RIVENDELL INTERSTATE SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD MEETING
District Office, Orford, NH
September 11, 2012

Members Present: Cicely Richardson, Marc DeBois (Orford); Sandra Smith-Ordway, Bruce Lyndes, Mark Avery (Fairlee); Dawn Stever, Jennifer Shatney (W. Fairlee); Jennifer Ricker, Jean MacDonald (Vershire); Kathy Blanchard (at-large)

Members Absent: Vanessa DeSimone

Administration and Staff Present: Brenda Needham (Superintendent), Keri Gelenian (Head of Schools/RA Principal), Gail Keiling (Head of Elementary Schools/Principal SME & WES), Tammy MacQueen (WES Asst. Principal), Gabi Martino (Tech. Integration Specialist/Website), Michael Galli (RA Dean of Students), Hank Plaisted (Director of Information Technology), Jennifer Ellis (RA Art Teacher)

Others Present: David Ricker (Orford)

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

II. Agenda Revision/Time Allocation: Smith-Ordway stated that there was one correspondence item that needed to be addressed immediately and then there were two other items that would need action under New Business.

Correspondence: Smith-Ordway announced that Vanessa DeSimone had sent in her resignation from the Board due to a health issue. The Board accepted her resignation with regret. Smith-Ordway stated that since David Ricker had expressed interest in being a Board member previously when there was an opening that Marc DeBois had approached him and he was willing to fill DeSimone’s position until the District Meeting in March, 2013. Smith-Ordway asked for Board support.

Action: Motion made to appoint David Ricker of Orford, NH, to fill the Board member (Orford) opening. Approved. Smith-Ordway stated that Ricker had been sworn in prior to the meeting in anticipation of being appointed.

III. General Public Comments: Jennifer Ellis, RA Art Teacher, stated she was there to present a couple of overnight student trips. Smith-Ordway stated that this is not considered a general public comment and should be presented to K. Gelenian who would then in turn present to Board. Gelenian asked if since Ellis was here if the Board would allow her to speak. Board agreed. Ellis is interested in putting together a community service field trip or two for a small group of students such as working for Habitat for Humanity in New Orleans or to Joplin, MO, and/or maybe to New York City to work for a soup kitchen. She thought the trips would be less than $1,000 per student. Board asked if she had looked at doing something to help locally and Needham mentioned there are opportunities in Vermont to still help with Hurricane Irene rebuilding. Ellis is hoping to have it planned for winter and stated that she would like to eventually have it set up so there was an annual type of trip in the fall. Needham suggested that Ellis work with Gelenian and M. Galli on a proposal when Ellis has more definite plans and be sure to make the connections to curriculum so that students and community understand why it is valuable. Needham said the formal plan would then need to come to the Board to approval or disapproval.

IV. Presentation/Guests:
   A. Website Update (G. Martino) – Martino announced that the new Rivendell website had gone live on the first day of school and gave a visual presentation with the website on a screen for the Board to view. Martino requested that everyone please look over the website at their leisure and give her feedback through the website feedback button or by sending her an email. Martino explained next steps. It was suggested that curriculum come off as what was there was outdated. Keiling suggested a link to VT GREs and then common core. Overall comments from Board were that it was much better and Board thanked Martino for her work.

V. Consent Agenda (accept)
A. Minutes (August 7 & 9, 2012) – (Changes noted.) Smith-Ordway reminded Board of the 2nd part of the Board Retreat on September 18 at 6:00 p.m. at the District Office.

B. Superintendent Report (written) – Needham stated that #5 -School Improvement on her written report should have said “LEA” not “DOE.” She had additional information on #10 of her report on playgrounds which was that the company has been very cooperative and is giving a very large discount resulting in $15,000 for each playground structure and that our insurance company will be providing some support to that also. Needham stated that the Board will need to do a motion under New Business to approve the replacement. Needham also said that a motion from the Board would be needed regarding the replacement of the SME heating control system. She stated that G. Collins, Director of Operations, had gone through a bid process for this and had selected Control Technologies who had offered two options – 1) bare bones at $25,000 and the recommended more sophisticated system around $31,000. Discussion ensued regarding questions on how the system works, where money to pay would come from (qualifies for capital expense), who the bidders were, return on investment, maintenance contract, shelf life, etc. Needham stated that she would have Collins prepare a report for the next meeting to answer questions but that a decision had to be made in order to be able to regulate the heating system with cold weather coming. Avery stated that that the Board should trust Collins’ judgment. Shatney stated that there were still a few pieces of the old playground equipment on the ground at Westshire and could it please be removed. Also, asked if the playground structures being purchased can have additional equipment added on to it in the future. Needham replied yes and a picture of the structure was shown to the Board. Board asked what had happened to the Speech Language Pathologist approved for hire and Needham replied she had taken another position and that J. Cole, Director of Special Education, was working on hiring an independent contractor. Avery stated that he has a connection with a company that does natural playgrounds. Needham requested he give her the information so that could also be looked at for the future.

C. Principal Reports (written) – (Moved ahead of Head of Schools Report on Agenda): Richardson asked if another alternate recess had replaced the end of the day one that was changed. Keiling and MacQueen said yes and there is still one hour of recess a day. They reported that some complaints were received but had received more thank yous from parents. MacQueen reported that it has been a positive change and it is much calmer when the students are boarding the buses to go home. MacQueen reported that Westshire had a wonderful opening, teachers were working well together, students seem happy and she thinks the atmosphere feels warm, good and productive. MacDonald asked about enrollment and Keiling reported that there had already been three additional children enrolled since opening day at SME.

D. Head of Schools Report (written) – Lyndes asked how many exchange students this year and Gelenian stated there is one from Slovakia and is the sister of a former exchange student at RA. Gelenian stated she was also attending River Bend which immediately raised questions from the Board regarding who would be paying tuition and commenting that it would not be the District. Gelenian will check into it for the next meeting. Gelenian stated that RA will run a regular day on Thursdays when Winter Program is going on at the elementary schools. RA students that want to ski will be able to if their grades are appropriate. Gelenian stated that the movie “Buck” had 40 people attend and some were from outside of the District. He stated that the conversation with the director via Skype went very well and she had asked for the video tape of the conversation as she may use it on her website. Gelenian stated that in regards to summer reading – every teacher and Tracy Page had led a group on the book. Discussion ensued regarding various student responses about summer reading.

Action: Motion made to approve consent agenda with changes to minutes. Approved.

VI. Ongoing Business
A. Auditor Position: Smith-Ordway said she had received from District Office information on what the auditors do and will send a write-up to the District towns’ list serves this week.

B. Committee Updates: Needham reported that Dick Paulson, CFO, and she have been meeting with Anne Duncan Cooley and the Old Orford Academy Building Task Force would really like to have a couple of Board members be on the Task Force. D. Ricker and J. MacDonald both volunteered.
VII. New Business
A. Change in Authorized Signers SME Account: Action: Motion made that Gail Keiling and Angel Parkin be named as the authorized signers on the SME student government account at Wells River Saving Bank. Approved.
Motion made to accept bid from Control Technologies for expenditure up to $31,120 for JACE computer and software system for Samuel Morey Elementary School. Discussion ensued including amending motion to include extra steps, withdrawing original motion and final decision made to leave motion as read. Action: Motion made to accept bid from Control Technologies for expenditure up to $31,120 for JACE computer and software system for Samuel Morey Elementary School. Approved.
Action: Motion made to approve replacement of playground equipment through Recreation Creations Company for the cost of $15,000 per site. Approved. Needham will in her next report what amount the insurance covered.
B. Policy Adoption/Revision – Needham stated that all policies were for a first reading and explained that VSBA provides a service to Boards on policy. She stated that policies shouldn’t be older than five years, which means they should at least be reviewed every five years for their currency.
1) HIPAA Compliance, Code D1 (revision): No changes just review update.
2) Professional Development, Code D2 (revision): Reviewed changes. Ordway questioned regarding where it stated “Superintendent” to add in “his or her designee” for Gelenian to be responsible.
3) Substitute Teachers, Code D6 (revision): Took from VSBA but need to make changes because of NH and VT regulations. Some discussion.
4) Volunteers and Work Study Students, Code D7 (revision): Change was mandatory.
5) Alcohol and Drug Free Workplace, Code D8 (revision): Requested Board read carefully – some changes in legislature that extended this policy to volunteer and work study students. Needham added that RISD also has EAP (Employee Assistance Program) and they offer this support, counseling, etc.
6) Resignations, Code 9 (revision): Request Board read carefully.
C. Correspondence – Ordway stated Concerned Citizens had sent another letter and wanted to know what the Board plans to do regarding the various items they have brought up. Ordway will send a letter to them and stated that some things need to be handled at retreat.

VIII. Future Agenda Items (Discussion)
Long Range Plans to Address Flux in Population (Gelenian), Strategic Planning (Next Steps), Community Outreach, Grants, Global Language for 6th grade, Policies to be Revised (ongoing), Student Presentations, Department Reports, Board Goals (Retreat), 4 Year Science Progression with NECAP and progression and possible elementary student presentation (Oct.), Food Service (Nov.), School Improvement Update & NEASC (Dec.).
Shatney requested that NECAPs be presented with disability students broken out, however, Needham and Gelenian didn’t think it got reported that way, not until AYP. Blanchard asked about addressing the flux in population and Gelenian stated he has been looking at that. Board will talk about at their retreat and let administrators know what statistics they will want. Board also asked about having student reps this year and Galli stated they are waiting for first Student Government meeting and will be addressing that.

IX. Anticipated Executive Session – None.
X. Adjournment - Action: Motion made to adjourn at 8:09 p.m. Approved.

Recorded by:
Penny Perryman