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

Absent: Margaret Gladstone (Fairlee)

Administration and Staff Present: Mike Harris (Superintendent); Keri Gelenian (Head of Schools/RA Principal); Michael Foxall (SME Principal); Tammy MacQueen (WES Principal); Jan Cole (Director of Special Education); Michael Galli (RA Dean of Students); Barbara Griffin (WES/SME Teacher)

Others Present: Sue Ford (NH House of Representatives); Rob Wolfe (Valley News); Mark Burger, Cicely Richardson (Journal Opinion); Orford Residents – Dianne Stanley, Rick Shreve, Chris Crowley, Craig Tomlinson, Priscilla Clark, Shelly Shreve, Joe Arcolio, Don Davis, Terry Harwood, Meredith Harwood, Ann Hughes, Bonnie McCouch, Rob O’Donnell, Nancy Murphy, Sheri Clifford, Bill McKee, Joseph Schwendler, Elizabeth Schwendler, Carl Schmidt, Lauren Halter, Rusty Keith, Marion Spottswood, Stephen Spottswood, Lud Flower, Caroline Flower, Eva Daniels; Fairlee Residents: Dan & Georgette Ludwig, Noël Walker

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

II. Agenda Revision/Time Allocation: No changes.

III. General Public Comments:
   A. Orford Citizen Technical Assessment Committee of RISD Historical Annual Reports (M. Burger): DeBois introduced Burger as spokesperson for the aforementioned committee and said that the Board had allotted 15 minutes for this item and when Burger was finished the Board would then ask questions or comment. Burger opened stating that the group was in full support of the District but had questions about how the Articles of Agreement have been properly applied when allocating the net operating costs of the District between the four Rivendell towns over the years of the agreement. He stated that the goals were to show the need for an independent audit/review of whether the Articles of Agreement have been properly applied (including the financial impact if any), show the need to update the Articles of Agreement due to changes in federal and state regulations and funding, and to establish a finance committee. Some other items Burger spoke of in relation to Articles of Agreement: various VT legislation (i.e., Act 130) and if RISD had to adopt them and their financial effect, parent paid tuition for preK students versus District paid and ADM count, calculation of ADM, Special Education costs, RISD being an independent school, transportation costs, the document being applied inconsistently causing an adverse effect on all the towns but significantly on Orford, administrative and fixed costs not tied to student enrollment, calculation of net operating expenses, changes in the financial presentations in the annual reports over the years. Avery felt there were merit in some of the items brought up and added that the Articles of Agreement are rather general. Board comments in general were regarding who would review the Articles of Agreement and the application of RISD costs, RISD is not an independent school district but a public school district with funding from both states, endorsing reviewing the document but with reservations, look into items with a forward focus and in a financially conservative way, not money in budget for lots of legal fees, suggesting people in attendance run for Board positions, worry about potential divisiveness of this as RISD has come together from four separate towns into a unified district, will be long and difficult – not a quick answer, agreement that document should be clarified, contacting both states regarding legal advice, Board cannot amend the document only the voters. DeBois asked what the Board wanted to do. Avery said Board should be more active and address this suggesting using the legal expertise of the two states (Ricker agreed). Hooke suggested putting together a Board subcommittee to clarify some key issues. Burger offered to help. Harris stated he would be communicating with both the NH DOE Commissioner and VT AOE Secretary tomorrow and will ask for their support in terms of legal
IV. Presentation:
A. Community Outreach (M. Rizos): Harris gave a brief introduction stating that Rizos would be talking about some of the projects she has in mind and then the Board will discuss what their expectations are. Some of the items Rizos and the Board spoke of: she has revised the Academy brochure, she was preparing for November 14th Advisory Open House which is an information night at the Academy and plans to run a video, has been talking to students about their Rivendell experiences, she distributed a draft poster, visiting local real estate agencies, students being on radio stations, short videos regarding critical exploration. DeBois reported that he had contacted the Piermont School Board Chair who was not interested in having the RISD Board meet with them. However, the idea developed of RISD holding an open house and inviting area school boards and communities. DeBois stated he had met with Gelenian and some other RA staff to arrange for this to happen. Discussion was held on how to invite and who to invite. Harris stated that Gelenian had recently made a presentation to Lyme which was well received by parents. Gelenian said he has changed the way he is doing these presentations as he has found there needs to be a story. Hooke said everything sounded terrific but wondered what Rizos would do for the elementary schools. Rizos stated that she had the same question and is waiting direction on that. She hopes to start working on other items after the November 14th meeting. DeBois thanked her for attending.

V. Consent Agenda
A. Minutes
1) Board – September 6, 2016
Action: Motion made to approve consent agenda. (MacDonald, Ricker) Approved.

VI. Informational Reports (written)
A. Head of Schools Report: Gelenian stated his additions are more overnight trips that will be under New Business.
B. Elementary Schools Report: Foxall thanked Board and Harris for giving extra staff support in the third grade class. He reiterated items in his written report (all school hike, the outdoor classrooms and working on more grants for outdoors). MacQueen reiterated her report (family night, all school hike, VT Rural Partnership Conference). She added the videos and blogs are being viewed by many, including students’ extended families, and is a great way of reaching out to community and beyond. Also, a buddy bench is being created in Dylan O’Hearn’s name and they will have a dedication when completed.
C. Superintendent Report: Harris reported still within budget even with the new hiring of a paraprofessional for the SME third grade; Operations has had some custodian and mechanical challenges recently, including a rodent problem; thanked Perryman for being accommodating while her office was not accessible; free and reduced numbers are back up thanks to work from Food Service and the principals; believes he had found some grant money for the restoration of the Westshire snack program; 2017-18 budget planning is starting; have made a change on the 2016-17 school calendar which does not require Board approve of a switch of October 7 being a teacher inservice day (instead of inservice and conferences) and November 4 being a conference day (instead of inservice and conferences). DeBois asked about the status of the lawsuit in NH by the Rochester District that reportedly could mean as much as $50,000 in back state aid for Orford. Harris responded that the verdict had been rendered in Rochester’s favor (i.e., the state cannot cap aid allocations to districts) but that it was expected that the state would appeal the decision. Harris added that no action was expected soon.

VII. Ongoing Business
A. School Board Member (W. Fairlee) & Auditor (VT or NH) Openings: DeBois stated that open positions are to be filled within 30 days but if no one volunteers this is difficult to do. He requested that everyone continue to think of and approach community members, who may be interested.
B. **Head of Schools Evaluation:** Harris nothing new at this point.

C. **Superintendent Search:** DeBois reported that Harris had suggested the possibility of Lyme and Rivendell sharing a superintendent next year if a candidate wanted full time work, as he will be leaving Lyme and Rivendell at the end of June 2017. Harris stated that the superintendent job description had been included in the Board packet and asked Board to review as it will need to be approved at the November Board meeting.

VIII. **New Business**

A. **Overnight Trips – RA**
   1) Appalachian (Mt. Cube) Trail (October 29 & 30, 2016)
   2) Southwest Science Trip (April 2017 Recess)
   3) French III Trip to Montreal (October 23-24, 2016)
   4) NHS Overnight Retreat (Orford in December 2016)
   5) France Trip (April 14-29, 2017)
   6) Canadian Studies Trip to Quebec (May, 2017)

   Gelenian stated that we have done all above trips in the past and there should be no additional expenses to the District.

   **Action:** Motion made to approve all trips as presented. (Lyndes, Hooke). **Approved.**

B. **Personnel Updates:** Harris reported that there had been two qualified candidates for the elementary school nurse position. The search committee and he were recommending Jennifer Ricker for the position. She is a school nurse at an area school and has been for many years.

   **Action:** Motion made to hire Jennifer Ricker as the Elementary School Nurse (1.0 FTE) as recommended. (Hooke, Ricker) **Approved.**

C. **Correspondence:** DeBois asked if anyone had received emails or letters to Board to share. Harris said he had a letter for executive session.

IX. **Future Agenda Items**

   Common Core, Crisis Response, Community Outreach, Policies to be Revised (ongoing), Department Reports, Orford Academy Building Task Force, Superintendent Search (Nov), Vision for Food Service, Presentation by R. Bryant (Nov.) – 15 minutes;

   Avery told Burger that he appreciated him staying for the whole Board meeting.

X. **Executive Session**

A. **Personnel**
B. **Negotiations**

   **Action:** Motion made to go into executive session at 7:55 p.m. (Avery, Lyndes)

   Board came out of executive session at 8:16 p.m.

   **Action:** Motion made to approve Cheryl St. Pierre for a leave of absence without pay retroactive from August 22 through September 23, 2016. (Ricker, Hooke) **Approved.**

XI. **Adjournment**

   **Action:** Motion made to adjourn. (MacDonald, Ricker) **Approved.**

   Meeting adjourned at 8:18 p.m.

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

**Note:** All Board votes were unanimous unless noted otherwise.