

Cabot School Sustainability Committee

Approved Minutes of April 16, 2025 Meeting

Cabot School Library

In attendance: Eric Nelis, Stef Burt, Johanna Thibault, Theresa Lay-Sleeper, Melissa Pratt, Barry Wyman, Nikki Jiraff and Chris Tormey

Meeting began at 4:45 PM

1. **Draft Minutes** of the committee's April 9th meeting were reviewed and approved.
2. **This afternoon's meeting agenda** was reviewed. After agreeing to move discussion of a potential "town meeting" to the beginning of the discussion section and to postpone until a later meeting discussion of the other discussion items on the draft agenda, the agenda was unanimously approved.
3. **Discussion:**
 - a. Potential "town hall" meeting in Cabot in the near future to provide information about and an opportunity to discuss the Education Transformation legislation currently being considered by legislators in Montpelier.

Participants discussed how the planned April 30 town meeting should be structured and advertised. A good deal of discussion also centered on the goals of the April 30 event and how the meeting should be run to achieve those goals.

General consensus was reached that the meeting should:

- Inform attendees of the current status of education reform legislation being considered in Montpelier
- Provide attendees with information from authorities in the field on the factors pushing school budgets and property taxes upward, as well as the impacts of school consolidation.

- Provide an opportunity for attendees to discuss their perspectives on two or three general questions:
- 1. What are your hopes and dreams for public education in this part of Vermont?
- 2. What are your concerns about the elements of the education reform legislation currently being considered in Montpelier?
- 3. How can we work together to craft a solution?
- Provide an opportunity for the legislators present to hear from their constituents and to possibly respond to their concerns.

To hopefully meet those goals, participants agreed to the following format for the 2-hour town meeting: (First draft : please review and share your thoughts)

6:00- 6:15 : Informal time for food, looking over and picking up info from presenters, meeting with others at your randomly-assigned table

6:15-6:20: General welcome and meeting overview (Identify who will do this)

6:20-6:50: Information from presenters:

Margaret McLean of the Rural School Community Alliance:

Legislation's current status, impact of school consolidation

Stephanie Yu of Public Assets Institute:

Overview of current school funding and factors impacting increased school budgets and property taxes

Nikil Goyhal, sociologist from _____:

Impact of health care costs on Vermont school budgets

(Allow time for questions/comments after each presentation)

6:50- 7:15: Time for discussion at tables on these three questions:

- What are your hopes/dreams for education here?
 - What concerns do you have about the legislation being considered?
 - How can we work together to craft a solution?
- (Collect answers on chart paper at tables)

7:15- 7:30 Share highlights from each table's discussions with entire meeting
(collect highlights shared up front on paper?: identify who will collect/transcribe these)

7:30- 7:45 Time for input from and questions for legislators attending

7:45-8:00 Extra time as needed, thanks for attending, next steps

Attendees shared results of outreach/planning:

1. Several legislators have expressed interest in attending (Burt, Southworth, Harple, McCann, Watson, Beck,)
2. Margaret McLean from Rural School Community Alliance, Stephanie Yu from Public Assets Institute, and Nikil Goyal (via Zoom) can be there to present
3. We are able to hold the event at the Willey Building (Morris Dancers graciously agreed to practice elsewhere so we could use the 3rd floor space)
4. Johanna met with members of the Cabot Student Council. They are enthusiastic about attending the meeting and sharing their perspectives/concerns, and will reach out to similar groups at Danville and Twinfield to encourage them to attend as well
5. There is projector/screen available if needed at Willey Building
6. Nikki discussed her efforts to craft a digital flier for the meeting: agreed to send her feedback so that she can have a finished version available for dissemination by this coming weekend (4/20)

General conversation on “What can we do to get a large turnout?” for the event.

Ideas:

1. Share through schools to get teachers/staff there (Chris Sheehan of Twinfield is a good contact)
2. Facebook, Front Porch Forum (identify who will do this)
3. Cabot Chronicle: Chris will check if the May edition will appear before 4/30)
4. Share through school newsletters to get parents and students there

5. Post paper fliers widely.
6. Word of mouth: personally call at least 10 good friends to alert them of the meeting
7. Press release to local papers (Cal Rec, Times Argus, etc.): Barry offered to draft a brief one

Brief Discussion of “the Zoom Option”

- Chris will contact Seth O’Brien to facilitate this
- Barry will structure the link on the flier so that people registering for the event will see that a Zoom option to participate is available (ideally most people will attend in person)

Meeting adjourned at 5:50 PM

(Notes by Chris Tormey)

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