

SOMERSWORTH SCHOOL BOARD

September 12th 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, Smith, Austin, Yoder, Hanlon, Hiller, Brennan, Joanne Pepin and Bolduc. Absent: Smith Austin asked everyone to stand for a moment of silence for John Powers who was Superintendent from 1968-1987.
2. **Comments by Visitors:** Jason Cleary from 36 Laurel Lane stated that his daughter is a junior at the high school. He stated that the form for building use has not been updated since 2007 and the black box theatre is not listed as a facility. He stated that the music boosters last spring used Mulligan's Grill to sell stuff in and we were told we couldn't use the coolers or the kitchen and we had to bring the coolers from the middle school and we couldn't use anything but the counters. He stated that there was a poetry reading that wanted to use the black box theatre and they were told they could not due to something to do with the technology aspects of the lighting and the sound equipment. He stated that there are people in the community who could get a tutorial to use them or you could hire someone to run the equipment for the event. He stated that these are just two instances where school groups were not able to use it. He stated that there are more restrictions on the theatre and the whole idea was that it would be a community space that would benefit the community. He stated that he is just putting it on the table for further discussion.
3. **CONSENT CALENDAR:**
 - 3.1 **Removal of items from the consent calendar:** None
 - 3.2 **Approval of Consent Calendar:** A motion made by Hanlon seconded by Hiller to approve the consent calendar as presented. VOTE: motion passed, unanimously. Approved were:
 - August 22nd 2017- Minutes from the Somersworth School Board Meeting
 - Newsletter- Somersworth HS & CTC September 2017
 - Enrollment
4. **ANNOUNCEMENTS:** Dr. Brown stated that she would like to invite everyone to attend the marching band showcase that we are cohosting with Marshwood where 500 students will take part and this is the first time we have cohosted. She congratulated Krystyna Smith who had a new child Colbie Dakota Smith.
5. **Discussion Items**
 - 5.1 **Back to School Report:** Dr. Brown stated that the administrators are here tonight to give a brief report on the opening of school. Vic Sokul stated that he would like to congratulate Jess Lemp whom also had a baby last night named Theo. He stated that the high school had a good opening and it didn't take long to get into a routine. He stated that they had a well-attended freshman orientation. He stated that the fall sports are in full swing and they will be having a clubs fair on the 20th to let the students know what they have available. He stated that they have nine new teaching staff, eight new paraprofessionals and six UNH interns. He stated that the total enrollment is 440 students. He stated that yesterday Steve Hodson and I went to the NHIAA meeting and Somersworth High School was recognized as a school of excellence for having no disqualifications in any sport all year last year and that is a tribute to the coaching staff, the kids and the parents. Hilliard stated that they are off to a fine start with the magic in the middle. He stated that we have 350 enrolled and that number goes up each day as we had seven new students today. He stated that we have two new staff members Evan Coffey in Math and Douglas O'Hearn in Social Studies. He stated that the theme for the building is one spark. He stated that you can take one spark and ignite and inferno of positive change at the Somersworth Middle School and the community at large. He stated that they had a community day where he launched the principal's challenge for each student to ignite their inner flame and they saw how one spark can come together as a community we can ignite an inferno. He stated that they did screening for sixth, seven and

eighth for math and literacy. He stated that they are starting their intervention block on RTI levels one, two and three. He stated that SYC has started and the enrollment is 80 at the middle school. Hersey stated that they started the year great. She stated that we have an enrollment of 472 students. She stated that we have the following new teaching staff Marisa Henderson, Riley McCabe, Hannah Cook, Alicia Parks and Amy Chaput. She stated that we have a new Title I tutor Victoria Perkins and new paraprofessionals Asia Tellez and Shadai Gosselin. We welcome them to our family. She stated that they would like to thank the taxpayers of Somersworth for our beautiful building and it looks as good today as it did when it opened and they are so grateful for the amazing facility. She stated that the Idlehurst staff did a scavenger hunt amazing race around the different agencies and resources that Somersworth has to offer. She stated that they visited the middle school, the police department, the fire department, city hall, millennium park and willand pond. She stated that it was a great opportunity to see what Somersworth has to offer. McNelly stated that Maple Wood opened with 302 students. He stated that they have four new staff Kristin Lockhart, Victoria Russo, Kayla Tompkins and Emily McNair. He stated that the opening was very successful and open house was very successful. He stated that he has been greeting every student as they enter the building and it was an opportunity to high five them, fist bump and say hi to every kid. He stated that they held their first community day on September 1st and he read a story called a story of two seeds. He stated that it is about how you can make every moment count. He stated that they went over the rules of being safe, responsible, and respectful and the teachers performed skits on how to behave in the bathroom, at recess and in the hallways. He stated that they also have a new Facebook page called Maplewood Somersworth. Carrington stated that Thursday is the fall open house and freshman convocation. She stated that they will follow the student schedule and have 15 minutes with each teacher and then at the end of the evening there will be more time if you need to have a follow up. She stated that the convocation is at 5:45 and will last 15 minutes. She stated that it is a special ceremony where we welcome the freshman class into the hilltopper family. She stated that the CTC program sending and receiving programs started a week earlier than in the past and it went smooth. She stated that the theatre and design program is collaborating with Seraphina Caliguire to do a production of strawberry freckles on September 30th in the black box theatre. She stated that the elementary kids are coming for a special show. She stated that at the state level we are now officially able to enroll 10th graders in CTE programs, which allows for more opportunities.

5.2 Building, Grounds & Transportation: None

Curriculum and Activities: Hanlon stated that we talked last time about getting the AD's in and put them on the agenda, we could talk about the school groups using the facilities, and how we can help. Austin stated that Kelly, Joanne and Matt are on that committee so you can set up a meeting.

Policy Committee: None

5.3 City Council Update: None

5.4 Student Representative Report-TBD: None

5.5 NHSBA Call for NHSBA Resolutions: Austin stated that this is included in your packet. It is regarding issues that are pertinent to statewide issues that affect boards so if you would like to write one for us to consider let me know and we can draft an appropriate resolution.

5.6 Resolution No. 46-09 Councilor Marty Pepin: Marty Pepin stated that this is the wrong resolution but we are discussing the right one later in the agenda.

6. ACTION ITEM

7. NEW BUSINESS

7.1 Move to Approve: Moving \$100,000 from the fund for the educational persons with disabilities to the district operating budget for the purpose of educating students in the Somersworth School district with disabilities: Dr. Brown stated that there is a memo in your packet regarding students who are outplaced at this point we have an estimated deficit of \$247,432. She stated that in May 2009 resolution number 46-09 was passed anticipating this problem. She stated that the current balance in the account is

\$104,750, which would leave \$4,750 in the account to keep it open. She stated that she would encourage the board to support this recommendation this evening. A motion made by Rivers seconded by Hanlon to approve discussing this memo. Bolduc stated that this is the same request we had last year for the \$50,000 and we didn't need it. He stated that this year we are looking for it on the front end. Dr. Brown stated that we have three or more new students. Bolduc stated that at this point, we do not need the money; we could have more students move away from us. He stated that we should hold until we find the day where we need that money and if things change then we can ask for it. Hiller asked how many students we are talking about. \$100,000 for three students seems like its overkill. She stated that we should wait until everything settles down before we expend that money. She stated that she is skeptical of leaving only \$4,000 in that fund. She stated that it is an emergency fund and she doesn't see an emergency. Hanlon stated that he was around when this was crafted and it was supposed to be there if we went in the red. He stated that at this point if we are up front with the situation and tell the council we are going to pull it when we are in the red. He asked if there is a time frame on pulling these funds out. Dr. Brown stated that it is unlikely that the special education line will go positive and it would be irresponsible of me not to bring it to you as this line is seriously in the red. She stated that there was an understanding that it was under budgeted at the time the budget was passed and we had students move in. She stated that this line will go even redder in the next month. She stated that she is not comfortable with leaving almost a quarter of a million dollars in the red thinking that it will get better because I don't think it is going to get better. Bolduc stated that it is up to the board and the Superintendent to take care of the money as I read the resolution. He stated that he comes from a different side where we wait until the end as it could change for the better. Marty Pepin stated that the purpose of this wasn't to make it a line item in your budget and the tax cap forced us to do that. He stated that the purpose was that when special education was in the red, regular education was hurting for it, and the thought was that if the school turned money back into the city that we could put it in a fund to help out special education. He stated that this was part of the budget as a line item and with the tax cap; it puts you in a deficit for next year. He stated that it wasn't utilized the way it was supposed to be and it is a double-edged sword because it puts you in a \$100,000 deficit in next year's budget. Austin stated that how far in the red do we need to be for you to consider this an emergency. He stated that a quarter of a million dollars and he is hearing that it is not going to get better he considers that an emergency. He stated that as far as what it costs for an out of district placement, he has seen anywhere from \$40,000 to \$350,000 per student depending on the student so it is not unreasonable for three kids to cost \$100,000. He stated that special education is very expensive and we make a conscious effort to keep kids in district but there are times that we just can't do it. He stated that we have no control over that and it is his perspective that it is time to act on this and we can't afford to wait. Hiller stated that this might be a symptom of us not seeing every line item in the budget process. How did we get to this point, we are just starting the school year with a deficit in special education, why wasn't it something that was funded first. Brennan stated that there was a change in student counts which is why there was a rise in student costs and this line is so variable that it should not come to a surprise to us. Hanlon stated that this is the first week of school and we are having this discussion and he is afraid of what the perception might be so he would like to wait a bit to be careful about how we approach this and have further discussion at the city level. Bolduc stated that he doesn't want to see money taken from other line items to cover special education. He stated that this is what the tax cap does; we can't operate on a 0.8% increase. We have a real problem and he doesn't know how we fix it. He stated that when the time comes they would use the \$100,000. Hiller stated that she is concerned about this seeing since we also agreed to a contract after the budget season, which is \$75,000 that we also need to find in other line items. She stated that she is concerned about starting in the red. She stated that we need a bigger discussion about this. Rivers stated that we were audited have they had any concerns about the special education budget. D'Agostino stated no, they don't look at individual lines they make sure the appropriations are spent accurately and we are running pretty close. On a \$25 million dollar budget to come in a \$38,000 is a miracle. She stated that we are very frugal in our estimated revenues and we had a shortfall

there as well. She stated that Supt. Mosca put a budget freeze on so we stayed within the budget and a credit needs to go to the administrators as they helped to make sure that the budget came in under the appropriations. Bolduc stated that we came in at \$38,000 in the black does that mean that \$19,000 goes back into that fund. Austin stated that requires city council action to do that. Hanlon stated that we are a department of the city and rather than doing this on our own, we should have a larger conversation with the city. Joanne Pepin stated that we learned a hard lesson trying to stay under the tax cap. She stated that we are relying on the administrators and staff to help us keep cutting the budget but not the quality of education and it is time we try to educate citizens, our staff can no longer carry the burden and the tax cap is going to destroy the education in Somersworth. She stated that as a taxpayer on a fixed income, it is hard but we have to find a way for people to realize that it is important and the tax cap is ruining our school system. Austin stated that we need to focus the discussion on the motion. Joanne Pepin asked if the motion was to approve or was it to approve the discussion. Rivers stated that it was to discuss. Austin asked if anyone wanted to make a motion to approve. There was no motion.

7.2 Cell Phone Classroom Pilot: Vic Sokul stated that he has seven teachers who want to integrate this cell phone pilot in their classroom, three English teachers, one world language, one biology, one physical education and one special education. He stated that policy JLCJ unauthorized communication devices strictly prohibits use during the school day. He stated that he conducted a survey to report how many students had cell phones and out of the 440 enrolled there were 346 that had cell phones. He stated that we meet them where they are doesn't apply to cell phones, when they enter the building we tell them to put them away and then can be used as an educational tool. He stated that enforcement of the policy call for giving a warning and then confiscating them for the day and then giving back at the end of the day. He stated that sometimes this turns into an out of school suspension due to the action of a staff member. He stated that his plan is to notify the parents of the plan, propose holding a parent forum to hear input from them, notify them to review their data plans, and have the teachers have the students develop rules that they can live with. He stated that he would report back all results of the pilot program to the board. He stated that what would success look like, it could save money. He stated that three purchase orders came across my desk for TI 83 calculators, stopwatches, and other devices and the app store has apps that we could use for these for free. He stated that we could also save paper and supplies. He stated that we would also have better student collaboration and better prepare our students for 21st century learning, teach students about an online presence and do's and don'ts, could do podcasting, improve listening skills and communicate with parents faster. Joanne Pepin asked what would be done for students who don't have cell phones. Sokul stated a buddy system. Joanne Pepin asked if there are any other schools doing it. Sokul stated that he is not sure but he can find out. Brennan stated that in my house this would be welcomed. She stated that six teachers agreed, have you asked more to see if they are in support. Sokul stated that he asked for volunteers at a meeting and he was hoping for between 3-5 and he got seven. He stated that he is happy with the results. Brennan stated that parent cell phone plans was a question she was going to ask so she is happy to hear that you thought of that. Sokul stated that he talked to the tech person and he doesn't see a major problem. He stated that they did open up the cafeteria, as a place they can use their phones and it has been fine. Hanlon stated that we had a tech integrator who brought this to us and we shot it down for a number of reasons. First who is responsible if the device gets broken, data plans who is responsible if they go up, we can't get a good idea of what they are doing on their phones, and devices are used in bullying or kids taking photos and videos. He stated that it is Pandora's Box and he is not comfortable with it. Sokul stated that he read cell phones in the classroom book and in every case; they had a permission slip where the school was held harmless if a device was broken and he would implement the same thing here. Austin stated that he worries about our SAU security as we have magnified our risk and asked if they have thought of that. Sokul stated that they wouldn't go on the WIFI. He stated that he would look into it and it would be part of the process. Hiller stated that she is concerned about cheating and keeping students on task. She asked if they have carts with computers that come into the class. Sokul stated yes we do. Hiller stated that the kids

could use the kindles, chrome books or Ipad and then hand them in after class. She stated that kids are on screens so much and they need a break in my opinion. She stated that she would need more information. Sokul stated that he is not sure he can get more information without the pilot. Bolduc stated that if they have their phones and texting they are not absorbing what the teacher is doing. He stated that maybe we need to change the policy. He stated that he doesn't know how to vote tonight but he is leaning toward supporting it and seeing if it makes a difference. Sokul stated that we allow the special education students to take pictures of the homework on the board and we have had an influx of ESOL students who use the app to translate into their own language. He stated that he understands what everyone is saying. He stated that the cheating aspect will always be there. He stated that the cell phone policy and dress codes cause many gray hairs. He stated that we need to come into the 21st century ourselves. He stated that he will bring the teacher and students in and hear from them on if it is worth continuing. Joanne Pepin stated that she thinks this is a great idea; students have to be brought into the 21st century. She stated that she hated having to ask students to give her their cell phones and very seldom did it not turn into a major problem. A motion made by Joanne Pepin seconded by Brennan to support Vic with the pilot program at this time. Yoder stated that I think we are missing the point, there will be specific apps for specific classes and if we trust our kids often times they live up to it. She stated that she thinks it is a brilliant idea and with any new thing we do we figure out the disciplinary actions that need to be taken. Rivers stated that he is willing to vote on it as a pilot. He stated that cell phones are an addicting thing but he is willing to give it a try and see what happens. Hiller asked if there is a chapter in the book on the negative side effects of using this drug. Sokul stated that the stories weren't all fairytales, they had problems. He stated that cell phone infractions went down because they had no reason to hide them, and he doesn't envision the teachers using them every day. He stated that the book gave both sides. He stated that it talks about prep time and the different disciplines and how they use them and what the challenges were. Hiller stated that they are only using them in class; it won't be a free for all. Sokul stated that they are allowed to use them during lunch and they have identified seven teachers to use them as part of the pilot. He stated that so far they have had no issues in the café. Hiller stated that she has no problem with lunch she has concerns with cheating and kids not paying attention. Sokul stated that they have had no cheating incidents with cell phones most are asked to put them on their desk during tests or in their backpacks. Hanlon stated that some valid ideas and proposals came up but one that is completely invalid is that it is easier than disciplining them. That is completely invalid and that bothers me. He stated that they have broken the policy and he doesn't like hearing that administrators break the policy and saying that we will deal with it. Bolduc stated that we are ready to take a vote. VOTE: Motion passed, Hanlon opposed.

7.3 Motion to join the city council in the following resolution: No 08-18 reaffirming the city of Somersworth's commitment to immigration and cultural diversity: Marty Pepin stated that 08-18 reinforces the commitment to immigration and cultural diversity and every member of the council signed this policy of deportation. He stated that they are hoping that the school board will join us. A motion made by hiller seconded by Hanlon to accept the resolution as written. Austin read the resolution as written. Whereas, The Hilltop community was founded upon the commitment and dedication of immigrant groups, and Whereas, the American dream is based upon the equal access of all seeking equality and the warmth of liberty's light, and Whereas, Somersworth has become known for its unwavering commitment for celebrating and honoring diversity, and Whereas, under the current federal administration, Somersworth immigrant families' ability to access and obtain the American dream are being threatened through fear of deportation, and Whereas, the Hilltop City finds these acts as unethical, going against the core of Hilltopper and American values, Now, Therefore, be it resolved by the Mayor and City Council of the city of Somersworth that the city of Somersworth stands with pride, honor and commitment, by all of its immigrants; and be it further resolved, that the City of Somersworth urges the current federal administration to reverse its Un-American policy of deportation and honor the foundation of which this Nation was built upon. VOTE: motion passed, unanimously.

8. OLD BUSINESS

8.1 Vision 20/20 Committee: None

8.2 Budget: None

9. MAYOR FORUM DATES:

10. FUTURE MEETING DATES/SUGGESTED AGENDA ITEMS:

- **September 18 2017- SAU 56 Board Meeting**
- **September 26 2017- Somersworth School Board Meeting**

11. CLOSING COMMENTS

11.1 Visitors: None

11.2 Board Members: Yoder thanked the Mayor and Councilor Soldati for the resolution, it is great. Bolduc thanked Vic for his presentation. He stated that in regards to the use of facilities we have a problem when we have to hire someone to cover activities but he doesn't want to see anyone not being able to use the facilities. He stated that if they sign something that says they will pay for any costs with the use whether it be for hiring someone to run the technology or for a custodian for set up. He stated that we want to see the facilities used all the time but the school department doesn't have the money to pay for extra costs so any additional costs for use has to be a consideration. He stated that he is not sure who makes the decisions but hopefully the groups will pay the costs.

12. NON-PUBLIC: A motion made by Hanlon seconded by Joanne Pepin to exit into nonpublic session in accordance with Chapter 91-A: 3 II (b) Personnel (c) matter, which if discussed in public would likely affect adversely the reputation of any person and (e) Negotiations. VOTE: motion passed, unanimously. Exited into nonpublic session at 8:27pm. A motion made by Joanne Pepin seconded by Yoder to exit out of nonpublic session. VOTE: motion passed, unanimously. Exited out of nonpublic at 8:45pm.

A motion made by Joanne Pepin seconded by Hanlon to accept the nomination of Karen Raymond. VOTE: motion passed, unanimously.

13. ADJOURNMENT: A motion made by Hiller seconded by Yoder to adjourn. VOTE: motion passed, unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 8:46pm.

Katie Krauss
Board Secretary

Pending Board Approval