RIVENDELL INTERSTATE SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD MEETING
Westshire Elementary School – West Fairlee, VT
June 2, 2015 – 6:30 p.m.

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

Members Absent: Grover Boutin (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), Gail Keefer (RA World Language Teacher), Gary Collins (Director of Operations), Mary Rizos (World Language Teacher)

Others Present: Robert Bryant (Consultant), Gay-C Gahagan (JO Reporter), Elizabeth Wilken (Warren), Jill Haley (Warren), Lalena Fair (Warren), Quenla Haehnel (RA student)

I. Call to Order: Meeting called to order at 6:00 p.m.

II. Focus Group Discussion: Needham introduced Bryant who was there to facilitate the discussion. Needham explained Gelenian had put together various groups (administrators, teachers, students, etc.) on how to meet the needs of Rivendell students and wanted input from Board. Bryant said the process was to get everybody into the conversation at the same time. He stated there are four questions and he will go around room and collect ideas. Following questions were asked and Bryant collected the answers. 1) What are the greatest unmet needs of our students preK-12? 2) What is being done with existing programs to address these needs? 3) What additional programs will be helpful? 4) What can you do personally and professionally to help those students and our schools?

III. Agenda revision/Time Allocation: DeBois stated that VT Rural Partnership (IX.D.) and Middlebury Interactive Language (IX. C.) to VII.A. under Elementary Reports. Also, moved Spanish Overnight Trip (IX.A.) to after General Public Comments (IV.).

IV. General Public Comments: Wilken spoke first saying she had an 8th grader who loves Rivendell and she not pleased with what Warren School Board is doing. She stated that the Warren parents in attendance were there because Gelenian had told them that the Board might adjust the Rivendell tuition rate and they were hoping that could happen so that their children could continue to go to Rivendell. Warren parents spoke about their understanding of the Warren School Board’s decision regarding students having to attend Woodsville and if a parent did not want their child to attend Woodsville, the parents would need to pay any additional tuition rate over Woodsville’s tuition rate. DeBois stated that the Rivendell Board could not get involved in any decisions the Warren School Board is making, however, the Rivendell Board would be looking at the tuition rate and can make adjustments as a Board. Hooke thanked the Warren parents for their support of Rivendell. Gelenian stated that he would like to see the Board lower the tuition to $13,650. A discussion was held on the legality of lowering the tuition rate and Needham stated that while the Board could make an adjustment specific to NH schools an adjustment to our announced tuition rate in Vermont entails certain perimeters. Wilken also asked what the cost of transportation would be and Needham thought it was around $8,000 a year for transporting from Warren. Action: Motion made to lower Rivendell’s 2015-16 tuition for New Hampshire tuition students to $13,500. Approved.

V. Spanish Overnight Trip (RA) for 2015-2016 – Haehnel is working on a Spanish overnight trip to Guatemala as her senior project and gave a brief summary (two or two and half weeks with students and teachers, going through an organization – Where There Be Dragons – which provides guides, selected Guatemala because her father is from there, expense expected to be around $3000 per person, working on ideas for fundraising and grant proposals). DeBois thanked her for coming and that she should continue her planning and come back to Board in September with dates and specifics of the trip for Board approval.
VI. Informational Reports

A. Consent Agenda

\[ \text{Minutes} \]

1) Board – May 5, 2015

Action: Motion made to accept consent agenda. Approved.

VII. Consent Agenda

A. Minutes

1) Board – May 5, 2015

Action: Motion made to accept consent agenda. Approved.

VIII. Informational Reports

A. Elementary Reports:

VT Rural Partnership - MacQueen and Keiling presented a brief presentation on VT Rural Partnership Grant, including a student video. SME and WES are both members of VRP. They spoke of key goals to be met for grant, spoke of composting, community partnerships, student leadership team at WES (primarily 4th graders), connection with Farm to School curriculum, outside classroom gardens being built at SME, each garden having a theme, teaching students to be good stewards of the land, having community members to mentor each class at SME with their garden, and how students have to come and present and answer questions for the grant. Board thanked them for the presentation and were enthusiastic about it being a great program and opportunity for the students.

Middlebury Interactive Language – Keefer gave a brief presentation on the program and was going to run the program for the Board but did not think WES had enough bandwidth. She explained that while the program was still called Middlebury Interactive Language it has broken away from Middlebury College. She said the program is about learning to learn in a number of ways to gain proficiency. Keefer said it is mostly self-graded and students can do the activities as many times as they want and it is recorded if they’ve done the activity so that Keefer can check. Keefer stated that the 7th graders loved it, 8th graders did pretty well with it, 4th year French students had a hard time with it (ambiguity is problem with older students). Keefer said RA is doing it again this year and she is attending some workshops this summer. She also mentioned that technology has been a problem with computers at homes. Needham stated that the program is being looked at RA first and then perhaps at elementary. DeBois thanked Keefer.

B. Superintendent Report: Lyndes was concerned about the $82,437 Needham had referenced in her written report regarding the Vermont chart relating to growth and what will be allowable expenditures. Needham stated that Paulson and she would be keeping a close eye on this and that Rivendell’s budget for next year is very tight.

C. Head of Schools Report: Gelenian reported that he had spoken with a new Rivendell family who had used the Academy Facebook page when looking at the area, so he felt it was working as a marketing tool. He spoke briefly about early college programs (CCV and Goddard College). Hooke asked about VTC and Gelenian replied that VTC has a residential program but that it was tough to get there and very limited. Rinehimer mentioned checking into Johnson. Gelenian also said he was looking at the NH Title money and trying to spend in a new more targeted way; RA summer reading day was working well; prom was great; 100 people showed up to the movie “The Hornet’s Nest” and seven letters from government officials were received which students read and Sarah Copeland-Hanzas (VT Representative) spoke. Rinehimer asked about Visions program – summer and afterschool. Gelenian reported that the administrators had met today and Keiling added that there was going to be a summer program with Jenna Ditcheos help. Administrators are still working on an afterschool program.
IX. Ongoing Business
A. Auditors Appointments: Jean MacDonald announced that Ken Stella of Vershire was willing to be an auditor. The Board was very grateful. Action: Motion made to appoint Ken Stella of Vershire as auditor (term to expire at the Annual District Meeting in March, 2016). Approved. Perryman will contact Stella regarding his appointment.
B. Strategic Planning: This item will be addressed at the Retreat agenda in August.
C. Warren Tuition: Moved, see above.

X. New Business
A. Spanish Overnight Trip (RA) for 2015-2016: Moved, see above.
B. Resignations: Needham spoke briefly regarding the resignation of Hank Plaisted, Director of Information Technology, and his long service and dedication to Rivendell. She also spoke of the resignation of Nicki Barsamian, RA Teacher, who is returning to her home state of Hawaii. Needham stated that they both will be missed. Action: Motion was made to accept the resignations of Plaisted and Barsamian with regrets. Approved.
C. Middlebury Interactive Language: Moved, see above.
D. VT Rural Partnership – Moved, see above.
E. Board Meeting Schedule 2015-2016: Board reviewed proposed schedule, agreed to have no Board meeting in July and to schedule an August Board Retreat. DeBois requested that Board members send to Perryman Tuesday dates they are available in August and a list of suggested agenda items. Action: Motion made to approve Board Meeting Schedule for 2015-2016 as presented with no meeting in July and a retreat in August (date to be determined). Approved.
F. Correspondence: DeBois stated that the correspondence from Warren parents had already been covered above.
G. New Hires (Added item): Needham stated that she was recommending two teachers for hire beginning with the 2015-2016 school year – James Graham as Physical Education Teacher at Rivendell Academy and Kamila Bohacova as Elementary Teacher at Westshire. MacQueen and Gelenian briefly spoke about each candidate, the interview process and that both candidates had been selected unanimously by the members of each search committee. Action: Motion made to hire James Graham as RA Physical Education Teacher and Kamila Bohacova as Elementary Teacher at WES. Approved.

XI. Future Agenda Items
Common Core, Crisis Response, Community Outreach, Policies to be Revised (ongoing), Student Presentations, Department Reports, Spanish (September), Strategic Plan (Retreat),

DeBois stated that it was up to the Administration if they wanted to have a retreat this year. He requested that if they did have a retreat that they plan it during the day of the Board retreat.

XII. Executive Session, 1 VSA § 313
A. Personnel
   1) Superintendent Evaluation:
      Action: Motion made to go into Executive Session at 8:27 p.m. Approved.
      Board came out of Executive Session at 9:44 p.m.

XIII. Adjournment
Action: Motion made to adjourn. Approved. Meeting adjourned at 9:45 p.m.

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