

**Carlisle School Committee
Carlisle Finance Committee**
Minutes
April 20, 2020
7:00 p.m.
Remote Meeting Via Zoom

Present Via Zoom – School Committee: Christine Lear - Chair, David Model, 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; Susan Pray, Business Manager; Nancy Anderson, Assistant to the Superintendent.

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://zoom.us/j/91739256694>

Meeting ID: 917 3925 6694

Call-In (Dial number followed by Meeting ID)

+13126266799,,91739256694# US (Chicago)

+16465588656,,91739256694# US (New York)

Meeting Documents:

FY20/21 Budget Discussion		
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I. Call to Order

Jim Darr, Scott Triola, Victor Liang, Alan Lewis, and Aaron D’Elia were present from the Finance Committee (FinCom); Mr. Liang convened the FinCom meeting to order at 7:04 p.m. Ms. Lear opened the School Committee (CSC) meeting at 7:05 p.m. Ms. Lear announced that the meeting is being recorded.

II. Information/Discussion Items

FY 2020 budget status and FY 2021 guidance and impact of COVID-19 on Town and School finances.

Mr. Liang thanked the CSC for joining the meeting. Mr. Liang acknowledged that the school closure will impact the budget, and a lot of uncertainty exists. The hope is to deal with the situation by putting up some reserves and also managing next year’s budget. It is good to get an understanding from Carlisle and the Region in terms of unexpected expenses and how to manage budgets. Mr. Liang said that in FY21 FinCom is looking for a budget reduction of 1 to 1 ½

million, so this is the time to get together, hear about what the school is dealing with and have discussions. Mr. Liang asked the School to share thoughts and discuss this year's spending and next year's budget. Mr. O'Shea shared a slide show. Mr. O'Shea began with a few assumptions, including that school would not reopen this scholastic year and that Chapter 70 and Circuit Breaker funding would be unaffected this year. The School will continue to pay all salaries through June 30. Possible savings will be from transportation costs and a reduction in supplies and maintenance utilities. Carlisle will continue to pay private tuition costs, because those schools are providing services to students. Carlisle Schools will save operating expenses in the FY20 budget. The breakdown of savings included: \$192,161 in Regular Education due to remote operations, \$222,795 in Special Education due to two Out of District placeholders that were not used, along with savings in Student Services, Administration and Operations due to remote operations, for a total of \$531,570 in savings. For FY21, there were also assumptions including that school will reopen in late August. It was noted that the budget is largely driven by contractual increases, along with fixed contracts for utilities and transportation. These account for 89% of the budget. Special Education remains the biggest variable. The proposed use of the savings are: to establish a Summer School program for general education students at an estimated cost of \$130,000; additional services in Special Education due to the school closure at an estimated \$50,000; and funds for general contingencies for unknown changes to the Circuit Breaker formula for \$50,000. This equates to a return to the Town of \$300,000. Summary and risks were discussed. By returning all available savings to the Town, Carlisle Schools is acknowledging the need to provide as much funds as practical to address the unknown shortfalls and ensure critical functions can continue. Carlisle School is proposing to enter FY21 without any prepaid expenses; a \$250,000 departure from past practice. It was also asked when there will be confirmation on Chapter 70 funds from the state for FY21. Per Sue Pray, Circuit Breaker for FY20 will not be changed. For the following year, we will not know about Circuit Breaker until the State budget is passed. We are building on a model of \$35,000-\$50,000. Melissa McMorrow shared that she attended the School Committee meeting at the Region and noted it is premature to discuss a FY21 budget with the unknown contributions from the State. Jim Darr appreciated the information presented by the School Committee and acknowledged that the School might have a variety of expenses along with a huge reduction in State aid. Mr. Model proposed that the School prepay \$130,000 which would fund the summer school program. Mr. D'Elia added that Chapter 70 and Circuit Breaker funds won't likely increase and he echoed that the School prepay. FinCom is asking for a fair cut across the boards in Town; a 5% cut in FY21 to pay for uncertainties. Mr. Triola asked that the School work within its budget then come to FinCom if more funding is needed. Mr. Darr agreed with Mr. Triola and Mr. D'Elia. Mr. Model confirmed the importance of Summer School because if School is closed until late August, students would not have been in school for 6 months. In June, the School will make a decision on whether to have Summer School. Mr. Darr added that everyone is dealing with uncertainty. The Town is trying to be cautious. Mr. Triola added that FinCom wants to do as much as possible to build up reserves and acknowledged that it may be a different type of year because the School might come back to the Town for additional funds. Mr. Liang added that this conversation is consistent with what we opened the meeting with, which was the intent to increase reserves. He said the information provided by the School was helpful. We can build up reserves, and make decisions as we go in this very different year. Mr. Triola asked if there were decisions made at the Region about budget. Mr. Model answered that the Concord FinCom is not as proactive in asking for money. As a region, it builds up its own reserve. Melissa McMorrow added that for FY20 in

Concord there was \$820,000 in unencumbered balance; some of this may not be spent. Concord is treating itself as if it was in year end, and liquidating purchase orders. Jared Stanton, Director of Finance and Operations in Concord, indicated that once Concord hits the cap and covers expenses, anything in excess will go to the Town. For FY21, Concord is just getting started on meetings, it is concerned about funding at the state level and how to protect against potential decreases. The approach the Concord finance office is taking is similar to the Carlisle FinCom. It was noted that the money from the Region would be returned to Concord and Carlisle. It was noted that Concord also prepays. Mr. Liang thanked the School Committee for joining the meeting tonight, and acknowledged and understood that there are a lot of uncertainties moving forward.

III. Adjourn Meeting

Ms. Lear thanked the FinCom. Mr. Model made a motion to adjourn the meeting; Ms. Wilson seconded the motion. The following votes were taken in Roll Call: Lear, aye; Model, aye; Wilson, aye. The public meeting was adjourned at 7:54 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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

Nancy Anderson
Assistant to the Superintendent