Members Present: Marc DeBois, Michael Smyth (Orford), David Gagner, Bruce Lyndes (Fairlee); Kathy Hooke, Jean MacDonald (Vershire); Kevin Dexter (W. Fairlee), Kathy Blanchard (at-large)

Members Absent: Mark Avery (Fairlee), David Ricker (Orford); Cory Austin (W. Fairlee)

Administration and Staff Present: Elaine Arbour (Superintendent); Keri Gelenian (Head of Schools/RA Principal); Tammy MacQueen (WES Principal), Jan Cole (Director of Special Education); Michael Galli (RA Dean of Students); Barbara Griffin (SME/WES Teacher); Carmen Winchester (SME Teacher)

Public Present: Mark Burger (Orford); Cicely Richardson (JO)

I. Call to Order: DeBois called meeting to order at 6:30 PM and stated that meeting was being recorded by Richardson, Journal Opinion, for her reporting purposes.

II. Agenda Revision/Time Allocation: Local Elected Auditors would be added to VIII.E.

III. General Public Comments: Michael Galli presented the original Orford Memorial Hall building plaque with a request that it be mounted on the wall outside of the Business Office. Keri Gelenian opposed this recommendation. There was further discussion about protocol for receiving items of this nature. It was advised that the Leadership Team needs to make a recommendation to the Board about the plaque and the topic was deferred to the next meeting.

IV. Presentation – None

V. Consent Agenda
   A. Minutes
      1) Board – June 6, 2017
      Action: Motion made to accept the consent agenda as presented, with changes to June 6, 2017 minutes. (Dexter/Hooke) Approved.

VI. Informational Reports
   A. Superintendent Report: DeBois welcomed Elaine Arbour and mentioned they will meet regularly during her transition. Arbour publically thanked Penny Perryman and Mike Harris for assisting during the transition. Arbour reported she was familiarizing herself on the federal grants.
   B. Head of Schools/RA Principal: Gelenian reported progress on new hires at the Academy, including a Digital Culture Leader, Athletic Director, Math Teacher, Biology Teacher, Long-Term Counselor Substitute and Administrative Assistant. Arbour said she will begin looking at best business practice to maximize efficiencies and to help the Academy be more mission driven, which may result in a shift of certain tasks from the current job description of the RA Administrative Assistant to the District Office. Gelenian reported that, overall, final grades for 7th and 8th graders were not good and he will present that data at a future meeting. Gelenian also reported that the Academy has approximately 22 new students registered for the fall, including two school choice students, two exchange students and two students transferring from private institutions.
   C. Elementary Principals Report – None. MacQueen reported that SummerScapes was going extremely well with approximately 81 students enrolled and a great staff. She mentioned that the program has not collected as much revenue as in the past, but there are a large majority of students on free/reduced lunch. MacQueen stated that the elementary school is still searching for a music teacher and has hired a math teacher.
VII. Ongoing Business

A. Personnel Policy Committee Recommendations: Gelenian addressed questions about the new hiring documents prepared by the Personnel Policy Committee distributed in the Board packet and explained they represent a more descriptive process of what to do. It was recommended that the Committee compare the hiring procedures documents from the District Office, which were provided in the Board packet, with the proposed documents and bring a recommendation to the Board at the next meeting.

B. Rivendell Review Committee Update: Gagner reported progress on the homework assignment given to the members of the Rivendell Review Committee which will be presented at the next meeting on July 18, 2017 6:30 PM. Gagner also requested clarification of the Committee’s charge and it was discussed that, although the Committee is reviewing historical information, the original charge focused on budget related FY18. Burger reported finding calculation differences (clerical mistakes) which the Committee will identify in a secondary report.

C. Board Retreat Planning (08/15/17): DeBois reported that most administrators are away on August 15, 2017 at a conference and the Board Retreat needed to be rescheduled. DeBois requested Board members send dates they are available to Gray.

D. Report from Former Superintendent re Legal Counsel & Guns: Harris sent a draft security policy to Leopold with no response to date. Gray will check with Leopold for an update. There was discussion about setting a policy prohibiting employees from bringing a gun to campus as a condition of employment. Galli mentioned his work with the Town of Orford Selectboard to pass an ordinance designating the school as a gun free zone and reported they were getting ready for a response before the storm damage occurred. The Board will wait on Leopold’s recommendation before drafting a policy.

E. Substitute Rate Increase: Arbour reported that the current daily substitute rate is $75.00 which might prohibit attracting substitutes. Based on the work that Harris had done previously it was suggested to increase the daily rate to $85.00 to be more competitive. Action: Motion made to approve an increase in the daily substitute rate from $75.00 to $85.00. (Blanchard/Lyndes). Approved.

F. NEASC Accreditation: Gelenian distributed background materials and reviewed a NEASC Pros and Cons document which he prepared. He mentioned that Rivendell is the only school in the country that has combined Critical Exploration and project work and stated that Carmen Winchester’s wagon project is one example. Board members spoke about the importance of reassuring the public that we have better ways to identify our strengths and weaknesses and developing those alternative measures. Gelenian said that we should keep our focus and resources on students and staff and them put together a phenomenal visit for NEASC in the future. Gagner commented that it would be helpful to add Vermont Quality Standards to the website showing that we already meet these standards. Arbour said it will be important to identify specific data points as alternatives, that would include indicators from each of the components of the mission statement, that the Board would be looking for along the way if we decide not to go through accreditation now. Action: Motion made to delay the accreditation process for up to three (3) years as discussed during this meeting (Lyndes/Smyth). Approved.

VIII. New Business

A. Spanish Trip to Nicaragua: Gelenian reported that Paige Radney is currently in Nicaragua and working with a group to do a water project in the village. This is a similar project that students opting for this trip would be involved with. Board would like more insight about the trip, including travel time and duration before approval.

B. Personnel Updates (Hiring/Resignations): Gelenian reiterated personnel openings he spoke of during his report.

C. Correspondence: Gagner stated that there was some email correspondence sent to Perryman from Sean Perry. DeBois and Arbour will discuss. Arbour mentioned receiving a VT legislature update that she would forward to the Board.
D. **Handicap Bathroom – West Wing, RA:** It was discussed that John Jakubens is working on adding a bathroom within the nurse’s office and making the bathroom outside of the nurse’s office handicap assisted. A preliminary architectural drawing was distributed. Jakubens will be meeting with the General Contractor in the next few weeks and will be able to provide an update on costs. Arbour also commented that the sinks in some classroom need to be modified to meet ADA standards.

E. **Elected Local Auditors:** Arbour reported on items discussed at the July 10, 2017 meeting (i.e., role of local elected auditors). There was additional discussion about the scope of work for external independent auditors and whether we should expand their authority to use as a tool to assist the elected local auditors. It was suggested for Dick Paulson to inquire with Dresden School District about who they use.

IX. **Future Agenda Items:** Orford Memorial Hall Plaque (August), Personnel Policy Committee Recommendations (Sept), Security Policy Update – Gun Policy (August), Spanish Trip to Nicaragua (future), Expanded Role of External Auditors (future), Orford Academy Task Force (August), Identify data indicators in lieu of NEASC (Retreat), 7th & 8th grade final grades for SY2016-2017.

X. **Executive Session**

A. **Personnel**

**Action:** Motion made to go into Executive Session at 8:15 PM. (Gagner, Lyndes) Approved. Board came out of Executive Session at 8:45 PM. (MacDonald/Hooke)

**Action:** Motion made to amend existing contract for Elaine Arbour to 24.5 additional days to year one of her contract. (Lyndes/Hooke) Approved.

XI. **Adjournment**

**Action:** Motion made to adjourn. (8:46 PM) (Hooke/Lyndes) Approved. The meeting adjourned 8:46 PM.

Recorded by:
Brenda Gray
Executive Assistant/HR Manager

Note: All Board votes were unanimous (Chair abstains) unless noted otherwise.