

MINUTES OF CITY COUNCIL MEETING

FEBRUARY 6, 2012

Mayor Spencer called the meeting to order, and upon roll call, the following members were found present: Pepin, Soldati, Hebert, McCallion, Durkee, Tapscott, Witham, Jarvis and Sprague.

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING.

Councilor Pepin moved to accept the minutes of the 1/17/2012 City Council Meeting as presented. The motion was seconded by Councilor Witham, and passed by a vote of 8 yeas, 1 abstention, Councilor McCallion abstaining.

Councilor Pepin moved to accept the minutes of the Joint City Council/School Board Workshop held on 1/23/2012 as presented. The motion was seconded by Councilor Durkee.

Councilor Witham indicated the minutes should reflect that he arrived about five minutes late.

The Council voted to accept the minutes of the 1/23/2012 workshop with Councilor Witham's requested amendment by a vote of 5 yeas, 3 abstentions, Councilors Jarvis, Sprague and McCallion abstaining.

COMMENTS BY VISITORS.

Phil Munck, 4 Woodchuck Lane, said he is a State Representative, and he is here tonight with his County Delegation hat on. The Representatives are the ones who set the budget for the County. The particular Committee that he is on to review the budget is "Outside Agencies and Regionalization".

Mr. Munck said as the budget season is getting started, he would like the City Council members to give serious consideration to joining the County dispatch center for Police and Fire. He believes the last time it was looked at was in 2005. Since then, the County has achieved the highest certification that is given in the country for dispatch centers.

Mr. Munck said that in 2005 there was a study done by the County that estimated that the savings to the City by joining in with the County dispatch center would be somewhere between \$130,000 and \$175,000 per year. Adjusted for inflation, it is probably considerably higher now.

Mr. Munck said that Durham was the last community to join the dispatch center. Their estimate is that over a ten-year period they probably would save about \$3M. Dispatch is expensive in terms of personnel. You would need a minimum of five people for 24/7 coverage.

Mr. Munck urged the Council to look at this. He believes the County would be willing to redo the study if they thought the City was serious about going in with them. The City probably would only need to ask.

Mr. Munck indicated the County budget is looking at a 2-1/2% increase. He said the Republican minority will probably be pushing for reductions.

Mr. Munck said they are having fun in Concord. He offered to answer any questions the Councilors might have.

Councilor Witham moved to suspend the rules to allow question and answer dialogue. The motion was seconded by Councilor Tapscott and passed unanimously.

Councilor Tapscott said he noticed that last year a lot of items were cut from the County budget, e.g. Meals on Wheels, and also a lot of other organizations. This year they added a couple back in and he wondered why they did not add Meals on Wheels back in.

Mr. Munck said that will be coming up and he knows there is some interest in Meals on Wheels. The issue is one of not knowing how we want to pay for these things. The Commissioners told outside agencies last year not to count on County money. By and large, his impression is that Strafford County is a very efficient operation. There is not a lot of fat there, if any.

John Jackman 38 Fremont Street, said he is here to show support for the public-private partnership that the City Council is looking to vote on tonight. He thinks it would be a great move and he encouraged the Council to go forward with it.

Mr. Jackman said he feels the monthly water/sewer billing was a great step for the City. He recently had a \$400 water bill and due to the monthly billing he was able to recognize quickly that there was a problem. If the City was still doing quarterly billing, his bill would have been outrageous before he even realized there was a problem. He encouraged people to actually look at their water bills to evaluate savings in their own water usage.

Regarding the energy study that is being proposed, Mr. Jackman indicated that every energy study done in the past year was done on different things, some looking at lights, some looking at usage, etc. He believes the one that has been brought up would be looking at winterization and heating. He encouraged the City Council to move forward on this. He thinks the information that could be collected would be very valuable. The report that would be generated would be beneficial for the Sustainability Committee to look at winterization or the energy that would be saved. Many of the reports would probably show very obvious and quick savings that can be achieved.

John Joyal, 1 Molly Lane, agrees with the previous speaker with regards to the public-private partnership between the City and the Friends of Somersworth. He hopes the

elected officials of this community will provide further assistance towards the effort up on the hill. This would be a shining example of the City coming together in a public and private way. The groundwork that the people on the hill have taken to preserve their community speaks volumes of the people in this City and their love for the community. He doesn't live on the hill, but he has been a very vocal advocate for the effort and he commends the people who have taken this on as a charge of their own to improve their neighborhood. They are hoping the Council will provide them with the support to see this through. He supports this 100% and he hopes the Council does also.

Mr. Joyal said the first speaker tonight referred to what is going on in Concord as "fun", and he is entirely offended by this. He was in the State House a week ago with one of his co-workers and the Governor recognized them for their leadership effort in 2005 to save the Shipyard. While he was there, he didn't get the sense of any "fun" in the State House. He gets the sense there is vile activity taking place and those people could learn a huge amount of knowledge and experience if they were to look closely at what we are doing up on the hill with the public-private partnership.

Mr. Joyal thanked the Council for what they are doing. In his view, the "fun" that is taking place at the State House is repulsive and offensive. He feels that everybody should pay attention and contact their elected officials and let them know what they think.

COMMUNICATIONS.

From: Charles Kinney
To: Matthew Spencer
Subject: Skyhaven Airport Commission

January 28, 2012

Dear Mayor Spencer:

Appointed by Lincoln Soldati, I have served on the Skyhaven Airport Commission (SCCA) the last couple of years representing city interest in General Aviation.

Due to schedule constraints as an airline pilot and family matters, effective today, I hereby resign my position on the commission.

I have notified Chairman Peter Bruckner of same.

Respectfully,
Charles Kinney
23 Mount Vernon St.
603-973-9045
MAYOR'S REPORT.

Mayor Spencer reported the following:

- He attended two ribbon cuttings, one at Kids Korner on High Street and one at the Teetotaller on Main Street. It is good to see storefronts filling up and hopefully it will continue.
- The Noble Pines grant for the misting station, skateboard park and pavilion has been received.
- On 1/23/2012, we had a workshop with the School Board that went very well. During his term, he would like to see the City Council and School Board working together. We need to solve our problems with a balanced approach.
- He attended a Tri-City Chamber Legislative Night on 1/28/2012. There were quite a few City Councilors there as well. This was a great event to reach out to Rochester and Dover as well as businesses and other legislatures .
- On 2/01/2012, there was a preliminary Somersworth-Berwick bridge meeting held in Berwick. Many Council members attended, as well as members of the public. They are planning another meeting which will be held in Somersworth at City Hall sometime in June. The bridge is a gateway into the City of Somersworth and the State of New Hampshire. If you have suggestions regarding the bridge, you should make a point to be there.
- He is not going to appoint anyone to the Somersworth Housing Authority Board of Commissioners tonight. He is continuing to review our options to fill two positions on this board. As is the case with most boards, it is important to have an eclectic group of board members with different backgrounds and talents, including financial, legal, and superb leadership and management skills. Residents have expressed their interest, and he welcomes more people to consider sharing the gift of their time and expertise.
- He has been communicating with a possible tenant for the Hilltop building, the University of Phoenix. That may be a beneficial thing and could help the Friends of Somersworth.
- We already have a very successful public-private collaboration, the Oaks Golf Club. He is hoping we can do this with the Friends of Somersworth also.
- A member of the Somersworth High School Class of 1987, Pauline Plante-Tarr, passed away last month. Her funeral is going to be at 12:30 p.m. on Friday, 2/10/2012 at St. Martin's.

REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES.

FINANCE COMMITTEE.

Councilor Jarvis reported this Committee met on 2/03/2012, discussing the following:

- Resolution to create a capital reserve fund for school facilities to provide funding in a more organized fashion for their CIP items. They put together an initial draft which will be put together by City Manager Belmore and forwarded to the School Board for their review, then coming back to the Finance Committee, then hopefully to the Council.

- Reviewing water and sewer billing, monitoring the revenue and expenses to figure out if the monthly billing is effective so we can continue to accumulate that data. We began this year with a deficit in the Water Fund of \$400,000 and we are now actually seeing a small surplus. The Wastewater Sewer Fund started with a \$600,000 deficit. We still have a deficit of approximately \$280,000 but things are moving forward.
- They took an in-depth look at the current budget year and compared it to the last couple of years. We are in line and things are looking good. The winter has cooperated so far which has been very helpful.
- They took some time to take a look at the bridge work, specifically the share that will be needed from Somersworth and where we might bring those funds from.

PUBLIC WORKS & THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE.

Councilor Sprague reported this Committee met on 2/03/2012, discussing the following items:

- Approved the proposal from Paul Gordon Logging to cut some timber along Rocky Hill Road from Winslow Drive down to the gully. It is a dirt road and ices up in the winter time because it doesn't get sun light. Mr. Gordon will be cutting along there about 30' so we don't have to constantly be sending a sand truck there. The proposal was for \$3,000.
- Went over engineering proposals for downtown utility work. They had four companies that put out an RFQ. After reviewing these, they decided to readvertise.
- The Mayor brought forth to the Committee a Quarry Road site. Some years back, when there was a sub-division request, there was also an issue with some contaminants on that site. DES stepped in and no further action was taken. The Mayor asked the Committee to look at this. We voted that no further action will be taken at this time because of statements from DES. He is going to follow up with DES himself when he is in Concord.
- They talked about the Somersworth-Berwick Bridge also. Our match in the whole scheme of things is \$150,000. We have the railroad tracks on our side of the bridge and engineers have determined that the abutment has to be taken care of now. For this reason, we will incur a higher cost than Berwick. We will coordinate that with the Railroad.

GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS COMMITTEE.

Councilor Tapscott indicated they all received a memo from the City Attorney regarding minor charter changes and amendments. The Government Operations Committee will be meeting soon to take up these issues.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE.

Councilor McCallion reported this Committee met on 1/09/2012 and discussed the following:

- Breton's Cleaners – City staff gave them an update on this property and approximate costs for monitoring yearly. Staff will get more information on the recent federal changes as to what can be included in funds to clean up site and demo and what possibly could be gained in tax revenues.
- Hilltop Resolution – The consensus of the Committee was to keep the language in the current resolution. City staff was to meet again with the Friends of Somersworth and discuss zoning options.

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE.

Councilor Witham reported this Committee will meet on 2/08/2012. They will be discussing proposed amendments to our fire works ordinance, update from Fire Chief regarding Fire Department staffing and budget, discussion of a pre-order consideration for a new Police Department cruiser, and ongoing dialogue regarding regionalization opportunities.

SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE.

Councilor Soldati reported this Committee met on 1/19/2012. The Committee has decided for the first year of community gardens they will be using the Malley Farm. There is already water there. They would like to urge any member of the public who would like to have a garden plot to contact the Public Works Department and give them your name and contact information. They plan to kick off their community gardens on Earth Day, 4/22/2012.

Councilor Soldati reported the Committee is sponsoring a Study Circle, which will happen every Tuesday beginning on 2/28/2012, going on for six weeks. This will take place at Teatottlers at 109 Main Street from 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. The cost is \$20.00. This group will be looking at how to choose food that is more sustainable, not just for your health, but in terms of leaving the earth a better place.

Councilor Soldati said it will be a nice opportunity to meet other members of the community who care about such things. She indicated that people should contact Kira Sawyer at 603-499-2318 if they are interested in participating.

Councilor Soldati said their next meeting will be on 2/16/2012 at 7:00 p.m. in Council Chambers.

Councilor Durkee indicated at the previous meeting the Council voted to refer the resolution regarding energy audits to the Sustainability Committee. He was wondering if they discussed it at their meeting.

Councilor Soldati said they didn't because the agenda had already been posted for their meeting, which was two days after the Council meeting. They will be discussing it at their 2/16/2012 meeting.

Councilor Sprague asked whether the Malley Farm being used for the community gardens has to come before the Council for approval.

Councilor Soldati said their plan is to use the Malley Farm. If it needs to come before the Council for approval, they will do that.

REPORTS OF SPECIAL COMMITTEE.

COAST BOARD OF DIRECTORS.

Councilor Pepin said he attended his first meeting of the COAST Board of Directors, and the following items were discussed:

- They started the Clipper Connection on 1/09/2012, which is a bus that goes to the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard (PNS) and also to the Pease Tradeport. The route starts in Somersworth at 5:50 a.m. and after several stops drops off at PNS and at Pease. They also have a return trip for workers in the afternoon.
- They are looking at possibly getting involved with the Seacoast Commuters Option in conjunction with the Transportation Management Association. This encourages other means of transportation such as bicycles, pedestrian, and alternate transportation such as busses.
- They went through the 2011 draft of their audit report that they submit to the Federal government, and they also went over the financial reports.
- 2012 is their 30th anniversary in the community, so they have formed a committee to come up with ways to celebrate that.

Councilor Pepin said ridership is up by 13% over last year.

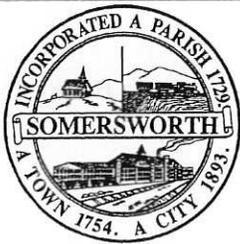
SCHOOL BOARD.

The School Board met on 1/23/2012 with the City Council for a joint workshop. It consisted of a brief overview of their budget proposal and answering questions.

A School Board Meeting was held on 1/24/2012 and the following items were discussed:

- They are trying to secure a grant with Public Service Co. to operate some of the electrical lighting in the Vocational Technical Center.
- The Building, Grounds & Transportation Committee requested that a copy of their energy audit be handed out to Council members.
- Upgrade of the food service at the Maplewood School at a cost of approximately \$20,000. This was tabled until they receive answers to some questions they have.
- They discussed custodian contract (whether to stay with what we have or go to an outside contractor). They decided to stay with what we have.
- On 1/31/2012 they had a budget workshop. Their budget included about \$2M more than last year. They have cut about \$500,000 from that amount, mostly coming out of the CIP.

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT.



CITY OF SOMERSWORTH Office of the City Manager

TO: Mayor Matthew Spencer and City Council Members
FROM: Robert M. Belmore, City Manager
DATE: Friday, February 3, 2012
SUBJECT: City Manager's Report for Monday, February 6th, 2012
City Council Agenda

Lay on Table (under Section 11 of the Agenda):

- A. Resolution No. 19-12 To Authorize the City Manager to Coordinate with Yankee Thermal Imaging of Dover, NH to Conduct Energy Audits on City of Somersworth Buildings and Facilities, at no Cost to the City. (Referred to Sustainability Committee by City Council vote on 1/17/12.)

Unfinished Business (under Section 12 of the Agenda):

Resolutions:

- A. Resolution No. 17-12 Authorizing a Public-Private Collaboration between the City of Somersworth and the Friends of Somersworth to Pursue the Preservation of the Hilltop School as a Community Resource. (Postponed until this Meeting by City Council vote on 12/12/11.) Attached is a memorandum outlining the concept and implementation of a Zoning Overlay District.

New Business (under Section 13 of the Agenda):

Ordinances:

- A. Ordinance No. 9-12 Amend Chapter 4, Personnel Rules and Regulations, Appendix 1, Assignment of Class to Grade. Please see attached memorandum and proposed job descriptions.

Other:

- A. Possible Date Change for Goal Setting Session.** I have included an agenda meeting notice in the packet, however, I realize that date might need to be changed.

City Manager's Items (under Section 9 of the Agenda):

A. Informational Items:

1. **City Charter Amendment Process.** I have included specific City Attorney provided guidance for Council's review as you consider the possibility of presenting City Charter amendment/s to the voters.
2. **Somerset/Berwick Bridge.** Please see attached memorandum regarding the February 1st Public Meeting and proposed funding plan.
3. **Regionalization Efforts and City-School Co-Operation Opportunities.** Exploring regionalization opportunities and a more robust City-School internal relationship were two City Council goals this year. Therefore, I wanted to provide the Council with an update on some recent efforts and benchmark some on-going City department efforts. Attached are the various reports and a cover memorandum from me.
4. **FEMA-Hurricane Irene.** I am pleased to report the receipt of \$24,672 from the State for FEMA's reimbursement of City emergency response costs during Tropical Storm Irene. I want to thank all our Departments again for their efforts in the response as well as tracking costs in detail.

B. Attachments:

1. City Attorney Certification (1).
2. Energy Efficiency Report Memorandum and City action completed.
3. City Health Insurance premium comparison report for years 2006-2012.
4. City Employee breakdown by unions.
5. Fire Chief recruitment update from City Manager.

NOMINATIONS, APPOINTMENTS AND ELECTIONS.

BOARD OF CEMETERY TRUSTEES.

Mayor Spencer nominated Jennie Flayhan for reappointment to this Board, term to expire 1/2017.

Councilor Tapscott moved to accept this nomination, seconded by Councilor McCallion.

Councilor Witham asked if she is a current member of the Board of Cemetery Trustees. The Mayor replied in the affirmative, stating she has been a member for ten years.

Councilor Sprague said it has been our practice for the past two years to receive something about a person's background. He would like it if from this time forward a person could provide a resume of sorts if they wish to serve on any of our boards.

Councilor Durkee agreed with these comments. We sometimes have a hard time getting people to step forward and participate on our boards, but at the same time volunteering for something doesn't necessarily mean a person has the qualifications to do so. He would like to see some kind of resume before we vote on board members.

Councilor Witham said he feels it is a good practice to get into. Councilor Witham moved to table this nomination until we receive more information from the candidate. The motion was seconded by Councilor Pepin and passed unanimously.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS.

RESOLUTION NO. 17-12 AUTHORIZING A PUBLIC-PRIVATE COLLABORATION BETWEEN THE CITY OF SOMERSWORTH AND THE FRIENDS OF SOMERSWORTH TO PURSUE THE PRESERVATION OF THE HILLTOP SCHOOL AS A COMMUNITY RESOURCE.

Councilor McCallion said the Friends of Somersworth (FOS) have been working diligently with the City of Somersworth. There are still things to work out, but passing this resolution would allow them to explore some opportunities. He is in favor of this and feels we should move on it tonight.

Councilors Jarvis, Sprague and Pepin agreed with Councilor McCallion.

Councilor Witham said he supports the resolution, but he feels it is important to the entire constituent base that he has in Somersworth to share his thoughts as to how he arrived at supporting this. Initially he was in favor of the redevelopment of the property into age restricted housing.

Councilor Witham said the City took control of the building last year which set the wheels in motion for what we are going to do today. During the first part of his term on Council, the Economic Development Committee thought it proper to request proposals for the re-use of the building, hoping to receive proposals that were in line with some of the re-use alternatives that were generated by the re-use committee. The only proposal received was from the development company out of Massachusetts for the age restricted housing, with a large building adjacent to the existing school building. Several Councilors signed on to the idea of further exploring that option. Once we put our feet into the water we didn't like the temperature and we began to revisit the whole issue. At the time, it seemed like an economic shot in the arm for the City, with so many pressing needs such as roads, school infrastructure needs, etc. Eventually, that whole project lost support and died on the vine, which brings us to where we are today.

Councilor Witham said what we have in the Friends of Somersworth is a group of energetic, positive visionaries for what can be done with that building. Although he doesn't share their same passion for art, he shares their passion for wanting to do the right thing for Somersworth. His biggest fear about this property has been that it could, over time, be a long-term abandoned property that could lead to a blighted building and to decay of the neighborhood. That is the one thing he does not want to see happen. With no other options on the table and an option that is fostered by an energetic and "glass half full" group of folks he thinks it makes sense for us to pursue this at this point in time.

Councilor Witham said he is not willing to gamble with the taxpayers' dollars unless he knows there is a potential payoff in the end. This resolution talks nothing about gambling with the taxpayers' dollars. There is a potential that the City may have to come up with some money at some point in the future for this project and that debate will be for another day. It makes sense for us now to move forward with this. There is no financial obligation involved. Also, the resolution is very clear that it does not stop the City from looking at other alternatives that may mesh in the future. He believes our affirmative vote tonight would close one chapter in this book and open another one.

Councilor Tapscott said he also had his reservations about this resolution. Seeing no other alternatives at this time, this resolution is probably better than any he has seen so far. He agrees the people in the neighborhood are a very dedicated group of individuals. He is in favor of the resolution.

Councilor Durkee said he will gladly vote for this resolution. He feels all Councilors feel the need to do due diligence on these issues. At this point it is important for this body to foster the historical nature of our City and we owe it to concerned and passionate citizens to work with them. He doesn't see anything in the resolution that is objectionable. He looks at this as a starting point and he hopes that the FOS are not looked upon as the sole responsible party for the building. He feels the Council has the obligation to work with them and to find ways to help with the process. He hopes that members of this Council will work together with the FOS in partnership to turn around the situation and restore that building on the hill. He will vote in favor of this resolution and hopes it will be the start of something with a positive influence in the community.

Councilor Soldati said she wished to commend the people that formed the FOS group. She would like it noted, as a person that does not live on the hill, that there are members of this group that do not live on the hill. This is something for the whole City. She commended the core group of people for their patience with the Council, with pleading their case and making their goals clear. They are very poised, very articulate, and she learned a lot from them. She hopes that other people in this City who do like art and would like to be part of this wonderful endeavor, will be encouraged to attend FOS meetings and to volunteer some of their time.

Councilor Hebert said he agrees with everything that has been said tonight and it is his intention to vote in favor of this resolution.

Resolution No. 17-12 passed by roll call vote of 9 yeas, 0 nays.

NEW BUSINESS.

ORDINANCE NO. 9-12 AMEND CHAPTER 4, PERSONNEL RULES AND REGULATIONS, APPENDIX 1, ASSIGNMENT OF CLASS TO GRADE.

Somersworth, NH
February 6, 2012

THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SOMERSWORTH ORDAINS THAT the Ordinances of the City of Somersworth, as amended, be further amended as follows:

AMEND Chapter 4, Personnel Rules and Regulations, Appendix 1, Assignment of Class to Grade, as follows:

- DELETE the CODE column;
- DELETE the asterisk mark (*) next to Welfare Officer, and delete "Based on 25/35ths hrs." at the bottom of the page.
- ADD Director of Planning and Community Development, Grade 31 and Economic Development Manager, Grade 25.

This Ordinance shall take effect upon its passage.

Introduced by

Mayor Matthew L. Spencer

By Request

Approved:

City Attorney

Following the first reading of Ordinance No. 9-12, Mayor Spencer indicated this Ordinance will lay on the table until the next regular meeting.

Councilor Soldati moved to refer this Ordinance to the Government Operations Committee. The motion was seconded by Councilor Sprague and passed unanimously.

POSSIBLE DATE CHANGE FOR GOAL SETTING SESSION.

Councilor Soldati said the goal setting session is currently set for the same time the Local Government Center is offering a workshop for newly elected people to learn how State

laws affect city and town ordinances. She feels that a lot of new Councilors would like to go to this workshop if possible. She is hoping that the goal setting workshop can be moved to a different date.

After discussion, it was agreed to change the goal setting workshop to Saturday, February 25th at 8:30 a.m.

COMMENTS BY VISITORS.

John Joyal, 1 Molly Lane, said he has been a civil servant most of his adult life. For most people who work as civil servants, it is not just a job but a career. He was very proud to see our own Tim Wilder, a firefighter, be recognized for his efforts and his volunteerism. He was chosen out of thousands of people. What Mr. Kraft has done as far as recognizing civil servants speaks volumes for the Patriots organization. He is proud of Mr. Wilder. This speaks volumes about him and about our City.

Mr. Joyal said he is very happy tonight, as a resident and a taxpayer, that the City Council did their homework, took their time, and passed the resolution relative to the Hilltop building. This was well thought out. He feels they have done the right thing tonight and he thanked the Council for their service to the City.

Mr. Joyal said he has been riding the Clipper bus to the Shipyard for a few weeks, and he feels it is a very good thing.

Nora Molloy, 69 Prospect Street, thanked the City Council for the affirmative vote on the resolution tonight. The Friends of Somersworth look forward to working with the Council and the City as a whole. The FOS are currently reorganizing, preparing for the next steps in this venture, expanding some of the roles, and will be forming a Board of Directors. Ms. Molloy said they will be scheduling more meetings.

Real Roseberry, 405 Route 108, said the City Council did the right thing tonight. He just wants the Hilltop building to be taken care of.

Mr. Roseberry said he watched the City Council/School Board workshop the other night. He thinks this is great and they should do it once per month.

Mr. Roseberry said he thinks the City Manager should make arrangements to have some City offices in the Hilltop building.

Mr. Roseberry said he is proud of the City Council and the School Board. He urged them to keep up the good work.

Emmett Soldati, 7 Prospect Street, said he is here as a Friend of Somersworth, but also has a personal comment. He has been following the Hilltop issue politically for the last four years. Every time there has been a vote on the school, it has been very divisive, very antagonistic, and has often come down to a split. This is one of the first times we have

seen a major breakthrough where it is a totally unanimous decision. He feels that will stand as a testament that this isn't just an option waiting for a better option, that this is really what the people, the Friends of Somersworth, and the City want. For him this is momentous. He thanked the City Council wholeheartedly. He appreciates their comments and the work they put in. He also thanked the core group that has been working the last few months. They have been doing great work, and have gotten us this far. He also thanked the Economic Development Committee for taking it on and really working with them.

Mr. Soldati said that anyone who wants to get involved can go to friendsofsomersworth.com or send an email to friendsofsomersworth@comcast.net. They are currently looking to expand. They want energetic, enthusiastic people that know a lot about the community center, that know a lot about the arts, or are benefactors looking to invest in a project they know is going to last.

Diane Griffith, 52 Grove Street, congratulated the City Council on their vote tonight. She applauds their courage and enthusiasm. As an individual and a member of the Friends of Somersworth, she is very encouraged.

CLOSING COMMENTS BY COUNCIL.

Councilor Jarvis said it is great to see such positive things going on in our community and to hear some of the positive feedback.

Councilor Jarvis said we have all seen a lot of negative articles about the Somersworth Housing Authority recently and the issue they have had there. She hopes some of the positive things that are going on in the community can take the place of some of the negative articles.

Councilor Jarvis said she would like people to think back on all the positive things the Somersworth Housing Authority has done. They have done a lot of work with the City in the past and will be doing a lot more positive things in the future.

Councilor Jarvis said at the last meeting she spoke about the Somersworth Youth Safe Haven, which is a non-profit group here in Somersworth. They mentor youth ages 6 to 18, doing after-school homework labs, activities and programs, gym, etc. They offer community service opportunities, and a six-week summer program. They do a tremendous amount of good for the youth in our community and we have just found out the funding they receive is coming to an end. A lot of people in the community have pulled together to try to figure out how we are going to be able to continue to have this program. One of the things that was moved forward by the school SAU 56 administrative office was to sponsor and put together a basketball game, which will be happening on March 7th. She believes a few Council members will be playing. It is the Harlem Wizards, and it will take place on March 7th at 7:00 p.m. at Somersworth High School. Tickets are being sold now at the SAU 56 office and they are looking for volunteers as well. They are hoping to have a great showing for Somersworth.

Councilor Witham said he has signed on to play in the basketball game.

Councilor Witham referred to the joint workshop that was held with the City Council and the School Board, stating he felt they had very good dialogue and it set in motion some thoughts as to things we might begin to explore. He is happy to see a School CIP being pushed forward. On this note, he is deeply disappointed that the first round of cuts by the School Board seemed to target CIP items. He realizes the School Board is free to do as they please, but he respectfully encouraged them to reconsider that item.

Councilor Witham said various boards and commissions in the City struggle to generate a quorum for meetings from time to time. Sometimes that jeopardizes a project moving forward for an individual or a business, and he believes that is far from being business-friendly. There are certainly legitimate reasons why people might miss a meeting. Maybe something we are lacking is a fair number of alternates on our boards and commissions.

Councilor Witham said as he evaluated the situation a little further, he also discovered there are people serving on our boards and commissions that he has never met. He respectfully asked Councilor Tapscott, as Chair of the Government Operations Committee, to put discussion of "lame duck" committee members as a meeting agenda item.

Councilor Witham referred to the City Manager's mention of the Somersworth-Berwick Bridge rehabilitation project that is planned for calendar year 2013, stating it should probably be called the Somersworth-State of Maine bridge since the Town of Berwick isn't contributing any money towards this project. The reason for that is when you get to the middle of the bridge it becomes a State of Maine roadway, not a Town of Berwick roadway. The funding for the project is split between the City of Somersworth and the State of Maine. That is an important point to underscore.

Councilor Witham said we had a representative here earlier this evening from the County delegation. He agrees with Mr. Joyal's statement that things are not running well in Concord. Many items have been cost-shifted down to our locality, and that hampers us in some pretty significant ways come budget season. He is very concerned about what is going on in Concord and the impact on the local level.

The representative also talked about regionalization in regards to our dispatch people. He is amenable to exploring that. On face value, it seems like a savings, but he doesn't want to achieve savings and compromise service delivery. That is something we need to evaluate closely. Also, he would be concerned about having other communities within the County helping to subsidize our efforts in Somersworth. He is amenable to looking at it, but simply not on a dollars and cents basis.

Councilor Pepin said he has been sitting through the School Board budget meetings and he gets very depressed. At least \$1M of their budget consists of fixed items. They cut

from the CIP because it is next to impossible to cut from anywhere else. This is unfortunate, because we are not addressing the problems. He doesn't see us as a community working to have a plan to address school CIP needs. He would like to see us set some game plans so we can start addressing these needs. He believes this takes a joint effort of the City Council and the School Board.

Councilor Pepin said he doesn't want to see our school buildings neglected. He agrees with what has been said about us being poor janitors of our own buildings. The reason for that is we do not have the finances to do it, but we cannot let that stop us from trying come up with a game plan to try to solve the problems. He is looking for some guidance from Council, staff, or School Board members, to see if there is some way we can do some long-range planning to address the school CIP needs.

Councilor Pepin said when he drives down High Street, he is appalled at the condition of the road between Stackpole Road and Blackwater Road. He wonders why that section of road has deteriorated in such a short period of time and if we have any corrective measures. He doesn't feel we should be paying for roads that last only 3 to 4 years.

Councilor Pepin thanked the Friends of Somersworth and City staff for their work.

Councilor Sprague said he is presently serving his third term in the State Delegation and it is very difficult in Concord this year. He feels things are different this year because it seems that the present majority rules with an iron fist. He will not be seeking another term at this time.

Councilor Sprague said he did not take Representative Munck's comments tonight as making light of what is going on in Concord. He feels we are very lucky in Somersworth because our representatives are very respectful.

Councilor Sprague said he was at the Governor's State of the State Address last week and he was pleasantly surprised to see JJ Joyal there. He congratulated Mr. Joyal on being singled out for his work on keeping the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard open. This made him feel proud to be from Somersworth.

Councilor Durkee said he has sat on the Planning Board and seen some of the capital improvement projects that exist in this City. It would be an eye-opening experience if every member of this City saw the condition of some of the City buildings. Coming into office, one of the things he wants to focus on is the stewardship of our buildings. It is very easy to put off these capital improvement projects, but it is detrimental in the long run. It is the job of this Council to determine what the priorities are and he would like to see tough decisions made to take care of some of these projects. He would appreciate some concentration on those CIP items.

Councilor Durkee said the situation that has happened at the Housing Authority is terrible. His wife is a Commissioner. There are plenty of questions that the community has. The Housing Authority staff is working very hard to put policies in place to stop that

from occurring in the future. He commented that Foster's did a wonderful job bringing to light some of the concerns and issues. The coverage was fair. He would now like to see the community rally around those folks who are trying to make things right, and hopefully we can do that in a positive way. There is no need for negativity.

Councilor Durkee said he really appreciates the efforts of the Friends of Somersworth and he was glad to see the resolution pass tonight.

Councilor Durkee commented that he actually went to a jazz brunch at Teatotalers. Being a resident of this City for four years, he never thought he would be going to a jazz brunch in Somersworth. He and his wife struggle with finding local businesses they can support, and it is refreshing to see a young person opening a business here. The atmosphere at Teatotalers is contagious and he hopes that spreads throughout the downtown. He hopes the City can promote more businesses going in that area so we can have more foot traffic.

Councilor McCallion thanked the Friends of Somersworth for all the work they have done. Hopefully this is the beginning of something that can be great up on the hill.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS.

Mayor Spencer asked Council members, if they are going to miss a meeting, to let him know as a courtesy with a phone call or an email.

Mayor Spencer reminded City Councilors that they will be having a picture taken prior to the next meeting. They will try to do that at 5:00 p.m.

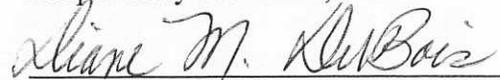
Mayor Spencer reminded City Councilors there will be a CIP workshop at 5:30 p.m. prior to the February 21st meeting.

ADJOURNMENT.

Councilor Witham moved to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Councilor Tapscott and passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Diane M. DuBois, City Clerk

