RIVENDELL INTERSTATE SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD MEETING
District Office – Orford, NH
November 3, 2015 – 6:50 p.m.

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

Members Absent: Bruce Lyndes (Fairlee), Jean MacDonald (Vershire), Grover Boutin (Fairlee)

Administration and Staff Present: Brenda Needham (Superintendent), Keri Gelenian (Head of Schools/RA Principal), Jan Cole (Director of Special Education), Gail Keiling (Head of Elementary/SME Principal), Tammy MacQueen (WES Principal), Michael Galli (RA Dean of Students), Richard Paulson (CFO)

Others Present: Cicely Richardson (JO), Robert St. Pierre (Director of RBC&TC), Lance Mills (Fairlee), Jolene Vogelien (Orford), Dawn & David Binford (Orford)

I. Call to Order: Meeting called to order at 6:50 p.m.

II. Agenda Revision/Time Allocation: No changes.

III. General Public Comments: Mills spoke briefly regarding being a long-time supporter of Rivendell, as well as an employee and coach at a various times, and now he works at River Bend and was there to offer support during the River Bend presentation and for Rivendell students attending River Bend.

IV. Presentation:
   A. River Bend Career and Technical Center (R. St. Pierre): St. Pierre introduced himself and distributed folders and reviewing information (Program Completion Certificate Requirements 2015-16, Why Choose River Bend, Dual Enrollment Numbers 2011-15, Dollar Per College Credit, Rivendell Academy/RBC&TC Students’ Future Plans, RBCTC’s enrollment, High School Populations from 5 Partner schools and RBC&TC 15-16 numbers from partner schools). St. Pierre spoke of River Bend enrollment dropping and how River Bend is changing, offering more, college credits and trying to collaborate with RA to see how River Bend can meet needs. St. Pierre also stated that they hold regional board meetings and would really like to have one of Rivendell’s Board members attend. He also requested that when Rivendell develops the 2016-17 calendar to have October 7 and March 31 match River Bend’s calendar. DeBois thanked him for coming.

V. Consent Agenda
   A. Minutes
      1) Board – October 6, 2015
         Action: Motion made to accept consent agenda, with format changes. Approved.

VI. Informational Reports (written)
   A. Elementary Principals Reports: MacQueen shared that Keiling and she were going to VT Rural Partnership with grant requests of $2500 for each school regarding outside classroom proposals. Also, the Vermont Symphony (harp and flute) had played for both schools. Keiling reported on field trips (6th graders went to NE College and will be going to Dartmouth soon and another to Cedar Circle Farm). Keiling stated SME harvest lunch will be soon and in the past SME has hosted the Bradford Senior Center, however, this year they were also inviting grandparents of kindergartners and first graders.

   B. Superintendent Report: Rinehimer asked about the education quality review Needham had in her written report. Needham said it had reminded her of old days of school approval when a team comes in and reviews certain documents and information to make sure you are meeting the qualifications of the State. She said after first of the year she expected the State will send out a
list (three year cycle) and who has been chosen. Needham also reported that Keiling, Gelenian, Cole, MacQueen and she were going to be meeting with Richard Boltax from VT AOE on school improvement. She also stated that Warren is not paying for student transportation to RA and that she has written a letter to them and is waiting to hear back.

C. **Head of Schools Report:** Gelenian reported they are trying to get together a parent fundraising group for the arts and needs a parent group to take a lead (about 5 people). Gelenian said he is working on interpreting SBAC scores. Rinehimer asked if there could be an amendment to the RA “marketing” pamphlets and Gelenian said yes to get in touch with him regarding the change.

1) **Student Government Report:** None (at play practice).

**VII. Ongoing Business**

A. **Auditor Appointment:** Nothing to report.

B. **Head of Schools Evaluation Process:** DeBois spoke briefly saying that Hooke and Rinehimer had volunteered to work on this and will meet with Gelenian to discuss how they would like to see the process go and then will report back to Board (perhaps December) for approval on process.

C. **Act 46 Public Forum Review:** DeBois reviewed the forum held immediately prior to the Board meeting. Discussion on making sure community is aware of forums when they are held (suggestions were: listservs, newspaper, sandwich boards, electronic sign, Facebook, website, postings in town – also babysitting suggested). DeBois reported that the Thetford Board wanted to meet again and he would be hearing from their Board Chair probably tomorrow and that while Rivendell wasn’t in a time crunch, Thetford was. J. Vogelien spoke very complimentary on how the District and RA had been sold to them when they were deciding where to move to. Gelenian and Keiling reported that they are currently involved in educational rounds (visiting various schools) and now the Ray School wants to bring a whole team to SME because they’ve heard such great things. D. Binford also spoke about when they were relocating and spoke very complimentary of the amount of time RA spent showing them the school and talking to them. Blanchard spoke of the study group meeting with OESU that MacDonald and she have been attending and she discussed Rivendell applying for a study grant instead with Thetford and drop out of the one with OESU. Although there was no formal vote, the Board agreed to drop out of the OESU study group grant. DeBois asked if the Board wanted to continue talking with Thetford and apply for a grant and Board were in favor. Ricker, Blanchard, DeBois and Hooke volunteered to be the members to meet with Thetford, should DeBois be contacted that Thetford wanted to continue talks. DeBois stated that Perryman would contact everyone after he hears from the Thetford Board Chair.

D. **Strategic Plan:** Rinehimer would like Board to use the plan as a guide for future planning. Ricker suggested the final draft be posted on the back of the Board agenda to remind Board.

E. **FY17 Budget Development:** Needham reported that the Leadership Team had met today and Ricker, as one of the Board’s representative on budget had attended. Paulson distributed a handout (attached). He pointed out that losing even one student at this time will have a big effect on budget. Needham pointed out that there was no decision regarding salaries with teacher negotiations and they had just used numbers to give Board a sample of how it works. She reported that Leadership Team had discussed supplies, books, equipment, dues and fees, etc. considering as level funded or decreases. They had also tried to problem solve and it was a tough discussion, as needing to talk about personnel cuts. Brief discussion on the unexpected additional revenue (special education reimbursement) for FY15. Talk of other districts/schools doing fundraising so that some items can come off the regular budget. Needham reported that Paulson and she were running numbers and will be having another meeting with the Leadership Team. She reminded Board that they would present a preliminary budget to them at the December 1st meeting.

**VIII. New Business**

A. **VSBA Conference Update (K. Blanchard):** Blanchard stated that the educational quality standards had already been spoken about earlier. She then spoke briefly on the presentation by Laura Soares (VEHI) which was more eye opening regarding all current health plans through
VEHI ending and being replaced by January 1, 2017. VEHI promised that districts would have all the information needed to negotiate with teachers and staff by June 2016.

B. **Correspondence:** DeBois stated that he had received a letter from the VT AOE Secretary stating Board could proceed on the Superintendent search. He said this would be discussed more in executive session.

IX. **Future Agenda Items**

Common Core, Crisis Response, Community Outreach, Policies to be revised (ongoing), Student Presentations, Department Reports, World Language for Elementary (Dec), Act 46, Budget

Hooke stated that a community member had asked if Rivendell had asked for larger buses when the school buses were replaced. Needham said no and that the buses were purchased by the transportation company and Rivendell does not instruct them on what to purchase.

X. **Executive Session, 1 VSA § 313**

A. **Personnel**
   1) **REA Negotiations** *(Teacher Unit)*
   2) **Personnel**

   **Action:** Motion made to go into Executive Session at 8:12 p.m. Approved.
   Board came out of Executive Session at 9:10 p.m.

XI. **Adjournment**

   **Action:** Motion made to adjourn. Approved. Meeting adjourned at 9:11 p.m.

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