RIVENDELL INTERSTATE SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD MEETING
Westshire Elementary – West Fairlee, VT
November 5, 2019 – 6:30 p.m.

Members Present: Dav Gagner, (Fairlee); Maria Koehler, Kathy Hooke (Vershire); Marc DeBois, David Ricker, Vanessa DeSimone (Orford); Kevin Dexter, Rebecca Wurdak (West Fairlee); Kathy Blanchard (at-large)

Members Absent: Jason Knowles, Jon Lester (Fairlee)

Administration and Staff Present: Barrett Williams (Superintendent), Bill Little (CFO), Jan Cole (Director of Special Education), Keri Gelenian (Head of Schools), Melissa Zoerheide (WES Principal), Steve Lindemann (SME Principal), Story Graves (RA Teacher); Kerry Browne (RA Teacher), Barbara Griffin (WES Teacher), Sasha Irish (SME Teacher), Wendy Fogg-McIntire (RA Learning Coach)

Public Present: Christine Bills (Orford), Devlin Tarmey, Jes Tarmey (Vershire)

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

II. Agenda Revision/Time Allocation: Add Section III.A. REA Board Address. Move Section VIII.A. Approve Overnight Trips to Section III.B.

III. General Public Comments:
A. REA Board Address: Barbara Griffin, REA President, commented on an incredible start to the school year and thanked the administration. She expressed appreciation for problem solving with the Superintendent and building administrators. Griffin explained the key roles of the REA and Marc DeBois thanked both the union and the administration.

B. Approve Overnight Trips
1) Hulbert Outdoor Center – December 5-6, 2019
2) National Honor Society – December 12-13, 2019
3) Quebec City – May 23-26, 2019
   Action: Motion was made to approve the Hulbert Outdoor Center, National Honor Society and Quebec City overnight trips (Gagner/Hooke) Approved.

IV. Presentation
A. Academic Mentoring Program: Story Graves introduced herself and student Devlin Tarmey and provided an overview of the Academic Mentoring Program. Graves explained how students are identified to participate. The program is currently available to 9th and 10th grade students only, with most students attending one block per day. The goal is to move students out of the program and create independence. Tarmey spoke about his experience in the program.

V. Consent Agenda
A. Minutes
1) Board – October 1, 2019
   Action: Motion made to approve the minutes from the October 1, 2019 board meeting as submitted (Hooke/Gagner) Approved.

VI. Informational Reports (Written)
A. Superintendent Report: Barrett Williams briefly reviewed the points in his written report and mentioned he plans to send the strategic plan letter next week. There was some discussion about grants and available funds.

B. Head of Schools Report: Keri Gelenian added the following points to his written report: Academy play is this weekend; a group of students is making a 3d map of the Rivendell Trail and Information Night is November 19th. Gelenian reported that he went to Warren to meet with 8th grade students and gauge interest in Rivendell.
C. **Elementary Schools Report:** Steve Lindemann reported that the students gave a valiant effort at the spelling bee and that it was a good experience. Kathy Blanchard said communications from Lindemann have been wonderful. Melissa Zoerheide said the clear need at Westshire is stabilization and telling the story of the elementary school as being a positive place. She said things are going well.

**VII. Ongoing Business**

A. **Monthly Finance Update:** Bill Little reported that audit work is underway and that the transition to eFinance continues. Little stated that cash flow continues to be a challenge and the entire line of credit has been executed. $2.57 million has been collected from Vermont towns. Little mentioned that the tuition rate has been unchanged for two years and the deadline for Vermont is in December. Williams will research area school rates. Little stated the general fund net deficit for FY2019 is $175,001.

B. **Elected Local Auditor Update:** Tabled.

**VIII. New Business**

A. **Approve Use of Funds from Capital Reserve Fund:** Williams explained that the heat exchanger wheel at the Academy broke and the cost to repair it was $32,000. **Action:** Motion was made to approve $32,000 from the Capital Reserve fund for the repair of the heat exchanger wheel at the Academy (Hooke/Gagner) **Approved.**

B. **Community Meeting Recap:** David Ricker reported that he spoke to a few people when he attended “Dump Day” in Orford and feel it had some impact. He also spoke about the Community Meeting at Samuel Morey and members that attended agreed the structure was better than the meeting held in Orford. There was discussion about negative communication at the meeting and DeBois reminded board members that they are there to listen and talk about what is going on in a positive manner. The next Community Meeting is scheduled for West Fairlee at Westshire Elementary School on Monday, February 10th at 6:30 p.m.

C. **2020-2021 Budget:** Little reviewed the FY2021 budget assumptions: (1) 12% increase in medical insurance cost, (2) flat staffing with few exceptions, (3) 100% use of HRA, (4) pay increases not yet factored in, (5) no contribution to Capital Reserve Fund in regular budget, (6) additional line of credit in FY2021 to bridge deficit, and (7) FY2019 budget deficit and cumulative prior year’s food service deficit (special warrant article). Little stated that we need to recover $175,000 in this budget and will also need to recover in the FY2021 budget for HRA under budgeting. Overall, the current proposed general fund budget is up 6.4% without salaries. Little stated that the proposed FY2021 is representative of every employee HRA budgeted at 100% of their benefit; in years past this has not been budgeted correctly. There was discussion about possibly looking at class size and configuration and exploring the possibility of sourcing health benefits from another vendor, as well as seeking revenues from outside sources. Williams has emailed Brad James to ask about the process of applying for a Vermont threshold exemption, if needed. The board would like to see three budget options at the next meeting (ranging from a 5-7.5% increase) which represent the least impact on education and continue moving the district forward.

D. **School Board Training:** The annual VEHI meeting is at Lake Morey Inn on Friday, November 8, 2019. Dav Gagner will attend.

E. **RISD 20th Anniversary Celebration:** Maria Koehler will discuss with Karen Ward about possibly working on this committee.

F. **Correspondence:** An email was received by Ricker to be discussed in executive session.

**IX. Future Agenda Items:** 2020-2021 Budget (Dec), Facilities Use Review (Dec)

**X. Executive Session - (Discussion), 1 VSA § 313**

A. **Personnel, 1 VSA § 313(a)(6)**

**Action:** Motion was made to move into Executive Session at 8:37 p.m. (Hooke/Koehler) **Approved.**

**Action:** Motion was made to come out of Executive Session at 8:50 p.m. (Gagner/Wurdak) **Approved.**
XI. **Adjournment (Action)**

**Action:** Motion was made to adjourn (Hooke/Gagner) **Approved.**
Meeting adjourned at 8:51 p.m.

Recorded by:
Brenda Gray
Executive Assistant/HR Manager

Note: All Board votes were unanimous unless noted otherwise.