Members Present: Marc DeBois, David Ricker (Orford); Mark Avery, Bruce Lyndes (Fairlee); Kathy Hooke; Kevin Dexter, Sarah Rinehimer (W. Fairlee); Kathy Blanchard (at-large); Cameron Day (RA Student Rep)

Members Absent: Grover Boutin (Fairlee); Michael Smyth (Orford), Jean MacDonald (Vershire)

Administration and Staff Present: Mike Harris (Superintendent); Keri Gelenian (Head of Schools/RA Principal); Gail Keiling (Head of Elementary/SME Principal); Tammy MacQueen (WES Principal); Jan Cole (Director of Special Education); Michael Galli (RA Dean of Students); RA Teachers – Mary Rizos, Christopher White, Christina Robison, Kerry Browne, Anna Alden, John Bristol, Nancy Hall

Others Present: Cicely Richardson (JO), Tali Gelenian (RA Student), Mark Burger (Orford), Charlie Buttrey (Thetford)

I. Call to Order: Meeting called to order at 6:30 p.m. DeBois asked the public to please sign in for the record.

II. Agenda Revision/Time Allocation: No changes.

III. General Public Comments: No comments.

IV. Presentation: Rowland Foundation Fellowship (RA)

Gelenian reiterated from his written report that RA teachers, Laszlo Bardos and Rachel Sanders were awarded a Rowland Foundation Fellowship ($100,000) for their proposal to deepen the District’s work with Critical Explorers. The Fellowship provides financial support for the teachers to have substitute coverage in order to work on their project, as well as to support their work. Bardos and Sanders will work this summer with the Critical Explorers group in Cambridge and then during the school year will work with teachers to help infuse the curriculum with high quality materials for critical explorations. Gelenian explained that finding suitable materials requires imagination and research and that this approach fits with Rivendell’s non-textbook approach to instruction and emphasis on non-tracked classrooms and critical thinking. Gelenian then used various materials he had brought to give a demonstration of what this looks like in a classroom. DeBois thanked Gelenian for the presentation.

V. Consent Agenda

A. Minutes

1) Board – February 2, 2016

Action: Motion made to accept consent agenda. (Dexter, Rinehimer) Approved.

VI. Informational Reports (written)

A. Head of Schools Report: Gelenian praised James Graham, RA Physical Education teacher, for his work on the Rivendell Fitness Center and the recent article in the Valley News. In addition, he reported on RA’s summer reading and some Piermont students coming to shadow on March 3rd. Board commented that they liked his new format for his written report.

1) Student Government Report: Day distributed a tentative schedule for Raptor Con and gave a brief update regarding receiving donations of about $500 worth of prizes, reviewed the schedule, date is set as May 14th, and stated he is contacting area schools.

B. Elementary Schools Report: Keiling reported briefly that 6th graders were engaged in a two week special study. RA senior, Jennifer DeBois, met with the 6th grade girls as part of her Senior Project on leadership, social media and other issues that might confront girls at RA. The boys worked with Mary and Robert Bryant on leadership skills as well. While 6th graders were engaged in these special programs, 5th graders participated in a two-week integrated study of Africa. Literacy, geography, art and music of Africa were all part of this experience. Keiling
then shared that the new Rivendell Rec did not have skating this year and that left more students than the elementary schools were able to handle in their winter program at the schools. Rivendell Rec coordinated with Jason Knowles and the Hubert Outdoor Center to offer two Thursday ski afternoons to the non-skiing students to engage in fun winter activities. Students played barn hockey, hiked, skated, did arts and crafts and built shelters. MacQueen is going to work with Amy Fahey (Rivendell Rec) this summer and take on a winter program plan for next year. It was mentioned that Rivendell Rec is suffering from lack of volunteers which was a problem for the prior organization. MacQueen reported on Westshire’s winter carnival that had been Harry Potter themed, Love to Read Week scheduled for next week and that Kristina Otis, Westshire Physical Education teacher, was conducting with the students on Friday a “It Takes a Heart to be a Hero” to benefit the American Heart Association.

C. Superintendent Report: Harris stated that the Head of Schools evaluation questions were going to Brenda Gray to prepare into a survey to be distributed. He also reported he had met with Olivia Beleau regarding old Orford Academy building project which is still progressing with various construction professionals (engineers, electricians, etc.) looking at the site.

VII. Ongoing Business

A. Annual District Meeting: DeBois stated that, as decided at the February meeting, he would go first for the Board presentation at the meeting, then Lyndes and then Hooke with Ricker and Hooke answering any questions on Act 46. DeBois requested that any slides for presentation be sent to Perryman before the meeting. Harris reported that the budget informational flyer is being prepared and will be distributed by bulk mail to the four Rivendell towns next week after the Annual Reports go out this week. Galli spoke about students singing the National Anthem and leading the Pledge of Allegiance at the meeting and that will be coordinated through Harris. Discussion then ensued due to an idea of Hooke’s regarding pitching several focus groups to the community and about how the Board needs their input. After many ideas, it was decided that at the District meeting, Keiling, MacQueen and Geleman would come up with three items they wanted to focus community involvement on and each would have a table in the RA café, coordinated through Harris, with information and sign-up sheets for community members interested in helping. DeBois will make an announcement during meeting regarding the tables and community input.

B. Head of Schools Evaluation: Harris had already spoken about this above during his report but he did ask the Board what the target date is for completion of the evaluation. Hooke suggested by the May Board meeting and everyone agreed.

C. Superintendent Search

1) Job Description: DeBois stated that the Board needed to approve/disapprove the presented Superintendent job description. Lyndes noticed it had veered away from basically being the business leader towards more educational. DeBois and Blanchard stated that due to laws/regulations on Superintendent roles/duties it had to be done that way. Action: Motion made to approve the presented Superintendent job description. (Lyndes, Ricker) Approved. DeBois requested that Perryman send an email to Attorney Leopold regarding the approval.

2) Update: Discussion regarding advertising and Harris said electronic (i.e., SchoolSpring) most efficient and he was inclined to use some of the big newspapers. DeBois said Board will discuss more, including search committee, at the April meeting. Harris, with Perryman, will work on advertising.

D. Administrative Hiring Process: Harris reported administrators including Keiling had worked on the Samuel Morey Principal draft job description. There was a brief discussion regarding removal of the Head of Elementary Schools title and that the Westshire Principal is under the supervision of the Superintendent. Action: Motion made to approve the change from Head of Elementary Schools/SME Principal title to SME Principal. (Blanchard, Hooke). Approved.

E. Act 46 Update from Study Group: DeBois opened this topic stating that Rivendell entered into this study grant with Thetford to see if anything was even feasible for the two districts. He continued that if there was feasibility and a decision was made to combine in some manner, it would not be a merger, but Thetford (or any other town) would need to become part of the
VIII. New Business

A. Special Meeting for Reorganization 3/22/16 tentative: DeBois announced that the Board would need to hold their organization meeting within 10 days following the Annual Meeting and the suggested date is on Tuesday, March 22, 2016. Board agreed to meet March 22nd at District Office for swearing in before meeting and then organization.

B. Request for Extension of Leave of Absence: Harris stated that Irene Drew, who is currently on a Board approved leave of absence due to a family medical matter, has requested it be continued through April 15, 2016, with her continuing to use her accumulated paid sick leave. Action: Motion made to approve the extension of Irene Drew’s leave of absence, using her accumulated paid sick leave, through April 15, 2016. (Blanchard, Ricker) Approved.

C. Hiring/Resignation Updates: Harris reiterated from his written report teacher resignations effective at the end of the 2015-16 school year. Action: Motion made to accept the resignations of Mary Rizos, Clarisse Benoit and Kolin Kepler at the end of the 2015-2016 school year. (Blanchard, MacDonald) Approved. Harris then requested the Board approve the hiring of Charlotte Johnson as an ESL/ELL teacher at Samuel Morey Elementary (not to exceed 4 hours/week) for the remainder of the school year. Action: Motion made to approve Charlotte Johnson, ESL/ELL teacher at Samuel Morey. (Blanchard, Hooke) Approved.

D. Correspondence: DeBois reported a number of emails had been received from Rusty Keith by some individual members of the Board and administrators. DeBois said that he had sent an email to Keith letting him know if he had more questions in regard to the Interstate Compact and Article of Agreement that he could contact our attorney (at his expense) or a NH or VT education attorney to have specific legal/procedural questions answered.

IX. Future Agenda Items

Common Core, Crisis Response, Community Outreach, Policies to be Revised (ongoing),
X. Executive Session, 1 VSA § 313:
   A. Personnel
      Action: Motion made to go into Executive Session at 8:30 p.m. to discuss a personnel matter with the Superintendent. (Blanchard, Ricker) Approved. Board came out of Executive Session at 9:10 p.m.
      Board members continued some more discussion on Act 46. No action.

XI. Adjournment
    Action: Motion made to adjourn. (Avery, Blanchard) Approved.
    Meeting adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

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

Note: All Board votes were unanimous unless noted otherwise.