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**Board Meeting**

**CALL TO ORDER - ROLL CALL:** Austin called the meeting to order at 6:00pm. Upon call of the roll the following members were present: Austin, Richardson, Cannon, Larson, Hanlon, Hiller, Yoder and McCallion. Absent: Brennan

Austin stated that the reason for the meeting before the Budget Workshop was the opportunity to meet the finalist for the principal opening at the high school. Lane introduced John Shea and stated that he had been through two rounds of interviews. She stated that he had spent the day at the high school and then an hour at the SAU with her. She stated that she realized the Board had not seen any paperwork on Shea but that this was a good time to meet him and ask any questions. Shea stated that the high school visit was great and that he particularly enjoyed talking with a group of 15 students who had some very positive things to say about the high school and some constructive ideas also. He stated that he had also spent about 45 minutes with the entire faculty. He stated that he has lived in New England since 1991 and in Portsmouth since 2002. He stated that he is originally from Philadelphia. He stated that before coming to New England he was a Co-Founder, Chief Operating Manager, Vice Principal, Business Administrator and Curriculum Planner for a Charter High School in San Diego, California. He stated that we started the Charter School called High Tech High and there was a documentary done about it long after he left which was released in 2015 and recommended that the school board members see it. He stated that it is about the economy and the work force and how high schools are failing in these areas. He stated that it talks about the STEM Program and how they were focused on getting low income students, students of color and girls to represent these fields. He stated that after San Diego his family moved to Portsmouth and he landed an interim position at Berwick Academy and ended up staying for four years. He stated that at that point, the headmaster left and it was the consensus that I would be the new headmaster but I really wanted to get back to public education. He stated that he was a finalist at both Noble High School and Spaulding High School for a position and he choose Spaulding where he stayed for four years. He stated that he then did a bit of consulting work at Traip Academy in Kittery, Maine. He stated that the opportunity came to be a High School Principal in an International School in Delhi, India and I figured that this was a unique opportunity for his three girls who were in elementary and middle school to study abroad. He stated that they then came home, via the International School in Panama. He stated that he has been doing some consulting work and writing a book with the hope of finding the right opportunity in this coming school year. He stated that Somersworth High School is a great high school in that I have long believed that high schools should be between 400-600 students. He stated that he believes there are three parts to being a high school principal. He stated that these are the day to day operations and events that happen but are invisible and are critically important to the school running smoothly. He stated that the second is the school culture and you have to be present in the classrooms, at the sporting events and support the kids. He stated that the third part of the job is rethinking and envisioning where the high school should be in ten years. He stated that he believes that 95% of high schools are grossly inadequate and were actually designed to be efficient and not to support teaching and learning and that what we are accomplishing in our schools today is despite how we have designed our schools. He stated that we are pretty stuck in our thinking of redesigning our schools and that we need to be carefully and thoughtfully rebuilding a vision for the school. He stated that it's about depth, it's about organizing our learning, solving problems and answering questions. He stated that he believes that we can make Somersworth High School the best high school in seven to eight years. He stated that as principal this would not be my school but our school. He stated that the School Board and faculty will need to commit to changes. He stated that it is not a three-year plan or a ten-year plan but it is a commitment and would bring energy and raise the moral at the high school. He stated that bringing in money through the change process can help get things where they need to go. He stated that he is at a place in his life now that this is what he

wants to do and that he is excited that Somersworth would be a good fit for him. Richardson stated that in New Hampshire, charter schools is a four letter word due to the voucher system. He asked how would he transfer the creativity to the teachers to allow them to be who they are within all of the curriculum guidelines. Shea stated that he is not a fan of vouchers. He stated that giving kids \$2500 when they are trapped at bad schools, to go to another school is not going to do anything and does not serve a purpose other than making a political statement. He stated that the premise of public schools is to regulate students with no accountability for outcomes whereas the charter school model is the opposite and if students do not perform on certain measures, we'll shut the school down. He stated that he believes that public schools have more freedom than they realize around curriculum and instructional practice. He stated that with the Teacher's Union in Rochester the only thing he supported was "good pay for good teachers" and the rest of the Agreement was a hindrance because we need to do what is in the best interest of kids not what has to do with bargaining agreements or tenure. He stated that he is talking about good instructional practice with a bit of flexibility. Hiller asked for Shea to give the board some ideas of changes he'd want to make. Shea stated that the instructional practice was designed for efficiency and a school can process a lot of kids by putting them in a room and lecturing to them. He stated that the students will get out of it what they can. He stated that over the past 20 years there has been a shift from "bad" delivery to "good" delivery in which the teacher moves around some more and there is some discussion. He stated that then there is constructivism which means more opportunity for kids to figure things out. Hiller stated that in that way you are teaching the students how to think. Shea stated that you will not be able to teach as much. He stated that there will be many lectures, many discussions but many more opportunities for students to figure the answer out for themselves and you frame things around interesting and relevant questions and solving problems. He stated if you teach this way class sizes need to be smaller and you need to look at teacher loads so that teachers will have the time to individualize and personalize more. He stated that he is an advocate for less choice which is not usually popular with school boards or parents. He stated that a lot of choices that we offer to kids they do not choose and you need to create opportunities within the classes you offer. He stated that assessment is for one purpose and that is to sort the kids into groups, which is pathetic. He stated that a grading scale only needs three to four points. He stated that real life application should be part of the learning experience. Hanlon asked if he leans more towards project based learning. Shea stated he does and when you do project based learning well you have kids grappling with things. He stated that kids need to try to figure things out that they haven't been taught, they have to process things and that is what is exciting. Hanlon stated he liked hearing about project based learning and culture and climate. He asked if Shea had any background or thoughts on PBIS. Shea stated that he liked PBIS but that high school level is tricky because ninth graders are like middle school students still and twelfth graders are young adults. He stated that the idea of rewarding with positive behavior rather than bad behavior is a no brainer but there is a point by twelfth grade it needs to be a bit more intrinsic and they need to be grappling with owning the person that they want to be. He stated that anything good should be ingrained in how we operate and this is just called "running a school". Cannon asked what outside influences would Shea depend on to help him and what would he need from the administration and the school board. Shea stated that he will need to get to know the incoming superintendent. He stated that he will also need Lori Lane to go back to the position of Assistant Superintendent working with Curriculum and Instruction. He stated that he needs to know that there is a school board commitment and that we can work together and that what we are doing is considered exciting. He stated that there needs to be a critical mass in the faculty and he senses there is. He stated that constant conversation with the students is important. He stated that if Somersworth High School is committed to what a high school ought to be with a vision, we should be able to apply and receive some grants to get us through the process but you do not want to count on support from grants forever. He stated that there has to be a point in 7-9 years that the operating budget will take care of you. He stated that the most sacred responsibility of each day is the kids in the building at that

moment. He stated that if we can all agree on what we need in Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment and Practice, I think this is all we'll need. McCallion stated that his challenge to Shea is the security in the schools and also, sports and the culture. He stated that sports are declining like crazy. He asked what are you going to do to change that. Shea stated that he knows the safety piece inside and out and as principal I want to know the Police Chief, I want to know the Fire Chief, I want to know the community. He stated that he is even a stickler about fire drills. He stated that the kids watch adults and this is just one more opportunity to show that we are competent at what we do. He stated that as far as athletics it is not about winning, it is about quality and it is about developing kids that understand sportsmanship and character. He stated that if you focus on these things you will often win. He stated that coaching to win and coaching to develop young people are quite different. He stated that a high school cannot offer everything and needs to limit the sports offered. He stated that he does not know why sports is declining but that he values it. Hiller asked what the book he was writing was about. Shea stated that he spent a year travelling around the world, mostly on a bicycle and it took him 24 years to process it all, about philosophy and ideas. Hiller asked if Shea had talked to Bob Gadomski. He stated he had not. Austin thanked John Shea for attending.

Yoder stated that he has a "tech talk" and she had watched it before attending the meeting. Richardson stated that he has the energy and the enthusiasm, the will and desire. Austin stated that he talked about the high school experience and working with the student and knowing what their whole environment is like. Hanlon stated he was different than any other candidate they had seen for this position but can we afford him? He stated that there is a lot of experience and a lot of drive there. Hiller asked what Katelyn Carrington and Krystyna Smith thought of working with him. Lane stated that they thought he was a person that they could build a team with and that they have been wanting some consistency and continuity. She stated that Shea is not looking for a "stepping stone" at this point in his life but is looking for a place where he can do some really cool things. She stated that he has an incredible depth and breadth inside and outside of education and he is going to push the envelope and that sometimes is scary. She stated that he wants to know that Bob Gadomski and him will be a good match. Austin stated that it was up to Lane now to work on the negotiation with him and bring a nomination forward.

**NON-PUBLIC:** A motion made by Yoder seconded by McCallion 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 6:30 pm. A motion made by Hanlon seconded by Hiller to exit out of nonpublic session. VOTE: motion passed, unanimously. Exited out of nonpublic at 6:40 pm.

**ADJOURNMENT:** A motion made by Yoder seconded by Richardson to adjourn. VOTE: motion passed, unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 6:45 pm.

### **Somersworth Budget Workshop**

Austin stated that they would now have the Budget Workshop. Lane stated that she and Katie Krauss had been working on where they need to make reductions. She stated that this is not done yet. She stated that we have to get to a number to get to the tax cap. The budget summary and list of cuts is as follows:

**Somersworth School District 2018-2019 Budget Reductions**

**Budget Summary**

Total Expenditure Increase Version Two	1,187,561.00
Total Loss of Revenue (including changing adequacy to 95%)	<b>(572,916.00)</b>
Total Net Budget Increase (including changing adequacy to 95%)	1,760,477.00
Tax Cap Increase	574,334.00
<b>Amount over tax cap</b>	<b>1,186,143.00</b>

**Proposed Budget Reductions**

New Staff Requests	258,898.00
Technology Increases	194,772.00
Facilities	30,000.00
HiSet Funding (GED)	42,048.00
Reductions from 2017-2018 (only thing added back were building cuts and substitutes)	100,057.00
Teaching Staff Reductions (2)	155,304.00
Paraprofessional Staff Reductions (4)	115,499.00
Moving secretaries from A to B	17,255.00
Administrator Health to 90% single, 80% 2-person and Family	4,717.00
<b>Total Budget Reductions</b>	<b>918,550.00</b>

**Amount Remaining** **(267,593.00)**

Lane stated that this is an evolving process. She stated that we have to get to a number to meet the tax cap and we have a lot of money to cut as with the above reductions we have not met the tax cap number yet. She stated that all the New Staff Requests have been cut. Hiller asked if any of the requests from Administrators for new staff would be hired. Lane stated that they had all been cut. She stated that it makes sense not to add in new staff when we are trying to reduce the budget. She stated that all of the new Technology and Infrastructure were cut out. She stated that the facilities line has been decreased by \$30,000.00. She stated that the Hi-Set program for students who are not able to earn a diploma have been cut and that these are after school hourly wages that will be cut. She stated that in the current budget the Administrators were asked to cut \$50,000.00 and we will keep those cuts as they are now moving into the next budget. She stated that four Para Educators will be eliminated and that this is a tough line to manage as you have students moving in and out all the time. She stated that we have proposed to move the secretaries from Category A to Category B which involves five staff that will go from a 260-day contract to a 210-day contract. She stated that we want to create continuity with benefit packages with the different groups of educators so we will change the district percentage we pay for the Administrators medical benefits. She stated that we still have to find \$267,593.00. Hanlon stated that the Adequacy Aid is a big issue in this. Lane stated that we may want to change the percent of Adequacy Aide from 95% which is a guaranteed amount to 97%. Krauss stated that if we changed to the 97% it brings us to looking for \$121,000.00 in cuts as it reduces the shortfall by another \$145,000. Larson asked if there was any change in the Special Education amount. Lane stated that Special Education is a tough line and in the current year we are over expended by \$330,000.00. Hiller stated that we are required to

provide for Special Education Services. Larson asked if we really were required to provide Special Education Services. Hanlon stated that the biggest problem with Special Education in the State of NH is that there are Federal Mandates and we get paid to meet these Federal Mandates. He stated that then the New Hampshire Department of Education goes above and beyond the Federal Mandates with their requirements and they refuse to pay us the reimbursements. Austin stated that Congress can pass laws and then not fund them. Hanlon stated that we are trying to do more for these students but we are not getting the funding. Richardson stated when he first came to the Board there was an audit of the Special Education services and what he found was that Somersworth goes above and beyond in complying with the mandates. Hanlon stated that a lot of our out of district placements have been replaced with tutoring within the schools for those students which has reduced costs. Krauss stated that when you get Cat Aide for Special Education services you get it the following year and the reimbursement is not guaranteed to be what you thought it would be. McCallion stated that we have 266 kids in Special Education receiving services. Lane asked what was thought about the Adequacy Aid percentages. Krauss stated if you go to the 97% it gives us back \$145,000.00. Larson asked if the 2 teacher reductions were teachers retiring. Lane stated that they were 2 reductions, and not retirees. Lane stated that she knew who was represented in that number for reductions but she was not comfortable sharing that information. Larson asked if there was any way to meld positions. Lane stated that this is the first wave to show you the cuts. She stated that if you want us to stay with the 95% Adequacy Aid it will help me to know what I need to do. She stated that if you want to stay with the 95% it will probably mean additional cuts of teaching positions. Austin stated that he is disturbed with the decreases in technology because the cuts keep us where we are today and if we want to move forward we need to keep our technology usable. Hiller stated that we should go with the 97% Adequacy Aid. Austin stated that he wanted the Board to be prepared to account for the full \$267,593.00 amount in cuts. Richardson asked when the Keno money kicks in. Krauss stated that it is in the 18-19 budget and it has already been added in. Austin stated that if they agree to go with the 97% then they need to go to the Council with the \$145,000 number. He stated that they need to be transparent and we need to show we made cuts. He stated that he wants the Council to put as much money on the table that they can and we need the council to realize the full impact of this. Larson asked if there was any way to get revenue from renting out space in the schools. Hanlon stated that this is a long term vision. He stated that the community needs to start to see the value in our buildings. Krauss stated that there is \$4,000 in the budget from building use and most of it comes from Head Start renting a room at Maple Wood. She stated that it has been the philosophy to not charge groups from Somersworth for use of the buildings. McCallion stated that after the new principal comes in and the new Superintendent we need to take a look at policies regarding use of our schools. Austin asked for consensus on where to go with the Adequacy Aid percentage. The consensus was to cuts for both the 95% and the 97% Adequacy Aid amount. Lane stated that she had some items for discussion relating to the 18-19 budget. She stated that there is a thought about reorganizing the two elementary schools but that it is going to take lots of studying. She stated that this had been looked at three years ago when all day kindergarten was put into place. She stated that the plans and ideas we had back then can be looked at and we can see what we have and what else we need to do. She stated that she is looking for a consensus from the Board to see if it is alright to keep looking at this as an option. Austin stated that he thinks we could gain some efficiencies by reorganizing the elementary schools and it makes a lot of sense to have the same grades in the same buildings as coordination and collaboration would be easier. He stated that the students would not have to wonder what school they would be assigned to anymore. Lane stated that if the Board agreed to pursue this she would bring the elementary administration together and look at what we have already from three years ago and continue some planning. Richardson asked if this would have any effect on Title One schools. Lane stated that all schools except for the high school are Title One schools. She stated that unfortunately, because Idlehurst has made some significant gains they are no longer a priority school and they are losing the SIG grant of \$300,000 so some of what was paid with that grant will be transferred to the regular budget. Hanlon stated this should be noted when the board goes to the City Council that because we did well, we did our job, we are losing this amount of money.

McCallion stated that he thought it was a smart move. He stated that buses go to both schools now so that would not be an issue. Lane stated that she and Krauss had met at City Hall with Scott Smith and Bob Belmore regarding the possibility of putting a full time custodial position in the budget that we would share with the City. She stated that the City is looking to expand services and that they would pay for it all. She stated that the position would be 40 hours some weeks and other weeks it may be less. She stated that the school could benefit by this person having a schedule to allow for coverage at weekend activities at the schools. Krauss stated that the salary would show in our budget as an expenditure and then again as a revenue as the City was funding it. Lane stated that this person would do custodial services for City Hall, the Public Library and Public Works and that Andy Lucier would have the oversight of this person as he is the Facilities Director for both the schools and the City. Larson asked if something like this could be done for the School Resource Officer. Krauss stated that we pay 75% of his salary and the City pays 25%. Larson asked if there was a chance it could be shared 50-50. McCallion stated that the flip side to all of this is that the City plows for the Schools. Lane stated there is always give and take. Austin stated that we saw that with the Comcast contract with the City where the high school benefited. Lane stated that they would check with the attorney to make sure there were no issues with this position contractually. She stated that the other thing on the reduction list is to change five Category A secretaries to Category B. She stated that they will move from a 260-day contract to a 210-day contract and that there is a savings with this. She stated that the Administration had put a schedule together for the summer as to how the offices would be covered. Hanlon stated he thought we should move them from A to B's at this time but if additional appropriations came up, we could change them back to A's. Richardson stated that as long as we say that we will go back if something changes they will only approve a one-year contract year after year until it changes back. Krauss stated to accomplish this, you need to lay them all off and then rehire them as Category B's. She stated that this process was not followed last year. She stated that one secretary is retiring so you just would hire the replacement as a Category B. She stated that this had worked last summer when there was a schedule for the secretaries to be in the schools over the summer. Larson stated that she does not approve of this as it only results in saving \$17,000 and you are leaving the school offices unmanned during the summer. Hanlon stated that this was easier than telling six teachers that they were losing their jobs. Austin stated that we had said that everyone in district would have to contribute to this process. Krauss stated that perhaps we could put them back to 7.5 hour days instead of 8 hour days. Lane stated that for now we would leave this as it had been discussed and revisit it later and decisions could be made then. Austin asked if additional funds were found, would Lane take this off the table. Lane stated no, that there are other things she would rather put the money to. She stated that building administration would choose other things. She stated that she wanted to discuss the \$75,000 that we currently have from when the Idlehurst School was built and there were a number of energy efficiencies built into the building. She stated that because of the energy efficiencies, Public Service presented us with a sizable refund check. Hiller asked where this money is now. Lane stated that it is in a revolving account and it is not part of the regular budget. Krauss stated if it was in the General Account it would go back to the City at the end of the year. She stated that it is earmarked for building improvements. Lane stated that it is time to do something with this money as it has been sitting in the account since 2011 and it is not gaining interest. She stated she wanted to make the Board aware that the money was there and that the Buildings and Grounds Committee may want to discuss this and make some decisions. Austin stated that the Board has some homework to do. He stated that we were supposed to meet with the Finance Committee tomorrow but that has been postponed due to weather to Monday, 2/12 which means the joint meeting we were to have with the City Council on Monday is postponed to Thursday, 2/15 from 6-8 at Mulligans Grill. He stated that when they meet with the Finance Committee on 2/12 they will probably have a revised list of cuts and the reason for meeting with them is to get an idea how the City Council may react. He stated they could go in three different directions. He stated that they could tell us they are not going to help us at all and then we will be stuck with the cuts, or they could say we would like to help you with the current budget so you are starting in a better position for next year. He stated that would give us the \$500,000 back that we had to give up in the first place, or they could decide to

leave the current budget alone and help with next year's budget. He stated that this is why we want to give them as much information and detail as we can. He stated that we want them to see what the impacts of the cuts will be. Hiller stated that in past years they have asked if you had an extra \$100,000 what would you spend it on so we had better have an answer ready. Austin stated that at next week's meeting on Tuesday he would like to take some time talking about the budget so the public can hear where we are in this process. Austin closed the workshop at 8:35 PM.

Melinda Sullivan  
Board Secretary

Pending Board Approval