The Annual Meeting was held in the gymnasium of Rivendell Academy in Orford, NH. Voters of Orford, NH, Fairlee, West Fairlee and Vershire, VT met for the purpose of holding the Annual District Meeting of the Rivendell Interstate School district pursuant to Article IV.G of the New Hampshire-Vermont Interstate School Compact. Approximately 158 voters attended the Annual Meeting.

David Hooke, Moderator of the Rivendell Interstate School District, called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. Mr. Hooke asked that those present stand for the Pledge of Allegiance. Mr. Hooke read the Warrant, reviewed the procedures to follow during the meeting, and stated that the polls were opened at 6:00 p.m. and would remain open for one-half hour following the completion of business under the other articles. Mr. Hooke asked if there were any members of the press attending the meeting – Cicely Richardson, Journal Opinion, and Tim Camerato, Valley News were recognized.

Article 3: To hear reports from the School Board and others relating to the construction/renovation, educational, and financial issues facing the District.
The article was moved and seconded. Marc DeBois recognized Dick Paulson, CFO, Michael Foxall, SME Principal and Jean MacDonald, School Board member – all three are retiring this year from their respective positions. DeBois introduced Bill Little as the new CFO for the district. DeBois discussed the highlights of things the board is working on the budget of $10,632,960 is a 1.01% increase and is a responsible budget for the district. The board has extended is relationship with AHEAD, the non-profit working on a development plan for the Academy Building; Critical Exploration; a weapons policy was adopted by the schoolboard, and the ADA Project - approximately $93,000 was spent to bring Rivendell into compliance with the ADA. Bruce Lyndes addressed the budget for the 18-19 fiscal year. This years’ budget increased 1.01% as compared to other K-12 schools (BMU 4.54% and Oxbow 3.03%). Historically our 7 year average is less than 1.75%. Jim McGoff, Orford commented that the actual budget amount for these other school is lower than Rivendell (BMU $8M and Oxbow $7M) and asked what is the student count attend these schools (RA 305, BMU 245, Oxbow 500). Terry Harwood, Orford thinks there’s a typo on the number of students in the annual report. Elaine Arbour confirmed 500 is the correct number. Ronald Smith, Orford asked about the declining graduation percentage rate. What is the board doing to address this issue? Jan Cole responded that there are several students that didn’t drop out but took a 5th year and that can throw off the percentages as they don’t get counted with their class. Kathy Hooke commented that when there are small numbers it can skew the percentage reported. Cathy Eastburn, Orford asked about the students that are sent to Riverbend and Hartford. Do tuition students have their towns pay for these classes. Keri Gelenian responded that sending towns are responsible for the Vo-Tech expenses. Justin Adams, Orford provided the student count for K-12 for BMU is 419, Oxbow 623 and Rivendell 500. He asked why we are paying so much more for our education. DeBois replied that Rivendell maintains three buildings and the board is exploring what the savings would be to only use two buildings. Hod Palmer, Fairlee mentioned that the Oxbow budget is only for the high school – there is another budget for the elementary school. Doug Tift, Fairlee addressed the Auditors report and the handout that reflects some corrections to the annual report. The Rivendell Review committee will be working with the auditors to review how expenses are allocated and the impact in the tax rates per town. They will also work on how the financial information is presented to make it easier to understand. Kathy Hooke wanted to share that while there are 398 BMU students but they are ranked 53 out of 54 and Rivendell is ranked 5 out of 55. A West Fairlee resident questioned the Special Education funds that were discovered. How many years has this been allocated, and what assurances do we have that this won’t happen again. Paulson responded that this was a misunderstanding - the money was deducted on the primary budget but moved to the Grant Funding line item. The total budget was not affected by this re-classification. Mark Berger commented that the money was spent correctly, the changes are only for how it’s allocated. McGoff asked the number of total district voters (2633) and is concerned about the low turnout. McGoff asked about the Vo-Tech educational expenses. How many go to Riverbend and Hartford. Paulson responded the Riverbend tuition rate is approximately $8,000 and Hartford $9,000 with 26 and 4 students of expected enrollment respectively. McGoff asked why students are allowed to Hartford. Arbour replied that if Hartford offers courses that Riverbend doesn’t, then students can take that option. McGoff asked why NH doesn’t get transportation funding but VT doesn’t? Berger responded that Vermont towns pay a small part of the Vo-Tech expenses, and the state provides funding directly to the Vo-Tech schools. This is something else the Review Committee will be working on to help clarify.
Article 4: Shall the voters of the District raise and appropriate the sum of $10,632,960 for the operating budget for the District for the 2018-2019 fiscal year?
The article was moved and seconded. Terry Harwood, Orford asked why Special Education was up over last year. Paulsen responded that the actual expense isn’t up, but how it’s recorded on the financials. The grant for special education is reported in another area of the financials. Brook Gladstone, Fairlee asked why the Guidance Salary line has increased. Arbour responded that $100,000 was added back to the budget by the board to cover social, emotional and mental health support for students. Gladstone also asked why the Administrator Salary increased. Arbour responded it reflects the current administration, but the likely savings will be with the elementary assistant principal will be lower in salary and will actually reduce this line item. Gladstone asked about professional development funding. Paulsen responded that this expense is now included in the benefits line item. Mark Blanchard, Orford commented on the issue around Special Education and how schools are now responsible for providing these services at a cost to the tax payers. He asked the school to somehow raise the issues back to us and think of how we can help more with these issues as a community. Deb McGoff, Orford asked if it’s true that the Pre-school will be moving to the High School. Arbour responded that the board and administration are exploring ways to better use the buildings, but no decisions have been made yet. Ken Pushee, Vershire asked about the business program and a decrease in funding for that. How will that impact our students? Arbour responded that Title One funds will be used to supplement some of these costs. Pushee also asked about the increase to the sports budget. Arbour responded that it’s based on anticipated increase due to all the changes occurring in Vermont and which schools we will compete against. Jim McGoff requested a paper ballot for the vote – seven supported this.

Total votes cast by paper ballots were 158, 139 for, 18 against, and 1 blank. The article passed.

Article 5: Shall the voters of the District authorize the School Board to add the sum of $70,000 for future capital needs reserve fund?
The article was moved and seconded. Jim McGoff asked what the balance in the fund currently is. Paulsen responded around $62,000. McGoff asked what these funds are used for. John Jakubens, Director of Operations responded for maintenance of the buildings. The heating systems need flushing every 3 years, roof issues that come up occasionally. DeBois mentioned that the fund balance was higher, but was used to the ADA project. The moderator asked if voters were ready for the question. The article passed by voice vote.

Article 6: Shall the voters of the District authorize the School Board to apply for, accept, and expend, without further action by the voters of the District, all money from any governmental or private source which becomes available during the 2018-2019 fiscal year?
The article was moved and seconded. With no discussion, the moderator asked if the voters were ready for the question.
The article passed by voice vote

Article 7: To transact any other business which may lawfully properly come before the meeting.
There was no discussion

Motion made and seconded to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed by voice vote.
The meeting adjourned at 8:27 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Esther Dobbins-Marsh
District Clerk, RISD
March 29, 2018
Annual Meeting, March 20, 2018

Ballots were officially counted and tallied as below:

**Fairlee Board Member (3 year):**
- Write in candidates received the following: **Jon Lester (8)***, Noel Walker (1), Matt Jung (1), Leda Amanatidas (1), Clyde Blake (1), Sue Martin (1), Margaret Gladstone (1), Robert O’Leary (1), Lucy Pilcher (1), Bern Traendley (1), Blank (14), Spoiled (2)
- Total Ballots – 33

*Registered voters in the Town – 734
Write in candidate needs 1% of the Total Town registered voters to win election

**Orford Board Member (3 year):**
- **Vanessa DeSimone (64)**
- Write in candidates received the following: Justin Adams (1), Michael Smythe (1), Robb Day (1), Anne Green (1), Joseph Schwendler (1), Seth Carter (1), Tom Thomson (1)
- Total Ballots - 71

**West Fairlee Board Member (3 year):**
- **Kevin Dexter - 17**
- Total Ballots –17

**Vershire Board Member (3 year):**
- Write in candidates received the following: **Maria Koehler (16)***, Jack Kruse (1), Ken Bushey (1), M Koeh (1), Jen Ricker (1), Sue Kruse (1)
- Blank (4)
- Total Ballots –25

*Registered voters in the Town – 499
Write in candidate needs 1% of the Total Town registered voters to win election

**For At-Large Board Member, 1 year term:**
- **Katherine Blanchard – 128**
- Write in candidates received the following: Jeanine MacDonald (1), Mark Blanchard (1), Tom Thomson (1), Jim McDonald (1), Sandra Marsh (1), Craig Pelletier (1), Annie Jones (1), Sara Day (1)
- Blank (9)
- Spoiled (1)
- Total Ballots - 146

**For Moderator, 1 Year Term:**
- **David O. Hooke - 141**
- Write in candidates received the following: Peter Thomson (1), Mark Burger (1)
- Blank (3)
- Total Ballots - 146

**For District Clerk, 1 Year Term:**
- **Esther Dobbins Marsh - 139**
- Write in candidates received the following: Justin Adams (1), Cara Dyke (1)
- Blank Ballots (5)
- Total Ballots - 146

**For Treasurer, 1 Year Term:**
- **Esther Dobbins Marsh - 139**
- Write in candidates received the following: Judy Franklin (1), Mark Burger (1)
- Blank Ballots (5)
- Total Ballots - 146

**For Auditor, 2 Year Term:**
- Write in candidates received the following: Mark Burger (11), Doug Tift (7), Carl Cassel (2), Erin Cilley (1), Chase Kling (1), Bill Payton (1), Ethel Pike (1), Judy Franklin (1), Larry Taylor (1), Ryan Peebles (1), Jon Lester (1), Amy Winagle (1), Peter Berger (1), Caleb Day (1), Clement Powers (1)
- Blank (112)
- Spoiled (2)
- Total Ballots – 146

Registered voters in the District – 2540
Write in candidate needs 1% to win election –no write in received the percentage required – no one was elected

**For Auditor, 3 Year Term:**
Write in candidates received the following: Sheri Clifford (1), Ted Cooley (1), Jon Molesworth (1)
Blank (10)
Total Ballots – 146

All ballots and exit checklists are sealed and on file per request of the District Clerk at her office in Hanover, NH.

All write in votes are listed above as spelled by the voters on their actual ballots, regardless of whether spelling is correct or not.

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