

MINUTES OF PUBLIC HEARING

FY 2011-2012 BUDGET

APRIL 11, 2011

Mayor Soldati opened the public hearing at 7:00 p.m. He indicated that his observation is that public input would be most helpful if people can be specific about where they would like to see cuts or additions.

Mayor Soldati said this is the public's opportunity to have public input on the budget process. People are not limited to commenting on the City side of the budget, they can also comment about the School Department budget.

Betsy Andrews Parker said she is the Director of Strafford County Community Action Committee, Inc. She thanked the Council for considering their request of \$4,000.00. She indicated that Somersworth is the third highest user of Community Action programs in Strafford County. Last year 489 households in Somersworth were assisted by the Fuel Assistance Program, and 371 households received electric assistance. They also assisted families with approximately \$14,000 in security deposits. They put a total of over \$500,000 in services directly back in to residents of Somersworth. For your \$4,000 allocation, we multiplied that over 100 times.

Ms. Parker thanked the Council for their consideration and hopes the allocation will stay in the budget.

Todd Warfield, 55 Hickory Lane, said he is not too pleased with the budget overall. His suggestion would be to look strictly at cutting even more than was suggested on Saturday, for example not buying cruisers on a "2/1/2" deal. His understanding is that the City agreed to buy a new cruiser this year even though the budget hasn't been approved.

Mr. Warfield said he doesn't feel positions should be cut because people's lives depend on their jobs. He feels we should push off purchasing things such as a sidewalk plow for a couple of years, put off purchasing a police cruiser, and possibly other items in the school budget.

Mr. Warfield said he knows there is a lot of debt service and probably not much can be done about that, but interest rates have gone down since those bonds have gone through and maybe it's time to think about what could be done about that.

There being no further comments from the public, Mayor Soldati closed the public hearing at 7:07 p.m.