RIVENDELL INTERSTATE SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD MEETING
District Office Conference Room – Orford, NH
October 3, 2017 – 6:30 p.m.

Members Present: Marc DeBois (Chair), Michael Smyth (Orford); Mark Avery, Bruce Lyndes, David Gagner (Fairlee); Kathy Hooke (Vernshire), Kevin Dexter (W. Fairlee); Kathy Blanchard (at-large)

Members Absent: Cory Austin, Jean MacDonald, David Ricker

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

Public Present: Mark Burger, John O’Brien, Carl Schmidt, Quentin Mack, Kathy Baker (Orford); Art Pease (Lebanon); Cicely Richardson (Journal Opinion)

I. Call to Order: Meeting called to order at 6:31 p.m.

II. Agenda Revision/Time Allocation: Auditors meetings and notices would be added to VII. F.

III. General Public Comments: Members of the public (Art Pease, Quentin Mack, John O’Brien and Carl Schmidt) verbalized support of re-hanging the Memorial Hall plaque. Marc DeBois said the Board did not oppose re-hanging the plaque, that it was left for administration to determine the location of where it was to be displayed. Elaine Arbour informed the group that the leadership team wanted to respect the sacrifices that families and individuals made and agreed it is important to honor our veterans. Administration suggested displaying the plaque in the Orford Academy building where it would be visible to many and could be displayed with some language about its history. Kathy Blanchard said she consulted with Doug Tifft, a member of the original Rivendell building committee and he reported the history of the Memorial Hall buildings and informed her that the plaque may have come down at any time during the building renovations in anticipation of demolition and it was just never re-hung. Tifft went on to say that the building committee was respectful to each of the individual schools’ history and each of the towns’ heritage. There was discussion about where it may have been hung in the old Memorial Hall. Bruce Lyndes said he felt it needed to be discussed more to gather information from all sides. There was some conversation about how the plaque came into the possession of Michael Galli and how there had been prior discussion with differing opinions about what to do with it. The Memorial Plaque discussion will be added to the November agenda.

IV. Presentation: None.

V. Consent Agenda
   A. Minutes
      1) Board September 5, 2017
         Action: Motion made to approve consent agenda. (Lyndes/Smyth) Approved.

VI. Informational Reports (written)
   A. Superintendent Report: Arbour talked about the visit to High Tech High and said she felt it was helpful for people to observe the project work and talk to students. She added that the trip was funded through Title IIA grants. Arbour also mentioned the educational funding deficit in Vermont for FY19 and that tough decisions will need to be made to bring in a reasonable budget for the district.
   B. Head of Schools Report: Keri Gelenian provided an analysis about the drop in student grades for the 2016-2017 third trimester. He added that the Academy may need to make it mandatory to pass all three trimesters of a course, or a student would need to make it up. Kathy Blanchard asked about the change of SBAC testing in the 9th, which Gelenian explained was moved
C. Elementary Schools Report: Tammy MacQueen reported that the Open House was well attended at Westshire. She also said the Science SBAC scores were good and that the connection with the Montshire Museum seemed to be helping. Michael Foxall reported that Samuel Morey was off to a positive start this year. The all school hike was last week and back-to-school night is scheduled for later in the week. Foxall said there is a shortage of substitute teachers and they are looking for ways to juggle schedules and provide supervision to cover when a teacher is out.

VII. Ongoing Business

A. Personnel Policy Committee Recommendations - Informational: Arbour introduced draft documents from the Personnel Policy Committee and explained they reflected a merge of current hiring procedures and new recommendations from the committee. She added the committee is working on finalizing a reference check form. Arbour also reviewed the evaluation process document. The forms have not yet been rolled out to staff wanting to give the Board an opportunity to provide input. There were no questions from the Board.

B. Rivendell Review Committee Update: The Rivendell Review Committee will meet next on November 16th. David Gagner reported the committee has come to the point where they need support of legal counsel. He mentioned they have reviewed two different versions of the Articles of Agreement and there are discrepancies in ADM counts. There was some discussion about a small set of legal counsel with expertise on interstate law. David Hooke sent an email to Arbour with the questions the committee needs legal counsel guidance with and hopes to have feedback before the next Rivendell Review Committee meeting. Arbour will share Hooke’s correspondence with the Board. Marc DeBois added that we need to be cautious about the cost of legal counsel and be sure to add it to next year’s budget in the event additional counsel is required.

C. Finance Update: Jennifer Chaffee referred to the finance update that was distributed and mentioned that salary/benefits were not encumbered on this report. She added there is nothing glaring in the budget. There was some discussion about whether additional support was needed in the Business Office to cover absences and Arbour assured she was keeping an eye on this, but felt we had what we need to continue our work.

D. Orford Academy Building Task Force Update: DeBois reported that the Orford Academy Building Task Force was not a Board established subcommittee and that it had been disbanded because it was no longer needed. DeBois publically thanked the Orford Academy Building Task Force members and said that AHEAD will take over the work in conjunction with the Board. Burger asked about the status of the lease with AHEAD and the actual cost to the district for carrying the building. DeBois explained there is no lease currently signed and that AHEAD is still trying to secure funding. DeBois reassured that when a lease is presented it will be reviewed with our attorney.

VIII. New Business

A. Personnel Updates: None.

B. Correspondence: DeBois reported receiving a phone call from Kelly Monahan who expressed displeasure about the progress with the Orford Academy Building. DeBois also received notification from the NEA to engage in negotiations. Action: Motion made to establish a Negotiations Committee for the Board. (Avery/Hooke) Approved. Negotiation Committee members: Mark Avery, Kathy Blanchard and Elaine Arbour.

C. Establish Rivendell Marketing and Communications Committee: There was discussion that the Rivendell Marketing and Communications Committee would be established as a Board subcommittee to address marketing concerns of the district. Action: Motion made to establish the Rivendell Marketing and Communications Committee (Lyndes/Avery) Approved. Initial members include Bruce Lyndes, David Gagner, David Ricker, Michael Smyth and two administrators who will meet and determine a plan to bring back to the Board.

D. Community Conversation about Facilities: Arbour is a member of the COL2.0 subcommittee to identify facilities and educational needs. She reported that on October 19th she will meet with
staff to get their thinking before reaching out to other groups. Following this meeting a letter would be distributed to the community about the committee’s charge and include information about the process. Later in the year (November/December) the first community conversation would be scheduled. Arbour said the committee won’t recommend any major changes until the 2019/2020 school year. Kathy Hooke advised that communication to the community should come jointly from DeBois and Arbour.

E. School Board FY19 Budget Priorities: Arbour asked for the Board’s priorities for the FY19 budget. Responses included maintaining quality of education, not endangering current professional development initiatives which relate to student education, listening to elementary educators and replenishing the capital reserve.

F. Auditors Meetings & Notices and External Auditors: Burger asked for clarity on public notification for the auditor’s meetings and will provide Brenda Gray with a week lead time. He inquired about the engagement letter with external auditors. Arbour will check with Dresden District to see if they have a comparative engagement letter.

IX. Future Agenda Items
20th Anniversary; Common Core; Crisis Response; Community Outreach; Policies to be Revised (ongoing), Department Reports; Vision for Food Service; Cooperation w/Thetford Academy; Electronic Devices; Elected Local Auditors’ Role; Guns in Schools Policy; NEASC Accreditation – Identify Indicators (Nov); Orford Memorial Plaque (Nov); AHEAD Update (Nov); Teacher Project Presentation (Dec); Charge of Marketing Committee (Nov); ALICE – Active Shooter Response Training

X. Adjournment
Action: Motion made to adjourn (Smyth/Hooke) Approved.
Meeting adjourned at 8:43p.m.

Recorded by:
Brenda Gray
Executive Assistant/HR Manager

Note: All Board votes were unanimous unless noted otherwise.