



Minutes of City Council Meeting Monday, January 10, 2022

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: Pepin, Vincent, Dumont, Austin, Michaud, Witham, Gerding, Cameron and Messier.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Councilor Messier led the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC HEARING

- A. **Ordinance No. 5-22** – Supplemental Appropriation for Emergency Repairs to a Culvert on Blackwater Road

No comments were heard.

COMMENTS BY VISITORS

There were no opening comments by visitors.

CONSENT CALENDAR

- A. Approve Minutes of the City Council meeting held on December 13, 2021

Councilor Austin made a motion to approve all items in the Consent Calendar. The motion was seconded by Councilor Cameron and passed 9-0.

COMMENTS BY CITY COUNCILORS

Councilor Vincent welcomed Councilor Messier back to the City Council and wished him the best of luck.

Councilor Witham echoed the welcoming of Councilor Messier and added it is good to have someone back on Council who deeply cares about Somersworth.

COMMUNICATIONS

There were none.

PRESENTATIONS OF PETITIONS AND DISPOSAL THEREOF BY REFERENCE OR OTHERWISE

There were none.

MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayors Report for City Council Meeting January 10th, 2022

The largest accolade that can be bestowed to a citizen is what is referred to as the "Key to the City". Only one person in the Somersworth history has been given this honor and tonight we will add

Captain Russell Timmons to the list of honorees. For forty years, Captain Timmons did not hesitate to wake up in the morning, give his body, mind, and soul to the City he loves, and be willing to lay down his life for the safety of his Community. Captain Timmons is a model for other officers to show what towing the thin blue line really means. On behalf of the Mayor's office, City Council and all Hilltoppers I present you with the key to the City for forty years of your honored work with the Somersworth Police Department.

Captain Timmons stated he couldn't think of a gift finer or that he would be more honored to accept than the key to our fine Community. The forty years of service he has given to the Somersworth Police Department has been his pleasure and he looks forward to whatever the future brings. He added that his time in the Department was the best of times and he greatly appreciates his key and everything he has been able to be a part of making the Police Department better.

•This evening marks the beginning of the 2022 – 2023 City Council session. Over the course of the next two years our team Mayor, Council, City Manager, School Board, City Professionals will continue our journey to keep Somersworth “On the Move!” We will hold true to honoring and celebrating our “Proud Past” will planning for a “Bright Future” for every citizen who carries their head high as Hilltoppers. We should be equally proud of all accomplishments we were able to achieve over the last eight years, and how we continue to shine of how a team approach to governing reflects the spirit of our democracy. Of all the disfunction and negative that plagues our modern-day democratic society, it is reassuring to know that within our 10 square mile community, civility, respect and the pillars of a team approach to govern continue to be the foundation of who we are as a municipal government.

Over the course of the next two years, I look forward to continuing to help layout and keep us moving forward to reach our next phases of excellence. I am equally excited to begin working with what I believe is one of the strongest representations of a true team in the history of this community. I pledge to you and to all the citizens, that I will continue to champion all of Somersworth's causes and dedicated myself to helping resolve conflicts when they arise and keep us journey forward, step by step as one united team. Tonight, we continue, continue as one, ensuring that the home we love, the city we all bleed blue for will travel forth, “On the Move!”.

January 15th will mark the 93rd birthday of the late civil rights leader and American hero, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Each year, our city, state, and nation inches forward to fulfill our destiny as scribed within our Declaration of Independence and United States Constitution. To become a society, a people and nation built upon the principals of equality for all.

America was founded upon a dream, a concept, that for the first time in human history, people from all nations, all religions and ethnicity would forge themselves into one. That we would continue to move, move through the battles of distrust, hatred, and discrimination, to ignite the flame of hope throughout humanity where “All People Are Created Equal”. America, Somersworth, tonight we pause, pause to acknowledge our failures of the past, how much work we still need to achieve in our future, but celebrate for a moment the achievements we have reached.

While the journey of our society has barley reached its adolescent phase, in the sort time of history that we have become a nation, we have through our own growing pains continued our advancement of civil rights for all. Within our own city, we have continued to honor our commitment to our immigrate history by welcoming each new ethnic group that desires Somersworth as their home. We made history tearing down the walls of homophobia by electing New Hampshire's first gay Mayor and continuing to have large contingency of members of the LGBTQ community serving within office.

This MLK day, let us pause. Pause to remember our history, owing the failures and mistakes, and continuing to commitment ourselves to the forward motion of building a nation upon the dream of equality for all.

This respectfully concludes my January 10th, 2022 Mayors Report

REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEES

There were no reports of Standing Committees

REPORT OF SPECIAL COMMITTEES, CITY OFFICERS AND CITY MANAGER

Traffic Safety Committee – Councilor Vincent said the Committee discussed the installation of additional lighting on Willand Drive and Commercial Drive. He said that a recommendation to install two additional lights on existing Willand Drive utility poles is in front of Council tonight.

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, January 7, 2022
SUBJECT: City Manager's Report for Monday, January 10, 2022 City Council Meeting

Unfinished Business (under Section 14 of Agenda)

Ordinances

- A. Ordinance No. 5-22: Supplemental Appropriation for Emergency Repairs to a Culvert on Blackwater Road.** Again, the Finance Committee met on November 17th and voted to support this Supplemental Appropriation and authorized \$50,000 in spending to complete the project. The actual SUR cost came in at \$46,555.00 for work to date an estimate for final paving at \$525 for a total of \$47,080.00

Manager Belmore said the fix to the culvert has done wonders to alleviate the flooding issues. He recommends leaving the full \$50k to account for any contingencies.

New Business (under Section 15 of Agenda)

Other

- A. Vote to Accept the Recommendation from the Traffic Safety Committee, Whether in Part or Entirely, to Install Public Lighting on Willand Drive and Commercial Drive.** The Traffic Safety Committee met on December 15th. Attached is a Memorandum from Captain Timmons with the Committee's recommendations, along with a breakdown of estimated costs from Eversource and a Memorandum from Public Works Director Mike Bobinsky explaining the cost breakdown.

City Manager Belmore stated that adding two lights to existing poles on Willand Drive will assist greatly with pedestrian traffic to and from the Willand Drive Warming Center.

City Manager Belmore explained that a sewer line at 19 Buffumsville Road has collapsed and requested to add item “B” under OTHER, “Vote to Waive the Excavation Work Schedule Requirement (City Ordinance Ch. 12) to Allow an Emergency Sewer Service Repair at 19 Buffumsville Road”. Mayor Hilliard added the item without objection.

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

Informational Items

1. **Police Chief David Kretschmar - Retirement.** Chief David Kretschmar has submitted his notice of retirement effective March 20th. David will be sorely missed. It has been my pleasure to work with him over the years, especially more closely in his role as Chief of Police. He has done tremendous work in moving the Department forward in service to our Community.

City Manager Belmore also informed Council that, per a resident report, Atlantic Broadband has now been renamed to Breezeline. It expected there will be no changes to service with the change.

Attachments

1. **2022-2024 Council Appointments from Mayor Hilliard.**

NOMINATIONS, APPOINTMENTS AND ELECTIONS

Nominations being introduced for a Council Confirmation Vote:

- A. Kevin Dodd for Appointment as a Member of the Conservation Commission with a Term to Expire January, 2025

The nomination will remain open until next scheduled meeting.

- B. Ken Hilton for Appointment as an Alternate Member of the Zoning Board of Adjustment with a Term to Expire January, 2025

Councilor Austin made a motion to waive Council Rules to Allow for the Appointment of Ken Hilton.

Councilor Vincent stated that the ZBA is running short on members which causing postponements and other issues.

The motion to waive Council Rules was seconded by Councilor Vincent and passed 9-0.

The Vote to appoint Ken Hilton as an Alternate Member of the Zoning Board of Adjustment passed 9-0.

Nominations Requiring Council Confirmation Vote:

- A. Mayoral Nomination of Deputy (Acting) Mayor
 - David A. Witham
- B. Mayoral Nomination of City Council’s Representatives to Planning Board
 - David A. Witham, Representative
 - Kenneth Vincent, Alternate Representative
- C. Mayoral Nomination of City Council’s Representatives to Historic District Commission
 - Matt Gerding

Councilor Witham made a motion to waive Council Rules to allow for the Appointment of the slate of nominees before Council. The motion was seconded by Councilor Dumont and passed 9-0.

The Vote to approve the slate of nominees passed 9-0.

Mayor Hilliard also appointed Thomas McCallion as a member of the Somersworth Housing Authority Board of Commissioners with a term to expire in May of 2024. This Appointment is in accordance with Council Rule 15.

LAY ON THE TABLE

There were no items on the table.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

ORDINANCES

- B. **Ordinance No. 5-22** – Supplemental Appropriation for Emergency Repairs to a Culvert on Blackwater Road

Councilor Witham inquired about the installation of a previously discussed screening mechanism. City Manager Belmore replied that the mechanism has already been installed.

Councilor Gerding commented he was impressed with the timeliness of the repair.

Councilor Austin made a motion to adopt Ordinance No. 5-22 as submitted. The motion was seconded by Councilor Pepin and passed 9-0 by roll call vote.

NEW BUSINESS

OTHER

- A. Vote to Accept the Recommendation from the Traffic Safety Committee, Entirely or in Part, to Install Additional Street Lighting on Willand Drive and Commercial Drive

Councilor Witham stated his desire to follow the Traffic Safety Committee's recommendation to approve the installation of two additional lights on existing poles on Willand Drive. City Manager clarified that the Committee's recommendation included lighting on Commercial Drive. Councilor Witham stated that the additional lights on Commercial Drive is cost-prohibitive and it not his intention to proceed with installing lights on that street. Councilor Vincent stated that the plan should not include Commercial Drive since we would have to add a pole which would potentially delay the project due to frost.

The Vote to Accept the Recommendation passed 9-0.

- B. Vote to Waive the Excavation Work Schedule Requirement (City Ordinance Ch.12) to Allow an Emergency Sewer Service Repair at 19 Buffumsville Road

Councilor Witham stated he will vote in favor of this item, but questioned whether Council needed to vote on items deemed an emergency.

The Vote to Waive the Excavation Work Schedule passed 9-0.

COMMENTS BY VISITORS

Anthony Jones, 19 Buffumsville Road, thanked Mayor Hilliard and Council for attending to his issue and expressed his interest in sitting on the Zoning Board.

CLOSING COMMENTS BY COUNCIL MEMBERS

Councilor Pepin said congratulations to Captain Russell Timmons for his 40 years of service and added it was great getting to know him during his time on the Fire Service. Councilor Pepin reminded people again to install blue lightbulbs outside of their homes to show support for Police.

Councilor Vincent said well done to Captain Timmons and said he is a stand-up guy and has done a lot for life safety in Somersworth. Reacting to the news of Chief Kretschmar retiring, Vincent said he has brought the PD to another level. Both men have strived to help people in their Community and are stand-up guys.

Councilor Dumont stated Captain Timmons is very easy to like and he has done a great service to the Community. Dumont mentioned that 9 players on the Somersworth High School Champion Football Team made All-State selection. He added that 8 made the second team and 5 received honorable mention. He said they are a great group of guys and have a great coach. Dumont stated it appears Walmart has been utilizing more parking spaces with containers than their approval allows and it is unsightly and taking spots away. He also stated there seems to be an increasing number of residents violating the dumpster regulations. Dumont ended by mentioning he has a blue light on the front of his home and suggesting painting a blue line on the High Street to show support to Police.

Councilor Austin said that every interaction he has had with Captain Timmons has been very favorable and positive. He said it is tough to commit 40 years to any profession and even harder to do so in law enforcement. He stated Chief Kretschmar has taken the Somersworth Police Department to another level and is happy to see the way it is operating today. Austin said he appreciates Chief's service to the City and wishes him well in retirement. He also said he was excited for the next 2-year Council Term and encouraged everyone to remain safe and follow guidance to keep themselves and others safe. We are all tired, but we are not out of the woods yet.

Councilor Michaud said thank you to Captain Timmons and wished him luck in his retirement. He wished the same to Chief Kretschmar, adding that there are two sets of shoes that will be hard to fill. Michaud welcomed back Councilor Messier and noted that the inauguration ceremony planned by Sean Peschel and Maureen Jackman was great. Michaud also sent condolences to the family of retired Fire Chief, Paul Valee for the loss of his wife.

Councilor Witham said it is an understatement to say it will be hard to fill Chief Kretschmar and Captain Timmons' shoes. Both are great men of character who have provided 79 collective years of service to the City. They have both done a lot for Community Policing in Somersworth and he sees instances of this every day. Witham also mentioned the dumpster issue throughout the City and added that he knows Walmart is doing renovations and perhaps that is why they have extra storage containers in the parking lot. Witham said he hopes some funds can be authorized soon to spruce up the plaza façade and parking lot.

Councilor Gerding said a big congratulations to both Chief Kretschmar and Captain Timmons. He has seen them do nothing but push the Somersworth PD forward. He also said thank you to those who orchestrated the wonderful inauguration ceremony. Gerding also hopes everyone stays warm during the cold snap coming.

Councilor Cameron thanked Chief Kretschmar and Captain Timmons for their years of service. They have always been open when questions are brought to them. She welcomed Denis Messier back to the Council and introduced her new dog, Fenway.

Councilor Messier said he agreed with all of the comments regarding the Chief and Captain. He also stated his agreement to the comments regarding the Plaza façade. Messier said he has been vaccinated and boosted and does not understand why he is being asked to wear a mask. He thanked those who welcomed him back.

ADJOURNMENT

Councilor Gerding made a motion to adjourn the City Council meeting. The motion was seconded by Councilor Vincent and passed 9-0. The meeting adjourned at 8:52 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jonathan Slaven, City Clerk



City of Somersworth – Ordinance

Ordinance No: **5-22**

SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATION FOR EMERGENCY REPAIRS TO A CULVERT ON BLACKWATER ROAD

December 13, 2021

THE CITY OF SOMERSWORTH ORDAINS THAT pursuant to Section 7.7(A) of the City Charter:

The annual budget for the City of Somersworth for Fiscal Year 21-22 is amended as follows:

Appropriate \$50,000 (Fifty Thousand dollars), with \$23,538 (Twenty-Three Thousand Five Hundred Thirty-Eight dollars) coming from the General Fund unassigned fund balance and \$26,462 (Twenty-Six Thousand Four Hundred Sixty-Two dollars) coming from funding provided by the Federal American Rescue Plan Act, to the Capital Outlay section of the General Fund Budget as follows;

Original Budget	Amendment	Revised Budget
\$ 78,475	\$ 50,000	\$ 128,475

Approved as to Funding:

Scott A. Smith
Director of Finance and Administration

Recorded by:

Jonathan Slaven
City Clerk

Background:

This Ordinance appropriates funding for emergency repairs to a collapsed culvert on Blackwater Road located near the Blackwater Road Pump Station. The \$26,462 (Twenty-Six Thousand Four Hundred Sixty-Two dollars) is the balance of funds available from the first payment received through the American Rescue Plan Act, with \$23,538 (Twenty-Three Thousand Five Hundred Thirty-Eight dollars) coming from the General Fund unassigned fund balance for a total project cost of \$50,000 (Fifty Thousand dollars).

This Ordinance requires a public hearing and requires a 2/3 majority vote of the City Council after the public hearing subject to Section 7.4.1 and Section 7.7 (A) of the City Charter.

This Ordinance shall take effect upon its passage.

Authorization

Sponsored by:

David A. Witham
Donald Austin
Martin Pepin
Matt Gerding
Richard Michaud

Approved:

City Attorney

City of Somersworth – Ordinance 5-22

History

First Read Date:	12/13/2021	Tabled:	
Public Hearing:	01/10/2022	Removed From Table:	
Second Read:	01/10/2022		

Discussion

12/13/2021

Ordinance No. 5-22 will remain in first read. Public Hearing scheduled at the call of the Chair.

01/10/2022

Councilor Witham inquired about the installation of a previously discussed screening mechanism. City Manager Belmore replied that the mechanism has already been installed.

Councilor Gerding commented he was impressed with the timeliness of the repair.

Councilor Austin made a motion to adopt Ordinance No. 5-22 as submitted. The motion was seconded by Councilor Pepin and passed 9-0 by roll call vote.

Voting Record		YES	NO
Ward 1 Councilor	Pepin	X	
Ward 2 Councilor	Vincent	X	
Ward 3 Councilor	Dumont	X	
Ward 4 Councilor	Austin	X	
Ward 5 Councilor	Michaud	X	
At Large Councilor	Witham	X	
At Large Councilor	Gerding	X	
At Large Councilor	Cameron	X	
At Large Councilor	Messier	X	
TOTAL VOTES:		9	0
On 01/10/2022	Ordinance 5-22	PASSED	FAILED