

**CARLISLE SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
MINUTES
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2025
6:00 PM
COMMUNITY ROOM, ROBBINS BUILDING
AND REMOTE ZOOM ACCESS**

Present – School Committee: Scott Jamison, James Steele, Julie Viola, Brian Waterson
Present – School Administration: James O’Shea, Superintendent; Mary O’Regan, Assistant to the Superintendent
Present – School Administration: Lori Bruce, Director of Student Support Services

Per the governor’s order suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A sec. 20, members of the public can access the meeting via live stream at:

Topic: CSC Meeting 2-12-25

Time: Feb 12, 2025 06:00 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://carlisle-k12-ma-us.zoom.us/j/89461299329?pwd=ZBnnmmxjU1xWrNUBmlrBL6JiBKHqam.1>

Meeting ID: 894 6129 9329

Passcode: 420972

I. Call to Order

School Committee Member Waterson called the meeting to order at 6:02 PM and announced the meeting was being recorded.

II. Seat New School Committee Member

Motion to recognize James Steele as a member of the Carlisle School Committee was made by Ms. Viola and seconded by Mr. Jamison. The motion passed unanimously.

Vote: Jamison, aye; Viola, aye; Waterson, aye

III. Public Comments - Mr. O’Shea recognized outgoing School Committee member Sara Wilson for her service and dedication. The floor was opened to further comment:

- Christine Lear, 120 Oak Knoll Road, Carlisle
- David Model, 140 Carroll Drive, Carlisle
- Scott Triola, 109 Hart Farm Road, Carlisle
- Melissa McMorrow, 301 Concord Street, Carlisle

Members of the School Committee thanked Ms. Wilson for all she has done for Carlisle Public Schools, the School Committee, and the Carlisle community.

IV. Consent Agenda

A. CSC Meeting Minutes 1.8.25

B. Warrants

- a. Accounts Payable Warrant 25SE14; \$34,327.96
- b. Accounts Payable Warrant 25SE15; \$118,126.37
- c. Accounts Payable Warrant 25SE16; \$48,991.60
- d. Payroll Warrant 25PR14; \$426,736.21
- e. Payroll Warrant 25PR15; \$448,063.26
- f. Payroll Warrant 25PR16; \$443,628.24

Motion to approve the Consent Agenda was made by Ms. Viola and seconded by Mr. Jamison. The motion passed unanimously.

Vote: Jamison, aye; Steele, aye; Viola, aye; Waterson, aye

V. Information/Discussion Items

- A. Student Update - Estella Gu reported on activities in the school including the end of the basketball season, intramural floor hockey and the upcoming volleyball season. Rehearsals are underway for the 7th grade play. Brainstorming has begun for the 8th grade gift. 8th graders received their course recommendations for next year and are working on their DC Roommate assignments. Currently there is a Valentine's Spirit Week underway. There is an upcoming music field trip to CCHS for students in grades 4-8 . The next Drama club production will be You're a Good Man Charlie Brown. There was a recent 5th grade field trip to the Concord Museum.
- B. Superintendent's Update - Mr. O'Shea reported that the Multicultural Festival held today was a great success. He thanked Marie-Laure Rivier, Mahreen Hoda and all the families who made displays or took part in the potluck lunch. Final preparations are happening for DESE targeted review scheduled for March. Mr. O'Shea thanked Lori Bruce for her coordination for the review. The Advancing Parent/Professional Leadership in Education (APPLE) Institute work with SEPAC continues. The focus is team building using the new IEP as the vehicle. The School Start Time Exploratory Committee continues work and has recently sent out surveys. Currently there are two book groups, a school based group and community based group. Superintendent O'Shea thanked Mahreen Hoda and Krystle Gibbs for coordinating the community group. The book, An Anxious Generation, focuses on parents being overprotective of their children while at the same time not being protective enough in the social media world. Mr. O'Shea attended the MASS winter meeting which had focused discussions on cell phone policies as well as a presentation on AI. Earlier in the year Mr. O'Shea attended the Leading Now Conference which was an opportunity for network building with superintendents from across the country. There was also a focus on how to lead in the current political climate. There was a meeting with Police Chief Amendola surrounding new executive orders regarding law enforcement and ICE. The goal was to make sure administration and police are on the same page. The Merrimack Valley of Superintendents had a presentation on bomb threats and swatting. To recognize Black Excellence Month in February, administration worked with the art teachers to identify black artists to celebrate. The artwork is posted in the breezeway outside the cafe and will be used as a prompt for a student writing assignment. School Administration met with PTO Co-Chairs this week. There will be a change in leadership over the summer. WBYC hosted a lecture at CCHS on Monday with a focus on special education experiences. Mr. O'Shea noted several of the exciting visitors that classrooms have lined up over the next few weeks. February break is next week. With the need for daily substitute teachers, Mr. O'Shea explained that his son worked as a daily sub in early January and asked members of the School Committee to let him know if they had any concerns with regards to a conflict of interest if he were to work as a daily sub in the future.
- C. Appointment of Committee Vice Chair & Primary Warrant Signer - There was a brief discussion of the warrant signing process.

Motion to appoint Brian Waterson as Carlisle School Committee Vice Chair was made by Ms. Viola and seconded by Mr. Jamison. The motion passed unanimously.

Vote: Jamison, aye; Steele, aye; Viola, aye; Waterson, aye

Motion to appoint James Steele as Carlisle School Committee primary warrant signer was made by Ms. Viola and seconded by Mr. Jamison. The motion passed unanimously.

Vote: Jamison, aye; Steele, aye; Viola, aye; Waterson, aye

- D. FY26 Budget Update - Andy Paquette joined the meeting to provide a FY25 Budget update. Salaries for remainder of the year have been encumbered. Mr. Paquette thanked Town Accountant Kelly Beyer for her assistance in updating the account codes in Munis to better track budgets. Additional special education costs are expected and the facilities expenses are being monitored. It was noted that expenses and encumbrances are checked weekly. The FY25 budget is tight but at this time there are no major concerns. Mr. O'Shea shared a revised FY26 proposed budget which included a reduced ask for the town. He reviewed the process of getting to the current proposal. The town has asked for feedback on what a 2% budget reduction would look like for the district. Mr. O'Shea spoke about the reasoning behind not identifying specific positions or personnel for reduction. It was suggested that administration only identify the number of positions and not the names of the positions that could potentially be cut. There was a discussion surrounding contingencies. A question was asked about the amount of federal funding the district receives and what the consequences of losing this funding would be. Work will be done with MASC regarding the possibility of getting special education transportation costs refunded at 100%. Ms. Bruce clarified what costs are included in circuit breaker. The possibility of finding alternative funding sources for stipends will also be investigated.
- E. Follow-Up to 2.11.25 Joint Carlisle School Committee & Select Board Meeting - Scott Triola of the Select Board joined the meeting. There was follow-up discussion regarding the Town Administrator Bylaw. The bylaw will not impact hiring or supervision of staff in the school at all. The hope was that by having the bylaw more will be delegated to the Town Administrator in order to allow town committees to focus on issues not personnel matters. This bylaw would help better define the Town Administrator duties and responsibilities as well as make town administration more efficient. Mr. Triola indicated that as Town Meeting approaches the hope is that boards and committees will take a position on the bylaw. Mr. Triola indicated that he would return to a future School Committee meeting to provide review of any revisions to the proposed bylaw and answer any questions School Committee members may have. There was a brief discussion regarding the request to use the school parking lot for overflow parking for Great Brook Farm Ski Touring Center.
- F. Yellow Tulip Project Update - Dr. Sidell was unable to join the meeting due to illness. Mr. O'Shea stated that the goal of the project is to remove stigmas. Many staff have developed "I Am" posters and now students are working on their own "I Am" posters. Focus is ensuring everyone is welcome in the school and feel that they belong. In support of the project, Emerson Health Car donated approximately 200 tulip bulbs that were planted in the fall.
- G. Review CPA applications (Diment Park, Track, Baseball Field, Highland Building) - Mr. Jamison shared a presentation highlighting four CPA funding requests. Items that came from Carlisle Recreation Commission and Highland Building Committee include a Diment Park Study, Banta Davis Track Rehab, Spalding Baseball Field Rehab, and Highland Building Study. The School Committee may want to consider supporting some or all of these applications. There will be further discussion regarding support of these applications at upcoming meetings.

- H. Castle Playground Update - Donor signs will be installed in the spring. The committee is looking into the installation of an exterior water fountain and continues to look at options to resurface the plaza. Issues with trees have come to light. It is suspected that roots were damaged during the grading process and that the depth of the mulch, which is necessary to be compliant with playground guidelines, is choking out some trees. During February vacation there will be several trees removed from the playground area. To prevent further issues, during April vacation there will be removal of mulch from the exterior of some trees and several wells will be built. Also a planting plan for new trees is being put in place.
- I. Fee Review - Mr. O'Shea discussed the presentation attached to the agenda. The Preschool fee was raised this year with the start of a full day offering as well as the continuation of a half day option. There was review of fee information presented last year with several fee structure models for FY25 and FY26. Kindergarten fees were raised \$1,000 over the past few years. The increase was implemented over two years with \$500 increases. Mr. O'Shea spoke to the mandate to provide free half day kindergarten, but noted that districts can charge for full day kindergarten. Most districts that do not charge in the surrounding areas have a more commercial tax base. There was a suggestion to raise Preschool fees to the rate in Model #3 for the 25-26 school year. Student Support Services Director Lori Bruce addressed that registration letters have gone out and families have committed to enroll their students at the current preschool tuition rates. Following discussion the committee decided to wait until the 26-27 school year to increase Preschool fees. There was a proposal to increase kindergarten tuition rates by \$100 for the 25-26 school year. Bus Fees were discussed as related to increase to transportation costs. There was a suggestion to raise Bus Fees to \$425 per student for 7th and 8th grades for the 25-26 school year. As noted in the presentation linked to the agenda, families also incur other charges each year such as field trips and supplies. Committee members discussed the possibility of asking families who are able to support students in need to purchase supplies or cover field trip costs. It was pointed out that a mechanism needs to be put in place to inform families that financial help and support is available in the district. Mr. O'Shea explained that athletic fees do not cover costs of student athletic programs. Following a brief discussion of a minimal increase to athletic fees, it was decided to hold off on increasing athletic fees and look further into athletics costs and fees. The committee will continue the discussion of fee increases at the next meeting.
- J. Portrait of a Graduate Review - The committee agreed to address this agenda item at the next meeting.
- K. Facility Naming - Mr. O'Shea spoke about the work that Jeremy Behrle has done over the years to keep the lighting working in the auditorium. Mr. Behrle has contributed so much to the Carlisle Community especially with his work on the recent lighting project. It has been suggested to name the stage in the Corey Auditorium after Mr. Behrle. Mr. O'Shea will do some additional research and report back to the committee at the next meeting.
- L. 2025-2026 School Calendar - A draft 2025-2026 calendar was linked to the agenda. The Calendar Committee generated a first draft and then revisited the draft after adding a school committee member to the committee, Brian Waterson. Various calendar options were discussed by the Calendar Committee including moving the start of the school year to after Labor Day, aligning with CCHS school calendar whenever possible, and a proposed winter break of two full weeks. School Committee members reviewed the draft calendar presented and asked about exploring the concept of flipping the schedule on some early release days so professional development is scheduled for the morning and classes are held in the afternoon. It was noted that December has a lot of time out of school. There were questions about how to adjust the calendar in order to move the last

day of school to earlier in June. There was discussion of possible scenarios to move professional development days. The Calendar Committee will be tasked with further review of the calendar to address these suggestions. Feedback from the Calendar Committee will be shared at the March meeting.

- M. Superintendent Goals Mid-Year Update - An update on activity related to the Superintendent's Goals was linked to the agenda. Mr. O'Shea will share notes on these activities with School Committee members and they are welcome to reach out to Mr. O'Shea directly with any questions or concerns.

VI. Communications/Correspondence - The committee received two emails. One from a Wellesley School Committee member regarding HVAC and one from 8th grade students as part of their Civics project.

VII. Members'/Committee Reports as Needed

- A. Regional Committee - The Amenities Building is a major focus for the region. The committee is monitoring the budget and reviewing policies. The April 10, 2025 Regional meeting will be held at Carlisle Town Hall.
- B. Policy Subcommittee - The subcommittee will provide a list of policies for review to the full committee for review at the March School Committee meeting.

VIII. Action Items

- A. Vote to accept the FY26 CPS Budget
Motion to approve the FY26 CPS Budget as presented was made by Ms. Viola and seconded by Mr. Steele. The motion passed unanimously.
Vote: Jamison, aye; Steele, aye; Viola, aye; Waterson, aye

IX. Public Comments - Cynthia Sorn, 433 Rutland Street, Carlisle

X. Adjournment to Executive Session pursuant to MGL Chapter 30A, Section 21(a) with no intent to return to Open Session: (Purpose 3) To discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining with the Carlisle Teachers' Association

A motion to adjourn to Executive Session pursuant to MGL Chapter 30A, Section 21(a) with no intent to return to Open Session was made by Mr. Jamison and seconded by Ms. Viola.

Roll Call Vote: Jamison, aye; Steele, aye; Viola, aye; Waterson, aye

The motion passed unanimously and the meeting adjourned to Executive Session at 9:12 PM.

Respectfully Submitted
Mary O'Regan
Assistant to the Superintendent
February 12, 2025

List of Documents Viewed and/or Reviewed:

CSC Meeting Minutes 1.8.25
Accounts Payable Warrant 25SE14; \$34,327.96
Accounts Payable Warrant 25SE15; \$118,126.37
Accounts Payable Warrant 25SE16; \$48,991.60

Carlisle School Committee Minutes
Meeting Date: 2/12/25

Approved: 3/12/25

Payroll Warrant 25PR14; \$426,736.21

Payroll Warrant 25PR15; \$448,063.26

Payroll Warrant 25PR16; \$443,628.24

[FY25 Budget Update](#)

[FY26 Budget Proposal](#)

Castle Playground Update

Fee Review

Portrait of a Graduate

2025-2026 Draft School Calendar

Superintendent Goals Mid-Year Update