

MINUTES OF CITY COUNCIL MEETING

Somersworth, NH
March 6, 2017
7:00 P.M.

The meeting was called to order by His Honor, the Mayor, Dana Hilliard, and upon roll call the following Council members were present: Dumont, McCallion, Messier, Witham, Sprague, Cameron, and Paradis. Councilors Pepin and Soldati were excused.

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING.

MINUTES FOR CITY COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON FEBRUARY 21, 2016

Councilor Witham, seconded by Councilor Paradis, made a motion to accept the minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

COMMENTS BY VISITORS

Wendy Berkley, representing Farm to School Initiative, said she was hired in November. The goals of the Farm to School Initiative are to increase food access, to have school gardens and to build curriculum. Pending projects are school wide composting and Idlehurst has a grant for a greenhouse/classroom and chicken coops. They are also looking into raised bed gardens at the schools and teaching students how to grow and care for food. For the high school, they have ideas to tap into their community service requirements. They are thinking along the lines of city beautification and edible adopt-a-spots, and instituting rain barrels to provide irrigation. Farm to School is looking to pull in as many resources as possible. If anyone is interested in more information or helping in any way, they should contact her. She is aware that there are grants to improve the walkway between the high and middle schools. She would like more information about the grants.

Mayor Hilliard thanked her for her commitment and for sharing the information.

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY COUNCILORS

Councilor Witham said there are exciting things happening. This Wednesday night the Somersworth Hockey team is in the finals, the Somersworth boys basketball team is in the semifinals, and the unified basketball team is in the second round of the playoffs and will be hosting.

COMMUNICATIONS

Resignation – Bill Connor from the SRPC effective March 1, 2017.

The letter of resignation was read by the Clerk. It will be entered into record. Councilor Witham said Mr. Connor represented Somersworth extremely well. By having a representative on that committee it gave Somersworth access to various grants. It is an incredibly important group.

Mayor said on behalf of the City of Somersworth he wanted to thank Bill for his commitment and service. He will be missed.

Historic District Commission Chair, Laura Barry: HDC Update.

Laura Barry gave an update on what the HDC has been working towards over the past couple of months. It has been the HDC's priority to address any concerns. There have been many workshops over the past several months, and more workshops are definitely needed. They are asking for 90 days to finalize a plan to present to the full Council.

MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayors Report for City Council Meeting March 6th, 2017

- Since the founding of our community the Irish have helped lay and build upon the foundation which has keep our great community "On the Move"! From securing Somersworth's spots among the Mill giants during the Industrial revolution, from their dedication to public service in the Police and Fire services. As one of our founding ethic groups the Irish have continued to be honored within Somersworth's "Proud Past" and ensure the Hilltop city will have a bright future.

This Friday March 10th the Cultural Commission will honor one of our founding ethic groups by raising the flag of the Republic of Ireland at 4:00pm on the Citizens flag pole located at citizens place. All citizens are welcome to attend. This evening I dedicated the majority of my Mayors report to honoring the contributions of the Irish community to building Hilltopper Pride throughout Somersworth. I welcome local celebrities Jerry Corr and Pat Boyle who will honor the proud Irish throughout Somersworth this evening with a few traditional songs.

Thank you Jerry and Pat *Erin go Bragh!*

- The next **Mayors Community** forum will take place Saturday **March 18th from 9:00 – 10:30** at City Hall. Including in this forum will be **At – Large City Councilors Dale Sprague and Nancie Cameron along with At-Large School Board member Don Austin and Joanne Pepin.** *The* purpose of the forums are to foster dialog and ideas, in a non-formal setting to continue to move our community forward. All members of the community are welcome to attend any forums.

Appointments

- Under nominations, appointments and Elections; **In accordance with Council Rule 17 Appointments**, the following are before the Council this evening for a confirmation vote.

- **Beth Wheland**, as a member of the Board of Cemetery Trustees with a term to expire in February 2020
- **Aaron Fournier** – for reappointment as a member of the Planning Board with a term to expire in February 2020
- **Harold Guptill** – reappointment as member of the Planning Board with a term to expire in February 2020

This respectfully concludes my March 6th, 2017 Mayors Report

REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

Economic Development – Councilor McCallion said the committee met last Friday; they approved the minutes, discussed the purchase and sale agreement of Hilltop School; there is more to come. They discussed the Plan New Hampshire agreement. Shanna gave an update on the TIF district for the downtown.

Finance Committee – Councilor Witham said met on last Friday; they approved minutes of the previous meeting, then went on to discuss a request for Somersworth Plaza Laundry Mat, the Washington Street laundry mat that is relocating. He has more space than he needs. He will be dividing the space to have a take out restaurant. The committee approved a previous abatement for sewer connection for the Laundry facility. He has requested an additional abatement for the \$7,000, for the restaurant portion of the facility. The abatement request was not granted. The Finance Committee decided to go with a different calculation.

Staff updated the Committee about the negotiations with Solar Garden. Staff was able to work with Solar Garden for some calculations. The risks are directly tied to the going electrical rates. The patterns make a lot of sense to us. Various models suggest that the risk is minimal. There will be a PILOT agreement and a land lease payment. Staff will present a brief presentation. There was discussion about LED street lighting. Eversource issues a rebate check of approximately \$70,000, but they need to act by the end of March. Other communities are working with a vendor in Dover. Director Smith gave an update of current fiscal year status. There are 2 areas that they are watching; snow removal and the salt/sand budget as well as overtime in the Public Works Department, and the other area is Fire Department overtime. This is typically addressed at the end of the year. Councilor Sprague reported that they discussed the Primex workers' compensation program, the CAP program. Voted 3-0 to enter into the CAP program; Councilor Witham excused himself from the discussion.

Public Works & Environment – Sprague reported that they met today; approved the minutes, discussed the update on the change order request going from vertical curb to sloped curb. Committee decided to take no action. They discussed the draft tree ordinance which was introduced by the Sustainability Committee. They are going to look into it more. They received a road improvement plan update and were briefed on the condition of the streets within the city. There are about 11 projects that need to be

addressed. They also discussed the LED streetlight program and the need for another sidewalk tractor.

REPORTS OF SPECIAL COMMITTEES, CITY OFFICERS AND CITY MANAGER

Special Committees

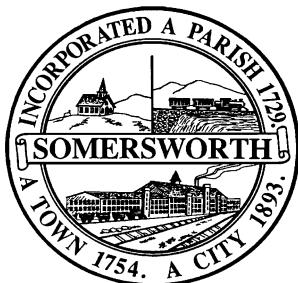
Vision 2020 – met on Feb 23rd. They tabled the minutes. They discussed the Facebook transition. The in-coming Economic Development Manager will be responsible for updating the Facebook page. There was discussion about using the City’s calendar of events. They talked about the potential of useful information of the “Adult Worksheet”. They want to get the Vision 2020 Goals on the 2 television Channels. Old Christmas Flags are down and new flags are up. The Matrix has been updated.

Historic District Commission – met on Feb 22nd. They discussed the installation of a heating system at the old Tea Totaller on Main St. HDC wants to ask for a 90 day timeline in consideration of what they want to come to the full council. They would like the HDC meetings to be televised to get the information out. He believes that the information shared at the meetings can be valuable.

Cultural Commission- Met with the Chef at the culinary institute. Councilor Cameron said they have picked the date for the Culinary Meal, May 10th. 5:30-7pm. There will be Ethnic appetizers and desserts. They are waiting on the cost to determine a ticket price. The Chamber will help sell tickets as well.

Friends of Somersworth invited Councilor Dumont to speak to them about the approach to open spaces. They are looking into incorporating more arts into the community; musicians on the sidewalks. They have thoughts of doing a “Somersworth Night Out” one Saturday night a month. Friends of Somersworth connected with the New Hampshire Arts. The Friends are alive and well.

City Manager’s Report



CITY OF SOMERSWORTH *Office of the City Manager*

TO: Mayor Dana Hilliard and City Council Members

FROM: Robert M. Belmore, City Manager

DATE: Friday, March 3, 2017

**SUBJECT: City Manager's Report for Monday, March 6, 2017
City Council Agenda**

5:30 p.m. State of the City Address

*6:45 p.m. Public Hearing
Re: Ordinance 9-17 Water Ordinance & Ordinance 10-17 Sewer Ordinance*

Lay on the Table (under Section 12 of Agenda)

Resolutions

- A. Resolution No. 31-17 To Authorize the City Manager to Amend the Renewal Cable Television Franchise Agreement Between the City of Somersworth and Comcast of Maine/New Hampshire, Inc.** Again, the City's Special Counsel, Attorney Kate Miller, recommends amending the current Franchise Agreement out for five (5) more years. The new expiration date would be June 17, 2023. Also, a Public Hearing is scheduled prior to the March 20th Council meeting at 6:30 p.m.

Unfinished Business (under Section 13 of Agenda)

Ordinances

- A. Ordinance No. 9-17 Amending Chapter 32, Water Ordinance, by Amending Section 16 Titled "Rates, Fees, and Charges".**
- B. Ordinance No. 10-17 Amending Chapter 8A, Sewer Ordinance, by Amending Section 7. (B) Titled "Sewer Use Volume Charges".** Ordinance No. 9-17 and 10-17: Again, the Finance Committee met on January 18th to review possible increases to our water and sewer utility rates. The Committee voted to recommend the increases. The monthly utility bill increase for an average Somersworth home for next year would be \$1.16 for water and \$2.20 for sewer.

City Manager's Items (under section 10 of Agenda)

A. Informational Items

- 1. Goal Setting Session, Saturday, March 11.** Attached is the agenda, last year's meeting minutes and a worksheet to complete prior to the session.
- 2. Plan NH Grant.** Without objection, I will be submitting the attached Plan NH Grant application that our Planning & Community Development

Director has prepared. The focus of this Community Planning and Design Charette will be downtown, with a primary examination of the Plaza. If selected there will be a Grant match of \$5,000 as well as some in-kind cost.

City Manager Belmore said, without objection, he would look into having the Historic District Commission Meetings televised.

City Manager Belmore said, without objection, he would move forward with the Primex CAP Program.

Without objection from Council, the City Manager is authorized to move forward with the Plan NH Grant, the televising of the HDC meetings and the Primex CAP Program.

Note: The Mayor has approved a non-meeting to discuss labor negotiation issues and strategy.

B. Attachments

- a. Senator Watters Report.
- b. Eversource - Enhanced Tree Trimming (ETT) Program.

NOMINATIONS, APPOINTMENTS AND ELECTIONS

Mayoral Nominations – For Council confirmation vote.

Beth Wheland – as a member of the Board of Cemetery Trustees, term to expire Feb. 2020.

Councilor Messier, seconded by Councilor Paradis, made a motion to accept the nominations. The motion passed unanimously. 7-0

Aaron Fournier, Re-appointment as a Member of the Planning Board, term to expire Feb. 2020.

Councilor Witham, seconded by Councilor Cameron, made a motion to accept the nominations. The motion passed unanimously. 7-0

Harold Guptill, Re-appointment as a Member to the Planning Board, term to expire Feb. 2020.

Councilor Dumont, seconded by Councilor McCallion, made a motion to accept the nominations. The motion passed unanimously. 7-0

LAY ON THE TABLE

Resolution No. 31-17 To Authorize the City Manager to Amend the Renewal Cable Television Franchise Agreement Between the City of Somersworth and Comcast of Maine/New Hampshire, Inc.

Resolution 31-17 will remain on the table.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Ordinances:

Ordinance No. 9–17 Amending Chapter 32, Water Ordinance, by Amending Section 16 Titled “Rates, Fees, And Charges”.

Councilor Witham, seconded by Councilor Messier, made a motion to approve Ordinance 9-17.

Councilor Dumont said he knows the Committee worked on this. He received one phone call from an elderly resident. These types of increases eat away at retirement money. There are some who don’t even get the medical care that is needed. We are granting businesses abatements, but we have elderly who are having a hard time making their bills. Increases are a crucial part of their lifestyle. It is sad to think that people are outliving their money. Maybe we should table this and see if they Finance Director has any other ideas.

Councilor Witham said he cannot argue Councilor Dumont’s points. Tabling this Ordinance until another meeting would not bother him. These ordinances were not done haphazardly. A lot of thought and research goes into them. There are several projects that are coming up. We know what the capital costs are. They looked at a gradual increase as they tackle these projects.

The motion to approve Ordinance 9-17 passed by a vote of 6-1.

Ordinance No. 10–17 Amending Chapter 8a, Sewer Ordinance, By Amending Section 7. (B) Titled “Sewer Use Volume Charges”.

Councilor Witham, seconded by Councilor Messier, made a motion to approve Ordinance 10-17. The motion passed by a vote of 6-1.

CLOSING COMMENTS BY COUNCIL MEMBERS

Councilor Paradis said the Mayor looks good.

Councilor Cameron said she is happy to be a part of all that the City Council has accomplished over the past year. She wished the hockey team and the basketball team the best of luck. The Cultural Meal will be prepared by the students and monies will go back to their program.

Councilor Sprague said there was a lot of thought and consideration that was put into the water and sewer rate increases. As far as the HDC, he has some legislation coming forward to abolish the HDC. A lot of times it is so hard to do things, that people don't take care of their properties. It's hard for businesses and landlords to do anything. What value does the HDC bring to the community and what are they doing. The gentlemen who presented tonight, Pat Boyle is a dedicated citizen of this community. He has done some great things.

Councilor Witham said he enjoyed the musical presentation as well. He thanked Laura (HDC) for what she is doing and said he could wait another 90 days. He is not sure if a smaller district or no district is the answer. He was on HDC when he first got on the Council. There is work that needs to be done there. He thinks there is a leadership that can bring us something different. The idea of televising is something that he thought of in 2010. It could serve as an educational tool. He noticed the cul-de-sac at the end of Willand Drive. There are many trash bags, and television sets, and many other things.

Councilor Dumont said, "Go Hilltoppers!" He complemented the teams for being representatives of the City of Somersworth. He thanked the performers, Jerry Corr and Pat Boyle. He first saw them at the Childrens' Festival. Mr. Boyle was a police officer at one time in Somersworth. Councilor Dumont went on to say he appreciates the comments about the new leadership in the HDC. Both ladies are very knowledgeable. Laura is a task master. She gives assignments, so the members of the HDC can learn. He said Peter Michaud said we do not have the "largest (HDC) overlay, but we have a big area. What value does it bring is a challenging question. There are answers but it takes time to get the answer, which is why they are requesting the 90 day extension. As for the increase in the water/sewer rates, he is not against the money; he is all for it. We need to do the right job, do it once, and get it done right. His vote against the ordinances was a token vote to not support this.

Councilor McCallion said kudos to the State of the City Address. Good to look at all of the things that has been done. He thanked all of the Directors. Kudos to basketball and Hockey teams. Sewer/Water fee it is a user fee. We still aren't as expensive as other communities. We try to plan ahead. He thanked Wendy Berkley for speaking for the Farm to School Initiative. The work they are going to do for Somersworth is amazing. The entertainment this evening was unbelievable.

Councilor Messier said he has no problem with giving the HDC 90 days, but he would like his questions answered; why does it cost more to repair a house in the HD? The cost can be minimized and still maintain the Historic look of the properties. He has a long

history of indifference for the HDC. He is all for televising the committee or any committee, he doesn't have a problem.

There is the same issue of trash on Copperhead drive, as on Willand Drive. He wished the high school hockey and Basketball teams, as well as the unified team the best of luck. Tonight's entertainment will be at Kelly's Row on St. Patrick's Day.

ADJOURNMENT

Council entered into non-meeting in regards union negotiations at 8:40pm.

Trish Harris, City Clerk

Dana Hilliard, Mayor