RIVENDELL INTERSTATE SCHOOL DISTRICT
SPECIAL BOARD MEETING
District Office – Orford, NH
December 18, 2018 – 6:30 p.m.

Members Present: David Gagner, Jon Lester, Bruce Lyndes (Fairlee); Kathy Hooke (Vershire); Marc DeBois, David Ricker (Orford); Kevin Dexter, Cory Austin - late (West Fairlee); Kathy Blanchard (at-large)

Members Absent: Maria Koehler (Vershire); Vanessa DeSimone (Orford)

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); Ross Convertino (Athletic Director); Matt Joska (IT Director); Terry Straight (Director of Operations); Carmen Winchester (Teacher), Nancy Hall (School Counselor); Tracy Martel (Teacher); Rachael Weber (Teacher); Gabi Martino (Teacher), Amy Kosakowski (Paraprofessional – Classroom Assistant), Matt Jung (Paraprofessional – Special Education Individual Student Assistant – Intensive Needs)

Public Present: Mark Burger, Chris Bills, Cathy Eastburn, Lesley Butman, Chris Crowley, Paul Perry, Samantha Perry, Jolene Vogelien, Craig Tomlinson (Orford); Jen Shutney, Rebecca Wurdak, Erin Cilley, Andrea Welch (West Fairlee); Brooke Gladstone, Marie Gladstone, Nancy Thatcher, Joe Pellegrino, Peter Lange, Jess Cheney, Katie Knowles (Fairlee); Joel Goodrich (Vershire); Cicely Richardson (JO)

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

II. 2019-20 Preliminary Draft Budget: Elaine Arbour provided an overview of the changes in the revised budget and added that the numbers do not yet include negotiations or benefits. Some of the highlighted changes include, reinstatements of two of the original elementary RIFS while maintaining a partial cut to the Elementary Math Coach/Teacher position. One FTE elementary general education paraprofessional would also be reduced, but would be handled through attrition, not a loss of employment. At the secondary level the two Academic Mentoring program staffing positions would be funded through Medicaid, if funds are available, and NEASC accreditation was added. Special education decreased one FTE special education teacher, but the District will verify this proposed RIF against the list of service requirements. Districtwide changes included corrections to the guidance, business office and administrative salary line to actuals, additional funding for worker’s compensation insurance and legal fees. The proposed reductions include leaving the superintendent at .8FTE instead of 1FTE, the grounds/maintenance request from 1FTE to .5FTE and replacing the payroll specialist position with Project & Communication manager. The new budget proposal represents a 1.2% increase over the current approved budget. There was some discussion about a separate warned article for an IT capital reserve fund for a projected large purchase of network switches. It was agreed to handle this as a transfer of 50K to the capital reserve fund to include 20K for IT expenses (over next three years), to be tracked separately, and 30K for operations. There was general discussion from the Board about phasing in equipment/rug replacement, the composition of district and school administration, business services and special education services. There was also discussion about some of the unknown budgetary factors such as negotiations, revenues and VT equalized pupil counts. The Board provided feedback to Arbour with what they would like to see in the next iteration of the budget which included not adding additional money, but reallocating it around some. Members voiced concerns about cuts to the VISIONS program and that it needs to remain affordable. There was also some discussion about the possibility of not reducing the Math Academic Coaching position by shifting it to Title IIA or REAP grants. Members of the Board discussed various options for phasing in the purchase of rugs and furniture and the cost to pursue NEASC accreditation this year and in future years. Arbour will look at other schools that hold NEASC accreditation and bring back pros/cons to the next meeting.
There was additional conversation around the costs for snow removal and building repairs/maintenance. The Board was generally ok with a 1.2% increase over last year’s budget assuming not going above 3% once negotiations are settled. Members of the community voiced thoughts about the proposed budget such as maintaining the VISIONS and SummerScapes programs, Superintendent salary, Winter Program, reduction of elementary assistant principal days, and misleading/incorrect salaries for guidance, school administration and business office. There was additional discussion from members of the community that dollars are not being put toward education and administrative costs have increased with a flat enrollment. Some concerns were raised that there is an inequity of resources between the Academy and the elementary schools, such as guidance and nursing and supporting the needs of students in early childhood. Discussion focused on the budget process, better financial management and priorities of the budget.

III. Executive Session (Discussion), 1 VSA § 313 (if needed) Action: Motion made to move into Executive Session at 9:05 p.m. (Gagner/Ricker) Approved. Action: Motion was made to come out of Executive Session at 10:00 p.m. (Austin/Ricker) Approved.

IV. Transact any other business that needs to be considered Action: Motion made to approve the Outing Club overnight field trip January 18-20, 2019 (Hooke/Ricker) Approved. Action: Motion was made to approve the 2019 Annual District Meeting Timeline (Gagner/Ricker) Approved.

V. Adjourn Action: Motion was made to adjourn (Austin/Ricker) Approved. Meeting adjourned at 10:02 p.m.

Recorded by:
Brenda Gray
Executive Assistant/HR Manager

Note: All Board votes were unanimous unless noted otherwise.