

MINUTES OF CITY COUNCIL MEETING

Somersworth, NH  
November 6, 2017  
7:00 P.M.

The meeting was called to order by His Honor, the Mayor, Dana Hilliard, and upon roll call the following Council members were present: Pepin, Soldati, Dumont, McCallion, Messier, Witham, Sprague, Cameron, and Paradis.

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING.

MINUTES of the PUBLIC HEARING Regarding a Question to be Placed on the November 7th Official Ballot: Shall we allow the Operation of Keno Games within the City of Somersworth?

***Councilor Paradis, seconded by Councilor Cameron, made a motion to accept the minutes. The motion passed unanimously.***

MINUTES of the CITY COUNCIL MEETING held on October 16, 2017

***Councilor Pepin, seconded by Councilor Cameron, made a motion to accept the minutes. The motion passed unanimously.***

COMMENTS BY VISITORS

Debora Evans, Somersworth Housing Authority. She reported that the Somersworth Housing Authority has paid their PILOT payment of \$33,052. Housing Authority PILOT is just for the public development they have. The managed properties are privately owned and pay their taxes.

In 2015, the City of Somersworth was awarded a CDBG grant of \$500,000 on behalf of the Housing Authority, to implement energy improvements at Bartlett Ave and Verona St. The project started in early 2016 completed in September 2017. The new heat distribution design resulted in approximately 27% savings in energy cost and 72% savings in energy usage. On behalf of the Somersworth Board of Commissioners and the Albert J. Nadeau families, she thanked each Somersworth City Councilor, Mayor Hilliard, City Manager Bob Belmore, Finance Director Scott Smith, and City Staff for their support of this successful project.

COMMENTS BY COUNCILORS

NONE

COMMUNICATIONS

Letter of Resignation from Beth Wheland

Clerk read the letter. Mayor thanked Beth Wheland for her service to the Trustees of the Cemetery Committee. The letter will be placed on file.

PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS AND DISPOSAL THEREOF BY REFERENCE OR OTHERWISE  
NONE

MAYOR'S REPORT

**Mayors Report for City Council Meeting Monday November 6th, 2017**

- The Somersworth 21<sup>st</sup> century team approach to governing continues to be a model for how any issue when approached with open communication, civility and respect can be resolved. Through the diligence of the joint meetings of the City Council and School Board and the work of the Joint Commission and Finance Committee a agree solution has been reached before Council this evening for approval. The cooperative plan would require Council not agree to override the tax cap holding the school district accountable for the \$627,000 short fall. The school district would then begin a deep dive review of their current budget searching for all existing revenue which could close the gap on the deficit. If by April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2018 budgetary shortfalls still exist, the School Board would seek a supplemental appropriation to bring all accounts from the red to the black.

The spirit of this agreement is a reflection upon how functional the system of collaboration works. Throughout this process, several meetings between Chairman Don Austin and I occurred. In each meeting Chairman Austin's concern and commitment to continuing to maintain and build upon the team approach which has been created was re-committed. Chairman Austin and I also agreed to continue the conversations at the Joint Commission as to the best agreeable approach to ensure that a shortfall will not occur again.

I wish to thank Chairman Austin for both his commitment to the Hilltopper method of governing and his openness and cooperation, working with the Mayor's office and members of Council in searching for and rendering a workable solution to the shortfall. I would also like to thank members of the Rollinsford School board who comprise the SAU board, for their level of understanding and support in agreeing to withdraw capital from the SAU fund to help offset the shortfall.

While there are still issues which need to be address, including the manner in which the budget is created and presented as raised by Councilor McCallion for the last four years, I am confident that through the work of the Joint Commission, a successful approached resolving all current existing issues will come to fruition.

- Congratulation to SYC, for hosting another success "Lights on for Learning" celebration. The annual event highlights the importance of supporting extend learning opportunities and how they are the key to keeping our young Hilltoppers safe while engaging them in active learning. Despite Somersworth SYC programing scoring the Highest rank in the state on their grant reauthorization and

the data which proves the value of 21<sup>st</sup> century programing, both President Trump and the US Secretary of Education have eliminated future funding for the programs to continue.

I urge all Hilltoppers, to voice your opinions to the current administration, why continuing to fund SYC and 21<sup>st</sup> century program is vital to keeping young Hilltoppers safe and continuing to broaden learning opportunities for all young Hilltoppers.

- Like most of the citizens in our nation, I continue to become distraught by the latest incident involving an Active Shooter. The recent triages in both Las Vegas and Texas remind us of the violence and complete disregard towards human life our nation continues to grapple with. Just a few weeks ago, I was part of panel and forum hosted by the our school which was comprised of members of the command staff of the Somersworth Police Department, Fire Chief and first responders to discuss the measures taking to ensuring our students safety.

Despite these measures, what we must acknowledge is how in 2017 the fortification of our American society is becoming normal. There is nothing normal about turning a school into a small military compound. There is nothing normal about citizens going out to a mall, movie theater, night club, concert and church and having their life end tragically. The extreme level of violence which has become an identifying factor of the American experience is highlighted by the news cycle from event to event. In between each cowardly act, those of us not effected return to our daily routines hoping that our families, friends and loves one will never fall victim.

In the four years I have occupied the Mayor's office, too often has dialog within the Mayors report been dedicated to speaking of senseless acts of attacks harbored upon innocent citizens. Too many dreams have been extinguished, too many families have become broken, too many hopes and lives loss. In the end a society will be judged by history on how they protected, valued and treated each other. It is my hope that soon, we will awaken from the nightmare we have created and again become the beacon of hope that we once were.

- Tomorrow Hilltoppers through our great city will execute the most sacred right in our democratic republic, the right of suffrage. In New Hampshire tradition, a vast amount of decision making is harbored at the local level, including how the majority of your tax dollars will be raised and appropriated. Let your voice be heard tomorrow and participate by casting your vote. Help you're elected officials keep Somersworth "On the Move!" by voting in tomorrow's municipal election.

Polling places are open from 8am – 7pm. This is our city, our future, let your voice be heard, vote.

- And finally this evening just a quick reminder of how the Hilltopper spirit is applied each day. Last week, the mailman whose route includes Somersworth Middle School, return to the school to inform and employee that the USP package which was dropped off at her home was left out in the rain. While this may be a seen a minor act, to me in continues to re-enforce all that is great about our city. Whether it be holding a door open for someone, buying the stranger behind you their cup of coffee, or ensuring a fellow Hilltoppers package would remain dry, we have truly created a community of caring that all of us can be proud of.

**This respectfully concludes my November 6<sup>th</sup>, 2017 Mayors Report**

#### REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

Finance Committee – Councilor Witham stated that the committee met. On the Agenda was the School District Revenue Shortfall. There was discussion around the strategies that were agreed to by the Joint Commission; use revenues from the Persons with Disabilities Fund and revenues from the pre-k program which will reduce the deficit by \$516,000 reduction on the bottom line of the school. The committee endorsed this decision, 4-0.

There was discussion about 20 Green St. There was some speculation that there are fuel storage tanks in the ground of this property. After testing, it was found that there are no tanks there. Consensus is to move forward with selling the property. The previous owner was interested in purchasing the property back, without paying the penalties and fees. That is not acceptable to the committee.

Wright Pierce engineers would like to do a presentation scheduled, for December 4, to show findings and projected cost for upgrades at the Wastewater Plant.

There was discussion about the inter-municipal agreement with Dover. The cost might be picked up by the state, but it is not yet finalized.

Public Works & Environment – Councilor Sprague reported that the committee decided to whom to award the complete streets project based on proposal received. CMA and Wright Pierce, both are familiar with the City and both vary capable engineering firms. The committee unanimously decided to go with Wright Pierce. The committee will endorse a resolution to be introduced in December.

The committee received a paving update; they will be finishing up the paving within the City in a couple of weeks. Another agreement was made with Joe Falzone, regarding the drainage issue on Stackpole Road. The sidewalks are planned to be completed in 2018 and the paving should be completed in 2019.

#### REPORTS OF SPECIAL COMMITTEES, CITY OFFICERS AND CITY MANAGER

## Special Committees

Historic District Commission – Councilor Dumont said there was a single item for presentation at the last meeting. They approved vinyl windows. He is happy to report that televising the meetings has some merit; people understand what is happening at the HDC. Don't assume that the HDC will just say no. They work with the applicants so that the right thing happens with the property, as long as it is compliant.

Joint Commission of City Council and School Board – Councilor Dumont stated that there were many hours of deliberations and many meetings regarding the budget shortfall. It was a challenge. The committee approached this with an attitude of opportunity. School Board Chair Don Austin, it's not an easy job to be the leader when a problem arises. School Board Member, Joanne Pepin also worked diligently to find a resolution. All those who took time to work through this, were professional while dealing with it. This is a team and we are concerned with the effects of what this can do in the community.

School Board – Councilor Pepin stated that there was a joint workshop with School Board and City Council and a School Board Meeting. There were presentation from teachers about their students, and their needs, maintenance and technical support. Took a vote on using \$104,000 the Noncapital Reserve Fund, and reduced the Budget by \$376,000.

COAST Bus – Councilor Pepin said staff is in the process of applying for a grant to replace busses. They are also looking to create a new website. Liability and property damage insurance is lower than anticipated, so there is a savings there. They reviewed the employee's handbook and will be adding 2 new categories; Bullying and Technical policies and support

Vision 2020 – Councilor Paradis reported that the Committee will meet on Wednesday November 15<sup>th</sup> at 5:30pm.

Somersworth Plaza Commission – Councilor Dumont said the Commission is functioning and up and running with the charge of coming back to council with a recommendation by April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2018. They are at the beginning of the development of the matrix. The members were present and enthusiastic.

## City Manager's Report



**CITY OF SOMERSWORTH**  
*Office of the City Manager*

**TO:** Mayor Dana S. Hilliard and City Council Members

**FROM:** Robert M. Belmore, City Manager

**DATE:** Friday, November 3, 2017

**SUBJECT:** City Manager's Report for Monday, November 6, 2017  
City Council Agenda

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*6:30 p.m. Public Hearing*  
*Re: Fiscal Year 2017/2018 Budget*

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*Unfinished Business (under Section 13 of Agenda)*

**Resolutions**

- A. Resolution No. 16-18 To Authorize the City Manager to enter into a Project Agreement with the State of New Hampshire Division of Historical Resources and to accept a Moose Plate Program Grant Award.** Again, the Finance Committee met on October 12<sup>th</sup> and voted to support acceptance of this Grant Award.

*New Business (under section 14 of Agenda)*

**Ordinances**

- A. Ordinance No. 15 -17 FY 2017-2018 Budget.** Attached is a memorandum from Finance Director Scott Smith that provides a summary of recent discussions regarding how the City Council and School Board have worked to provide a resolution to the estimated \$637,000 School Department revenue shortfall. The latest recommendation from the Joint Commission of the Council & School Board is to reduce the School Department appropriation by \$516,000. Presently, if the City Council follows this budget amendment path, the estimated total City Tax Rate is projected to increase by \$.98 over the prior year. This recommended action would also keep the budget in compliance with the Tax Cap over-ride vote when the budget was adopted.

## Resolutions

- A. Resolution No. 17-18 To Authorize the City Manager to Sell City Tax Deeded Property Located at 20 Green Street.** John Pasquale, PG, from NHDES-Waste Management Division, MtBE Remediation Bureau, was the project contact. The State program provided funding to hire Nobis Engineering who conducted the site exploration for contamination at the site. I have been informed the site is clean and I expect a summary report next week. Today, I received a letter from the prior owner's Attorney that notified the City of their intent to engage us in discussions to repurchase the property.

## Other

- A. Vote to Accept or Reject the Traffic Safety Commission Recommendation to Deny the Citizen Request for the Installation of Two Street Lights on Francoeur Drive.** See attached memorandum from Captain Timmons regarding the installation of street lights at Francoeur Drive and the Traffic Safety Committee's determination justifying their decision to recommend this request be denied. I have also included the original request that was sent to me by the resident, as well as a copy of the City Ordinance governing such requests.

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

### **A. Informational Items.**

- 1. State Historic Preservation Alliance Grant.** Unless directed otherwise, I will be authorizing a Grant Application submittal for funding from the New Hampshire Land & Community Heritage Investment Program (LCHIP). Staff has been working with the Cemetery Trustees and have developed a proposal for a \$5,800 project to access the condition of the Furber Chapel. The Grant request is for \$2,900 as this program would require a 50% match (\$2,900) from the City. This would be the first step to begin the process for needed repairs at the Chapel.
- 2. Breton's Cleaners (former) 1 Winter Street.** We recently held a project kick-off meeting for the demolition of the building. We are anticipating mobilization and demolition starting this week, and project completion by December 1<sup>st</sup>. We have also been working on our Grant submittal to EPA for an additional \$200,000 to complete the clean-up of this site.
- 3. Upcoming Meeting & Events.**
  - a. Mayoral Meeting for City Non-Profit Organizations.** Thursday, Nov. 9<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers.
  - b. Public Meeting on Brownfield's Grant.** Wednesday, Nov. 8<sup>th</sup> at 5:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers.
  - c. Capital Improvement Program Submitted to the Planning Board.** Wednesday, Nov 8<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers.

- d. **Somersworth/Berwick Christmas Parade.** Saturday, Dec. 2<sup>nd</sup> at 2:00 p.m.
- e. **Greater Somersworth Chamber of Commerce Business Breakfast.** Friday, Dec. 8<sup>th</sup> from 7:30 a.m. – 9:30 a.m. at Kelley’s Row. Speakers will be Director Shanna Saunders and Somersworth Now, Jenne Holmes.

City Manager Belmore also stated that City Staff has received proposals from several companies in regards to updating the City Website. He also mentioned moving forward with the Police Department safety grants.

**B. Attachments.**

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

NOMINATIONS, APPOINTMENTS AND ELECTIONS

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Resolutions:

RESOLUTION NO. 16-18 TO AUTHORIZE THE CITY MANAGER TO ENTER INTO A PROJECT AGREEMENT WITH THE STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE DIVISION OF HISTORICAL RESOURCES AND TO ACCEPT A MOOSE PLATE PROGRAM GRANT AWARD

*Councilor Witham, Seconded by Councilor Cameron, made a motion to approve Resolution 16-18. The motion passed unanimously.*

14. NEW BUSINESS

Ordinances:

ORDINANCE NO. 15 -17 FY2017-2018 BUDGET

SOMERSWORTH, NH

April 3, 2017

The City of Somersworth Ordains that Budgets for the City of Somersworth for the 2017-2018 Fiscal Year shall be:

<u>DEPARTMENT</u>	<u>ADOPTED BUDGET</u>
<u>GENERAL FUND</u>	
Elected Leadership	\$128,511
City Management	477,721
Finance and Administration	1,181,314
Development Services	1,002,395
Police	3,811,782
Fire	2,179,394

Public Works	3,258,980
Other Expenses	1,274,237
Capital Outlay	203,915
Intergovt Assessments - County	2,380,054
School Department	26,241,172
<b>TOTAL GENERAL FUND</b>	<b>42,139,475</b>
<b><u>ENTERPRISE FUNDS</u></b>	
Wastewater Department	2,159,074
Water Department	2,073,009
Solid Waste	400,200
<b>TOTAL ENTERPRISE FUNDS</b>	<b>4,632,283</b>
<b><u>SPECIAL REVENUE FUND</u></b>	
Cable Fund	60,107
<b>TOTAL FY 2017-2018 APPROPRIATION</b>	<b>\$46,831,865</b>

This ordinance shall take effect upon its passage.

Sponsored by  
Mayor Dana Hilliard  
by request

Approved:

City Attorney

**As Adopted April 17, 2017**

*Councilor Witham, seconded by Councilor Dumont, made a motion to waive council rules, and allow Ordinance 15-17 to be read by title only. All in favor.*

*Councilor Witham, seconded by Councilor Soldati, made a motion to waive council rules to allow for second read of Ordinance 15-17. All in favor.*

*Councilor Witham, seconded by Councilor Dumont, made a motion to amend Ordinance 15-17, by reducing the bottom line School Department budget by \$516,000.*

*Councilor Witham, seconded by Councilor Dumont, made a motion to suspend council rules to allow Finance Director, Scott Smith, to comment. All in favor.*

Director Smith stated that the reduction of \$516,000 would be the correct bottom line adjustment. The total revenue shortfall was \$637,000. A portion of the shortfall was made up through two revenue adjustments; \$104,000 from the Noncapital reserve fund, and \$17,000 from pre-k tuition. This leaves a balance of \$516,000 that needs to be adjusted.

Councilor Witham said Council had a couple of options; not seek an adjustment and cover the shortfall by increasing taxes and over riding the tax cap or take the money out of the city fund balance. Council did not approve of either of these options. Adjusting the bottom line makes the most sense. As we get to the end of the school year if the school board finds this difficult, we can look at it and make the appropriate decisions.

***Motion to amend Ordinance 15-17, by reducing the School Department Budget by \$516,000, passed unanimously, 9-0.***

Resolutions

RESOLUTION NO. 17-18 TO AUTHORIZE THE CITY MANAGER TO SELL CITY TAX DEEDED PROPERTY LOCATED AT 20 GREEN STREET

Somersworth, NH  
November 6, 2017

WHEREAS, the City of Somersworth has acquired the following parcel of property through tax deed,

- 20 Green Street, Map 10 Lot 176

And,

WHEREAS, after a review of the aforementioned, there has been no determined municipal need for the property and it may be considered surplus,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SOMERSWORTH THAT the City Manager is authorized to sell this surplus City property by any means determined to be in the best interest of the City.

Sponsored by Councilor:

David A. Witham

Approved:

City Attorney

***Resolution 17-18 will remain in first read until the December 4, 2017 City Council Meeting.***

Other

VOTE TO ACCEPT OR REJECT THE TRAFFIC SAFETY COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION TO DENY A REQUEST FOR THE INSTALLATION OF TWO STREET LIGHTS ON FRANCOEUR DRIVE.

***Councilor Witham, seconded by Councilor Messier, made a motion to accept the recommendation.***

Councilor Witham stated that this was reviewed by the Traffic Safety Committee. Chief Kretschmar said there have been no accidents on the streets. There was also discussion about the Speed limit on the street.

Councilor Dumont stated that street lights serve a purpose other than just traffic safety. The location of these lights would benefit the public safety. He is not worried about accidents or speed, but at the residents safety.

Councilor McCallion asked what the cost was for a street light. Councilor Witham said they are approximately \$1000 each.

City Manager Belmore said we would have to get a firm cost from Eversource. There have been no burglary statistics and in the City Ordinance, it states that street lights are not to be installed solely for security purposes. It has been discussed that they were looking to cut that budget line item for several years and have looked into removing some street lights through out the city.

Councilor Paradis said when the recreation building was being built on the Pines, her neighbors had a discussion about light pollution. That light now glares right in her bedroom window.

***The motion to accept the recommendation to not install 2 additional street lights on Francoeur Drive passed unanimously, by voice vote, 9-0.***

CLOSING COMMENTS BY VISITORS.

School Board Chair, Don Austin, thanked the council for their support in the process with the School Board issue. He feels they have reached an acceptable resolution and that they have learned a lot. They will have much more detailed reports to present to the Council in the future.

CLOSING COMMENTS BY COUNCIL MEMBERS

Councilor Pepin reminded the public that tomorrow is Election Day. This is a very important election. This is about our city. Hope everyone takes a little bit of time to vote.

Councilor Soldati stated, in reference to the violence, she recently walked into a medical lab, there on the door was a sign that said no guns, knives, weapons. What have we come to, seeing these signs. If you think we need more control in this society, stay in touch with your senator, congress person. People are afraid to go to places; we didn't have these concerns back in the day. This is now part of the American culture. We need more gun control. She said she is not against hunters, but why do we need weapons of war.

Councilor Dumont congratulated Somersworth High School Football. He is very proud of that team for representing our community.

It is a gift to offer to time and energy. With a little sadness he thanked Councilor Soldati and Councilor Paradis, as they are not running for City Council again.

Veterans Day, Nov 11, at the American Legion. We have come a long way since the time of Vietnam; The darkest hours. That a man can go out and lay down their life for this country. One day a year is a small token to our appreciation for our Veterans. The Legion does a moving ceremony. It's a wonderful thing for Children.

About the paving, it is making us look so much better. It has a visual impact. It came to him that we are a community that attracts the paving contracts at the end of the season. It might be something that we ought to consider. Saturday is not a sacred day for no paving.

The paving has a lot of merit of how we appear. Complements to the Public Works committee for the scheduling and getting that going.

Councilor McCallion said he was a little more irritated on his way in, better now. He has been upset for years, about the lack of disclosure of the School Budget. The school board should have a finance committee. We shouldn't have had to come to this day. He has some ideas that he wants to see happen. He would like to see presentations from the School District, so that the City knows where they are at with the budget. We have systems and computers in place where things are instantaneous. We have the finance committee oversee the finance for the City. The meetings and the decisions did not solve the problem. We can't just say it's a revenue problem. We need to make choices and find ways to ensure that this doesn't happen again.

Councilor Witham said it was interesting that the mayor mentioned the SYC. He recently ran into Maureen Jackman, and asked her where we stand with the funding for the SYC. She stated it has bleak outcome. Whatever we can do, he will fight for it.

The vote tonight for the change in the budget is just one step. We are not over the hurdle yet, but we are closer. As we move in to the fy19 budget, they are starting at a more negative financial position. Sometimes to get the best out of people, we have to go through some adverse times.

As for streetlights, there was some minor vandalism at the Pines. A light has been out for some weeks. It needs to be repaired and aimed up. It lights the bottom of the pole.

Councilor Cameron thanked Councilor Soldati and Councilor Paradis for their help to her and for their conversations. She said she appreciates the legwork behind all of the meetings and as a team we will get through it.

ADJOURNMENT

*Councilor Soldati, seconded by Councilor Witham, made a motion to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 8:10 pm.*

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Trish Harris, City Clerk

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Dana Hilliard, Mayor