

Somersworth School Board Budget Workshop

January 12th 2017

City Hall Chambers

5:30pm

1. **Call to Order-Roll Call- Pledge of Allegiance:** The meeting was called to order at 5:30pm. The following members were present: Ken Bolduc, Don Austin, Dana Rivers, Karen Hiller, Joanne Pepin, Matt Hanlon, and Kelly Brennan.

2. **Budget Discussion:**

FY 15/16 Budget: \$26,102,271

Current Budget 16/17: \$25,973,820

Proposed FY 17/18 Budget: \$26,859,165

Proposed Expense Increase: \$885,345

Loss of Revenue: \$201,982

Total Budget Increase: \$1,087,327

Projected Tax Cap Increase: \$360,725

Budget Savings (Bond Savings): \$161,145

Budget Shortfall: \$565,457

Supt. Mosca stated that the increases are comprised of:

Rollinsford Tuition (Revenue Loss)	\$ 150,803
Salaries	\$ 312,388
Retirement	\$ 196,908
Health Insurance	\$ 193,679
SACA (Negotiations)	\$ 50,000
SAU 56 Assessment	\$ 55,635
Contracted Services (Resource Officer, SPED)	\$ 20,258
Copier Lease Purchase	\$ 4,737
Property/Liability Insurance	\$ 3,917
Workers Compensation Insurance	\$ 2,053
Transportation	\$ 14,166

She stated that retirement increases every two years and that is about \$200,000 and the loss of revenue of about \$200,000 that is a total of \$400,000. If we didn't have those two things we would only be about \$165,000 short and she would be able to find that and say we could make it all work but there is nothing I can do to change those. Austin stated that if it were only \$165,000 you say you could find it but that is what we did last year which is why this year is less than the year before. He stated that we are at a point where even if we can find this or find that we can't find it reasonably. He stated that eventually you get to a point where you reach the point where it requires a certain number to operate and I think we are there. He stated that he doesn't think that we should go into thinking that we could cut. He stated that this is one of the years where the budget we support and the budget we submit are going to be entirely different. Supt. Mosca stated that page three are some true needs that the district needs and speaks to what Don is talking about.

True Needs

Full Time Kindergarten Teacher- \$76,000: Supt. Mosca stated that we know we have greater success if we intervene early so having another kindergarten teacher would help to lower the class size in those classes.

Part Time Grounds Person- \$58,000: Supt. Mosca stated that her feeling is that the interior of our buildings look wonderful but the exterior doesn't always look as nice but we don't have the extra folks to take care of that. She stated that for example we went from Hilltop which is about 30,000 square feet to Idlehurst that is 88,000 square feet and we didn't add people so a grounds person could help do the exterior work.

SPED Out of District Tuition- \$???: Supt. Mosca stated that we have had a difficult year this year in special education and we are seeing an influx of kids coming in. She stated that every superintendent is having the same issue and it is not middle and high school kids that we are having issues with it is ages 5-7. She stated that we have had to place kids outside the district because we don't have the ability to provide what they need and we have also had some kids move in that were already in outside placements as well as foster kids. She stated that she doesn't have this number yet but hopes to have it next week.

Internet Access, Waste Management and Utilities: Supt. Mosca stated that these lines we haven't been budgeting for properly and we have had savings in other areas that helped to lower the overages but this would help to budget more accurately.

High School Asbestos Removal- \$55,000: Supt. Mosca stated that she wanted to do a little CIP so she put this here.

Supt. Mosca stated that besides the \$565,457 that we are short if you add the \$327,610 of true needs we are actually short \$893,067 and that doesn't include special education.

- 3. Board Questions:** Brennan asked where the total for the kindergarten teacher come from. Supt. Mosca stated that the total is for salaries and benefits. Brennan stated that if the teacher is \$76,000 and a part time grounds keeper is \$58,000 that seems excessive for a grounds keeper. Supt. Mosca stated that she put the true needs out there and next week she will come back with some cuts because by charter we have to submit a budget under the tax cap. Hiller asked if we could submit two budgets one that is under and one that is not. Supt. Mosca stated no but we can make our needs known. Hanlon stated that we could do an impact statement. Austin stated that we do that every year showing what the impacts are. He stated that we also had a joint workshop with council in order to explain our needs, we don't want to just drop it is the lap of a city councilor. Supt. Mosca stated that as soon as the budget gets delivered to council we start attending meetings to answer questions as well. She stated that we also have a joint commission that is trying to schedule a meeting soon. She stated that they are sitting on the city side in the same spot. Hanlon stated that I know we have been looking at consolidated services so maybe especially with the grounds keeper we could look at that. Supt. Mosca stated that those things are being discussed and we are having those conversations weekly. She stated that there may be other ways to make the grounds person happen but she wanted to put it up here so we don't lose sight of the fact that it is important. Bolduc stated that we do this every year we go back and find money and when we do that something suffers and if there is extra money in the budget to find then it shouldn't be there. He stated that on the presentation it shows a budget savings for a retired bond of \$161,145 but he looked at the bond schedule and it looks like it adds up to \$262,000. D'Agostino stated that you are correct that the bond that is retiring is for more but there are also bonds that have been issued that we need to make payments on so the net effective is the savings of \$161,145. Bolduc asked if the \$20,000 listed

under resource officer is all for that position. Supt. Mosca stated no it also includes a 3% increase to Strafford learning center as well as the increases for the resource officer. Bolduc asked that they separate those out. He stated that he also saw an advertisement for two full time and two part time custodians and asked if they are looking for that. Supt. Mosca stated that we had a custodian at Maple Wood retire in November so we advertised for a custodian there and since then a full time custodian at the CTC moved over to Maple Wood and took that job so we were looking for a full time custodian at the CTC and we couldn't find anyone so we made that position into two part time positions and we found two people. Bolduc stated that next time there will be more pages showing what we are cutting. He stated that the council has been very good to us but somewhere along the line the train is going to off the tracks. Hiller asked to clarify the internet, utilities and waste management, are they overages of what we are currently paying. Supt. Mosca stated that those lines go over every year and we are trying to make it actual and budget more appropriately. Hiller stated that she wants to point out that last year when we met with the council both sides said that this year would be the tipping point year that we would have to make cuts that will hurt. Austin stated that if we look at the need for a kindergarten teacher he agrees that we need that but that is going to come at a cost of another employee we already employ. He stated that we are at a point that there is no more to cut, there are no more feathers in the feather bed it is flat as a pancake. He stated that if we need another position it is going to come at a cost of another employee. He stated that Jeni has tried to stay away from cutting people but we are at a point where we can't take that position. Brennan stated that there is the cost of stuff but the greater cost is the student's time, education, face time and learning time that they are not getting with a class of 30 people. Hiller asked if the increase in special education was an increase in students. Supt. Mosca stated that it is not so much the students the needs have become greater. She stated that we can educate the students with learning disabilities and things of that nature but there are some things that we can't handle. She stated that how can a class of 27 kids leave a class because one student is destroying a room. She stated that at the beginning of the year we were in crisis mode at Idlehurst. She stated that luckily we are using the some of the SIG grant for behavioral interventions to help us and help the students and staff. Joanne Pepin stated that we need to educate the public on special education they think that special education means reading issues or math issues they don't comprehend that students are included in the classroom and they don't realize what a teacher goes through. Supt. Mosca stated that we try to keep kids in the least restrictive classroom but there's a tipping point to what is fair. She stated that we go through different interventions before we place a student outside the district and we take a variety of different approaches before we say we can't do it anymore. Bolduc stated that he thinks that special education is something that the state should be funding more heavily. He stated that some students have one on one's and that becomes expensive so he hopes that someday they will fund that better. He stated that when you add a kindergarten teachers that says to me that you need another room, where do we find that other room. Supt. Mosca stated that we have a room at Maple Wood that we can use. Bolduc asked what the average number of students per class is. Supt. Mosca stated 20-22. Bolduc asked what the state average is. Supt. Mosca stated that the guideline is 20. She stated that she will come back next week and use the same presentation but have the next set of slides and we will start talking reductions and creative ways we have come up with. She stated that she met with the administration once and they will meet again next week. Bolduc stated that every year you say creative ways but how many creative ways do we have left. Supt. Mosca stated that the council has been good to us and the city is no better off, they are in the same boat. She stated that we have to continue to work together. She stated that we are talking short term and long terms plans that will come

through the board and council commission. She stated that it is one pool of money at the end of the day which is why I have to get as creative as I can in order to submit a budget under the cap. Hiller stated that long term she is concerned with the new secretary of education and her wants to put through a voucher system and asked if it would come down in this budget year. Supt. Mosca stated the Governor is a huge fan of school choice but in order to do that there has to be an amendment to the constitution because it says you can't send public money to private institutions so there will be some time and effort needed to do that. She stated that nothing moves fast. She stated that one bill she hopes goes through is that right now it states that you have to have two years of high school to enter a CTC program and they hope to amend it to one year because it is beneficial to get kids in sooner so their senior year could look different. Austin stated that as you talk to people this year the public has to realize that tough choices are going to be made and we either do this or we do that it can't be both. He stated that all these years with no public input, this is the year where we need to hear from the public on what their guidance is on where education and city services need to go. The choices won't be easy this year and when you get into that you can never please everyone. He stated that he would encourage the public to be involved and come to the workshops and public hearing to let us know their priorities.

4. **Adjournment:** Austin closed the workshop at 6:10pm.

Katie Krauss

Pending Board Approval

Board Secretary