learning model. Then we can mentally prepare the kids. We all want the kids to be physically at school, but considering the overall working environment, it's better to make remote learning more effective. Kristen Amanti was recognized. She was heartened to see that we are able to

address these topics politely. As a parent of two young children, she is worried about the virtual aspect of learning, and asked if the School has been thinking about impact of virtual learning for young students. Mr. O'Shea acknowledged that having our young students in person in School is critical to their learning, and it is more challenging to elementary parents to help virtual learning be effective. It is hard for teachers to manage as well. Middle schoolers can handle it better. Remote is not optimal. Ms. Amanti asked if we have considered different models for elementary and middle school. Mr. O'Shea answered that is not where we are presently. Ted Watters was recognized. He agreed that it is a good idea to survey about day care and added that many parents are not going to be able to find day care because the demand is great. He asked of the 19 people diagnosed with COVID in Carlisle, how many have kids in school? He also asked if there been children in the school that have gotten it? He supports full time in-person learning, and wonders if we will ever start full time at another point if not now.

IV. Members'/Committee Reports as Needed

Ms. Lear asked people to look at the new solar panels at the school; the project is well underway.

V. Warrants

- A. Payroll Warrant #0521; \$257,282.16
- B. Accounts Payable Warrant #0721; \$44,473.43

VI. Action Items

There will be a CSC meeting next Wednesday at 12:30. There is a chance we will have another meeting next week as well. To stay informed of meetings, families should sign up on the Town Website for alerts so the agendas will be sent directly to them. As much as we want to meet in person, CSC meetings will continue to be on Zoom so large numbers of people can attend.

VII. Public Comments

Comments were addressed earlier in the meeting. Ms. Comperchio said that based on everything we have been hearing in the past week, we have to really think about our online model. It's important to keep looking at it because we will probably have to use it at some point. Mr. Huntress noted that even with frameworks, the plan will not be static. It will require constant adjustments as we see successes and failures, and gather more data. Ms. Mostoufi said we will be getting more data from schools in Massachusetts; we will see what works and doesn't work and guide our plans. Ms. Wilson supported continual conversations of the remote model.

VIII. Adjourn Meeting

Ms. Comperchio made a motion to adjourn the meeting; Ms. Mostoufi 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 10:23 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Nancy Anderson, Assistant to the Superintendent