RIVENDELL INTERSTATE SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD MEETING
Westshire Elementary School – West Fairlee, VT
October 1, 2013 – 6:30 p.m.

Members Present: Marc DeBois (Chair), Cicely Richardson, David Ricker, (Orford); Bruce Lyndes, Mark Avery (Vice Chair), Grover Boutin, (Fairlee); Kathy Hooke, Kathy Blanchard (at-large)

Members Absent: Mike Fanizzi (W. Fairlee), Jennifer Ricker (Vershire)

Administration and Staff Present: Keri Gelenian (Head of Schools), Gail Keiling (Head of Elementary Schools/SME Principal), Tammy MacQueen (WES Principal), Brenda Needham (Superintendent), Michael Galli (RA Dean of Students), Dick Paulson (CFO), Mary Rizos (RA Teacher)

Others Present: Sarah Rinehimer (West Fairlee), Joey & Kate Farley (Piermont), Roberta Knight (Fairlee)

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

II. Agenda Revision/Time Allocation: Chair DeBois stated that Item VII B and VIII B were being moved to the top of the agenda.

VII. B. Board Position (West Fairlee): G. Boutin indicated Sarah Rinehimer in the audience and gave a brief introduction. Action: Boutin nominated Sarah Rinehimer to fill the Board position as a West Fairlee representative. Approved. Chair DeBois thanked her for offering to serve and invited Rinehimer to sit with the Board. He also informed her that until she is sworn in she is not an official Board member. The District Office will arrange the swearing in to happen soon. The Board introduced themselves.

VIII. B. Overnight Student Field Trips (Peru & Quebec): K. Gelenian read the request from Gail Keefer, French Teacher, that outlined a trip to Quebec City for no more than 12 students and 3 chaperones, November 8-11, 2013. K. Hooke asked how it would be funded. Gelenian replied student fundraising and students’ own funds. M. Rizos, Spanish Teacher, then gave an outline of her request for a trip to Peru, 10 students and 2 teacher chaperones, with a parent or two also. The focus is cultural and environmental issues of the region and it will be treated as a mini-course with students earning ½ academic credit. Tentative dates are April 10-22, 2014 and will cost about $1700 per person. Regarding funding for this trip, Rizos is looking into some grant funding, as well as fundraising by students, listing it on creative projects website for donations, and students’ own funds. Approved: Motion made to approve both student field trips (Peru and Quebec). Approved.

III. General Public Comments (Listen & Defer Action to Future Mtg.): None.

IV. Presentation
   A. SummerScapes Presentation (T. MacQueen): T. MacQueen gave a brief PowerPoint presentation on the 2013 July SummerScapes Program. The program was called Young Inventors Camp and served more than 120 children grades 1-10. The program included: Incredible Inventors, Young Einsteins, Academy Challenge Camp, Math Tutoring Sharing Projects 2013 Invention Convention, Abstract Art, Ecology, Ductagami, Mountain Biking; Drama, Math Tutoring, Scrap & Stamp, Lego Robotics, Kids Critic, Intramural Sports, Intro to Trails Crews, Tennis, Ceramics, Lawn Games, Dance Rocketry, Digital Photography, Rugby, and Swim Lessons at Treasure Island. Field trips included Billings Farm and Boston Museum of Science. MacQueen spoke of how the SummerScapes staff makes the program so great. The Board thanked MacQueen.

V. Consent Agenda (Accept):
   A. Minutes
      Action: Motion made to approve the consent agenda with noted changes. Approved.

VI. Informational Reports (written):
   A. Head of Schools Report: Gelenian reported that the Gray Sisters fundraising had really taken off and he had received some backlash in regards to it as it is an emotional issue due to the circumstances. Fundraiser is to support the girls, graduates of RA, in the short term. Brief discussion on receipt and dispensing of funds. Chair DeBois said that there needed to be a clear
cut process and accountability set up and clearly communicated. Lyndes asked what the enrollment numbers are. Gelenian said the large Senior class graduating had made enrollment number go down from last year even with added Warren students. Needham reported that as of today the total enrollment was 210 RA, 178 SME, and 96 WES for a total of 484. Lyndes felt knowing enrollment numbers was important as Board goes into budget planning.

1. **Student Representative:** None.

2. **Elementary Reports:** MacQueen (Westshire) reiterated items from her written report (Family to School Night on Thursday, all-school hike on October 10th, and preschool programs going great). Keiling (Samuel Morey) reported they had held SME’s Back to School Night and had a great turnout and lots of positive comments. She also reiterated various items from her written report (all-school hike using Rivendell trails this year, Tunbridge Fair). Keiling stated that NECAPS were under way this week. This lead to a discussion on the NECAP results being in. Needham stated Rivendell scores had gone down but not significantly. Administrators had looked at briefly and will be analyzing now and will report back to Board. Keiling reported that she had met with Jeff Francis from the Montshire Museum recently, adding that Rivendell had been the first school partnership with the Montshire. She also reported that Kathy McGowan is starting study groups with teachers of grades 3-8. They will meet to discuss the teacher’s lesson plan, all observe the teacher instructing and then they meet to debrief to focus on effective teaching strategies, especially questioning. C. Richardson asked Keiling where the natural playscapes she spoke of in her report were going to be located. Keiling replied to the right of the currently play structure and explained in more detail (i.e., slide built into hill, balance beams, water station) about it and that local community people were helping provide wood and services. She added that they also hoped to get it started at Westshire.

B. **Superintendent Report:** Needham reported that the only addition to her written report was that some information had been received from the Orford Academy Task Force. She quickly read the correspondence from them and thought maybe the Board should have someone from the Task Force come to next meeting. D. Paulson, who is on the Task Force, stated that there are four areas the committee feels are appropriate ways to move forward. Needham stated she would have the written correspondence sent electronically to the Board to review and have time to think about. Paulson stated that the $5,000 in the letter was the same $5,000 the Board discussed at a previous meeting. C. Richardson asked Needham about the risk management issues in her report. Needham reported that reviews/audits by our insurance company of workmen’s comp injuries and incidents, as well as review of procedures/policies, are done periodically and suggestions/recommendations are given to help with these items. Most recent was to add to our driver vehicle use sign-off that no cellphones can be used when Rivendell vehicle is in motion.

VII. **Ongoing Business (Deliberation & Possible Action):**

A. **Budget Update (R. Paulson, Jr.):** D. Paulson (CFO) noted that the FY14 budget is on track, but figures are too small to be meaningful at this point, so he would present an FY14 report at the next meeting. Paulson then presented a pre-audit summary of FY 13 financials, showing a gross surplus of roughly $283,000. $217,000 in lower than budgeted spending and $66,000 in higher revenues. Special education spending was approximately $89,000 below budget; school and District administrative savings of $57,000; debt service savings were $46,000, resulting from an FY13 budgeting error. Remaining savings were spread across other departments. Surplus revenues primarily resulted from a Vermont/Federal Education Jobs Program grant, Vermont transportation aid, and New Hampshire Vocational Aid. These additional revenues were offset, in part, by lower than budgeted Special Education reimbursement, as well as lower Early Childhood Program and secondary education tuitions. The Board stated that they would like to receive budget reports with the Board packet prior to the meeting so that they would have time to look at in more depth. K. Hooke asked what happens to a surplus and Paulson replied that it is kept for one year as often items from the “surplus” year come in during the next year and need to be applied to it. Boutin stated that he had attended the VSBA regional Board meeting and they were told to ask their business manager if your District was considered a small or large employer in regards to affordable care. Paulson replied that Rivendell is a large employer. Hooke then asked how the tuition from the Warren students and other tuition
students was handled. Paulson replied it was split in the same percentages as other mutual income and expense.

B. Board Position (West Fairlee): See above.

C. Strategic Plan Process (G. Boutin): Boutin thanked everyone who had taken a goal and will assign a few to others. He stated that after looking at the budget timeline, he thought there would be too many meetings if he went with the original strategic plan schedule, so he proposed that instead of having the fait accompli by the Annual District Meeting, that instead present how we are going to work on the plan at that meeting. Board agreed. Boutin was willing to meet with each Board member on their goals. He suggested that Board spend 5-10 minutes at each of the coming Board meetings on Strategic Plan. Boutin will contact each Board member individually to meet about their goal.

VIII. New Business (Receive Information & Possible Action):

A. First Reading of Revised Policy H-3 – Community Use of Facilities: Needham stated that she had updated the policy which will eventually require action by the Board, however, this was just the first reading. She then stated that she would like the Board’s guidance on the procedures for this policy which were really old including the fees and categories. She is trying to make the procedures simple and not repeat items. Board had questions and comments (i.e., not offering facilities to for-profit organizations, if Rivendell equipment is broken who pays for it, insurance concerns, organizations that are “non-profit” but are charging participants to attend, only allowing people who are part of the Rivendell District towns to use it, building keys, one time use versus multiple use, wanting to be welcoming, maybe adding another category such as D for a for-profit organization that is not a District business, multiple use fee should be proportional to number of participants, who decides what category a group fits into). Joey Farley, who runs a for profit fitness business and has used the facilities in the past and would like to again, spoke of his use and how many participants he has on average and that he carries his own liability insurance. Needham said she would work on the procedures for the next meeting and the policy will be presented again.

B. Correspondence: Needham announced that she had received five-year service award certificates for J. Ricker, B. Lyndes and M. DeBois from the Vermont School Board Association in recognition of dedication and exemplary service to Vermont children as a Board member of the Rivendell School Board. She presented them to DeBois and Lyndes and will send to J. Ricker, who was absent. DeBois stated that two letters were received by the REA. One was their interest and intent to continue the negotiation process for the Educational Support Personnel unit. The other regarding a counter offer which will be discussed in executive session later.

IX. Future Agenda Items (Discussion):

   Community Use of Facilities (Nov.), Strategic Plan (Nov.), Visions (Bazzell-Nov), Community Outreach, Grants, Global Language for 6th grade, Policies to be Revised (ongoing), Student Presentations, Department Reports, Individualized Student Needs, Recruiting Process, Budget

   Action: Motion made to go into executive session for purposes of negotiations and personnel. Approved. Board went into executive session at 8:17 p.m. Also, present for negotiations were B. Needham and K. Gelenian.

X. Anticipated Executive Session:

   A. Negotiations
   B. Personnel

   Board came out of executive session at 8:37 p.m. No action taken.

XI. Adjournment (Action):

   Action: Motion made to adjourn at 8:38 p.m. Approved. Meeting adjourned.

Recorded by:

Penny Perryman
Recorder