RIVENDELL INTERSTATE SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD MEETING
Westshire Elementary School – West Fairlee, VT
September 5, 2017 – 6:30 p.m.

Members Present: David Ricker (Orford); Mark Avery, Bruce Lyndes, David Gagner (Fairlee); Kathy Hooke, Jean MacDonald (Vershire); Kevin Dexter (W. Fairlee); Kathy Blanchard (at-large)

Members Absent: Cory Austin, Marc DeBois, Michael Smyth

Administration and Staff Present: Elaine Arbour (Superintendent); Keri Gelenian (Head of Schools/RA Principal); Tammy MacQueen (WES Principal); Paige Radney (RA World Language Teacher); Michael Galli (Dean of Students)

Others Present: Mark Burger, Chris Crowley (Orford); Cicely Richardson (Journal Opinion)

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

II. Agenda Revision/Time Allocation: None.

III. General Public Comments: Mark Burger asked about the status for an outside auditor search. Elaine Arbour stated that the Business Administrator had already started this process prior to her arrival and an outside auditor was selected early on. Burger made a request for the elected auditors to review the engagement letter before it is signed.

IV. Presentation: None.

V. Consent Agenda
   A. Minutes
      1) Board Retreat – August 22, 2017
         Action: Motion made to approve consent agenda. (Dexter, Lyndes) Approved.

VI. Informational Reports (written)
   A. Superintendent Report: Arbour reported that the start of the school year went smoothly and briefly discussed the professional development with High Tech High prior to school opening. Arbour also stated that she had spent some time at Samuel Morey. Arbour reported that she submitted the Corrective Action Report from the spring grants and the initial NH Title I grant. Also, two (2), Title IIA grants were submitted with the purpose of funding the High Tech High visit later in the month. The VT Title I grant was submitted and initially approved. Arbour stated there was a recent article in the Valley News about the Rivendell Academy summer writing program. Bruce Lyndes asked about student enrollment numbers, which Arbour will send to the Board. Kathy Hooke added there was also an article in the Valley News about the new Athletic Director, Ross Convertino.
   
   B. Head of Schools Report: Jean MacDonald questioned why there is not a student government this year at the Academy and Keri Gelenian explained there isn’t an advisor. He further elaborated that the idea is to take student groups that already exist and have those groups send one person to a leadership council which then works as a team to coordinate activities. This structure would add coordination across groups. Gelenian reported that the Digital Culture Leader position is still open. There was discussion about the decline in student grades third trimester last year at the Academy. Gelenian will discuss with staff and added that a lot of attention is focused on the low performing group and that individual programs are often created to try and help students. There was additional discussion about what might have caused the decline in grades. Hooke asked if the RA booklet would be updated, perhaps district wide, and distributed to realtors. Gelenian explained that we don’t have an individual to do this work and that creating a cohesive booklet would be challenging. There are also costs to consider.
C. Elementary Schools Report: Tammy MacQueen reported a great opening to school and the buildings look beautiful. MacQueen mentioned posting updates to her blog and reported an approximate enrollment for Westshire. MacQueen also mentioned the professional development work prior to the opening of school was inspirational. Westshire Elementary will be getting ready for Tunbridge Fair next week.

VII. Ongoing Business
   A. Handicap Bathroom Update – West Wing, RA: Arbour provided a brief update and reported that a lot of work has been done to get the project completed. The automatic doors at the entrance of the West Wing building and between the East and West Wing buildings are done.
   B. Orford Memorial Hall Plaque Update: Arbour explained that the leadership team will be meeting on September 6, 2017 to discuss the Orford Memorial Plaque.
   C. Spanish Trip to Nicaragua - RA: Paige Radney handed out an informational sheet about a 10-day trip planned in February 2018 to Nicaragua with approximately 12 students. Radney explained she visited the location and is working with an organization, Planning Hope. The trip will be a service learning trip with and students will participate in ongoing community projects. The trip is supported by student fundraising and Radney reported that she received a $5000 Byrne Foundation grant. Radney is also teaching a class geared toward the trip. Action: Motion made to approve Spanish Trip to Nicaragua in February 2018 (Ricker/Hooke) Approved.
   D. Retreat Review
      1) Superintendent/Board Goals - Approval: Superintendent goals identified at the August 22, 2017 retreat were briefly reviewed. There was additional discussion about forming a subcommittee to work on the Board marketing/communication goal identified at the August 22, 2017 retreat. Hooke spoke about possibly engaging Jim Collins of Flannel (http://flannelbrand.com/flannel) to assist in this work, including possible redesign of the front end of the Rivendell website. Avery suggested continuing discussion at the next Board meeting, securing volunteers for the committee and having something in place by the turn of the calendar. Action: Motion made to approve Superintendent Goals as identified in Section VI of the August 22, 2017 Board Retreat minutes and to form a Rivendell Marketing and Communications Committee based on discussion and Board Goals as identified in Section VII of the August 22, 2017 Board Retreat minutes (Ricker/Lyndes) Approved.

VIII. New Business
   A. Personnel Updates: Arbour reported that there was a change to Rachel McConnell’s contract (Mathematics/Science teacher at RA) which will reflect the addition of tutoring a student with a specialized schedule and a Title I math class.
   B. Correspondence: David Ricker reported that the Community Development Block Grant has been submitted. He added that the task force was tasked to find a viable alternative for the Orford Academy building and they feel that they have found it; therefore, their work is done. He added that Rivendell Administration is now responsible for forming a relationship and working with AHEAD. Ricker added this task force was an informal group, not a Board subcommittee, and not subject to warning meetings and keeping minutes. Kathy Blanchard mentioned there has been some discussion about forming another informal group to work in conjunction with the Board as this work continues. Arbour will work with Ricker to address concerns raised by Burger about AHEAD and local school tax.

IX. Future Agenda Items
   20th Anniversary; Common Core; Crisis Response; Community Outreach; Policies to be Revised (ongoing), Department Reports; Orford Academy Building Task Force; Vision for Food Service.; Cooperation w/Thetford Academy; Elected Local Auditors’ Role; Guns in Schools Policy; Electronic Devices; NEASC Accreditation – Identify Indicators (October) Finance Update (October); Rivendell Review Committee Update (October); Personnel Committee Recommendations(October); Rivendell Marketing and Communications Committee (October)
X. Executive Session
   Action: Motion made to move into Executive Session at 7:40 p.m. (MacDonald, Ricker) Approved.
   Motion was made to come out of Executive Session at 8:03 p.m. (Avery/Hooke) Approved.

XI. Adjournment
    Action: Motion made to adjourn (MacDonald/Ricker) Approved.
    Meeting adjourned at 8:04 p.m.

Recorded by:
Brenda Gray
Executive Assistant/HR Manager

Note: All Board votes were unanimous unless noted otherwise.