RIVENDELL INTERSTATE SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD MEETING
Westshire Elementary School – West Fairlee, VT
March 6, 2018 – 6:30 p.m.

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

Members Absent: Vanessa DeSimone (Orford), Cory Austin (W. Fairlee)

Administration and Staff Present: Elaine Arbour (Superintendent); Keri Gelenian (RA Principal); Tammy MacQueen (WES Principal); Michael Foxall (SME Principal); Michael Galli (Dean of Students); Jan Cole (Director of Special Education)

Public Present: Mark Burger, Mark Blanchard, Christopher Crowley, Tami Sullivan, Christine Bills, (Orford); Doug Tifft, Matt Jung, Samantha Hickman, Brooke Gladstone (Fairlee); Ashley Bean (West Fairlee); Melissa Goodrich (Vershire); Cicely Richardson (Journal Opinion)

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

II. Agenda Revision/Time Allocation: Move section VIII. A – Global Studies Bike Trip to Quebec – approval to section IV. – Presentation.

III. General Public Comments: Mark Burger (Orford) asked that the correspondence with the Superintendent concerning the hired auditor be discussed under VIII. G. Christina Bills (Orford) thanked the Board for taking a position on the gun issue and asked to add safety protocols to the discussion under section VIII. B.

IV. Presentation: Global Studies Bike Trip to Quebec – approval: Story Graves and Kirsten Surprenan present a PowerPoint overview which included goals and budget the connection to Academy curriculum. There are currently 12 student and 10 staff members onboard for the Quebec bike trip. Action: Motion made to approve the Global Studies bike trip to Quebec as presented (Lyndes/Hooke). Approved.

V. Consent Agenda
   A. Minutes
      1) Board February 6, 2018
         Action: Motion made to approve consent agenda. (Hooke/Lyndes). Approved.

VI. Informational Reports (written)
   A. Superintendent Report: Elaine Arbour reported that she spoke with REA President, Barbara Griffin, to identify four REA representatives to participate on the evaluation subcommittee. The committee will bring together different evaluation models before finalizing. She added she will be forming the elementary principal interview committee soon and reported approximately six applications have been to date. The committee will consist of a cross section of teaching staff and parent members from both elementary schools. Arbour said no committee has yet been set for the Winter Program because she will be working on it in the near future.

   B. Head of Schools Report: Keri Gelenian reported an assembly was held on gun violence and that students raised issues about the safety of the school, particularly the walkway between the two buildings and the District Office door being unlocked. He added that a few students were planning a walkout on March 14 and if they want to leave the building he will go out with them, but doesn’t expect a mass exodus. Arbour added that the school is not promoting an opinion on either side of the conversation, but it allowing students the space to exercise their voice. He also said that he received a letter from a senior asking to form a leadership committee. The proposed changes to the schedule is a “hot potato” and teachers have formed a committee to discuss it, but if he doesn’t feel is will move us far enough he will push for his plan which he describes as
Ongoing Business

A. Rivendell Review Committee Recommendations: Doug Tifft represented the Rivendell Review Committee (RRC) and provided an overview of the committee’s work in a draft interim report to the RISD Board dated February 1, 2018. He said the RRC was charged to review the Articles of Agreement (AOA) and how the towns share the cost of running the school district. He added the RRC will be making specific recommendations to the Board to build a better collaboration with the District and Business offices which included practices and methodologies to lay out a way for the local elected auditors to cooperate and work in tandem to help oversee the business of the school with a clear sense of their role. Tifft also inquired about the renewal and reaffirmation of the charge of the RRC and guidance on legal expenses and the use of staff time. He encouraged the Board to be receptive and said the elected auditors may want to meet with the Board throughout the year. David Ricker asked if it's possible to put together the findings of the elected auditors into a format that is easier for individuals to understand. Burger said they can put together a working document that follows the AOA. There was discussion about reviewing the AOA and whether a preamble (statement for guidance), and a glossary, (without an amendment), should be written emphasizing some of the principles in the document. Other areas of consideration include administrative agreements that should be part of an appendix and areas of policies that would be interpretations to be appended. This may require going through the amendment process which would allow the AOA to be more of a living document rather than static. Mark Blanchard (Orford) said things were found that were not technically correct and Burger concurred. The elected auditors have some answers and recommendations which he will send to David Hooke and once they have obtained feedback from Arbour final recommendations will be provided. Blanchard said the AOA got us up and running, but the business of running the business needs to be tightened. Tifft said the RRC wants to get a sense their work is valuable, and if not, they will give a final report and end their work. Burger commented that as elected officials he believes there should be a common interest in working with the district to reach educational goals while being fiscally responsible to the taxpayers. Arbour made a suggestion on the membership of the RRC to remove Jan Cole as a common interest. Others in working with the district to reach educational goals while being fiscally responsible to the taxpayers. Arbour made a suggestion on the membership of the RRC to remove Jan Cole as administrators and add her as Superintendent. Burger will send Arbour a list of legal questions in the next few days. Action: Motion was made to extend the charge of the Rivendell Review Committee as presented in the Board packet (Hooke/Ricker) Approved. DeBois thanked committee for all time and effort they have put in. Action: Motion was made to approve the Rivendell Review Committee specific recommendations as presented in the February 1, 2018 interim report. (Lyndes/MacDonald) Approved.

B. Second Read and Adoption (Gun Policy, Advanced Coursework/Placement)

Arbour addressed one change to the original draft of the gun policy and there was some discussion about the expulsion language and posting the policy physically and digitally. Action: Motion was made to approve the new Weapons on School Property policy as presented (Gagner/Lyndes) Approved. Action: Motion was made to approve the Advanced Coursework/Placement policy as presented. (Hooke/Lyndes) Approved.

C. Final Planning for Annual Meeting: Bruce Lyndes will put together historical PPTX slide on budgets and funding mechanisms and will send to Brenda Gray. Hooke will include a tax assessment slide and send to Gray. There was discussion about space at the annual meeting.
where literature can be distributed. Arbour will look into campaigning at the meeting and Michael Galli will get childcare lined up.

VIII. New Business
A. Hired Auditors Contract Action: Arbour said we have not had a verbal commitment from the audit firm when the audit will be completed and that Gene Besaw offered a couple of options, including terminating the remaining 2 years of his 3-year contract or adding a penalty payment going forward in future years. Arbour explained this is the only firm that we received an initial bid from and that the flu hit their office hard, but she is unclear why it has delayed them this much. Arbour will check with Dick Paulson to see if there are any updates. Kathy Blanchard said maybe we should look at the process for getting bids from other firms and some discussion followed. Action: Motion was made to instruct the Superintendent to work with the external auditor to complete the FY17 audit and then terminate the remaining 2 years of the contract after giving them payment (Ricker/MacDonald) Approved.

B. Special Education High Spending Status: Jan Cole explained that the State of Vermont identified Rivendell as a high spending district in special education for FY17. Cole said most of this is due to day programs and transportation costs. There has been discussion about creating our own program and space limitations are a concern, but the building review committee should keep this in mind as we continue to look at buildings and reconfigurations. An internal program would allow us to be a receiving district with the correct staff and space.

C. Organizational Meeting of New Board: The organizational meeting of the new Board is scheduled for March 27, 2018 at 6PM at the District Office to swear in new officers. David Hooke will not be available. Gray will find an alternative to swear new members in.

D. Tractor Bid: Arbour explained the bid process for a new tractor and suggested going with Blackmount. There was discussion about maintenance and funding. Action: Motion was made to approve the dollar amount of $26,700 for a new John Deere tractor from Blackmount (Hooke/Lyndes) Approved.

E. Personnel Updates
1) Business Administrator Nomination – tentative: Action: Motion was made to approve William Little as the new Business Administrator (MacDonald/Hook) Approved.

2) Resignation: Action: Motion was made to accept the letter of resignation from Christina Robison and Jane Finlay (Lyndes/Dexter) Approved.

Arbour also said a letter of retirement was received from Susan Putnam.

F. Correspondence: Burger asked if the hired auditor understands that the district has elected auditors and if they have been informed of their work and the work of the RRC. He feels this information should be provided and would like to be introduced.

IX. 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, ALICE – Active Shooter Response Training, Keys and Access to Buildings, Rivendell Review Committee Report (May or June); School Safety (April); Equity Discussion (April)

X. Adjournment
Action: Motion made to adjourn. (9:11PM) (Lyndes/Dexter). Approved.

Meeting adjourned at 9:11 PM. (Lyndes/Dexter)

Recorded by:
Brenda Gray
Executive Assistant/HR Manager

Note: All Board votes were unanimous unless noted otherwise.