Chair DeBois opened Public Budget Forum at 6:30 p.m. and welcomed public to meeting. Copies of the preliminary draft budget were available. Various items discussed.

- Final 2017-18 budget number had changed slightly from the January Board meeting to $10,526,145 (still 3.5% over last year’s budget) due to Paulson receiving a change in vocational which had doubled over the original estimate and also due to rounding.
- Vermont equalized pupil count going up.
- Question about why no formal presentation by Board. Board didn’t feel necessary.
- Proposal to change or close a building as mentioned at a prior Board meeting. Board said this was only discussed for the future as a way to save money if major cost cuts were necessitated.
- Compliment to Paulson on this work and a well put together budget.
- Is everything in budget (i.e., salaries & benefit increases)? Board reported teacher negotiations had been ratified, but not a signed Collective Bargaining Agreement yet. Educational Support Staff negotiations are under way. Any changes in relation to salaries or benefits would have to come out of the $10,526,147 not on top of it.
- Compliments to REA and Board Negotiations Committee on working through negotiations in a timely manner. Rivendell was first in state of Vermont to settle with their teachers.
- Discussion on new insurance plans starting in 2018. Avery belief that there will be a significant savings to the District realized after the first six months of 2018 when plans are in effect.
- Is $80,000 Gelenian had wanted in budget? Board said no but Gelenian replied the administrators are looking at the budget to see if adjustments can be made within it.
- Comment that some Rivendell graduates attending college have said they are further ahead in math and programming than their college peers.
- Comment regarding allocation to each town. Paulson is gathering information and plans to present at the next Budget Forum.
- Comparisons to other surrounding districts. Board thought increases were at Mascoma 3.7%, Lebanon 3.2% and Lyme 5%.
- Board said this 3.5% increase is the biggest increase of RISD’s over the past decade but that RISD had probably had the lowest increases over the past decade and even some surpluses.
- Comments that students need a good education and Rivendell is achieving that.
- Enrollment at RISD appears not to be decreasing but stabilizing, and the elementary classes are increasing.
- Comment about bringing in more preschool age students from surrounding communities to RISD’s Early Childhood Program. Board and Administrators said our Early Childhood Programs are usually full and often have a waiting list.
- Question on how many more students could Rivendell Academy take. Gelenian and Board said 50 if spaced out in grades/classes.
• Question on Vermont School Choice. Board said money does not follow a Vermont student with School Choice, however, RISD’s set limit is five students for School Choice. Burger & Keith commented on School Choice not addressed in the Articles of Agreement and who is picking up bill.
• DeBois stated that the ADM figures for student enrollments and the calculation of tax rate estimates would be presented at next week’s meeting.
• Appreciation comment to Board on the efforts to keep the school budget low over the years.

Action: Motion made to adjourn. (Ricker, Lyndes) Approved.
Public Budget Forum adjourned at 7:03 p.m.

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