Rivendell Interstate School District – Board Meeting Minutes
Westshire Elementary – West Fairlee, VT
April 8, 2008

Members Present: Juliette Bianco, Brenda Gray, Carol Sobetzer (Orford); Margaret Gladstone, Sandra Smith-Ordway (Fairlee); Doug Tifft (at large); Beverly Ash (West Fairlee); Jennifer Ricker (Vershire)

Administrators and Staff Present: Noelle Vitt, Head of Schools (Superintendent); Gail Keiling, SME Principal; Robert Thatcher, Physical Education Teacher/Athletic Director

Others Present: Walt Schwarz, Peter Thurston, Cecily Richardson (Journal Opinion)

I. Call Meeting: Noelle Vitt called the meeting to order at 6:33 p.m.

II. Board Reorganization: Noelle stated that this was the Board reorganization meeting and called for nominations for Chair and Vice Chair. Motion: Sandra Smith-Ordway nominated Carol Sobetzer for Chair and motion was seconded. Approved. Motion: Sandra Smith-Ordway nominated Margaret Gladstone for Vice Chair and motion was seconded. Approved. Carol then took over running the meeting.

III. Approve Board Minutes of March 18 and March 25, 2008: Action: Motion was made to approve the minutes of March 18 and March 25, 2008. Approved.

IV. Public Input

V. Communications and Reports: A. Report of Chair – Acknowledged loss of Allen Avery, tribute to Allen, his effort in forming the District, his kindness and generosity. His death is a loss to all. Carol acknowledged Noelle Vitt, Penny Randall and Sandra Smith-Ordway for their work in putting together the Annual Report. She also thanked Brenda Gray for her work as the Clerk at the Annual Meeting and her work as Treasurer and Clerk over the past year. Carol then welcomed the new Board members Brenda Gray and Jennifer Ricker. Committee assignments to come - Long Range Planning, Finance, Community Engagement. Carol reported that the Board received a letter from Ollie Jacobs submitting his name as a potential candidate to fill the Fairlee Board position. This will be discussed at the next meeting, along with future process.

B. Report of Head of Schools: Noelle reported on the Avery Scholarship, a possible grant, progress on the Head of Middle School/Associate Director of Curriculum search, an Art opening, nomination for Ross Award posthumously for Allen Avery. She also reported that the federal grant audit was completed and a few corrections were offered. The Nutrition audit letter was received with only one correction. Noelle talked about the need for sustainability – partnerships – expanding up to Grade 12, with leadership/mentorship possibilities.

1) Athletic Report Noelle fielded questions regarding the rotation of classes and process explained at the beginning of each season. Bob Thatcher reported on evaluation process of coaches and expectations of coaching staff. Bob T. recommended to Bob Sampson in summer of 2007 additions to evaluation process – evaluation of coach and coach of student, all using the national standards. Board asked question regarding students fear about filling out form. Effective communication is stressed and to stand behind the forms – makes for better coach. There is confusion regarding parent participation – middle school only. Parents to help with student’s assessment. Also, concern that forms are not effective. Believes Athletic Director should have sole view with parent help. Peter Thurston had concern about evaluation process – that it was not a true process. He agreed with Walt Schwarz that the feedback was not really accurate. Anonymity would help. There is a learning curve – new to this community. Walt S. was concerned that parents do not have say. Carol recommended using protocol – first going to the coach and then to Athletic Director. Evaluations are not a public process. Questions on what constitutes a rehire. Concern also raised about Open Gym. Feeling that communication around student evaluation process was confusing. Question raised on what constitutes a successful season. Bob T. and Bob S. will provide definition later in the summer. Noelle urges Mr. Schwarz to get parents with concerns to meet with Bob Thatcher or Bob Sampson.

C. Report of Strategic Planning Steering Committee: Doug Tifft said the Steering Committee would be meeting on April 30th. Minutes from last meeting were in Board packet. All notes from the various Focus
Groups and the Steering Committee are on the Rivendell website. Ray Proulx, Juliette Bianco and Doug are working on a summary document with one voice – raise this publicly at mid point – first draft. Focus Groups – number of citizen groups – goals, strategies and indicators. April 30th get feedback. Mailing to community – process – variety of responses. One Community meeting, staff meeting with focus group representatives, students meeting. Finally 30 people – highly engaged/positive charged up group to see how School Board will respond. What weight will it carry? Touchstone. Actions – June with final reporting of group to Board.

Doug also stated that the Orford Task Force would be meeting April 24th at 7:00 p.m. He said that student participation has really helped in creating a four town vision. Carol thanked Doug and Juliette for helping move the Strategic Planning process along.

VI. Business Requiring Discussion & Action:
   A. Senior Class Proposal – Action: Motion was made to approve the Senior Class Trip. Approved.
   B. TAN Note – Action: Motion was made to approve the TAN Note at a rate of 3.125% from Woodsville Guaranty Savings Bank up to $3 million. Approved.
   C. Board Mentor Assignments – Jennifer’s mentor will be Heather Fahy and Brenda’s mentor will be Margaret Gladstone.
   D. Summer Board Training Date – Date will be July 8, 2008.
   E. Board Meeting Dates for 2008-2009 – Action: Motion to adopt Board meeting schedule in 2008 as July 1, August 12, September 9, October 7, November 4 and December 2, then in 2009 as January 13, February 3, March 3, April 7, May 5, and June 2. Approved.
   F. Executive Session – Action: Motion made to go into Executive Session at 8:35 p.m. Approved.

Board came out of Executive Session at 8:58 p.m.

ACTION: Motion to offer Karen Bolster a second year contract for 2008-2009 as Middle School Guidance Counselor. Approved.

Action: Motion made to give Noelle approval to do a preliminary hire in the Art position only. Approved.

VII. Business Requiring Discussion Only
   A. Future Agenda Items
      1) Topics:
         a) Action Plan Review (May)
         b) Hiring
         c) Technology Skills Presentation (June)
         d) Policies: Vehicular Idling (May) and Allergies (Life Threatening)

VIII. Adjourn: Action: Motion was made to adjourn. Approved. The meeting adjourned at 9.01 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Noelle G. Vitt
Recorder