

Somersworth School Board Budget Workshop

February 2 2017

City Hall Chambers

6:00pm

1. **Call to Order-Roll Call- Pledge of Allegiance:** The meeting was called to order at 6:00pm. The following members were present: Ken Bolduc, Don Austin, Dana Rivers, Karen Hiller and Joanne Pepin. Absent: Kelly Brennan and Matt Hanlon
2. **Budget Discussion:** Austin stated that this is the final budget workshop before the presentation on Tuesday February 7th at 6:30pm. He stated that following that at 6:45pm is the public hearing on the presentation if you would like to make comments on the budget. He stated that at 7:00pm we will have the regular board meeting. He encouraged everyone to look at the budget and if you have any questions contact the Superintendent's office. Supt. Mosca stated that she has been asked a number of times about the cuts we make. She stated that year after year we have made cuts. She stated that this is her sixth year presenting a budget and have made cuts. She stated that although we said that we can manage and absorb the cuts but they do hurt and make a difference. She stated that her first year we cut over \$100,000 out of athletics and that has never gone back in. She stated that at one time we had foreign language at the middle school and that has never gone back and that has a direct effect on larger class sizes at the high school in order for them to get their requirement. She stated that although we have tried to work and manage things the cuts have an effect over time. She stated that we are presenting a final budget today and this budget is based on what our current needs are right now so we are doing our best to work with what we currently have in place and making our best assumptions on what we need based on the students current needs. She stated that what exists today may be very different come next year so she wants to remind folks that we are doing the best we can with what we have in place. She stated that enrollment fluctuates, we had 12 students in the last month leave and then we had 4 come in the last week so we have constant movement. She stated that we understand that we have a tap cap and we have to live within the parameters and we take all these things into consideration. She stated that this budget is created by myself, Marie, Pam, Lori, Andy and all the building administrators and we all sit around the table to make these decisions.

Current 2016-2017 Budget	\$ 25,973,820
Tax Cap Increase:	\$ 399,334
Less: Loss in Revenue Total:	\$ 201,982
School Department Total Allowable Budget:	\$ 26,171,172

Current 2016-2017 Budget:	\$ 25,973,820
Proposed Expense Increase:	\$ 885,345
Proposed 2017-2018 Budget:	\$ 26,859,165
Less Bond Savings:	\$ 161,145
Total Proposed School Department Budget:	\$ 26,698,020

Shortfall: \$526,848

Proposed Reductions

Health Premium Effective Rate:	\$108,000
NWEA Testing:	\$ 20,000
Maintenance Repair:	\$ 55,000
Secretaries Move to Category B	\$ 23,000
Maple Wood Print Media	\$ 10,000
Contracted Services	\$ 33,000
Four Paraprofessionals	\$140,000
Special Education Reserve	\$100,000
SPED Teacher Part Time	\$ 37,848

Proposed Reduction Total: \$526,848

Supt. Mosca stated that last week she put in a speech and language teacher but they can't shift that into the grant so we left it all in the budget. She stated that instead we had contracted services that we will be taking out of the budget and putting them into IDEA. She stated that we had originally eliminated two paras but we looked again and we added two more paras due to changes in IEP's for a total of four. She stated that a few years ago we created a special reserve fund in case we had a situation where we had a student move in with catastrophic special education needs and we didn't have the funds to cover it. She stated that we have been putting money into that fund and currently it has \$103,000 and she is suggesting that we take \$100,000 out of that fund and we will reduce special education by \$100,000. Bolduc stated that reducing the secretaries to category B is that something we can do based on their contract. Supt. Mosca stated that we can do that, it doesn't say that we have to have a certain number of A and B secretaries. She stated that is a cut that will make a difference, we will have to create a schedule on the hours the office will be open and it will also mean more people coming into the SAU office to pick up a registration packet and let them know when they can call the school. Bolduc stated that when you let the four paras go it does have an impact and were moving backwards. Supt. Mosca stated that we were able to look at the services the students are getting and as they move forward and progress we may not need the one on one so we are not taking services away unless they are no longer needed in the IEP. Hiller stated that she is concerned about the special education reserve fund because if someone does come in and there is only \$3,000 in there that will not make a big difference. She stated that the true needs are zeroed out and she is concerned with not having the kindergarten teacher. Austin stated that we reevaluated the need for the four paras based on the needs and if we get an influx of students we still have to provide the services and it would require us to come to the city council for a supplemental appropriation, the process is just different for getting the money. He stated that we will release the money and if we need it we will ask the money to be released. Supt. Mosca stated that we zeroed out the true needs because it was difficult to get where we needed to get. She stated that she will get creative with the kindergarten position and it might be another year with numbers greater than what she would like and then come up with a plan 2-3 years down the road. She stated that she is meeting with the elementary administrators

next week. Joanne Pepin stated that you have proposed reductions in maintenance repairs and then zeroed out the true needs, are we going to end up like Hilltop. Supt. Mosca stated that no we still have money in those lines and Andy felt comfortable that he could give up the money.

Current 2016-2017 Budget: \$25,973,820

School Department Total Allowable Budget: \$26,171,172

Total Proposed School Department Increase: \$197,352

Bolduc stated that your opening statement was very powerful and he hopes that people heard that. He asked if we are in line at the high school with foreign language. Supt. Mosca stated that we are but it does increase the numbers at the high school and the class sizes are higher because it is a requirement. She stated that another thing that people should be aware of is that when we cut positions and bring others into the budget we don't bring them in full time right away. She stated that we have some positions in the CTC such as medical assisting that aren't full time those are only ¼ positions. She stated that five years ago we cut the media specialist at the middle school and we brought it back the following year at 1/3 and it took us three years to bring it back to full. She stated that the broadcasting position started at 25%, went to 50% and this year it is 75% and next year it will be full time. She stated that there are things that we have done that hurt but the taxes in the city are very high so it is a balancing act that we do constantly. Bolduc asked if she could give us a number of how many students in each program at the CTC. Supt. Mosca stated that she could get that for him. She stated that another thing to keep in mind that currently in the legislature to change the requirement for a student to have to do two years of high school before they can enter a CTC program to one year of high school so they can get the kids involved earlier. She stated that another piece is that the CTC offers electives to get kids excited about the programs so the kids can say the pathways make sense to them. She stated that if they take an elective in building trades it may peak their interest to enter the program. She stated that one piece causing a decrease is because Dover went to double blocks so if our kids are interested it may conflict with the work they do at our school so it is a choice. Bolduc stated that there are no capital improvements in the budget which is a big disappointment and we give a list every year and then we just change the years and submit it again the following year, it is a crying shame. He stated that what will end up happening is that we will bundle everything and borrow and I hate borrowing. He stated that we have some problems the windows at the middle school are rusting and we have to let it go. The carpet in the library looks like an ocean and he worries about someone tripping but we can't fix it. Joanne Pepin stated that what you said at the beginning was awesome and she was impressed of how it was presented and mentioning the things that we lost. She asked if we can go back to when we started the tax cap to see what we have lost. Supt. Mosca stated that she has done that before but she can do it again. Austin stated that it is not all doom and gloom. He stated that next year is an opportunity to talk about reinstating a little of what was lost. This is the last year we have to account for the loss in revenue from Rollinsford and it will be an off year for New Hampshire Retirement so there will be no downshift to the local level so it may

give us a window of opportunity to put back some things. He stated that we are also continuing to talk with the city on ways to be more cooperative in what we do and find efficiencies between the city and the school which is an important function and it will allow us to utilize resources differently. He stated that it sounds awful but it is not all doom and gloom there is a light at the end of the tunnel. Supt. Mosca stated that she would echo that. She stated that we are looking at ways to do cooperative services, any opportunity where we can do that it is automatic. It is one pot of money and we are all in this together. She stated that there have been cuts and we have had enrollment changes. She stated that we have been making up lost revenue for four years which totals over \$1.2 million. She stated that there is a legislative bill where the state will take back 35% of what they should be paying into retirement and that would be good. She stated that although we cut paras we had to hire some as well as needs happen. She stated that we are building a budget that will end next June and she is willing to bet that the makeup will look different in June of 2018 than it does now. She stated that things change constantly for us. She stated that we are fortunate to have the administrators and staff that we have to make things work. Austin thanked Jeni and her staff for all the work that went into the budget, the conversations are not easy and the team has been remarkable and being creative to do more with less and he appreciates the effort and the work done. He stated that he would remind the public that the budget presentation is Tuesday at 6:30 followed by the public hearing at 6:45 followed by the regular school board meeting at 7:00pm.

3. **Adjournment:** Austin closed the workshop at 6:35 pm.

Katie Krauss

Pending Board Approval

Board Secretary