

MINUTES OF CITY COUNCIL MEETING

Somersworth, NH
May 2, 2016
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: Soldati, Dumont, McCallion, Messier, Witham, Sprague, Cameron, and Paradis. Councilor Pepin was absent.

MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING.

MINUTES OF NON-PUBLIC SESSION HELD ON MARCH 7, 2016.
Councilor Soldati, seconded by Councilor Cameron, made a motion to accept the minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

MINUTES OF NON-PUBLIC SESSION HELD ON APRIL 4, 2016.
Councilor Dumont, seconded by Councilor Paradis, made a motion to accept the minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

MINUTES OF CITY COUNCIL WORKSHOP HELD ON APRIL 18, 2016.
Councilor Soldati, seconded by Councilor Messier, made a motion to accept the minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

MINUTES OF CITY COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON APRIL 18, 2016.
Councilor Cameron, seconded by Councilor Paradis, made a motion to accept the minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

ANNOUNCEMENTS BY COUNCILORS

Councilor Soldati announced that this Saturday, May 7th, is the 9th Annual Spirit Up Somersworth Clean up day. It starts at 7am at the Middle School.

Councilor McCallion said 6 years ago he was challenged by another councilor to participate the Annual Spirit Up Somersworth. It is a great event, which helps the whole community. Also announced that they are having a golf tournament on May 20, and will support the Somersworth athletic Association.

MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayors Report for City Council Meeting May 2, 2016

- Special thanks to the American Legion post 69, for not only their unwavering commitment to Veterans across this nation, but there dedication to the city of Somersworth. Post 69 recently donated \$3,500 to the City of Somersworth to purchase and install American flags throughout the

downtown corridor. The flags will be install and displayed for the upcoming Memorial Day, and will remained displayed throughout Veterans Day. With partners like the American Legion post 69, our great city continues to be “On the Move”.

- Before the Council this evening is Resolution 33-16 proclaiming “Proud Past Bright Future” as the official motto of Somersworth. The phrase has been used for decades summarizing and identifying our community. The words itself describe not only the uniqueness of the Hilltop city, but the Hilltopper spirit which resonates in each of its citizens and anyone who has called and continues to call Somersworth home. While it continues to be used as the unofficial motto, I respectfully request that Council unanimously adopted Resolution 33-16 this evening making “Proud Past, Bright Future” the official motto of Somersworth.
- Special thanks to Patrick Gale for hosting me on “Late Night Leaven”. I had blast testing out my rapping skills. As a former student of mine I am impressed my how far you have come. Keep up the great work.
- I had the honor this month of addressing HAVEN during their annual breakfast. HAVEN’s mission is to “Prevent sexual assault, domestic violence and stalking and to support and empower women, men, youth and families to heal from abuse and rebuild their lives.”
My address that morning focused on not only the need for support services, prevention and education, but for society to move back towards the values of community. Together as a community of caring citizens we will continue to advocate for services to prevent sexual assault and domestic violence. Now let us rededicate ourselves to this mission; this mission to community, this mission to educate, this mission to understanding, this mission that each and every one of us are brothers and sisters, and that what happens to us, happens to others. Let us gather together and learn, spread awareness and rededicate. Let us spread the awareness, spread the education and spread the hope.
- I enjoyed a recent energizing performance by the Somersworth Middle School and High School Jazz bands at their annual Jazz nights. I was impressed and inspired by the high level of talent displayed by each member of the band that evening. You are all truly an asset to our community.
- As a former part of the English crown, the influence and impact our English brethren had can be seen throughout New England and our American culture. Celebrated on April 23rd, Saint George’s Day is a major holiday in England. In honor of the contributions the English had on Somersworth as one of our founding ethnic groups, the flag of the United Kingdom shared our City Hall flag pole throughout that week.

- Please join SYC, the Middle School & the City of Somersworth for the 9th Annual Spirit up Somersworth Community Cleanup Day scheduled for Saturday May 7th. Come out and show Hilltopper Blue Spirit as we come together to celebrate and take pride in our community! The clean-up day will kick off at the Middle School starting at 7:00am and register for designated locations throughout the city, we'll provide the gloves and trash bags. All volunteers will also receive a free t-shirt!
Once areas are cleaned up we will all meet back at the Middle School at 12:00 for the celebration. There will be a free lunch for all of the volunteers, music provided by DJ Ryan, demonstrations, displays & information for families and residents and awesome raffle prizes!
Special highlights will include touch a truck display representing all city services as well as Waste Management, Construction vehicles and a Special Monster Truck provided by Todd's Touch. The State Police will be on hand with a canine demonstration and then from 1:30-2:30pm the Police Department will conduct their Bike Safety & Education Course Challenge & Bike Checks for grade K-8. Please bring your bike to participate. For more info or to register please contact Maureen Jackman at the Middle School.
- A reminder, in an effort to continue to move forward in combating the heroin epidemic The Mayors drug task force is sponsoring a forum entitled "Putting the pieces together." The forum is a community event bringing awareness to resources in our area and what is being done to help those experiencing substance use disorder.
"Included in the forum will be a Family's story of recovery and the journey of a young mother from active addiction to active recovery.
The event will take place on May 25th at Somersworth Middle School at 6:00pm.
- The next **Mayors Community** forum will take place on **Saturday May 21st from 9:00 – 10:30** at City Hall. T Including in this forum will be **Ward 5 Councilor Denis Messier, Ward 5 School Board Member Ken Bolduc**. The purpose of these forums are to foster dialog and ideas, in a non-formal setting to continue to move our community forward. All members of the community are welcome to attend any forums.
- Reminder to all Council members this evening, that if upon approval of the motion of reconsideration, the city budget is not adopted that the City Council will hold a Special meeting on May 9th beginning at 6pm for solo purpose of debating the FY2016-2017 budget.

Nominations, Appointments and Elections:

- Under nominations, appointments and Elections; **In accordance with Council Rule 17 Appointments**, the following are being brought forward this evening for nomination.

William Connor, re-appointment as a member of the Strafford Regional Planning Commission

Brian Tapscott re-appointment as a member of the Strafford Regional Planning Commission

Mark Fearis as a member of the Strafford Regional Planning Commission

Arthur Hendrickson re-appointment as a member of the Historic District Commission

Beth Poulin re-appointment as a member of the Historic District Commission

Richard Brooks as a member of the Historic District Commission

Jenna Higgins as an Alternate member to the Historic District Commission

In accordance with Council Rule 17 Appointments, the nomination shall remain open until the May 16th, scheduled Council meeting.

This respectfully concludes my May 2nd, 2016 Mayors Report

REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

Finance Committee – Witham said they met at 9:30am on Friday, April 29th. The committee discussed awarding of the contract for cleaning of the lagoons at the water treatment plant. The price for the work was \$42,500. The committee endorsed a resolution to go to full council. They discussed the need for a new server for the police department in the amount \$9,400 which would be covered by JAG grant funds and other funding. The Server Upgrade was unanimously approved by the committee. They plan to use Backbay Technologies. VHB was the consulting engineering group for the Transportation Enhancement (TE) Grant. There was an amended contract for additional enhancement in the downtown area at a cost of an additional \$5,300. The committee unanimously agreed to move forward. There is about \$25,000 left in the TE grant and staff is looking into using that for enhancements in the downtown area. There was discussion about pedestrian crossing lights at Memorial and High Street. There was discussion about reconfiguring the intersection. Superfund solar project has not been started because of lack of funding by the State. The committee voted unanimously to resubmit an RFP. Director Smith reported that there will be some cost overages in overtime, particularly in FD.

Government Operations Councilor Soldati said the committee met on April 28th at 3:30. Search for Police Chief is progressing and there is a vacancy in the Economic Development Manager. There is also an opening as a Deputy Tax Collector. They have received over 70 applications for this position. The Accounting Assistant has retired after 21 Years. Valencourt and Ken Vincent of the Fire Department have also retired. Matt Moore was promoted to Fire Lieutenant.

Recreation department will use the Public Works Department to maintain the parks, to free up Kristen Ducharme to be able to focus on the programs. The committee then went into non-public.

Economic Development Councilor McCallion said the committee met on April 29. They talked about the sale of the former police station; the offer that they received was withdrawn. With the building right in the downtown, we want to make sure that the building looks decent. They talked about a TIF district in the downtown area. The committee got an update from Code Enforcement regarding unregistered vehicles and parking on the grass.

Public Works & Environment Councilor Sprague said the committee met at 6:00 on May 2nd. They discussed the cleaning of the lagoons. All three of the lagoons will be clean and the sand replaced. There was discussion about a bike rack at Teatotaller; was approved by informal vote. This could possibly be covered by the TE Grant. It is ironic that the sidewalk is small for a bike rack, because they had to narrow the sidewalk to make room for the bike lane in the road. There was discussion about the intersection of Memorial Drive and High Street and the need for pedestrian lights. Memorial Drive is one of the roads that will be paved this year. They are looking to the state for funding of the pedestrian lights, Safer Routes to School. There was a conversation about weed control. Roundup is out, Rodeo is in. Avenger is more natural, organically based. The Public Works Department suggests that they do the primary roads with Rodeo and secondary roads with Avenger. They want more information on Avenger. Cost will go up because there will be two applications this year. There was discussion about notifying people through their water bill. The committee also discussed the Solar Project. There is nothing against the company we have used over the year and a half, but more companies are now in this business, and they would like to see who else is out there. They discussed the possibility of using the power at the PD or PW. In Miscellaneous, there was quick discussion about dog droppings and disposing of them properly, and parking on West High Street, people cannot walk along the road and on sidewalks.

REPORTS OF SPECIAL COMMITTEES, CITY OFFICERS AND CITY MANAGER

Special Committees

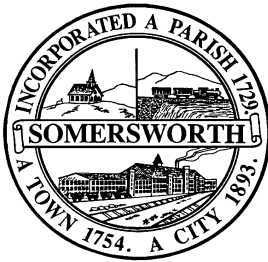
JBC Councilor Messier said the project is going pretty well. On May 23rd, the building will be turned over to the contractor. Some portions of the building is already being sheetrocked, and will be ready to be painted. The project is on budget and on time. Roof will be started this month, or shortly. Kitchen equipment RFP was awarded to a company, and they are out to bid for automotive equipment.

Planning Board Councilor Witham said that two project were approved. The new Dairy Queen which will be going in at Tri-City Plaza. The overall image will be enhanced with greenery and trees. And secondly, Sumner Printing on Route 108 was approved to add a large addition to the back of the building.

HDC. Councilor Dumont said they approved one project for the encapsulation of lead at one property. There were high levels of lead that none have seen before. Child cannot live in the house until it is completed. There will be a meeting in the near future with the new chair person, Al Marotta who replaced Madeline DeSantos.

Tri City Coalition Councilor Sprague said they met in Rochester to talk about cost savings on a few items. They brainstormed ideas concerning county wide assessing. A report was done, and there are cost savings, especially in the three cities. Small towns would benefit mostly. It's not only about saving money, but to have a better product. The Coalition also discussed welfare. The county was in control of welfare until the 1970s. Strafford County selected to run a pilot program that would include communities on this side of the bridge.

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, April 29, 2016

**SUBJECT: City Manager's Report for Monday, May 2, 2016
City Council Agenda**

Lay on Table (under Section 12 of Agenda)

Resolutions

- A. Resolution No. 29-16 To Amend Existing Pole Licenses and to Adopt a Pole License Form for all Future Pole Licenses.** The City's Legal Counsel (Attorney Jae Whitelaw from the Mitchell firm) recommended the City change its Pole License Form due to recent Court rulings. Written notices were sent to each licensee that the Council will be holding a Public Hearing on May 16th at 6:45 p.m.

Unfinished Business (under Section 13 of Agenda)

Resolutions

- A. Resolution No. 31-16 Authorizing the City Manager to Sell City Tax Deeded Property Located at 16 Winter Street.** The Finance Committee met on April 4th and voted to sponsor this Resolution and forward to the full Council. The Committee did discuss any potential benefits to keeping the property, but none were identified.
- B. Resolution No. 33-16 Proclaiming “Proud Past, Bright Future” as the Official Motto of the City of Somersworth.**
- C. Resolution No. 34-16 To Authorize the Somersworth Housing Authority to Enter into a Lease Agreement with the Somersworth Early Learning Center.** The Finance Committee discussed this issue with Somersworth Housing Authority (SHA) Executive Director Debbie Evans. I have also discussed the issue with Community Development Finance Authority (CDFA) Director George Hunton. Respectfully I would offer that this is somewhat of a housekeeping issue in order to comply with certain Grant conditions regarding the City’s approval of any lease arrangement. The Council will also need to approve any eventual sale of the property.
- D. Resolution No. 35-16 Amending the City of Somersworth Sustainability Committee.**

New Business (under Section 14 of Agenda)

Ordinances

- A. Ordinance No. 17-16 Supplemental Appropriation To Increase Funds Available In The City’s Municipal And Transportation Improvement Fund.** The City Charter requires a Public Hearing; I recommend it be scheduled prior to the next regular Council meeting on May 16th at 6:30 p.m. This action item also requires a two-thirds majority vote of City Council to adopt. The City’s Transportation Fund presently has approximately \$155,000 in it and we collect approximately \$5,000 per month in fees.

Other

- A. Vote to Reconsider Budget Ordinance No. 16-16.** Finance Director Scott Smith has provided a revised Tax Rate Estimate as well as a Tax Cap

Analysis based on the City Council's adoption of the 2017 FY Budget. The projected change for the total City Tax Rate stands at a (0.03) decrease: from \$32.25 to \$32.22.

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

A. Informational Items:

- 1. Strafford Regional Planning Commission (SRPC) Assessment Program.** SRPC staff has requested that the City prioritize our three (3) project nominations. Without objection, I will notify them of the following:

1. Former Police Station
2. Former Hilltop School
3. Former Breton's Cleaners Site – based on the recent meeting with Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and NH Department of Environmental Services (DES) representatives, it appears that this project will be supported by these agencies for Brownfield's Assessment Funding.

B. Attachments:

1. City Attorney Certifications (4).
2. Planning Board's Strafford Regional Planning Commission (SRPC) Nomination Letter to appoint three (3) SRPC Commissioners.
3. Miscellaneous.

NOMINATIONS, APPOINTMENTS AND ELECTIONS

**A. Planning Board Nominations – Requires Council Confirmation Vote
STRAFFORD REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION REPRESENTATIVES**

Re-appointments of:

1. William Connor
2. Brian Tapscott

New Appointment

1. Mark Fearis (present Planning Board alternate)

Councilor Witham, seconded by Councilor Messier, made a motion to suspend council roles and act on all 3 nominees of the Strafford Regional Planning Commission. The motion was approved unanimously.

Councilor Witham, seconded by Councilor Messier, made a motion to affirm all three nominees of the Strafford Regional Planning Commission. The motion was approved unanimously.

B. Mayoral Nominations – Requires Council Confirmation Vote
HISTORIC DISTRICT COMMISSION

Re-appointments of:

1. Arthur Hendrickson
2. Beth Poulin

New Appointment

1. Richard Brooks
2. Jenna Higgins – Alternate Member

These nominees will remain open until the May 16th City Council meeting.

LAY ON TABLE

Resolution No. 29 - 16 To Amend Existing Pole Licenses and to Adopt a Pole License Form for All Future Pole Licenses.

Resolution 29-16 will remain on the table.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Resolutions:

- A. Resolution No. 31-16 Authorizing the City Manager to Sell City Tax Deeded Property Located at 16 Winter Street.

Councilor Witham, seconded by Councilor Paradise, made a motion to approve Resolution 31-16. The motion passed 9-0, by roll call vote.

- B. Resolution No. 33-16 Proclaiming “Proud Past, Bright Future” as the Official Motto of the City of Somersworth.

Councilor Paradis, seconded by Councilor Cameron, made a motion to approve Resolution 33-16. The motion passed 9-0, by roll call vote.

- C. Resolution No. 34-16 To Authorize the Somersworth Housing Authority to Enter Into a Lease Agreement with the Somersworth Early Learning Center.

Councilor Paradis, seconded by Councilor Witham, made a motion to approve Resolution 34-16. The motion passed 9-0, by roll call vote.

D. Resolution No. 35-16 Amending the City of Somersworth Sustainability Committee.

Councilor Soldati, seconded by Councilor Cameron, made a motion to approve Resolution 35-16. The motion passed 9-0, by roll call vote.

Witham asked what the proposed changes are to the Sustainability Committee. Councilor Soldati replied that they removed a member of the business committee and added in a student and a member of the Conservation Commission. This committee will serve as a resource to the council. Any citizen who is a resident or employee within the city, is encouraged to become a member.

NEW BUSINESS

Ordinances:

ORDINANCE NO. 17-16 SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATION TO INCREASE FUNDS AVAILABLE IN THE CITY'S MUNICIPAL AND TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT FUND

Somersworth, NH
May 2, 2016

THE CITY OF SOMERSWORTH ORDAINS THAT pursuant to Section 7.7(A) of the City Charter that the annual budget for the City of Somersworth for Fiscal Year 15-16 is amended as follows:

Appropriate \$500,000 from Unassigned Fund balance (surplus) to the Municipal and Transportation Improvement Fund for the purpose of funding in whole or in part improvements to the local or regional transportation system including roads, bridges, bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

Approved as to funding:

Scott A. Smith
Director of Finance and Administration

Recorded by:

Trish Harris
City Clerk

Sponsored by

Councilor
David A. Witham

Approved:

City Attorney

Background:

This ordinance appropriates Unassigned Fund Balance for the purpose of increasing the City's ability to fund road improvement projects without negatively impacting the City's year-to-year operating budget practices. It is anticipated that this would replace use of at least \$500,000 of the unassigned fund balance in the Fiscal Year 16-17 budget as proposed and/or approved.

This Supplemental Appropriation requires a public hearing and a two-thirds majority vote of the City Council to adopt.

Ordinance 17-16 will remain in first reading until the scheduled May 16th City Council Meeting.

Other:

A. Vote to Reconsider Budget Ordinance No. 16-16

Motion by Councilor Witham to reconsider Budget Ordinance No. 16-16, seconded by Councilor Soldati, passed by Roll Call vote, 5-3.

Councilor Witham said he opened the books again after the last meeting, and the actions that the council took. Their actions of using the funds in fund balance lowers the tax rate, but in the long run, it is not a long terms sustainable practice. Next year they would have to allocate \$1.3 million from fund balance to maintain city services. After several years, the balance becomes zero. Also does negative things to the CPI and Tax cap. He felt there was a need to have a more robust discussion to the topic.

Councilor Paradis asked for details as to how taking something out of Fund Balance affects the overall budget.

Finance Director Scott Smith said there are a couple areas that this will affect. When you use a large amount of fund balance, it reduces the amount raised from taxes. It is not sustainable over time. You are digging into savings. You will have to make that up, by later increasing taxes or decreasing the budget to stay within the tax cap.

Debate.

Councilor Sprague said he will not support reconsideration. He was well aware of their actions. He agrees that it is not sustainable over time, nor is it sustainable for tax payers to continue paying more. He has received great comments about their actions. Councilors from other cities are impressed with what we have done. There

would be a .60 cent increase if they put \$500,000 back in the fund. His point was they lowered the tax rate. It is the tax payers money in that piggy bank, keep our rate down and gets our projects done. If you don't know where you are going, any road will take you there. Commercial assessment is upside down, we will have revenue there. New properties on Stackpole Road, more revenue there. It is staffs job to be widdling away the budget to present to the council. Lowering the tax rate is great press for this community.

Paradis, if we didn't have the tax cap, she would feel differently. They need to be a fiscally sustainable. It is not fiscally sustainable to mess around with the CIP formula for next year.

Councilor Witham said that Councilor Sprague is right, we have a revenue problem, not a spending problem. There are projects coming online will bolster our revenue stream. After the last meeting, he realized that he made a mistake in voting for the budget. It is not a sustainable product. If they stay the course with what they approved, the City Manager and Finance Director would have to use 1.3 million of the fund balance next year to stay status quo. They would need to make \$800,000 in cuts to the current budget to sustain this. The actions that have taken have lowered the tax rate to \$32.22. The City Manager's proposed budget would be at \$32.61. We are talking about cents, not dollars.

Councilor McCallion said he did not vote for the budget. There are lines in any budget that can be adjusted. Sprague talked about a zero based budget. Other communities have a use it or lose it mentality. He was naive, to know that the school budget was not hashed over by the school board. There is a revenue problem. From now on when we do our budget, let's look at what we really need. Positions could be consolidated, and save money. He didn't vote for the budget because he thought that was a wrong way to do it. You don't dip into your savings. But, with the budget that we have, in a year from now, we will be in a better situation. The roads will be better and the money will come back. If a department came up with a legitimate point and plan, they would not be denied. He didn't vote for it, but he is not in favor of reopening it.

Councilor Dumont he is very pleased that there is recognition amongst the councilor about having a revenue problem. It's about perception, dollars and cents, three cents lower seemed nothing, but it energized people to make comments. The image that we project, we say we have a revenue shortage... but in a matter of minutes, we have a budget. We approved the development of Downtown Somersworth. He doesn't understand why they, as a council, don't get the economic impact of that project. The downtown project, anticipated revenue, have not seen a dollar amount that was applied to the project. Sumner is expanding their business. What does that mean in tax dollars? How many properties do we have that are not taxed but could be? The school, its their budget. We give a total amount of money. They decide what to do with it. We all say it's the revenue. Sunningdale, is a positive economic impact. He is concerned with opening the budget, because everyone will have their say, and they will end up right back where

they were. This is the tax payers money. They should have some relief. When the economy went south, we were still raising the tax rate. It's more than lowering the budget three cents. It's caring about the residents. But we have an engineering report that we paid for, that says we need to put \$500,000 into the roads every year for the next ten years or we will never get ahead of the curve to where we can say, that's a nice road. There are some streets that haven't been attended to for over 30 years. We need to identify where the revenue problem is coming from. He received communication from a resident who owns 2 properties in Somersworth; their home that they live in and a rental property. Their home is impeccable. But the property owners said they weren't going to do anything to improve the rental property, because they are concerned about the taxes being raised. Main Street is a disaster, landlords can't even rent a commercial property because it is deteriorating. We are losing revenue because we allow that to happen.

Councilor Witham said his full intent is to have a discussion about not using the \$800,000 from fund balance. And to tackle the road projects with the ordinance that he has presented. It's not about needs or revenue, but the use of the fund balance.

Councilor Witham, seconded by Councilor Paradise, made a motion to end debate.

Vote passed by voice vote.

Reconsideration of Budget Ordinance 16-16 passed 5-3 by roll call vote, with McCallion, Messier, and Sprague.

5 minute recess.

Councilor Witham, page C65, line 9104, Road Resurfacing, made a motion reduce that line item by \$500,000. Seconded by Messier.

Councilor Witham said this is step one of a two part process, to restore the \$800,000 to the Unassigned Fund Balance that was voted for at the last meeting. This would leave \$258,000 in line 9104.

Councilor Sprague said there is an ordinance that says they will be taking money from the fund, even though we are putting it back in. It's like a shell game. This will increase the tax rate and undo what they did 2 weeks ago.

Councilor Messier, the intent is that he will be supporting ord 17-16. It lessens the impact and makes the budget for next year... it isn't short term. The roads are getting the \$700,000, but it's less of an impact out of the fund balance. If we stayed the way we were, \$1.3 would have to be made up, through the calculation of the taxcap, and wherever else we need to make the cut.

Councilor Sprague said taking from road resurfacing and putting into the municipal and transportation fund is not a good thing. That is the fund that had to be set up,

per state regulations, to accept the money from the fees collected per registration. It can also be used for things other than roads. If you are taking away from the Unassigned Balance Fund as it is stated in the proposed ordinance, I should be put into line item, 9104, Road Resurfacing, so it can only be used for the roads.

Councilor Witham said Councilor Sprague is right; the \$500,000 can be put into the Road Resurfacing account at another time, they could set up a special Capital Reserve account for road resurfacing. He understands that the Council wants more money for roads so the Transportation Fund will not be raided for other things.

The amendment to reduce line item 9104 on page C-65 by \$500,000 was adopted by Roll Call Vote, 5-3.

Councilor McCallion had a couple of questions about the school department budget, page C-92.

Councilor McCallion made a motion, seconded by Councilor Sprague, for discussion, to reduce line item 2000, on page C-92 by \$139,188.

Councilor McCallion asked to waive council rules, seconded by Councilor Witham, to allow the Superintendent and School Finance Director to speak. There was no objection.

Councilor McCallion questioned several line items in the School Budget.

Mayor Hilliard explained that the Council has bottom line authority, and questions about line items need to be directed to the School Board.

Councilor Sprague said we have authority over the bottom line, but we are able to question how they came up with that bottom line. In this day and age, we are not setting a good example by bickering or with the follow-up cyber-attacks on social media. He would like to see the SPED fund reduced by \$100,000, and reduce the bottom line, knowing there is a safety net in place. He clarified that he is not against the Schools.

Councilor Witham said that Councilor Pepin mentioned that he thought he saw SPED is getting close to being in to the red. Superintendent Mosca confirmed that, yes, it is in the red, and runs in the red most of the year. So we are already in that position. The line item was already reduced.

Councilor McCallion questioned a few other lines in the school budget. Superintendent Mosca said these are for incentives and they are in the process of negotiating a contract with the teachers and para-professionals. These lines are contingency for negotiating teacher contracts. Salaries are flat until they are negotiated.

The amendment to reduce line item 2000 on page C-92 by \$139,188 failed by Roll Call Vote, 6-2.

Councilor Sprague made a motion, seconded by Councilor McCallion, to reduce line item 2000, on page C-92 by \$100,000.

Councilor Sprague said they cannot specifically speak about the line items, but there is the SPED fund that hasn't been used for several years.

Councilor Soldati said she believes they all received a memo that explained the SPED fund. The school could use that at any time.

City Manager Belmore said the school board is authorized to spend it whenever they feel the need to dip into that fund.

Councilor Soldati said she agrees with councilor Sprague and she will probably support this amendment.

Councilor Witham said they just heard from the Superintendent that they are already in the red for the current meeting.

Councilor Paradis said she will not support the amendment because the budget is very transparent. One new person in town could eat that budget up.

Councilor Sprague said that if the schools needed more funding, they could come before council, and there would be a supplemental appropriation; which is similar to what they are doing with the roads. Trying to get the budget down to a manageable working document. The monies are from over estimating the budget for several years. This was his concern years ago when this fund was set up; it a piggy bank of tax payers money that can only be used for Special Education, and nothing else. He would like to see it zerod out and never used again. It's terrible to have money you cannot get at.

Councilor McCallion said change of events have happened and the amount being added to the fund has gone down. Why not use the \$100,000 this year when we are looking for money in the budget, and not raise the tax rate.

The amendment to reduce line item 2000 on page C-92 by \$100,000 failed by Roll Call Vote, 5-3.

Councilor Soldati referred to page C-8, line 5488, Somersworth Youth Connection, was dependent on funding from the federal government and state. The funding is being reduced by the fed, even though the program has had an increase in kids.

Councilor Soldati, seconded by Councilor Paradis, made a motion to increase the funding to \$3,000 for line item 5488 on page C-8. The amendment passed 6-2, by Roll Call vote.

Councilor Witham asked Finance Director Scott Smith what the balance in the Unassigned Fund Balance was; Director Smith confirmed that it is almost \$1.4 million.

Councilor Witham made a motion to reduce the Unassigned Fund Balance by \$800,000, seconded by Councilor Paradis.

Councilor Witham said this will bring us back, relatively, close to the City Managers proposed budget; below the tax cap. This brings us back to the .39 cent increase. A .39 cent increase is the smallest he can ever remember.

Councilor Sprague said he just wants to make sure that the amendment does not make them exceed the tax cap.

Director Smith said it will be below the tax cap by about \$53,000, and increase the tax rate by approximately .34 cents.

Councilor McCallion asked, as it stands, what will that do for the roads. It will reduce the roads to \$258,000. But if the ordinance (17-16) is passed, we can take from the “piggy bank” and put that \$500,000 back in to get the roads done.

Director Smith said there is money in the current budget that is funding the current road projects. This money would be for future road projects.

Councilor Sprague, we do have some roads proposed. The \$258,000 budget has nothing to do with roads we haven’t talked about yet. Road resurfacing starting at \$258,000. Council needs some idea where they need to be to get the roads taken care of. The Ordinance for \$500,000 needs to pass at next meeting, to be able to do any of the plans we want to do with the roads.

Councilor Witham said, just to be clear, the current road projects are already funded; future road projects have embraced the idea of using lapsing bonds to do roads. It is a fallacy that they will not be able to do roads in the future. The fact that they need to look at the sustainability of their budgeting practices, maybe less for the roads, but more for the vital services that we deliver; police protection, fire protection, plowing of our roads, and the delivery of quality education. Using \$800,000 of fund balance sets us up for failure of those vital services.

Councilor Messier said just so he is clear, and everybody else, we are putting \$800,000 back into the Unassigned Fund Balance. Mayor Hilliard said that was correct.

Councilor Sprague said, if we were to defeat this motion, an alternative motion of putting \$300,000 back into the Fund Balance, instead of the full \$800,000, it would still have no impact on the tax rate because the \$500,000 is already out of road resurfacing. This would be no increase to the tax rate.

Director Smith said it would reduced road appropriation by \$500,000, and use \$500,000 from Unassigned Fund Balance.

Councilor Soldati, she will vote against this, in anticipation of another motion.

Mayor Hilliard asked for a motion to waive council rules to continue the meeting past the 10:00 hour. Councilor Witham, seconded by Councilor Dumont, made a motion to waive Council Rules. Council Rule was waived by voice vote.

The amendment to reduce the Unassigned Fund Balance by \$800,000 failed by Roll Call Vote, 5-3.

Councilor Witham made a motion to reduce the Unassigned Fund Balance by \$500,000, seconded by Councilor Sprague.

Councilor McCallion asked what was added, in last year, to the general fund. It's pretty consistent over the past several years.

Director Smith said it was a little over a million and has been pretty consistent.

The amendment to reduce the Unassigned Fund Balance by \$500,000 passed by Roll Call Vote, 8-0.

Councilor Sprague made a motion to reduce, line item 905 on page C-41 to \$2,100, seconded by Councilor Paradis.

He talked with staff and this is an area that can be adjusted.

The amendment to reduce to reduce, line item 905 on page C-41 to \$2,100 passed by Roll Call Vote, 8-0.

Councilor Sprague made a motion to reduce the bottom line on page C-11 by \$20,000, seconded by Councilor Soldati.

He talked with staff and this is an area that can be adjusted. Line items 5100 and 5101, legal services and litigation, can be reduced.

The amendment to reduce to reduce the bottom line on page C-11 by \$20,000, passed by Roll Call Vote, 8-0.

Councilor Witham asked for a final update from Director Smith.

The bottom line of the budget is \$45,267,457, and the tax rate estimate would be \$32.20, which is a .05 decrease, and under the tax cap by \$376,000.

Councilor Witham, seconded by Councilor Soldati, made a motion to approve the Ordinance 16-16. The ordinance was adopted by Roll Call vote, 9-0.

CLOSING COMMENTS BY VISITORS.

Real Roseberry, 405 Rt 108. Not too happy with a councilman that opened up the budget again. The \$100,000 in the school fund, take half and help the budget. He pushed for it. Use half of it and keep half. It's money just sitting there. The tax payers are paying for that money and doing nothing. He suggests that the school looks at how to use that money. It's wasted money. The school is just holding on to it, it isn't doing any good. When the school hits a limit, the tax payers are paying for it. Sale signs are going down. Top tax payers, that one year they went under the budget. They did a good job.

CLOSING COMMENTS BY COUNCIL MEMBERS

Councilor Dumont complimented Councilor Soldati for the tulips and daffodils around the monument. He received a call from a resident who does street cleaning and sweeping around his yard and road. He thanked those residents who help. Some people in our community do good things to help improve our image and our city.

The Strafford County CAP director, Betsy Parker, is doing a good job. Another thank you to post 69 American Legion, the single largest philanthropic organization in the city. They gave \$3500 to provide American flags for our poles. Rodeo, Roundup and Avenger. He did some research, there are mixes that can be made that are safer than other things. Water and vodka will also kill weeds. It is cheaper for a gallon of vodka than it is for a gallon of Roundup. Special Kudos to our City Manager Bob Belmore in his efforts in helping Sumner get to where they will be adding on to their building..

Councilor McCallion, apologized for getting upset and making comments. He doesn't want anyone think its personal up there especially when 3 years ago he had 3 kids in the school system, he does not hate the school. He just questions the line items. Government can work if everyone gets to the table. Gotta get together on some issues and attack them.

This Saturday is the clean up. A lot of volunteers, and councilor should stop by if they are available. The Somersworth Athletic Association is having a Golf Tournament.

Councilor Messier said he wants an update on the garage property. Still looks bad. Not sure how this happened, but it needs to be cleaned up. Thanked Mike Davis of Sumner Printing for staying within our community and Planning Board for doing the right thing.

Councilor Witham said he was amazed at the legion and what they do. He is happy with the selection of police chief; we are in challenging times, and Dave is the guy for the task. Thanked fellow councilors for their patience during the budget discussions and he is happy that they found common middle ground.

Councilor Sprague said he was very happy with the selection of the police chief. David Kretschmar is a man of high integrity. He is very pleased with the way the budget turned out. They reduced the tax rate by another 2 cents. The Councilors are leaders and role models and he is sick and tired of the facebook bullying; slandering others without even knowing the details. He likes Councilor Dumont's suggestion, vodka, might work to kill the weeds.

Councilor Cameron thanked the fellow councilors for helping her understand the budget and the process of passing it.

Councilor Paradis congratulated Kretschmar. She feels 100% better with the budget. Thanked all the fellow councilors and was happy that they explored all of the different angles. She is happy with the results. Need to play nice in the sandbox.

NONPUBLIC SESSION

Councilor Witham, seconded by Councilor Paradis, made a motion to enter into nonpublic session @ 10:11. The motion passed by roll call vote, 7-1.

ADJOURNMENT

Trish Harris, City Clerk

Dana Hilliard, Mayor