RIVENDELL INTERSTATE SCHOOL DISTRICT  
BOARD MEETING  
District Office – Orford, NH  
October 1, 2019 – 6:30 p.m.

Members Present: Jason Knowles, Dave Gagner, Jon Lester (Fairlee); Maria Koehler (late), Kathy Hooke (Vershire); Marc DeBois, David Ricker, Vanessa DeSimone (Orford); Kevin Dexter, Rebecca Wurdak (West Fairlee); Kathy Blanchard (at-large)

Members Absent:

Administration and Staff Present: Barrett Williams (Superintendent), Bill Little (CFO), Keri Gelenian (Head of Schools), Melissa Zoerheide (WES Principal), Steve Lindemann (SME Principal), Rachael Weber (Elementary Teacher); Paige Radney (RA Teacher)

Public Present: Mark Burger, Chris Crowley, Tami Sullivan (Orford), Cicely Richardson (Journal Opinion)

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

II. Agenda Revision/Time Allocation: Move Section VII.A Approve Overnight Trips to Section III.A.

VII. A. Approve Overnight Trips
1) Spanish Trip (April 15-30, 2020)
Paige Radney gave a general overview of the Spanish Trip and commented that it is structured similarly to the French Trip. The trip will include a homestay experience and there are 15 interested students. She is partnering with two organizations with the hope of a future exchange opportunity.

2) Wilderness Exploration Trip – Cross Rivendell Trail (November 3-4, 2019)
Radney is co-teaching a Wilderness Exploration course with Gail Keefer which will culminate in a wilderness field trip. The course provides the scaffolding of the necessary skills and students are planning the entire experience. Action: Motion was made to approve the Spanish Trip on April 15-30, 2020 and the Wilderness Exploration Trip – Cross Rivendell Trail (November 3-4, 2019) (Gagner/Hooke) Approved.

III. General Public Comments: Tami Sullivan requested that an upgrade to the Samuel Morey playground be considered during budget season. Kathy Hooke mentioned the possibility of securing a grant.

IV. Consent Agenda
A. Minutes
1) Board – September 3, 2019
Action: Motion made to approve the minutes from the September 3, 2019 board meeting as submitted (Ricker/Gagner) Approved. Abstained: 1.

V. Informational Reports (Verbal Only)
A. Superintendent Report: There was some conversation about ACT 166 and the cost to the district. Barrett Williams explained that the act allows parents the choice to access other preschool programs, but that the maximum liability is $3,300 per family which pays for up to 10 hours per week of preschool. Typically, this pertains to 2-3 families per year. He added that we have contracted with Karen Flett to help write procedures and policies and anticipate this work to be completed by the end of October. There was additional discussion about defining a preschool region, ADM and cost allocation.
B. Head of Schools Report: Keri Gelenian reported that the Academy is working to develop a partnership with DHMC for student internships. The Academic Mentoring program is off the ground and students are working hard across the school. Things feel much different from last year; positive staff and students. Gelenian also spoke about the community agreement with students. Test scores indicated a drop in 9th grade scores and Gelenian discussed the various contributing factors.

C. Elementary Schools Report: Melissa Zoerheide said that Westshire is staffed with strong teachers and that everyone is showing a tremendous work ethic. She has been focusing on building relationships and routines. Westshire had an open house last Thursday with a focus on a common theme of hopes and dreams. Westshire has also participated on two all school field trips – Tunbridge Fair and Cross Rivendell Trail. Zoerheide mentioned a few staff vacancies she is working to fill. Steve Lindemann reported he did not receive the Restorative Justice grant, but is working with Williams on an Act 230 grant. Fifth and sixth graders will be participating in a spelling bee on November 2nd. Samuel Morey hosted a garden party where parents and staff members helped spruce up the property. Open house for Samuel Morey is on Thursday and the all school hike is October 8th.

VI. Ongoing Business
A. Monthly Finance Update: Bill Little reported the actuarial work is in progress and the auditors will be onsite later in October. Little reviewed the general fund handout and explained a 4.19% increase for the upcoming budget, even if its level funded, due to the benefits line.

B. Elected Local Auditor Request Update: Williams explained the local elected auditors requested an outside opinion on the repayment of new construction debt services and put in a request to Brad James and Diana Fenton for assistance. James attended a meeting last Wednesday at Rivendell; Fenton was unable to join, but is committed to contacting the State of Vermont to discuss the issue. The potential impact on historical cost share miscalculations is a $1,273,230 liability. Mark Burger will follow up with James on October 16th.

VII. New Business
A. Community Meeting Recap: DeBois reported that a small number of community members attended the community meeting. Feedback would suggest that the format is not conducive to what the community wants to see. The next community meeting is in Fairlee on October 8th at 6:30PM and will be a coffee hour/open discussion.

B. 2020-2021 Budget: The preliminary draft budget will be presented at the November meeting which Williams will be working on with the administrative team. The budget will require some creative thinking about how we are serving students and facilities. Williams mentioned a 3-5-year maintenance plan, a possible solution to special education out of district placement costs, staffing conversations with building principals and structure of the preschool. There was discussion about requesting exemption from the VT Excess Spending Threshold penalty.

C. RISD 20th Anniversary Celebration: There was discussion about organizing a 20th anniversary celebration. The board is looking for feedback from partnering organizations such as Friends of Rivendell and will establish a committee once this is received.

D. Correspondence
1) Establish Negotiations Committee: DeBois reported that the he received notification from the REA of intent to negotiate. Action: Motion was made to approve the establishment of a negotiation committee with the REA for next year (Gagner/Knowles) Approved. The committee will consist of the Superintendent, HR Manager, Kathy Hooke and Kathy Blanchard. Hooke will head the committee as vice-chair of the board.

VIII. Future Agenda Items:
Community Outreach, Department Reports, Vision for Food Service, Cooperation w/Thetford Academy, Electronic Devices, Elected Local Auditors’ Role, ALICE – Active Shooter Response Training, Flag of Compassion Discussion, School Board Training, Facilities Use/Rental, Quebec Bike Trip Presentation, Facilities Presentation, 20th Anniversary Celebration (Nov), 2020-2021 Budget (Nov), RA Student Presentation (Nov), Winter Program (Nov), Superintendent Evaluation (Nov), RISD Board Community Events (Nov)

There was brief discussion about the snowplow bid.
IX. Executive Session - (Discussion), 1 VSA § 313
A. Personnel, 1 VSA § 313(a)(6)
B. Academic Records or Suspension or Discipline of Students, 1 VSA § 313(a)(7)
Action: Motion was made to move into Executive Session at 8:05 pm (Hooke/Koehler) Approved.
Action: Motion was made to come out of Executive Session at 8:11 p.m. (Hooke/Wurdak) Approved.
Action: Motion was made to approve $2,892.05 to Leah Wolk-Derksen as a final settlement of her employment (Hooke/Koehler) Approved.

X. Adjournment (Action)
Action: Motion was made to adjourn (/Koehler/Dexter) Approved.
Meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

Recorded by:
Brenda Gray
Executive Assistant/HR Manager

Note: All Board votes were unanimous unless noted otherwise.