

SOMERSWORTH SCHOOL BOARD

April 10th, 2018

City Hall Chambers

7:00pm

1. **CALL TO ORDER - ROLL CALL - PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** Austin called the meeting to order at 7:00 pm. Upon call of the roll the following members were present: Austin, Richardson, Cannon, Larson, Hiller, Yoder, McCallion and Brennan. Excused: Matt Hanlon
2. **COMMENTS BY VISITORS:** Sarah Brecknock of Indigo Hill Road stated that she has two children who attend Idlehurst School. She stated that she had attended the forum earlier in the evening at Idlehurst and that she wanted to hear from the School Board about the research that had been done up to this point regarding separating students Pre-K through 2nd grade at one school and 3rd through 5th at another school. She stated that she was curious about the academic benefits of this. She stated that there were schools in the state that had looked at this and found that there were no academic benefits. Austin stated that this session is to provide information and that the School Board was not going to respond to questions. Barbara Wentworth of Buffumsville Rd. stated that she had a statement for those who were not able to attend the meeting at Idlehurst regarding the reorganization of the schools. She stated that the main argument for it, that she has heard, is that the reorganization would benefit the students. She stated that she does not currently see this as it is proposed. She stated that this being proposed for this coming school year shows a lack of consideration not knowing the possible consequences of this action. She stated that due diligence needs to be done over the coming school year to give teachers, students and parents a chance to be part of the decision process. She stated that a group of tax paying parents, teachers and Administrators needs to be a part of the decision making process to create an environment where our children can flourish. She stated that she is not comfortable and does not support the change as it is currently proposed.
3. **CONSENT CALENDAR:**
 - 3.1 **Removal of items from the consent calendar:** None
 - 3.2 **Approval of Consent Calendar:** A motion made by Richardson seconded by Hiller to approve the consent calendar as presented. VOTE: motion passed, unanimously. Approved were:
 - March 27, 2018- Minutes of the Somersworth School Board Non-Public Meeting
 - March 27, 2018- Minutes of the Somersworth School Board Meeting
 - Middle School News-April
 - High School News-April
 - Free and Reduced Lunch Percentages-Caroline Butler
 - Enrollment-April
4. **ANNOUNCEMENTS:** Lane stated that a parent forum had been held earlier in the evening on the study of the reorganization of the two elementary schools. She stated that there would be another one tomorrow night at Maple Wood School at 5:30. She stated that if you want to hear the presentation or were unable to attend tonight, you can attend tomorrow.

Lane stated that whenever there was a shooting in a school it brings up questions about how safe our schools are. She stated that there is a community group that involves police, fire, ambulance personnel and the school district that have met on a regular basis to address a number of training issues. She stated that she wanted to make the public aware that the district is going to be providing our Middle School and High School Teachers, this coming Friday which is a Professional Development Day, with Emergency Response Training. She stated that the police department will be offering this training. She stated that this is an effort that the district continues to support.

Lane stated that she had a chance to attend the Career Technical Center Advisory Committee Meeting the prior day. She stated that this was a meeting with Dover, Rochester and Somersworth along with our sending schools. She stated that there are some amazing opportunities coming for students who live in

this area. She stated that Rochester Career Technical Center has collaborated with Great Bay Community College with the Advance Manufacturing Program. She stated that they are collaborating with various businesses in Rochester to support 12-16 college credits at the high school level. She stated that there is a program that they are going to offer next year in Bonding and Finishing. She stated that this is a needed skill in the industry world. It is a six-month certificate program and students will be able to leave high school with a certificate in this area. She stated that Rochester is looking to grow this program further down the road and this is something that Somersworth students could take advantage of as well. She stated that this is one of the benefits to work collaboratively with other schools in the area.

5. DISCUSSION ITEMS:

5.1 SMS School Presentation: Hilliard stated that he was happy to be able to tell the Board about some of the exciting things that have been taking place at Somersworth Middle School. He stated that we are constantly trying to shift the paradigm into 21st century learning. He stated that the 1950's model of education was geared towards the industrial system that we had back then. He stated that children would move from room to room when a bell rang, textbook work, a lot of time sitting, worksheets and a lot of memorization and not much life applicable skills to bring education to life. He stated that the New England League of Middle Schools says that the "magic lies in the middle" meaning that middle level education of children can capture their minds and excitement and lead them towards opportunities. He stated that a group of students would teach the Board tonight about maple syrup that they made while learning the skills of math while harvesting and making the maple syrup. Daryl Dunbar thanked the Board for the opportunity to be at the meeting. Dunbar stated that he wanted to echo two words that Principal Hilliard had said and that was excitement and 21st century skills. He asked for a round of applause to the group of students who were exhibiting the skill of teamwork while making pancakes. Dunbar stated that he enjoys tapping maple trees and that the property located by the school has many maple trees. He stated that this gave them a great opportunity to do this. He stated that earlier in the year with the help of Justin Haight and a group of 8th grade students a video was shot which is entitled A Day in the Life of Somersworth Middle School Students. See video on www.sau56.org. Dunbar stated that some of the folks who helped to make this all happen are Welch's Hardware in Lebanon, Maine giving us a great discount on supplies and the Stove Shop who helped us out with some propane and a local person who was very happy to let us tap his trees. He stated that the day the video was shot Principal Hilliard had allowed him to spend the day out of the classroom with the group of students and during the day all 19 homeroom classes came out to watch the process with the evaporator that we built and used. He stated that the students who were with him all day acted as tour guides for the classes, taking them to see the trees that were tapped, showing them the filtering process, and then to see the boiling sap, which is a pretty unique experience. He stated that much of eighth grade math has to do with data and graphing. He stated that this process is providing us with raw data which will become a table and will become a graph and then we will find a relationship that represents several things such as the diameter of the trees which is an indicator of how many taps you can use and how much sap you might get. He stated that this year was a test run and next year we will have the data table in the classroom and the students will have an idea of where it came from. Hiller asked how long it takes to boil the sap down. A student replied that it took all day. Richardson asked if they had been able to calculate how many buckets of raw sap make 1 gallon. Dunbar stated that the answer depends on the weather on any given day or the time of year. He stated that early in the season it is 32 to 1 and late in the season 45-50 to 1. He stated that the different colors of syrup on the table correspond to different times of the year also. Richardson stated that this is not only 21st century learning but this process goes back to the beginning of our county so the students are getting a history lesson too. Hilliard thanked the Board for being able to show off a small microbe of the things that go on at Somersworth Middle School each day. He stated it was a "no brainer" when Dunbar approached him to do this. He stated what better way for students to learn math and also get excited about the history of maple syrup making. Austin stated that he is always excited to hear what is going on

at the Middle School. He stated that he is impressed that the students get to do hands on activities to collect the data, whether it is making maple syrup or recycling. He stated that there is a lot of work going on at the Middle School to make sure that students are engaged and they can use the data in real life situations.

5.2 SAU Team Report: Lane stated that her report has to do with some of the work being done on the reorganization of the elementary schools. She stated that they are concentrating on three areas which are safety, equalizing the educational experience of students and the culture and climate. She stated that the committee will bring recommendations to the Board on May 8th. She stated that we just added an additional meeting on May 15th to have additional discussions and make a decision as to what we are going to do. She stated that she has been meeting with the staff whose certification is due to be renewed, which happens every 3 years. She stated that she has met with about 50 staff members so far. She stated that it is nice to sit for 20 minutes and talk to teachers about their craft and the professional development that they engage in. She stated that Somersworth is lucky to have teachers who have chosen to continue to grow professionally. She stated that the Middle School and High School will be engaged in the Emergency Response Training this Friday during Professional Development Day. She stated that this training also includes “Stop the Bleed” training. She stated that Idlehurst staff will attend a workshop on “Brain-Friendly Teaching” which is offered by the Kagen Institute. She stated that Maple Wood has a number of activities that they have planned for the day.

Krauss stated that she wanted to thank the City Finance Committee. She stated that at the last City Finance Committee Meeting the District had brought forth a request to use a rebate that was received to replace the HVAC Unit at the High School. She stated that this will be coming to the City Council on the 16th of April to be hopefully approved. She stated that at the City Council Meeting on April 2nd Mayor Hilliard requested that the date that the School Board needs to come back to the City Council about the budget be moved to May 2nd and this will give us a few additional weeks to get some firm numbers together, which they approved, so thank you Mayor Hilliard. She stated that the Café Services renewal for next year’s contract is still in the process of being looked at by the attorneys. She stated that there will be a lunch price increase next year. She stated that every year they have to raise it by a minimum of \$.10 to get to the level that we are being reimbursed for our free and reduced lunch. She stated that this is not something we like to do but it is required. Larson asked what the reimbursed rate was. Krauss stated that for reduced lunch it is \$2.52 and for free lunch it is \$2.92.

5.3 Standing Committees

- **Budget and Revenue:** Austin stated that the Committee continues to finalize the details of the current budget. He stated that progress has been made and that they will be giving a report to the City Council on May 7th of where we stand with the current budget year. He stated that we are in a holding pattern on the budget for next year as it is in the hands of the City Council. They are continuing to go through their process of reviewing the budget.
- **Building, Grounds and Transportation:** McCallion stated that they are moving forward with many things. He stated that after our next meeting he will have more information.
- **Curriculum & Activities:** None
- **Policy Committee:** None
- **Joint Commission of City Council and School Board:** Austin stated that they had met this evening. He stated that we are looking at some ways to improve the security at Maple Wood. He stated that we are looking at opportunities for continued work with the City. He stated that we are looking at Capital Improvement Projects that are difficult to fund in our budget.

5.4 City Council Update: Marty Pepin stated that at the City Council’s last meeting we continued to look at the budgets. He stated that they have tabled the budget until the next City Council Meeting.

5.5 Student Representative Report: Rachel Wattimena: None

5.6 Policy 1st Reading: DIH-Fraud Prevention and Fiscal Management, GCG-Part-time and Substitute

Professional Staff Employment (Substitute Teachers), **JBAA**-Unlawful Harassment and Violence Policy, **JBAB**-Transgender and Gender Non-Conforming Students (NEW) Austin made a motion seconded by Hiller to do this reading by title only. VOTE: motion passed, unanimously. Richardson stated that he wanted to question Policy DIH. He stated that when it comes to inappropriate or illegal behavior of a staff person doesn't the Ethics Commission, as provided for in the City Charter, have some say. He stated he wants to be sure that the Districts policy's comply with the City's as in the Ethics Committee's involvement. He stated that on the school side, action would be taken much quicker than the Ethics Commission would. Hiller stated that this policy has to do with something that is not legal. Richardson stated that this is what the Ethics Commission is there for. He stated that it is any conduct that is inappropriate by an employee. Austin stated that they would ask the Policy Committee to investigate this.

6. ACTION ITEM:

6.1 Re-Nomination of Certified Staff: Lane passed the re-nomination list of Administrators and Certified Staff of all schools to Board Members. She stated that she had hand carried it as it was changing daily and wanted to be sure it was as accurate as possible. Austin stated that the Interim Superintendent is recommending re-nomination of the staff on this document. Hiller made a motion seconded by McCallion to accept the re-nominations as presented and recommended by Interim Superintendent Lori Lane. VOTE: motion passed, unanimously.

7. NEW BUSINESS:

7.1 2018-19 Student Handbooks: Austin stated that everyone had draft copies of the handbooks for the schools in the district for the next school year. He stated that the Board is required by policy to approve the drafts and editorial changes that may be necessary before print. He stated that we will vote on these at our next meeting which gives us the opportunity to look them over. Hiller asked if we do vote to reorganize the two elementary schools some of these will have to be revised to reflect that. Lane stated that there are some pieces that would need to be edited but a lot of the handbook is procedural so those things would stay the same. Austin stated that those are some of the editorial changes that might have to be made. He stated that the handbooks would go on the next meeting's agenda as an Action Item.

7.2 2018-19 Lunch Prices: Austin stated that the elementary lunch price will be going up \$.10 next year from \$2.40 to \$2.50 with no other changes in the meal prices. He stated that the increase is necessary to bring us up to the reimbursement that we get for free and reduced lunches. He stated that we have no choice in this but have to report any increase to the Board. Larson asked if we get 100% reimbursement of free lunch and reduced lunch. Krauss stated that we get the rate reimbursed for anyone who qualifies for free or reduced lunch. She stated that this is the reason we have to bring our prices up because we get reimbursed more than paid students are paying. She stated that the minimum increase is \$.10 to show good faith that we are trying to make it up. She stated that we do not want to put a hardship on families and increase it all at once.

8. OLD BUSINESS:

8.1 Vision 20/20 Committee: None

8.2 Budget: Austin stated that the Board has an update in their packet on the 18-19 budget. Richardson stated that he was happy that the Medicaid money was coming in. Austin stated that we do have some unanticipated revenue coming in. Larson stated that she wondered if there was any kind of reimbursement from Special Education. Krauss stated that the only reimbursement is from homeless transportation as the cost is split 50/50 with the town they are in now. Larson stated that it looks like we are over in Catastrophic Aid. Krauss stated that this is a good thing and it means we will receive more in revenue. She stated that we get reimbursed for Cat Aid in the following year and these figures are based on the expenses from last year.

9. MAYOR FORUM DATES

- **May 12, 2018- Mayor, Ward 4 City Councilor and School Board Member**
- **June 9, 2018- Mayor, Ward 5 City Councilor and School Board Member**

10. FUTURE MEETING DATES/SUGGESTED AGENDA ITEMS:

- **May 7, 2018-SAU 56 Board Meeting-6:30 PM-CTC 1st Floor Mulligan's Grill**
- **May 8, 2018-Somersworth School Board Meeting-7PM-City Hall Chambers**
- **May 22, 2018-Somersworth School Board Meeting-7PM-City Hall Chambers**
- Austin stated that he is adding a Special School Board Meeting on May 15th to consider the proposed reorganization of the elementary schools, as well as the proposed budget. Hiller asked if a Board Member was not present at that meeting could they write what they would vote on the reorganization issue. Austin stated that the policy does not allow for proxy votes.

11. CLOSING COMMENTS

11.1 Visitors: Mark Ferris, 75 Stackpole Rd. stated that he had attended the information forum at Idlehurst. He stated that they were informed that the decision rests with the School Board. He stated that his comments are addressed to the public who were not able to attend the forum tonight or tomorrow night. He stated that he requests that you ask questions, talk to your Ward Representative on the School Board and give them your opinion as to the reorganization of the two elementary schools.

Phil Yoder, 57 Mt. Auburn St. stated that this reorganization was presented as a way to save on expenses. He stated that right now the District does not have a budget there are no solid numbers as to if there will be any savings. He stated that we have been told that the data is inconclusive as to the benefit of this transition of students. He stated that he cannot understand why the School Board would vote on this reorganization when we do not have a budget in place or any idea what the cost will be. He stated that we are in a budget situation that is already sticky that we do not even know if we need to lay people off. He stated that there are too many questions and not enough answers. He stated that he is not against the reorganization of the schools. He stated that he just wants it to be done in a manner that makes sense and is effective for the long term. He stated that this feels less like a study of the reorganization and more like a push to get it done. He stated that he does not want to see this decision made like the Federal Government pushes through a budget like the OMIBUS bill. He stated not to treat our education system this way. He stated that we need to think about how this affects everyone in the community. He stated that we need raw budget numbers. He stated to do due diligence and get all the numbers.

Sarah Brecknock stated that she feels that she has many more questions than answers. She stated that if there is any way to educate some of us who feel we are on the outside looking in, in such a big decision that would impact our children, it would be appreciated.

Barbara Wentworth stated that there was one more meeting before the Board would vote on this decision. She stated that Devin McNelly and Eris Hersey took a lot of questions from parents at the forum and there were only three School Board Members present. She stated that she is urging parents to attend the forum at Maple Wood tomorrow night.

Mark LaFerrier of 5 Paul St. stated that when he showed up for the forum at Idlehurst there were maybe 24-30 parents. He stated that he feels the information about the meetings was not disseminated correctly. He stated that there was a voice mail but maybe the parents did not understand it. He stated that he feels that maybe it was meant to be kept under the radar so this could be passed quickly. He stated that we need to research this fully and then we can do this in the 19-20 school year. He stated that he is not against this. He stated that with the way that this was presented there are many unhappy people. He stated that maybe there should have been a leaflet instead of a voice mail and parents would have understood what is really going on.

11.2 Board Members: Richardson stated that May 8th is when the committee will make recommendations to the Board on the reorganization of the elementary schools and the vote is May 15th. He stated that this reorganization is a benefit to the students and the results have been that test scores are higher in schools that have done this. Larson stated that it is difficult to see the upward

slope. She stated that she doesn't believe that was the data that was presented in those districts. She stated that there was no correlation between the reorganization and the higher test scores. Hiller stated she wanted to thank Daryl Dunbar and his kids for their lesson. She stated it is nice to see what is going on in the schools. She stated that last year a teacher brought some students who are doing the recycling and composting at the Middle School and it has now saved the District \$14,000 a year because we were able to get rid of two dumpsters. She stated that as to the reorganization, I do believe there should be some written information to go home. She stated that we have been studying this for 3-4 years and this may be the first you are hearing about it. She stated that the Reorganization Committee went to visit other schools and they came back from the visits with great information. Yoder stated that she wanted to thank Daryl Dunbar for being an excellent teacher and the District is lucky to have you and thank you to all of the community members who came out tonight to give their opinions on the reorganization. McCallion stated that he wanted to thank Daryl and the students for their hard work. Cannon stated that she really appreciated Daryl Dunbar and the students for coming in and sharing. She stated that she was very excited about the fact that they shared their experiences with the whole school and to give students the chance to see that there are different things to do to get an education. Brennan stated that she wanted to switch gears and talk about something fun that happened this past weekend. She stated that she had gone to see the play that the High School students put on in the Black Box Theater. She stated that we are blessed to have the CTC and the space provided there. She stated it gives students a wonderful opportunity. She stated that she couldn't be more thankful as a parent to a student. She stated she wanted to thank those who took their time and energy to make this happen. Austin stated that he wanted to clarify a statement that was made earlier that perhaps parents weren't notified about the forums that were held tonight and tomorrow because we are trying to keep this under the radar. He stated that the Board has tried to be as open about this as we can. He stated that it has been a rapid process for some people. He stated that the Board is willing to listen to the concerns of parents. He stated that more Board members could not be at the forum this evening due to other meetings and other things on our plates at the same time. He stated that he will be at the forum at Maple Wood School tomorrow night and I hope any Board members that can will join me. He stated that right from the beginning of this process he has said that it is important to listen to the input from the community. He stated that we need to listen to what parents have to say because those of us whose kids are grown, or that never had kids in the schools don't have that perspective. He stated that he feels it is the right thing to do. He stated that the next two board meetings will be very important for parents to come and express their views. He stated that you can call members of the Board or send an email to keep everyone informed of how you are feeling. He stated that this is an important issue to the community.

12. Non Public: A motion made by McCallion seconded by Cannon to exit into nonpublic session in accordance with Chapter 91-A:3 II (b) Personnel (e) Negotiations. Vote: motion passed, unanimously. Exited into nonpublic session at 8:05 pm. A motion made by Yoder seconded by Brennan to exit out of nonpublic session. VOTE: motion passed unanimously. Exited out of nonpublic at 8:32 pm.

A motion made by Brennan seconded by Hiller to accept the resignations, with regret, of Kyle Lontine, Doug O'Hearn and Steve Wedick. VOTE: Motion passed, unanimously.

13. Adjournment: A motion made by Brennan seconded by Yoder to adjourn. VOTE: motion passed, unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 8:35 PM.