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

Absent: Mark Avery (Fairlee)

Administration and Staff Present: Mike Harris (Superintendent); Keri Gelenian (Head of Schools/RA Principal); Michael Foxall (SME Principal); Tammy MacQueen (WES Principal); Jan Cole (Director of Special Education); Richard Paulson (CFO); Michael Galli (RA Dean of Students); Kirsten Surprenant (RA teacher); Nancy Hall (RA Counselor)

Others Present: Cicely Richardson (Journal Opinion); Sue Ford (Easton, NH); Fairlee residents – Rick Senn, Lauren Senn, Grover Boutin, Linda Boutin, Kevin Stever, Lori Stever, Mikayla Stever, Martha Ussler, David Gagner; Orford residents – Mark Burger, Kate Paxton, Cathy Eastburn, David ?, Juliette Bianco, Sara Day, Robb Day, Caleb Day, Bonnie McCouch, Elizabeth Schwendler; Vershire residents – Shirley Collins, Markus Bradley, Carol Suich; West Fairlee resident – Sarah Molesworth

I. Call to Order: Meeting called to order at 6:30 p.m. DeBois stated that Richardson was recording the meeting as a Journal Opinion reporter for her reporting purposes.

II. Agenda Revision/Time Allocation: Add in under ongoing business E. Public Forum Date Change and under New Business D. Memorandum of Understanding with AHEAD. DeBois stated that Mark Burger had requested proposed changes to the October Board minutes. DeBois said that only the Board can decide to make changes to the minutes and requested the Board look at the proposed changes to discuss at next monthly meeting (January). Perryman was instructed to send Burger’s proposed changes to Board electronically. Burger also requested these changes be attached to the minutes from this (December 6th) meeting. The Board made no comment on this request.

III. General Public Comments: Burger said he had sent some emails to the Orford Citizens Committee, some Board members and on town listservs to keep people informed and said he received some responses from Commissioner Barry (NH DOE) and Secretary Holcombe (VT AOE). DeBois suggested Burger send any emails for the Board to Perryman who will insure the Board receives them. Burger questioned the scope of the local (elected) auditors and DeBois said he will look into the specifics and get back to Burger. At this point a member of the public, questioned Burger at what his goals are. Some items Burger said were: calculation of ADM, Articles of Agreement, have Board establish a committee to look at these items, thinks state expertise may be needed. DeBois redirected the meeting back to the Board agenda.

IV. Consent Agenda
A. Minutes
   1) Board – November 1, 2016
      Action: Motion made to approve consent agenda. (MacDonald, Ricker) Approved.

V. Ongoing Business
A. School Board Member (Fairlee & W. Fairlee): DeBois said a Fairlee resident, David Gagner, had volunteered for the Fairlee seat. Mr. Gagner gave a brief statement of his interest in being on the Board. Action: Motion made to appoint David Gagner to open Board seat from Fairlee with appointment to end at the 2017 Annual District Meeting in March. (Lyndes, Smyth). Perryman will arrange for Gagner to be sworn in before the December 13th Special Board Meeting.
DeBois reported that an ad had been run in Journal Opinion for the Board seats (West Fairlee remaining open) and the auditor position.
VI. New Business

A. 2017-18 Preliminary Draft Budget Discussion: DeBois stated that this is Board’s initial look at preliminary draft 2017-18 budget. Asked if Board had any comments or questions, and that the Administrators would be looking for direction/general guidelines for Board tonight. CFO Paulson reported that this initial draft had no increases in salaries or benefits in it; at this point he only has VT ADM not NH’s; there is about $65,000 available from previous year if Board wants to apply to FY18; and although the SPED budget shows a $132,000 increase, about half of that will be reimbursed by the state of Vermont and will be reflected in the revenue line. Discussion, comments and questions then ensued (co-curricular increase – due to discovery that coaching positions were not included in it, approximately $30,000; concern about budgets continued growth and ability to have it pass). Gelenian stated that he had Paulson run some numbers for him at which point he distributed a chart showing a budget comparison since FY 11 of revenue and expenses. Gelenian said his concern continues to be the issue of supporting RISD’s most struggling students. He then spoke of loss of the Visions grant (21st Century) that had run the afterschool programs and how he is looking at the use of federal grants, feels schools are doing more with less; thought of adding $100,000 to $120,000 to budget for math and reading K-9 support; District spends more money on athletics at RA then on curriculum and supplies; drama program supports itself; have athletics support themselves; his primary responsible is to educate the students. DeBois pointed out a large increase such as Gelenian suggested might mean the Board looking toward facilities and the elimination of a building perhaps. Board discussion ensued (i.e., feeling that the budget passed narrowly the last two years due to lack of voter attendance; Board needs to have a budget that they all agree upon and can sell to the public; RISD budget has been conservative while other area district budgets have not and have passed; different socio-economic makeup; look at some of the imbalances in budget; look at having athletics support more of itself, but don’t want a program closed to students due to costs; some RA classes have 8 or less students in them – Gelenian said mostly some junior and senior classes because going to River Bend, CCV and other places as part of their education; elementary classes are more heavily populated and students will be moving up to RA; question on SPED teacher addition, had actually been eliminated for this year, but needs to be added back in. Some public comments were regarding additional income like tuition

B. Local Auditor Opening (VT or NH) Openings: No suggestions or volunteers.

C. Superintendent Search: Harris reported he had met with the Board representatives, Blanchard and Hooke, and they talked about - advertising, ten applicants from SchoolSpring so far, he plans this week to email Search Committee members regarding having their first meeting on January 9th to review applications. Harris said the position requires dual certification from both NH and VT and he feels the New England market is where the search should be centered.

D. Update Regarding Orford Citizen Committee: Harris reported he had prepared a draft regarding the Orford Citizen Committee’s concerns which he distributed to the Board to review (copies also distributed to public and attached). He felt that both Secretary Holcombe and Commissioner Berry were agreeable to giving some assistance, however, due to political situations both states are in flux right now. Harris said he felt the Articles of Agreement was actually a simple document but trying to be applied to some complicated situations. DeBois thanked him for putting memo together. DeBois pointed out that Board meetings are for the Board to conduct their meeting. There is a brief time on the agenda that the public may speak and, at the discretion of the Board, sometimes the public may have time to share comments during a meeting. He also said that if someone wanted to be put on the agenda, they should notify Perryman and/or Harris.

E. Date of January Forum – DeBois stated the Public Forum that was voted last month to be held in Orford on January 9th was an error and should have been set for Tuesday, January 10th

Action: Motion made to change Public Forum in Orford from January 9th to January 10th. (Hooke, Smyth) Approved.
students; grant writing teams (Gelenian spoke of looking into a corporate partner to fit with RISD’s professional development); students paying for co-curricular activities with scholarships available for students unable to pay). Galli reported that student mental health challenges are increasing and need to look at this for District funding. DeBois asked public in attendance how many would support an additional $255,000 budget and majority raised their hands. After discussion, Board did not give Administrators a clear direction on where to go with initial budget. DeBois reminded everyone of the Special Board Meeting on December 13 regarding budget.

B. Personnel Updates: Harris updated Board on who were hired as basketball coaches. A brief discussion ensued on a $5000 grant that Gelenian was planning to use for a math tutor but he had figured out a different way by using present staff and he is now looking at using the grant for afterschool support in math and English. Hooke also said if he was interested in recruiting community volunteers that she had two suggestions.

C. Correspondence: DeBois reiterated to public to please send all correspondence for the Board through Perryman. Upon a question from Hooke on how “snow days” are called, Harris explained he usually gets a call around 5 a.m. from John Jakubens, Director of Operations, who has been monitoring weather reports, as well as, spoken to the town road agents and bus company regarding their recommendations, then Harris checks other sources and makes his decision. He said that Jakubens and he like to get the alert call out to the District by around 5:30 a.m., however, the recent “snow day” was an abnormality as nothing weather related was happening until around 6 to 6:30 when the buses got on the roads and then bus company stopped buses. Harris first tried to delay but then had to cancel. Galli reported Warren students left waiting at bus stop since call was late.

D. MOU with AHEAD – Ricker stated that there is currently an MOU that expires in February and AHEAD and the Orford Academy Building Task Force would like to have it extended for one more year. Ricker noted there were a few dates/changes that he noticed and is getting corrected. Once Perryman gets the corrected MOU, she will send to Board to review to be voted on at January meeting.

VII. Future Agenda Items
Common Core, Crisis Response, Community Outreach, Policies to be Revised (ongoing), Department Reports, Orford Academy Building Task Force, Superintendent Search, Vision for Food Service, Head of Schools Evaluation, Update of Orford Citizen Committee, Budget, Cooperation with Thetford Academy (Jan)

Burger asked if there is going to be a committee set now or what the next step is in regards to Orford Citizen Committee’s concerns. DeBois said there has been discussion about a committee but had been waiting for states and now looks like states are stepping back. Also, trying to decide if a committee should be a Superintendent committee or a Board committee. DeBois said a determination should be done by the January meeting. Burger suggested it should be done in the best interest of the public with representation from both sides (including community members). DeBois reiterated that Special Board meeting is next week December 13th at 6:30 p.m.

VIII. Executive Session
A. Personnel

B. Negotiations
Action: Motion made to go into executive session at 8:08 p.m. (Hooke, MacDonald) Approved.
Board came out of executive session at 8:28 p.m.

IX. Adjournment
Action: Motion made to adjourn. (Lyndes, Smyth) Approved.
Meeting adjourned at 8:29 p.m.

Recorded by:
Penny Perryman, CEOE
Executive Assistant/HR Manager
Note: All Board votes were unanimous unless noted otherwise.