RIVENDELL INTERSTATE SCHOOL DISTRICT

Public Budget Forum

Westshire Elementary School – West Fairlee, VT

January 23, 2018 – 6:30 p.m.

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

Members Absent: Cory Austin, (W. Fairlee); Mark Avery, David Gagner (Fairlee); Vanessa DeSimone, (Orford)

Administration and Staff Present: Elaine Arbour (Superintendent); Keri Gelenian (Head of Schools/RA Principal); Tammy MacQueen (WES Principal); Michael Foxall (SME Principal); Jan Cole (Director of Special Education); Dick Paulson (Chief Financial Officer), Barbara Griffin, Carmen Winchester, Matt Joska

Public Present: Mark Burger, Stacie Marshall, Mark Blanchard, Christine Bills, Samantha Perry, Paul Perry, Chris Crowley (Orford); Jennifer Ricker, Nate Thames, Kelly Bushey, Ken Bushey, Carol Suich (Vershire); Doug Tifft, Samantha Hickman, Brooke Gladstone (Fairlee); Nina Schwartz, Albert Schwartz, Patrick Fournier, Rebecca Wurdak, Jen Shatney, Irene Otis, Erin Mansur (West Fairlee)

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

II. 2018-19 Preliminary Draft Budget: Elaine Arbour presented an overview of the budget which included line by line explanation of expense adjustments for FY19. She spoke about a tuition rate increase from $15,000 to $15,400 and explained the proposed budget is a 1.01% increase over last year. Marc DeBois opened discussion to the floor at 6:51 p.m. There was discussion about the proposed cut of an elementary paraprofessional position and how Title federal grants work within the budget. There was conversation about the proposed change in the administrative structure at the elementary schools and whether it will provide enough consistency Arbour explained that administrators will be shared with both buildings providing students the opportunity to get to know them both, but that schedule has not yet been determined. Some voiced concern about obtaining the right quality level candidate needed to cover the needs of both schools. Other discussion items included the purchase of classroom partitions which would allow accommodation of space needs at the elementary school and cuts to the field trip budget. One of the biggest changes will be cutting the Winter Program and some other smaller field trips. There was additional conversation concerning the Samuel Morey Elementary preschool. Arbour explained that a letter is being mailed tomorrow to address the preschool miscommunication and that we are still looking at space before having a conversation with parents. It was asked if there is going to be a building study in the future and DeBois said the Board asked administrators to study if we have the option to close a building and what that would look like, but there has been no determination about closing any building in particular and have only asked for this to be studied. Community members expressed desire to volunteer services to help support work needing to be done at the schools. Additional discussion focused on why the projected cost savings with the shift in elementary principals was being reallocated to mental health supports. Arbour explained there are a large number of students who come to schools with needs not being met, in some grades one-quarter of the class facing challenges and not quite prepared to maintain in the classroom without support. There was further discussion about what those supports might look like and what evidence we have they are working.

III. Adjourn

Action: Motion was made to adjourn. (7:55 PM) (Lyndes/MacDonald). Approved.

Meeting adjourned at 7:55 PM.
Recorded by:
Brenda Gray
Executive Assistant/HR Manager

Note: All Board votes were unanimous unless noted otherwise.