Members Present: Marc DeBois, Cicely Richardson, David Ricker, (Orford); Bruce Lyndes, Mark Avery, Grover Boutin, (Fairlee); Jean MacDonald, Kathy Hooke (Vershire); Kathy Blanchard (at-large)

Members Absent: Mike Fanizzi (W. Fairlee), Sarah Rinehimer (Vershire)

Administration and Staff Present: Brenda Needham (Superintendent), Keri Gelenian (Head of Schools), Gail Keiling (Head of Elementary Schools/SME Principal)

Others Present: None

Newly Elected Board Members (Ricker, Lyndes, MacDonald, Hooke and Blanchard) and the District Clerk/Treasurer (Esther Dobbins-Marsh) were sworn in by Moderator David Hooke before the meeting at 6:28 p.m.

I. Call to Order (Superintendent): Meeting called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Superintendent Needham as this was the reorganization meeting of the Board following the Annual District Meeting.

II. Board Reorganization: Needham asked for nominations for Board Chair. Richardson nominated DeBois for Chair, motion seconded, no other nominations, and all in favor – DeBois elected Chair. DeBois took over running of the meeting at this point and asked for nominations for Vice Chair. Mark Avery was nominated, seconded, no other nominations and all in favor – Avery elected Vice Chair. DeBois requested nominations for Secretary, Cicely Richardson was nominated, seconded, no other nominations and all in favor – Richardson elected Secretary.

III. Agenda Revision/Time Allocation: Needham stated she had a teacher resignation but would bring it forward under her report.

IV. General Public Comments (Listen & Defer Action to Future Mtg.): None.

V. Presentation
   A. Teacher Spotlight Promo Video (K. Gelenian): Gelenian could not show video because he could not get internet service. No presentation.

VI. Consent Agenda (Accept):
   A. Minutes
      1. Board – March 5, 2014
      Action: Motion made to approve the consent agenda. Approved.

VII. Informational Reports (written):
   A. Head of Schools (written): Gelenian reported on “Rounds” which is he is hosting at RA April 23 which is approximately 12 Upper Valley principals who are visiting various schools to observe 3-4 classes, focusing on students developing their own ideas and supporting with evidence. He also announced that Gail Keefet got Language in Motion grant from Dartmouth for a fellowship to go to Africa this summer. Gelenian also reported that on the work-based learning grant they were told by a grant person that RA was way ahead of other schools. Also, the school counselors and he have been discussing the athletic policy and may need a policy change so he will work with Needham on that. Boutin said that perhaps the ALC should weigh in on it and Gelenian agreed. Discussion on possible elimination of some elective classes and DeBois asked that if that happened that Gelenian notify the Board. Last student day is June 23rd and graduation is June 14th, seniors have to attend at least 175 school days, so seniors will be coming on March 28
conference day) for a special project and senior River Bend students will be attending River Bend that day.


B. Elementary Report (written): Ricker commented that Dr. Seuss night had set a bar with snacks and Keiling reported more on the event. She also reported that Robert Bryant, a consultant at all our schools, applied and been approved for a safe space room grant so now someone can be hired to monitor the space. The grant is for the remainder of this year and next year. She explained that this is because of student behavioral issues and Bryant will help train the person in a style of invention that is a low key type of style.

C. Superintendent Report (written): Richardson asked about the Youth Risk Survey. Brenda said Keri and she have both looked at it briefly. Additionally, she has met with Wendy Walsh from VT Department of Health and Walsh was very pleased with some of the data because Rivendell’s was much lower than State data. Needham explained some of the topics that the survey speaks about such as, smoking, alcohol, sexual activity, bullying, etc. She suggested it be put on the agenda for the next meeting and have the School Counselors attend. Needham reported receiving a resignation from Crystal Larocque, SME Teacher, who is moving and read Larocque’s letter to Board. Action: Motion made to accept Larocque’s resignation with regret. Approved.

VIII. Ongoing Business (Deliberation & Possible Action):

A. Strategic Plan Process/Retreat (G. Boutin): Boutin reviewed where the Strategic Plan Process stood at this time (each Board member having a focus area, planning to hold meetings in personal homes with small mixed groups, clipboards with 10 copies of goals for note, snacks, Boutin at all meetings, and Board member will be looked as the expert on that focus area). Discussion ensued with questions (having a set end time, how to get a cross representation at meetings, advertising meetings – newsletters, website, letter to Editor, survey monkey or packets in staff mailboxes to get their feedback, student feedback through advisories) on this process. This is a Board document but the Board does want to hear from the community and staff. After the meetings, Boutin would bring back to Board a report and responses, then Board starts working on the new strategic plan. Boutin was going to ask if Juliette Bianco to come to a Board meeting to facilitate. Needham suggested that Leadership team could work on how to solicit teacher/staff feedback for Board. Keiling said this is a huge undertaking as the Strategic Plan is the District’s guiding document. It was agreed to hold the first meeting (April 29th) and get feedback at May meeting.

B. Annual Meeting Review: DeBois requested comments from the Board. Richardson said she liked Lyndes slide presentation much better this year. Boutin said that a community member had told him that they were very impressed with Needham and all the Board members who did presentations (DeBois, Avery, Lyndes). Brief discussion ensued and Ricker stated he would like to see variances when RISD publishes the tax rates in the future.

1) Auditor Position Appointment – Board discussed that Peter Berger had received the most write-in votes, although not the 1% needed to be elected, has been an auditor in past and believed he would be willing to accept the position. Action: Motion made to appoint Peter Berger as local auditor until the 2015 Annual District Meeting. Approved. P. Perryman will contact Berger.

IX. New Business (receive Information and Possible Action):

A. Overnight Student Trip (Senior Class): Gelenian stated they were staying in Marlborough for two nights and visiting Boston. Action: Motion made to approve Senior Class Trip in May. Approved.

B. Correspondence: Board members brought up scheduling conflicts on Rivendell event calendar with three events all being on the same evening that involved some families trying to attend all three. Keiling and Gelenian will look into this. Needham stated that the schools in the District should be able to avoid this type of scheduling problem.
X. Future Agenda Items (Discussion):
  Orford Academy Building Task Force (May), Crisis Response, Community Outreach, Grants, Global Language for 6th grade (June), Policies to be Revised (ongoing), Student Presentations, Department Reports, Recruiting Process, Building Use Policy (revisit in May 2014), Athletic Policy (May), Youth Risk Survey (May); Reflection on Multi-Grade Classrooms (June); Breakdown of classes for 2014-15 (June)

XI. Anticipated Executive Session (Discussion), 1 VSA 313 – No Executive Session.

XII. Adjournment (Action) -
  Action: Motion made to adjourn at 7:50 p.m. Approved.

Recorded by:

Penny Perryman, CEOE
Recorder