RIVENDELL INTERSTATE SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD MEETING
Westshire Elementary School – West Fairlee, VT
November 14, 2018 – 6:30 p.m.

Members Present: David Gagner (late), Jon Lester, Bruce Lyndes (Fairlee); Kathy Hooke (Vershire);
Marc DeBois, Vanessa DeSimone (Orford); Kathy Blanchard (at-large)

Members Absent: Maria Koehler (Vershire); David Ricker (Orford); Cory Austin, Kevin Dexter (West
Fairlee)

Administration and Staff Present: Elaine Arbour (Superintendent); Keri Gelenian (RA Principal); Julie
Donahue (Rivendell Elementary Principal); Tammy MacQueen (Rivendell Elementary Assistant Principal),
Jan Cole (Director of Special Education); Bill Little (CFO); Stephanie Chesnut (Dean of Students), Barbara
Griffin (Teacher)

Public Present: Rebecca Guillette (Fairlee); Mark Burger (Orford); Erin Cilley, Andrea Welch, Sarah
Rinehimer, Dawn Taylor, Jennifer Hill, Dustin Hill, Doug Sonsalla, Jen Shatney (West Fairlee); Emily
Knaeble, Annette J. (Vershire)

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

II. Agenda Revision/Time Allocation: Meeting began with III. General Public Comments in order to
allow enough Board members to arrive for a quorum to vote on II Agenda Revision/Time.

III. General Public Comments: Members of the public voiced concern and frustration about the lack
of communication about a personnel matter affecting their children at Westshire Elementary School
and asked the Board for a timeline in which parents would be notified about any decisions. Elaine
Arbour outlined the process and explained that the District does not have all of the information to
make this determination at this point, but agreed it should be as quickly as possible. Additional
concerns were raised about the breakdown of communication to parents, District policies and
procedures and whether the District has taken any proactive measures to avoid this same type of
situation in the future. Julie Donahue explained that Maggie Stoudnour, Trails Coordinator is
conducting a training for staff in March and we are working with school nursing staff to train staff
as well in an effort to be proactive. At this time, all hikes have been suspended. There was
conversation about annual required teacher training and Arbour explained all training is done at the
beginning of the year and school nurses provide training for staff for trips. A question arose about
the Code of Conduct Policy revision and, specifically, the language in the policy regarding a
“reasonable person”. Arbour explained that this is what a typical person would expect to happen
and it accompanies the teacher job description and the collective bargaining unit. Another concern
was raised about an employee handbook and Arbour agreed it needs to be updated. Some
community members expressed concern that Rivendell is not living up to what it was supposed to
be and that the buildings do not feel like they did in the past. Several comments were made about
the excellent teaching that Tammy MacQueen has been doing in the classroom and while she was
the principal at Westshire Elementary School. There was additional conversation about who is
filling in as Assistant Principal with MacQueen in the classroom. Arbour explained that Donahue
and MacQueen are managing between them.

Concerns were also raised about how the recent “snow day” on Tuesday was handled by the
District. Arbour explained there were a variety of factors that played into her decisions to send
students home, including the power outages at Samuel Morey Elementary School and Rivendell
Academy. Arbour added that she was working with someone locally to try and cover the plowing at
Westshire Elementary School since no bids were received on this work. She learned in October that
the bid was not put out and reacted as soon as possible once she had this information. The original
plan was the Director of Operations was going to plow at Rivendell Academy and Samuel Morey
Elementary School. Dustin Hill, West Fairlee, expressed an interest in putting in a bid for the work
and agreed to leave his contact information at the end of the meeting. Community members suggested better communication, including a link to the collective bargaining agreements and other documents discussed at the meeting. Also, posting the Board minutes to the list serves.

IV. Presentation – None

V. Consent Agenda
A. Minutes
1) Board – October 2, 2018
   Action: Motion made to approve consent agenda (Gagner/DeSimone) Approved.

VI. Executive Session – (Discussion), 1 VSA § 313
A. Personnel, 1 VSA § 313(a)(6)
B. Academic Records or Suspension of Discipline of Students, 1 VSA § 313(a)(7)
   Action: Motion made to move into Executive Session at 7:47 p.m. (Gagner/Hooke) Approved.
   Action: Motion was made to come out of Executive Session at 9:05 p.m. (Lyndes/Gagner) Approved. Action: Motion was made to approve the motion discussed in Executive Session (Gagner/Hooke) Approved. (1 abstention)

VII. Informational Reports (written) Any comments about the informational reports should be send to Brenda Gray via email.
A. Superintendent Report
B. Head of Schools Report
C. Elementary Schools Report

VIII. Ongoing Business
A. Policy Second Read and Adoption
   1) Employee Conduct: There was discussion about current practices, employee handbooks and language of the policy as written. Kathy Blanchard and Hooke will wordsmith the policy for the Board’s review in February 2019.
   2) Indoor Air Quality: Action: Motion was made to adopt the Indoor Air Quality Policy as presented (Gagner/Lyndes) Approved.

B. Monthly Finance Update: Bill Little explained the auditors are uncovering some issues and are waiting on some additional information from him before issuing a final report. The local elected auditors will be invited to review the report. Invoices were sent to each of the Vermont town in October and currently waiting on one (West Fairlee) for payment. Orford paid early in the summer. Little reported the District’s cash position is good. We are nearing a final settlement with Gene Besaw & Associates and are recouping some funds. Our current auditor, Plodzik & Sanderson just completed their Vermont licensing. Little is projecting an overall deficit for FY18, but FY19 looks like numbers are tracking per budget on the salary line. Arbour reported that Rivendell Academy was awarded a safety grant with a proposal to address exterior locks to be used by spring. This will require a vote in the December meeting to match the grant to complete the work. Mark Burger spoke about the importance of getting the counts right in regards to ADM and added that historically the financial information provided as a whole to the community has not been clear about how much the Vermont portion has back and what we are getting back. New disclosures to the community about financial should help with this.

IX. New Business
A. Approve Overnight Trips
   1) ECO Club – November 15-16, 2018
      Action: Motion was made to approve the ECO Club overnight trip (Gagner/Lyndes) Approved.

B. Approve Job Descriptions:
   1) SEA – Action: Motion was made to approve the SEA job description as presents (Blanchard/Hooke) Approved.
2) **SEA Intensive Needs Action:** Motion was made to approve the SEA Intensive Needs job description as presented (Lyndes/Gagner) **Approved.**

3) **Benefits/Payroll Specialist Action:** Motion was made to approve the Benefits/Payroll Specialist job description as presented (Lyndes/Gagner) **Approved.**

C. **Appoint District Clerk/Treasurer:** The Board had no suggestions for an appointment. Gray will add the position to the list serve with the understanding it is an elected position starting with the appointment until the March election.

D. **Correspondence:** Marc DeBois received one phone call from a concerned citizen and forwarded to Arbour. Kathy Hooke also forwarded one email to Arbour.

X. **Future Agenda Items**

XI. **20th Anniversary, Crisis Response, Community Outreach, Department Reports, Vision for Food Service, Cooperation w/Thetford Academy, Electronic Devices, Elected Local Auditors’ Role, ALICE – Active Shooter Response Training, Keys and Access to Buildings, Flag of Compassion Discussion, School Board Training, Facilities Use/Rental, Quebec Bike Trip Presentation (Dec), Rivendell Review Committee Summary Report (Dec), Orford Field Lease Agreement (Dec), 2019-2020 Budget (Dec), Appoint District Clerk/Treasurer (Dec), Capital Reserve Project (Dec), Board Goals – Communication to Community (Dec)**

XII. **Action:** Motion was made to adjourn (Lyndes/Gagner) **Approved.**

Meeting adjourned at 9:47 p.m.

Recorded by:
Brenda Gray
Executive Assistant/HR Manager

Note: All Board votes were unanimous unless noted otherwise.