

Joint Commission of City Council and School Board Meeting*

March 18, 2021

5:30 PM

**Due to the State of Emergency declared by the Governor and in accordance with the Governor's Emergency Order #12 pursuant to Executive Order 2020-04, this public body is authorized to meet electronically. This meeting will be held via zoom online platform.*

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 PM by Councilor Dumont. He stated that the meeting was held via the zoom online platform in accordance with the Governor's Emergency Order #12.

Roll call was taken for attendance. Present: Hanlon - Yes; Potter – Yes; Dumont – Yes; Austin – Yes. Also present: Tom McCallion – SAU 56 Board Chair; Lori Lane, Assistant Superintendent of Schools; Mayor Dana Hilliard; Suzanne Weete, Community Partners; and Mary Boisse, SOS Recovery Workplace Organization.

A motion to accept the meeting minutes from the December 2, 2020 Joint Commission meeting was made by Hanlon. Seconded by Austin. Motion passed, unanimously.

Miscellaneous – Recovery Friendly Workplace/Mental Health Alliance. The Mayor introduced Suzanne Weete and Mary Boisse who presented on their programs and the organizations they represent. Boisse said that they are working with different organizations and companies around the state to gain commitments to becoming Recovery Friendly workplaces. This commitment puts support and resources such as training/education in place in order to best help support employees and employers deal with the challenges that can come with addiction and the path to recovery.

Weete spoke about her work with the Dover School District and the formation of a Dover Mental Health Alliance to demonstrate that mental health is a community effort. If there is interested, she could help support the formation of a similar alliance in Somersworth.

All attendees agreed that both efforts would make sense to bring to Somersworth. The Mayor and Lane said that they would continue the conversation with Weete and Boisse to see how to best move these efforts forward in Somersworth.

School Adequacy Funding. The Commission discussed the concerns about the fluctuation in the state's adequacy aid which helps to fund education in districts around the state. Resolution 31-21 which was passed by the City Council in February 2021 will help lessen the impact of this fluctuation on the 2021-2022 school district budget. Dumont noted that "keno-garten" funding, the state funds generated by Keno had been originally designated to support kindergarten, but have been diverted to support building aid. Lane confirmed this and said that kindergarten students are now factored into the regular state adequacy funding formula.

The Commission also discussed the potential impact of various pieces of legislation on the state adequacy formula. There are bills moving the legislature to both "hold harmless" the impact that COVID-19 has had on total school population and the number of students eligible for free-reduced meals, but there are also a number of bills that support diverting state funds to private schools. We will need to wait and see what actually gets put into law.

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Rollinsford School District Withdrawal. The Commission discussed the impact should the Rollinsford School District decide to end its agreement with SAU 56 to provide SAU services. The Rollinsford School Board has notified SAU 56 that they are looking into options, but McCallion said that he has not received any official notification if they plan to end the current arrangement. McCallion and Lane explained that the current withdrawal agreement has both a January 1st notification but also that Rollinsford could also announce that they would like to make a change 90 days after a key personnel change.

Should Rollinsford decide to end its agreement, McCallion, Hanlon and Potter wanted to make sure that the City Council was aware that this was a possibility and the impact this would have on the revenue side of the budget if Rollinsford left. Lane reminded the group that the SAU budget is now a part of the Somersworth School District budget because SAU 56 is now a single-district SAU. Therefore, the amount that Rollinsford pays is seen as a revenue in the Somersworth budget. The Mayor suggested that Potter, who is the chair of the School Board's Budget Committee meet with Councilor Dave Witham, who chairs the City's Finance Committee to make him aware of the situation.

SYC Task Force. The Mayor updated the Commission on the work of the SYC Task Force. The passing of Resolution 33-21 on March 1, 2021 is a show of joint support by the City Council and the School Board will pay dividends going forward. The Task Force's next meeting is Thursday, March 25th.

Adjournment: A motion was made by Austin, seconded by Hanlon to adjourn. Motion passed, unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 6:45 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Lori Lane
Assistant Superintendent of Schools