

MINUTES OF CITY COUNCIL MEETING

APRIL 1, 2013

The meeting was called to order by His Honor, Mayor Spencer, and upon roll call, the following members were found present: Pepin, Soldati, Hebert, Donohue, Tapscott, Witham, Jarvis and Sprague. Absent: McCallion.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS.

- Minutes of 3/18/13 Public Hearing on Ordinance No. 10-13 Amend Chapter 19, Zoning Ordinance by Adding New Section 30 Hilltop School Property Overlay District.

Motion by Councilor Pepin to approve the minutes as recorded. The motion was seconded by Councilor Tapscott and passed unanimously.

- Minutes of 3/18/13 Public Hearing on Proposal for Renewal of the Cable Television Franchise Agreement.

Motion by Councilor Tapscott to approve the minutes as recorded. The motion was seconded by Councilor Hebert and passed unanimously.

- Minutes of 3/18/13 City Council Meeting.

Motion by Councilor Witham to approve the minutes as recorded. The motion was seconded by Councilor Hebert and passed unanimously.

COMMENTS BY VISITORS.

Dennis Therrien, 78 Market Street, said he got together with business owners from Canal Street to 6 Main Street concerning the changes that have been proposed. They would like to support the City, but with some changes that would be more appropriate for all of them. He indicated he had passed out a "Concept B" plan incorporating some of the changes they would like to see. Regarding the crosswalk on Canal Street near Somersworth House and Pizza, if you were to move that crosswalk to the other side of Canal Street, that could possibly save two parking spots in front of the bakery. Historically, the bakery needs those two parking spots. Also, we will be changing the water at some point, and that hydrant could possibly be located on the other side of Prospect Street. Also, they would like to see Main Street as a one-way street. If the bump-out is placed where it is proposed, it would take away ten parking spaces from the businesses and would cripple their ability to earn a living. They would like to see that bump-out eliminated.

Mr. Therrien said looking at the proposal right now, it places a stop sign at the intersection of Main Street to take a left-hand turn onto High Street, where there is

currently a yield sign. He doesn't see where that would work between the hours of 2:30 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. and they all agree it would be impossible for anyone to turn left onto High Street. That would be a terrible situation. Taking a right-hand turn would be difficult also because the flow of traffic is so intense. They are hoping the Council will take into consideration eliminating the bump-out. Several police officers have also indicated the traffic backup would be a horror show with a stop sign there. It would be nice to have one-way traffic and angled parking on Main Street. That would help a lot of businesses, particularly The Whistle Stop Restaurant which currently doesn't have any spaces.

Sherri Soldati-Pratt said she owns the Poppy Seed Studio at 74 High Street. She indicated she had handed out a letter to Council members and wished to read it out loud:

Poppy Seed Studio
74 High St.
Somersworth, NH 03878

April 1, 2013

To Whom It May Concern:

First of all I would like to thank the Somersworth City Council for giving the local businesses the opportunity to review the Somersworth Downtown Infrastructure Project Concepts and Costs Proposal. I also want to express additional thanks to the City Council members who took the time to talk to the downtown businesses directly.

There is no doubt that everyone involved in this project believes the primary concern for the downtown is to create a safe and aesthetically pleasing environment for our citizens and visitors to our historic community. We envision a community which will both encourage our citizens to support the downtown businesses and cultural events, and offer an attractive destination for non-residents.

The general consensus seems to be the need to slow the speed in which the traffic goes through the designated areas, as well as creating safe ADA compliant parking and walkways, understanding that in order to do so will change the landscape of the improved areas. So the question then becomes how to create a plan that supports this requirement, while still maintaining the needs of consumers (including those with vehicles, pedestrians, and cyclists), businesses (including their employees) and residents of the downtown community.

In looking at the proposed concepts for the Somersworth Downtown Infrastructure Project I am a strong proponent for concept A which maintains angled parking on the east side of High Street and Market Street. I also believe we would greatly benefit from additional angled parking on Constitutional Way and Main Street as proposed in concepts B and C.

Personally, I have spent my entire life and career working for and supporting downtown businesses including: Hampton, Exeter, Portsmouth, Dover and Somersworth. Whenever I travel I make a point to support downtown communities and businesses. I purchased a home in Somersworth in 2002. I opened Poppy Seed Studio, a vintage style gift shop on High Street, in 2003. In 2011, I purchased the building at 74 High Street and moved Poppy Seed Studio to its current location.

One of the most frequent questions I hear as a shop keeper is why I chose to open a boutique style shop in Somersworth. My answer is always the same. As a busy mother of two, and dedicated supporter of boutique style shops, there was no place in town where I could conveniently shop for unique items and gifts. Oftentimes my lifestyle did not allow an opportunity to visit Dover or Portsmouth. Additionally I saw the potential of the Historic Downtown Community and wished to be a part of it.

This brings me to the reason why I am a strong proponent of maintaining and potentially expanding the parking within the project area. I feel very strongly that it is paramount to the consumers, businesses and residents to have ample, safe and convenient parking. During my experience as a shop keeper on High Street, these are a few of the comments I have heard from my customers: "I have been driving by here for years. There was a parking spot out front so I decided to stop and take a peek." Upon checking out, "Well, I better get going. I have groceries in the car, and I just pulled in for a quick visit". One of my favorites: "Gotta go, I told my husband I was going out for cat food." Also, "Thanks for being here. We are in a hurry, because we are on our way to the birthday party now."

These are all examples of customers who shopped Poppy Seed Studio because we offer what they needed and it was convenient for them to do so.

We also enjoy the benefit of having become a destination business over the years and enjoy it when family and friends come to spend extended time shopping and supporting all the downtown businesses.

I feel strongly that it is currently important to maintain diversity in the types of businesses that we have in town. At this point a delicate balance of retail, restaurants and service-oriented businesses should be encouraged. Ample, safe, convenient parking allows for businesses like hair salons, printing companies and take-out business to do business. This may not seem important, however I have welcomed many women after having their hair done. (Who wants to just go home when sporting a stylish new hairdo.) I have made many sales to customers waiting for their Chinese food and while picking up their printing materials or taxes. Every person who walks through my doors is important.

I also believe it is extremely important to offer ample, safe and convenient parking to those customers who do not physically have the ability to walk for extended distances, including non-disabled customers who are elderly, or have health issues which prohibit walking long, uphill distances to reach their destination. Every customer is important and an asset to our community.

The final item I would like to highlight and feel strongly about is the feedback given to us by the City of Newmarket business community post renovation. We have been told they still have parking issues, the sidewalks didn't need to be as wide as they are, and that they still have difficulties slowing and stopping the traffic for pedestrians. We have the perfect opportunity to learn from their experience and I feel it would be remiss for the Council not to take this into consideration.

Lastly, I have taken the opportunity to speak with most of the businesses along High Street between Constitutional Way and City Hall, including the Somersworth Tax Office, New Beginnings Thrift Boutique, Poppy Seed Studio, Digital Ink Printing, The Rustic Dragonfly, and Now and Then. The majority of business owners or employees of the businesses stated the importance of maintaining ample, safe and convenient angled parking along High Street, and that they felt it was integral to the success of their business. They do not feel there is a need for extended, 15 foot sidewalks.

Once again I thank the City Council for giving the local businesses this opportunity to express our interests and concerns.

Respectfully,

Sherry Soldati-Pratt
Poppy Seed Studio
74 High Street

John Joyal, 1 Molly Lane, said he attended the Public Safety Committee Meeting here last Friday concerning the City possibly awarding our ambulance service contract to a company that is not even an American-owned company. He is concerned about this as a citizen and a taxpayer. He doesn't feel that a Scandinavian-owned company is concerned about his health or his family's health. They are probably in it for the profit. That is his opinion. He is concerned with why any elected official in the City would want to award a public service contract to a foreign company when we have an American company here called AMR that is doing an exemplary job.

Mr. Joyal said the City Manager brought up several points at the meeting. One of the points was they are looking for the company that is best for our community. What is best for our community? Going with a company that has been established for 25 years that is well renowned and works very well with employees and provides training to our firefighters or going with an "unknown" company? He is concerned about that. He does not think AMR is getting a fair shake on this deal.

Mr. Joyal said a few months ago AMR had all kinds of problems. There were some discrepancies that the professional panel came up with in determining that their recommendation would be to go with American Ambulance. Let's not forget that back in November AMR was being run by the same individuals that you folks want to turn our public safety services over to now. Regardless if you want to close your eyes to a pending law suit, he would hope that the City Council really does its homework on this

issue. They should look at the facts and they will find out that before some individuals were a part of American Ambulance Co. they ran AMR.

Mr. Joyal said the fact that this company is not an American-owned company causes grave concern to him as not only a citizen of the City, but as an American citizen. He doesn't think it is the right thing for our City to do when we have an ambulance service here that in the last several months has improved immensely. He hopes that the cronyism that he has experienced in this City for many years is not happening. One of the individuals that is presently employed by American Ambulance sits on our Planning Board, Somersworth Housing Authority, and the Strafford County Planning Commission. Mr. Joyal said he is a member of the Ethics Commission probably until the end of this month. There may not be any code of conduct violations here, but in his eyes cronyism is just as bad. He understands one of those boys is a Somersworth boy, but he is also responsible for the demise of AMR for at least six months back if not more.

Mr. Joyal said that when our Firefighters, public employees of the City, make a statement in support of AMR publicly and wholeheartedly, it sends a huge message to him that AMR is probably the company we should be going with, not some foreign-owned company where our money is going to be going overseas.

Councilor Sprague made a motion to suspend the rules to allow Mr. Joyal to continue speaking. The motion was seconded by Councilor Witham and passed unanimously.

Mr. Joyal said the parent company that owns American Ambulance has a record of privatizing public firefighting services. That really hit a nerve. Not only does he not want his money going to a foreign company providing us public safety services, he surely doesn't want them trying to privatize our first responders in the City of Somersworth once they get in there. He was even more perturbed when he saw that the Fire Chief himself said he was concerned about the quality of care. The quality of care at AMR is a lot better than it was 4 to 10 months ago.

Mr. Joyal feels that the people in the City should be concerned about the fact that we have a very well known ambulance service right now doing an exemplary job and we are considering going with an unknown company to provide services to our citizens.

Mr. Joyal requested that a public hearing be held before this contract is awarded. They should have the opportunity to ask questions and voice their concerns because it is very important. Public safety is at bay here.

Dennis Therrien, 78 Market Street, had another thought about the downtown project. If we were to change Main Street into a one-way street and eliminate that bump-out, he feels it would be prudent to have a sign there saying "no left turn". That would augment the flow of traffic and would be much safer. A lot of individuals he spoke to on Market Street felt that if the area was changed to parallel parking most people would not stop. He is looking at ten spaces being lost with the bump-out and they feel that businesses would struggle because of this.

Emmett Soldati, Ward 1, thanked the City Councilors, Mayor, and members of the public that came out to “La Grande Fete” on Saturday. It was a French Canadian Heritage Celebration hosted generously in the Mill Building donated by Chinburg Properties. By their estimation, there were approximately 200 people who attended. It was a really great event. They raised a lot of money, which was nice to hear. People should check with Friends of Somersworth in the coming months for other fun events.

Mr. Soldati said he wished to echo what Mr. Joyal said about holding a public hearing regarding the ambulance contract. He would also request a public hearing and said it would clear the air about what is going on.

Mr. Soldati said he is here tonight to talk about the downtown improvement project. He is a business owner in downtown Somersworth, actually owning two businesses. One is located in a not very populated part of our City, and the other in a very densely populated part of our City. He is also a resident of the downtown area. He takes his residency in the downtown historic district above and beyond being a business owner, because to live in a City, to love and enjoy the place you live and enjoy a sense of community and engagement, is much more important than being able to have a strong business.

Mr. Soldati said the reason we are spending so much money on this project is because something is wrong with the status quo. Something isn’t working, and it is not just a matter of delamination or repairing a couple of potholes. He doesn’t think there is one simple answer. He feels that for far too long downtown Somersworth has been a link for getting from one place to another place without stopping in Somersworth. He appreciates the efforts made by City staff, City Councilors, and members of the public and the business community that have come forward and asked for this change, that we turn downtown Somersworth into a place where people want to live, work, and do business in.

Mr. Soldati said he wished to put out a laundry list of things that he, as a business owner and resident, wholeheartedly supports in these downtown improvement projects. That would be more crosswalks, bike lanes, traffic calming measures including stop signs, more bump-outs, wider sidewalks, narrower streets. He feels these things will create a more vibrant community and will support the current businesses that are in the downtown area. It will support the businesses that are in Somersworth “the place” and not Somersworth “the link”.

Councilor Witham moved to suspend the rules to allow Mr. Soldati to continue speaking beyond the five minute limit. The motion was seconded by Councilor Sprague and passed unanimously.

Mr. Soldati said he feels there has been a communication problem. He feels it comes down to education more than it comes down to changing the plans. He had with him a pamphlet that was distributed by Burlington, VT to city residents, city staff, and other people in the community explaining what “reverse angle parking” is. Reverse angle parking is an idea that has come up with various downtown improvement projects. He is

not here to specifically lobby for it, what he wants to talk about is what the City of Burlington is doing with the community when something comes up that is a new idea. They distributed a great color flier about the pros of reverse angle parking, and they talk about the cons, although there aren't very many. They talk about how other cities have implemented it, how to make the transition, and also solicit input from the flier. He feels this is the type of document the City of Somersworth could desperately use right now. He feels that a lot of the plans that were distributed have some great ideas, but what ultimately matters is whether the members of the community understand why we are doing those things. There are very good reasons for doing all the things that are in the plans, but if he is a business owner who sees he is losing something in the short-term, he can't possibly understand the value of our City dynamically changing over the next few years. He feels the City Council should create an educational component to talk about what the proposed improvements will do for the downtown. This does not mean we need more studies or that we need to hold up the project, it just means we need a little bit more engagement.

Mr. Soldati said that because parking is a hot button for the business community, he really wants to emphasize to City Council that when they are selecting a plan they should choose smart parking over more parking. Smart parking means recognizing how parking is used, what people are using it for, and how they will use it in the future. Smart parking means looking at the parking spaces that are currently owned by the City and making sure that the public knows where those parking spaces are. The City should make sure that the public knows that the entire Plaza parking lot is City owned property and any member of the public can park there. It's about communicating, it's about signage, it's about making sure people know where they can find parking to get to the places downtown that they want to go to. It means telling business owners not to park their cars in front of their business, it means enforcing the law when you have a 90-minute parking rule. There is a difference between more parking and smart parking. At the end of the day, none of the businesses have their own parking spaces. No one is entitled to that. The City of Somersworth needs to choose how to plan a parking map so that everyone can feel like they can interface with the downtown really effectively.

Mr. Soldati asked the City Council to really champion causes. This means to not just pass a bill or resolution, it means to get people on board. They should be persuasive and communicate better. He asked them to take risks. He thinks there is a lot of creative potential we have here and we can make Somersworth a vibrant, interesting place to see and explore. Pessimism and cynicism are the gatekeepers to the status quo. The reason we are spending this much money is because something is wrong with the status quo. Not only do we have to listen to the voices of "now", we have to listen to the voices of the people we want to be here in the future.

Mr. Soldati thanked the Council members for the work they have done so far, saying he looks forward to the downtown improvement projects to come over the next few years.

Kelle Therrien, 78 Market Street, said she doesn't know what is going to happen down the road, but right now the situation is upsetting when it comes to parking. When you

live here, you have to have a place to park. A gentleman that was here at an earlier meeting said he could not rent his apartment because he could not provide a place to park. They live upstairs from their business, and they also have a tenant. A lot of times they do not have a place to park. She feels we have to be practical. She would like Somersworth to look nice, but she wants customers so that she can pay her bills and pay her taxes. It would be nice to have a bike lane and wide sidewalks, but what is really needed is parking. She is asking the Council to be practical for today. The economy is not good, and they need every customer they can get from High Street all the way to the bridge. If you take away all those parking places, people are going to lose their businesses.

Paul Goodwin, Ward 1, echoed earlier comments made by Mr. Soldati about the downtown improvement project. It appears there is a lot of tension about the parking issue. There is a lot of apprehension. Losing parking is really scary to people that are on the edge, that have worked very hard for their businesses and want them to continue to do well or at least to sustain themselves as they currently do. He would argue that the status quo, keeping downtown the way it is, is not working. If losing a few parking spots directly in front of your store is the difference between your business staying a business, then it isn't the parking, it is your business. Three parking spots are not going to be a make or break issue for a healthy business. We do know we will be losing some parking, and he does feel we should be balancing beautification with practicality.

Mr. Goodwin said we do have sufficient parking downtown, he sees it every day. He walks across an empty parking lot every day. Main Street near GE has angled parking for a quarter mile and you never see anyone parked there. It is about educating people about where parking can be found and getting people willing to walk that half block. Beautification is a big part of making people willing to walk that half block. The mentality that you will not stop at a business unless you can park right in front of it is the wrong mentality. He would like to see better parking, not more parking. We should make the whole improvement project educational about the benefits of the improvements. We would be more informed and can do it together.

Mr. Goodwin said he feels that Option C or D would be the most useful. There are improvements that can be made to both plans in order to alleviate some of the concerns we have heard about tonight. He would like to see a workshop on parking, showing what the resources are, maybe having someone from another town come in to talk about what they have done to improve their parking issues. He doesn't see parking as the main issue and he hopes it doesn't derail community building efforts that are really what this project is all about. It's not about parking or making commuters lives easier, it is about reclaiming our town as a place worth living in, worth working in, and worth playing in.

MAYOR'S REPORT.

- March 20th – Attended the Traffic Safety Committee meeting.
- March 22nd – Guest on WTSN 1270 AM Open Mike program.

- March 25th – Attended the City Council Workshop in regards to the downtown revitalization project. Thank you to the five City Councilors who attended, as well as the business owners who attended and made their concerns heard.
- March 30th – Attended the Friends of Somersworth fundraiser at the Canal Street Mills. Thank you to the Friends and to all those who attended and made the event a success.
- Please contact me if you are interested in serving on any City boards or commissions. We have a number of positions that are vacant or which are coming open at the end of April.

REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES.

FINANCE COMMITTEE.

Councilor Jarvis reported this Committee met on 4/1/13 and the following items were discussed:

- Reviewed Ordinance No. 11-13 Supplemental Appropriation for High Street Repairs. Committee agreed with City Manager’s recommendation not to amend the funding amount since funds not used on the project revert back to the General Fund Fund Balance.
- Reviewed High Street and Interstate Drive repair bids. Unanimous vote to support the repair concept endorsed by the Public Works Committee. This will be discussed more later tonight.

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

Councilor Witham reported this Committee met on 3/29/13 in Council Chambers as there was a large crowd in attendance. The key agenda item was the discussion of proposals that were submitted for emergency ambulance services. The companies that submitted proposals were AMR, Care Plus Ambulance Service, and American Ambulance. The City Manager outlined what the process had been to date and remarked that a review committee made up of City staff and Councilor Pepin had met with all three companies and had discussions with them around their proposal seeking to clarify questions and review open-ended issues. Chief Hoyle outlined several reasons for the interview committee’s recommendation of American Ambulance.

Councilor Witham added there were a fair amount of questions by the Public Safety Committee members about the recommendation and there was public comment received as well. After the discussion, the committee did vote unanimously 3-0 to move the recommendation by City staff to the full Council. It is his understanding that will probably be an agenda item at the 4/15/13 meeting.

Councilor Witham said they next talked about “police hot spots”. Councilor Jarvis had raised concern about some areas of the City that generate more police activity than others. Chief Crombie spoke to that, saying there certainly are some areas of the City that generate more police activity than others. The Committee had a brief discussion about what could be done for more targeted enforcement in those areas. One of the ideas that has been on the radar screen for a little while was placement of cameras in these hot spots to watch for violations for something as simple as illegal trash disposal to more serious crimes. There was some discussion about the

legalities of doing this. Chief Crombie is going to research this further. The Committee will continue to pursue this idea and will keep it as a standing agenda item.

Councilor Witham asked that a new item be placed on tonight's agenda under New Business, Other, discussion on the idea of a public hearing for the ambulance RFPs.

PUBLIC WORKS AND THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE.

Councilor Sprague reported this Committee met on 3/26/13 and the following items were discussed:

- Reviewed the High Street delamination repair bids. City Engineer reviewed bids from Brox Industries and Bourassa Construction. They awarded the paving on High Street to Brox Industries for \$299,000 which includes utility work. There are still questions about whether it will be night paving, and where the paving will stop. They awarded Interstate Drive paving to Bourassa Construction at \$53,923.
- They talked about roadway line striping. We need to determine which roads we are going to be doing. City staff will be getting back to the Committee to verify what linear footage we will be doing and whether we have to put it back out to bid.
- They reviewed Trench Permit Criteria/Process. This was brought up because of the gas company. When we issue trench permits, they are really intended for small trenches. The gas line is a bit of different because they will be doing a long stretch of trenching. We need to look at our current process to determine what the parameters will be.

Councilor Sprague indicated he went over the paving bids again knowing we could co-mingle the companies. The High Street utilities part of the job was broken up into two segments (Brox was \$86,000 and Bourassa was \$59,000). Both companies were asked if they had a problem with one company doing all the paving and one company doing all the utility work, which would save the City \$27,000. Both companies indicated they did not have a problem with this.

Councilor Sprague said for this reason they will be amending the resolutions that will be brought forward tonight to reflect different numbers, and he will be asking for a second reading on the resolutions tonight because he feels it is important to get that work started on April 16th. These companies need to know to put us in their queue.

REPORTS OF SPECIAL COMMITTEES.

COAST BOARD OF DIRECTORS.

Councilor Pepin reported this Committee met on 3/27/13 and discussed the following items:

- Medicare management – they had applied to see if they could get some subsidies from Medicaid/Medicare for ADA transportation. That doesn't seem to be going anywhere.
- They are having problems with Route 7, which is between Exeter and Portsmouth. They are going to make a change in the route during the morning and evening. As it stands right now it starts in Portsmouth and goes to Exeter in the morning, and it goes the opposite way in the evening. They are going to try reversing the process to see if that will bring up ridership.

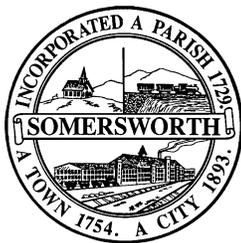
- They talked about some of the cities on Route 7 having some financial problems. They were advised that Greenland will not be contributing to COAST in their next budget.
- The Somersworth connection is the most popular on the Clipper Connection that goes to the shipyard. There were 47 people on it this morning and they would like to try to expand on it.
- They were trying to get drainage straightened away where the wash bay is and that has been taken care of. It had radiant flooring which they knew would be damaged in the process, now they will need to supply some form of heating for that area.
- Discussed the problem of ADA and how it is having an impact on COAST bus transportation. They talked about getting Mayors together to see if they could get some type of legislation at the State level to deal with this problem.
- Route 2, which goes through Somersworth, has had a 25% increase in ridership over the last year simply because we have changed the time schedules. There is growth and a very strong need for bus transportation in our area.

SUSTAINABILITY COMMITTEE.

Councilor Soldati reported this Committee met on 3/21/13 and discussed the following items:

- They are going full force in planning the cleanup of their garden area at the Community Gardens at Malley Farm. They are going to team up with “Spirit Up Somersworth” on 5/04/13 to clean up the City, have a lot of fun and have some free food.
- Disposing of household hazardous waste is very important environmentally and for your own family’s health. Right now, residents are required to bring their hazardous waste to a location in Rochester. They would like to figure out if there is a way for us as a City to have a day when you can bring your household hazardous waste to a central location in town. They think there would be higher participation. This will not happen this year, but on 5/04/13 in the afternoon they will be having a household hazardous waste drive.
- The City is looking for Adopt-a-Spot sponsors. This would be a good way to advertise your business. There are spots available and you can contact Public Works.
- The Sustainability Committee is encouraging people when they plant this spring to “Grow a Row”. The produce from that row would go to the local food pantry.

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, March 29, 2013

**SUBJECT: City Manager's Report for Monday, April 1, 2013
City Council Agenda**

**6:00 p.m. City Council Workshop Budget Presentation
FY 2013-14 Proposed Budget by City Manager, Superintendent of Schools and
School Board Chairman**

**6:45 p.m. Public Hearing
Ordinance No. 11-13 Supplemental Appropriation for Road Repairs to a Portion of
High Street.**

Unfinished Business (under Section 13 of Agenda)

Ordinances

A. Ordinance No. 11-13 Supplemental Appropriation for Road Repairs to a Portion of High Street.

I recommend that City Council pass the Appropriation without amending the amount. Any funding not used on this project will revert back to the General Fund – Fund Balance.

Resolutions

A. Resolution No. 27-13. Authorizing the City Manager to Contract with Toyne Fire Apparatus of Brada, IA for the Purchase of a Fire/Rescue Pumper Truck.

The Resolution, if approved, would authorize the City Manager to select the Lease that is most advantageous to the City. Finance Director Scott Smith will solicit Lease Agreement proposals.

B. Resolution No. 28-13. Authorizing the City Manager to Contract with STS Construction, Inc. of Lebanon, ME to Replace and Upgrade the Rocky Hill Road Culvert.

City Staff recommends STS as the lowest qualified bidder. Approximately \$16,000 +/- will need to be appropriated/earmarked in the next fiscal year's budget to complete this project, \$48,562 of the project is being funded by a FEMA Hazardous Mitigation Grant. This will be an approximate 4-week project that will close this section of Rocky Hill Road.

New Business (under Section 14 of Agenda)

Resolutions

A. Resolution No. 29-13. Authorizing the City Manager to Contract with Brox Industries, Inc. of Dracut, MA for Paving and Utility Repairs to a Portion of

High Street. Attached is a memorandum from City Engineer Joe Ducharme outlining the projected costs and bid award recommendation. Public Works and Finance Committees have reviewed this recommendation with staff.

- B. Resolution No. 30-13. Authorizing the City Manager to Contract with Bourassa Construction, LLC of Stratham, NH for Paving and Utility Repairs to Interstate Drive.** Attached is a memorandum from City Engineer Joe Ducharme outlining the projected costs and bid award recommendation. Public Works and Finance Committees have reviewed this recommendation with staff.

Other

- A. Downtown Infrastructure Project Design Concept, Requested by Councilor David Witham.**

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

A. Informational Items:

- 1. Spirit up Somersworth.** The Somersworth Youth Connection and High School Rotary Interact Club are organizing their yearly Community Clean-up day in celebration of Earth Day on Saturday, May 4th, 8:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. I have authorized the Highway Department to assist with staff and equipment.
- 2. City Ordinance Chapter 31- Community Revitalization Tax Relief Incentive.** Attached is the City's first application under this new Ordinance. The City Council will need to schedule a Public Hearing to act on the application. I recommend the Council schedule a Hearing prior to the next regular meeting on Monday, April 15th at 6:45 p.m.
- 3. City Council Goals.** Attached is a memorandum outlining two action items identified at the Council Goal Session pertaining to the City's Zoning Ordinance. These proposals will be forwarded to the Planning Board.
- 4. Police Department Grants.** I have authorized the Police Chief to move forward on three Highway Safety Grant awards from the State. They total \$23,244 to pay for additional Directed Patrols targeted for various enforcement activities: Speed, DWI/DUI, and Red Light infractions.

A. Attachments:

1. City Attorney Certifications (3)
2. City Manager's Memorandum on Landfill Superfund Site Solar Reuse Assessment
3. City Spring/Summer Newsletter
4. April Monthly e-Newsletter

Mayor Spencer asked if any Council members have a problem with scheduling the Public Hearing on the application for the Community Revitalization Tax Relief Incentive Program prior to the 4/15/13 Council meeting at 6:45 p.m. There were no Council members who had a problem with this.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS.

ORDINANCE NO. 11-13 SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATION FOR ROAD REPAIRS TO A PORTION OF HIGH STREET.

Councilor Witham said we are all aware of the condition of the road we are trying to fix. Passage of this ordinance would put the money into the Public Works budget in order to be able to do that before the end of the fiscal year.

Ordinance No. 11-13 passed by roll call vote of 8 yeas, 0 nays.

RESOLUTION NO. 27-13 AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO CONTRACT WITH TOYNE FIRE APPARATUS OF BRADA, IA FOR THE PURCHASE OF A FIRE/RESCUE PUMPER TRUCK.

Councilor Witham said this is in line with everything we have been talking about. The Department did go out to bid and two bids were received. Toyne was the low bidder. The Fire Chief and the Committee both indicate that the current rescue pumper is of the same manufacturer and they are very happy with it. There is no reason to not support the recommendation.

Resolution No. 27-13 passed by roll call vote of 8 yeas, 0 nays.

RESOLUTION NO. 28-13 AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO CONTRACT WITH STS CONSTRUCTION, INC. OF LEBANON, ME TO REPLACE AND UPGRADE THE ROCKY HILL ROAD CULVERT.

Councilor Tapscott said this is a job that has got to be done. We hope the culvert lasts as long as it has taken to get this in place. He requested that Council vote in favor of this.

Councilor Witham said the City Manager spoke at the last meeting stating that one of the pieces to this company's proposal was the requirement to fully close Rocky Hill Road in the area of the culvert for a period of 4 weeks.

Councilor Pepin said they are looking to do this the end of June into the beginning of July when school is out. Also, the water is a lot lower at that time of the year.

Councilor Soldati indicated that approximately \$16,000 of our funds will be used for this. The balance of \$48,562 is from a FEMA Hazardous Mitigation Grant. Government is good sometimes.

Councilor Pepin said this has been going on for almost four years. There have been three different proposals over time. He complimented staff and our City Engineer. They went out and did a flood plain survey to make sure the culvert they put in is adequate in size.

Resolution No. 28-13 passed by roll call vote of 8 yeas, 0 nays.

NEW BUSINESS.

RESOLUTION NO. 29-13 AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO CONTRACT WITH BROX INDUSTRIES, INC. OF DRACUT, MA FOR PAVING AND UTILITY REPAIRS TO A PORTION OF HIGH STREET.

Somersworth, NH
April 1, 2013

WHEREAS, a portion of High Street in the area between Bartlett Ave. and Sinclair Ave. has experienced significant delamination; and

WHEREAS, the City Council desires to have the delamination on this portion of High Street repaired as soon as possible, including certain utility repairs that should occur in conjunction with the paving repairs; and

WHEREAS, the City requested bids of qualified contractors to perform this work and received those bids on March 21, 2013; and

WHEREAS, City staff reviewed the bids received and recommends awarding the bid to Brox Industries, Inc. of Dracut, MA in the amount of \$361,085 (Three Hundred Sixty One Thousand Eighty Five dollars) for the paving and utility repairs; and

WHEREAS, the Public Works and Environment Committee reviewed the bids with City staff and recommends awarding the bid to Brox Industries, Inc. of Dracut, MA in the amount of \$361,085 (Three Hundred Sixty One Thousand Eighty Five dollars) for the paving and utility repairs,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SOMERSWORTH THAT the City Manager is authorized to contract with Brox Industries, Inc. of Dracut, MA in an amount not to exceed of \$361,085 (Three Hundred Sixty One Thousand Eighty Five dollars) for paving and utility repairs to the portion of High Street in the area between Bartlett Ave. and Sinclair Ave. and to take any other action to complete the project in the best interest of the City.

Introduced by Councilors

Dale Sprague
Marcel Hebert
Brian Tapscott

Approved
City Attorney

Background Information: The project breakdown is \$274,705 for paving, \$35,520 for drainage \$27,593 for sewer, and \$23,267 for water repairs.

Councilor Sprague moved to suspend the rules in order to have a second reading of Resolution No. 29-13 tonight. The motion was seconded by Councilor Witham and passed unanimously.

Following the second reading of Resolution No. 29-13 by title, Councilor Sprague moved to amend the Resolution in several ways.

The City Manager indicated that Council members have a copy of an amended Resolution No. 29-13. The dollar amount in the amendment is \$274,705. If the company does night paving, that particular amount of money would increase by approximately \$25,000.

Councilor Sprague indicated the other thing we have to decide is where we want the paving to stop. The Public Works Committee does not feel it is necessary to go beyond Blackwater Road at this time even though that original scope of work was done during the same period. It does not have the same delamination effects that it does on the other parts. He feels that is because of the traffic count. Some of the traffic turns onto Indigo Hill Road or Blackwater Road and doesn't continue on High Street.

Councilor Sprague said this project will take about two weeks for the utility work, followed by a week of paving. We would not be doing any utility work at night, just paving if that is what we choose to do.

Councilor Witham said whatever is needed to move forward, he is in favor of. This section of High Street is largely residential, and the residents prefer day paving. Regarding where the paving would stop, he said if the Council wants to go only to Blackwater he will go along with it as long as the intersection is done. His concern is past Councils have taken shortcuts to save money, and we have seen some of the results of that. He is in favor of keeping it the way it is, which is the section between Bartlett Ave. and Sinclair Ave.

Councilor Soldati said she would be in favor of daytime paving. The residents would not want to listen to that at night. Regarding stopping the paving at Blackwater Road and not going to Bartlett Ave., she feels it would be a gamble. The traffic density is not as bad in that section, so she is willing to take the risk.

Councilor Pepin said he would not want to have to come back to do that section if it starts delaminating. He is also not sure about drainage problems.

Councilor Sprague said if we do not do the section between Blackwater Road and Bartlett Ave. we would be saving \$70,000. The current Public Works budget for road resurfacing is \$150,000. We have delamination in other sections of town, such as Maple Street and Indigo Hill Road. We need to fix things that are broken right now. If we have to go back in a year from now because that section delaminates, so be it. We would have gained a year out of it. Everything that can be saved can be applied somewhere else.

Councilor Jarvis said her tendency is to agree with Councilor Sprague. When we are fighting for the money we are fighting for, and we are looking at other roads, she is in favor of stopping at the intersection.

Councilor Witham said he agrees that we have some other roads that could use some of this money. Whatever we do not use for this project will go back into the General Fund.

Councilor Tapscott said he hopes the small spot beyond the CVS Store after the intersection will be fixed. The contractor agreed that they could fix that one spot.

Councilor Sprague agreed with that.

The City Manager said as it stands now what is on the table is stopping at the Blackwater Road intersection, which would mean we do not go through the intersection but would stop at the loop detector, then hop over and do one repair in front of CVS.

Councilor Sprague moved to suspend the rules to allow City staff to speak. Motion was seconded by Councilor Witham and passed unanimously.

Councilor Sprague wished to know the address of the spot heading south on High Street where the delamination stops.

Shawn McLean, General Foreman at Public Works, replied it is 384 High Street, which is at the crest of the hill just past Lafreniere's Eyecare. He indicated this is about 100' further than Sinclair Ave.

Councilor Sprague remarked that these properties will all need sewer taps too. They are all on private septic systems presently.

Councilor Sprague moved to amend Resolution No. 29-30 as follows:

- Strike "AND UTILITY" from the title.
- In the first paragraph, strike Sinclair Ave. and insert 384 High Street.
- In the second paragraph, delete "including certain utility repairs that should occur in conjunction with the paving repairs".
- In the fourth and fifth paragraphs, strike the dollar amount of \$361,085 and insert with the amount of \$274,705 and also strike "and utility".
- In the sixth paragraph, strike the dollar amount of \$361,085 and insert \$274,705; strike "and utility"; strike Sinclair Ave. and insert 384 High Street.

The motion to amend Resolution No. 29-30 was seconded by Councilor Witham. The motion to amend passed unanimously.

Resolution 29-30, as amended, passed by roll call vote of 8 yeas, 0 nays.

RESOLUTION NO. 30-13 AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO CONTRACT WITH BOURASSA CONSTRUCTION, LLC OF STRATHAM, NH FOR PAVING AND UTILITY REPAIRS TO INTERSTATE DRIVE.

Somersworth, NH
April 1, 2013

WHEREAS, the City of Somersworth desires to make paving and utility repairs to Interstate Drive; and

WHEREAS, the City requested bids of qualified contractors to perform this work and received those bids on March 21, 2013; and

WHEREAS, City staff reviewed the bids received and recommends awarding the bid to Bourassa Construction, LLC of Stratham, NH in the amount of \$53,923 (Fifty Three Thousand Nine Hundred Twenty Three dollars) for the paving and utility repairs; and

WHEREAS, the Public Works and Environment Committee reviewed the bids with City staff and recommends awarding the bid to Bourassa Construction, LLC of Stratham, NH in the amount of \$53,923 (Fifty Three Thousand Nine Hundred Twenty Three dollars) for the paving and utility repairs,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SOMERSWORTH THAT the City Manager is authorized to contract with Bourassa Construction, LLC of Stratham, NH in an amount not to exceed \$53,923 (Fifty Three Thousand Nine Hundred Twenty Three dollars) for the paving and utility repairs to Interstate Drive and to take any other action to complete the project in the best interest of the City.

Introduced by Councilors

Dale Sprague
Marcel Hebert
Brian Tapscott

Approved
City Attorney

Background Information: The project breakdown is \$52,563 for paving and drainage, \$1,078 for sewer, and \$282 for water repairs.

Councilor Sprague moved to suspend the rules to have a second reading of Resolution No. 30-13 tonight. The motion was seconded by Councilor Tapscott and passed unanimously.

Following the second reading of Resolution No. 30-13 by title, Councilor Sprague moved to amend Resolution No. 30-13 as follows:

- Amend the title to include “and Utility Work on a Portion of High Street”;
- Amend the first paragraph by inserting after Interstate Drive “and utility repairs on a portion of High Street between Bartlett Ave. and 384 High St.”
- Add a fifth paragraph as follows: “WHEREAS, after further review the City Council recommends awarding the utility work for a portion of High Street as detailed in the bid specifications to Bourassa Construction not to exceed the amount of \$59,310 (Fifty Nine Thousand Three Hundred Ten dollars);
- Amend the last paragraph by striking \$53,923 (Fifty Three Thousand Nine Hundred Twenty Three dollars) \$140,303 (One Hundred Forty Thousand Three Hundred Three dollars) and inserting \$113,233 (One Hundred Thirteen Thousand Two Hundred Thirty Three dollars); after Interstate Drive, insert “the utility repairs on a portion of High Street between Bartlett Ave. and 384 High St”.

Councilor Witham seconded the motion on the amendments to Resolution No. 30-13.

Councilor Sprague noted Bourassa Construction, LLC will be doing the utility repairs on both streets.

Councilor Witham indicated the bid specifications were written with some flexibility, and we should also recognize both of these firms for their flexibility.

The amendments to Resolution No. 30-13 passed by unanimous voice vote.

Resolution No. 30-13, as amended, passed by roll call vote of 8 yeas, 0 nays.

OTHER:

DOWNTOWN INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT DESIGN CONCEPT (REQUEST BY COUNCILOR WITHAM).

Councilor Witham said we have had several months of work now looking at various options working with the engineering firms of HTA and VHB, the two firms that are sort of working in partnership on the downtown project. They have received input from the public and Council. The dialogue around the downtown project goes back several years. If he has heard the engineering firms correctly, the clock is ticking to get a plan finalized so we can get this out to bid since delays mean added costs.

Councilor Witham said everybody is saying we need to fix up our downtown. When he ran for Council, one of the positions he ran on was to improve the image of the community, not the least of which is our roads and infrastructure, and the downtown was

square in his sights. People have told him it is an embarrassment. All these issues have pushed us to where we are today. He is being pulled in a lot of directions. When the Council makes decisions on anything, half the people love it and half the people hate it. No matter which option we choose, there will be a mixed reaction.

Councilor Witham said looking at the options in front of us, safety needs to drive us, particularly at the intersection of Main, Market and High Streets. Every engineer has said that intersection needs to be more squarely aligned. It is very dangerous. He is resigned to that change. He knows this creates a lot of angst because it means we lose several parking spaces in front of existing businesses but it is driven from a pure safety perspective, including pedestrian safety.

Councilor Witham said the other “hot button” issue is on High Street in front of City Hall. He felt that if we were going to lose parking spaces on High Street we would have to think about putting parking somewhere else. That is when the idea came that we could make Constitutional Ave. a one-way street and put additional parking there. This would be off the main thoroughfare and most likely would be easier to get in and out of. He likes this idea, and thinks it has generally been supported by most people.

Councilor Witham said the other issues are aesthetic issues, and we have also been hearing about the wider sidewalks. He is not a business owner, but he can imagine wider sidewalks would allow for better product display, and area for outdoor seating, and that type of thing. He would guess the wider sidewalks would appeal to some. He feels that most Councilors would like to see more trees in the downtown area, some ornamental street lighting, etc.

Councilor Witham said he is leaning towards either option C or D. He feels we need to get this to the engineers.

Councilor Sprague said he is on a similar wave length as Councilor Witham, leaning more to option D. Some people tonight indicated we should get rid of the bump-out, but he doesn't agree. He feels that is a way of making a more pedestrian-friendly area. Some people have mentioned a parking garage to alleviate losing the parking spaces. If you have a parking garage, people are still going to have to walk to get to your business. He knows businesses get territorial about parking spaces, but you also need to look down the road. He said people may be more willing to walk a little ways if they have a nicer area to walk through. He agrees with the person that said we need “calming” measures to slow the traffic down, which can be accomplished with a combination of things.

Councilor Soldati said her inclination is option C. The difference to the businesses is it is the plan where we would lose the least parking spaces. After listening to all the businesses, she doesn't feel it's about how fast people are going, but the fact that our downtown is ugly. The problem with the angled-in parking is that people do not actually see the shops until they are on the sidewalk. She wants us to be a slower City. People should go 25 MPH down High Street, or they should get a ticket. We need to work more with the Police Department on enforcement. We need to slow the traffic down all the

way down High Street. If we have a downtown that looks attractive, people will want to stop.

Councilor Pepin thanked the businesses that came out Wednesday evening. They expressed their concern about losing parking spaces and feel that is their livelihood. They brought out some good points about the bump-out, especially during busy times of the day. He knows there are certain spots in town where you do not want to park during busy times, because it is impossible to get back out. He does not know if reverse parking would help the situation or not. Most of these businesses are in the ward he represents.

Councilor Pepin said one of the things that was discussed was putting a light at the intersection of Main, Market and High Streets. That would probably be the best option, however we all know how much that would cost. That area does concern him. He would go with option C, simply because it gives more parking for the downtown businesses.

Councilor Tapscott said he feels that option A offers the most parking for customers and businesses, and that's the option he would go for.

Councilor Jarvis said she has been tossing back and forth between options C and D. At this time, she would go for option C. She does like the idea of moving the crosswalk to the other side of Canal Street and adding a couple of parking spaces in front of the bakery.

Councilor Donohue said he is for a thriving downtown. What that means is that we need a safe and functional downtown. For safety, we need broad generic things like stop signs, crosswalks, and other common measures. Specific to our downtown, it is extremely important that we have safe parking. People don't like to back out of the angled spots because it is very unsafe. Referring to the bump-out on Market Street, Councilor Donohue said he is not for the bump-out because it will be aesthetically pleasing, he is for it primarily because we need it to be safe. We would lose a few parking spots there, but we would be putting them elsewhere. He is in favor of Constitutional Way being a one-way street with more parking on that street. He is for concept C, but there are things he would like to see different on it. He does not want to lock in if we cannot make changes down the road.

Councilor Witham said after last week's meeting he had indicated that if any member of the business community or the public has a question, comment or concern they could e-mail or call him. He did receive one typewritten communication which articulated some of what we heard from the business community here this evening, and one communication that was read aloud here this evening. On Saturday morning, he received a call from the owner of the Somersworth House of Pizza. He went to his business to have a conversation with him. They sat for about an hour, looked at the map briefly, and had a conversation mostly about process. It was a refreshing conversation. They talked about the pros and cons of the various proposals. At the end of the day, they agreed that one of the worst things we can do as a Council is to not make a decision.

Councilor Witham said we have heard from the engineers that we need to make a decision to at least get them going on a path for design. If we endorse an option here this evening, we are endorsing the general concept so they can begin planning drainage, where curbing is going, where hydrants and street poles are going to be, etc.

Councilor Witham moved that the City Council endorse concept C that has been presented by Hoyle Tanner Engineers.

Councilor Tapscott said three Council members were not here last Monday when the plans were discussed. He doesn't feel we should be making this decision at this time.

Councilor Sprague said the curbing is the most important thing they are going to articulate tonight. He thinks down the road they can have the conversation about what kind of parking there will be, and other things. Also, they have to meet ADA requirements for many things such as tip-down sidewalks, etc. We want to make the downtown not just pedestrian-friendly, but friendly for everyone. There will be some flexibility with some of the items.

Councilor Sprague said he goes along with option C.

Councilor Soldati said she is in favor of some parking spaces in front of the bakery if they can still maintain safety. It is a problem area. We are open to helping out as much as we can where it is possible. She also feels that option C is a good option.

The motion to endorse option C as presented by Hoyle Tanner Engineers passed by roll call vote of 7 yeas, 1 nay, Councilor Tapscott voting in the negative.

DISCUSSION ON PUBLIC HEARING FOR AMBULANCE SERVICE CONTRACT.

Councilor Witham said two people requested a public hearing regarding the ambulance service contract at tonight's meeting. This is an important community decision which affects everybody in the community. He would not have a problem with having a public hearing, although it is not required in this instance. The Council would need to vote on this.

Councilor Witham moved that a public hearing be scheduled for 6:15 p.m. on April 15th, 2013 regarding the proposals received on ambulance service.

The City Manager indicated there will be a discussion item regarding this on the April 15th agenda.

Councilor Soldati said she does not agree with the idea of a public hearing because she doesn't feel we will be getting any new information. She indicated that as a City Councilor she is disappointed in the process. We may have been better off if we had the Mayor appoint a special committee to review this, due to relationships that exist. The process may not have been as objective as it could have been.

Councilor Pepin said he is not in favor of a public hearing either. He spent 32 years on the Fire Department and worked closely with several ambulance companies. All the time spent on the Fire Department, he listened to his coworkers complain about whatever ambulance service was there, because they want an ambulance service in the Fire Department.

Councilor Pepin said he wants the best service for the citizens of Somersworth. He is not in favor of a public hearing, because he doesn't want to see this turned into a mud-slinging contest.

There was no second to the motion to schedule a public hearing on the ambulance service contract. The motion failed.

COMMENTS BY VISITORS.

John Joyal, 1 Molly Lane, said cronyism wins again and he wonders who is going to benefit and how. Hopefully the City Council will do the right thing and evaluate based on the merits of all three companies. He feels this should have been more of an open process instead of having the City Manager and his staff and one City Councilor make the determination on the recommendation that was made. He asked the City Council to be very careful and make sure to do research and homework based on what is best for the people in this community.

Mr. Joyal thanked Councilor Witham for putting a public hearing on the floor. He thought the public's voice did matter and it would have been nice if the public did have a chance to voice what they think. He has used ambulance services in the past. He thinks things were not right at AMR until they got rid of some of the people who now work at American Ambulance.

Mr. Joyal thanked Councilor Pepin for his service to the community. He said he is impressed with his stellar career but he needs to cut the cord on cronyism at some point.

Mr. Joyal remarked that he is sure City Manager Belmore is very good friends with the person in question, that their wives are probably friends, and he probably plays golf with that person. He suggested that cronyism is continuing there. Just follow the cronyisms.

Real Roseberry, 405 Route 108, said he was happy to see that we had proposals from three ambulance companies. The Council needs to make a decision based on what is best for the community. They need to use common sense.

Emmett Soldati, 32 Prospect Street, thanked the Councilors for rolling along with the Hoyle Tanner engineering project for the downtown improvements. He hopes there will still be opportunities to change some things. He is very happy the Council committed to a plan and we are moving forward.

CLOSING COMMENTS BY COUNCIL MEMBERS.

Councilor Sprague indicated he takes his vote for an ambulance service very seriously. When you talk about an ambulance service, you're talking about lives. His decision will be based solely on the merits of the companies. Many of the companies in the United States are owned by foreign entities. If the people working for the company live in the community, then the dollars stay local. Both AMR and American Ambulance are zero subsidy, so we really have to look at the ancillary fees. He is leaning towards one company, but he is going to be doing some serious homework. He is really leaning on the recommendation from the committee that conducted the interviews because of their expertise. There is no cronyism going on that he is aware of.

Councilor Witham spoke on the same matter. Some time ago, there were some concerns identified in terms of ambulance response times. One of the things that was identified as the leading contributor to that was the way the current contract with AMR was structured. The ambulance that was utilized here was also being shared with the Town of Berwick, ME. Although that may have been a reliable, functional method to achieve EMS response some years ago, both communities have grown and the demand for EMS service has certainly grown with that.

Councilor Witham added we were coming up to the end of a contract with AMR, and the Public Safety Committee felt that if we were going to improve our EMS response here one of the things we would need to have is a dedicated ambulance for Somersworth not shared with another community. A 40 minute response time is not acceptable when a person is having chest pains. They felt the contract needed to be re-tooled and they put out a request for proposals. The City received three proposals, each having a lot of detail. They had a committee made up of City staff to review the proposals. We pay these people very well to make important decisions for the City. The Committee met, reviewed the RFP's, but more importantly they brought in the companies to answer questions that may not have been answered through the written proposals.

Councilor Witham said there were pros and cons on all the proposals. No matter what company we choose, we do have safeguards. All EMS providers in the State of NH are licensed to their appropriate level, and are certified. The ambulances themselves are checked on a regular basis to make sure they are properly equipped.

The City Manager indicated the only relationship he has had with Mr. Robidas was developing a couple of Chamber of Commerce events and perhaps were on similar committees in the past. There is nothing secretive at all. He will work with any of the companies we have contracts with. There is nothing devious or inappropriate going on.

Councilor Soldati remarked that Mr. Robidas is not a golfer, but he has volunteered to help in the Chamber golf tournament.

Councilor Pepin said after last Friday's Public Safety Committee meeting he hasn't been able to sleep well because of allegations that were made. He tries to serve the community

the best he can. He will speak to anybody who wants to speak civilly. He does not have an opportunity to speak to the man in question, because he makes his comments and then he leaves. He does not stick around to discuss things. He does not want to be a mud-slinger and it bothers him to be verbally abused that way. None of the people on the Council deserve to be treated that way, and the gentleman should be concerned with the way he speaks.

ADJOURNMENT.

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

The meeting adjourned at 9:56 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane M. DuBois, City Clerk