

APPROVED

**CABOT SCHOOL BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
Monday, October 16, 2017**

PRESENT: Board Members: Chris Tormey, Jackie Folsom, Sharon O'Connor, Lisa Olson, Rory Thibault. Administration: Dave Schilling, Principal; Mark Tucker, Superintendent; Student Reps: Taylor Abbott, Cameron Muller Harder.

Call to Order: Chris Tormey, Chair 6:00pm

Public Comment

None

Consent Agenda

- a. Approve October 2, 2017 Minutes – Approved as written

Board Discussion

- a. Danville Interest
 - Chris heard from Danville Board Chair who reported that Blue Mountain has expressed a strong interest in merging (as opposed to collaborating) with Danville. This news has slowed Danville's discussion regarding collaborating with Cabot.
- b. Review results of Act 46 Survey
 - 284 responses (out of 600 mailed) – 129 Option 1 (Caledonia Cooperative and HS Choice); 155 Option 2 (Maintain Cabot as PK-12)
 - Lots of comments on both sides, most were helpful. Some indication that a few folks still do not understand the charge to the Board.
 - Some criticism of some of the data – too little, or not accurate.
 - Some of the comments indicate a misunderstanding about ongoing facility challenges.
 - Members spent some time reviewing comments from the surveys that arrived on Monday. Comments from an earlier review had already been consolidated last Friday.

Board Action: Act on Act 46 Directions:

Discussion

- L.O. - keep the HS open now, because once you close it, it would be difficult to reopen. You can always close it later if that's what the community wants.
- R.T. - Did Caledonia Cooperative understand the effect of the error in the projected costs. That doesn't necessarily mean that Option #2 is best. Cost is a factor; local control is valued. Best way to control costs is to keep control with a local Board. The Town is able to rise to the challenge. Option 32 is best.
- J.F. – Thanked the community for their work. 50/50 split on the community feedback continues to be a challenge. Tonight is not a vote about the Cabot Academy. Option #1: Still no guarantee

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that they can keep their elementary school. Capital costs are a challenge when partnering with three towns that have no debt. The projections that were the basis of the successful Cal Coop proposal, and now that the savings are less, is Cabot at risk? The \$.08 incentive will be eaten up by tax increases anyway. Transportation for families in a Choice scenario will lead to inequities. Option #2: Immediate \$.20 tax increase. Will our AGS be accepted? Will the Town step up and help – a great school is made by a great town, Majority of the Town supported the Board in June. Keep the HS.

- S.O. – Agreed with other comments. Feels that Act 46 has hurt our kids overall. Feels that this issue has energized the Town. If we try to maintain the HS and it works – great. If we go Choice, not the end of the world, but overall thinks the HS should stay open. Town can always revisit the Choice Town option in the future, but could not go the other way.
- C.T. – Have to deal with the unhappy half of the Town, no matter which way we go. Challenged by a “Lean HS” but if we go with Option #2 we are saying we will pay to make the school better, but not pay to send them to another school that is already good. Lots of energy and potential to be successful. Keep the HS. But let’s not fool ourselves – this will be hard.

Action

- Chris moved for the Board to support Option #2. Seconded by Jackie. Approved unanimously. The Cabot Board has voted to support an Alternative Governance Structure proposal to keep Cabot as PK-12 school with its own Board.
- Chris noted that there is a lot of “heavy lifting” to be done as a result of this vote. Need to convince the community to get behind this decision. Have to rebuild the HS faculty. Need to attract more students.
- Board may not know for several months after submission of their plan whether the plan will be approved. Board will have the benefit of feedback from the Agency of Education before the State Board decides. The arguments presented in the plan will be strengthened by a positive vote on the school budget in March.
- Chris opened the floor again to a number of “what-if” questions from the public in attendance.

Executive Session

- Chris made a motion to go into Executive Session to discuss Labor Relations Agreements, where the premature release of details of the discussion would adversely affect the Board in its negotiations. Jackie seconded. The Board went into Executive Session at 7:17pm.
- The Board came out of Executive Session at 8:18pm. No action was taken.

Adjournment:

- The meeting adjourned at 8:20.

Respectfully Submitted

Mark Tucker, Minute Taker