I. Call Meeting:
Meeting was opened at 6:31 p.m.

II. Administrative/District Restructuring: C. Sobetzer explained that the Board would discuss the Administrative/District Restructuring then take questions from the audience.

M. DeBois asked for clarification of repairs and cost to the Middle School. G. Collins replied that the sprinkler system at $150,000 (code item); the air handlers at $4,000 each (code item); the gym floor (will become code due to asbestos) at $115,000; two boilers, one now and the other within 5 years, for a total of $150,000-$160,000; roof in section 2 within the next 5 years; doors and temperature control in section 3 and the continued problems with the driveway.

DeBois stated that there were concerns about the 7 and 8th grades moving into the high school. Keiling stated that there would be 3 core classrooms downstairs with other locations to be determined. Lunch would continue to be separate and administration and teachers would work together for the best solution.

Various members of the Board told those in attendance that there had been a lot of time and thought put into this difficult decision and that the Board cannot continue to expect tax payers to keep spending during this economic downfall. S. Smith-Ordway said that she feels committed to make the administrative change originally planned and move forward. Sobetzer said that she has spoken with many community members who felt that the decisions being made needed to assure that students succeed beyond high school. M. Avery stated that in these economic times that the fiscal direction of the budget with the middle school building and paying rent for a district office was fiscally irresponsible and that the proposed changes would assist in correcting these indiscretions. Davidson wanted to discuss all options again before making any decision. C. Richardson stated that administratively something needed to be done now and that any extra monies should be spent on student learning.

Keiling also said she had spoken to many community members and staff about the situation and acknowledged that there would be challenges with any of the options. She reminded everyone that when Rivendell began there was going to be one principal at the Academy and it was to be one Academy. Option B gives the District this vision with the 7th through 12th Academy and follows through on the attempt suggested three years ago to move the 6th grade back to the elementary schools. Student numbers are decreasing, administrative costs need to come down to keep the school operating, and these options allow this to happen without sacrificing educational programs.

Sobetzer read a statement from Board member V. DeSimone then opened the meeting for questions from the audience.

Mr. Haehnel asked if the pressure to make these changes were coming from the State or the community. He said that he knew some residents would rather pay more taxes than lose a school. Smith-Ordway answered that Vermont towns are penalized if they exceed a spending threshold that the State sets, Fairlee is under Act 144 and already sends a lot of money to the state, there is a deficit in
Vermont, and New Hampshire is facing a deficit. She also said people are worried about the economy and don’t have the extra money. Mr. Barrett asked if the school had a capital budget for repairs and wanted to share some observations. As a Fairlee Selectman, he knows that the public is tapped out and Fairlee has, for the past 15 years, almost level funded their budget and the residents fear each year what the school budget will be. He wanted the Board to take into consideration the financial impact of the residents.

Mr. Gladstone stated that the number one issue should be the best welfare for the students; the elementary school has been and continues to be strong. What of the alternative to tuition out the high school students, has that option been discussed? Sobetzer stated that the public didn’t show any interest in that alternative and, if so, they should come before the Board as a group and address the option.

Mr. Winagle wanted to make a motion that the options not be decided this evening, but brought to the public for a vote. Sobetzer stated that he wasn’t able to make a motion during this meeting and that this decision was a function of the Board, the financial part is a community decision. DeBois asked Mr. Winagle if the administrative change was the issue or the student change. Winagle stated that combining 7th and 8th with 9-12 was a bad idea. He agreed the gym was an issue and that downsizing administration was a good idea. Ms. Hebb stressed that she would like to see Memorial Gym remain open and it was worth putting money into. She stated that closing the high school would only help another school with their financial situation and take away our choice of how our children are educated.

Ms. Wurdak said that she works within the Lebanon School District and encouraged the Board to contact them as they were in the same situation last year. Keiling stated that she had already spoken with the Lebanon Superintendent and he had shared that any change would be emotional. Mr. Gould felt it was more than emotion, there are solid concerns. Others also feel that different options fell on deaf ears and asked if the Board truly listened during the forums. Gould asked if Option B is selected, would the budget increase? Smith-Ordway stated that the Board does not have all the budgets in yet; they are currently in contract discussion with the teachers and also have a transportation bid out, so at this time these questions cannot be answered. Avery stated that if the Board submits a higher budget then he has failed as a Board member and it would go against everything that Board is trying to accomplish. Ms. Bates asked if the decision could be postponed until all questions were answered. Smith-Ordway stated that the Board needs to hire a superintendent and cannot wait until March to write a job description and the administrative structure needs to be done.

Mrs. Gladstone expressed her concern of what is happening within the classrooms, she felt the need was to offer more for the student’s education. Ms. Conley felt a decision should be made and get back to the business of educating our students. Mr. Ricker shared results of a survey he distributed to Rivendell Students, some didn’t care, some didn’t know anything about it and some students worried about the loss of space.

**Action:** Motion made to adjust the administrative structure to a part-time .5 superintendent. However, motion was amended to adjust the administrative structure to a part-time .5 superintendent, with Option B for building/grade structure. **Approved.**

**III. Transact any other business that needs to be considered:** **Action:** Motion made to adjourn to executive session at 8:20 p.m. **Approved.** Board came out of executive session at 10:09 p.m. **Action:** Motion made to approve the REA’s request to allow teachers/staff to voluntarily contribute to a sick bank for a specific employee to be used by the end of June, 2010. **Approved.**

**IV. Adjourn:** Meeting adjourned at 10:11 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sheri Clifford, District Clerk