RIVENDELL INTERSTATE SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD MEETING
Westshire Elementary School – West Fairlee, VT
October 7, 2014 – 6:30 p.m.

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

Members Absent: Jean MacDonald (Vershire), Grover Boutin (Fairlee), Mike Fanizzi (W. Fairlee)

Administration and Staff Present: Brenda Needham (Superintendent), Keri Gelenian (Head of Schools/RA Principal), Michael Galli (RA Dean of Students), Creigh Moffatt, RN (School Nurse)

Others Present: None.

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

II. Agenda Revision/Time Allocation: None.

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

IV. Presentation/Guests:
   A. Youth Risk Survey – Needham introduced Moffatt and gave some background on the Youth Risk Survey. Moffatt did a brief overview of the survey which is given every two year with the next one in January of 2015. She also mentioned it takes quite some time to get the results. Survey asks students to answer question regarding subjects such as bullying, weapons, various substance use, soda usage, suicide, self-worth, seat belt use, sexual behavior, etc. Moffatt reported that the Academy averages where better than the State averages. Lyndes asked if there was any way to compare to another school, but the State discourages that and Moffatt said only way would probably be to contact another school and ask them to share their results. Moffatt gave examples of a couple of questions and results. Needham suggested that if the Board was interested Moffat and Needham could put together a chart showing some of the questions and some of the specific data because it does drive some program decisions. Moffatt and Needham will do this.

V. Consent Agenda (Accept):
   A. Minutes
      1. Board – September 2, 2014
         Action: Motion made to approve the consent agenda, with corrections. Approved.

VI. Informational Reports (written):
   A. Head of Schools Report: Gelenian mentioned the meeting at the Academy on October 16th on Common Core and hoped Board members would attend. Rinehimer, Blanchard, Ricker, Richardson, and Avery plan to go. Hooke asked about NECAPs and how data is analyzed by Gelenian. Needham said teacher should be looking at each student and making sure they are continuing to increase with NECAP and other data. Gelenian said he doesn’t care about individual student data or clusters of students, he looks at data over time in general – looks at the whole thing. Richardson said that the elementary school scores in Science were disappointing because they have worked with Montshire for so long. Needham said that there is one more year of NECAP science, the others (math, literacy) will be now be Smarter Balanced. Richardson mentioned Gelenian’s snow day comment in his report and Needham said 2015-16 calendar will be coming to the Board in a few months, perhaps may look at taking snow days from in-service day or school vacations, although need to remember that there must be a certain percentage of students in school or the day does not count and per statute the calendar has to be aligned as close as possible with the technical school (River Bend). Blanchard mentioned that in a mid-west state she knew the schools are allowed to us computer based learning on a snow day. Needham
stated that NH allows that now, however, there is an approval process first. Vermont does not allow this yet. Rinehimer commented to Gelenian that she thought his letter was a very strong statement (Common Core) and wondered if the Board would be talking about it today or in the future about whether the Board had an official position. Needham reminded everyone that with meetings, like the one being held at the Academy, it is important to let parents know if this is a personal opinion, or a policy, or a Board opinion or position. Discussion ensued and agreed Common Core discussion will be added to November agenda. Needham stated that the VSA/VSBA conference this month at Lake Morey Resort will be helpful on this subject and Richardson encouraged Board members to attend.

1) **Student Government Report:** Galli handed out the Student Council written report. Richardson asked if Council President can’t attend the Board meeting would they have another member come as a representative. Galli stated they were discussing this. One item on their report was a flag pole that was near the old middle school entrance that was taken down. Needham stated that the pole had been taken down this summer due to disrepair and safety reasons, as she understood it. In addition, it was not being used and the official school flag pole was at the Academy’s main entrance. She has now heard that a former Orford class might have given the removed pole to Orford Academy sometime in the past, although there was no plaque on the pole and no one knew that when it was removed.

B. **Elementary Reports:** Needham pointed out, as indicated in the elementary report, that a system of intervention is provided at the elementary schools based on the model of response to intervention (RTI). Elementary principals unable to attend. No additions.

At this point, Gelenian added to his report that something that might come to the Board’s attention is the Academy trying to find a teacher to teach driver education to NH students. They have been looking at a number of options but don’t have anything finalized yet.

C. **Superintendent Report:** Needham reported the electronic sign now needed a new circuit board and it is on order. RAD needs a Board representative to attend their meetings. No one showed interest at this point and members will be asked again at the next meeting. Needham reported on a meeting held with Manuela Fonseca, VT AOE Early Education Programs Coordinator, and the elementary principals and Rivendell’s ECP teachers recently regarding new legislation which will affect our ECP. It basically requires providing 10 hours a week to families in a community based setting, Rivendell’s ECP and a community based program would need to be approved and then the ECP students would be part of our ADM. She added that looking down the road, it would man not charging students. Needham also said that AOE’s technical assistance has said perhaps the ECP has not been correctly run budget wise since beginning. Needham reported with regret that Andy Boyce, Trail Coordinator, had resigned. She is has not met with RTA or the administrators yet about this position but is in the process of setting up meetings.

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

A. **Auditor Position Appointment:** No suggestions. Needham asked if Board would like her to look into putting opening on town listserv, or an ad, or telling Town Selectboards about opening. DeBois requested she do so.

B. **Policy Review – Second & Third Reading (Possible Approval):**

1) **Curriculum Development, Code G1**

   **Action:** Motion made to approve Code G1, Curriculum Development. **Approved.**

2) **Animals in the Classroom, Code G2** – Discussion ensued, with Needham pointing out that policy does allow for educational reasons and therapy animals. Gelenian gave example of a dog that comes to Robotics Club, is therapeutic for at least one student but is more like a mascot. Needham stated that parents still need to be informed when animals are in a classroom or club activity especially in regards to allergies or skin sensitivity. Rinehimer felt #7 of policy was the most constraining. Ricker felt it needed more discretion for the administration on this. Policy will be reviewed again in November.
C. Elementary Athletics & Enrichment/Former CSO: Needham stated that these two new groups (recreation and fundraising/enrichment) have been meeting as mentioned in her written report. The groups are planning to call themselves Rivendell Recreation Association and Friends of Rivendell. Board was adamant that the groups must be representative of all four Rivendell towns to use fields, gyms, etc. Richardson felt the Board needs to create a policy about elementary school sports and that elementary sports are not part of the Rivendell school program. Board expressed interest in receiving updates and communication from the newly formed groups. Needham said some members of the group have been in communication with her and Needham will invite a representative to the next Board meeting. Board was not sure they needed to approve the use of the Rivendell name but agreed to its use by these two parent/community groups.

D. Strategic Plan Process: Needham said she had contacted Harry Frank at VSBA who was willing to facilitate. Rinehimer had been checking with someone also but has had no reply. Brief discussion on looking over the goals and maybe eliminating some now, Board working on a draft and then bringing to public for input (Blanchard), and providing an opportunity for faculty input. Agreed to have Needham schedule a Board meeting soon with Harry Frank as facilitator soon. Board members are to look over the current plan and come to meeting prepared.

VIII. New Business (Receive Information and Possible Action):
A. Budget 2015-2016: Needham announced that the principals are collecting input and information at the building level and she was reminding Board of the Budget Timeline. She also reminded Board that there is usually a second Board meeting in December in regards to budget. Ricker stated he would like to know what administrators would really want/need and Blanchard agreed but also need information in terms of threshold. Needham said Dick coming to next meeting.

B. Overnight Student Field Trips
   1) US Southwest Trip
   2) France Trip
   3) Quebec Trip
Action: Motion made to approve all above overnight field trips. Approved.

C. Administrator & Administrative Contracts: DeBois spoke briefly that District’s attorney had sent more up-to-date sample contracts and DeBois requested the Board review for the November meeting.

D. Correspondence: Vermont School Board Certificates of Appreciation – 5 years for Cicely Richardson and 5 years for Mark Avery. Avery mentioned that he had recently spoken to Senator Jane Kitchel regarding educational funding.

IX. Future Agenda Items (Discussion):
   Common Core (Discussion & Position), Crisis Response, Orford Academy Building Task Force (November), Finance Report & Threshold, Administrative Contracts, Community Outreach, Policies to be Revised (ongoing), Student Presentations, Department Reports

X. Anticipated Executive Session (Discussion), 1 VSA 313:
A. REA Negotiations
Action: Motion made to go into Executive Session at 8:10 p.m. Approved.
Board came out of Executive Session at 8:15 p.m.

XI. Adjournment (Action)
Action: Motion made to adjourn. Approved. Meeting adjourned at 8:16 p.m.

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