

APPROVED

CABOT SCHOOL BOARD SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES
Monday, November 13, 2017
Cabot School Library

SPECIAL MEETING

Present: Chris Tormey, Sharon O'Connor, Lisa Olson, Jackie Folsom, and Rory Thibault **Administration:** Mark Tucker, Dave Schilling

Call to order: Chris Tormey called the meeting to order at 6:05pm

Consent Agenda: Approve November 6, 2017 Minutes

Jackie moved to approve as written, Chris seconded. Approved as written.

Chris asked to add an agenda item related to a resident request to do an open house for the purpose of attracting new students. Item added.

Public Comment

None

Board Discussion: Discuss "Advantage Cabot" (AC) proposal

- Karen Larsen presented on Advantage Cabot. A copy of her slide set was shared with the Board and attendees.
 - Concept: A boarding program for out-of-State students who would attend Cabot HS. Students will be housed with local families.
 - Goals: Aim is to stabilize and grow Cabot HS. New opportunities, strengthen the community, improve the chances of the AGS proposal being accepted by the State Board. This would be a program to benefit ALL Cabot students. Bring significant financial resources into the community without an investment of tax dollars by the community
 - Staffing (for this group – not added to school budget): Director, Marketing Coordinator, Board of Directors (Advantage Cabot is a 501c3 organization) with a blend of local and regional members
 - Collaboration with School Board and Administration: Regular communications with Board, school Principal. Collaborative marketing opportunities to 'grow' Cabot School.
 - Scaling up: Web Presence; Vermont 501c3 status (done); Federal EIN (done); Federal Tax exemption status (pending); Build AC Board; Ballot initiative in March 2018; If approved, hire a Director in March 2018; Enroll 2 pilot students Sep 2018; enroll 4 additional students Sept 2019.
 - Financing: Scaled request from CCIF (formerly UDAG) – petition and ballot initiative with multi-year benchmarks; Pursuit of complementary financing from Foundations, Private Philanthropy, and Federal Funding.
 - Some discussion ensued about different money amounts requested before and now. Response was that the numbers are evolving, and downward. Emphasis that whatever AC does is not intended to negatively impact school budget.
 - Jackie stated that there are limits embedded in rules about how much can be distributed from UDAG funds that the community adopted in 1992.
 - Current UDAG plan may restrict use of money to capital expenditures and not for salaries, etc.
 - Tuition breakdown: \$45,500 annual per student
 - \$17,000 tuition to school
 - \$12,000 to enrichment programs for all students in school
 - \$9,000 to screened/selected host families

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- \$7500 for AC administrative and operating costs
- Request of the School Board: Inclusion of AC concept into the AGS proposal; Support of complimentary innovation to continue to improve Cabot School
- Questions:
 - Is AC prepared to move ahead regardless of the status of the AGS proposal at the State Board? Yes.
 - Why is the target number of students lower than earlier projections? The numbers (2 next year, and 4 in 2019) reflect minimum numbers to make a go of this proposal – will take more students if available.
 - Does AC presume that their initial funding will be a mix of CCIF and other funds, or just CCIF money? A mix is likely, but exact sources are not determined. Expect that most third parties will expect CCIF to be contributing in order to put up their money.
- Jackie reported a misconception coming from some community members that they can support the AC proposal and get a “free high school” without also supporting the school budget that will be presented in March at the same time.
- There was an extensive discussion about the challenges the Board is facing in presenting a budget that will build the kind of high school structure that the AC folks would be able to market. There is consensus that the current offerings in the high school are not adequate to attract outside students as AC has envisioned.
- Chris proposed that the Board is not quite ready to act on this proposal at this time. Board will not see an initial budget for FY19 until next week, and need to do that to have a comfort level with their ability to support this. Chris suggested that first meeting in December is a good time to come back together with the AC group.
- Rory is concerned with the completion of the AGS proposal in late December, especially if AC is to be included in the AGS proposal.

Board Action: Act on Advantage Cabot Proposal

Motion from Rory: “Be it resolved that the Cabot School Board supports the concept of Advantage Cabot and their effort to develop an independent educational enrichment and boarding program, subject to full endorsement upon presentation of their financial plan to the Board.” Seconded by Lisa. Motion is passed 4-1.

Additional Agenda Item

Suggestion by Lily Talbert to form a small group to start a marketing effort to attract students in the area who have Choice and could enroll at Cabot. Concept and timing discussed. Idea is to bring the students to Cabot as opposed to going out to sending schools to market. Will aim for a concert event before Christmas break.

Future Agenda Items:

- Initial budget presentation
- Review AGS proposal

Adjournment: 8:20PM

Future Meetings:

1. **W NESU Board Meeting:**
November 16, 2017, 6:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m., Twinfield Union School Library
2. **Cabot Board Meeting:**
November 20, 2017 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m., Chris Tormey’s home