Members Present: Margaret Gladstone, Sandra Smith-Ordway, Doug Tifft (Fairlee); Carol Sobetzer, Brenda Gray (Orford); Beverly Ash, Heather Fahy (West Fairlee); Trevor Law, Jennifer Ricker (Vershire)

Administrators and Staff Present: Noelle Vitt, Head of Schools (Superintendent), Robert Sampson (Head of High School), Gail Keiling (Head of Elementary Schools), Joy Michelson, Eric Reichert, Jon Sands, Jennifer Silverstein.

Others Present: Cicely Richardson (Journal Opinion); Melinda Tse, Cathy Eastburn, Carolee Devito, Mark DeBois.

I. Call Meeting: Carol Sobetzer called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Action - Motion was made to go into Executive Session at 6:01 p.m. Approved.

II. Executive Session for REA Grievance: Board came out of Exec Session at 7:29 p.m. Action: Motion was made to discuss w/REA regarding education of children. Approved. Joy Michelson said the association feels the decision to cut classes out of the schedule was hasty and done for financial issues only with no concern for the consequences for the students, such as schedule and total electives. The number of incoming freshmen is 52 students. Some of the effects/ramifications of these cuts are: Cut of art classes reduces courses available; no yearbook class, Trails booklet, Cross-Age Tutoring, mentoring new teachers, SADD (no stipend in contract; grant funded, where will that be?), no class choice for students which could impact the ability to attract tuition students, a good school is more than high test scores, integrating Life Skills class will be difficult, the affect on art classes will be traumatizing, difficult to move forward with curriculum, talented and motivated art students will suffer. Eric Reichert stated that the schedule means that the 9th grade language arts teacher will have two classes of 25 students which is too many, resulting in lack of attention and communication, and test scores will fall. Also, less electives will be available. Jenny Silverstein echoed the above sentiments.

The high school schedule impacts the middle school schedule as well since teachers who teach at both levels don’t have the same teaching blocks/schedules and this creates times when students are not being taught. Carol expressed appreciation to the REA for the information and comments.

III. Approve Board Minutes of May 6 & 27, 2008: Action: Motion was made to approve the minutes of May 27, 2008. Approved with changes: Members Present: Change Doug Tifft from (at large) to Fairlee; and Section IV. Personnel, Section A - …. Robert Sampson and (insert “a”) to say “agreed”.

IV. Public Input: Mark DeBois from Orford was in attendance just to listen. Carolee Devito, Melinda Tse, and Cathy Eastburn came to the Board with four issues. The Board agreed to hear them as long as they were brief due to the lengthy meeting. One issue was the communities are interested in beautifying the grounds at Samuel Morey and the Old Academy building in Orford. Plants were donated by Sheri Tullar and they wondered how to go about this process since so many volunteers are willing to help with the effort. Noelle responded that there is a master landscape plan in place and recommended that the group meet with Gail Keiling to review the plan and see how this would fit in. She also mentioned that in the past the Orford Gardening Club had tried to also work on this project. The only reason the District had not moved forward in the past was due to monetary concerns.

Second issue: Carolee Devito brought up the idea of improving the environment in the elementary classrooms — she has a background in public health. Felt that there could be improvement. She was referred to Gail for further conversation.

Third issue: Tables vs desks in the elementary — They said the community is interested in meeting to have a conversation about is it working, is it appropriate, how is that measured. Again, she was referred to Gail for further conversation.

Forth issue: Are there guidelines for a PTA/PTO? Noelle spoke about the CSO and how in its formation, there were plans for one but it didn’t find its way to forming. She encouraged a discussion with building teachers and administrators in both elementary schools as well as middle & high schools. Doug reiterated the need to talk with the CSO. The ladies wanted to make it clear that they
were not challenging the situation but want to understand where to bring ideas/suggestions. Noelle recommended that they contact Mike Wood, chair of CSO, or Shawn Gonyaw, Westshire Elementary principal, who is the school representative. Carol Sobetzer recommended once again that they bring each concern to the individual building principals. Gail also mentioned that SIT (School Improvement Team) would be looking for parents to serve with the team this upcoming year and appreciated the ideas and concerns that were being raised.

**Action:** Motion was made to recess for two minutes at 8:20 p.m. **Approved**

Meeting was called back to order at 8:24 p.m.

**V. Communications and Reports:**

**A. Report of the Chair:** Carol recognized that this meeting is Noelle Vitt’s last meeting. She expressed thanks from the Board and District for all of Noelle’s hard work over the years and in appreciation of her dedication to the District, announced a gift in honor of Noelle – a granite bench will be installed in front of the high school building with a plaque in her name. Noelle expressed her thoughts – her time at Rivendell has been the most significant educational and professional opportunity that anyone could have; serving on the Design Team and being a leader, an extraordinary time, joy of the work accomplished in the District. Noelle received a round of applause by all those present.

**B. Report of Head of Schools:** Noelle had sent out a written report to the Board, will be brief due to late hour: highlighted the pilot videography class that will be taught by John Bristol the current high school librarian; Rivendell Trail celebration last week was a wonderful event – Doug’s remarks were eloquent, as were David Hooke’s and Tom Lund’s (student).

1) **Head of High School (R. Sampson)** – Bob Sampson spoke about his decision to leave the District. He knows that a question the Strategic Plan was working on was how to retain good people and he wanted to make sure it was known that he was not “running from Rivendell.” He is proud of the last two years, the work is not done but the foundation for future work is. Rivendell is a great school with great staff. His departure was a struggle but it made the most sense for his family. He hopes to look back in five years and see it is still great, a fine school and district. Margaret asked what he saw as the biggest challenge facing Rivendell. His response was money – the economic prosperity of the four Rivendell towns. He wants to make sure it is understood that the future success of the four towns is that the school is the anchor. Industry isn’t why people come, the school should be. He felt that the budget is based on fear rather than need. Carol expressed her appreciation for his coming to the Board. Brenda asked one last question – did he have any advice for the incoming head of high school? He said building relationships and trust with the staff and students. It should be clearly articulated that there is already a design, someone doesn’t need to come in needing to rebuild it – it’s there. Noelle expressed her appreciation for the CCS (Character, Community, & Scholarship) evening and looks forward to the rest of the week’s events. Margaret added that she appreciated that the school climate has definitely seen an increase and more pride is displayed. Bob finished with a heartfelt pledge of help in finishing the NEASC accreditation because the school he is going to doesn’t begin until November 1 and NEASC is a point of pride for him.

2) **Report on Hiring Process (G. Keiling)** – Gail Keiling presented a copy of the Draft Hiring Procedure. Questions were asked and comments were made. Gail will incorporate changes/updates.

**VI. Executive Session for Personnel:** **Action** - Margaret made a motion to go into Executive Session at 9 p.m. **Approved.** Board came out of Exec Session at 10:10 p.m.

**Action:** Motion was made to hire Laurie Melanson, special education at Rivendell Academy; Chris Schmidt for math at Rivendell Academy; Mariah Lienau as elementary teacher. **Approved** unanimously.
VII. Business Requiring Discussion & Action
A. Open Board Seats

**Action:** Motion was made to appoint Marc DeBois from Orford to fill out the Orford vacancy on the Board and Bruce Lyndes from Fairlee for the At-Large position. *Approved.*

Noelle put forth the 8th grade trip to Maine on 6/17 & 18, overnight with chaperones. There was discussion about the number of male and female chaperones and that there must be enough male chaperones for the boys. **Action:** Motion was made to approve the 8th grade trip to Maine and that there be enough male chaperones for the boys. *Approved.* Sandra voted no, although she supports the trip, she does not like the fact that this came to the Board so late when in fact this trip was planned for months but was not brought to the Board until almost too late. The approval process should be discussed with all site administrators.

VIII. Business Requiring Discussion Only:
A. Policy – Second Reading (not for final approval):
   1) Life Threatening Allergy Policy & Chronic Illnesses in School (revision). Policy was presented. Discussion ensued. It will be sent to the Policy Committee since there were many questions.

B. Future Agenda Items:
   1) Topics
      a) Strategic Plan – July
      b) Law Enforcement Memorandum of Understanding – July: date was set for July 8 at the District Office for approximately 2 hours; time TBD
      c) Math Curriculum Presentation and Approval/Disapproval – July
      d) Board Committee Charges – July
      e) Technology Skills and Health Curriculum (September)
      f) Guidance Curriculum – October

Future Agenda: add Bridget Fariel to the July schedule; set Board retreat at the next meeting.

Gail shared consideration of two 5th grade classrooms at Samuel Morey with Patsy Belknap teaching math & language arts and Dan Noseworthy teaching science and social studies.

IX. Adjourn – Meeting adjourned at 10:23 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sandra Smith-Ordway