

KIMBALL UNION ACADEMY STUDY COMMITTEE

The charge of this committee is “to meet with representatives of the KUA administration and maintain an ongoing review of the relationship between the academy and the town, including any agreement pursuant to RSA 72:23, and to report its findings at next March's annual town meeting.” Over the last few years the committee has held its discussions with the stated goal of “working as a collective community to maximize all of our local resources to enhance opportunities for all and at the same time reduce or control property tax increases.”

Based on our work this year, your committee reports the following:

Local Students: Exclusive of students of KUA faculty, there are currently 32 students from Plainfield attending the academy. This is up from the 31 students that were reported last year, and 24 reported two years ago. A total of 6 seniors will graduate in the coming spring and based on early applications as many as an additional 9 or 10 new students from Plainfield will begin attending the academy in the fall bringing the number of local students for next year to as many as 35.

In the 2007/08 academic year, day student tuition was \$25,500. The property tax funded tuition at Lebanon High, the town's designated high school for Plainfield students, was \$11,043.

Based on the academy's dormitory, dining hall and kitchen assets valued for tax purposes at \$5,143,500, the discretionary exemption granted for 2007 had a value \$132,500. In return, Kimball Union provided to local students \$130,800 in “Plainfield Grant Assistance.” In addition, the school informed the committee that another \$104,000 in financial aid from the school was awarded to local students.

The town and Kimball Union continues to explore the concept of expanding the Putnam Scholarship Fund as another local funding option.

The committee continues to support a need-based distribution of the Plainfield Grant. In 2007 the allocation formula remained 70% based on demonstrated financial need with the other 30% being divided evenly among the non-faculty Plainfield students attending the school. Again this year this resulted in all students receiving at least \$1,300 in tuition relief with the maximum Plainfield Grant award being just over \$9,000. This year's committee recommends that this same formula be used for the 2008/9 year.

Facility Access: Plainfield residents have continued to have access to KUA facilities and events. The skating rink, cross-country ski trails, tennis courts, athletic fields and track remain some of the most heavily used facilities. Local attendance at theatre productions and music recitals also remains strong. The school's active website provides up to date current information on open facilities times and upcoming events, www.kua.org

Again this year the academy hosted a Plainfield Elementary School soccer tournament on the new-lighted artificial turf field. This experience is highly valued by our elementary school soccer players.

Kimball Union's use of the field lights has resulted in tension between the town's Planning Board and the school's administration. In follow up to the previous year's approval of the field, the two sides met three times over the year. As a result, the school plans to come forward in the early spring of 2008 and request a modification of the existing approval for the use of the field lights. It is not expected that there will be a request to expand the use of the lights past 9pm or to significantly increase the number of game nights that the lights are used for each year. It is likely, however that the school will request additional use of the lights during weekday afternoon/evening twilight periods for athletic team practices.

KUA students again this year hosted the holiday luncheon for Plainfield Seniors. This annual event features a holiday meal from the school's dining hall coupled with performances from KUA music students.

Post Office: While no certain plans are in place, both the school and your local town government have committed doing all that is possible to keep a US Post Office in Meriden Village within walking distance of the village compact. Kimball Union is actively investigating the process that is involved in relocating the facility to some other part of the campus. The school has indicated that renewing the existing agreement at the current location, which expires in 2009, is very unlikely. Research on the process used for siting a post office facility has revealed that if the US Post Office process requires going out to a formal bid there will

be strong participation from the private sector to provide a new facility. However, the resulting location will be much less certain. In all cases, any new Post Office will be required to go through the town's site plan review process. In the end, the town's biggest impact may be making sure that the Postal Service is keenly aware of the importance of this facility to all of Meriden Village.

Traffic Safety Improvements: Over the past year Kimball Union has invested significant funds in reducing traffic on Main Street. Newly painted crosswalks and chain fencing have been used to define crossing locations. Starting in late March day student drop offs will be relocated to the new campus center further reducing vehicle traffic and pedestrian crossings on Main Street during peak school hours.

Due to the overall positive state of the town/school relationship, the committee, again this year, supports the approval of the KUA tax exemption.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert Bartles, Susan Plummer, Douglas Cogan, Gordon DeJae, Stephen Halleran, Rachel Tilney and Hugh McGraw **Kimball Union Academy Study Committee**