RIVENDELL INTERSTATE SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD MEETING
Westshire Elementary School – West Fairlee, VT
January 10, 2017 – 6:00 p.m.

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

Members Absent: None

Administration and Staff Present: Mike Harris (Superintendent); Keri Gelenian (Head of Schools/RA Principal); Michael Foxall (SME Principal); Tammy MacQueen (WES Principal); Jan Cole (Director of Special Education); Richard Paulson (CFO); Matt Joska (Director Info Tech); John Jakubens (Director of Operations)

Others Present Who Signed In: Bradford Keith, Chris Crowley, Mark Burger, Bonnie McCouch, Kate Paxton (Orford); Diana Fenton, NH DOE

I. Call to Order: Meeting called to order at 6:00 p.m.

II. Agenda Revision/Time Allocation:
   - Items VI, Informational Reports, there will be no additional oral reports at this meeting
   - VIII, A. 2017-18 Preliminary Draft Budget Discussion moved after III. General Public Comments
   - VIII, C. 2017-18 Tuition Rate following above
   - VII, D. Update on Orford Citizens Committee & E. Discussion Regarding Development of Board Committee following above

III. General Public Comments: Upon question regarding what positions are open for election at the Annual District Meeting, public was referred to Rivendell’s website for general election information which is posted with positions open and deadline for applying.

VIII. New Business
   A. 2017-18 Preliminary Draft Budget Discussion: Harris briefly reviewed changes that were made and that the final number is $10,520,047 which is a 3.5% increase over 2016-17 budget. After discussion an adjustment of an additional $6,000 was made to legal costs (Board concerned might need additional legal assistance with items arising from the Orford Citizens Committee). Avery stated that he foresees that health insurance costs may have decreases. Gelenian is still looking for $80,000 for support and remedial services for District’s student vulnerable population (not speaking of Special Ed students and across the District) but as it is not being added to budget, will look at it within the budget with administrators and at grants available. Paulson stated there is about $100,000 remaining from FY15 which is counted toward revenue. After the additional $6,000, the draft budget to be presented at the Public Budget Forums would be $10,526,047 which is a 3.5% increase over 2016-17 budget. Action: Motion made to present a 2017-18 draft budget of $10,526,047 to the public at the upcoming public budget forums. (Blanchard, Ricker) Approved.
   
   C. 2017-18 Tuition Rate: Harris and Paulson were recommending secondary tuition stay the same as this school year at $15,000 and elementary tuition increase $100 to $12,000. Brief discussion. Action: Motion made to set RISD’s 2017-18 tuition rates at $15,000 for secondary and $12,000 for elementary. (Lyndes, MacDonald) Approved.

VII. Ongoing Business
   D. Update Regarding Orford Citizen Committee: Discussed with E.
   E. Discussion Regarding Development of Board Committee: A discussion ensued over whether or not to establish a committee and over its possible makeup. The discussion referred to an email from Burger sent previously regarding such a committee and it further focused on concerns regarding overburdening administrators in searching for data. Blanchard added comments about the perspective of Orford residents questioning school systems periodically and
she insisted that RISD is providing a high quality of education. She urged that the committee look at issues moving forward and not go back to correct practices in the past. Comments from Board members suggested their belief that the Articles of Agreement worded generally for a reason in order to provide flexibility under ever-changing conditions/policies, laws, etc. **Action:** Motion made to establish an ad hoc committee to review the Articles of Agreement in light of questions raised by the Orford Citizens Committee on whether there is a need for recommendations for future operations. (Gagner, Smyth) **Approved.** (1 nay)

Board agreed, after some discussion, that committee should consists of two Board members (1 from each state), 4 community members (one from each RISD town), and one administrator. Board members need to find volunteer community members from their town. David Gagner volunteered to be the Board member from Vermont. The name of the committee will be Rivendell Review Committee. Board will discuss the committee charges at the February meeting.

Keith commented that the Board has failed to recognize that RISD is an independent school district not a Vermont school district and doesn’t have to accept every Vermont law. Blanchard commented that this is Keith’s opinion and questioned it. Discussion ensued which included the fact that RISD does not follow every Vermont law, as RISD was exempt from Act 146. DeBois reminded everyone that the Rivendell Review Committee would be making any recommendations to the Board and then the Board would be deciding whether to take any action.

IV. **Presentation**
   A. **Rivendell Academy Fitness Center** – Moved to February 7, 2017, Board Meeting.

V. **Consent Agenda**
   A. **Minutes**
      1) **Board – December 6 & 13, 2016**
         **Action:** Motion made to approve December 6 and 13, 2017 minutes. (Gagner, Hooke) **Approved.**
         Discussion held regarding Burger’s former request that some items be attached to the October meeting minutes and the minutes changed. Board decided to have minutes stand as approved with no attachments. Ricker suggested that Burger’s suggested attachments might be linked to the new Rivendell Review Committee on the website.

VI. **Informational Reports:** Board requested no oral reports at this meeting.
   A. **Elementary Principals’ Reports**
   B. **Superintendent Report**
   C. **Head of Schools Report**

VII. **Ongoing Business**
   A. **School Board Member (W. Fairlee):** DeBois stated that Cory Austin of West Fairlee had volunteered to fill the office and Dexter gave a brief statement regarding Austin and that he had been unable to attend tonight’s meeting. **Action:** Motion made to appoint Cory Austin to open Board seat from West Fairlee with appointment to end at the 2017 Annual District Meeting in March. (Ricker, Lyndes) **Approved.** Perryman will arrange for Austin to be sworn in before the February Board Meeting.
   B. **Local Auditor Opening (VT or NH):** DeBois stated that Paul Dalton, long time local auditor for Rivendell, had resigned as he has moved out of the Rivendell District and is no longer eligible. Board expressed regret at Dalton’s resignation and appreciated his 17 years of service to Rivendell. At this point, the only local auditor is Ken Stella, who was appointed by the Board. All auditor positions will be open for election at the District Meeting in March.
   C. **Superintendent Search:** MacDonald reported: Search Committee had met once and was meeting again January 11 and January 18, Harris is providing them leadership services, have 15-16 applicants, reviewing resumes, and plan at January 18th meeting to narrow field and start setting up interviews.
   D. **Update Regarding Orford Citizen Committee:** See above.
E. Discussion Regarding Development of Board Committee: See above.
F. MOU with AHEAD: The Memorandum with AHEAD regarding the old Orford Academy Building has been changed as Board requested at December 6th meeting. Action: Motion made to extend MOU with AHEAD for one more year. (Ricker, Blanchard) Approved.

VIII. New Business
A. 2017-18 Preliminary Draft Budget Discussion: See above.
B. Public Forums Prep: DeBois requested as many Board members as able to come to the forum and that Harris and Paulson will be there for specifics. First one is at Westshire on January 17th and second one will be on January 24th at the District Office/Rivendell Academy (Multi-purpose Room), both at 6:30 p.m.
C. 2017-18 Tuition Rate: See above.
D. Personnel Updates: None unless something for Executive Session.
E. Correspondence: None.

IX. Future Agenda Items
Common Core, Crisis Response, Community Outreach, Policies to be Revised (ongoing), Department Reports, Orford Academy Building Task Force, Superintendent Search, Vision for Food Service, Head of Schools Evaluation, Update of Orford Citizens Committee, Budget, February - Cooperation with Thetford Academy, School Calendar, Rivendell Review Charges

McCouch brought up tuition rates again in regards to additional expenses for a student, however, after a brief discussion on rates, school choice, networking and marketing, Board explained that the sending town bears any additional costs for Special Education costs for a student (over and above the set tuition rate).

X. Executive Session
A. Personnel
B. Negotiations
Action: Motion made to go into executive session at 7:50 p.m. (Hooke, Blanchard) Approved. Board came out of executive session at 7:59 p.m.
Action: Motion made to ratify Rivendell Education Association (Teacher Unit) collective bargaining agreement. (Hooke, Smyth) Approved.

XI. Adjournment
Action: Motion made to adjourn. (Lyndes, Smyth) Approved.
Meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Recorded by:
Penny Perryman, CEOE
Executive Assistant/HR Manager

Note: All Board votes were unanimous (Chair abstains) unless noted otherwise.