

MINUTES OF CITY COUNCIL MEETING

JANUARY 21, 2014

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

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS.

- Minutes of Inaugural Ceremony held on 1/07/14 – Motion by Councilor Pepin, seconded by Councilor McCallion to approve minutes as recorded. Motion carried 8-0.
- Minutes of Public Hearing held on 1/08/14 – Motion by Councilor Tapscott, seconded by Councilor Hebert, to approve the minutes as recorded. Motion carried 8-0.
- Minutes of Council Meeting held on 1/08/14 – Motion by Councilor Tapscott, seconded by Councilor McCallion, to approve the minutes as recorded. Motion carried 8-0.

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY COUNCILORS.

Councilor Soldati reminded Chamber Members and guests that the City of Somersworth will be hosting a Business before Hours on Friday, 1/24/14 in Council Chambers from 8 AM to 9:30 AM. She would like to see City Council members attend, noting that means a lot to the business community.

COMMUNICATIONS.

LETTER FROM BRIAN C. CAPLE.

January 10, 2014

Somersworth City Council
c/o Diane M. DuBois, City Clerk
One Government Way
Somersworth, NH 03878

Dear Somersworth City Council,

I recently completed the renovation of 44 Market Street, location of the new Leaven Beer and Bread House. This project qualified for the “Community Revitalization Tax Relief Incentive” and City Council granted me such relief last year. I feel the tax relief had a large impact on my ability to do the extensive renovations that were done, and I hope the Council is happy with the results. I wish to thank the City Council for implementing this incentive and voice my support and confidence that this will spur future development in the upcoming months and years.

I also wanted to acknowledge the support of several individuals at the City that helped with this project. Christine Soutter and Dave Sharples were my initial points of contact and were instrumental in my decision to invest in the City. Their enthusiasm, knowledge of state and local incentives, and even investment opportunities was very helpful as I researched my alternatives.

Once the project was identified, Tim Metivier was my primary contact for several months. Tim's help was critical in evaluating the condition of the building, getting the project started on time, getting the permits necessary to keep the project moving and providing timely, sound advice on many aspects of the project. As the project neared completion, Tim guided me through the many levels of inspections and approvals that I needed in order to get my certificate of occupancy.

Overall, I felt that I had the City's support throughout the project and that will make a big difference as I evaluate other investment opportunities in the future.

Thank you.

Brian C. Caple

PRESENTATION BY REV. MARK RIDEOUT – SOMERSWORTH ROLLINSFORD PREVENTION COALITION (ROSO).

Rev. Rideout indicated he is the Chair of the Somersworth Rollinsford Prevention Coalition, which is a group of individuals and organizations coming together, representing various sectors of our community, to address a common goal: a healthy environment for our communities, and the drug-free development of our youth. Their mission is to create and support projects and initiatives that promote healthy, safe, and drug-free lifestyles for youth and families.

They are hopeful that with honest discussion, our community, including you, the City Council and the School Board, will guide the direction which this City wants to take in combating substance use and abuse.

The Coalition is in the process of reviewing a Drug Free Communities Grant for resubmission. We ask your input as we review current data for this grant. We invite your active participation, because we believe Somersworth is poised to mobilize and address this community concern.

What we need from you:

- We invite you to a breakfast meeting on Friday, February 14, 8–10 a.m. at the Career Technical Center at Somersworth High School, where we will review Youth Risk Behavior Survey data to prioritize and then pinpoint the 2-3 substances that need to be addressed in the grant.

- We need you on board because prevention saves the City money. Positive community engagement of youth translates into positive community “feel”, positive economic growth, low incarceration costs, and it is the right thing to do.
- We’ve done a lot with all volunteers. I believe we are poised to pro-actively shift into patterns of healthy, life affirming practices that will bring purpose to daily living. Your active presence and commitment will make the difference in the efforts of our coalition.

MAYOR’S REPORT.

Mayor Hilliard reported the following:

- He respectfully asked that any Council Standing Committee that has not yet met please do so by the end of February.
- He respectfully suggested that the Government Operations Committee review all Council rules and regulations within the next 90 days.
- He indicated that he will be forming, within the next 30 days, a Rail Service Advisory Committee. He welcomes input and feedback from members of the Council on what the membership and prospective structure of that committee should look like.
- He will be meeting with the Friends of Somersworth within the next 30 days to discuss future options. It is his intent to work actively with the NH Congressional Delegation to seek any and all available federal funds to support that project.
- He will be appointing members of the Christmas Parade Committee this evening. Under Council Rule 15, these appointments do not require confirmation by the Council. Their terms will expire on 1/21/16.
- He asked Council to postpone nominating a person to fill the At Large City Council Seat until the next Council meeting due to receiving four more letters of interest today. This will give them a chance to review the letters of interest.
- He announced hours for the Mayor’s Office for the winter/spring season as follows: Mondays 4:30 p.m.-5:30 p.m.; Wednesdays 5:00 p.m.-6:00 p.m.; Fridays 3:30 p.m.-4:30 p.m. In addition to these hours, he will also be holding monthly Saturday office hours, rotating ward meetings, and a neighborhood walk-around. More details will be announced soon.

He reminded the public that interns Christien Dubois and Bill Travascio are available in the Mayor’s Office on Mondays from 9:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. except the first and third Mondays of the month at which time they will attend Council meetings; Wednesdays from 9:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.; and Fridays from 9:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

- He announced that on February 7th from 7:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. a Celebration of Somersworth has been planned at the American Legion. The event will highlight Somersworth’s proud past and bright future in addition to celebrating the newly elected City officials.

REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES.

FINANCE COMMITTEE.

Councilor Witham reported this Committee will meet on 1/29/14 at 4:30 p.m.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE.

Councilor McCallion reported this Committee met on 1/14/14. Economic Development Manager Christine Soutter presented a review of 2013. There was discussion regarding some of the ideas that should be taken up by the Committee.

PUBLIC WORKS & THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE.

Councilor Sprague reported this Committee met on 1/14/14. There are three new members. The following items were discussed:

- Reviewed the Water Ordinance.
- Voted to place on agenda authorizing the City Manager to obtain PUC approval for sale of water to three Dover properties.
- Councilor Messier asked several questions to bring him up to speed.

REPORTS OF SPECIAL COMMITTEES.

SCHOOL BOARD.

Councilor Pepin reported he attended a School Board Workshop on 1/09/14. They started working on their budget by looking at contractual items.

Councilor Pepin reported he attended the School Board Meeting after the Workshop. They held election of officers. They had a report from the Building & Grounds Committee regarding a water leak at Idlehurst School. The leak has been repaired at no cost to the School Department.

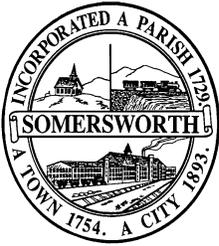
VISION 2020 COMMITTEE.

Councilor Witham said he met with the City Manager to go over what work was done in the past. He intends to schedule a meeting by the end of February.

CHRISTMAS PARADE COMMITTEE.

Mayor Hilliard reported this Committee met on 1/14/14. They set a date for the 2014 parade of 12/06/14 at 2:00 p.m. They will be examining a new route for the parade and planning a celebration after the parade.

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT.



CITY OF SOMERSWORTH
Office of the City Manager

TO: Mayor Dana Hilliard and City Council Members
FROM: Robert M. Belmore, City Manager
DATE: Friday, January 17, 2014
SUBJECT: City Manager's Report for Tuesday, January 21, 2014
City Council Agenda

5:30 P.M. Joint City Council & School Board Workshop

at the HS Career Technical Center, 2nd Floor, Re: the City Charter Tax Cap

Old Business (under Section 13 of Agenda)

Resolutions:

- A. Resolution No. 23-14 Authorizing the City Manager to Sell City Tax Deeded Property at 43 Colonial Village, 207 Sherwood Glen, and 613 Sherwood Glen.** These properties are manufactured housing units. First, I would advertise for sale through a sealed bid process; if unsuccessful, other options would be considered to conclude a sale.

- B. Resolution No. 24-14 Amend Council Rules and Regulations, Section 4.A, City Clerk, Regarding Electronic Recordings of City Council and Other Such Special Meetings.**

New Business (under Section 14 of Agenda)

Resolutions:

- A. Resolution No. 26-14 To Authorize the Dissolution of the Ad Hoc Cable Committee.**

Other:

- A. Vote that City Water Service Continue to be Provided to Three Dover Properties: 170 Varney Road, 167 Varney Road, and 193 Blackwater Road, and Furthermore, to Authorize the City Manager to Obtain PUC Approval for the Water Service to these Three Dover Properties. Submitted with Recommendation to Approve by Public Works & Environment Committee.** I would offer that this is a housekeeping action item. As reported to the Public Works & Environment, City Attorney recommends that we secure PUC approval as we have with the water service being provided to other property outside our City limits.
- B. Tax Cap Discussion/Direction.** Mayor Hilliard asked that this item be placed on the Agenda as a follow-up to this evening's workshop with the School Board. The City Council may want to decide on some specific guidelines and directives for the City Manager, Staff and School Board.

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

A. Informational Items:

- 1. Hunting at Willand Pond.** Attached is a memorandum from Director Sharples in response to the concern brought to my attention regarding hunting and the discharge of firearms in close proximity to houses and the Willand Pond Recreational Trail. Both Dover and Somersworth Police Departments are aware that hunting is not allowed and will enforce infractions. We will post on our side of the Pond.
- 2. FY 2014 General Fund.** Attached is a summary of current year end expenditures as well as revenues. Overall expenditures and revenues appear to be in line with the budget as adopted.
- 3. Sale of Tax Deeded Property.** The City received two (2) bids on the 425 Main Street property; \$125,000 and \$73,000. We received no bids on the 213 West High Street property. I will move forward in accepting the \$125,000 bid.
- 4. Hilltop School/Building Project Study Update.** Attached is a memorandum that provides a brief synopsis of the project to date. Our plan is to provide the City Council and Public a presentation of the Study at a Workshop in March. AG Architects will then finalize the Project Study based on feedback and direction received after the presentation.
- 5. City Council Annual Goal Setting Session.** I would appreciate some direction on how the Mayor and Councilors wish to proceed with the Annual Goal Session with Department Heads. Please consider any preferences on the date and time as well as the meeting format.
- 6. UNH Intern.** Attached is a memo regarding my approval in accepting a UNH Student Intern to work in the Development Services Department with Economic Development Manager, Christine Soutter. Derek Maloomian of Rollinsford will be working with us for about four (4) months on various objectives outlined in the memo.

B. Attachments:

1. Department Head Reports
2. Employee Newsletter

NOMINATIONS, APPOINTMENTS AND ELECTIONS.

CHRISTMAS PARADE COMMITTEE

Mayor Hilliard named the following people to the Christmas Parade Committee, terms to expire 1/21/16:

- Cheryl Gagnon, Chair
- Beth Poulin, Vice Chair
- Captain Russell Timmons
- Donald Ouellette
- Amie Wallace Pence
- Steve Goff
- Chris Smith
- Elizabeth Miller
- Liza Cocco
- Katelyn Rideout

UNFINISHED BUSINESS.

RESOLUTION NO. 23-14 AUTHORIZING THE CITY MANAGER TO SELL CITY TAX DEEDED PROPERTIES AT 43 COLONIAL VILLAGE, 207 SHERWOOD GLEN, AND 613 SHERWOOD GLEN.

Following second reading of Resolution No. 23-14 by title, Councilor Witham moved for adoption. The motion was seconded by Councilor Pepin and passed by roll call vote of 8 yeas, 0 nays.

RESOLUTION NO. 24-14 AMEND COUNCIL RULES AND REGULATIONS, SECTION 4.A, CITY CLERK, REGARDING ELECTRONIC RECORDINGS OF CITY COUNCIL AND OTHER SUCH SPECIAL MEETINGS.

Following second reading of Resolution No. 24-14 by title, Councilor Witham moved for adoption. The motion was seconded by Councilor Pepin and passed by roll call vote of 8 yeas, 0 nays.

NEW BUSINESS.

RESOLUTION NO. 26-14 TO AUTHORIZE THE DISSOLUTION OF THE AD-HOC CABLE COMMITTEE.

Somersworth, NH
January 21, 2014

WHEREAS, an ad-hoc Cable Committee was established in 2009 to oversee the renewal process for the City's Cable Television Franchise Agreement with COMCAST of Maine/New Hampshire, Inc. in accordance with the Federal Cable Communications Policy Act of 1984; and,

WHEREAS, a Cable Franchise Agreement was approved by vote of the City Council, who are the Franchise Authority; and

WHEREAS, the City Manager, duly authorized, signed the five (5) year Renewal Franchise Agreement which commenced on June 18, 2013; and

WHEREAS, the Renewal Franchise Agreement will remain in effect with COMCAST of Maine/New Hampshire, Inc. until June 17, 2018; and

WHEREAS, it has been determined that the ad-hoc Cable Committee has fulfilled its charge set forth by the City Council,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SOMERSWORTH THAT the ad-hoc Cable Committee be dissolved upon passage of this Resolution.

Introduced by

Mayor Dana S. Hilliard

Approved:

City Attorney

Motion was made by Councilor Witham and seconded by Councilor Tapscott to suspend the rules in order to have a second reading of Resolution No. 26-14. The motion carried 8-0.

Following second reading of Resolution No. 26-14 by title, Councilor Witham moved for adoption. The motion was seconded by Councilor McCallion and passed by roll call vote of 8 yeas, 0 nays.

Councilor Witham thanked the members who worked on this Committee. They worked behind the scenes for about five years and were dealing with Comcast, a corporate giant. It was a tough job and he appreciates their work.

VOTE THAT CITY WATER SERVICE CONTINUE TO BE PROVIDED TO THREE DOVER PROPERTIES: 170 VARNEY ROAD, 167 VARNEY ROAD, AND 193 BLACKWATER ROAD, AND FURTHERMORE, TO AUTHORIZE THE CITY MANAGER TO OBTAIN PUC APPROVAL FOR THE WATER SERVICE TO THESE THREE DOVER PROPERTIES. SUBMITTED WITH RECOMMENDATION TO APPROVE BY PUBLIC WORKS & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE.

Councilor Sprague noted this is a “housekeeping” issue, as pointed out by the City Manager. If you are providing water service to properties outside your town, you need approval from the PUC.

The Council voted unanimously by roll call vote to continue to provide water service to three Dover properties and to authorize the City Manager to obtain PUC approval for the water service to these three Dover properties.

TAX CAP DISCUSSION/DIRECTION.

City Councilors thanked the City Manager and Finance Director for their presentation regarding the tax cap at the joint City Council/School Board Workshop tonight. Most Councilors indicated they are not proponents of the tax cap, but will work with it as best they can. Councilors offered the following comments:

- Councilor Witham feels the tax cap language is very clear in some areas, but not in other areas. There is substantial room for interpretation. He will lean on City staff and City Attorney to help guide interpretation. His direction would be to have the Finance Committee kick this around with staff in a committee format and come back to full Council with a series of recommendations.
- Councilor McCallion feels we have to find our way to not sacrifice services and keep moving forward. It seems that what we do this year can also affect the next year. There will have to be a lot more communication between the City Council and School Board on certain items. There will be a smaller pie than what was there in years past. We should also try to look at things outside the box, such as consolidation of services.
- Councilor Sprague said what he took away from the workshop tonight is just how bad this tax cap really is. We cannot control things such as State revenue, which affects our budget tremendously. If we have fluctuations in the way we bond, that could hamstring future Councils when they work on their budgets. This will put a lot of pressure on both the School Board and the City Council.
- Councilor Messier said the presentation showed us that this will be a complicated process and that whatever we do could affect us in the future. We have been directed by our constituents to formulate a budget under the guidelines of the tax cap. We will need to educate ourselves and all the taxpayers that voted in favor of this.
- Councilor Pepin said when he ran for Council one of his concerns was looking down the road to see what we could do to improve things by better planning. He feels the tax cap takes that away. The School Board is already over the tax cap with just their contracted items which is something they have no control over. We will be missing things in the future that would help save the City money.
- Councilor Soldati said the tax cap will be very serious if it means we are going to stop spending to keep our schools up to par and if we are going to stop spending in looking at investing in the Hilltop School to bring a cultural center to our community. The top

things people look for when moving into a community are culture, amenities and parks. We have been moving in that direction. If we stop spending in the very areas that would spur economic growth in this City we would be like a rat running in circles. She hopes this will not take us backwards.

Councilor Witham stated he will not sacrifice public education or public safety to fulfill the obligations of a tax cap. He has to live by his values. He hopes his fellow Councilors view their role in a similar way.

Councilor Sprague applauded the wisdom of the crafters of the tax cap language because they did include an area that would allow Councilors to override the tax cap. He will not vote to put the schools in a bad place.

Mayor Hilliard stated the implementation of the tax cap will be historic. It will be historic with either allowing our City to continue to progress forward, or it can be crippling with all the work past City Councils have done and he knows this City Council will do as a united team. He is not in favor of the tax cap but it was chosen by a democratic process. He feels this body, as well as the City Manager and staff, will examine all avenues to ensure that we balance the needs of this community while honoring the dictate that was given to us by the electorate knowing that we do have the capacity, if necessary, to override regardless of how unpopular that might be. Our job is to ensure that this community will progress forward.

COMMENTS BY VISITORS.

Sean Collins, Ward 1, introduced himself and expressed his interest in serving in the City Council At Large Seat. He believes he has the experience and skills necessary to add value to the Council and to help forward the Master Plan for the City.

CLOSING COMMENTS BY COUNCIL MEMBERS.

Councilor Pepin thanked the Highway Department for all the work they have been doing. They have been working a lot of overtime. He was upset when he picked up Foster's the other and read about "delamination" in Somersworth again. Other communities have the same problem, but you don't see them in the newspaper. He commended Public Works for patching holes as quickly as they have been.

Councilor Soldati commended Sen. David Watters for bringing the issue of hunting at Willand Pond to her attention. She thanked the Somersworth and Dover Police Departments for their cooperation.

Councilor Hebert said the tax cap was voted on by the citizens of Somersworth hoping their taxes would not go up.

Councilor McCallion said he was also upset by the article in Foster's. He applauds the job our Public Works Department has done. Foster's did have a nice article in today's paper about our historic district. He feels one of the fairest taxes is the consumption tax, which some other communities are doing. He thanked everyone who sent a letter of interest regarding the At Large Council seat.

Councilor Messier said they fixed delamination on the bridge by cold planning and then patching. Maybe we could try that.

Councilor Tapscott said he was on Maple Street today and noticed that apparently someone crashed through the fence at the cemetery.

Councilor Witham thanked Reverend Rideout for an information presentation. It is of interest to him. He noted that recently a family of 7 people was hospitalized as a result of carbon monoxide poisoning. Having a detector is important. He was driving in Berlin, NH last week, and our roads are pristine in comparison. This is a state-wide problem. Regarding articles in Foster's pertaining to Somersworth, he has seen more of a balance of negative and positive articles over the last few months.

Councilor Sprague said he doesn't know why people even read Foster's. He believes in reading real journalism. Regarding road maintenance, we live in New England and our roads take a beating. You need to spend money on maintenance. We need to work on a rail program. He thanked Mayor Hilliard for putting together a committee on this. He would love to see gambling in New Hampshire.

Mayor Hilliard noted his two interns are tracking the position and negative articles about our community. They started doing this on 1/08/14 and will do it for one month. He looks forward to sharing the results with the City Council.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS.

Goal Setting Session – After discussion Council members agreed on the date of February 13, 2014, starting at 5:30 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT.

Councilor Pepin moved to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Councilor Tapscott and passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane M. DuBois, City Clerk

