

SOMERSWORTH SCHOOL BOARD

February 20th 2017

City Hall Chambers

7:00pm

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, Hanlon, Joanne Pepin, Austin, Hiller, Brennan, Smith, Yoder and Bolduc. Austin stated that he would like to add an action item 6.2 to act on the proposed 2017-2018 budget. He welcomed the two new board members Chris Smith and Kyla Yoder. Chris Smith stated that he has lived in Somersworth 20 years and he has gotten involved at the high school level and worked with Sharon Lampros and that led to work on the Christmas Gala and Dana has involved him in a few things as well so when the board opportunity opened up he decided to give it a try and he looks forward to working with all of you. Kyla Yoder stated that she has four kids in the schools from first grade to eighth grade and she is really glad to be back to support the students and faculty.
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 Hanlon to approve the consent calendar as presented. VOTE: motion passed, unanimously. Approved were:
 - January 26 2017- Minutes from Somersworth School Board Meeting
 - February 2 2017- Minutes from the Somersworth School Board Budget Workshop
 - January 26 2017- Minutes from the Somersworth School Board Final Budget Workshop
 - January 19 2017- Minutes from the Somersworth School Board Budget Workshop
 - Enrollment- February
4. **ANNOUNCEMENTS:** Supt. Mosca stated that she was contacted by the Lions club to do a fundraiser breakfast for a student in Maple Wood who is need of special eyewear and the Lions club will be hosting a donation breakfast on March 11th from 8-11am at the high school café. She stated that they are looking for donations of breakfast items and they hope to raise money for the eyewear. She stated that boys and girls basketball are ending their seasons and getting ready for the tournament and hockey is also ending their season and getting ready for the tournament, they are in first place. She stated that the unified basketball team had an undefeated season 4-0 and qualified for the tournament and they will play after vacation on Tuesday the 7th at the high school at 5pm. She stated that Andy and his staff did a fabulous job getting snow removed on memorial drive over the weekend. Also there was a basketball tournament and they received numerous compliments on how smoothly it ran.
5. **DISCUSSION ITEMS:**
 - 5.1 **Spelling Bee Winner: Idlehurst:** Supt. Mosca stated that she would like to thank Mrs. Francoeur and Mrs. Corbeil for running the Idlehurst spelling bee it was amazing to watch as one of the judges. She stated that tonight we want to recognize a very special winner Fiona Liu. She stated that the spelling bee has been done for 5 years and the Francoeur Group with Remax have sponsored and provided T-shirts and they have had great success over the years. She stated that this year the bee went 27 rounds with the last ten rounds a showdown between a third grader faith and a first grader Fiona and with the whole school watching they remained calm and poised. She stated that the winner Fiona won with the winning word Mahogany and will be representing Somersworth and Idlehurst at the NH spelling Bee on February 25th in Concord at the NH Capital Center for the Arts. She will take a vocabulary test to get on stage at the state bee and we wish her the best of luck and we are proud of her hard work. Austin presented a certificate to Fiona Liu.
 - 5.2 **Building, Grounds & Transportation:** Rivers stated that they met on February 1st and had three items on the agenda. They had an update on heating issues where a water heater at Maple Wood was replaced. He stated that Andy is working to balance the new heating system at the CTC where we went

form eight boilers to two. He stated that we have had an ongoing problem at Idlehurst with heat trace systems and a company is scheduled to go to Idlehurst during February break to determine the best solution so hopefully it will be fixed. He stated that the theater floor was installed and the floor surface finishing will be done during April break and the new acoustic panels were installed in Mulligan's Grill. He stated that all hands were on deck with the weather but everyone has to be careful on the walkways. Thanks to Andy and his staff.

Curriculum and Activities: None

Policy Committee: None

5.3 City Council Update: Marty Pepin stated that on February 6th they filled the vacancies on the board and we had two people put in for the ward 4 position which made it hard but it was nice to have qualified people who applied. He stated that they approved and closed the account for the trust for the bond issued in 1996 for Rollinsford's portion.

5.4 Student Representative Report-Isis Orchard: None

6. ACTION ITEM

6.1 Decision on Vice Chairperson: Joanne Pepin stated that she asked for this to be on the agenda as we need someone since Sean left and it needs to be replaced. A motion made by Hanlon seconded by Brennan to nominate Dana Rivers as Vice Chairperson. VOTE: motion passed, unanimously.

6.2 Budget 2017-2018: Austin stated that this will be a motion to move the budget on to the city manager for presentation to the city council it is not on the final budget it is just to move it on to city council. A motion made by Hiller seconded by Joanne Pepin to pass the 2017-2018 budget as presented on to the city manager. Bolduc stated that he does not agree with the budget but he knows that we have to do it but were putting something up to vote but saying we have to vote yes. He stated that he has trouble with that because he doesn't agree with the numbers but he knows that we have to do it but it does nothing for our school system. Austin stated that there is no requirement for you to vote yes on any motion. If the majority of the board voted no the administration would have to come back with a revised budget proposal for us to consider. We do have the option to say no. Joanne Pepin stated that we have to give the city manager a budget below the tax cap. Can we move it along but make it clear that this is not what we actually agree will keep our system a good school system. She stated that most people think that if we say it is alright then it must be alright but we can make it clear with a cover letter that this is not something that we approve of to give our kids a quality education. Austin stated that we have taken the position to present a budget that meets the tax cap because the city has to approve a budget under the tax cap and we have taken the position that it is our obligation to present a budget that meets the tax cap. He stated that when you vote to move the budget on you vote to support what is moved on. We have the opportunity to make our position clear to city council with the true needs page that we would like to have but it is not included in the budget and these are things that we truly believe we need but we know we can't afford based on the tax cap and those discussions happen he doesn't think that we gain any ground by putting it in writing but we can have those discussions at the appropriate time. He stated that for the purposes of moving the budget forward you either agree to move it along or you don't support it. Hanlon stated that you can vote to not support it and the administration can go back but they are just going to make different cuts. He stated that if we don't support it that means that you don't support the cuts and you would see different cuts. He stated that it was hard just to come up with these cuts so keep that in mind. He stated that we have been fortunate enough to have the Mayor and two councilors at the budget meetings and they understand the impact of what is going on and will go back and make it understood. He stated that we need to trust in what we have and the administration did the best they could with the cards we have been dealt. He stated that he hates it but he is going to support it and hopefully the impacts will be given when it is presented. Hiller stated that she agrees with Matt. She stated that she dislikes what we're putting forward but it is strictly about the tax cap, she trusts the administration and Jeni who made the decision and it was the best choice we could make and she wishes we could do more and move forward because we have been back peddling for years. Marty

Pepin stated that each year the school cuts go deep trying to live in the tax cap and if we keep kicking the can eventually it will burst open and we will have a problem. He stated that he doesn't think that people realize how much has been cut and it is very important that is brought out because the kids are being affected. He stated that he is fearful that the line item is so tight that if anything major happens you will be coming back to the general fund and there will come a point where the general fund is depleted and that is a disadvantage to the tax payers of the city of Somersworth. Bolduc stated that the council has funded money to help the school with some things but these funds are drying up and this year we are using \$100,000 from the special education fund which means we won't be able to use it next year. He stated that last year other departments gave up some things and they won't do that forever. He stated that \$197,353 is what we were allowed to increase our budget. The tax cap is written that the amount that taxes can be increased to pay for that budget and the only amount we can increase is the amount the tax payer pays for. He stated that people need to realize that it is not a budget cap it is a tax cap. He stated that when the cap went in he didn't see how it was going to work and we could stumble through for a few years but this is going to come to an end and we need to get the community involved and hear from them because something has to be done. Hanlon stated thank you for that Ken. He stated that he wants to remind everyone that we may have a reprieve next year but two years from now we are in trouble again so we need to get some long term planning together. VOTE: motion passed, 8-1 with Bolduc opposed.

7. NEW BUSINESS

8. OLD BUSINESS

8.1 Vision 20/20 Committee: None

8.2 Budget: Austin stated that there is an update in the packet if anyone has any questions.

9. MAYOR FORUM DATES:

- March 18 2017- At Large Councilors Sprague and Cameron and School Board Pepin and Austin
- April 8 2017- At Large Councilors Witham and Paradis and School Board Brennan and Hanlon

10. FUTURE MEETING DATES/SUGGESTED AGENDA ITEMS:

- **March 14 2017- Somersworth School Board Meeting**

11. CLOSING COMMENTS

11.1 Visitors: Dave Witham stated that he is wearing a few hats tonight. He stated that as a city councilor he agrees and we listen and understand and know the board is submitting a budget to the city manager that is not something palatable to you but it is something that you need to do and we generally understand that. He stated that he always voted for a budget but never really liked what I am voting for and it is never ideal. He stated that since the tax cap he has reached out to the chair and the Superintendent and asked if we were to consider an override which items would you be in favor of putting back in and depending on what it is he would lead the charge for an override. He stated that he is not a fan of the tax cap but the voters saw it another way and somehow we make it work. He stated that as a parent who has a child in the high school he is very pleased with the quality education he is getting despite the anguish over the tax cap, the staff and administration continue to deliver a product he is pleased with but he is not sure how long we can continue that it could be forever as we have a great staff. He stated that he is also involved in the frosty basketball tournament which is a cooperative effort between the recreation department and the Somersworth High School Boys Basketball Boosters and they had 30 games over 4 days at the middle school and Idlehurst and it was jam packed with attendees from across the region and was very busy and he would echo the Superintendent that Andy and his staff did a tremendous job at the venues. D'Agostino stated that she would like to thank everyone from the administration to the board for putting the budget together and moving it forward. She stated that she will create the same format as the city for the school portion and it will be available tomorrow afternoon if you want to pick it up and it will also be emailed and on the website.

11.2 Board Members: Hanlon stated that he would like to congratulate Fiona and wish her all the best

moving forward. He thanked the SAU for putting together the budget and it will be great to have it available online and he wished everyone a safe and happy February vacation. Joanne Pepin stated that she would like to welcome Chris and Kyla and she appreciates that they took the time to put their hat in and she is glad to see them here. She congratulated Fiona and can't believe that a first grader can spell better than she can. She thanked Andy and his staff they always do an outstanding job. She thanked the administration for putting the budget together because she knows that it was difficult. Rivers welcomed Chris and Kyla. Hiller stated that everything Joanne said she agrees with and feels the same way. Yoder congratulated Fiona and stated that it was super impressive to see a first grader win. She stated that she is glad to be back and the budget is rough but she will be contacting Mr. Witham about an override and she is glad to hear they have our backs. Austin welcomed Chris and Kyla and stated that it was nice to have a full board again. He reminded the board that the state of the city is on March 6th.

12. NON-PUBLIC: A motion made by Hanlon seconded by Brennan to exit into nonpublic session in accordance with Chapter 91-A: 3 II (b) Personnel and (e) Negotiations. VOTE: motion passed, unanimously. Exited into nonpublic session at 7:46pm. A motion made by Brennan seconded by Hiller to exit out of nonpublic session. VOTE: motion passed, unanimously. Exited out of nonpublic at 8:10pm.

A motion made by Hiller seconded by Hanlon to accept the retirement of Elaine Anderson. VOTE: motion passed, unanimously.

13. ADJOURNMENT: A motion made by Brennan seconded by Bolduc to adjourn. VOTE: motion passed, unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 8:11pm.

Katie Krauss
Board Secretary

Pending Board Approval