

1. **Members present:** Denis Messier, Mark Richardson, Todd Patten, Dana Rivers and Robert Gadomski. Absent: Dave Witham, Todd Marsh and Matt Hanlon
2. Messier called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM. He stated that he had met with the Superintendent the prior day to go over the materials for review which are being distributed. He stated that Rollinsford had voted overwhelmingly to proceed to form a committee to look at their withdrawal from the SAU. He stated that once their committee gets up and running we could perhaps offer to meet with them. He stated that in the packet is a sample letter that was sent to surrounding SAU's. Gadomski stated that he had had some discussions with Lane, MacDonald and Krauss asking them the question regarding what Somersworth will be gaining and/or losing without Rollinsford and asking the questions about academics and what they will gain for time. He stated that the split for next year is 84% Somersworth to 16% Rollinsford. He stated that all three of them gave him pretty much the same answer. He stated that time wise, the percentages are pretty accurate through the whole year. He stated that to gauge it on any particular day it is very difficult to do. He stated that mapping it out right to a dollar is difficult. He stated that in preparing the Pros and Cons the biggest thing that kept rising was the "singular focus" to be able to spend time just on Somersworth rather than switching gears all day. He stated that if one entity goes away you will be gaining that amount of time for increased productivity. He stated that right now the SAU spends time between the two entities with professional development and curriculum development. He stated that they talked about the leases and purchase agreements and that is something that we will have to look at a bit more. He stated that they will be able to spend increased time in the Somersworth schools. He stated that they will have autonomy in decision making as it pertains to functions of the SAU Office. He stated that one of the negatives is that you will have to cover some or all of the cost for Rollinsford. He stated that he had asked Lane, MacDonald and Krauss if they felt that we could do some reductions in staff at the SAU if we were to just have Somersworth. He stated that the answer was not for the first year, but that perhaps after playing it out a year, there may be some possibility to do that. He stated that the SAU building is ours which is a huge plus. He stated that the SAU building is Somersworth's property. He stated that this is something that can be an issue when other districts are separating but you do not have that issue. You do not have to look for a building to house the SAU. He stated that for Rollinsford it will be different and they will have to find a facility. He stated that the next page is a letter that he drafted to other SAU's. He stated that he included Rollinsford in the letter for two reasons. He stated that our plan will have to identify options for Rollinsford when you submit it to the State Board and also, they will be going through the process so it will be interesting to see if any other districts want to take us or perhaps Rollinsford. Patten asked if Gadomski will be on the Rollinsford Committee? Gadomski stated that he would. Messier stated that it is good as he already has a lot of the information prepared. Gadomski stated that a lot of it will be the same information that Rollinsford will want. He stated that he is a non-voting member here and a non-voting member on the Rollinsford committee. Patten stated that this is a good thing as it allows to have one

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that this committee is about four meetings ahead of them. He stated that if this committee would slow down for a month or so, and allow them to get their committee going, perhaps in the June-July timeframe the Rollinsford committee may want to meet with this committee. He stated that at that time you might come away from the meeting with one direction. He stated that either the SAU stays the same, Somersworth pulls out which means that Rollinsford will have to do something. He stated they can contract with another SAU, they can form a small SAU or they can contract back with Somersworth and have no say. He stated that even if Somersworth becomes a new SAU number it will still look the same. He stated that for Somersworth the only issue is how you are going to cover that \$183,000. He stated that if both committees could get together in July, he thinks there might be some appetite to have Rollinsford pull out and this SAU remains the same. Messier stated that it makes sense to have a mediated split. He stated that there are rumors that Rollinsford may want to close their elementary school and send all of their kids to South Berwick and move to MSAD 35. He agreed that at some point they need to meet together. He asked what other information this committee would need to move forward? Patten stated that until we get an idea of what they are doing we really don't know. Messier stated that he is leaning towards taking a time out, a pause. He stated that there is not much more we can look at. Patten stated that Rollinsford needs to know that they have the benefit of using the SAU Building all these years rent free. Messier asked how you get Rollinsford to say that they will not have a say in the SAU matters? Patten stated that if they are going to be part of the SAU, they are going to have a say in the SAU decisions. Gadomski stated that the say in the decisions is not a small piece. He stated that it is a real dilemma. He stated that everyone knows the situation with staffing last year at the SAU and there was not complete agreement between the two Boards and that autonomy piece would have been a big piece if it was just the Somersworth Board's decision or just the Rollinsford Board's decision. He stated that the SAU Board and the Somersworth Board is the same entity if you are alone. He stated that this was in regards to SAU staffing and not staffing in the schools. He stated that would be the Somersworth Board. He stated that when it comes to hiring and firing a Superintendent, that is the SAU Board, both boards combined. Rivers stated that there was one person several years back who was really hot about the Rollinsford Board going to five members. Messier stated that he does not know of any more information they need right now. Patten stated he wants to confirm, that if Rollinsford leaves the SAU or Somersworth leaves the SAU we are looking at absorbing that cost that would have been Rollinsford's. Messier stated that the Somersworth School Board will have to find that \$183,000. Gadomski stated that if their committee decides it is best for them to pull out and they put it to the voters next March and it passes we don't have a choice. He asked if Rollinsford could run an SAU for \$183,000? He stated they will need a part time Business Administrator, a part time Special Education Director and a part time Superintendent. He stated that perhaps for the \$183,000 Dover or Marshwood may say they'll do the services for Rollinsford. Richardson asked if the fund balance would have to be separated? He stated that we would have to reimburse Rollinsford for their fair share. Gadomski stated that the fund balance is not a liability. Richardson stated that we would have to give Rollinsford their percentage of it. Gadomski stated that Somersworth's piece of that would be an asset. He stated that the amount would have to be divided up proportionally.



Richardson stated that there is a larger amount of money involved than just the \$183,000 that would disappear from the SAU. Gadomski stated that you cannot include the Capital Reserve in the larger amount of money. He stated that it is a plus and not a minus, like a savings account. Richardson stated that he knows Witham is concerned about that \$183,000. He stated that you cannot put a dollar value on all the Pros you listed. He stated that it would take several years to figure that out. He stated that Witham wanted pros and cons and a value of each and we can't do that. Patten stated that he looks at that list and asks if Rollinsford was a burden to the community in general, time wise. Gadomski stated if they want a dollar amount on the time, we can take 16% of all of our time, take our salaries and put a dollar amount on our time and that is what you would be gaining for the \$183,000. Messier stated that Witham is looking to see if there is a way to minimize the political ramifications and financial ramifications. He stated that there is one way and that is billable hours, services to be purchased. He stated that no matter where Rollinsford ends up there is going to be a percentage that they will have to pay for the services. Patten stated that he wants something to quantify whether it is a practical benefit for that loss. He stated that if this happens he thinks that they may have to override the tax cap next year. He stated that this would not just be a one-time hit. Messier stated in the end we have met, we have a lot of information and hopefully we can meet with Rollinsford and have a rational talk and maybe they will have something totally different. Patten stated that two thirds of the options mean we will be paying the \$183,000 and absorb that cost. Gadomski stated that the issue with Somersworth, in his mind, is not very complex. He stated if you look at some regional districts that are in the same SAU, they don't own their school buildings so if you pull out it is a huge issue because you have to buy your school buildings. He stated that Somersworth does not have to do that. He stated that you also don't have to buy an SAU building. He stated that it really comes to the fact that you are gaining time from everyone in this office and you are gaining the autonomy of decision making for this office and it is going to cost \$183,000. He asked if it is worth it to you? He stated that he does not think there are any SAU's that will take Somersworth. He stated that would not be a cost savings to you anyways because they would have to add all of the staff. He stated that maybe down the road there is a town or city that may want to come here and join Somersworth but then you are back to the same situation and lose your autonomy. Patten stated if we look at this, he thinks we should remain in the SAU and see what Rollinsford decides. Gadomski stated that this is just one committee member's opinion. Rivers stated that we have deadlines coming and we cannot lose sight of those. He stated that in August we need to have something to Concord. Gadomski stated that if we do not meet in April, but meet on May 2, he could report back to this committee in regards to where Rollinsford is at that point and he can report if he has heard from any other SAU's and let you know about his meeting with Dover next week. Rivers asked, if we pull out, and we have the same staff, somebody in the community is going to suggest that the staff's salaries can be reduced by 1/6<sup>th</sup> because they are not doing all that work they were before. He stated that they really would be doing all the work they couldn't get done before or additional work for Somersworth. Gadomski stated he will get the packets to the committee members not here tonight. He stated that the Rollinsford Board meets next Thursday night and they will set their committee and then they have ten days to have their first meeting.

3. **Adjournment:** The meeting adjourned at 6:30 pm.

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