I. Call to Order: Meeting called to order at 6:30 p.m.

II. Agenda revision/Time Allocation: DeBois stated that item VIII (B) will be moved to III. General Public Comments.

III. General Public Comments

Property Right of First Refusal:
Needham gave a brief overview regarding the former O’Brien property (746 Route 113, West Fairlee) adjacent to the Westshire Elementary School which the District had owned and then sold the house and a small amount of land to Walter and Jean Zarris in 2004. Jean Gardner (formerly Zarris) is in the process of selling the house and land to the Parontos and right before closing the realtors and attorneys discovered that the District had first right of refusal/purchase, as well as conditions and restrictive covenants. Needham stated that the District’s attorney for the original sale of this property, Gavin Reid, had been consulted and referenced his letter the Board had received. Discussion ensued regarding historical data, why not discovered until closing, the restrictive covenants (no excessive noise, must be residential, no dumping, etc.), sale price for property and amount of acreage (.47 acres). Needham’s recommendation to the Board, if the Board did not want to purchase the property, was that the Board release the purchase rights but that all other rights and interests from the former deed, including the former restrictions and conditions, be continued in the deed. Bromley took responsibility for not knowing about it and not reading deed correctly. Action: Motion made to not exercise District’s first right of purchase, as the District at this time has no reason to purchase said property and that all other rights and interests including the restrictions and conditions must remain, with DeBois authorized to sign the legal documents required. Approved.

IV. Presentation:

A. Budget (R. Paulson): Needham stated that she had asked Paulson to give some preliminary information for this year and an up-date of last year’s.

1) 2014-2015 – Paulson reported that the FY15 operating budget had expenditures of about $26,000 more than budgeted. He deferred the $100k principal payment on the asbestos loan until FY16 to reduce the FY15 cash outflow. He stated that total employee benefits were under-budgeted by about $60,000 in total. Paulson also reported that he had not finished the reconciliation of the special revenue accounts, which include grant funds, so there maybe additional expenses to transfer.

Paulson then reported that Orford had not paid their assessment balance of $90,877 which is late and that when they do the FY15 revenue will be $208,302 above the projected revenue budget. As to why Orford had not paid the assessment yet, he stated: it was his understanding the town of Orford has been using school tax funds to finance the rebuilding of a bridge that was damaged, rather than borrowing the funds, and they will be reimbursed by FEMA when the job is complete; he had received a note from the Orford Treasure in February asking if the town’s February 1st payment of $1,163,510 could be split by paying...
$663,510 immediately and then $500,000 by the end of February and he had said that was fine. However, it was not until May 20th that the District received a partial payment of $200,000 and in the meantime the Orford town treasurer moved out of state and a new treasurer was appointed. Paulson corresponded with her, explaining the urgency of bringing the account up to date, since the overdue balance was $300,000 with an additional $290,877 due on June 15th. The Town’s check for $500,000 was not received until July 6th, leaving the FY15 unpaid assessment at $90,877 which has not been paid to date. He added that the new treasurer has not responded to his July 27th email asking for payment. Board members were upset and unhappy regarding this and discussion ensued. Blanchard explained what she knew regarding the problem the Town had been in with the treasurer suddenly leaving. Comments were regarding payments from towns needing to be timely, especially as it could have put the District in a position of needing to get a loan. It was decided DeBois will call the Orford Selectboard and attend a Selectboard meeting, if necessary, regarding this issue and getting the remaining payment.

2) 2015-2016 – Paulson reported that the personnel budget is very tight for this year and some budgeted position have been filled at salaries in excess of the budgeted amounts. A couple of positions which were partially grant funded can no longer be included in the grants and have increased the operating budget portion of those positions. However, he said that some other budgeted positions have been vacated without being replaced. Paulson stated that he thought it would be okay but he is keeping an eye on any changes that may be of concern. Needham indicated that enrollment is currently at 493 district-wide, of which 46 are preschool students for whom the District receives a .5 ADM count. If that enrollment is maintained for the first 40 days of the school year, the ADM should be okay. The mix of Vermont vs. New Hampshire students obviously plays into that in calculating state of Vermont funding for FY17. Also, reported that FY16 Title I and IIA funding was been approved at $211,727, down from $284,510 in FY15. Upon a question from the Board, Paulson stated that Brad James from VT AOE had told Paulson it actually advantaged Rivendell by having a lower net cost per student in FY16, as it required the State (VT) to give us a higher percentage increase per student for FY17. Paulson thinks there will be a lot of shake out in policies in the next 12-18 months.

V. Consent Agenda
A. Minutes
1) Board – June 2, 2015
Action: Motion made to accept consent agenda. Approved.

VI. Informational Reports (written)
A. Superintendent Report: Hooke asked about SummerScapes and Visions afterschool program and funds. Needham said the elementary principals are overseeing afterschool programs, with Jody Mace and Jenna Ditcheos being hired as the school site coordinators and the elementary administrative assistants will be doing attendance and other necessary paperwork. Needham said the debrief on summer was mixed with some things positive and others not and whether the program is doing what it should be doing. Gelenian said he is pulling money out of the regular budget and working on finding the right people for the Academy, where it will not be a Visions program anymore although a continuation of how to support neediest students and work into an afterschool program and money from the regular budget. Needham reported the District had just gone through a NH Title I monitoring (audit) and Jane Waterhouse from NH DOE was very helpful in explaining to Needham, Gelenian, Perryman and Brenda Gray what is need to meet requirements. Needham reported that Alyssa Fish, WES elementary teacher, had resigned as she and her family were moving and that the resignation letter was very complimentary. A replacement has already been found, Needham said, and will be addressed later in the meeting. Needham also reported that Dan Newsted, RA Math teacher, had resigned as his wife, who now has her special education teacher degree, had found a job in Idaho and they were moving. He was also very complimentary of the school and district. Blanchard spoke complimentary regarding Jennifer Chaffee, the newly hired Accounting Specialist/HR Assistant in the District Office.
B. **Head of Schools Report:** Gelenian distributed hardcopies of his written report. Gelenian said there has been no feedback from the Warren School Board. Needham reported a tuition and transportation agreement had been sent to SAU #23 for Warren but nothing has been received back. Gelenian said he had a math teacher candidate for Newsted’s position coming in on Wednesday, who had come across well in Skype interview (5 students were also in attendance) and references were good so far. Needham reminded everyone that the candidate needs to be certified in NH.

VII. **Ongoing Business**

A. **Auditor Appointment:** Needham reported there is still one position open and it could be a District resident from either Vermont or New Hampshire.

B. **Retreat Planning:** DeBois reported that the Board Retreat was scheduled for Tuesday, August 18th, at the Lake Morey Resort to begin at 5:30 p.m. with Administrators (Needham, Gelenian, Cole, Keiling and MacQueen) to be in attendance for one hour. He stated that he would like to narrow it down to three topics – strategic planning must be one. Hooke said she was very interested in budget and financing, especially as the proposed budget for 2017-18 must be a budget that the Board members can all sell and get the teachers and community behind. DeBois asked that Board members email Perryman a third topic. Act got to be on board must come up with a budget that we all can sell and get the teachers and community. Email Penny the third topic, perhaps Vermont Act 46.

C. **Extend Preschool Region:** Needham stated that previously the Board made a motion to designate the Rivendell region as our preschool region so Rivendell could get in early on Vermont’s Act 166. She further stated that at the time, Vermont had not given any regulations, however, now a public hearing must be held by the District and Vermont must also hold one, so Rivendell and Vermont collaborated and held one together. Needham said that invitations were sent out to preschools in the surrounding areas and the meeting was posted and there was strong input from the community preschools to include Thetford in our preschool region (there are already two preschools in Thetford that are preapproved with VT). Brief discussion with questions ensued about clarification that if Thetford preschools were included in the Rivendell preschool region it only pertains to preschool students who are residents of the Rivendell District’s four towns. Cole and Needham also said that Vermont had spoken complimentary of Rivendell and the District’s willingness to try this early, how easy it has been to work with the District and being collaborative. **Action:** Motion made to expand Rivendell’s preschool region to include Thetford. **Approved.**

VIII. **New Business**

A. **Resignations/Hires:** Needham reported again that resignations had been Dan Newsted and Alyssa Fish. She then reported that regretfully Gary Collins, Director of Operations, had also resigned, however, he was going to work at the Montshire Museum and it was a great opportunity for him. She said that ads had been placed on SchoolSpring, newspapers, and on the website and the hiring protocol was been followed. She stated that the WES Principal and she had known that there was a strong possibility that Fish would be moving so an anticipated opening had been advertised and she was recommending Aimee Bittinger as Fish’s replacement, as well as other new hires from her report: Matthew Joska, Director of Information Technology; Jennifer Chaffee, Accounting Specialist/HR Assistant; Maggie Stoudnour, Rivendell Trails School Coordinator. **Action:** Motion was made to accept the resignations of Collins, Fish and Newsted with regrets. **Approved. Action:** Motion was made to accept recommendation to hire Matthew Joska, Maggie Stoudnour, Jennifer Chaffee and Aimee Bittinger. **Approved.** In addition, Gelenian wants to hire a Robert Bryant as a Behavioral Student Support Specialist. Gelenian said Bryant has worked as a consultant in the District for awhile and brought in some grant money also. DeBois asked if this was a new position, is there a job description, who would be the position’s supervisor. Needham said yes it would be a new position, the person hired would be on a District Office contract (non-union), proposal is to work with Special Education (Jan Cole) for 8 hours/week at SME and 14 hours/week at RA with funding through Tobacco grant and District funds per Gelenian. DeBois wondered if the position would be able to be funded in the future and Lyndes asked if Tobacco grant continues every year and how much is
the allocation. Needham reported that at this point Tobacco grant is every year and is around $5,600 annually. She stated that the position could be made a one year position only and it would probably be for about $30,000 to $36,000. **Action:** Motion made to create this new position of Behavioral Support Specialist for a one year only contract. **Approved.**

**B. Property Right of First Refusal:** Moved see above.

**C. Foreign Exchange Student (RA):** Needham stated that RA had a request to accept a foreign exchange student to attend this school year. Gelenian stated that the female student met all RA’s educational requirements and was coming from Mexico. **Action:** Motion made to approve said foreign student to attend RA for this school year. **Approved.**

**D. Correspondence:** None.

**IX. Future Agenda Items**
- Common Core, Crisis Response, Community Outreach, Policies to be revised (ongoing),
- Student Presentations, Department Reports, Spanish Trip (Sept.), Head of Schools Evaluation (Sept.), Retreat Items (Sept.), Strategic Plan, World Language for Elementary (Nov or Dec)

**X. Executive Session, 1 VSA § 313**

**A. Personnel**

1) **Superintendent:**

**Action:** Motion made to go into Executive Session at 7:55 p.m. **Approved.**

Board came out of Executive Session at 8:20 p.m.

**XI. Adjournment**

**Action:** Motion made to adjourn. **Approved.**

Meeting adjourned at 8:21 p.m.

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