



Minutes of City Council Meeting Monday, March 15, 2021

ANNOUNCEMENT BY MAYOR HILLIARD

As Chair of the Somersworth City Council, I, Dana S. Hilliard, Mayor find that due to the State of Emergency declared by the Governor as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and in accordance with the Governor's Emergency Order #12 pursuant to Executive Order 2020-04, this public body is authorized to meet electronically.

We are utilizing Zoom for this electronic meeting. All members of the Council have the ability to communicate contemporaneously during this meeting through this platform, and the public has access to contemporaneously watch by way of our local public access Comcast channel 22 or via live streaming available at our City website Somersworth.com.

Please note that **all votes** that are taken during this meeting shall be done by **roll call vote**.

ROLL CALL OF MEMBERS

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by His Honor, the Mayor, Dana S. Hilliard and, upon roll call, the following Council members were present: Councilors Pepin, Vincent, Dumont, Austin, Michaud, Witham, Gerding, and Paradis, who were all by themselves.

Councilor Cameron joined the meeting via Zoom at 7:50 p.m.

Mayor Hilliard announced that City Manager Bob Belmore, Deputy City Manager/Finance Director Scott Smith, and City Clerk Jonathan Slaven were in the Council Chambers.

Joining via Zoom were Director of Planning & Community Development Michelle Mears, Fire Chief George Kramlinger, Director of Public Works Michael Bobinsky, and Police Chief David Kretschmar.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Councilor Michaud led the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC HEARING

There were no Public Hearings scheduled for this meeting.

ADDITION TO AGENDA

Councilor Witham requested the addition of the following item be placed on the agenda under "OTHER C". Mayor Hilliard obliged the request without objection from Council.

A Vote to Authorize Our Fire Department to Participate the State Covid-19 Vaccination Program and to Authorize the City Manager to Sign Any Required Agreements to Allow for that Participation and to Seek Reimbursement for the Cost for Any Participating Employees/Firefighters in that Program

COMMENTS BY VISITORS

There were no comments by visitors.

CONSENT CALENDAR

- A. Approve Minutes of the City Council Meeting held on March 1, 2021

Councilor Austin made a motion to approve all items in the Consent Calendar. The motion was seconded by Councilor Paradis and passed 8-0 by roll call vote. Councilor Cameron was not present for this vote.

COMMENTS BY CITY COUNCILORS

There were no opening comments by Councilors.

COMMUNICATIONS

- A. Presentation of the Communities for Healthy Aging Transitions (CHAT) Project by SRPC Executive Director, Jennifer Cyysz & Ashley Desrochers of the Strafford County Public Health Network

Ms. Cyysz and Ms. Desrochers shared a short video which outlined the CHAT program. They indicated they would like to hold a public forum in early April, share a survey with the City, and compile the results into a personalized Community Assessment. The ladies answered a few questions from Councilors after their presentation.

- B. Report from Sarah Eckstein – Chair of the Sustainability Committee

Sarah Eckstein introduced herself to the City Council as the Chair of the Sustainability Committee. She gave Council some information into her background which includes measuring energy efficiency and also informed Council that the Committee held their first meeting in a while to get to know each other. Ms. Eckstein described her and the Committee's passion for sustainable practices and their desire to introduce topics that could be solutions to addressing local and regional sustainability issues. She further explained she wishes to explore solutions that are measurable and achievable.

MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayors Report for City Council Meeting March 15th, 2021

Before the Council this evening for a first reading is *Ordinance No. 13-21, 2021 – 2022 budget*. Tonight, the Council will once again begin its journey of seeking and imposing the proper balance of

the scales over ensuring Somersworth's future, services, and invest in self is weight against keep our city affordable for all current and future Hilltoppers.

The vetting of our municipal budget is one of the great responsibilities this body tackles annually. The process begins when the City Manager allow with his department heads and staff prepares their annual suggestions of what they believe is the right equation for our needs vs. managing the unequable property tax system we must all adhere to in the State of New Hampshire. Once again, our Manager and the professional staff, in my opinion, has reached that balance successful. The proposed budget will ensure our Hilltop City maintains an affordable rate property taxes, while not shorting the needs our city or hindering the progress we have made over the last 8 years.

The budget will now be in the hands of this body to do its due diligence at examining the proposal and seeking consensus at moving forward into another fiscal year. As we begin our work, I will again ensure that all voices are heard within the process, and that this body is afford the opportunity to do a deep dive, seeking answers to the questions asked and approving a final budget that will keep Somersworth "On the Move!" The schedule created will allow each member to process as an individual and come together as a team to pass and approve the budget before the end of May at the latest. It is my hope that Council can possibly conclude its work before the end of April.

As we begin this process, I again encourage each member to reach out to the City Manager when you have question, the Chair of the Finance committee or I when you need further clarification or questions. As in the past eight years, I will ensure that process remains open and does not stagnate. While we may not all agree at times, and that the budget generally is when we can get on each other nerves. Let us keep in mind again, that we have become a model of how municipal government should operate and function. Despite our contentions at time, despite the times we may become heated during this process, remember we are a team. Remember that at the end of the process all of us share the same goals and values, to continue the equation that we have mastered over the last eight years, keeping Somersworth "On the Move!"

I look forward to us beginning our work, and once again demonstrating how we honor our "Proud Past" while continue to build a "Bright Future" for all.

I would respectfully request that Council wave its rules this evening and give ***Ordinance No. 13-21, 2021 – 2022 budget*** a second reading then place it upon the table.

- Under nominations, appointments and Elections; **In accordance with Council Rule 17 Appointments**, the follow for a confirmation vote;
- **Kenneth Vincent, for Appointment from Alternate Member to a (regular) Member of the Zoning Board of Adjustments, with a term to expire February 2024**

This respectfully concludes my March 15th, 2021 Mayors Report

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEES

Public Works and Environment Committee – Councilor Witham stated the prime purpose of the meeting on Wednesday, March 10 was to be briefed by staff and our environmental engineering firm, Wright Pierce, regarding the EPA's Nitrogen Discharge Permit Application. They discussed history, next steps, and whether to proceed with a permit on our own or enter into a General Permit. The Committee also discussed moving forward by way of an Intermunicipal Agreement with neighboring

towns/cities, however it was decided this was not the way to go at his time. The option to do so in the future, however, is still available. The Committee voted unanimously to support moving forward with the General Permit. Wright Pierce, who is also the firm upgrading the waste water treatment plant, gave an update on the project's progress. The project is going well; however, the anticipated schedule is a little behind due to delays in receiving materials.

Recreation Committee – Councilor Michaud stated the Committee met last on March 10th. They discussed and unanimously supported a request submitted by the Somersworth Babe Ruth to replace the batting cage at Noble Pines Park and add signage on the batting cage for financial contributors. The Committee also supported the School Department's request to use the softball fields at Malley Farm. Recreation Supervisor Kristin Davenport updated the Committee on the status of different recreation programs. In place of the annual Easter Egg Hunt, the City will be holding a drive-up event with the Easter Bunny who will be handing out eggs for children to have egg hunts at their homes. She also informed the Committee of a modification to the summer camps. In order to avoid confusion of parents thinking the same program was being held, the name was changed to the Noble Pines Summer Program. The program will run from June 21 through August 13 (excluding July 5th) and will be weather dependent. 24 kids will be permitted to register and will consist of 3 age groups (or pods). The Committee also discussed potentially renaming USS Somersworth Park now that the memorial once present there has been relocated to Veterans Memorial Park. They decided to forgo a decision and remain flexible on renaming. The Committee also discussed adding regulations to signage at Veterans Memorial Park, however decided to keep the rules as is and address if issues are found.

Councilor Witham requested the Recreation Committee dig further into the potential of adding regulations to signage at Veterans Memorial Park due to issues of snowboarding and potential skateboarding when the weather warms up. Councilor Michaud replied he would bring the issue up at their next meeting.

REPORT OF SPECIAL COMMITTEES, CITY OFFICERS AND CITY MANAGER

School Board – Councilor Pepin stated the School Board last met on March 9th and discussed a plan to vaccinate all teachers beginning March 17th. At the meeting there was a robust discussion on phase-4 of reopening schools to students. They also discussed the lifting of a travel restriction on sports teams. High School sports will once again be permitted to travel beyond 30 miles.

E911 Committee – Councilor Pepin said the Committee last met on March 11 and renamed the cul-de-sac at the end of Gator Rock Road, "Seamore Drive". They also discussed whether 44 Union Street needed to be renamed, however the Committee decided it is clearly marked and does not need to be. The Committee also reviewed 100 Tri City Road and potentially renumbering additional buildings. The Committee decided to add letter designations to identify the new buildings (7a, 7b, etc.). The Committee took no action after a discussion on potential renumbering changes on Route 108.

Fire Station Building Committee – Councilor Pepin said the Committee last met on March 3rd and 11th. At both meetings, Value Engineering deduction options were discussed. The Committee discussed potential deductions to save costs on the new Fire Station such as using an alternative brick, replacing some sections of the interior with sheetrock where CMU block has been planned, and removing the training tower. The Committee also discussed the use of contingency funds which came to a vote and failed for a lack of a second. The Committee unanimously supported the 8

proposed deductions submitted on March 9th in addition to adding the training tower as a bid alternate.

Cultural Commission – Councilor Gerding said the Commission last met on March 3rd and decided on cultural banners to represent 6 different cultural groups (Indigenous, Indonesian, French Canadian, Irish, English, and Greek). The Commission also discussed their mission statement.

Sustainability Committee – Councilor Paradis said the last meeting on February 18th was mostly a goal setting session, but the Committee did discuss potential programs such as the rain barrel program, hazardous waste collection dates, Dover’s Pesticide Ordinance, and net metering. No action was taken on these items.

Veteran Homeless Task Force – Councilor Dumont said the Task Force is looking to have their first meeting in mid-April and plan on having the director of Liberty House (Veterans shelter) in Manchester present via Zoom to gain his perspective.

City Manager’s Report

Office of the City Manager

TO: Mayor Dana S. Hilliard and City Council Members
FROM: Robert M. Belmore, City Manager
DATE: Friday, March 12, 2021
SUBJECT: City Manager’s Report for Monday, March 15, 2021

Communications (under Section 7 of Agenda)

- A. Presentation of the Communities for Healthy Aging Transitions (CHAT) Project by SRPC**
Executive Director, Jennifer Cyzsz & Ashley Desrochers of the Strafford County Public Health Network. Attached are materials that Jennifer and Ashley will be presenting.
- B. Report from Sarah Eckstein – Chair of the Sustainability Committee**

New Business (under Section 15 of Agenda)

Ordinances

- A. Ordinance No. 13-21 - FY 2021-2022 Budget:** The City Manager’s Proposed FY 2021/2022 Budget and School Department Budget has been submitted in accordance with the City Charter. Mayor Hilliard has scheduled the Public Hearing for Monday, April 5th. The City Manager’s Budget Presentation starts at 6:00 p.m. The Budget Public Hearing starts at 7:00 p.m.

Other

- A. Vote to Authorize the City Manager to Sign the Lower Great Falls Hydroelectric Project Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) Settlement Agreement for Prescription for Fishways for American Shad and River Herring by and between Green Mountain Power, the City of Somersworth, and the US**

Department of the Interior Fish and Wildlife Service. The Public Works & Environment Committee voted on February 16th to support a vote to approve. Attached is a copy of the Agreement that our City Attorney has reviewed and provided a couple of minor amendments that were accepted.

- B. Vote to Authorize the City Manager to Provide a Notice of Intent (NOI) to the EPA for the City of Somersworth to Seek Coverage under the Great Bay Total Nitrogen General Permit (Permit No. NHG58A000) in the Great Bay Watershed.** The Public Works & Environment Committee voted to endorse this action at their March 10th meeting. The attached summary regarding City options provided by Wright Pierce Engineers was discussed with Tim Vadney and City Staff at this meeting.

City Manager's Items (under section 11 of Agenda)

A. Informational Items

1. Reminder - Upcoming City Council Special Meetings

➤ ***Saturday, March 27***

- 8:30 am: City Council Goal Setting Workshop

➤ ***Saturday, April 3***

- 8:30 am: City Council Budget Workshop – Non-Profits & City Departments

➤ ***Monday, April 5***

- 6:00 pm: FY 21/22 Budget Presentation
- 7:00 pm: FY 21/22 Budget Public Hearing/City Council Meeting

➤ ***Monday, April 12***

- 7:00 pm: City Council Special Budget Meeting

Attachments

- 1. City Attorney Certifications One (1)**
- 2. Department Head Reports**

NOMINATIONS, APPOINTMENTS AND ELECTIONS

Nominations requiring a Council Confirmation Vote:

- A. Kenneth Vincent, for Appointment from Alternate Member to a (regular) Member of the Zoning Board of Adjustments, with a term to expire February 2024

Councilor Dumont made a motion to appoint Kenneth Vincent from Alternate Member to (regular) Member of the Zoning Board of Adjustments with a term to expire February 2024. The motion was seconded by Councilor Austin and passed 8-0 by roll call vote. Councilor Vincent recused himself.

NEW BUSINESS

ORDINANCES

- A. **Ordinance No. 13-21 – FY 2021-2022 Budget**

Councilor Witham made a motion to suspend Council rules to allow a first reading of Ordinance 13-21 to be read by title only. The motion was seconded by Councilor Vincent

and passed 9-0 by roll call vote. City Clerk Slaven performed a first reading of Ordinance 13-21 by title only.

Councilor Witham made a motion to suspend Council rules to allow for a second reading of Ordinance 13-21. The motion was seconded by Councilor Vincent and passed 9-0 by roll call vote. City Clerk Slaven performed a second reading of Ordinance 13-21 by title only.

Councilor Witham made a motion to lay Ordinance 13-21 upon the table. The motion was seconded by Councilor Vincent and passed 9-0 by roll call vote.

OTHER

- A. Vote to Authorize the City Manager to Sign the Lower Great Falls Hydroelectric Project Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) Settlement Agreement for Prescription for Fishways for American Shad and River Herring by and between Green Mountain Power, the City of Somersworth, and the US Department of the Interior Fish and Wildlife Service

The vote to authorize the City Manager to sign the Lower Great Falls Hydroelectric Project Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) Settlement Agreement passed 9-0 by roll call vote.

- B. Vote to Authorize the City Manager to Provide a Notice of Intent (NOI) to the EPA for the City of Somersworth to Seek Coverage under the Great Bay Total Nitrogen General Permit (Permit No. NHG58A000) in the Great Bay watershed

The vote to authorize the City Manager to Provide a Notice of Intent (NOI) to the EPA for the City of Somersworth to Seek Coverage under the Great Bay Total Nitrogen General Permit passed 9-0 by roll call vote.

- C. A Vote to Authorize Our Fire Department to Participate the State Covid-19 Vaccination Program and to Authorize the City Manager to Sign Any Required Agreements to Allow for that Participation and to Seek Reimbursement for the Cost for Any Participating Employees/Firefighters in that Program

Councilor Witham explained the necessary contract between the City and the State of New Hampshire that provides that salary and benefits for employees/Firefighters administering vaccine shots is reimbursable up to 100%. He acknowledged that many fire departments in the State have signed this agreement and he is pleased to see the Somersworth Fire Department is willing to participate.

Councilor Paradis thanked the residents who emailed their comments on this topic; and also thanked the City Manager and Fire Chief for acting on this matter quickly. She is glad to see this will be reimbursed and happy to see the vaccination process begin in the City. Councilor Dumont stated he received the same correspondence as Councilor Paradis which led him to question whether the Somersworth Fire Department had the manpower to engage in vaccinations while maintaining the same level of fire service. He mentioned that the overtime budget for the fire department increased significantly since last year. Dumont

stated it is a nice idea to do what is being proposed, but worries that the Community will suffer if the Fire Department is tied up doing vaccines. Councilor Witham rebutted that he has full faith in the Fire Chief and does not think the request would have been made to administer vaccinations if his department could not handle it. Witham further expounded saying not all of our firefighters will be administering vaccines at the same time. Councilor Pepin noted that the Fire Department has changed a lot since he was a fire fighter and stated the reason for the overtime budget increase was due to the increase in staffing from 3 to 4 full time firefighters on at a time, which makes the department more efficient.

Councilor Paradis asked for confirmation that the vote is authorizing the City Manager and Fire Chief to move forward with the vaccination clinic if they feel we have the capacity; and also, that the salary and benefits of the fire fighters working it will get reimbursed. Manager Belmore replied in the affirmative.

Councilor Cameron asked how many firefighters would be administering vaccines and how many fire fighters would remain at the station.

Councilor Cameron made a motion to suspend Council rules to allow Fire Chief Kramlinger to respond to questions from Council. The motion was seconded by Councilor Witham and passed 9-0 by roll call vote.

Chief Kramlinger, replying to Councilor Cameron's question, stated the on-duty staff will not be affected by the vaccination clinic, there will always be four people on duty plus the mutual aid partners responding as rapidly as our staff.

Councilor Vincent inquired how many call firefighters would be available. Chief Kramlinger replied there are no call firefighters available for interior firefighting, however, they are available for the airvan.

Councilor Cameron asked who would be trained to do the vaccination. Chief Kramlinger replied that all those who wanted to be trained to administer the vaccine would be and only the off-duty firefighters would be authorized to schedule themselves in the clinic.

Councilor Gerding asked if the training has occurred yet. Chief replied that some have been and some are in the process. Kramlinger added that the training is brief and straightforward.

Councilor Vincent asked if the remaining 12 firefighters, who are not one of the four full time fire fighters on duty, sign up for the clinic? Kramlinger replied in the affirmative.

Councilor Dumont asked for clarity on how overtime and retirement compensation factor in. Manager Belmore replied that the City would pay the salary and all roll up costs associated, then seek reimbursement.

Councilor Gerding asked if there was a cost associated with needing to utilize mutual aid in the case that all 12 off duty firefighters were participating in the clinic. Manager Belmore replied that there is no cost associated with mutual aid. Belmore further explained he has had conversations with Chief Kramlinger about not having all off-duty fire fighters participating in the clinic all at once. Gerding stated that after hearing the details tonight, the authorization seems like a no brainer.

Councilor Vincent asked how the firefighters were to be reimbursed. Manager Belmore again explained that the City would pay the salaries and then submit documentation to the State for reimbursement. Vincent asked why Council needed to provide authorization on this. Manager Belmore further explained that Council is being asked to authorize the City Manager to sign a legal document to participate in this program.

Councilor Witham stated he is certainly in support of this. He said we are in the middle of a pandemic which has affected many of us individually and many of those close to us. Helping our people out of the pandemic is the right thing to do and the request before us is a small, calculated, and well managed effort to do just that. He also noted that our City is being protected by today's fire service better than it ever has.

Councilor Dumont stated he doesn't think this is the solution to the Covid-19 vaccination program. He stated he is favorable to support this program with the understanding there are some issues that could arise.

The vote to authorize Our Fire Department to participate in administering vaccine shots through this State Program and to vote to authorize the City Manager to sign any required agreements to participate and to seek reimbursements passed 9-0 by roll call vote.

COMMENTS BY VISITORS

There were no closing comments by visitors.

CLOSING COMMENTS BY COUNCIL MEMBERS

Councilor Pepin recognized former Deputy Police Chief Lionel Couture who recently passed away. He said many towns have a divide between Police and Fire Departments, however Lionel was a big reason the Somersworth Departments worked so well together. He sends his sympathies to the family.

Councilor Austin stated he is pleased to see the exposure numbers dropping and that it is a testament to those who are following the necessary precautions.

Councilor Dumont thanked Manager Belmore for his opening comments in the budget. He also spoke regarding funding discrepancies with State programs, more specifically the New Hampshire Keno program that was supposed to support kindergarten.

Councilor Michaud said he noticed there was a lot of trash and debris after a recent wind storm and wanted to thank the residents of Somersworth who he saw helping to clean up.

Councilor Gerding stated he was excited to get started on discussing the budget and is looking forward to the vaccination clinic, hoping it brings us back to some form of normalcy. He urged everyone to stay safe, use caution, and do not become complacent.

Councilor Paradis thanked the Somersworth Fire, Police, and Ambulance Departments for a great job in rescuing Bill Rogers who recently fell through the ice on Salmon Falls River. She urged people to stay off the ice as it is getting too warm to be safe. Ms. Paradis also expressed her enthusiasm as the City begins the vaccination process.

Councilor Witham thanked the City Manager and the Recreation Committee for their parts in allowing the upgrade to the Somersworth Babe Ruth League batting cage at Noble Pine Park. He also said 'hats off' to those involved in the State of the City address as it was very well done.

Councilor Cameron thanked the Mayor for allowing her to enter the meeting late. She also said she appreciates the start of the vaccination clinic as it is an important step in getting things back to normal.

Councilor Vincent spoke to a sad state of affairs at the State level in regards to funding. He expressed his discontent that the local level municipalities end up getting squeezed out for decisions the State makes.

ADJOURNMENT

Councilor Witham made a motion to adjourn the City Council meeting. The motion was seconded by Councilor Michaud and passed 9-0 by roll call vote. The meeting adjourned at 8:52 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jonathan Slaven, City Clerk

Dana S. Hilliard, Mayor



City of Somersworth – Ordinance

Ordinance No: **13-21**

FISCAL YEAR 2021-2022 BUDGET

March 15, 2021

THE CITY OF SOMERSWORTH ORDAINS THAT BUDGETS FOR THE CITY OF SOMERSWORTH FOR THE 2021-2022 FISCAL YEAR SHALL BE:

DEPARTMENT

ADOPTED BUDGET

GENERAL FUND

Elected Leadership	\$149,236
City Management	518,197
Finance and Administration	1,540,478
Development Services	908,566
Police	4,525,987
Fire	2,300,734
Public Works	3,241,916
Other Expenses	1,137,086
Capital Outlay	78,475
Intergovt Assessments - County	2,742,364
School Department	27,680,522

TOTAL GENERAL FUND

44,823,561

ENTERPRISE FUNDS

Wastewater Department	2,544,607
Water Department	2,402,519
Solid Waste	547,873

TOTAL ENTERPRISE FUNDS

5,494,999

SPECIAL REVENUE FUND

Cable Fund	105,896
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TOTAL FY 2021-2022 APPROPRIATION**\$50,424,456**

This Ordinance will take effect upon passage.

Authorization	
<i>Sponsored by:</i> Mayor Dana S. Hilliard by request	<i>Approved:</i> City Attorney

City of Somersworth – Ordinance 13-21

History			
First Read Date:	03/15/2021	Tabled:	03/15/2021
Public Hearing:		Removed from Table:	
Second Read:	03/15/2021		

Discussion***03/15/2021***

Councilor Witham made a motion to suspend Council rules to allow Ordinance 13-21 to be read by title only. The motion was seconded by Councilor Vincent and passed 9-0 by roll call vote. City Clerk Slaven performed a first reading of Ordinance 13-21 by title only.

Councilor Witham made a motion to suspend Council rules to allow for a second reading of Ordinance 13-21. The motion was seconded by Councilor Vincent and passed 9-0 by roll call vote. City Clerk Slaven performed a second reading of Ordinance 13-21 by title only.

Councilor Witham made a motion to lay Ordinance 13-21 upon the table. The motion was seconded by Councilor Vincent and passed 9-0 by roll call vote.

Voting Record		YES	NO
Ward 1 Councilor	Pepin		

Ward 2 Councilor	Vincent		
Ward 3 Councilor	Dumont		
Ward 4 Councilor	Austin		
Ward 5 Councilor	Michaud		
At Large Councilor	Witham		
At Large Councilor	Gerding		
At Large Councilor	Cameron		
At Large Councilor	Paradis		
TOTAL VOTES:			
On / /	Ordinance 13-21	PASSED	FAILED