RIVENDELL INTERSTATE SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD MEETING
District Office – Orford, NH
December 5, 2017 – 6:30 p.m.

Members Present: Marc DeBois (Chair), Vanessa DeSimone, David Ricker (Orford); Mark Avery, Bruce Lyndes, David Gagner (Fairlee); Kathy Hooke, Jean MacDonald (Vershire), Kevin Dexter (W. Fairlee); Kathy Blanchard (at-large)

Members Absent: Cory Austin

Administration and Staff Present: Elaine Arbour (Superintendent); Keri Gelenian (Head of Schools/RA Principal); Tammy MacQueen (WES Principal); Michael Foxall (SME Principal); Michael Galli (Dean of Students); Jan Cole (Director of Special Education); Celise Johnson (Director of Food Service); John Jakubens (Director of Operations); Ross Convertino (Athletic Director), Dick Paulson (Chief Financial Officer); Matt Joska (IT Director), Carrie Emerson

Public Present: Mark Burger, Jolene Vogelien, Cicely Richardson (Journal Opinion)

I. Call to Order: Meeting called to order at 6:30 p.m.

II. Moment of Silence: Elaine Arbour led a moment of silence recognizing the loss of Rivendell community member and assistant baseball coach, Richard Norman

III. Agenda Revision/Time Allocation: None

IV. General Public Comments: None. Mark Burger pointed out that the Rivendell Review Committee meeting location at the bottom of the agenda should indicate Westshire, not the District Office.

V. Presentation – Teacher Professional Development Website: Keri Gelenian provided an overview of the community expertise project that Rivendell teachers participated as part of professional development. The project consisted of creating a website to include each of the local community organizations visited by teachers and staff. The website design included an interview/discussion, photos, a biography of the individual contact at the site and possible future project connections for Rivendell.

VI. Consent Agenda
A. Minutes
   1) Board November 7, 2017
      Action: Motion made to approve consent agenda. (Dexter/Hooke) Approved.
   2) Governor’s STEM Scholarship Program Approval
      Action: Motion made to approve the Governor’s STEM Scholarship Program. (Ricker/Lyndes) Approved.

VII. Informational Reports: None

VIII. Ongoing Business
A. Conservation Easement Land Management Nomination: Arbour brought forward Margaret (Maggie) Stoudnour’s name for nomination to the Conservation Easement Land Management committee. Arbour explained that this role would blend well with her work as Trails Coordinator and her work in the outdoor classroom.
      Action: Motion made to approve Margaret (Maggie) Stoudnour as the Conservation Easement Land Management nominee. (MacDonald/Hooke) Approved.
IX. New Business
A. Personnel Updates: Action: Motion made to accept a letter of resignation from Amanda Enright as Student Assistance Program (SAP) Counselor/School Social Worker. (Avery/Lyndes) Approved.

B. Budget Presentation: Arbour presented a preliminary 2018-19 budget and acknowledged that the approximate $422,000 increase over last year was a starting point. Arbour discussed some of the unknowns in the budget, including health insurance rates and potential savings, labor negotiations, career and technical education and building configurations. She also reviewed some staff changes being proposed in the district office and suggestions about replenishing the capital reserve fund. In turn, each administrator addressed their portion of the budget. Elementary principals spoke about the questions and challenges about potential additional staffing for a World Language Teacher at the elementary level and stated the greater need is for social workers, school psychologists and/or therapists. Gelenian spoke about the shift from summer reading to the project work that is now happening as a result and that curriculum is going to shift as we move more towards project-based learning. He also expressed wanting a middle school counselor four days a week rather than three. Dick Paulson spoke about a correction in special education revenue with the effect that the gross budget increases by the same amount, but the net increase is zero. John Jakubens reviewed operations highlights which include, in part, over-seeding the field at Samuel Morey and savings realized from plowing our own lots at Rivendell Academy and Samuel Morey. Celise Johnson said that food service revenue has been steady and stable and spoke about a greenhouse project to supplement fresh food to the program. Matt Joska reported one major change for next year is the move from FirstClass to Microsoft Office 365, but that overall the technology budget was down from last year. There was some discussion about how to potentially decrease alternative student placements and how to potentially share professional services with area districts. David Gagner agreed that the elementary World Language teacher might not be realistic now, but would like to investigate how to integrate components into classrooms with the current school structure and staffing. Kathy Blanchard commented that the budget clearly needs to be lowered and we need to look at priorities and needs. Kathy Hooke added that staffing numbers should also be considered. Bruce Lyndes said that there is a nine cent tax hike at the state level for Vermont taxpayers no matter what we do locally and that we need to temper the best quality of education for our students with the taxpayers’ ability to pay. Gagner asked administration to revise the budget and provide several options for the Board which might include a 2.5%-3.5% reduction.

C. Determine Budget Special Meeting Date: A special budget meeting date was set for December 19th at 6:30PM at the District Office.

D. Correspondence:
1) Chelsea School Board: DeBois said Rivendell had been invited to give a presentation at Chelsea on December 13th at 6PM. There was discussion about investigating the cost to run a bus from the Chelsea green to Rivendell.

2) Tax Commissioner Letter: Informational only; included in packets.

E. Second Read and Adoption – Financial Policies – Kathy Blanchard will send some typo corrections to Arbour. Action: Motion was made to approve financial policies as presented both new and existing. (Lyndes/Hooke) Approved.

X. Future Agenda Items
20th Anniversary, Crisis Response, Community Outreach, Department Reports, Vision for Food Service, Cooperation w/Thetford Academy, Electronic Devices, Elected Local Auditors’ Role, Guns in Schools Policy; ALICE – Active Shooter Response Training, AHEAD Update and MOU (Jan); Budget (Jan); Special Budget Forums (Jan); Chelsea School Board presentation update (Jan); Student Enrollment data (Jan); FY18 Budget Status (Jan)

XI. Executive Session
Action: Motion was made to go into Executive Session at 8:52 PM. (Gagner/Lyndes) Approved. Board came out of Executive Session at 9:06 PM. (Avery/Lyndes).

XII. Adjournment
Action: Motion made to adjourn. (9:07 PM) (MacDonald/DeSimone). Approved. Meeting adjourned at 9:07 PM.
Recorded by:
Brenda Gray
Executive Assistant/HR Manager

Note: All Board votes were unanimous unless noted otherwise.