RIVENDELL INTERSTATE SCHOOL DISTRICT
SPECIAL BOARD MEETING
District Office – Orford, NH
May 21, 2013 – 6:00 p.m.

Members Present: Marc DeBois (Chair), Cicely Richardson, David Ricker (Orford); Mark Avery (Vice Chair), Bruce Lyndes (Fairlee); Jean MacDonald, Jennifer Ricker (Vershire); Kathy Blanchard (at-large)

Members Absent: Mike Fanizzi (W. Fairlee), Grover Boutin (Fairlee)

Administration and Staff Present: Brenda Needham (Superintendent), Dick Paulson (Chief Financial Officer), Gary Collins (Director of Operations)

Others Present: Anne Duncan-Cooley, Tom Bubolz, Carl Schmidt, Mark Blanchard, Ann Green, Sylvia Paxton, Cassandra Pike, Terry Martin (Old Orford Academy Building Task Force); Andrew Winter (Twin Pines Housing Trust); Stephen Schuster (Northern New England Housing Investment Fund)

I. Call to Order: Meeting called to order at 6:01 p.m.

II. Discussion of Old Orford Academy Building’s Future:
Duncan-Cooley led off with background: The Task Force looked at numerous uses for the building, considering various criteria (community benefit, community investment, financial sustainability, preserving the historic structure, compatibility with school, and, understanding the district wants to retain long-term control of the building, any benefit to the school district). Looked at community center, government offices, commercial uses, market-rate housing and senior housing; last year, talked with five or six developers re senior housing, leading to a proposal for affordable housing by Twin Pines Housing Trust (TPHT) and Northern New England Housing Investment Fund (NNEHIF).

Winter proposed 16-20 housing units—75% one-bedroom, 25% two-bedroom—plus 1,000 square feet of commercial space. The units would be affordable to households with incomes at or below 60% of the area median income. He presented a lease option agreement to be signed in order for TPHT to apply for funds for a planning/market study in the 2013 funding cycle. This proposed a 99-year ground lease with TPHT to develop and manage the project.

Asked why the change from senior housing, Winter said senior-only projects were unlikely to be funded in towns with no family projects, so he proposed a family project with small units that would be as senior friendly as possible but that would qualify for Low Income Housing Tax Credit, Historic Tax Credits and Community Development Block Grant Funding. Developing the property is likely to cost $3-4 million, he said.

Board and Task Force members raised questions about: the risk of undesirable tenants within 200 feet of the school, the absence of a feasibility study to determine the highest and best use of the building, how TPHT could turn down an applicant, water and septic adequacy, and the lack of community input.

Asked about economic benefit to the school district, Winter said this would take an asset that has been empty for 13 years and restore it; any other benefit would be negotiated. He also described the criteria, process and background checks they use for screening tenants. Re studies, the District paid for an engineering study several years ago, and Schmidt said that architects and planners at a weekend charrette in 2006 identified possible uses of the building, including housing.

Schuster proposed extending the dialogue and delaying the application for a year and Winter agreed, adding that he would be willing to come back.

Needham thanked the Task Force and DeBois said this would be an agenda item at the June meeting for the Board to set a course of action.

III. Transact any other business that needs to be considered
Action - Motion made to enter Executive Session at 7:13 p.m. Approved.

Executive Session: Personnel
Board came out of Executive Session at 7:25 p.m.

IV. Adjournment (Action): Action – Motion made to adjourn at 7:26 p.m. Approved.

Recorded by:

Cicely T. Richardson