

## MINUTES OF CITY COUNCIL MEETING

Somersworth, NH  
October 16, 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: Pepin, Soldati, Dumont, Messier, Witham, Sprague, Cameron, and Paradis. Councilor McCallion was excused.

### MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING.

MINUTES FOR CITY COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON OCTOBER 2, 2017

***Councilor Soldati, seconded by Councilor Pepin, made a motion to accept the minutes. The motion passed unanimously. Messier and Paradis abstained.***

### COMMENTS BY VISITORS

Real Roseberry, Ward 1, congratulated the City for having all of the sidewalks, crosswalks, etc., marked on Market Street. He walked down Market Street and all of the parking spaces were full. Market Street was booming. Market Street needs 3 things now; a crosswalk to the restaurant (45 Market Street Bakery and Café), sign for limited parking time for the parking spaces in front of the pizza places (Somersworth House of Pizza and Villa Pizza), and finally, make parking spaces on one way down the hill (Prospect Street). He was invited and visited the new event facility (The Hall at Great Falls). They did wonders with that church. It looks amazing inside. He also suggested a sign be placed on Franklin Street, showing direction to Down Town Main Street.

### COMMENTS BY COUNCILORS

None

### COMMUNICATIONS

#### Presentation from Mr. Austin, School Board Chair

Mr. Austin said he wanted to share some information regarding a memo that was given to the School Board on October 10<sup>th</sup>, 2017, regarding an anticipated revenue shortfall for the current fiscal year of approximately \$637,000. There are three primary drivers for this shortfall; the Adequacy Education Grant, Catastrophic Aid, and Building Aid, and an anticipated shortfall in Medicaid.

The Adequacy Grant has several components, mostly surrounding the Average Daily Membership (ADM). On September 30<sup>th</sup>, the District received the revised summary of 2017-2018 Adequacy Aid and membership in each of the categories has dropped. The average daily membership dropped by 10 students. Total amount lost in the Adequacy Grant is approximately \$104,000.

Catastrophic Aid reimbursement is for prior year expenditures, for students who have extraordinary expenses in special education. During the 2015-2016 school year, the district submitted 5 students for Catastrophic Aid, and the total aid was \$886,000. Superintendents verify the catastrophic aid in July of each year. During the current year budget presentation, the School District used a 5 year historical trend to determine the projection for Catastrophic Aid. They used a number that they thought was conservative; \$340,000. The aid total looks to be about \$676,000; a reduction of \$209,000 from the previous year.

Building aid is aid that the State was giving for building projects. On September 16<sup>th</sup>, the District was notified by the New Hampshire Department of Education that they would receive Building Aid payments of \$109,000 for the High School renovations, \$738,000 for Idlehurst Elementary School, for a total of \$846,000. On September 29<sup>th</sup>, the School District received from the Department of Education, the amounts of Building Aid that the District would receive, and the total amount of building aid was reduced rate of \$172,000, primarily because the High School Bond was paid off last year, and they failed to recognize the reduction in revenue for that.

Federal Medicaid reimbursement is the final category. As in prior years, the School District compared the 5 historical year reimbursements of Medicaid. The district used a conservative average of \$320,000. It looks like the reimbursement will be about \$180,000, a reduction of \$140,000, which is flexible.

All of these things accumulate to a total shortfall of \$637,000.

Schoolboard meeting tomorrow on Tuesday evening and will be looking at how to fill the gap, and looking at budgeting for next fiscal year.

#### PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS AND DISPOSAL THEREOF BY REFERENCE OR OTHERWISE

None

#### MAYOR'S REPORT

##### **Mayors Report for City Council Meeting Monday October 16th, 2017**

- As the school district prepares to meet tomorrow evening, looming in the fiscal shadows, is a \$630,000 reported deficit for the 2017-2018 budget cycle. SAU and the School Board Officials have met with the City Manager and Finance Director and the Joint City Council and School Board Commission to offer up explanations as to why and how this fiscal shortage has occurred. Underlining the shortage, more and more questions will continue to develop. And a laissez faire attitude to what is before both governing bodies, is not and will not be acceptable. Before both bodies, will be a test to the team approach, which Somersworth has become defined for. The last minute notification to the City Manager and Finance Director, of the shortage by the SAU Staff has unnecessarily tested this relationship. However, the elected officials in both bodies who live and breathe within this community and whose very soul is comprised of Hilltopper Pride, have once again proven that they are stronger and wiser than some of the educational bureaucrats who we pay a professional salary. What lies within both governing bodies is now several issues and matters which must be

resolved. Some within the immediate future and others which must not be neglected by the Joint Commission as we continue to move forward and seek answers and ultimately, implementation of new policies.

In need of immediate action, is bringing to resolve the \$637,000 shortfall which has been generated within the current school budget. The explanation by SAU Staff has raised even more questions; questions that warrant a full review of the finances. And once again prove that the next expansion of cooperative services between the City and the School District should be the transfer and establishment of the City Finance Office absorbing the management of the school district finances.

I am calling upon the Joint Commission to move forward with vetting this concept, and move forward a recommendation to both bodies for final approval after the election. I am also calling upon the Joint Commission to discuss whether or not the financial records and practices of the School District need further review by an independent source to ensure the shortfall will not occur again.

Both of these recommendations fall under the 'future' category. One that I will continue to repeat in future Mayor's Reports until satisfactory resolution has been met. Again, this offers no solution for what lies before both governing bodies, which needs to be addressed.

The option for a full bailout for the shortfall by this Council, I see from the Mayor's Office, as non-negotiable. For this body to approve the full \$637,000 shortfall, an override of the tax cap would have to occur, raising the current rate of taxation in this community to over \$1.72 per thousand. This option is not only unreasonable, but violates the trust of the citizens who elected us and compromises the firm budgetary system we operate under. To suggest, in any fashion, that this body would examine and take into true consideration, the adoption of any such proposal, of such nature, displays a complete lack of understanding of Somersworth, the citizens who carry the tax burden or respect to the balance both governing bodies implement when adopting budgetary processes they go through each year.

I am, therefore, respectfully requesting to Council that an override in the full amount not be approved.

The second option would require this body, in some manner, to contribute from its fund balance, to offset the deficit. While I again, do not fully support this option either, I do find it more palatable after certain conditions have been met:

1. The SAU Administration and School Board readjust their current budget to address the majority of the shortfall. Such readjustment should not affect direct student services or the quality of instruction or instructional support.
2. The SAU utilize a large portion of their fund balance to offset the deficit; a fund balance that the City just became aware of last week.

Upon due diligence by the SAU and School Board, I do not find it unreasonable or unexpected that the School Board would approach Council requesting some level of supplemental appropriation to offset the deficit. I also do not find it unreasonable that a valid lesson be learned through addressing this issue.

For well over a year, by the powers afforded to the Mayor, under the City Charter, a Joint Commission was created to open communication and strengthen ties between

both bodies. This commission was further validated by a resolution by both bodies being passed, making it part of our official City Government. This structure is unique within our state and proves that Somersworth's commitment to 21<sup>st</sup> Century governing is certainly one that should be celebrated. Tearing down traditional firewalls supported by short sighted bureaucrats on both the City and School sides has led to great success over the last four years. Moving forward, this commission must continue to not only utilize its level of function but also increase communication between both the City and the School. It is only through honest communication and continuing the team approach, that Somersworth will reap the rewards of its style of governing, one that we have become known for throughout the State of New Hampshire.

With a team approach in mind, the Joint Goal Setting Session between the City and the School Board scheduled for this week has been reposted as a Joint Budget Workshop. The goal of the Budget Workshop will be to help both bodies acquire a better understanding of how the shortfall occurred. And to reach some form of resolution that both bodies can live with and render a final solution. I look forward to the lessons which will be learned by this shortfall; the restructuring which needs to take place, and the redefining our commitment to the Somersworth team approach. It is my sincere belief that not only as a team, will we be able to solve this problem, but strengthen the relationship between our two respective bodies. Tough decisions and reorganization must occur, but also, too, is keeping our great community 'on the move.'

- I have the honor last week of co-sponsoring an art show for an amazing, talented and dedicated 98 year 'young' citizen of Somersworth. For over 30 years, George Lelarge volunteers his talents with the fourth grade class at the Hilltop Elementary School. Out of his love for the arts, he inspired many Hilltoppers to form their own appreciation for the arts and search for their inner artiste. Over the years, George would continue to paint and create hundreds of pieces, not in search of a profit, but out of the pure love and calling of his soul. Upon reaching his personal milestone of 98 years of life, the Hilltop City honored George last week through an opening of a sampling of his work at the Somersworth Public Library. His work can also be found at Teatottallers and also at Somersworth Maplewood Elementary School. Each of his works is now up for a donation sale, with all of the money generated to be used for furthering the arts for this great Hilltop City and school system. Thank you George Lelarge for your amazing contribution to the Hilltop City, and the advancement of arts throughout Somersworth. We are truly blessed to have you as a citizen and for you to have chosen our great Hilltop City as your home. Your art will continue to inspire generations of Hilltoppers. In George's honor, I proclaim Wednesday, October 11, 2017, as George Lelarge Day in the City of Somersworth.
- Another milestone was reached by another caring, loving Hilltopper. Happy 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday to Christine Gaitan who turned 100 years 'young' last week. May your caring and loving soul continue to guide all Hilltoppers for years to come. For her reaching her life milestone, Friday, October 13<sup>th</sup>, 2017 was proclaimed Christine Gaitan Day in the City of Somersworth. Congratulations again on reaching that milestone.

- Congratulations to all volunteers and planners on another successful annual Pumpkin Festival, the packed downtown was a testament to all of your hard work and planning and the Hilltop City is grateful for all of your efforts. The festival was a perfect way to spend a picturesque New England fall day. I had an enjoyable time celebrating the well planned event in our Hilltop City.
- A great way to kick off the fire safety week, was at a recent open house with the Somersworth Fire Department. Thank you to all of the members of the Fire Department for their unwavering service and dedication to the safety of all Hilltoppers. Honor National Fire Safety Week by installing or checking your smoke detectors and by stopping the Fire Department and thanking our brave officers for their continual dedication and service to our City.
- Final announcement is that the City Clerk and I want YOU. We are in desperate need of filling some positions for the upcoming election. If you are interested, please contact the City Clerk. We would love for you to be able to help. We will feed you for the day and you will have a great time ensuring that our democracy continues to carry on. Please come forward and volunteer your services. It is a great way to help out during the election cycle.
- **Appointments**
- In accordance with Council Rule 15, the following appointments are being named this evening and do not require Council approval.

Rick Michaud, as a member of the Somersworth Plaza Commission with a term to expire, April 30, 2018.

**This respectfully concludes my October 16, 2017 Mayors Report**

#### **REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES**

Finance Committee – Councilor Witham reported that the committee met on October 12th. They approved the minutes, then moved into a discussion about the Moose Plate Grant Award for the Forest Glade Cemetery. With this grant, the gate, fencing and monuments will be repaired. The Cemetery is on the National Registry of Historic Places. The motion to receive the grant was unanimously supported.

The Committee discussed Tax dedeed properties; mostly Mobile Home Units. Annually, they look at the properties that they do and do not want to deed. There are 2 Resolutions on the agenda this evening. There was discussion about other properties that the City owns. Heather Kretschmar will market the properties.

The property at 37 Franklin Street, an abutter has interest in the property. It will cost the City \$18,000 to tear down the property.

The Committee discussed the bids HVAC improvements at City Hall. There were 2 bids for the cooling tower. City Staff recommend Denron; the committee supports the decision.

Truck for Code Enforcement, plow options, about 9k more, the thought of the truck would be a backup for Public works. Committee decided not to go with the upgraded truck.

There was discussion about the need for additional equipment for Channel 22.

Under Miscellaneous, there was a lengthy discussion of the revenue shortfall. It was suggested that the school consider a spending freeze. There will be more discussion at the Thursday meeting.

Public Works & Environment – Councilor Sprague reported that the committee met right after the Finance Committee. They approved the minutes, reviewed the complete streets engineering proposals. There were 9 proposals were received, narrowed down to 2; Wright Pierce and CMA. Both are familiar with the City and have done work in the City. The committee will be looking into the design and the repairs. They will be meeting again, and hope to award to one of the bidders

There was an update from Director Bobinsky regarding the paving throughout the city. An amount of \$1.2mil was appropriated, and Pike’s bill is about \$772,000 at this point. The City may be able to do a few more small projects in the spring.

## REPORTS OF SPECIAL COMMITTEES, CITY OFFICERS AND CITY MANAGER

### Special Committees

School Board - Councilor Pepin said the committee discussed the HVAC unit on the High School. It is out of service and the project went out to bid. There was lengthy discussion about the budget shortfall.

Joint City Council/School Board Commission – Councilor Dumont reported that there was an unscheduled meeting called due to the budget concerns. Members, Councilor Witham and Director Smith, got together and a lot of concerns were shared. It will need to be a collaborative effort to resolve the issue.

Somersworth Plaza Commission - Councilor Dumont reported that the Mayor wants a final recommendation, a broad review to what came of the Charrette. There is a lot of foundation to work from and the committee is enthusiastic and committed. Mr. Michaud is the master of matrix, and will be an asset to the committee. Next meeting will be to design and develop a matrix.

Parade Committee - Councilor Dumont reported that the commitment of the members proves to be why the committee is on the move.



**CITY OF SOMERSWORTH**  
*Office of the City Manager*

**TO:** Mayor Dana S. Hilliard and City Council Members

**FROM:** Robert M. Belmore, City Manager

**DATE:** Friday, October 13, 2017

**SUBJECT:** City Manager's Report for Monday, October 16, 2017  
City Council Agenda

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*6:30 p.m. - Public Hearing*  
*Re: Question to be Placed on the November 7th Official Ballot:*  
*Shall we allow the Operation of Keno Games within the City of Somersworth?*

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*Unfinished Business (under Section 13 of Agenda)*

**Resolutions**

- A. Resolution No. 10-18 To Authorize the City Manager to Continue the City of Somersworth's Support in Furthering the Plan for an Intermunicipal Agreement with the City of Dover for the Development of a Water System Interconnection between Dover and Somersworth.** Again, the Public Works & Environment Committee met on September 12<sup>th</sup> and reviewed preliminary plans for this potential interconnection and voted to support a continued dialogue with Dover's staff and consultant engineer.

*New Business (under section 14 of Agenda)*

**Resolutions**

- A. Resolution No. 12-18 To Notify the City Tax Collector that the City Council shall not accept a Tax Deed on Certain Manufactured Housing Units Subject to an Unredeemed Tax Lien.** The Finance Committee met on October 12th and voted to support this action. Committee members decided to move forward and accept the tax deed for one (1) manufactured housing

unit that was in arrears from 2012 forward. Attached is a copy of the list of pending tax deeded property that was reviewed by the Finance Committee.

- B. Resolution No. 13–18 To Notify the City Tax Collector that the City Council shall not accept a Tax Deed on Properties Located on Wexford Lane Subject to an Unredeemed Tax Lien.** The Finance Committee met on October 12<sup>th</sup> and voted to support this action as has been done in the past years due to the condition of the land which has buried debris.
- C. Resolution No. 14-18 To Authorize the City Manager to Contract With Denron Plumbing and HVAC of Manchester, NH for the Purchase and Installation of a Cooling Tower for City Hall.** The Finance Committee met on October 12<sup>th</sup> and voted to recommend Denron Plumbing for the purchase and installation of the Cooling Tower for City Hall. Attached is a memorandum from Director Shanna Saunders with our staff's recommendation. City Council did appropriate \$75,000 for this project.
- D. Resolution No. 15-18 To Authorize the City Manager to order a Pickup Truck for the Division Of Building Inspection which will be Funded by a Lease Purchase Arrangement.** The Finance Committee met on October 12<sup>th</sup> and voted (3-1) to recommend this Pickup Truck purchase to the full City Council. Attached is a memorandum from Director Mike Bobinsky that outlines the cost for adding certain snow-plowing equipment as well as a different truck capable of plowing. The Committee decided to endorse a basic truck without plowing capabilities.
- E. Resolution No. 16-18 To Authorize the City Manager to enter into a Project Agreement with the State of New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources and to accept a Moose Plate Program Grant Award.** The Finance Committee met on October 12<sup>th</sup> and voted to support acceptance of this Grant Award. Attached are copies of the State Grant Award notification and associated documents.

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

**A. Informational Items.**

- 1. Upcoming Meeting & Events.**
  - a. 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Pumpkin Festival.** Presented by the Somersworth Festival Association. Saturday, October 14<sup>th</sup>, 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 pm. at the Somersworth Plaza.
  - b. City Council & School Board Workshop.** Thursday, October 19<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 p.m. at the Career Technical Center.
- 2. LED Street Lighting Conversion Project Update.** Director Mike Bobinsky, Scott Smith and I met with Affinity's staff last week to discuss this project. Attached is a copy of their notes regarding the Project's status. It is

approximately 97% complete. They are in the process scheduling 15 more conversions which will be finalize the street lighting project other than issues that Eversource needs to resolve. Our reduced billing will be retroactive to the dates of installation. Affinity will also start working on City Facility lot lights for possible conversion.

*A Budget Hearing was scheduled for November 6, 2017 at 6:30, without objection.*

**B. Attachments.**

1. City Attorney Certifications (5)
2. Department Head Reports
3. Complete Streets Engineering Proposals Costs of Finalists & Available City Road Budget
4. Strafford County Delegation Public Hearing Notice on their CIP Plan for 2018-2023

NOMINATIONS, APPOINTMENTS AND ELECTIONS

Mayoral Appointment - Does not require Council Confirmation Vote

Richard Michaud, as a member of the Somersworth Plaza Commission.  
With term to expire on Sunset date of April 30, 2018.

LAY ON TABLE

None

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Resolutions:

RESOLUTION NO. 10-18 TO AUTHORIZE THE CITY MANAGER TO CONTINUE THE CITY OF SOMERSWORTH'S SUPPORT IN FURTHERING THE PLAN FOR AN INTERMUNICIPAL AGREEMENT WITH THE CITY OF DOVER FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A WATER SYSTEM INTERCONNECTION BETWEEN DOVER AND SOMERSWORTH

*Councilor Witham, seconded by Councilor Paradis, made a motion to approve Resolution 10-18. The motion passed unanimously.*

NEW BUSINESS

Resolutions:

RESOLUTION NO. 12-18 TO NOTIFY THE CITY TAX COLLECTOR THAT THE CITY COUNCIL SHALL NOT ACCEPT A TAX DEED ON CERTAIN MANUFACTURED HOUSING UNITS SUBJECT TO AN UNREDEEMED TAX LIEN.

Somersworth, NH  
October 16, 2017

WHEREAS RSA 80:76 directs the Tax Collector, after 2 years, to execute to the City a deed of the land subject to the real estate tax lien and not redeemed, and

WHEREAS the Governing Body of a municipality may refuse to accept a tax deed on behalf of the municipality because in its judgment, acceptance and ownership of the real estate would subject the municipality to undesirable obligations or liability risks, or for any reason that would be contrary to the public interest,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SOMERSWORTH THAT the City Tax Collector be notified that for those reasons the City shall refuse to accept the tax deeds on property located at the following locations:

| <u>Location</u>        | <u>Tax Map/Lot</u> |
|------------------------|--------------------|
| 47 Colonial Village    | 81-47M             |
| 48 Crystal Springs Way | 82-19M             |
| 69 Crystal Springs Way | 82-53M             |
| 63 Crystal Springs Way | 82-59M             |
| 26 Jack & Jill         | 83-26M             |
| 102 Sherwood Glen      | 87-102M            |
| 113 Sherwood Glen      | 87-113M            |
| 223 Sherwood Glen      | 87-223M            |
| 409 Sherwood Glen      | 87-409M            |
| 629 Sherwood Glen      | 87-629M            |
| 687 Sherwood Glen      | 87-687M            |

Sponsored by Councilors:  
Dave A. Witham  
Dale R. Sprague  
Martin Pepin  
Jennifer G. Soldati

Approved by:  
City Attorney

***Councilor Witham, seconded by Councilor Paradis, made a motion to suspend rules to allow for a second read of Resolution 12-18. The motion passed unanimously.***

The Clerk read Resolution 12-18 for a second time.

***Councilor Witham, seconded by Councilor Cameron, made a motion to approve Resolution 12-18. The motion passed unanimously.***

RESOLUTION NO. 13-18 TO NOTIFY THE CITY TAX COLLECTOR THAT THE CITY COUNCIL SHALL NOT ACCEPT A TAX DEED ON PROPERTIES LOCATED ON WEXFORD LANE SUBJECT TO AN UNREDEEMED TAX LIEN.

Somersworth, NH  
October 16, 2017

WHEREAS RSA 80:76 directs the Tax Collector, after 2 years, to execute to the City a deed of the land subject to the real estate tax lien and not redeemed, and

WHEREAS the Governing Body of a municipality may refuse to accept a tax deed on behalf of the municipality because in its judgment, acceptance and ownership of the real estate would subject the municipality to undesirable obligations or liability risks, or for any reason that would be contrary to the public interest,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SOMERSWORTH THAT the City Tax Collector be notified that for those reasons the City shall refuse to accept the tax deeds on property located at the following locations:

| <u>Location</u> | <u>Tax Map/Lot</u> |
|-----------------|--------------------|
| 5 Wexford Lane  | 35-12A             |
| 7 Wexford Lane  | 35-12B             |

Sponsored by Councilors:  
David A. Witham  
Dale R. Sprague  
Martin Pepin  
Jennifer G. Soldati

Approved by:  
City Attorney

**Note – It is believed that these properties contain contaminated soils and /or buried debris.**

*Councilor Witham, seconded by Councilor Paradis, made a motion to waive Council Rules to have Resolution 13-18 read by title and property location only. The motion passed unanimously.*

*Councilor Witham, seconded by Councilor Messier, made a motion to waive Council Rules to allow for a second read of Resolution 13-18. The motion passed unanimously.*

*Councilor Witham, seconded by Councilor Messier, made a motion to approve Resolution 13-18. The motion passed unanimously.*

RESOLUTION NO. 14-18 TO AUTHORIZE THE CITY MANAGER TO CONTRACT WITH DENRON PLUMBING AND HVAC OF MANCHESTER, NH FOR THE PURCHASE AND INSTALLATION OF A COOLING TOWER FOR CITY HALL.

Somersworth, NH  
October 16, 2017

WHEREAS, the Somersworth Capital Improvement Program for Fiscal Years 2018 through 2023 contains a recommendation to replace the cooling tower on the City Hall, and

WHEREAS, the fiscal year 2017-2018 adopted budget contains an appropriation for the purchase and installation of a cooling tower on the City Hall, and

WHEREAS, City staff requested and received proposals for this project and recommends awarding the project to Denron Heating and Plumbing of Manchester, NH for a cost not to exceed \$46,300 (Forty Six Thousand Three Hundred dollars), and

WHEREAS, the Finance Committee for the City of Somersworth has reviewed the recommendation with City staff and supports the recommendation,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SOMERSWORTH THAT the City Manager is authorized to contract with Denron Plumbing and HVAC of Manchester, NH for the purchase and installation of a cooling tower on the City Hall at an amount not to exceed \$46,300 (Forty Six Thousand Three Hundred dollars) and to take any actions relative to this purchase determined to be in the best interest of the City.

Sponsored by Councilors:

David A. Witham  
Dale R. Sprague  
Martin Pepin  
Jennifer G. Soldati

Approved

City Attorney

*Councilor Witham, seconded by Councilor Messier, made a motion to waive Council Rules to allow for a second read of Resolution 14-18. The motion passed unanimously.*

*Councilor Witham, seconded by Councilor Cameron, made a motion to approve Resolution 14-18. The motion passed unanimously.*

RESOLUTION NO. 15-18 TO AUTHORIZE THE CITY MANAGER TO ORDER A PICKUP TRUCK FOR THE CODE ENFORCEMENT OFFICE WHICH WILL BE FUNDED BY A LEASE PURCHASE ARRANGEMENT.

Somersworth, NH  
October 16, 2017

WHEREAS, the City of Somersworth's Capital Improvement Plan proposes a replacement schedule for public works equipment to maintain fleet integrity, standardize equipment and reduce maintenance costs, and

WHEREAS, the City of Somersworth's approved FY2017-2018 Budget provides funding for a new half-ton pickup truck through a lease purchase arrangement, and

WHEREAS, City staff has evaluated the advantage of the use of a standard vehicle manufacturer acquisition policy and recommends the use of the NH State bid list for Ford vehicles as the most efficient method of procuring these new vehicles, and

WHEREAS, the Finance Committee has reviewed this with staff and supports the recommendation,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SOMERSWORTH THAT the City Manager is authorized to order one new half-ton pickup truck which is funded in the approved FY2018 City budget through a lease purchase arrangement.

Sponsored by Councilors:

David A. Witham  
Martin Pepin  
Jennifer G. Soldati

Approved:

City Attorney

***Councilor Witham, seconded by Councilor Cameron, made a motion to waive Council Rules to allow for a second read of Resolution 15-18. The motion passed unanimously.***

***Councilor Pepin, seconded by Councilor Cameron, made a motion to approve Resolution 14-18. The motion passed, 7-1 with Councilor Sprague opposed.***

Councilor Dumont asked why the vote wasn't unanimous in the Committee. Councilor Sprague wanted a plow capable truck. He didn't understand why Code Enforcement needed a pickup truck, and if they were getting a truck they should get a ¾ ton, with plow capability. We can do a big job with a big truck and a small job with a big truck. But we can't do a big job with a small truck.

RESOLUTION NO. 16-18 TO AUTHORIZE THE CITY MANAGER TO ENTER INTO A PROJECT AGREEMENT WITH THE STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE DIVISION OF HISTORICAL RESOURCES AND TO ACCEPT A MOOSE PLATE PROGRAM GRANT AWARD.

Somersworth, NH  
October 16, 2017

WHEREAS, the City of Somersworth has received notification of the establishment of a Moose Plate Grant Program to support historical preservation efforts throughout the State of New Hampshire, and

WHEREAS, the New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources has awarded the City a grant of \$10,000. (Ten Thousand Dollars), towards this project, such amount being 100% of the project's costs, and

WHEREAS, the City will be responsible for managing and implementing the overall project including overseeing project costs, and

WHEREAS, the grant funds will be for the restoration and repair of the Forest Glade Cemetery Main Entrance Gates, Fencing, and Monument Pillars,

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SOMERSWORTH THAT the City Manager is authorized to execute any documents and agreements necessary for the grant's acceptance and execution, and take any and all other such actions relative to this grant project's completion determined to be in the best interest of the City.

Sponsored by Councilors:  
David A. Witham  
Dale R. Sprague  
Marty Pepin  
Jennifer G. Soldati

Approved:  
City Attorney

***Resolution 16-18 will remain in first read until the November 6, 2017 City Council meeting.***

Other:

### School District Budget Shortfall

Councilor Witham stated that it is important for both bodies to look at it together and to resolve the shortfall. Second thing to consider, is how we arrived here. He thanked Mr. Austin for the details. It is important to keep an open mind. Is there a need for an independent assessment of how the School District calculates its revenue? Is there a financial management system that can help? That is a focus of work that needs to be undertaken by the School Board. These are the important silos that we need to keep in mind here.

Councilor Cameron said, being new, she was concerned when hearing about the shortfall. She is anxious to find a resolve, but there is one thing she is adamant about. She is not willing to pass any more burden on to the tax payer. The resolve needs to come from innovative ideas between the two boards by working together to find a solution, and put this behind us.

Councilor Paradis thanked Mr. Austin for reading the memo and explaining the details. It is confusing and hard to understand how something like this could happen. Unfortunately, we have no control over who moves in to and who moves out of our city.

***Councilor Sprague moved to waive council rules, seconded by Pepin, to allow members of the School District to speak and answer questions of the Council. Motion passed unanimously.***

Business Administrator Marie D'Agostino and Interim Superintendent Connie Brown came up to the podium.

Councilor Sprague asked if someone could answer how the school fund balance gets funded.

Business Administrator D'Agostino stated that the fund balance is funded by any revenues or appropriations that exceed what is planned or any over expenditures; it could go either way.

Councilor Sprague asked why that doesn't revert back to the city. He has never heard of a special balance. How much has it fluctuated and what is it used for?

Business Administrator D'Agostino stated that it is used to fund the administrative services for the SAU. The Board determines if they want to use some of that fund balance if they want to offset some of that expense, because the expenses get proportionate based on a formula; a percentage goes to City of Somersworth and the other portion goes to Rollinsford. That is what pays for the services. Then, the last few years, the board has elected to use fund balance to offset the expense to both communities.

Councilor Sprague asked how much the fund balance was right now. Business Administrator D'Agostino stated that the balance as of June 30, 2017, is \$280,000. The

Board approved the use of \$100,000 to offset the expense of both communities. The fund is also used as employees are hired or leave, to cover insurance cost, etc.

Councilor Sprague asked when was she informed about the Catastrophic Aid Shortfall. Business Administrator D'Agostino stated that, to clarify, it was called Catastrophic Aid. It is now called Special Education Aid. It is the same aid. She stated that they were notified on September 29<sup>th</sup>.

Councilor Sprague stated that, being a State Representative, it is really hard to see that the blame was with the state. He thinks some of the School Board Members who were misinformed, that there were some representatives saying lie to them and don't send them money. There is misinformation and misperceptions that maybe the SAU is giving the School Board. If there is something wrong with what the State government is doing, let him know and he will get the head down there to speak to us.

Councilor Sprague continued by asking if they are informed at some point during the school year that some of the students are aging out?

Business Administrator D'Agostino stated that is correct. They are informed that there are students aging out of the system. There is also an influx of students that come in and students that get placed on an ongoing basis. They had anticipated that there would be more kids being placed last year.

Councilor Sprague said he has not heard of this happening in other communities. Rochester is at a deficit, but they thought they were getting kindergarten aid. It had nothing to do with the Catastrophic Aid. To do a budget with 5 year historical data, when Rollinsford is no longer in our School System is a terrible way of doing things. Councilor Sprague continued, saying that before he puts his vote forward to do anything to resolve this snafu from the SAU Finance Department, he wants somebody's head on a platter. He wants to know who is responsible and why this happened. Until he has that, he is not voting for one penny to go towards this issue. He said he had never heard about this Fund and that is worrisome. The School Board and Council have been working together and have come closer over the past few years, through the efforts of the Mayor. That is being challenged and jeopardized right here. He doesn't trust the figures that he hears. With Medicaid, he wants to know when they were informed. Do they tell you what to expect as student age out and as new students come in.

Business Administrator D'Agostino stated that they have ongoing conversations. They anticipated a certain amount of students entering the system, and that did not happen. Councilor Sprague reiterated that he has not seen this happening with other communities. He is tired of Concord being blamed for everything.

Councilor Witham said he appreciated how Councilor Sprague referenced "how did we get here?" He is going to focus on how we close the gap. He said he is intrigued by the \$180,000 in the SAU budget, but he understands the mechanics of that. The release of that money includes action of the SAU Board.

Councilor Messier said it's the SAU money that they are talking about. It has to go through the SAU board, but it would be interesting and nice to get a portion of that. They need the facts before a decision is made. He could possibly support something to offset part of that fund. But they need to do something. It should not be an expectation that the Council will fix it.

Councilor Dumont said he was trying to hold his comments, but this is a trying and serious situation. There is a certain amount of anxiety and the goal would be to attend to this situation as soon as possible, so that they can get back to the people's business. There are policies and operations that need to be looked at and an outside review is essential. The SAU fund may be a safety net or whatever, and it is probably public record, but with no knowledge, he is concerned. Thursday will be an important day in the collaborative effort and it will take some work. This problem won't just go away because they came up with money. There needs to be some thorough understanding of how we came to these numbers. We have lost some students to another school system. Some in Rollinsford didn't like what they were getting for their money. That was a loss of revenue. When you look at five year averages, and we were losing 131 students, it is logical to think that if you are coming up with average revenue for those five years and you don't have the average enrollment, it says a lot. It is very serious. Reality is that we are all elected, appointed or hired to be leaders, and this is a very important part of our history so that we all lead and continue to be a community on the move.

Councilor Pepin said he is very upset. He sits in on the School Board meetings. They struggle with the budget. With the students coming and going, they struggle with this every year. They need figures before they know what they are going to receive. They really have to look at the system that they are handed. There is a whole group there that makes a decision. They don't blame it all on the State. It is about circumstances and timing for certain programs to come in. Councilor Pepin stated that the City budget is easier to deal with than the school budget. The only thing we may have to struggle with is we might have to put more sand and salt down on the roads. If we get hit with a hurricane in this community, we would have to deal with a whole bunch of problems. It is not a person that we have to blame for this budget shortfall, but the whole system.

Councilor Paradis reiterated Councilor Pepin's comments. The School Board budget is more difficult than the City Budget. And the SAU budget is totally different than the school budget. Rollinsford is still affecting us. She stated that a shortfall is also happening in the Goffstown School District as well. They lost students and this is happening there. Once the Boards come together and put their heads together, the students and taxpayers won't be disadvantaged. We will figure things out and we will figure things out for the future, so this doesn't happen again.

Councilor Witham said as they look to resolve this, what both bodies need to keep in mind, is that the decisions that they make should not affect the students. They have worked very hard, collectively, to deliver a quality education. An independent review is important to look at it as a 'process' perspective. We have the mentality that, we have systems and formulas that we have used for the last several years, and if they work, then why change. An independent review will cost money, of the school board, not the council. There needs to be absolute transparency, in regard to our approaches and solutions.

Mayor Hilliard stated that the test of any government and any system does not come at a time when there is not a crisis, but instead, it comes at a time when suddenly a major

issue needs to be resolved. This will clearly be the test of something that Somersworth has prided itself on and it has marketed itself on throughout the state of New Hampshire. And that is the tearing down of traditional firewalls that have led to discourse and dysfunction throughout our democracy. Despite the downshifting from the gold dome, Concord is still functioning. One only needs to look beyond the gold dome to the marble dome in D.C. for an example of systems which are falling apart. Of where suddenly, traditional walls have been built and that people elected to do the peoples' business, to communicate and find solutions, has deteriorated. He is proud of how far this community has come. He is proud of the team approach that Council has done. He is proud of the team approach that the Chairman of the School Board has implemented since his tenure, of ensuring that that team would function. We have both worked together to ensure that both of these bodies, which have had a poisonous tradition of non-communication and battling each other, have buried the hatchet in the name of Somersworth. In the name of keeping this community on the move. The last four years has led to a key that does not exist in most elective bodies that even surrounds us. That KEY is the magical word: Communication. For us to continue to move forward, communication will be a key. For us to continue to move forward, burying political egos will be a key. This body continuing to extend a hand and the School Board working in the tradition of a partnership, in the tradition of a team and modeling what Hilltoppers are all about will be the KEY.

There are some very tough decisions that need to be made and some answers that need to be given to the questions that have been raised this evening. Those answers to those questions are all in the spirit of continuing to ensure that our students will continue to receive a 21<sup>st</sup> century education and that this community continues to model what its City Motto is; celebrating its Proud Past and ensuring that all of us will have a Bright Future. He has no doubt that, from his seat in the Mayor's Office that these two bodies will find a solution to what is before us and that we will continue to examine the silos that have been raised before us this evening to get the answers deserved, as well.

Councilor Witham, made a motion to release the confidential legal memo from the City Attorney into released into public record, Seconded by Councilor Dumont. Motion passed, unanimously.

#### CLOSING COMMENTS BY VISITORS.

Real Roseberry, Ward 1. Suggested that the City get with the Managers of the Mobile Home Parks, and have the empty trailers auctioned off. People can get them at a reasonable price and remodel them. The City gains taxes and the owner get rent.

#### CLOSING COMMENTS BY COUNCIL MEMBERS

Councilor Pepin thanked all who were involved with the Pumpkin Festival. He helped set up and break down, and he was beat. There was a great turnout; they ran out of pumpkins at 2pm.

Councilor Dumont congratulated those who put together the Pumpkin Festival. It is getting bigger and better each year. He thanked the collaborative effort for the senior

picnic. There is no 'I' in team. This annual event is well received by the seniors, who are an instrumental piece in our history. He congratulated the whole team. These seniors are a group of people as diversified as our community; a part of our history.

He thanked the Mayor for placing some unique direction on the joint commission.

Congratulations Christine Gaitan on becoming 100 years old.

George Lelarge is an artiste extraordinaire. He was dedicated to our students. When teenagers tell you who their idols are, we should listen. They looked up to George Lelarge. They look up to leaders. He never considered his age as a factor. How many want to do their job until they are 85.

Councilor Messier said the Historical District Commission has been approving considerable changes. The Great Falls Hall (Former VFW) is beautiful.

He is pleased to hear that many were happy with the Pumpkin Festival. He's also heard high approval for the work on the roads; some negative feedback, but happy about the end project.

He wants more information about the Cable Fund that gets pinched, why isn't that an enterprise fund in the budget. The budget needs to be transparent. He wants to know what is in this fund, and what has been taken out for what.

Councilor Witham stated that, with the Cable Fund, all expenditures are approved by the Finance Committee. It will be on the next committee agenda.

Councilor Sprague said, in reference to Mr. Roseberry's idea that the City work with the Park Owner, they still would want to receive the rent; the City would have to pay. Many of them are older units and the Park Owners would like to see them moved out. Working with the landlords is not an option.

Councilor Cameron thanked School Board Chair, Mr. Austin, for coming forward and answering question. Congrats to the Festival Association. The Pumpkin Festival was a great time.

Councilor Paradis congratulated to the two residents, Christine Gaitan and George Lelarge, on their long, happy, lives in Somersworth.

## ADJOURNMENT

***Councilor Paradis, seconded by Councilor Cameron, made a motion to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 8:53 pm.***

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Trish Harris, City Clerk

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Dana Hilliard, Mayor