

Cabot/Danville/Twinfield Act 46 Study Committee (706)
Monday, April 24, 2017
Cabot School Library

Present: Chris Tormey, Ry Hoffman, Robert Edgar, Bruce Melendy, Lauren Cleary, David Towle, Ginni Lavelly, Chandra Miller, Sarah Watkins, Ian Covey, Scott Harris
Administrators: Nancy Thomas, Superintendent WNESU; **Consultant:** Peter Clarke.
Absent: Tim Sanborn, Mat Forest, Superintendent, CCSU

Call to Order: Chris Tormey, Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:35pm.

Public Comment

A Cabot resident expressed concern about the possibility of Cabot School closing. She asked to understand what this merger proposal does to protect the school.

Discussion: Peter explained that the law does not allow for closure of school in the first 4 years. It is in article 13 and would require an affirmative vote of $\frac{3}{4}$ of the New Unified Union Board of Directors. "Prior to holding a vote on whether to close a school, the Board shall hold at least three public hearings regarding the proposed school closure. At least one of the public hearings shall be held in the community in which the school is located. If after conducting public hearings, the Board of Directors intends to vote on whether to close a school, it shall give public notice of its intent to hold a vote on whether to close a school, stating the reason for the closure, at least ten days prior to the vote. The closure shall be effective only if approved by each of the member towns voting at a special vote warned for this purpose. The votes shall be counted and reported by town, voting by Australian ballot.

Chris asked for a vote confirming the new language. The Committee unanimously voted in favor.

Public Comment: A Cabot resident applauded the work of this group. He feels that this is an opening, not a closing. It is an opportunity for students and tax payers. He hopes that this results in all 4 towns considering all their children as one.

Public Comment: A Cabot resident asked about the power of the new Board to restructure the schools. Postponed to later in the meeting.

Consent Agenda:

Approve April 18, 2017 Minutes, - Bruce moved to approve the minutes of April 18, 2017 as written. Chandra seconded the motion. Minutes of April 18, 2017 approved as written. Scott abstained as he was absent at the meeting.

Discussion: Peter asked the Board to review the Executive Summary that he wrote from the comments submitted by some of the Committee members. The Committee

reviewed and responded with corrections and suggested changes to the draft. The Committee approved the executive summary.

Peter discussed the challenges of not knowing what the final language will be in S-122 which, if passed, would give some flexibility regarding district numbers Regional Education District and timelines. The Committee discussed whether the merger should continue if there are no incentives that if the Barnet/Walden /Waterford merger proposal is not voted affirmatively. The Committee agreed that this merger **is** dependent on receiving incentives. There is also an issue of whether or not this merger could qualify as a phase 3 merger, given the numbers of students in the combined district. Peter is exploring that with the AOE.

Peter reviewed the next sections. He reviewed the revised section regarding the process of narrowing the options from 14 to one. The Committee continued the review of the report, making corrections and adjustments where needed. In regard to restructuring, it was agreed that these articles of agreement should not tie the hands of a future board, though it has been made clear that the intention is to maintain grades preK through 8 at each of the schools.

Peter talked about Chris' proposed alternative analysis of the tax savings. Peter has sent the model to Brad James at the AOE. The current model does overestimate in one way, but underestimates savings in another way, still providing general trend lines. Brad would need to approve the use of a different model. If it is approved, Peter will work with Chris to refine the estimates. Peter reminded the Committee that the models are intended to show general trends, but not specific estimates of individual tax savings.

After the review was completed. Bruce moved and Chandra seconded the provisional approval of Draft 7 to be forwarded to the AOE and school board to begin their review of the proposal.

Dave moved and Bruce seconded the motion to allow Peter to make adjustments as suggested by the AOE and legal counsel. Motion approved.

Adjourn: Bruce moved to adjourn. Meeting adjourned at 9:17 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Thomas, note taker