Members Present: Sandra Smith-Ordway, Margaret Gladstone, Allen Avery (Fairlee); Doug Tifft (at-large); Carol Sobetzer, Mel Emerson (Orford); Harry Black, Trevor Law (Vershire); Bev Ash (West Fairlee)

Administrators and Staff Present: Noelle Vitt (Head of Schools), Gail Keiling (Head of Elementary Schools)

Others Present: Cicely Richardson (Journal Opinion), Samantha Wolf (RA Student Government Representative)

I. Call Meeting: Carol Sobetzer called the meeting to order at 6:08 p.m.

II. Approve Board Minutes of December 8, 2008: Action: Motion was made to approve the minutes of January 8, 2008. Approved.

III. Public Input: None

IV. Communications and Reports:
   A. Report of the Chair: Carol mentioned a request from Betsy Hutchins for early retirement to be discussed later in the agenda.
      1) Transition
         Carol referred to the transition plan that was distributed in Board packets.
   B. Report of Head of Schools: Noelle referred to some articles that she distributed in Board packets.
      1) SME Principal Search
         Noelle reported that the search is well underway and the committee has been formed. First interviews are scheduled for Monday, February 4, 2008.
      2) Conservation Easement
         Noelle reported that the group met and the easement plan was reviewed and edited by the committee. A hearing will be held for comment on the ten-year management plan.
   C. Reports of the Committee Chairs:
      1) Long Range Planning (D. Tifft)
         Doug reported that the committee’s primary focus is the formation of the Strategic Planning committees. There was discussion about an informational update that Doug was planning to give on Thursday, January 31 at 3:30 p.m. to the Academy faculty. It was agreed that this should be a PreK-12 discussion at a future date. Doug requested that administration handle the details. The Orford Academy Task force will meet January 31st at 6:30 p.m. at the Academy.
      2) Negotiations (M. Emerson)
         Mel reported that support staff negotiations have concluded.
      3) Finance (A. Avery)
         The next Finance meeting is scheduled for February 11 at 6:00 p.m. to finalize the budget. Discussion regarding the budget presented to the Board to follow later in the agenda under Business Requiring Discussion Only, Section A.

Samantha Wolf elaborated on her report and answered questions from the Board.
V. Business Requiring Discussion & Action:
A. Ratification of Teachers’ Master Agreement:
Action: Motion was made to ratify the Teachers’ Master Agreement. Approved.
B. 2008-2009 Allowable Tuition Rate:
There was a recommendation to set the 2008-2009 tuition rate to $12,200 for Grades 6-12.
Action: Motion was made to set the 2008-2009 tuition rate to $12,200.00. Approved.
C. 2008-2009 School Calendar
Action: Motion was made to approve the 2008-2009 School Calendar as presented. Approved.
D. Personnel
1) Reading Title I
Betsy Hutchins has requested early retirement. Noelle recognized all of Betsy’s hard work and dedication to the District. Action: Motion was made to accept Betsy Hutchins’s early retirement request. Approved. Noelle offered the following recommendations for 2008/2009: at Westshire Elementary - Shawn Gonyaw to assume 40% Reading Title I position and 60% administration; at Samuel Morey Elementary - Administrator to assume 90% administration and 10% literacy work and to seek an additional 50% reading teacher K-2; at the Middle School - Administrator to assume 70% administration and 30% other (curriculum coordination). These positions are represented as such in the 2008/2009 draft budget. Noelle reported that Kate Traverse (Academy science teacher) is returning to the field of research and will not return next school year. Noelle spoke about NH Title 1 money that is available for reading support (3.5 hours per week for the remainder of the school year has been identified and would fall under a teaching contract). Action: Motion was made to appoint Tammy MacQueen to a part-time Title I reading teacher position for 3.5 hours per week for the remainder of the school year. Approved.
2) Early Retirement
See above.
E. Nominations to Strategic Planning Committees
Doug explained the function of the Focus Area committees and the process by which they will report to the steering committee. The groups will meet a total of seven times between February 7 and June 11, 2008. Carol expressed her desire to serve ex-officio on the committee. Questions arose about whether or not the subcommittee meetings are public meetings and whether Board members should be present. Doug asked for permission to have members conditionally join committees until February 7, 2008 and later be ratified by the Board. Steering Committee Members: Juliette Bianco, Orford; Heather Fahy, West Fairlee; Margaret Gladstone, Fairlee; Gail Keiling, ex-officio; Trevor Law, Vershire; Doug Tifft, Fairlee Focus Area #1 Members: Sarah Blanchard, West Fairlee; Edmond Cooley, Orford; Sara Day, Orford; Moria DeBois, Orford; Mike Landgraf, Orford; Joann McCool, Fairlee; Sarah Molesworth, West Fairlee; Nancy Murphy, Orford; Jennifer Nelson, Vershire; Kevin Petrone (elementary teacher); Tim Price, Fairlee; Jon Sands, Orford (RA teacher); Will Tifft, Fairlee (student); Kathy Young, West Fairlee Focus Area #2 Members: Gordon Christie-Maples (RA teacher); Gail Dimick, Orford; Gay-C Gahagan, Fairlee; Cheryl Howe, Vershire; Nick Ludwig, Fairlee (student); Bruce Lyndes, Fairlee; Betsy Miller, Orford; Bonnie Nunn, Vershire; Chris Schmidt, Orford; Susan Spayth, Orford; Dawn Stever, West Fairlee; Hetty Thomae (elementary guidance); Samantha Wolf, Vershire (student) Focus Area #3 Members: Petey Becker, Fairlee; Laura Bradley, Vershire; Carl Cassel, Orford; Mark DeBois, Orford; David DeSimone, Orford; Sam Fulford, Orford; Walter Gladstone, Fairlee; Ryan Murphy, Orford (student); Dave Ricker, Orford; Kirsten Surprenant, Orford (RA teacher) Action: Motion was made to approve the list of committee members as presented and give Doug Tifft permission to appoint additional members from under-represented towns conditionally to be ratified by the Board at the next Board meeting. Approved. Doug and Juliette were both publicly recognized for their work in organizing these committees.
F. Rural Partnership Grant
Noelle spoke about the Rural Partnership group and a $1,200.00 grant secured by the efforts of Jenny Silverstein, Teddy Reichert, Ann Green, Gay-C Gahagan, Grover Boutin, Paul Fassler and Melanie Emerson for a traveling student art show. Action: Motion was made to approve the one year $1,200 grant from the Rural Partnership. Approved.
Noelle spoke about a potential gift of a LL Bean braided rug valued over $1000.00. **Action:**
Motion was made to approve a potential gift of a LL Bean rug valued over $1000.00. **Approved.**

VI. **Business Requiring Discussion Only:**

A. **Review of 2008-2009 Draft Budget**

Allen spoke about FTE and enrollments for 2008-2009, teacher salary and benefits increase, reduction in teacher and administration FTE and possibility of further FTE cuts at Rivendell Academy. Allen highlighted additions and reductions in spending in 2008-2009 budget. At the February 12th meeting more details will be provided with ideas and suggestions on how to reduce food service expenses. Allen recognized the extraordinary job that Jan Cole has done in SPED. The proposed budget is up 3.7% with the goal below 3%. The Finance Committee members were publically recognized for all of their hard work. The expenditure budget is expected to be posted to the web on Friday, February 1, 2008 with a note that a full revenue and expense budget will be available at a later time (if revenues have not come from the state by Friday).

B. **Future Agenda Item**

1) **Topics:**
   a) Policy: Vehicular Idling
   b) Approval of warrant articles
   c) Possible SME hire
   d) Approval of budget

**Action:** Motion was made to move into executive session at 8:18 p.m. **Approved.**

VII. **Executive Session, as needed**

Board came out of Executive Session at 8:48 p.m.

VIII. **Adjourn:** **Action:** Motion was made to adjourn. **Approved.** The meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Brenda Gray
District Clerk/Treasurer