Members Present: Trevor Law, Jennifer Ricker (Vershire); Bruce Lyndes (at large); Carol Sobetzer, Mark DeBois, Brenda Gray (Orford); Doug Tifft, Sandra Smith-Ordway, Margaret Gladstone (Fairlee); Beverly Ash (West Fairlee)

Others Present: Gail Keiling, Head of Schools (Superintendent); Cicely Richardson, Journal Opinion; Kathy Young and Jon Molesworth

I. Call to Order: Carol called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m.

II. Agenda Revision/Time Allocation: Agenda was revised to reflect addition of Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) discussion under VII. New Business.

III. General Public Comments: Kathy Young stated that she had read that the Board was considering closing a building and wanted information about which one. Gail explained that members of the public had attended the last Finance Committee meeting and requested that, among other things, a look be taken to see what it would save the District if the Westshire Elementary School was closed. Kathy stated that she hoped this would not be done and if minutes for the committee meetings could be posted on the web site. Doug stated that he thought the dates of Board committee meetings in the school newsletters. Gail will look into these items. Kathy then asked how much money was being saved by having the combined third and fourth grades in the morning at Westshire. Gail responded that it saves the cost of half a teacher’s salary and benefits. There was further discussion regarding equity between the two elementary schools and what steps to take to ensure this is worked on and how to assess this progress.

IV. Student/Teacher Presentation & Recognition
   A. Writing (E. Ginty): Eloise presented work that she has been doing with several other educators which was recently published in the book, Writing for Understanding. Eloise demonstrated how the process would be used in a kindergarten class and talked about the professional development that the elementary faculty have been doing around writing this year. Brenda asked about use in the middle and high school to which Eloise and Gail stated that they will be working on how this could be continued in the Middle School.

V. Consent Agenda:
   A. Minutes (November 18, 2008)
   B. Finance Committee Report – There was no report from the Finance Committee. Sandra will send the minutes from the last meeting electronically to the full Board.
   C. Head of Schools (Superintendent) Report
      Action: Motion made to accept the consent agenda without the Finance Report. Approved.

At this point, Carol recognized John Molesworth who had arrived after public input but wanted to ask about the question of closing Westshire. Carol repeated the discussion that had been held earlier in the meeting with Kathy Young.

VI. Ongoing Business:
   A. Australian Ballot – Carol explained that at the Special Board meeting on November 26th the Board had approved putting on the warrant for the Annual District Meeting in March, 2009, the question of changing the Articles of Agreement which would
change voting procedures to Australian balloting, as requested by community members. She explained that there will need to be a public hearing on the warrant article at least 90 days prior to the Annual District Meeting and the wording of the changes to the Articles of Agreement need to be posted in a local paper at least 10 days prior to the public hearing. The Board agreed to have the public hearing on December 18th at the Samuel Morey Elementary School at 6:30 p.m. Carol explained that the wording of the warrant article will be the same as used in the past, as legal counsel had drawn up this wording previously, and the proposed wording of the warrant article would need to be printed in a local newspaper by December 8th.

**Action** - Motion made to accept the below wording of the proposed changes to the articles of agreement to be put on the warrant article for the Annual District Meeting on March 28, 2009. **Approved.**

- Amend the 6th sentence of Article C to read as follows: “The District Elections shall be held each year during the voting phase of the Annual District Meeting and at the same polling places where voting on the article in the warrant takes place.”
- Amend Article T “Conduct of Meetings:”
  “Voting on all warrant articles including the operating budget article and article votes to authorize the incurring of debt to finance capital projects (bond issues) and on the election of School Board Members, the Moderator, Clerk, Treasurer, and Auditors shall be by secret written ballot according to the document entitled “RIVENDELL PROCEDURES FOR AUSTRALIAN BALLOT” attached to these articles as Appendix A. Except as provided in the Compact or these Articles of Agreement, a simple majority of those present and voting shall carry the vote. The Vermont Open Meeting Law shall be followed in the conduct of all District meetings, School Board meetings, and committee meetings, whether such meetings are held in New Hampshire or Vermont.”
- Amend Article U “Annual Meeting” to read as follows: “The discussion and voting phases of the Annual District Meeting shall be held at such times as the voters of the Interstate District may determine from time to time at an Annual or Special District Meeting. Unless the School Board determines otherwise, the location of the discussion phase of the Annual District Meeting shall be rotated annually between Fairlee and Orford.”

**VII. New Business**

**A. Technology Committee Members** – There were no names submitted for members to this committee so this item was tabled until the next Board meeting.

**B. Correspondence** – Carol distributed a letter signed by Tom Thompson and Lud Flower from Orford that was given to the Finance Committee at their last meeting. In the letter, they requested that the School Board cut the next school budget by 10% due to the current uncertain and difficult economic situation many people in the communities are facing. There was discussion about the need to think “out of the box” but to always keep in mind the academic needs of the students. Sandra, also, stated that at the last Finance Committee meeting, a community member, Deb Kingsbury, gave her a similar letter signed by a few community people. Sandra stated that she would send the other Board members a list of the people who had signed that letter.

**C. New Hires** – None.

**D. Hiring of Coaches Process** – Gail explained that the administrators have been notified about the new process for hiring coaches. She reported that they think making the superintendent responsible for officially hiring coaches and then informing the Board of hires will work better. Gail said that the work is continuing on the evaluations for all coaches, including non-sports coaches.

**E. Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)** – Gail distributed a draft of the MOU between the Rivendell Academy and the Orford Police Department. She explained that the CEC, administrators, and the new Orford Chief of Police (Chris Kilmer) worked to put the draft together. There were a number of questions on the section regarding interviewing students. It was agreed to table the MOU until January and that Gail would ask Officer Kilmer to come to the January Board meeting.
VIII. **Strategic Action Plan:** The Long Range Planning Committee will be meeting with Ray Proulx on December 8th and will discuss how to get the finished plan available to the public.

IX. **Future Agenda Items:** It was requested that Gail ask Donna Valentine, Head of High School, to come to a future meeting to talk about senior projects and the role of the advisor. Also, the addition of items mentioned previously during this meeting.

**Action:** Motion made to go into Executive Session to discuss personnel issues. **Approved.** Board went into Executive Session at 8:35 p.m. and came out of Executive Session at 8:55 p.m.

X. **Adjournment:** **Action** – Motion made to adjourn. **Approved.** Meeting adjourned at 8:56 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Carol Sobetzer
Recorder