

PUBLIC HEARING ON TAX AND SPENDING CAP PETITION

AUGUST 13, 2012 – 6:00 PM

Mayor Spencer opened the public hearing at 6:00 p.m.

Bill Connor, 41 Pinewood Drive, said the Council should all have a copy of a letter he dropped off to the City Clerk today explaining how he feels regarding the tax cap.

Don Austin, 51 Cinnamon Ridge Road, said it is hard to argue against giving the public an opportunity to vote on the tax cap question, but he is in opposition to a tax and spending cap here in Somersworth for a lot of reasons. For those of us that sit in the chairs trying to make budgetary decisions, based on already limited funds, to put in a tax and spending cap would significantly reduce the amount of money that would be available to us. That just is not an option at this point. He thinks they do a pretty good job at managing the budget process and managing the money we ask our citizens to pay in taxes. He knows that costs keep going up, and based on the size of the community and the number of taxable properties that is what we base our tax rate on. He thinks we are asking for trouble if we start looking at a tax and spending cap similar to what Dover has. Mr. Austin said he saw some numbers that made him realize if a spending cap had been in place the schools would have lost another \$250,000 in funding this year. That would have been devastating and would have resulted in the loss of major programs, staffing reductions, and making us be non-compliant with federal regulations.

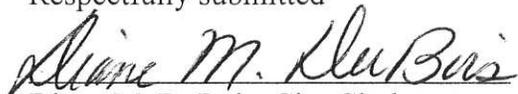
Mr. Austin said he thinks that in terms of the citizens managing the way that the City finances itself, they have an opportunity to do that every two years through the election process. He does not think we need a tax and spending cap here in Somersworth, but it is hard to argue against putting it on the ballot. The people have a right to vote on that.

Real Roseberry, 405 Route 108, said he is the one that started the tax cap petition back in 2008. He fought for this tax cap for four years. His opponent defeated him the first time because he was by himself, he wasn't educated, and he didn't have anybody behind him. The second time he picked up a petition, he picked up as many signatures as he was beat by, but picked up 36 extra to show that the people want a tax cap. The City doesn't seem to realize that the people won't come here to complain, but they will sign his tax cap.

Mr. Roseberry said he sympathizes with the school situation. If we had the tax cap back in 2008, we wouldn't have a \$27 tax rate. We wouldn't have the new school, but we would have done something else. The tax cap is needed here. There is nobody policing the City Council. A tax cap would stop you people from spending over your head which you have been doing for the last four years. Let's put it on the ballot and let the people decide. He is confident the people want the tax cap. If it doesn't pass in November, he will start over again.

There being no further public comments, Mayor Spencer closed the public hearing at 6:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted


Diane M. DuBois, City Clerk