Members Present: Marc DeBois, David Ricker (Orford); Mark Avery, Bruce Lyndes (Fairlee); Kathy Hooke, Jean MacDonald (Vershire); Sarah Rinehimer (West Fairlee); Kathy Blanchard (at-large)

Members Absent: Grover Boutin (Fairlee), Michael Smyth (Orford)

Administration and Staff Present: Brenda Needham (Superintendent), Keri Gelenian (Head of Schools/RA Principal), Michael Galli (RA Dean of Students), Gail Keiling (Head of Elementary Schools/SME Principal), Tammy MacQueen (WES Principal)

Others Present: John Boutin (W. Fairlee), Kevin Dexter W. Fairlee), Irene Otis (W. Fairlee)

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

II. Board Member Appointment (West Fairlee): DeBois introduced Kevin Dexter of West Fairlee who he had approached regarding possible appointment to the Board as a representative from West Fairlee and Dexter expressed interest. Action: Motion made to appoint Kevin Dexter as a Board member from West Fairlee until the next election in March of 2016. Approved. DeBois welcomed Dexter to the Board and informed him that Dexter would need to be sworn in by the Moderator before the next meeting.

III. Agenda revision/Time Allocation: Needham stated that she had two resignations to add under New Business and a recommendation for a new Samuel Morey hire.

IV. General Public Comments: John Boutin introduced himself and said he was there for the West Fairlee Conservation Commission who would like to clean up an old farm dump which is on a corner of the school property. Boutin said it will cost under $1,000 to clean up (they are covering cost), they will bring in someone from the State in to ensure cleanup is done correctly, and they will work with Gary Collins, Rivendell’s Director of Operations. Action: Motion made to allow the West Fairlee Conservation Commission access to Westshire property to cleanup an old farm dump site in coordination with Gary Collins. Approved.

V. Presentation/Guests – None.

VI. Consent Agenda
   A. Minutes
      1) Board – March 4, 16 & 24, 2015
      2) Annual District Meeting – 03/17/15
         Action: Motion made to approve Consent Agenda. Approved.

VII. Informational Reports
   A. Superintendent Report: Needham reported on the alternative option for life and long term disability that she had mentioned in her written report. It is in conjunction with VEHI and the insurance will be with Lincoln Life Insurance and through Insurance Point (part of Arthur J. Gallaher & Company). Needham said there should be significant savings and thanked Dick Paulson and Penny Perryman for their work on this. She distributed a monthly report on expenditures that Paulson had provided and requested Board look it over. Needham reported on the recent meeting with VT AOE Secretary Holcombe, area Superintendents, and various school board members that was held at Rivendell regarding consolidation and collaboration options and the potential of participating in a planning grant that OESU and BMU have already agreed to. As Blanchard and MacDonald had attended Needham asked if they wanted to report on their prospective. MacDonald said that she thought the Board should request the grant money to help with planning (i.e., population and hiring a consultant). Blanchard said this would help with
getting questions answers and the grant does not obligate Rivendell in any way to join with any other district. Blanchard and MacDonald did not see any downside to the grant. Needham also reported that she had spoken to Shannon Darrah, Thetford Board Chair, as a follow up to Charlie Buttrey’s visit last meeting and that Darrah would get back to Needham dependent on what happened at Thetford’s Board Meeting also tonight.

**Action:** Motion made to approve to participate in the Planning Grant as presented. **Approved.**

B. **Head of Schools Report:** Gelenian distributed GPA Comparisons for Trimester 2 comparing 2014-15 to 2013-14 and reviewed them.

1) **Student Government Report** – None.

C. **Elementary Reports:** MacQueen did a quick show and tell with the equipment from VT Rural Partnership for Westshire’s composting (scale, thermometer, buckets and wagon). Hooke stated that she was glad to see the collaboration with the Town Library that MacQueen had mentioned in her written report. Keiling reported on SBAC training, stating that Kathleen McGowan and Gabi Martino have been a huge help. Keiling also reported that it was noticed Samuel Morey’s 5th graders were very involved with social media, so Keiling and Martino did a two week series on cyberbullying, being a digital citizen and included a parent component to bring home so to share with the parents. Ricker asked about SBAC and if the time spent on it will be any less or the same every year. Gelenian thought less and Keiling agreed. Brief discussion on proctoring students, how testing affects the classroom in regards to absent students, etc. Rinehimer asked if any parents had objected to the SBAC. Keiling replied no and Gelenian said some.

VIII. **Ongoing Business**

A. **Annual Meeting Review**

1) **Auditors Appointments:** Brief discussion on trying to find people to appoint from the District and whether the number of local auditors could be changed or eliminated since a professional audit is done annually. Perryman said that it is part of the Articles of Agreement and would require a District vote and also the state laws would need to be checked.

Discussion then on the weak voter turnout at the Annual Meeting and the need next year to try to get a better turn out. Board expressed disappointment that even some staff members who are voters did not attend, as well as many parents. Lyndes pointed out that if 20 voters had changed their minds then the vote would have been different.

B. **Strategic Planning:** Ricker reported the ad hoc committee had a meeting and Rinehimer was going to have minutes for the next meeting (May).

C. **Superintendent Evaluation:** Blanchard reported that the evaluation form had been sent to Perryman to make into a fillable form. DeBois thanked Blanchard and Hooke for working on this. Blanchard said the plan was for the Board members to complete the evaluation forms, as well as some administrators based on certain supervision areas (i.e., Gary Collins would do the facilities/operations section).

IX. **New Business**

A. **Approve Teacher Contract Renewals for 2015-2016:** Needham reported that the teacher contracts for 2015-16 needed to be out by April 15th per Master Agreement. Needham changes were that Mary Rizos, RA World Language teacher, would be going back to 100% from her reduced time this current year and that there was one RIF of Carol Sobetzer’s Social Studies position (regular budget) and her Title I position.

B. **Authorization for Signatory on RA Student Activity Account:** **Action:** Motion made to authorize Brenda Gray to be added as a signatory on the RA Student Activity account at Wells River Savings Bank and remove Tracy Page. **Approved.**

C. **Correspondence:** Needham received letter today from Penny (Mitchell) Rouse regarding hiring of former Rivendell students; two letters received from James Harris of Fairlee – one complimenting the recent Harlem Rockets event at RA and the other a copy of a letter sent to the Fairlee Select Board about the Fairlee’s Planning Commission survey; also received from North Country Supervisory Union a resolution regarding governance and funding that their
Board had done rejecting H.261. Lyndes said that VSBA had sent out a request that school boards support legislation on no teacher strikes and that school boards contact their legislatures. **Action:** Motion made to communicate with Vermont House Representatives who cover the Rivendell District towns to advocate for passage of the bill banning teacher strikes (H.76). **Approved.** DeBois will take care of this.

**D. Resignations:** Needham reported that she had received resignations from Laura Erickson and Jonathan Lester for the end of this school year. **Action:** Motion made to approve resignations of Laura Erickson and Jonathan Lester with regrets. **Approved.**

**E. New Hire:** Needham stated that at Keiling’s request she was recommending Ryan LaBella for hire as the Physical Education Teacher for Samuel Morey Elementary School next school year (2015-16). **Action:** Motion made to approve hire of Ryan LaBella as Physical Education Teacher for SME beginning with the 2015-2016 school year. **Approved.**

**X. Future Agenda Items**
Common Core, Crisis Response, Community Outreach, Policies to be Revised (ongoing), Student Presentations, Department Reports, maybe one of the recent overnight field trips (Needham will check with the administrators to get one), Middlebury Interactive Language (June)

**XI. Executive Session, 1 VSA § 313**
A. **REA Negotiations**
B. **Personnel**
   **Action:** Motion made to go into Executive Session at 7:34 p.m. **Approved.**
   Board came out of Executive Session at 8:00 p.m.

**XII. Adjournment**
**Action:** Motion made to adjourn. **Approved.**
Meeting adjourned at 8:01 p.m.

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