



MINUTES OF THE
EMERGENCY CITY COUNCIL MEETING
Somersworth, NH
March 24, 2020
6:00 P.M.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY MAYOR HILLIARD

It is possible that, in light of the Covid-19 situation and the state of emergency declaration in New Hampshire that most or all Councilors will be unable to attend our next City Council Meeting in person, because they are concerned about getting sick or perhaps are already sick. Therefore, I, Dana S. Hilliard, Mayor of the City of Somersworth, hereby declare an Emergency, and the requirements of the physical present quorum is waived so that the City Council Meeting on Tuesday, March 24, 2020 may be conducted with most or all Councilors participating electronically.

This evening, this is the first meeting using the zoom app. The Somersworth City Government is committed to maintaining normal operations of all facets of government, including your elected leadership and your legislative body. It is my intention, that if this pandemic continues, that we will conduct government operations as regularly as possible utilizing this app. Your government is stable that we are under the leadership of the City Manager and Elected Leadership as well as the Fire Chief, who is our Emergency Management Director, as a plan of ensuring not only that the government will continue to operate, but the safety of every member of this community.

If this works successfully, it will be my intention and the intention of the City Manager, to get the Planning and Zoning Board set up with the same technology so that they can conduct regular business if necessary, so that our economy and construction plans can move forward to the best capacity they can, given the current situation.

They three Mayors have been in regular contact. We continue to have discussions in the try city area can continue to have joint decision making, in protecting the citizens of Somersworth, Rochester, and Dover. That included an in-depth conversation with the Governor this morning, to have the Governor to continue to examine, thoroughly whether or not the state needs to go into a harbor in place, also having the Governor speak with the Commissioner of Education and re-examining the date as to when the school will open. I think all of us here on the City Council are of no mindset that this is going to go away by April 6th. Know that the three Mayors are continuing to have conversation with the State Elective leadership, and local Superintendents so that the public can plan ahead of time so that our school system can plan ahead.

Your local elected Leadership along with the leadership of the City Manager, Finance Director and Economic Director are continuing to examine ways that we can support our local businesses. If you are a local business owner, know that this is a top priority; keeping every citizen safe and ensuring that we can aid you and that your business will remain here. We are in constant contact with the federal government and our state leaders, and we are urging them to make sure that that help is flowing from the federal and state government as fast as possible, and your local government will be examining ways to help you out within the future.

For all of the Citizens, the City Manager, along with the Superintendent of Schools, the Fire Chief and I, will be giving weekly updates. The first one will take place tomorrow, and will be aired on Channel 22. This evening, I am stressing to all citizens to practice extreme social distancing. Make sure that you are keeping yourself and your family safe, and making the wise decisions to do so. Go out only when necessary, for essential products, and with extreme social distancing.

ROLL CALL OF MEMBERS

The meeting was called to order at 6:00pm 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 Paradis, via remote conferencing.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Councilor Austin led the Pledge of Allegiance.


COMMENTS BY VISITORS

None

NEW BUSINESS

Each vote taken will be by Roll Call Vote.

ORDINANCES

	City of Somersworth – Ordinance
	<p>Ordinance No: 18-20</p> <p>EMERGENCY APPROPRIATION TO MEET THE NEEDS OF THE CITY AND SAFEGUARD THE LIFE, SAFETY, HEALTH, AND WELFARE OF THE CITY DURING THE COVID-19 VIRUS PANDEMIC EMERGENCY</p>

March 24, 2020

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

The annual budget for the City of Somersworth for Fiscal Year 19-20 is amended as follows:

Appropriate \$589,250 from unassigned General Fund fund balance to the Contingency section of the FY19-20 General Fund budget as follows:

Original Budget
\$ 76,000

Amendment
\$ 589,250

Revised Budget
\$ 665,250

Approved as to Funding:

Recorded by:

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Scott A. Smith
Director of Finance and Administration

Trish Harris
City Clerk

Background:

This ordinance appropriates funding to allow the City through action authorized by the City Manager to respond to any emergencies effecting the life, health, welfare, and safety of the City of Somersworth without delay. Any expenditure authorized will be made in consultation with the Mayor and the Chair of the City Council Finance Committee. Any and all funds from this appropriation not expended for this intended purpose at the conclusion of this emergency shall lapse and revert back to unassigned fund balance.

This Ordinance is being acted upon in accordance with Section 7.7(B) Emergency Appropriations of the City Charter.

Authorization	
<i>Sponsored by:</i> Mayor Dana S. Hilliard Councilors: David A. Witham Matt Gerding Nancie Cameron Crystal Paradis Richard Michaud	<i>Approved:</i> City Attorney

City of Somersworth – Ordinance 18-20

History			
First Read Date:	03/24/2020	Tabled:	NA
Public Hearing:	NA	Removed From Table:	NA
Second Read:	03/24/2020		

Discussion

Councilor Witham, seconded by Councilor Paradis, made a motion to waive Council Rules, to allow for a second read. Motion passed by roll call vote, 9-0.

Councilor Witham, seconded by Councilor Pepin, made a motion to approve Ordinance 18-20.

Councilor Paradis asked if that was the entire amount in the general fund.
 City Manager Belmore said that is not the entire amount; they used 10% of the fund.


Councilor Vincent asked if they had any anticipation of the use of the money.
 City Manager Belmore said staff has not identified any needs at this time. This is just to put ourselves in position.

Councilor Witham asked, for the sake of the public, where this leaves the General Fund balance
 City Manager Belmore stated that will bring us to \$3.5mil in the General Fund which is within the guideline of the fund balance.

The motion passed, 9-0.

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	Paradis	X	
TOTAL VOTES:		9	0
On 03/24/2020 Ordinance 18-20		PASSED	

RESOLUTIONS

City of Somersworth – Resolution	
	Resolution No: 43-20
	TO AUTHORIZE THE CITY MANAGER, IN CONSULTATION WITH THE MAYOR AND CHAIR OF THE CITY COUNCIL FINANCE COMMITTEE, TO UTILIZE FUNDING PROVIDED THROUGH ORDINANCE 18-20 “EMERGENCY APPROPRIATION” TO PROVIDE FOR THE LIFE, SAFETY, HEALTH, AND WELFARE OF THE CITY OF SOMERSWORTH DURING THE COVID-19 VIRUS PANDEMIC EMERGENCY

March 24, 2020

WHEREAS, on March 13, 2020, President Donald J. Trump, declared a national emergency concerning the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) outbreak, and

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WHEREAS, on March 13, 2020, Governor Christopher T. Sununu issued Executive Order 2020-04, declaring a state of emergency concerning the novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) outbreak, and

WHEREAS, the City of Somersworth has activated the emergency response team to implement processes and take action in accordance with Federal and State Officials in order to protect the life, safety, health, and welfare of the residents of the City of Somersworth, and

WHEREAS, the City Council believes it is imperative that the City emergency management team has the resources available and ability to respond without delay, and

WHEREAS, Section 29.8.4.2 of the Administrative Code allows for emergency purchases to prevent delays in work which might affect the safety, health, or convenience of the community,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SOMERSWORTH THAT that the City Manager is authorized, in consultation with the Mayor and Chair of the City Council Finance Committee, without further action required by the City Council, to expend funds provided by Ordinance 18-20 “Emergency Appropriation”, to provide for the life, safety, health, and welfare of the City of Somersworth during the COVID-19 Virus Emergency, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SOMERSWORTH THAT any and all funds appropriated through Ordinance 18-20 not expended for this intended purpose at the conclusion of this emergency shall lapse and revert back to unassigned fund balance.

Authorization	
<i>Sponsored by:</i> Mayor Dana S. Hilliard <i>Councilors:</i> David A. Witham Matt Gerding Nancie Cameron Crystal Paradis Richard Michaud	<i>Approved:</i> City Attorney

City of Somersworth – Resolution 43-20

History

First Read Date:	03/24/2020	Tabled:	03/24/2020
Public Hearing:	NA	Removed From Table:	03/24/2020
Second Read:	03/24/2020		

Discussion

Councilor Witham, seconded by Councilor Paradis, made a motion to waive Council Rules to allow for second read. The motion passed by roll call, 9-0.

Councilor Witham, seconded by Councilor Cameron, made a motion to approve Resolution 43-20. The motion passed, 9-0.

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	Paradis	X	
TOTAL VOTES:		9	0
On 03/24/2020 Resolution 43-20		PASSED	



City of Somersworth – Resolution

Resolution No: **44-20**

TRI-CITY REQUEST FOR FEDERAL AND STATE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE RELATED TO THE COVID-19 EMERGENCY

March 24, 2020

WHEREAS, the respiratory illness known as COVID-19 (novel corona virus) is presently affecting the United States and the State of New Hampshire; and

WHEREAS, on March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization (“WHO”) declared COVID-19 a pandemic; and

WHEREAS, on March 13, 2020, Governor Christopher Sununu issued Executive Order 2020-04, declaring a state of emergency in New Hampshire with respect to COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, Governor Sununu has since issued emergency orders directing remote instruction by public schools, requiring food and beverage service to carry out, and limiting public gatherings of more than fifty people; and

WHEREAS, the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (“CDC”) as well as President Trump have issued or recommended further restrictions on public gatherings and minimizing exposure to COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, all of the foregoing mitigation measures are understandably aimed at reducing the impact and spread of COVID-19, and preserving the ability of the country’s and state’s healthcare systems to address the pandemic;

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting mitigation measures are, and will in all likelihood continue, inflicting dire statewide and local economic consequences upon local businesses and employees; and

WHEREAS, the-Cities of Somersworth, Rochester, and Dover believe broad economic assistance packages are critical to mitigating the adverse economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, but the aforesaid communities lack the authority or resources to undertake necessary economic assistance; and

WHEREAS, the Cities of Somersworth, Rochester, and Dover are reliant upon the federal and state authorities to provide immediate economic assistance and to do so proactively, to avoid potentially irreversible economic loss from the COVID-19 pandemic; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SOMERSWORTH, ROCHESTER AND DOVER CITY COUNCILS THAT, The Cities of Somersworth, Rochester, and Dover, New Hampshire in all urgency, request and call upon the federal and state government to expeditiously enact broad, significant economic assistance to local businesses and employees in order to minimize the adverse economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic.

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

City of Somersworth – Resolution 44-20

History			
First Read Date:	03/24/2020	Tabled:	
Public Hearing:		Removed From Table:	
Second Read:			

Discussion

Councilor Witham, seconded by Councilor Gerding, made a motion to waive Council Rules for a second read. Motion passed by roll call vote, 9-0.

Councilor Witham, seconded by Councilor Cameron, made a motion to approve Resolution 44-20.

Councilor Paradis stated that she supports the Resolution; it is important to protect the investment by asking for assistance from the State. This is allowing the local businesses to protect their employees.

Councilor Witham said he agrees with Councilor Paradis. Local businesses are taking a hit. He said he wished we had the wherewithal to help more, but at this point, we need to lean on the state. There are efforts underway and he is hopeful that it is enough. It is a long hole to dig out of. Dover and Rochester are doing something similar.

Mayor Hilliard said they have identical Resolutions that they are presenting.

Councilor Witham asked if this will be sent on to Concord and Washington?

Mayor Hilliard said that is correct.

The motion passed, 9-0.

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	Paradis	X	
TOTAL VOTES:		9	0
On 03-24-2020 Resolution 44-20		PASSED	

CLOSING COMMENTS BY VISITORS

None

CLOSING COMMENTS BY COUNCIL MEMBERS

Councilor Pepin said it was nice to see Councilor Dumont back in action. He reminded the community to check on their elderly neighbors. As for the meeting this evening, he stated that he would have rather go into a burning building than to set up a computer, but this was an easy set up.

Councilor Vincent stated that he has received a few phone calls, that emergency personnel do not have n95 masks. He encouraged the public that if they have access to any, to consider donating them. He said it is good seeing everyone, take care of yourselves.

Councilor Dumont said it is good to see everyone. He has been riding in the passenger's seat of the car, and he is not cleared to go in to the stores. He said he will have a Market Basket story soon. He said he had a conversation with a previous Councilor today; Councilor James Arvid Wiggin. He is a well-respected individual. He always has a recommendation or comment on how the City should be run.

Councilor Austin said it was important that we passed the Resolution to encourage the State government to act. He hopes this isn't becoming a political issue, it is a medical crisis that is becoming a financial crisis. He encouraged people to take care of themselves. Stay home and find ways to occupy yourselves. Stay well and be safe.

Councilor Michaud wished everyone well and said to stay safe.

Councilor Witham applauded the Mayor and City Staff for coming up with the Ordinances and Resolutions that we acted on this evening. It demonstrates to our citizens that we can get things done and more importantly, that we have the wherewithal, both financial and technical to be able to work, at the local level, in helping to find our way to the end of this pandemic

crisis that we all find ourselves in. So, these are important gestures, and he stated that he cannot applaud the Mayor and City Staff enough for leading us down this road for these particular items. He went on to say, that since Councilor Dumont brought up Councilor Wiggin, he said that Wiggin was president of Somersworth Little League and hired him for his first job as a ground's keeper for the Little League at the age of 13. Now, 40+ years later, he is still working on ball fields. It got him started in a good direction. He said Wiggin would love that Councilor Paradis is using a yellow post-it note. If you ever visited Councilor Wiggins's house when he was a councilor, he had a million of those on his table with notes about various things. That is a little good, light humor on an otherwise, bleak week.

Councilor Gerding said welcome back to Councilor Dumont. He thanked BackBay for making this meeting possible; it took lots of phone calls and they did a great job. He reminded the City about the Cultural Commission videos, "We are Somersworth". He encouraged others to send in videos to mgerding@somersworth.com, to be shared on Channel 22.

Councilor Cameron thanked Councilor Gerding and Councilor Paradis for trying to get her tech savvy. She said she is proud to be part of this community. Everything that we did tonight, it shows the community that we are united in times of crisis. She reminded the community, that if you have to go out to the stores, for those who are working in retail, this is very challenging. It is stressful trying to get the products on the shelves for those who need it. She said it is good to see Councilor Dumont. Be well everyone and stay safe.

Councilor Paradis echoed a lot of the sentiments that were shared. She said be nice to your retail workers. They are essential at this point with keeping us fed and stocked with supplies. She shared some resources. [Nh.gov/COVID19](https://www.nh.gov/COVID19) is all of the state information. The Governor announced [NHeconomy.com/PPEhelp](https://www.nheconomy.com/PPEhelp), so if there are any local businesses that manufacture PPE, contact this page if you can help. There are some manufacturing facilities here in Somersworth, not sure what the capacity is, but if any can contribute to this stateside effort. She echoed what the Mayor has said and what other public officials are saying; Please stay home if possible. She said she has a couple family members who have been given the technical ability to stay home if they feel they are sick. A lot of employees feel like they are being pressured by their employers to come into offices that have too many people, and one of them was around someone that was symptomatic, and tested positive. Any encouragement that businesses can give their employees to facilitate their employees to work from home, will save multiple exposures at this point. What we are trying to do is flatten that curve. Even when out walking, stay 6 feet away, take precautions. She encouraged people, while they are home, fill out your census online. This can limit exposure and encourage social distancing, because for those who don't complete the census, someone will have to go to your house in the future, since the census has been delayed. But this can be filled out online.

Mayor Hilliard said, to the general public, it was demonstrated this evening that your municipal government will continue to function and will continue to operate, and that you are blessed with one of the most dedicated teams in the State of New Hampshire; whether that be the City Manager, the Fire Chief, the Police Chief, the City Clerk, our Director of Finance, and all of the City Hall Staff, whether it be each City Councilor behind me who continues to

go above and beyond during this crisis to ensure that your voices are being heard and that democracy will continue. We will get through this united together as a team. And since the beginning of this pandemic, those hilltopper values have continued to shine within our ten square mile community that we call home. From Franklin Street to Francoeur Drive, from Victoria Drive to Mt. Auburn Street to Cinnamon Ridge Road. Those values continue to be practiced each and every day and all of us, at the end of the day, should be proud to call each other hilltoppers. Continue to practice extreme social distancing, continue keep safe and healthy. We will get through this. We will prevail, and our community will become stronger because of that. Why? Because we are Hilltoppers.

ADJOURNMENT

Councilor Witham, seconded by Councilor Vincent, made a motion to adjourn until the call of the Chair. The motion to adjourn passed, by roll call, 9-0. The meeting adjourned at 6:50 pm. Adjournment at the call of the chair.

Trish Harris, City Clerk

Dana Hilliard, Mayor