

1. **Call to Order-Roll Call- Pledge of Allegiance:** Austin called the meeting to order at 6:00pm.
2. **Budget Discussion:** Austin welcomed everyone to the budget workshop for the proposed 15/16 budget. He stated that he would urge people watching to pay close attention to the details because there are some significant impacts based on the tax cap. Supt. Mosca stated that in front of you is the same presentation as last week but you will notice that the document is getting thicker. **(See Attached)** She stated that we will start on page three where it shows the tax cap increase of \$331,628. She stated that if you turn to page 21 we will outline the next set of cuts and where we stand.
3. **Proposed Reductions:**
 - **Teacher Retirees (5): \$353,133**
 - **SAU Assessment: \$24,000**
 - **Substitutes: \$20,000**
 - **School Board Supplies- Finger Printing: \$5,000**
 - **TOTAL PROPOSED REDUCTIONS: \$402,133**

She stated that with these cuts that leaves us at \$928,172 and we know we can increase the budget by \$331,628 so we are still just shy of \$600,000 left to cut.

Impacts:

- **Teacher Retirements:** Supt. Mosca stated that these teachers are in various positions so she can't present an impact yet as we will be shuffling staff around but we will have less people. She stated that we need to spend time looking at shifting and making those adjustments. She stated that she would also like to add that the administrators are not taking an increase this year.
- **SAU 56 Assessment:** Supt. Mosca stated that your portion of the SAU 56 assessment is 84.5%. She stated that the cuts include no administrator increases along with the salary adjustment that was made. She stated that the support staff has gone from a 3% raise to only taking a 2% raise so they have given up 1% of their raises. She stated that we have cut our custodial services from 5 days a week to 3 days a week. We also decreased our event costs by eliminating the welcome back food and gifts. She stated that we will also be closing the SAU office the week of Christmas break in order to save on utilities. She stated that your total portion of these cuts is \$24,000.
- **Substitutes:** Supt. Mosca stated that Idlehurst will be cutting \$13,000 and Maple Wood will be cutting \$7,000. She stated that reducing subs at the elementary level means when a teacher is out students will be reassigned to other classes or paraprofessionals will cover and will have to make up the loss of student services.
- **School Board Supplies-Fingerprinting:** Supt. Mosca stated that new staff and volunteers will have to pay for their own fingerprinting.

Supt. Mosca stated that the next page shows the budget changes in each of the line items and where the cuts occur in the line items. She stated that there is still \$600,000 that still

needs to be cut and she is asking the board to meet again next Thursday in order to give us another week to dig deeper to come up with more.

4. **Board Comments:** Bolduc stated that we don't know the impact of the teacher retirees and he has trouble not knowing that. He stated that we will hear if we don't have to replace them then why do we have them in the first place. Supt. Mosca stated that because they are in specific places it could mean we have to move people around and until we know how she can't give an impact. She stated that there will be an impact, she stated that one of those retirees is an elementary librarian but the state says we have to have one, so we will be shuffling people around. She stated that we are going to have to stretch people so we don't have those answers yet. Bolduc asked what other positions are there. Supt. Mosca stated that there is a grade three elementary teacher which means that we might have to shift classes so the class sizes may be bigger but it will depend on further cuts. She stated that we have a special education case manager so we may look at all the case managers and increase their cases loads. She stated that there is a kindergarten teacher leaving so we may move a teacher to cover kindergarten and increase the higher grade level class size. She stated that she doesn't want to say yet when we still have cuts because she could be proposing 8-10 more cuts. Bolduc stated that you said you decided as a group and asked who the group was. Supt. Mosca stated she did with the administrators. Bolduc asked if they would save money on wages for the SAU closing during Christmas week. Supt. Mosca stated that they would use their vacation time or days without pay. Bolduc stated that he feels that someone should be there for the outside people. He stated that 220 is not a big savings. He stated that this ultimately becomes the school board's budget going to city hall and we can disagree with you if we want to do something else. He stated that \$800,000 is from tuition and that is a hole that we can't plug by letting people go and decimating the school. He stated that he will be looking to recover that. He stated that he doesn't like the \$650,000 in insurance either. He stated that it goes back to the tax cap and he doesn't know if people realize what they were doing. He stated that .85% is what we can increase the budget, a 1.7% tax cap is not a budget cap the budget is only half of that and no business can survive on that. He stated that you won't get my vote to pass this on to city hall. He stated that he is not faulting the Superintendent. Supt. Mosca stated that she doesn't like it any more than you. Bolduc stated that he hopes the board members will do the math and if we try to live with the tax cap we are going the city no good. Supt. Mosca stated that this is not anything that I want to do, we are decimating a system. Hiller asked if the elementary schools kept any money in for substitutes. Supt. Mosca stated yes all the schools kept some money but they will be watching the substitute budget weekly. She stated that they left \$130,000 total left but we usually spend over \$450,000 a year. Hiller stated that a big part of the problem came from Rollinsford and asked if we are able to go to the state and have them give us the \$800,000 rather than to cut personnel. Supt. Mosca stated no, we knew it was coming but it took time to negotiate contracts so we have been feeling a pinch over the last couple of years. She stated that more and more districts are doing this and the state only approves the plan for the kids. Hiller stated that if there is anyone near retirement age we could offer them some bonus to retire early. Supt. Mosca stated that nobody has come forward to me but she can mention that. Joanne Pepin stated that on the substitute impact is says that the paras can cover and per their

contract will they get the extra pay. Supt. Mosca stated yes, but it is less than paying for a substitute. Joanne Pepin asked how they will make up their services. Supt. Mosca stated that we will have to be creative about that and look outside the box. Austin asked if a one on one is out if we have to provide a sub. Supt. Mosca stated yes. Austin stated that there are two things we have to worry about, school approval to maintain to meet minimum standards in order to keep approval and high school accreditation. He stated that the accreditation we think won't be an issue and we hope to be in a better position next time it comes around but isn't there somewhere if we do an amount of changes we have to report to them to the state. Supt. Mosca stated that is the NEASC visit and as we have a big change to what is happening currently. She stated that the school approval is for X amount of years. She stated that when all is said and done we will have to look at how we create a system that still falls within the standards but it is going to be a stretch. Austin stated that this board has always maintained a position to provide every opportunity we can to make students successful. He stated that this is ways to meet the absolute bare minimum that we have to provide, these are light years apart and it is not anything this board wants to do but we have an obligation to present a number to council within the tax cap. He stated that we may have a discussion on where we would like to see the cuts made but the amount can't increase more than \$331,000. He stated that he doesn't know how we will vote and not support it. He stated that in the end we have no choice. He stated that there is a lot of opportunity for public input and we will have another workshop next Thursday and will be having a presentation on February 10th and a public hearing on the 17th. He stated that the public has the opportunity to make their feelings known and you need to let city council know where you stand as they approve the bottom line and if they decide to maintain the tax cap number we will have to live with that increase and will be implementing many of these cuts. He stated that we have no flexibility in that number if we have no override for the city; this is where the tax cap rubber meets the road in terms of education in Somersworth. Hiller stated that she is new to the board and asked if we are allowed to get corporate donations or sponsorships. Supt. Mosca stated yes but you have to remember that it goes to the general fund as revenue is a pass through as we are a department of the city so she doesn't know that it would come directly to us. Austin stated that the city would consider all priorities. He stated that you have to be careful because once we get a revenue stream if it is not maintained we have to find a way to replace it when it is gone. Joanne Pepin she likes the idea and asked if we could get materials donated. Supt. Mosca stated yes. Paradis stated materials are good, and asked about services and what if a parent wants to donate money to their classes. Supt. Mosca stated that donating small amounts are ok, but she would have to look into it. Philpott stated that she commends everyone on the cuts and it appears that you are just chipping away at the infrastructure and the vision 20/20 says excellent education. She stated that this is heartbreaking. She stated that she doesn't have kids in school but she pays taxes and we are losing a lot of value in our community by making these cuts and we can't offer an excellent education if we cut two million. She stated that if you make all these little cuts it is like cutting away at a bridge sooner or later it will collapse, it is not just this year it is our future of the education system. She stated that if we cut money we may end up spending more so we are putting ourselves at risk. She stated that if you cut 20 teachers you might as well just fold the

school system right now, it is going to collapse and then where will our community be. She stated that she would urge people to let their concerns be known. Supt. Mosca stated that she has been meeting with the administration weekly and they are not easy conversations, she believes in the people we have and the work the people do and the SAU office people have taken cuts there. She stated that she doesn't know where to make up the 1.9 million and if there are better ideas she is happy to hear them but there is no other choice but people, they cut everything else we could before people. She stated that she is not sure where we can come up with another \$600,000, this is not what she wants to do but she has no choice we have to live by the rules. She stated that she appreciates the board's willingness to meet next Thursday that will give us time to meet and she needs to get to staff and let them know because she doesn't want staff to hear about the cuts on a slide. She stated that this is not easy and these are awful conversations we are having but there is no other way. Austin stated that it is a good point that it is not only this year. He stated that if you consider the option of no override, the bar is set at \$330,000 next year and in a budget where we expect normal kinds of increases we are already more than \$300,000. He stated that Mr. Gibson made mention of larger ticket items to talk about such as consolidating the elementary schools and moving kids around or tuition the high school to another community and close the high school, close the ctc, none of us want to go that road but it won't be long before we have no other options, this year is a critical year. Paradis thanked everyone for their hard work and she encouraged people at home to contact their city councilors and let them know their feelings, this is a loss for our community. Joanne Pepin stated that she has learned over the year that if you have weak schools the discipline goes up which means the criminals go up so do you want to pay to educate kids or pay to incarcerate them. She stated that we have wonderful teachers in the schools and in the city.

- 5. Adjournment:** Austin closed the workshop at 6:45.

Katie Krauss

Pending Board Approval

Board Secretary