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

Members Absent: Michael Smyth (Orford); Sarah Rinehimer (W. Fairlee); Grover Boutin (Fairlee)

Administration and Staff Present: Brenda Needham (Superintendent), Keri Gelenian (Head of Schools/RA Principal), Gail Keiling (Head of Elementary/SME Principal), Richard Paulson (CFO)

Others Present: Cameron Day (RA Student Rep)

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

II. Agenda Revision/Time Allocation: DeBois said to add under VIII. New Business, a third item – C. Special Presentation. Needham said that a motion regarding the Act 46 Study Grant would need to part of the VII. Old Business, D. Act 46 Updates.

III. General Public Comments: None.

IV. Presentation: None.

V. Consent Agenda
   A. Minutes
      1) Board – November 3, 2015
         Action: Motion made to accept consent agenda, with changes. Approved.

VI. Informational Reports (written)
   A. Superintendent Report: Needham had no additions.
   B. Head of Schools Report: Gelenian distributed his written report to the Board. He pointed out that Mary Rizos and the students are working very hard on fundraising for Guatemala trip and doing a great job.
      1) Student Government Report: Day reported they were working on fundraising to put on their holiday assembly.
   C. Elementary Principals Reports: Keiling added that the two elementary schools had a Vermont State Trooper come talk to teachers regarding school safety and lockdowns and revision of procedures/policies to be more flexible. She added that MacQueen and she would be attending a school safety conference the next day and will share with Leadership Team what they learn. MacDonald mentioned the door at Westshire has not been consistently locked and Keiling said she would talk to MacQueen about this.

VII. Ongoing Business
   A. Auditor Appointment: Nothing to report.
   B. FY17 Budget: Needham gave a brief introduction to the preliminary budget that Paulson distributed regarding it being the initial one that the Board reviews and then comes back with questions/comments. She also stated it was different this year as they had been given by the Board a certain amount that the budget needed to be and then needed to back out items due to the anticipate cap. She stated the Gelenian, Keiling, Cole and she had taken out about $300,000 based on trying to meet the cap. She reminded the Board that, like every year, after the District approves the bottom line of the budget, there is still movement room in the budget due to staff moves, new hires, retires, insurance changes, etc. Paulson reported that the primary reason he can’t be specific with the presented draft is because he still need equalized pupil figures. He stated that this budget has a drop of $140,000 of revenue, increases do not include any administrators’ increases, the state has picked up dual enrollment fees, and a number of personnel issues that we are hopeful to restore but these were made to meet the letter of the budget right now. Needham reminded the Board of the Special School Board Meeting on
December 8th to discuss budget and told them public forums for January are already being posted, and that Perryman would send out the Annual Meeting timelines soon. Board discussed and agreed to hold a Special Board Meeting at 7:30 p.m. after the Westshire Public Forum on January 12th with one agenda item - Budget. Gelenian said that these budget cuts have program implications unlike what they have had in the past. DeBois said we need to know by next Tuesday’s special meeting a final number. DeBois instructed Board to send any budget questions through Perryman to send to Paulson.

C. Head of Schools Evaluation Process: Hooke reported that Rinehimer and she had worked on this and distributed a draft of topics to be addressed in the candidate’s self-assessment and potential survey questions for the evaluation tool. Their hope is that this current evaluation will lay a foundation for future evaluations. She said the next step of the general process is that the Head of Schools will write a reflection of his accomplishments. Rinehimer and Hooke are working on the evaluation tool, like a survey rubric that will go out to people to evaluate the administrator and they are taking a 360 degree review. Hooke said that by the January Board meeting they hope to come back with the reflective piece and the survey tool, then for it to go to everyone and then report back in February. Hooke asked if Board members had any thoughts to give them to her. Gelenian suggested to go back to job description to reflect on this and feels there needs to be well written job descriptions in these evaluation processes. DeBois requested Board review individually and send back to Hooke any suggestions and then Rinehimer and Hooke will incorporate what they feel is effective.

D. Strategic Plan: DeBois moved this item to in front of the Act 46 Updates as they believed Charlie Buttrey from Thetford was coming to meeting regarding the Act 46 updates. DeBois reported that the Strategic Plan had been put on the back of the agenda as the Board had requested, however, it has never been formally approved by the Board. Decided that it should be marked “draft” and Board would put on agenda to approve at January meeting. Gelenian suggested the administrators’ board reports should be done in reference to the strategic plan to guide their work and show the items actually being done in conjunction with it.

E. Act 46 Updates: As Buttrey did not attend, Ricker and DeBois reported that the Thetford Elementary Board had voted to join Rivendell in an Act 46 Study Grant at their meeting on November 24, 2015. They spoke about other towns being welcome to join us such as Strafford, Piermont, and Newbury. Lyndes was curious if the State then makes the decision from the grant on what is best. DeBois said the State doesn’t do that, Rivendell and Thetford decide what is best. Also, a brief discussion held on the facilitator for the study and, per Blanchard, the facilitator does more than just facilitates. Needham pointed out that the deadline for applying for the grant is no later than December 30, 2015. Action: Motion made to join in a study grant in conjunction with Thetford Elementary School and any other schools interested. Approved.

VIII. New Business
A. Meal Price Increase: Needham requested the Board make a motion to increase the lunch price ten cents effective the beginning of 2016. Action: Motion made to increase the lunch price ten cents from $2.85 to $2.95 effective January 1, 2016. Approved.
B. Correspondence: DeBois reported that the media have been contacting various Board members regarding budgets and Act 46 and asked Board member to make sure any emails with media need to be sent to Perryman for file and in some cases Perryman may send to all Board members for information. DeBois reported and passed around a letter for a student requesting the Board provide financial support so he could attend an event he was invited to. DeBois said that in the past the Board has not given financial support to individual students and doing so in this case would be precedent setting. Board agreed that they should not support. DeBois stated that a letter would be sent to the student.
C. Special Presentation: DeBois presented Needham with a plaque from the Board thanking her for her service to the District the past five years. Board members pointed out some areas where Needham excelled (i.e., passing of successful budgets, union negotiations, ensuring no legal problems, and thoughtful, compassionate way she has dealt with personnel and personnel issues). DeBois thanked her again for all she’s done for the District and wished her well in her retirement from Rivendell.
Day asked if he would be able to sit with the School Board during the Annual District Meeting. Day is not old enough to be a registered voter, however, other non-voters can attend the meeting but need to be identified as non-voters, so DeBois said the Board would work something out, if he wanted to attend.

IX. Future Agenda Items
Common Core, Crisis Response, Community Outreach, Policies to be Revised (ongoing), Student Presentations, Department Reports, Act 46, Budget, HOS Evaluation, Strategic Plan

X. Executive Session, 1 VSA § 313
A. Personnel
  1) REA Negotiations (Teacher Unit)
  2) Personnel
     Action: Motion made to go into Executive Session at 7:30 p.m. Approved.
     Board came out of Executive Session at 8:45 p.m. No action taken.

XI. Adjournment
Action: Motion made to adjourn. Approved. Meeting adjourned at 8:46 p.m.

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