RIVENDELL INTERSTATE SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD MEETING
District Office – Orford, NH
May 5, 2015 – 6:30 p.m.

Members Present: Marc DeBois, David Ricker, Michael Smyth (Orford); Mark Avery (Fairlee); Kathy Hooke, Jean MacDonald (Vershire); Kevin Dexter (West Fairlee); Kathy Blanchard (at-large)

Members Absent: Grover Boutin, Bruce Lyndes (Fairlee); Sarah Rinehimer (West Fairlee)

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), Jan Cole (Director of Special Education), Tammy MacQueen (WES Principal)

Others Present: Maureen and Byron Boardman (Bradford)

I. Call to Order:
Meeting called to order at 6:30 p.m. DeBois stated that the Thetford Board meeting was also tonight and that Needham and he were planning to attend after the RISD meeting to continue discussions on collaboration. DeBois requested that a few more Board members also attend.

II. Executive Session, 1 VSA § 313
A. Student Issue - Action:
Motion made to go into Executive Session. Approved. Board went into Executive Session at 6:31 p.m. Board came out of Executive Session at 7:14 p.m. Action: Motion made to have Superintendent follow up with parents on student issue denied with much regret as authorized by the Board. Approved.

III. Agenda revision/Time Allocation: None.

IV. General Public Comments:
Galli handed out a postcard regarding RA hosting the film “The Hornet’s Nest” on May 20, 2015, at 6:30 p.m. with discussion after. He reported that he believed a number of veterans would be attending and hoped some of the Board might also attend.

V. Presentation/Guests – None.

VI. Consent Agenda
A. Minutes
1) Board – April 7, 2015
Action: Motion made to accept consent agenda. Approved.

VII. Informational Reports
A. Head of Schools Report: Gelenian reported on interviewing three physical education candidates and said that all on the search committee were unanimous on one candidate on every issue and Gelenian is currently checking references. He also reported that Nancy Hall and he were meeting the President of CCV regarding a more ongoing relationship between CCV and RA. He also reported that there was going to be some shuffling of faculty. Gelenian, DeBois and Needham have talked about the Planning Grant and Gelenian still has a problem with this and had some information to disseminate. DeBois stated the School Board has already agreed to do the Planning Grant but Gelenian could still disseminate his information. Gelenian report that DeBois and he are going to a Warren School Board meeting regarding tuition.
1) Student Government Report – None.

B. Elementary Reports: Keiling reported that Mary Azarian, a children’s book illustrator, had visited with the 4th graders at Samuel Morey and also the 4th and 6th graders are preparing for the Hulbert trips. Hooke stated that from a parental view it would help if some of the transition events happened in the fall – like tours of the school, etc.

C. Superintendent Report: Needham reported that teacher contracts are due back in on May 14th. She also reported that Roxanne Ward who has worked in the District Office had decided not to return next year. Needham and Board were thankful for all her years of work for the District.
XIII. Ongoing Business
A. Auditors Appointments: None
B. Strategic Planning: Moved to June.
C. Superintendent Evaluation: Blanchard reported that the forms are now ready and can be filled in electronically. She will draft an email and then have Perryman send out to Board and Administrators. Gelenian spoke fervently against this form and process not being qualitative enough, should be 360, with interviews and questions, and that teachers are held to a more rigorous evaluation. Hooke agreed but stated the thinking was to get something started as a superintendent evaluation had not been done for a number of years and Board wanted to get something to open the window. Blanchard reported that it will educate the Board on the roles of the superintendent as Rivendell’s model is set up. Gelenian continued to speak against it. DeBois interrupted stating it was a starting point and is not up to Gelenian. He said the Board feels an evaluation matters and at Rivendell the superintendent position is different and does not include any of the education administration. Gelenian stated he expects a better quality of tool to evaluate the administration. Blanchard continued that the next step would be to get information from Board members and from administration who have knowledge of the superintendent’s role.
D. Overdue Grants: DeBois stated that the Board noted that Gelenian was not pleased with this and again reiterated that it was not up to Gelenian. Needham then stated that she agreed that evaluations were very important, she supported that the Board used their school board association as a resource, and she was flexible in this beginning process. She was willing to be a “guinea pig” and she expected this process will help develop a process for the future.

IX. New Business
A. Overnight Trips (RA)
1) Senior Overnight Trip
   Action: Motion made to approve both overnight trips as presented. Approved.
B. Resignations: Needham reported that she had received resignation letter from Scott Riess, RA English Teacher. Action: Motion made to approve resignation of Scott Riess with regrets. Approved.
C. Correspondence: DeBois reported receiving a piece of correspondence from Perryman regarding duties and it had given it to the Needham to review and handle. Also, received an unsigned letter from a concerned Orford citizen regarding hiring and flagpoles at RA. Board members were each given a copy. DeBois said that the Board valued receiving the letter, however, they could not craft a response because no one had signed it. As one of the items in the letter was about a flag flying at the Academy, discussion turned to that. Needham reported that the official Rivendell Academy flag pole is at the main entrance near the RA office, where the flag is to be raised and lowered every day. Galli reported that they are looking into having a light installed that will illuminate the flag at night, so it can remain raised at all times. Needham further stated that there had been a second flag pole down near the West Wing, however, the flag pole has in disrepair and the flag was not being raised and lowered every day for some time. Due to the disrepair and as it was not the official school flagpole, it was removed this past summer. She added that off and on during this year she has heard reports that the flagpole removed might have been a present to the former Orford School by a class, however, there was no plaque on the pole or indication of this. Also, she pointed out that although there are two buildings on the Rivendell Academy campus, it is one school. Board was in agreement that as long as the school had a flagpole where the flag was raised daily that was the main concern.

X. Future Agenda Items
Common Core, Crisis Response, Community Outreach, Policies to be Revised (ongoing), Student Presentations, Department Reports, Recent Overnight Field Trip Report (Needham to arrange one), Middlebury Interactive Language (June), VT Rural Partnership (June), Strategic Planning

XI. Executive Session, 1 VSA § 313
A. REA Negotiations
B. Personnel
Action: Motion made to go into Executive Session at 7:50 p.m. Approved.
Board came out of Executive Session at 7:55 p.m.
Action: Motion made to ratify Educational Support Personnel Unit Master Agreement for 2015-2017 as discussed. Approved.

XII. Adjournment
Action: Motion made to adjourn. Approved.
Meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

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