



Minutes of the Joint Commission of City  
Council and School Board Meeting  
Tuesday January 31, 2023  
6:15 p.m.

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| Present:                      | Mayor Dana Hilliard  |
| Councilors present:           | Donald Austin, Chairman<br>Robert Gibson, City Councilor                                     |
| School Board Members present: | Maggie Larson, School Board Chair<br>Todd Marsh, School Board Vice Chairman                  |
| City Staff present:           | Bob Belmore, City Manager<br>Scott Smith, Finance Director<br>Ammy Ramsey, Deputy City Clerk |
| School Staff present:         | Lori Lane, School Superintendent<br>Katie Krauss, School Business Administrator              |

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The meeting was called to order by Chairman Donald Austin at 6:16 p.m.

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

*School Board Member Larson made a motion to approve the minutes of the January 20, 2022 meeting. The motion was seconded by School Board Member Marsh and passed 4-0.*

PROPOSED 2023/2024 SCHOOL BUDGET

Superintendent Lori Lane presented the latest 2023/2024 proposed budget summary, and explained the challenges with decreasing State revenue. Superintendent Lane stated that the decrease is because the State's adequacy aid continues to decrease significantly. Superintendent Lane informed the Commission Members that the School District is requesting to use \$100,000 of the estimated Fiscal Year 22-23 budget surplus as a revenue source for the FY 23-24 budget as authorized in Resolution 31-21.

Superintendent Lane explained there are no new positions, and there are a number of professional and para-educator positions that will be reduced.

Superintendent Lane also informed the Commission that they are having a budget workshop on Saturday, February 4<sup>th</sup>, and the proposed budget will be presented to the School Board at the February 14<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Councilor Austin stated he understands the challenges in filling positions and mentioned his concern cutting unfilled positions. Superintendent Lane explained there are 7 ½ open positions so no person

will lose a job and that some have transitioned into different positions to accommodate for reduction in enrollment, and student needs.

Councilor Robert Gibson inquired about decreasing positions effecting the needs of possible incoming enrollment in the future and current student needs. Business Administrator Krauss stated that the decrease does not affect any one-on-one needs, or impact incoming students. Discussion continued concerning finding the balance of appropriate staff numbers and student needs in an environment that could change.

Councilor Gibson inquired about the supply costs going up. Business Administrator Krauss stated they have gone up around \$15,000. Superintendent Lane also mentioned that the utility cost and bus contract have increased.

School Board Chair Maggie Larson inquired with Finance Director Smith if the property tax income has increased or decreased. Director Smith explained that the tax rate is determined when the budget is set. Director Smith continued to explain how the tax rate process works.

Mayor Dana Hilliard stated that the tax rate has been stable and believes that is because the City of Somersworth has worked well with the School Board and they have been able to accomplish many great things for the entire Community.

#### UPDATE ON 2022/2023 SCHOOL YEAR

Superintendent Lane presented an update stating that enrollment has been stable but consistently declining in part due to families moving out of Somersworth. Superintendent Lane also mentioned the challenges of hiring for any open positions.

Superintendent Lane mentioned the COVID Response Management Team continued to meet regularly until January 2023. The School District received nearly 8 million dollars in ESSER funds and they were able to accomplish some much-needed HVAC improvements along with other funding needs.

Superintendent Lane also gave some information concerning the Somersworth Youth Connection and how it is no longer funded by a grant and is part of the District's operating budget.

*Councilor Gibson made a motion to recommend to the Council's Finance Committee to the use of \$100,000 from the estimated School Department Fiscal Year 22-23 budget surplus as a revenue source for the Fiscal Year 2023/2024 School Budget in accordance with Resolution 31-21. The motion was seconded by School Board Member Marsh and passed 4-0.*

The meeting adjourned at 7:02 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Ammy Ramsey, Deputy City Clerk