

**Carlisle School Committee**  
Minutes  
February 1, 2006  
Ruth C. Wilkins Library, Robbins Building  
7:00 PM

Present – School Committee: David Dockterman, Chair; Nicole Burkel, Vice-Chair; Christy Barbee; Wendell Sykes; Michael Fitzgerald.

Present – School Administration: Marie Doyle, Superintendent; Steven Moore, Business Manager; Stephen Goodwin, Principal; Michael Giurlando, Assistant Principal; Linda Stapp, Director of Student Support Services.

**David Dockterman called the meeting to order at 7:08 pm.** He welcomed the large crowd present at the meeting. He reviewed the information in the School Committee brochure regarding school committee meetings. He stated that he intended to carefully control the meeting and reviewed in particular the rules for public participation. Mr. Dockterman then asked the approval of committee members to change the order of the agenda to discuss first the administrative changes at the school, followed by the Highland Building discussion.

## **Discussion Items**

### **Administrative Changes**

Mr. Dockterman read a statement regarding the changes, in which he thanked both Stephen Goodwin and Michael Giurlando for their tenure and offered them his good wishes. He noted that change is always part of any organization.

Mr. Goodwin then read a statement recognizing and thanking the people he has worked with during his 5 years in Carlisle. He particularly thanked Jane White and Beverly Woolard for their consistent help and support. He discussed his new position, noting the many reasons why the new position attracted him. He stated that he would have 5 other principals to work with, his own building, a shorter commute, and fewer nights out at meetings. He thanked the faculty and noted that the state of the Carlisle Public Schools is strong because of the faculty, the administrative team, the parents, and the children. We will always have challenges but we will meet them and solve problems together. He thanked Marie Doyle for the past two years of working together and stated that he had learned a great deal from her.

Mr. Giurlando read a statement thanking teachers, staff, administrative team, children and parents. He is leaving the Carlisle School because he would like to return to New Jersey where his family is located and is looking for a position there.

Mr. Dockterman then introduced Deborah Butts who read a statement from the Carlisle Teachers' Association. She stated that the teachers will miss both principals and wished them the best as they move on to new positions. She pledged to work closely

with the School Committee and with the Administration to determine the best structure and leadership for the school.

Mr. Dockterman thanked Ms. Butts, Mr. Goodwin, and Mr. Giurlando, and asked Marie Doyle to comment on the changes.

Ms. Doyle first thanked everyone for attending the meeting. She discussed the bittersweet nature of the changes, in that the school is losing a beloved principal, while at the same time having the opportunity to move forward. She stressed her appreciation for the countless contributions Mr. Goodwin has made in all areas of the school. She wished both Mr. Goodwin and Mr. Giurlando well in their future endeavors. She pledged to work closely with the teachers and with the parent community during the transition. She is confident we can find excellent leadership to meet the expectations of our school.

Mr. Dockterman then opened the floor to comments from the public.

Alex Krapf asked whether we expect to have additional turnover among the teachers and he also asked what the process of selecting a new principal would be. Mr. Dockterman stated that no teachers have left other than the two principals. He encouraged anyone who has questions about the running of the school to talk with Ms. Doyle. Ms. Doyle has stated that a team will be set up to select a new principal, made up of teachers and other school constituencies.

Jim Harris stated that he is perplexed as to why we are losing both our principals at this time of the year. He asked that the School committee do everything possible to keep our teachers, who are most integral to the success of our school. Mr. Dockterman noted that this is the time of year when changes begin to occur in the educational community. He also noted that anyone interested in tracking the progress of the school is invited to attend School Committee meetings. He stated that our teaching staff is excellent and we appreciate them, and that the School Committee is highly appreciative of their work.

Diane McGrory asked that Ms. Doyle answer some of the questions, particularly about the structure and the process of selecting a new principal. Ms. Doyle responded that discussions have begun about the best structure for the administration of the school, and she reviewed some of the discussions that have taken place. She pledged to have open forums and community input.

Nancy DiRomauldo asked if we've had any response to the ad in the Globe last Sunday. Claire Wilcox, Assistant to the Superintendent responded that we have received 4 or 5 responses.

Colleen Walsh asked why Mr. Goodwin is leaving, as he is an excellent role model for the children in the school. Mr. Goodwin stated that he would let his statement speak for itself, as he had addressed the reasons through that forum.

Lori Goldberg asked about the makeup of the selection committee and how many members would be on it. Ms. Doyle responded that she would like to have a wide variety of people and that in order to have an effective process, the maximum number of members would be about 12 people.

Alex Krapf asked if the process would be open in the sense that interviews would be conducted in an open session at a school committee meeting. Ms. Doyle assured him that it would be an open process and would include a school committee interview. He also said that he has heard that morale has fallen and asked what will be done about this. Ms. Doyle stated that she is aware of this and encourages everyone to be open and talk with her. She is committed to being more visible in the classrooms, and is hoping to have open dialogues with teachers. She noted that she is still learning the culture of the school, which sometimes leads to miscommunication.

Scott Brazina asked the School Committee if they are aware of a new direction for the school. He moved to Carlisle because of the school, and he feels that now there is a potential for a major change in the school's direction. Mr. Dockterman responded that system goals are set each year and there is also an open budget process. The commitment to high quality education is the same as it always has been. Anything new being implemented has been discussed at School Committee meetings. Ms. Doyle reiterated that the school is excellent and that although change is occurring, the school will continue to be outstanding. The faculty gives 1000% and no drastic changes are planned. We have goals and are working together to meet them.

Wendell Sykes noted that he works in the technology industry and is conscious of the trend toward globalization. He stressed that we need to prepare all of Carlisle's children for this new world. It's a challenge we need to meet, and he feels that Ms. Doyle is bringing this new approach to Carlisle. Ms. Doyle responded that what drew her to Carlisle was the excellent staff.

Marty Blue asked what help the School Committee and Ms. Doyle need from other members of the community to move forward. Ms. Doyle asked that staff come and speak openly with her about their concerns and that the community continue to support the school. Mr. Dockterman noted that the large turnout of the meeting shows how dedicated parents are to an excellent education.

Annie Hill asked how the students would be involved in discussions about the administrative changes. Mr. Goodwin stated that he has met with the School guidance people to determine the best way to inform the students. Mr. Dockterman reminded everyone that the changes would not occur until after the current academic year, thus lessening their impact on students.

Fred Halstrom asked how many other towns are competing for principals at this time. Ms. Doyle stated that there are a number of openings, but she is confident that our system will attract excellent candidates.

Roxanne Brazina asked what the plan is for the school and noted that most of the publicity this year has been around world language. She wondered what was being done in the areas of math, language, and science. Ms. Doyle stated that nothing is more important than literacy in the curriculum. She also stated that focus groups have been meeting to discuss the math curriculum, and that science and technology offerings have been expanded through after-school programs.

In concluding the discussion, Ms. Burkel stated that the public is always welcome at School Committee meetings and noted that the minutes are posted on the school website. She encouraged people to stay involved with what the committee is doing.

### **Highland Discussion**

Christy Barbee of the School Building Committee began the discussion by referring to a letter from the architects regarding the Highland Building, and the problems that would be involved to convert it to school use. The School Building Committee has asked that the School Committee affirm that the building is not suitable for school use, as they had voted at a previous meeting. Mr. Dockterman noted that this is a narrow question, that of whether the Highland Building is useful for education, not whether it should be torn down or put to some other use. He stated that the School Building Committee is looking at consolidating the campus, and there are issues of security regarding Highland. Ms. Barbee stated that it would be very expensive to renovate the building for educational purposes, and it still would not be ideal space. Mr. Fitzgerald added that the state would not reimburse the town for renovation of a wooden building. Mr. Sykes stated that he has heard that the town might want to use the building for another purpose, and that the school will want to know this for planning purposes. Following these comments from committee members, Mr. Dockterman opened the meeting to public input.

Kevin Sweet asked in what way declaring the building as not useful for education would help the master planning process. Mr. Dockterman stated that this would pass the issue to the Selectmen, and let the architects focus on other plans for the school. Ms. Barbee added that this declaration would allow the architects to move on to consider other options, not including Highland. Mr. Fitzgerald stated that the School Committee recognizes the value of the building to the town from an architectural perspective and also because of the artists who use the building.

Tim Hult, Carlisle Selectman, noted that whatever use the town might make of the building, it would have to be brought up to public standards. This will be expensive, and there are other high priority major capital projects facing the town.

Scott Brazina asked whether there was a deadline by which the Selectmen would have to determine the fate of the building in order for the master planning process to go forward. Ms. Barbee stated that planning can go forward without the Selectmen's decision, and that the current preferred plan puts the building on the other side of the campus.

Larry Sorli, chairman of the historical commission, noted that there are two other historic buildings on campus, including the Brick Building and Spalding. Ms. Barbee stated that the Brick Building has been better maintained than Highland and is currently used as an art classroom. Spalding has a number of problems and would likely not be part of any new building plan. Mr. Sorli went on to make a case for the importance of keeping historic buildings and noted a concern that the Highland Building has not been well maintained over the years. Mr. Sykes stated that the school should not be expected to subsidize the maintenance of historic buildings that had no educational purpose. Mr. Sorli questioned whether serious consideration was ever given to using the building for offices. Ms. Barbee responded that it had been considered and would still be a very expensive project.

Peter Stuart stated that there are major issues around Highland. If the school doesn't want the building, he stated that he thinks it will ultimately be torn down. He noted that the SBC seems to be moving toward a consolidated single building, and he is not sure this is the best approach.

Robert Hilton remarked that often in New England we want to keep buildings even if they're not the best. If the Highland and Brick Schools were located on a college campus they would be treasured as the heart of the campus. He would like to see the School Committee take a wider view of the importance of this building to the town, not just focusing on the needs of the children of Carlisle.

Mr. Dockterman restated that the School Committee was only being asked to declare the building as not suitable for education so that the master planning process could go forward. He asked what the process would be if the selectmen determined another use that the School Committee didn't agree with.

Lynne Stuart commented that she was retired from a school that had converted an older building for school use. She urged the committee to look into functions other than classrooms for the Highland building before declaring it unsuitable for school purposes.

Wendy Davis asked if there might be grants available to restore buildings like the Highland. Mr. Sorli noted that the Mass Historical Commission doesn't have funds. He also restated his opinion that the SBC is getting bad advice from the architects regarding the cost of bringing the building up to code.

Debbie Bentley stated that she is an architect and has children in the school, and she feels that the building is beautiful but that the school has other more pressing needs for space and new buildings.

Kevin Bergquist asked whether the architects had considered other uses for the building other than classrooms. Ms. Barbee again stated that they had.

Mr. Dockterman called for an end to the discussion, and **Mr. Sykes made a motion that the SC affirm the decision of the SBC that the architects should leave the**

**Highland Building out of further consideration for the school master planning process. Ms. Burkel seconded the motion.** Mr. Fitzgerald stated that it would be important to continue the dialogue of what exactly to do with the Highland Building. Ms. Burkel stated that the narrow focus of the question was to be whether the building would be useful for education. **A vote was taken, and all members voted in favor of the motion.**

### **World Language Presentation**

Andrea Steffek, who is the world language curriculum coordinator, began the presentation. She noted that she would be briefly discussing what is new this year in world language. As of January 2006, Spanish is being offered in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade. Thanks to a grant from the CEF, Rosetta Stone language software has been purchased and is currently being installed. The 8<sup>th</sup> grade language program is using the Kurzweil system to learn language.

Nicole Baker, French teacher, noted that all the language teachers work closely together. They share an office, but because there are not dedicated classrooms, she moves to other rooms. She stated that she is excited about 5<sup>th</sup> grade language program, and also that Spanish will be offered next year in the elementary school.

Chiao Bin Huang next discussed the new Chinese program she is teaching for the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grades. She stated that Chinese children have become more interested in learning Chinese because of the program at school. She is teaching her students conversation along with some writing of characters. She demonstrated the way Chinese characters have evolved over time. Teaching the language also involves learning about the country including the culture. She was very pleased that non-Chinese students participated in the Chinese New Year celebration and hopes it will become a tradition for the town, as it is unique. Mary Storrs asked if Chinese is taught at the high school. Ginny Lamere stated that Concord is looking into offering Chinese in their middle schools in addition to the current program at the High School. Ms. Burkel stated that Ms. Huang's performance was wonderful, as were the student performances at the Chinese. Ms. Huang then demonstrated the ribbon used in the dance.

Ms. Baker told the committee that international week will be the first week in June, and she invited everyone to attend. Nancy Diromauldo stated that the CSA, through cultural enrichment, would be sponsoring a program called "Glimpses of India" on Saturday, March 5<sup>th</sup> at the school.

Andrea Seddon, who is a Spanish teacher new to the Carlisle School, spoke next. She described the 5<sup>th</sup> grade language program. She will be teaching 10 weeks of Spanish, and this will be followed by introductions to Chinese and to French. The classes meet once a week for 45 minutes.

### **World Language Task Force**

Mr. Goodwin reported on the work of the task force. He referred to a report previously distributed to the School Committee, which summarized the work of the task force. The

basics of the report were that Spanish would be taught to Kindergarten through grade 4. In grades 5 - 8, students will be able to choose Spanish, French, or Chinese. This program will begin next year with the help of a grant from the Carlisle Education Foundation. He reviewed the goals of the language program, which tie directly to the School Improvement Plan and the work of the School Council. He also reviewed the process by which the task force reached their conclusions.

Mr. Sykes asked whether we are taking full advantage of the ability of very young children to learn language. Ms. Seddon answered that it's important to teach language as early as possible.

Mr. Fitzgerald asked how the time will be structured for this program, and how students will select the language. Mr. Goodwin stated that this is still being worked out and that different models are being considered. Mr. Fitzgerald also questioned whether 4<sup>th</sup> graders would have enough experience to be able to choose a language. Ms. Doyle responded that parents would play a large role in the selection process. Ms. Burkel and Mr. Dockterman noted that the language program for the elementary school has been a goal for many years, and that it's very good to see it finally being implemented. Ms. Burkel thanked the administration for working closely with the elementary teachers to make this happen.

Kevin Bergquist asked how the high school program fits with the Carlisle Middle School program. Ms. Seddon explained that there are different levels of each language at the high school.

Don Rober asked why students would choose any other language besides Spanish when they get to 5<sup>th</sup> grade. Ms. Seddon noted that some students would decide on another language for a variety of reasons. He also asked how students new to the school in a later grade would be integrated into the language program. Ms. Baker noted that this happens now and the teachers handle it very well.

Alex Krapf asked what adjustments would be made in the curriculum in order to add language. Ms. Doyle stated that these discussions are still occurring.

### **Middle School Task Force**

Mr. Goodwin reported on the work of the task force, which has been meeting to develop staffing models for next year's 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade students. They have recommended two teams for grade 6: a 2-person team and a 3-person team. This will keep class sizes at 21. Grade 7 will have one 5-member team to maintain class size at 21. Four team members would teach a single subject, and one team member would teach all four subjects once per day. The plans for the two grades would not change the staffing in either the elementary or the middle school. He noted that there is still much planning and preparation to do, so the work of the task force will continue.

Mr. Dockterman asked how the two teams have worked this year with the 6<sup>th</sup> grade. Mr. Goodwin stated that feedback he has received from parents, students, and teachers

has been positive. Mr. Dockterman asked how one teacher would be able to cover all four subjects. Mr. Goodwin stated that the team, with direction from the administration, developed the plan, and he is very confident that this will work very well. Mr. Fitzgerald expressed a concern about the fact that the model will be changing for the second year in a row for the current 6<sup>th</sup> grade.

Kris Tocci asked for clarification of the model. She asked how it would be possible for one teacher to have the expertise to cover all four subjects. Mr. Goodwin responded that the particular teacher who is interested in doing this is outstanding in all ways and can make this a success.

Lisa Harris said that her understanding is that teachers have to be certified to teach middle school subjects. Ms. Doyle and Mr. Goodwin stated that the teacher is fully certified in all areas.

## **Review of minutes**

**Nicole Burkel made a motion to approve the minutes of the meeting of January 18, 2006. Wendell Sykes seconded the motion.** Mr. Sykes suggested two corrections, which will be incorporated. **All members present voted in favor of approving the minutes as corrected.**

## **Communications/Correspondence**

- A. Mr. Dockterman read a note from Margaret Heigl representing the Physical Education and Health Departments. The note thanked School Committee members for their support and for allowing them to present their curriculum to at the previous meeting.
- B. The schedule for this year's warrant was received from the town administrator. The warrant closes on March 7, 2006, and town meeting will be on May 1, 2006.

## **Superintendent's Report**

- A. **Chinese New Year.** The event was spectacular. Parents, teachers, and others worked very hard to make it a success, and over 400 people attended.
- B. **The Mitten Play.** The Kindergartners are currently presenting the Mitten Play.
- C. **Middle School and World Language Task Forces.** Ms. Doyle thanked everyone who had worked on the Middle School and World Language Task Forces.
- D. **Chapter 70 Funding.** Ms. Doyle had attended a meeting regarding the change in funding for Chapter 70. Mr. Fitzgerald stated that the Acton Proposal is reasonable, and encouraged everyone to contact state lawmakers asking them to support this. The proposal will be introduced in the legislature next Tuesday.

- E. **5<sup>th</sup> Grade Assembly.** Ms. Doyle reported that the most recent community meeting was done by Ms. Butts' 5<sup>th</sup> grade class, and was a great success.
- F. **Science and Technology Clubs.** The after school clubs are in full swing, and Ms. Doyle thanked Mr. Giurlando and Mrs. Lamere for their hard work in organizing them.
- G. **Middle School Dance.** The Snowflake Ball was recently held and many middle school students attended.

## **Members'/Committee Reports**

Mr. Fitzgerald and Ms. Burkel reported on the Regional School Committee. At a recent meeting, the Guidance Department did a presentation on new software the school is using help track and automate the college application process. Mr. Fitzgerald noted that State Senator Susan Fargo had attended the last meeting to discuss potential Chapter 70 funding for next year. Ms. Burkel also informed the committee that several windows had been broken at the high school. The Administration is trying to identify the students responsible for the vandalism.

Mr. Sykes noted that he has been unable to attend the Cell Tower Committee because of conflicts with School Committee meetings.

## **Continuation of Discussion Items**

### **FY07 Budget Discussion**

Mr. Moore noted that in order to meet the deadline for the FinCom meeting on March 6<sup>th</sup> to discuss the budget, it would be necessary to vote the budget at the next meeting.

He distributed a worksheet showing the current status of the budget. Without any new initiatives or salary adjustments, we are about \$21,000 below the town's budget guideline. He discussed the prioritization of the new initiatives, which had been done by the Administrative Team. He discussed each initiative, prioritized as follows:

1. Technology Aide
2. Tutors (language)
3. DARE
4. Activity Coordinator

Mr. Moore asked the members of the committee where they stand on the new initiatives, if funding is available. Discussion followed regarding the DARE program and the possibility of including it in the Wellness program. Dr. Linda Stapp stated that this is a long-term goal, but including it in the program would not necessarily reduce costs.

## **Citizens' Comments**

Mary Storrs asked if School Committee minutes could remain on the school website for the year, rather than being overwritten by each new set of minutes. Ms. Wilcox said she would talk to the school's webmaster about this.

## **Adjournment**

There was no additional business, and **Ms. Burkel made a motion to adjourn to Executive Session for the purpose of discussing negotiations. The meeting would not return to a public session. Mr. Sykes seconded the motion, and members voted as follows: Ms. Barbee, yes; Mr. Sykes, yes; Mr. Fitzgerald, yes; Ms. Burkel, yes; Mr. Dockterman, yes.**

The public meeting was adjourned at 11:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Claire M. Wilcox  
Assistant to the Superintendent