

## SOMERSWORTH SCHOOL BOARD

April 7<sup>th</sup> 2015

Somersworth City Hall

7:00 pm

**1. CALL TO ORDER - ROLL CALL - PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Austin called the meeting to order at 7:00pm upon call of the roll the following members were present: Rivers, Austin, Philpott, Pepin, Gibson and Bolduc. Absent: Brennan, Hiller and Paradis

**2. COMMENTS BY VISITORS:** None

**3. CONSENT CALENDAR:**

**3.1 Removal of items from the consent calendar:** None

**3.2 Approval of Consent Calendar:** A motion made by Joanne Pepin seconded by Philpott to approve the consent calendar as presented. VOTE: motion passed, unanimously. Approved were:

- March 24 2015- Minutes from the Somersworth School Board Grievance Meeting
- March 24 2015- Minutes from the Somersworth School Board Meeting
- March 24 2015- Minutes from the Somersworth School Board Non Public
- Middle School Newsletter-March/April
- Enrollment- April

**4. ANNOUNCEMENTS:** Supt. Mosca stated that this month is child abuse prevention month and there will be 300 pinwheels at the SAU that will be put into the ground by the sign to represent people who have been affected by child abuse.

**5. DISCUSSION ITEMS:**

**5.1 SAU 56 Team Report:** Supt. Mosca stated that on Monday, March 9<sup>th</sup> Marie and I attended the Best Practice Personnel Workshop in Concord. Topics of the day included; Healthcare Reform updates, and Employee Personnel Files to name a few. Healthcare discussion was focused on current requirements, and then next steps regarding filing and potential penalties. She stated that on Monday, March 30<sup>th</sup> Bob, Marie and I attended the Legislative update. Senator Stiles, the Vice Chair of Senate Education highlighted adequacy funding. She spoke about the bills crossing over, those that have survived and the anticipation of the budget as it makes its way through the senate. She stated that Representative Rick Ladd, Chair of House Educations also spoke regarding the house version of adequacy funding, state assessments, charter schools, social media policies, and personally identifiable student information. Both speakers placed emphasis on the fact that the current budget proposal has no new revenue source so difficult decisions will need to be made as this budget becomes final. Marquis stated that those elements involved with competency-based education continue to be worked on in various schools within the District. At the elementary level teachers are continuing to work of creating a report card that is more in line with current instructional practices that incorporate college and career ready standards (which involve common core state standards). At the Middle School teachers and staff will be focused upon developing a strategic plan around the development of quality performance assessments. These assessments, which are central to competency-based education, allow students to demonstrate and apply their skills and knowledge to “real world” situations. Familiarity with this type of learning / assessment task is directly aligned with part of the Smarter Balanced Assessment that students and teachers are presently being exposed to. At the high school level, while teachers have already developed competencies around subject areas, conversations will move toward focusing upon 21<sup>st</sup> Century learning skills and reviewing the Next Generation Science Standards. From a more “global” District-Wide perspective there have been some discussions around competency based education and the implications for the District as we move forward. Minimally we need to either adopt those competencies that have already been developed by the Department of Education or decide to develop our own – by 2017. This work will be continued over the summer time where the administrator will engage in similar conversations so as to move this work along. He stated that professional development with respect to the Readers / Writers workshop model continues at both the elementary and middle school levels. The Middle School mathematics teachers continue to work with a mathematics consultant as they strengthen their

instructional and assessment practices. Conversations have begun with the administrators around what aspects of professional development will be focused upon during the 2015-16 academic year. Parallel conversations are occurring around the use of Federal Entitlement funds (Title 2 monies) to provide these professional development opportunities as well as direct instruction to teachers, i.e. use of Title 1 funds. He stated that the Smarter Balanced Assessment is presently underway with our students in grades three and four participating. Soon the window will be opened for our fifth and sixth grade students to begin the assessments. Later this spring we will see our seventh and eighth grade students become involved; and finally our ninth graders will be administered the assessment. Everything about this assessment has been a new experience for all involved – from the staff and students in Somersworth schools to the State Department of Education. From a technological standpoint our capabilities are well established and have provided us with the access and assistance needed. Kudos to San Murray, Ann Brown and Back Bay for their invaluable help with the SBAC preparation and implementation. Teachers and administrators in all the buildings have been incredibly understanding and flexible with the process - which has been superimposed upon all of those things already happening within our buildings. Their professionalism is mirrored by the seriousness that our students are approaching the assessment. Kudos is very appropriate and well deserved to all involved. Results from this assessment are expected to be released at some time over the summer months. Due to the nature of the assessment, i.e. the new format, its new foci on skills as well as application of these skills, we have been informed and advised that the results will be viewed as new baseline data; as to make any comparison with NECAP would be impossible and ill advised. Bolduc stated that you mentioned a lot of things and sometimes he gets overwhelmed with testing and what you all have to go through and what we put teachers through. He stated that he saw in the news teachers in handcuffs for fixing scores and with all these tests are we attaching this to teachers and saying that your class didn't meet the standards so your rating is not good. He stated that some teachers have good learners and others have some who don't learn as fast and asked if those assessments are putting grades on teachers, he worries about that. Marquis stated that he just wants to make sure that the public knows that the handcuffs were in Georgia not in this community. He stated that what we try to do is keep things in perspective. He stated that in other places there is a premium placed on testing and they have value but they are only one piece so we don't look at them as high priced testing. Bolduc stated that when you talk about smarter balanced assessment all these things seem like there is more testing than education in schools. Marquis stated that he doesn't disagree with that; we need to come to some place in the middle. Gibson stated that with the previous testing he was concerned that you couldn't track the testing year to year because it was a snapshot in time and he asked if the common core is better balanced to allow you to track progress. Marquis stated that it does both. He stated that you have to recognize that it is a snapshot in time but there is hope that we will be able to use the results to measure progress and use it to adjust instructional practices in the classroom. He stated that we have to continue to use the snapshot in time perspective but we get three different points of data to get an accurate reflection. Supt. Mosca stated that the difference with this testing is that it adjusts to your abilities so it is a truer reflection of your own abilities. D'Agostino stated that the FY 2015 budget status report is included in your packet if anyone has any questions. She stated that there were more funds released for snow removal that we had encumbered last month. Gibson stated that in terms of snow removal there was a comment made from the finance committee that it would cost the school district and asked if we incorporated them giving us a bill for next year. Supt. Mosca stated that they do the snow removal at no charge but they did ask us to look at the cost to contract the service so the city could spend more time on the city roads and sidewalks. Austin stated that this is the first time that we have seen a lot smaller red numbers in the special education lines and asked if there is a reason for that. MacDonald stated that there is a combination of students moving in and out and we are also keeping a closer eye on the budget to make sure that everything is status quo and we have worked really hard keeping the kids in district and the staff at the schools have done a nice job with that. Austin stated that we made a big deal about being a million over budget for special education and we are a lot closer to being on budget so congratulations to make that happen but it is another example of how much

these lines fluctuate. D'Agostino stated that on March 30<sup>th</sup> we held a School care informational meeting on the consumer driven health plan that has lower premiums with a deductible. She stated that she is happy to report that we had a nice turnout. She stated that in the packet we are requesting an increase to the meal cost for elementary lunch from \$2.10 to 2.20 as we need to show we are trying to meet what we are reimbursed for by the state for a free and reduced meal as we should not charge less than we are being reimbursed. She stated that it will be on the next agenda for action. She stated that the second memo is the café services contract as we are in the last year of a five year contract. She stated that it is a draft because the department of education also has to approve it after the board approves it. She stated that it will come forward at the next meeting for action. She stated that in the summer we will put out an RFP for contracts. She stated that the transportation contract is also in the packet for approval, this is the second year of a five year contract. She stated that this is a formality to approve for another year. She stated that this will also come forward for action at the next meeting. Bolduc asked why we have to vote on the food service and transportation contracts, he doesn't remember doing that before. He stated that it is a lengthy contract and asked if there are any changes. D'Agostino stated that the changes are very minimal, just some USDA changes and the financial costs are updated every year. She stated that she included it so the board could see it before they make a decision and the department of education requires the board to approve it for another year. She stated that the transportation contract is just a formality due to it being a long term contract to make the board aware of where we are in the contract. Bolduc stated that he is not a big fan of formalities, he doesn't understand why we have to approve the transportation contract every year if we decided we didn't want it would it be gone. D'Agostino stated that we have put it in every year but it gives us the opportunity if we needed to go out to bid again the board would know why we are doing it. She stated that it is important for the board to be aware of our long term contracts. Austin stated that we do this every year. Joanne Pepin stated on the café services increases we charge elementary less than the high school but the free lunch is \$2.65 so this gives us the same for both. D'Agostino stated that the expectation is to get it up to that. Joanne Pepin stated that if we don't get it up to that will they still reimburse us. D'Agostino stated that we have to show that we are increasing and she doesn't want to take that risk of losing our reimbursement. Austin stated that not increasing it will put us at risk of losing federal funding. Gibson asked what the deficit is. Supt. Mosca stated that each year if a student who doesn't pay their balances we have to make food service whole so if you think about this three to four years ago lunch cost \$1.95 so we knew we needed to increase our current cost so each year we come forward with an increase to try to show that we are making a good faith effort. She stated that because we have increased it becomes difficult for some families and we don't let kids go without food so if there are outstanding balances it is our responsibility to make it whole. Gibson stated what the consequences of owing an outstanding balance are and what happens next year. Supt. Mosca stated that we do try to recoup the money, we send letters and make phone calls to collect and a lot of times they start the year clean. Gibson stated that if someone is finding it difficult to pay is there something we can do to qualify them for free or reduced. Supt. Mosca stated that we try to help but people may not follow through or they don't qualify and we do allow for a grace period so there are a variety of things that happen. Austin stated that he would remind everyone that the food contract and transportation contract will be on the agenda for action at the next meeting. Gibson stated that he is not criticizing the administration; he just wants to make sure where we are. Philpott stated that in the transportation contract if we did cut a bus does it allow for us to do that. D'Agostino stated that we put out the bid for 7 buses and last year we only had 6, so we do have flexibility to add or reduce a bus. MacDonald stated that she met with staff in regards to students who will be transitioning from preschool to kindergarten, from elementary to middle school and from middle school to the high school. We broke into teams and have been holding meetings with the small groups since meeting as a whole group. Our goal is to make transitions as smooth as possible. She stated that she met with Tamara Hallee, Dana Hilliard, Michael Quigley, Maureen Jackman, and Caroline Butler to discuss the summer school programs for this year. The dates for summer programming will be July 6, 2015 to August 5, 2015, except for SYC whose programming will

end on August 7, 2015. As we get closer, more information will be shared. Parents and students will be contacted and given the particulars of the summer program. She stated that she met with ESOL staff and we discussed the students who are currently in program. We also discussed projecting student needs in the fall; however would like to wait for the ACCESS test results. Currently 18 students are receiving services between SMS and SHS, with two students projecting to test out. There is one ESOL student who will transition to the middle school next year. There are 82 students at Idlehurst and we have the appropriate staff placed there to cover the large numbers. We will meet again in May as that is when we hope to have the results from the NHDOE (NH Department of Education). Students who achieve proficiency in English, as measured by qualifying ACCESS for ELLs© test scores, transition into "Monitored Status", and no ESOL instruction will be provided during this two-year period. She stated that she continues to meet with case managers, monthly, in their buildings. Topics of discussion include any law updates, the new and improved NHSEIS system, special education process and paperwork, as well as summer school. We also have discussed the state testing for special education students, as well as those taking the alternative assessment through the new computerized program from the state called Dynamic Learning Maps. She stated that our preschool program continues to be successful in what we have to offer special education students and typical students. We have a full roster of students with a very long waiting list for typical (non-special education) students. We are beginning to plan for next year and will be setting up a screening for typicals to attend next year's program. Austin asked what ACCESS is. MacDonald stated that it is the state test for ESL students and they have to obtain a certain percentage to gain monitored status. Austin stated that so these students that haven't progressed enough they will take the smarter balanced testing. Macdonald stated yes with accommodations for whatever they need.

**5.2 Building, Grounds & Transportation:** Rivers stated that two weeks ago they had the opening of the RFP's for the CTC renovations. He stated that the committee looked at the responses and wrote up their analysis on the firms and turned them into the SAU where they compiled the data. He stated that they met on March 31<sup>st</sup> and they came up with recommendations and they will have oral interviews with four firm's tomorrow night beginning at 6pm. He stated that each of you received a packet to go through and review their qualifications and hopefully by the end of the evening tomorrow we will select an architect. Joanne Pepin stated that tomorrow night we will be voting. Rivers stated yes that is the intent. D'Agostino stated that the board received questions and the times are 6:00, 6:45, 7:30 and 8:15. Austin stated that the only piece that this is for the architect for the conceptual design not the whole project.

**Curriculum and Activities:** None

**Policy Committee:** None

**5.3 City Council Update:** Marty Pepin stated that on Saturday April 4<sup>th</sup> they started the budget process and Mr. Witham voiced concerns in the school budget and asked the board to do a process of \$100,000 intervals up to a million of what you would put back in the budget. He stated that someone will need to follow up on how they wanted that presented. He stated that last night they had the first reading and there was a motion to do a second reading but they did very little action last night. He stated that they had a presentation on the city audit and it was very impressive. He stated that it was the first time that the company has come in where nothing has to be improved and he commended the people working on our budgets.

**5.4 Student Representative Report:** None

**5.5 Health Cost Savings:** D'Agostino stated that in the packet the board had asked to provide the savings if the employees moved from the current health plan to the consumer driven plans. She stated that it shows each group savings. She stated that there is no flexibility of some staying it has to be the whole group that moves. She stated that the savings is for the whole district. Austin stated that we have a lot of work to do in this area and it is going to take some significant work in negotiations to get everyone on the same page.

**5.6 Handbook 2015-2016:** Austin stated that we had drafts handed out to us tonight. Supt. Mosca stated that these are drafts and we will be looking for the board to take action at the next meeting to get them out to the printers. She stated that there are some grammatical changes but the content is the same. She stated that the two elementary ones mirror each other and the middle and high school also mirror each other. She stated that they will bring them back to the next meeting for action. Gibson asked how much it costs to print the handbooks. Supt. Mosca stated that off the top of her head she doesn't know because some have hard cover and are spiral bound because they use them for agenda books. Gibson asked if there is any advantage to putting them online instead of a hard copy. Supt. Mosca stated that they need hard copies because they are the agenda books at the middle and high schools.

**5.7 Meetings 2015-2016:** Austin stated that in the packet are the proposed meeting dates for 2015-2016 and Jeni and I have been through these to make sure the dates are right and we maintain a steady schedule. He asked the board to take a look at it and contact him with any questions and they will approve it at the next meeting.

**6. ACTION ITEM:** None

**7. NEW BUSINESS:**

**8. OLD BUSINESS**

**8.1 Vision 20/20 Committee:** Supt. Mosca stated that they have been meeting at different establishments in the city and they met last month at the gathering place and they talked about how to brand events that are happening in the city and they are working on a Facebook page and working on gathering information on various organizations and putting the word out on what is happening in Somersworth. She stated that this month the meeting is on the 23<sup>rd</sup>. She stated that she is working on a palm card flyer to share with real estate agents to promote things happening in the schools. Gibson stated that he has brought this up before with the city council regarding the mural on the side of the building and how it continues to depreciate and asked if the vision 2020 see about doing something with it. Marty Pepin stated that he has brought it up to the committee several times and we have one time chance where the person will redo it so they have been waiting until the end to get the best out of it. Supt. Mosca stated that it did come to vision 2020 and we got the same answer if we try to fix it now it negates what the person will do. Marty Pepin stated that we have one shot so we are trying to wait as long as we can to get the best out of it.

**8.2 Budget:** None

**9. FUTURE MEETING DATES/SUGGESTED AGENDA ITEMS:**

- **April 8 2015- Conceptual Design Interviews**
- **April 16 2015- Rollinsford School Board Meeting**
- **April 21 2015- Somersworth School Board Meeting**

Joanne Pepin stated that she had a few people approach her and they would like to know if on channel 22 or 95 we can list all of the legitimate fundraisers so they know what is legitimate. Supt. Mosca stated that part of the problem is if they are booster based we may not know about them. She stated that we are trying to work on the broadcasting teacher taking more ownership of channel 95 and start to funnel things to him so she can have a conversation with Krystyna if the fundraisers are going on we can filter them to him.

**10. CLOSING COMMENTS**

**10.1 Visitors:** None

**10.2 Board Members:** Bolduc stated that earlier in the meeting he mentioned teachers on television in handcuffs and he doesn't know where they were from but it upset him that teachers are treated that way and it has to do with adjusting scores to keep their jobs. He stated that they get extra pay for getting to a certain point and he was so upset when he saw that. Gibson stated that he wants to second what Ken said and to make aware of the pressure educators face on accountability, we all want

accountability in our schools but an attempt to relate pay to testing brings into focus the difference of finding a way to rationally approach relating pay to performance. He stated that the problem he has is you have a third grade teacher goof off and passes them on to the fourth grade teacher and even with someone trying to do a good job you get a group of students not on level and it puts a lot of pressure on teachers and where the pressure to adjust scores comes from. He stated that the vast majority of educators are professionals who want to help students grow into good citizens and he hopes at some point people come up with a successful way to do it. Rivers stated that he would like to thank the SAU, Marie and Jeni for the fiscal audit report, it was an excellent report. Thank you to the offices for doing such a great job. Joanne Pepin stated that she is very impressed as a tax payer with what the auditors said and Marie and all her staff at the SAU are remarkable people and she has no idea how they do what they do and they should be commended. Philpott stated ditto what Joanne said. Austin stated congrats on the audit results, they didn't issue a management letter this year and it doesn't get any better than that. The funds are managed as well as they can be and we have a great set of controls and great people running those controls. He stated that channel 22 is now on demand and everything is indexed as well so you can pick an area of the meeting you want.

**11. NON-PUBLIC:** A motion made by Paradis seconded by Joanne Pepin to exit into nonpublic session in accordance with 91-A: 3, II (b) personnel. VOTE: Motion passed, unanimously. Entered into nonpublic session at 8:15. A motion made by Gibson seconded by Philpott to exit out of nonpublic session. Exited out of nonpublic session at 9:10.

A motion made by Joanne Pepin seconded by Gibson to accept with deep regret the retirement of Allen Storms. VOTE: motion passed, unanimously.

A motion made by Gibson seconded by Joanne Pepin to accept the resignation of Chris Carey. VOTE: Motion passed, unanimously.

A motion made by Philpott seconded by Gibson to accept with regret the resignation of David Miller. VOTE: Motion passed, unanimously.

**12. ADJOURNMENT:** A motion made by Gibson seconded by Philpott to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 9:12pm.

Katie Krauss  
Board Secretary

Pending Board Approval