

**Carlisle School Committee**  
Minutes  
February 6, 2008  
Ruth C. Wilkins Library, Robbins Building  
7:00 PM

Present – School Committee: Nicole Burkel, Chair; Wendell Sykes, Vice Chair; Michael Fitzgerald, Chad Koski.

Present – School Administration: Marie Doyle, Superintendent; Jim Halliday, Principal; Patrice Hurley, Principal; Karen Slack, Director of Student Support Services; Claire Wilcox, Assistant to the Superintendent; Heidi Zimmerman, Business Manager.

**Nicole Burkel called the meeting to order at 7:06 pm.**

### **Public Comment Period**

Ms. Burkel welcomed everyone to the meeting, and asked if any members of the public had comments. There were no comments.

### **Review of minutes**

**Michael Fitzgerald made a motion to approve the minutes of the meeting of January 16, 2008. Chad Koski seconded the motion. All members voted in favor of approving the minutes.**

### **Communications/Correspondence**

The following items were reviewed:

- Email from John Ballantine asking for time at a School Committee meeting to discuss the Livable Carlisle Community project
- Thank you notes from Ms. Doyle to Andrea Seddon, Steve Bober, and Sue LaPorte for their presentations at the January 16<sup>th</sup> School Committee meeting
- Thank you note to Christy Barbee for her service as chair of the School Building Committee
- Thank you note to Lee Storrs for assuming leadership of the School Building Committee
- Thank you notes to Chiao Bin Huang, Chris Denaro, Gene Stamell, and Peter Darasz for their participation in the Chinese New Year celebration
- Thank you note to the fourth grade team acknowledging their organization of the clothing drive for the Lawrence fire victims
- Thank you notes to Kevin Brown and Bryan Sorrows for their help with the clothing drive

- Photos of the clothing drive

## **Superintendent's Report**

Superintendent Marie Doyle reported on the following:

- Mitten plays
- CSA MCAS presentation at the parent information coffee
- Middle school principal search
- Clothing drive for Lawrence fire victims
- Chinese New Year celebrations
- Math Review Team meeting
- Curriculum coordinators' meeting
- MSBA meeting on January 30<sup>th</sup> and approval of Master Plan
- EDCO joint purchasing venture
- Letter from Nikki Tsongas with grant information

## **Administrator Reports**

Middle School Principal Jim Halliday represented the Administrative Team and reported on the following:

- Lawrence clothing drive
- Visiting film artist, Jeff Warmouth
- Mitten plays
- Principal search interviews 2/11, 2/12, And 2/13
- Mentoring and new teacher meetings
- Varsity and JV basketball

Ms. Burkel asked for additional information on what is covered in the mentoring meetings.

## **Members'/Committee Reports**

Mr. Fitzgerald reported on Regional School Committee activities. The teacher and students from the high school forensics class did a presentation at a meeting, and it was greatly enjoyed by members. The committee approved the addition of 19 minutes to each day for the high school schedule. Next year classes will start at 7:25 am, end a bit later, and the passing time will be reduced. Focus groups are being set up to work on a search for a new superintendent. Internal candidates will be considered first.

Ms. Burkel stated that she attended the EDCO School Committee leadership group. Participants in the group updated others on school committee activities in their districts.

## Information/Discussion Items

- A. **Organizational Review update.** Ms. Burkel reported on a workshop held on January 27<sup>th</sup> with consultant John Littleford. Following the workshop, four sub-committees have been set up to continue Mr. Littleford's work. Each committee has two chairs and includes representatives from the faculty, the administration, and the School Committee and will be addressing one of four areas: faculty, CTA leadership, superintendent, School Committee.
- B. **School Building Committee.** The School Building Committee attended a meeting at the MSBA on January 30<sup>th</sup>. Lee Storrs, new chair of the School Building Committee reported on the meeting. He distributed a summary of the meeting and discussed the next steps for the process. Carlisle was well represented at the meeting by several members of the community along with Cory Atkins and a representative from Susan Fargo's office. The MSBA is viewing the current process as a partnership with the town and will be working closely with us. They have stated that we would get a 40% reimbursement rate for the feasibility study, which is the next step for us in the process. We will also need to hire an onsite program manager. Going forward the reimbursement rate would also be about 40% depending on incentive points we might get for maintenance and for green buildings. They indicated that they would accept our master plan with the probable addition of schematic drawings as part of the feasibility study.

In the next 3 months the MSBA would like Carlisle to sign a feasibility study agreement. The feasibility study would then take place over the following 6 months. We will also need to supply them with an enrollment report, which they will verify. We will also expand the membership of the School Building Committee.

Ms. Doyle asked at the meeting about the boiler work that was done last winter, and the MSBA stated that they would like to get the information about it and that there might be reimbursement available. Ms. Zimmerman has prepared a packet for them.

Ms. Zimmerman stated that she has the strong sense that the MSBA wants any new building to last for many years and that any repairs and upgrades needed over the next several years should be bundled into the current building project. They would not want us to come back to them in a few years with additional requests.

Mr. Fitzgerald asked if the team has inquired about the wastewater treatment facility payment issues at the meeting. Ms. Doyle responded that Larry Barton had followed up with the MSBA previously on this and it was not addressed at the meeting.

Ms. Burkel stated that the group did a great job at the meeting and that she is optimistic about the project going forward. She thanked the Building Committee for all the work they've done for several years with little recognition.

C. **Science curriculum presentation.** Mimi Chandler, Science Curriculum Coordinator reviewed the school's science program through a Power Point presentation. She first discussed the science curriculum, including the strands addressed. She stated that the most important thing is to teach students how to approach science. Then she summarized the following new and/or notable science topics including:

- Kindergarten rainforest presentation
- First grade science rotations and whale nonfiction writing
- Second grade science rotations with units on simple machines and wind
- Third grade "science switch" studying building conservation communities program and salmon eggs
- Fourth grade science Wednesday rotations
- Fifth grade has dedicated science teachers and updated Science Court software
- Sixth grade is using active boards and Wendy Stack and Brad Cranston have been accepted into the DesignLab program at UMass Lowell.

Ms. Chandler noted with gratitude that the CSA provided new software and microscopes for science classes. She reported that Alan Ticotsky and Rob Quaden would be presenting at the National Science Teachers' Association Conference in Boston.

She summarized the various STEP after school programs now in session and those planned for the spring. She then addressed the following initiatives going forward:

- Vertical articulation
- Summer STEP classes
- Aligning the science curriculum with Concord
- No child left inside initiative
- Expansion of building conservation communities program

Ms. Chandler showed a series of slides of children studying science. She distributed magnifying glasses to committee members and asked them to look closely at the world around them.

Ms. Burkel asked Ms. Chandler what she likes about being science coordinator. She responded that she loves science and has enjoyed getting out of Kindergarten into other classes. Ms. Doyle added that Ms. Chandler has been an excellent

science coordinator. Ms. Hurley said that Ms. Chandler has brought ideas and enthusiasm to all the different grade level teams and has done an amazing job.

- D. **Budget.** Ms. Burkel summarized events that have taken place since the last meeting. She commended Ms. Doyle on her presentation to the Finance Committee and reviewed comments made at the meeting. She stated that some of the items on the tiered cut list were cut due to declining enrollment and asked if these might be removed from the budget. Ms. Doyle stated that the kindergarten teacher and the special education teacher would be in this category and that those items are in tier 3.

Ms. Burkel asked if the Administrative team would want to re-prioritize the curriculum coordinators. Ms. Doyle stated that it is very important to keep the aide positions to cover the copy room, recess, and lunch. She agreed that the coordinator stipends are very important as well and that some might be moved forward in priority on a rotating basis.

Ms. Burkel asked for clarification regarding enrollment numbers. Ms. Doyle stated that she and Ms. Zimmerman had met with Mr. Ballantine to discuss enrollment projections and that there are slow growth and accelerated growth numbers. Some of the numbers discussed at previous meetings referred to class size and did not include out of district placements and pre-kindergarten. After further discussion, it was agreed that the enrollment number to be used for next fall would be 733 students, which is the non-accelerated growth number. This includes pre-kindergarten and out of district students.

Mr. Fitzgerald summarized that after removing the Kindergarten and special education teachers, the budget is \$481,611 above the level funded budget. To restore tiers 1, 2 and 3 would cost \$415,561.

Ms. Doyle asked to move three stipends (\$9,246) into tier 2, leaving the rest in tier 4. This would change the above total for tiers 1, 2, and 3 to \$424,807.

Ms. Burkel asked about the status of building use fees. David Flannery is in the process of reviewing current fees and comparing Carlisle fees with those of other communities. He will be bringing forward changes to the policy to a School Committee meeting in March. Discussion followed regarding the viability of charging local groups for the use of the buildings and how this would affect the community.

David Erickson of Fisk Street stated that he would support higher fees to use facilities. Mr. Koski stated that it's important for the public to be able to use the school to build community support for a new school building.

Nancy Cowan of Russell Street asked if analysis had been done regarding the number of administrators and school psychologists. Ms. Burkel stated that this discussion had been ongoing.

Bill Fink asked for clarification regarding the reduction of the kindergarten and special education teachers.

## **Action Items**

### A. Vote 2009 Budget.

**Mr. Fitzgerald made a motion to approve a level service budget of \$9,298, 295 for presentation to the Finance Committee and Board of Selectmen and further that the committee recommend that in the event we are required to present a level funded budget that we follow the tiered cut list proposed totaling \$481,611. Mr. Koski seconded the motion.**

Ms Burkel reviewed the reasoning behind maintaining small class sizes and the necessity of keeping three psychologists/guidance counselors and two principals.

**All members present voted in favor of the motion.**

Thornton Ash from the Finance Committee stated that the Finance Committee would be surprised at the amount of the budget voted by the committee. He stated that the FinCom was hopeful that there would be another, smaller number brought forward by the School Committee. He also stated that it is highly unlikely that the FinCom would support using free cash to subsidize an operating budget. Mr. Fitzgerald stated that this would have serious implications for the high school budget.

Mr. Fitzgerald stated that several smaller numbers have been provided through the tiered cuts, and that FinCom can respond to the tiers. Further discussion followed regarding the budget process, override potential, and availability of free cash.

Ms. Burkel asked for information about the long-term capital requirements budgeting. Mr. Ash discussed the technology replacement and upgrade process and stated that the LTCRC would recommend \$70,000 for technology for next year. There was also discussion about upkeep of additional equipment and its affect on the operating budget.

## **Citizen Comments**

Alex Krapf of Ice Pond Road had a number of comments about the budget. He reiterated concerns made at previous meetings about the technology budget and the replacement cycle. He stated that he is unhappy with the prioritization of items in the budget. He would like to see the elementary world language program as a separate override item. He stated that no one has been talking about the major budget drivers, particularly the cost of special education. In his view it is a very expensive model with costs similar to other towns but many fewer students involved. He also stated that he

thinks we are well below NesDec projections for growth and that he expects the school size to be below 700 within a couple of years.

## **Adjournment**

There was no additional business, and **Mr. Fitzgerald made a motion to adjourn the meeting and enter executive session to discuss a contract issue. The meeting would not return to open session. Mr. Koski seconded the motion, and all members present voted in favor as follows: Mr. Fitzgerald, yes; Ms. Burkel, yes; Mr. Koski, yes.**

The public meeting was adjourned at 9:35 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Claire M. Wilcox  
Assistant to the Superintendent