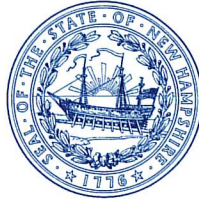


**ATTORNEY GENERAL  
DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE**

**154 - 6/17/26**

1 GRANITE PLACE SOUTH  
CONCORD, NEW HAMPSHIRE 03301

JOHN M. FORMELLA  
ATTORNEY GENERAL



JAMES T. BOFFETTI  
DEPUTY ATTORNEY GENERAL

May 20, 2026

Her Excellency, Governor Kelly A. Ayotte  
and the Honorable Council  
State House  
Concord, New Hampshire 03301

Your Excellency and Members of the Council:

**REQUESTED ACTION**

Authorize the New Hampshire Department of Justice (DOJ) to amend an existing subgrant with Somersworth Police Department, Somersworth, NH (Vendor #117476-B003) for the Comprehensive, Opioid, Stimulant, Substance Abuse Site-based Program (COSSAP) from the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Assistance for the purpose of continuing to fund enhancements to the Prevention, Enforcement, and Treatment Program (PET), by increasing the price limitation by \$82,000 from \$105,439 to \$187,439, with no change to the completion date of September 30, 2026, effective upon Governor and Executive Council approval. The original contract was approved by Governor and Council on September 21, 2022, item #124, amended on May 29, 2024, item 5S, and further amended on September 17, 2025, item 5H. 100% Federal Funds.

**EXPLANATION**

The U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Bureau of Justice Assistance, COSSAP funding is specifically designed to help lower recidivism rates of overdose victims and provide support to families of those struggling with substance use disorder (SUD) through enhancing and expanding the Prevention, Enforcement, and Treatment (PET) program. This program funds dedicated police officers to respond to overdose calls to provide resources. These officers can assist individuals suffering from SUD, and affected family members, by connecting them with needed resources. The officers also focus on child family members to identify adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) with a goal of preventing children from becoming future users.

New Hampshire Police Departments suffered a shortage of staffing and turnover causing delays in implementing the PET Program with the communities. Due to these shortages several

Her Excellency, Governor Kelly A. Ayotte  
and the Honorable Council  
May 20, 2026  
Page 2 of 2

of the Police Departments are de-obligating funds as they will be unable to spend the funds during the extension period. The de-obligated funds will be utilized by the Police Departments with staff in the PET Officer position.

The establishment of the Police Department's Prevention, Enforcement, and Treatment Officer is playing a key role in our communities. The goal is to educate and provide support to prevent entry into the criminal justice system and/or recidivism. With additional funding, the Somersworth Police Department will continue to support the PET Officer position and purchase an enclosed trailer equipped to serve as a Hidden in Plain Sight training unit. The Hidden in Plain Sight trailer will be staged as a typical child or teen bedroom and used as a training tool to help identify potential substance misuse by demonstrating how substances may be disguised or concealed within the room. This trailer will serve as a valuable asset for New Hampshire's community engagement efforts and can be incorporated into a wide range of outreach events, including National Night Out, school programs, children's festivals, and presentations for civic organizations.

It will also be made available upon request to any agency, school, or community event, along with the Prevention, Enforcement, and Treatment Officer, who will be the program's overall point of contact. The continuity of this trailer will provide the support needed to new residents, parents, and teachers. It will play a significant role in staying up to date on the latest substance use trends and best practices for prevention.

In the event that federal funds are no longer available, general funds will not be requested to support this program.

Please let me know if you have any questions concerning this request. Your consideration is greatly appreciated.

Respectfully submitted,



John M. Formella  
Attorney General

#5575120

## AMENDMENT TO GRANT AGREEMENT

This AMENDMENT TO GRANT AGREEMENT (the "Amendment") is entered into and effective as of the Effective Date (defined below) by and between as of the NEW HAMPSHIRE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE ("State") and the SOMERSWORTH POLICE DEPARTMENT ("Subrecipient"). State and Subrecipient are sometimes referred to herein singularly as a "Party" and collectively as the "Parties."

### RECITALS

WHEREAS, the Parties entered into the Grant Agreement as approved by the Governor and Executive Council of the State of New Hampshire on September 21, 2022 at Item # 124 (the "Agreement"), wherein the State agreed grant, and Subrecipient agreed to accept, certain sums upon the terms and conditions set forth therein; and

WHEREAS, in accordance with Paragraph 20 of the Agreement, the Parties wish to amend the terms and conditions of the Agreement as further specified herein;

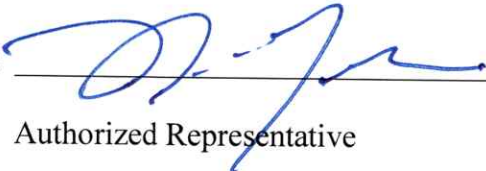
NOW THEREFORE, for good and valuable consideration exchanged, the receipt and sufficiency of which are hereby conclusively acknowledged, the Parties hereby agree to amend the Agreement as follows:

1. Amendment to Block 1.8. The Grant Limitation as set forth in Block 1.8 of the Agreement is to increase from \$105,439 to \$187,439.
2. Amendment to Exhibit C. Awarded amount as set forth in Paragraph 3(a) of Exhibit C to the Agreement is to increase from \$105,439 to \$187,439.
3. Effect of Amendment. Except as provided in this Amendment, the terms and conditions of the Agreement shall remain in full force and effect for all purposes.
4. Construction. The recitals set forth at the outset of this Amendment are a part of this Amendment, as fully as if set forth in their entirety in the body hereof. The captions or headings in this Amendment are for ease of reference only, and no caption or heading shall affect in any way the interpretation, meaning, or construction of this Amendment. Capitalized terms that are not defined within the text of this Amendment shall have the same meanings respectively ascribed to them in the Agreement.
5. Effective Date. The terms and conditions of this Amendment shall become effective on the date that it is approved the Governor and Executive Council of the State of New Hampshire (the "Effective Date").
6. Counterparts; Facsimile and Electronic Signatures. This Amendment may be executed in two or more counterparts, each of which shall be deemed an original, but all of which together shall constitute one and the same Amendment. A facsimile or portable document format (PDF) signature on this Amendment shall be equivalent to, and have the same force and effect as,

an original signature. In accordance with the New Hampshire Uniform Electronic Transactions Act, RSA 294-E:1 *et seq.*, the Parties hereby agree that this Amendment may be signed electronically, including any exhibits, schedules, addenda, or other attachments referenced herein.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the Parties have executed this Amendment as of the date adjacent to their respective signatures set forth below.

SOMERSWORTH POLICE DEPARTMENT

By:   
Authorized Representative

5/14/26  
Date

David Moore  
Name of Authorized Representative

NEW HAMPSHIRE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

By: Thomas D. Kaempfer  
Thomas Kaempfer, Deputy Director of Administration

5/18/26  
Date

Approved by the Attorney General (Form, Substance and Execution)

By: Christen Lavers

5/18/26  
Date

# SOMERSWORTH, NEW HAMPSHIRE

City of Somersworth  
One Government Way  
Somersworth, NH 03878



City Hall  
603.692.4262  
www.somersworth.com

I, Kristen LaPanne, hereby certify that I am a duly appointed City Clerk of the City of Somersworth. I hereby certify the following is a true copy of a vote taken at a meeting of the City Council of the City of Somersworth, duly called and held on May 4, 2025 at which a quorum of the City Council was present and voting.

RESOLVED: That David Moore, City Manager, of the City of Somersworth, is authorized to accept the amendment to the Comprehensive Opioid, Stimulant, and Substance Use Program (COSSUP) grant agreement on behalf of the City of Somersworth with the New Hampshire Department of Justice and further is authorized to execute any documents and agreements necessary for the Grant's execution, and to take any and all other such actions relative to this grant determined to be in the best interest of the City.

I hereby certify that the foregoing resolution has not been amended or repealed and remains in full force and effect as of May 13, 2026. I further certify that it is understood that the State of New Hampshire will rely on this certificate as evidence that the person listed above currently occupies the position indicated and that they have full authority to bind the Municipality. This authority remains valid for thirty (30) days from the date of this certificate.

Dated: 5/13/2026

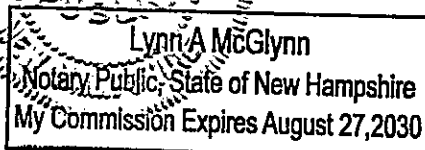
Attest: K. LaPanne  
Kristen LaPanne, City Clerk

State: New Hampshire  
County: Strafford

On this 13 day of May 2026, before me, Lynn McGlynn (notary/JP's name), the undersigned officer, personally appeared Kristen LaPanne known to me to be the person whose name is signed on the foregoing document and acknowledged to me that he signed voluntarily for its stated purpose and that it was his free act and deed.

In witness thereof, I hereunto set my hand and official seal.

Lynn McGlynn  
Justice of the Peace/Notary  
Commission Expires August 27, 2030



Proud past, bright future



### **ROLL CALL OF MEMBERS**

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Mayor Gerding and, upon roll call, the following Council members were present: McNair, Gibson, Paradis-Catanzaro, Michaud, Witham, Austin, Cameron and Barry.

Councilor Vincent was excused.

### **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Councilor Paradis-Catanzaro led the Council in the Pledge of Allegiance.

### **RECOGNITION OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLE – OUR NATIVE ANCESTRAL AMERICANS**

Mayor Gerding read the Recognition of Indigenous People – Our Native Ancestral Americans

### **PRESENTATIONS**

- A. Downtown Somersworth Parking Study – Colin Lentz Principal Transportation Planner of Strafford Regional Planning Commission (SRPC)

City Manager Moore welcomed Colin Lentz and introduced the purpose of the presentation being to present recommendations and data from a parking study commissioned last year. The discussion is going to be large and ongoing study with next steps being to finalize the report and present it to the Council for guidance on moving forward.

Colin Lentz presented findings from the downtown parking study covering 444 public spaces in the downtown and adjacent areas, using data collected on a weekday and a Sunday by volunteers walking three routes hourly. Overall parking supply was found to be underutilized, with average occupancy around 38%, though demand is concentrated on High Street and Market Street. The Somersworth Plaza lot is functioning largely as long-term parking, and analysis of the Green Street apartments area suggests potential peak occupancy of approximately 61%. Lentz noted concerns from businesses that current downtown time limits are too short and result in customers receiving tickets, and that long-term and renter parking patterns are not well managed. Recommendations included re-evaluating time limits and related regulations, conducting additional outreach to downtown and adjacent businesses and renters, and improving use of existing spaces—including encouraging some parkers to use spaces slightly farther out and walk—before considering expansions to supply. Lentz also recommended learning from nearby communities that have implemented paid, app-based parking systems, emphasizing that paid parking should be treated primarily as a behavior-management tool, with revenues reinvested into parking and streetscape improvements. He will finalize and format the full report with staff for future policy guidance and indicated the study could be repeated in several years to track changes.

Councilor Witham thanked Lentz for the work on the study, noting that the findings both confirmed many of his impressions about parking and highlighted some new issues. He observed that the original discussion around paid parking was really about how to manage driver behavior, and emphasized that effective enforcement is essential whether or not the City pursues paid parking. Referring to the data on vehicles significantly exceeding posted time limits—especially on High Street and Market Street—he supported working with downtown businesses to identify an appropriate mix of parking durations, suggesting that the

corridor likely needs a combination of short-term spaces (e.g., 15 minutes for quick pick-ups) and longer-term spaces (90 minutes to two hours) to serve both sit-down restaurants and take-out customers. He expressed concern that the City's current part-time parking enforcement is likely insufficient to support either existing time limits or any future paid parking program, and asked whether the study examined how many hours are currently devoted to enforcement. Councilor Witham also shared a practical "thumb-in-the-wind" example—cars still covered in snow well after the two-hour window begins—as an indicator that some vehicles are staying far beyond posted limits.

Lentz emphasized that enforcement is a critical part of any parking approach and that mobile app technology improves this by providing instant data on where and how long people park. He cited Dover's system, where the first 15 minutes are free and enforcement is done via license plate tracking. He agreed that if parking revenues are generated, they should help fund enforcement efforts, consistent with the study's recommendations.

Councilor Gibson asked how a mobile-app-based parking system would work without traditional kiosks or meters, and specifically how staff would know a vehicle had exceeded a one- or two-hour limit without a paper ticket on the windshield. Lentz explained that, in app-based systems such as Dover's, the City contracts with a software provider that manages the platform and defines parking areas through signage and configuration in the system. Enforcement officers use a tablet or similar device to scan license plates, with the system showing how long each vehicle has been parked and when an officer should return to check for overstays. Lentz noted that Dover and Portsmouth use different apps, which can require drivers to download multiple apps when visiting different communities, and that this "technological hurdle" is something to consider when selecting vendors or coordinating regionally.

Councilor McNair noted that many New Hampshire communities are transitioning to QR-code-based parking, where drivers scan a code on signage, enter a zone code and license plate, and pay as a guest user without needing to download an app. She observed that this approach is becoming common and provides infrastructure-light, low capital-cost options for municipalities. Lentz agreed, noting he has used such systems himself and that communities like Dover and Portsmouth are increasingly not replacing broken kiosks because app- and QR-based systems now generate sufficient revenue to outweigh the cost of maintaining older hardware. Councilor McNair, drawing on her experience working downtown, also described frequent short-term activity (delivery drivers, food pickups, coffee stops, retail visits) along High Street and Market Street, and suggested exploring a model where businesses could purchase daytime permits for specific spots in front of their locations and help monitor their use. She proposed that this could give businesses more control over access for their customers while shifting some responsibility for monitoring onto the business owners. Lentz responded that he can look for examples of such approaches and suggested that future outreach could include mapping potential paid-parking or QR-code zones and using materials in storefronts (e.g., table tents, notices) to gather business and customer feedback on how proposed changes would affect their operations and parking behavior.

Councilor Paradis-Catanzaro asked how the study accounted for renters who park long-term on downtown streets, whether renters had been directly consulted, and what solutions for renter parking Lentz might recommend. Lentz replied that the team did not conduct a formal renter survey; instead, they inferred from observations and limited conversations that in downtown areas with rental housing and no permitting, renters are likely occupying spaces for extended periods. He recommended that, in addition to business outreach, the City conduct targeted engagement with the renter community to better understand their needs and patterns—particularly in winter and in scenarios where snow events can highlight long-stay vehicles. Lentz also referenced similar issues in Newmarket, where constrained supply and any move to downtown paid parking could push demand into surrounding neighborhoods, raising questions about residential permitting, renter access, and how to balance neighborhood capacity with renter needs.

B. Building Codes Fees, Fines, & Penalties – Director of Planning and Community Development  
Michelle Mears

Director Mears presented proposed updates to Chapter 22 – Building Codes, Fees, Fines, and Penalties as part of a broader citywide fee schedule and budget process. She noted that the building code fee schedule was last updated in 2019, and the changes are intended to modernize fees, streamline administration, and align Somersworth with surrounding communities (Dover, Rochester, Durham, Portsmouth, Concord, Keene).

Director Mears explained that, under RSA 47:17, City Council may change fees by ordinance following a public hearing, while land use fees (site plan and subdivision) are governed by RSA 673:16 and were recently updated by the Planning Board. The Finance Committee previously reviewed and recommended the proposed Chapter 22 changes in April.

The current fee structure requires itemized, “piece by piece” calculations (e.g., counting fixtures), creating a significant administrative burden for both staff and contractors. The proposed structure simplifies the process by using higher but clearer flat and per-value fees. Examples provided included:

- Residential building permit changing from a \$25 application fee plus \$9 per \$1,000 of construction cost to a \$50 application fee plus \$10 per \$1,000, eliminating most itemized counts.
- Demolition permit increasing from \$35 to \$100 for structures of approximately 1,500 sq. ft., with additional tiers tied to structure size, plus an application fee.

Director Mears noted that the changes coordinate with implementation of the SmartGov online permitting system, expected to go live in June, allowing the new fees to be integrated into the platform at no additional cost.

Councilor Witham noted that, based on the Finance Committee’s prior review, the updated fees remain generally in line with or lower than those in surrounding communities, even with the proposed increases. Councilor Witham also commented from his own recent home project experience (window replacement) that the simplified, value-based fee calculation is much clearer and easier for residents to understand, and he expressed appreciation for the added simplicity for people doing the work.

Mayor Gerding commented from personal experience that the prior system was confusing and time-consuming and voiced support for the streamlined approach. He also asked if future fee updates would be incorporated into the annual budget process, which staff confirmed is the plan.

Next steps include integrating the new fees into SmartGov, updating the City website and building permit forms, posting a notice under News & Announcements, and continuing outreach to contractors regarding the revised fee schedule.

## **PUBLIC HEARING**

- A. Ordinance 10-26 – To Amend Chapter 13D, Noise/Nuisance Control Definitions, Noises Prohibited, Exclusions and Exemptions, and Penalty, and the Addition of a Section, Noises Created by or Emanating from a Motor Vehicle

Richard Brooks, Ward 1, resident and automotive enthusiast, spoke regarding the proposed vehicle noise ordinance. He expressed that while he is hesitant about the regulation and concerned it could become a “slippery slope,” he recognizes the need to address excessively loud, gunshot-like vehicle noises. Brooks noted that some legitimate vehicle configurations, such as his off-road vehicle with a locked axle, can cause tire “chirping” when turning even when driven responsibly, and he urged the Council to focus on driving behavior rather than the mere existence of modifications. He explained that many of the loud backfire noises are the result of engine tuning and programming, not just muffler changes, and described how maintaining high RPMs in low gear and then abruptly releasing the throttle can intentionally trigger backfires. Brooks shared a recorded video example of the noise complaints and observed that public reaction online indicates broad annoyance with these backfire noises. Brooks recommended specific

amendments to focus on driver behavior that produces gunshot-like sounds rather than vehicle modifications alone. He suggested adding language to the section addressing rapid acceleration to include operation of a vehicle at unusually high engine speeds with quick closing of the throttle that results in loud bangs, pops, or backfires mimicking gunshots, and to reference rapid acceleration with quick up-shifting in both manual and automatic transmissions where drivers deliberately hold high RPMs in low gear and then release the throttle to trigger backfire. In addition, under the section related to racing or high-revving of engines (Section V), he proposed expanding the language to cover racing of high-revving by manipulation of the accelerator, carburetor, or gear selection whether the vehicle is in motion or stationary, including behavior that enables a rev-limiter action. He distributed printed copies of his suggested revisions for the Council's consideration.

- B. Ordinance 11-26 -- To Amend Chapter 34, Exemptions and Credits, Section 34.3 Service-Connected Total Disability

There were no public comments.

- C. Ordinance 12-26 -- To Amend Chapter 20, Building Codes, Section 20.L Fees, Fines, & Penalties, Section 1 Building Permit Fee Schedule and Section 20.L.4 Reinspection Fee

There were no public comments.

### **COMMENTS BY VISITORS**

Ashley Forrest addressed the Council and thanked them for the opportunity to speak. She explained that in November her father, Steve Forrest, and his dog, Randall, were struck and killed while walking on Old Rochester Road. In response, her family created "The Forrest Way," a mission focused on protecting pedestrians, empowering communities, and turning awareness into action to prevent similar tragedies. As part of this effort, they have been donating reflective vests and armbands to community members who walk or work near roadways to improve visibility and safety. Forrest recognized Councilor Nancie Cameron and the "Don't Trash Somersworth" group for their important roadside cleanup work and noted the safety risks they encounter near traffic. On behalf of The Forrest Way, she donated a set of reflective vests and armbands to the group to support their safety while working along the roadside. She expressed appreciation to the City Council and the Mayor for the safety improvements already made on Old Rochester Road and stated that her family looks forward to continued collaboration on additional safety measures. Forrest concluded by emphasizing the importance of working together to keep the community safe, which she described as "The Forrest Way."

Ethan Clark, Ward 1, announced the upcoming Memorial Day services and encouraged broad community participation, highlighting the quality of the events organized by the local Legion and the strong involvement of the school band. He emphasized the importance of honoring fallen heroes and noted the value of these ceremonies as a display of community spirit and as an educational experience, particularly for younger residents. Clark urged residents to make attendance a priority and to invite their families and loved ones. He also stated for the record his opposition to instituting paid parking downtown, expressing concern that parking fees would not serve as a meaningful revenue source and would instead discourage visitors and place additional strain on local businesses, particularly while the City is still working to attract and sustain more viable establishments in the downtown area. He requested that any proposal to implement paid parking downtown not move forward.

### **CONSENT CALENDAR**

- A. Approve Minutes of the City Council Meeting held on April 20, 2026

*Councilor Austin made a motion to approve the consent calendar as presented. The motion was seconded by Councilor Cameron and passed 8-0 by voice vote.*

**ACCEPTANCE OF WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS, PETITIONS AND DONATIONS**

There were no written communications, petitions or donations.

**MAYOR'S REPORT**

First, I would like to announce some new appointees to the Mayor's Commission to Redesign and Reimage the Somersworth School District. We had some great outreach from folks once word got out that we were looking to fill some vacancies.

The following folks have been added as community representatives to the commission:

- Daniel Smith
- Wendy Berkeley
- Katie Goulet

At this point, we have filled the openings on the commission, but will be looking for ways to engage with the community soon.

Also, this evening I have two proclamations....

For the first proclamation, I invite members of the Somersworth Mental Health Alliance up to accept their proclamation. Mayor Gerding read the following proclamation:

**Proclaiming May 2026 as Mental Health Awareness Month in the City of Somersworth, NH**

WHEREAS, mental health is an essential part of overall well-being, impacting youth, families, individuals and those who work in or own businesses across Somersworth; and

WHEREAS, one in five American adults experiences a mental health condition each year; one in six American adolescents (age 12-17) experience a major depressive episode. Mental Health challenges impact everyone. We all face challenges in life that can impact our mental health; and

WHEREAS, despite its prevalence, mental health remains shrouded in stigma, preventing many from seeking help. Per the CDC and the National Institute of Mental Health - the average time between a person's onset of symptoms to seeking treatment is 11 years; and

WHEREAS, early intervention and access to quality care are crucial for managing mental health conditions and improving quality of life; you can recover from mental health challenges; and

WHEREAS, May is recognized nationally as Mental Health Awareness Month, providing an opportunity to raise awareness, combat stigma, and promote mental health resources;

**NOW, THEREFORE**, I, Matt Gerding, Mayor of the City of Somersworth, New Hampshire, on behalf of the Somersworth City Council, do hereby proclaim May 2026 as Mental Health Awareness

Month in the City of Somersworth, and encourage all citizens to educate yourself and others about mental health conditions, treatment options, and available resources; challenge stigma by speaking respectfully and inclusively about mental health; seek help if you are struggling with your mental health and encourage others to do the same; support organizations that provide mental health services and advocacy; create safe and supportive environments for open conversations about mental health; become part of the mental health solution; and work together to create a community where everyone feels empowered to prioritize their mental well-being and seeks help when needed.

**IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and seal of the City of Somersworth, New Hampshire, this 4<sup>th</sup> day in April in the year two thousand and twenty-six. Signed Mayor Matt Gerding.**

Councilor McNair accepted the proclamation on behalf of the Somersworth Mental Health Alliance. She thanked Mayor Gerding for his support in helping the Somersworth Mental Health Alliance grow, noting that she has served on the steering committee since its recent re-establishment. She explained that the Somersworth alliance has been working closely with the Dover Mental Health Alliance and the Rochester Mental Health Alliance, and that together they are becoming a coordinated Seacoast effort to make mental health resources more visible, reduce stigma, and ensure that residents can access the help they need with the support of their cities. Councilor McNair also announced that May 15 is wear green day in support of individuals experiencing mental health challenges, and she encouraged everyone to wear green on that day to show solidarity and to remind those who are struggling that help is available.

Next up I will invite up members of the Home for All Coalition. Mayor Gerding read the following proclamation:

**Proclaiming May 11-17, 2026 as Affordable Housing Week in Somersworth**

WHEREAS, all people should have access to safe, healthy and affordable homes; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development defines affordable housing as “housing on which the occupant is paying no more than 30 percent of gross income for housing costs, including utilities”; and

WHEREAS, the Seacoast region of New Hampshire faces one of the most severe housing shortages in the state, with rents and home prices outpacing wages and contributing to increased housing insecurity; and

WHEREAS, housing instability impacts the ability of young families to stay in our communities, creates barriers for older adults wishing to age in place, and effects our workforce and economic growth; and

WHEREAS, only 15% of New Hampshire residents, today, could afford to purchase a median priced home, according to New Hampshire Housing; and

WHEREAS, everyone benefits from affordable housing, not just the people living in these properties; and

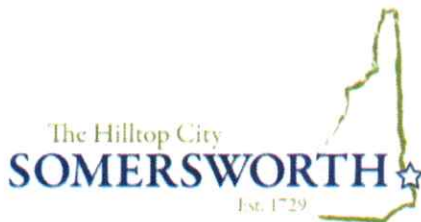
WHEREAS, united through the Home for All Coalition, municipalities, organizations, and residents across the Seacoast are participating in Affordable Housing Week to elevate the urgent need for affordable housing solutions and to ensure homelessness is rare, brief, and nonrecurring.

**NOW, THEREFORE,** I, Matt Gerding, Mayor of the City of Somersworth, New Hampshire, on behalf of the Somersworth City Council, do hereby proclaim the week of May 11-17 2026, as Affordable Housing Week in the City of Somersworth, and commit to actions and policies that expand affordable housing opportunities and strengthen community stability for all residents.

**IN WITNESS WHEREOF,** I have hereunto set my hand and seal of the City of Somersworth, New Hampshire, this 4<sup>th</sup> day in May in the year two thousand and twenty-six. Signed Mayor Matt Gerding.

This concludes my report.

### **CITY MANAGER REPORT**



#### ***Office of the City Manager***

**TO:** Mayor Matt Gerding and City Council Members  
**FROM:** David Moore, City Manager  
**RE:** City Manager Comments for May 4, 2026 Meeting  
**DATE:** Friday, May 1, 2026

---

**Reminder:** Please note a non-public meeting re: Collective Bargaining Agreements will be held at 6:00 p.m. immediately prior to the meeting. Information pertaining to the non-public session has been transmitted under separate cover.

#### **Presentations**

- A. Downtown Somersworth Parking Study – Colin Lentz Principal Transportation Planner of Strafford Regional Planning Commission
- B. Building Codes Fees, Fines, & Penalties – Director of Planning and Community Development Michelle Mears

## Public Hearings

- A. **Ordinance 10-26 – To Amend Chapter 13D, Noise/Nuisance Control Definitions, Noises Prohibited, Exclusions and Exemptions, and Penalty, and the Addition of a Section, Noises Created by or Emanating from a Motor Vehicle**

I have included a mark-up of this ordinance as well as an introductory communication from Chief Sunderland relative to this issue in your packet.

- B. **Ordinance 11-26 – To Amend Chapter 34, Exemptions and Credits, Section 34.3 Service-Connected Total Disability**

Context for this change can be found later in this memorandum.

- C. **Ordinance 12-26 – To Amend Chapter 20, Building Codes, Section 20.L Fees, Fines, & Penalties, Section 1 Building Permit Fee Schedule and Section 20.L.4 Reinspection Fee**

A presentation on this proposed amendment will be provided by Director Mears as part of the evening's presentations.

## Consent Calendar

### Lay on the Table

- A. **Resolution 19-26 – Vote to Approve the Somersworth School Board Recommended Open Enrollment Policy for the SAU 56/Somersworth School District**

As previously explained in this [City Manager report](#), the procedure for adopting this policy is driven by state RSA. More detail about this topic can also be found in the report.

*Sample motion: To remove Resolution 19-26 from the table.*

## Consideration of Ordinance and Resolutions

- A. **Second Reading of Ordinance 10-26 – To Amend Chapter 13D, Noise/Nuisance Control Definitions, Noises Prohibited, Exclusions and Exemptions, and Penalty, and the Addition of a Section, Noises Created by or Emanating from a Motor Vehicle**

A public hearing on this ordinance will be held earlier in the meeting.

Please refer to Chief John Sunderland's memorandum on this topic in your packet.

- B. **Second Reading of Ordinance 11-26 – To Amend Chapter 34, Exemptions and Credits, Section 34.3 Service-Connected Total Disability**

A public hearing on this ordinance will be held earlier in the meeting.

This ordinance amendment is recommended in order to respond to a recent change in law regarding tax credits offered to veterans.

New Hampshire House Bill 99, which took effect on July 13, 2025, prohibits veterans from receiving both the Veterans' Property Tax Credit AND the Total and Permanent Service-Connected Disabled Property Tax Credit.

Effective for the 2026 tax year veterans, may only receive one of the credits. This means, that, if no further action is taken by the City Council, veterans who currently receive both credits will only be able to take one credit.

As a response for Somersworth, the staff have worked with the Finance Committee and the Finance Committee supports this amendment that retains the value of the credits that disabled-veterans have been receiving.

This amendment would increase the Total and Permanent Service-Connected Disabled Property Tax Credit from \$2,500 to \$3,250 (an increase of \$750). This increase will have a net zero effect on all current residents who receive these credits, and will not increase the amount of property taxes needing to be raised from other tax payers in order to fund the credit.

4

A chart explaining the change and the proposed solution is on the next page.

<b>Credit Comparison for Veterans Receiving Both Credits in 2025</b>			
		IF No Action Taken	With Action Taken
	2025	2026 (New State Law – Must Choose One Credit)	2026 (With Proposed City Amendment – Must Choose One Credit)
Veterans' Property Tax Credit	\$750	\$750	\$750
Disabled Veterans Property Tax Credit	\$2,500	\$2,500	\$3,250
Can Both Credits Be Taken Together?	Yes	No	No
Number of Credits Allowed	2	1 only	1 only
Best Choice Available	Both credits	\$2,500 credit	\$3,250 credit
Total Credit Veteran Receives	<b>\$3,250</b>	<b>\$2,500</b>	<b>\$3,250</b>
Difference from 2025	—	<b>-\$750 less</b>	<b>No change</b>

**C. Second Reading of Ordinance 12-26 – To Amend Chapter 20, Building Codes, Section 20.L Fees, Fines, & Penalties, Section 1 Building Permit Fee Schedule and Section 20.L.4 Reinspection Fee**

Director Mears will present the Chapter 20 Building Codes Fee schedule during the presentations portion of the meeting and...the public hearing.

As the City Council is aware, the City is embarking on an online building permit system this spring. In conjunction with this change, staff is recommending an update to the Code Enforcement Fees so that the changes can be incorporated in the online programming efficiently. This updated fee schedule was reviewed by the Finance Committee at its meeting on April 14, 2026 and gained its recommendation to the full Council. These fees were last adjusted in 2019.

The effective date of these fees is upon passage, which is preferable to the effective date of the Schedule of Fees adopted during the budget process. (Whose effective date July 1<sup>st</sup>)

Proposed fees are based on the cost of construction/work to be completed. In addition to the benefit of the earlier effective date, these changes ease administration of the collection of fees and better align our fee structure with other communities.

A public hearing on these fees will be required per RSA 47:17. I have asked Director Mears to present on the new schedule at your next meeting in advance of the public hearing.

### City Manager Items Requiring Action

A. **To Authorize the City Manager to Accept the Amendment to the COSSUP Grant in the Amount of an Additional \$82,000.**

The Somersworth Police Department was awarded \$105,439 in FY22 through the COSSUP grant. In FY25, the Department identified the need for a part-time position; however, existing funds were insufficient to cover costs through the grant's October 1, 2026 expiration. An [addendum](#) request was submitted for \$57,000 in personnel funding and \$25,000 to develop a "hidden in plain sight" educational trailer to help parents, teachers, and community members recognize signs of substance use.

On April 28, 2026, the City was notified that the full \$82,000 request was authorized, pending City Council and Governor approval.

***Recommended Action: To Authorize the City Manager to accept the amendment to the COSSUP Grant in the amount of \$82,000.***

B. **Vote to Ratify a 1-Year Collective Bargaining Agreement between the City of Somersworth and the Somersworth Public Administrators Association (SPAA)**

Please see the memorandum and Tentative Agreement in your packet.

***Recommended action: To ratify 1-Year Collective Bargaining Agreement between the City of Somersworth and the Somersworth Public Administrators Association (SPAA)***

C. **Vote to Ratify a 1-Year Collective Bargaining Agreement between the City of Somersworth and the Public Works/High Division AFSCME Council 93, Local 863**

Please see the memorandum and Tentative Agreement in your packet.

***Recommended action: To ratify 1-Year Collective Bargaining Agreement between the City of Somersworth and the Public Works/High Division AFSCME Council 93, Local 863***

D. **Vote to Ratify a 1-Year Collective Bargaining Agreement between the City of Somersworth and Water/Wastewater Employees Association**

Please see the memorandum and Tentative Agreement in your packet.

***Recommended action: To ratify 1-Year Collective Bargaining Agreement between the City of Somersworth and Water/Wastewater Employees Association***

**Other**

There are no items under “Other” for your May 4<sup>th</sup> meeting.

**Informational Items**

There are no “information items” for you May 4<sup>th</sup> meeting.

**REPORT OF STANDING COMMITTEES, SPECIAL COMMITTEES, CITY OFFICERS**

*Finance Committee* – There was no report.

*Government Operations Committee* – Councilor Michaud reported that the Committee is tentatively scheduled to meet on Monday, May 18<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m.

*Economic Development Committee* – Councilor Paradis-Catanzaro reported that the Committee is tentatively scheduled to meet on Monday, May 18<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m.

*Public Safety Committee* – There was no report.

*Public Works and Environment Committee* – There was no report.

*Recreation Committee* – There was no report.

*Mayor’s Commission on Reimagining and Redesigning the Somersworth School System* – Mayor Gerding reported that the commission met on April 22<sup>nd</sup>. He stated that the commission identified several main categories to guide the redesign process, including school scheduling (start and end times, length of day, and coordination with bus transportation and staff availability), use of space (buildings, fields, grounds, classrooms, transitional and common areas, and how these have evolved with school safety concerns), student structure and organization (how students progress through the system, whether by grade level, ability, or other models, and how student pathways are defined), and the roles and responsibilities of teachers, counselors, administrators, parents, families, students, and the broader community. He noted particular concern about maintaining high-quality education in the context of potential staffing reductions driven by funding limitations.

Mayor Gerding further reported that the commission discussed potential partnerships within the community, among the Tri-Cities, and with the State, identifying the existing Tri-Cities CTC agreement as a strong partnership. The group also considered longer-term structural questions around district leadership, including what it might mean for Somersworth to function as a single-district community and the implications of state-level discussions about consolidating SAUs from more than 100 to 12. As part of this discussion, the commission raised the question of whether the SAU’s “home base” should remain in a standalone building or be integrated into school facilities.

He explained that the latter portion of the meeting consisted of open brainstorming, with no decisions made, where members raised additional ideas for future discussion. These included exploring an open enrollment model among the Tri-Cities, under which students might attend specialized programs (for example, Somersworth offering a French program to which Rochester students could enroll, similar to the

CTC structure) supported by memoranda of understanding. The commission also discussed creative approaches to student transportation and cost savings, including a concept modeled on Burlington, Vermont, in which students would make use of the city bus system and, locally, whether COAST could be incorporated into student transportation. Mayor Gerding reported further discussion on the role of technology and artificial intelligence in schools, including appropriate uses, limitations, and potential impacts on student learning and brain development.

Additional topics included flexible scheduling at the high school, such as schedules that allow some teachers and students to start later and end later in the day to better meet student needs and reduce attendance and truancy issues, and the possibility of a four-day school week in which students attend four longer days while Friday serves as an additional planning day for staff, in recognition of the increased preparation required to address varied student abilities. Finally, the commission stressed the importance of maintaining enrichment opportunities, including foreign language instruction, and considered how to determine which languages to offer, whether based on career and college readiness and national prevalence or the languages most commonly spoken in the local community. Mayor Gerding concluded by noting that these discussions were conceptual and exploratory in nature, with no decisions taken, and that the commission scheduled its next meeting for tomorrow, May 5<sup>th</sup>.

*Historic District Commission* – Councilor Barry reported that the commission met and approved two applications that were up for review. Of note, the members voted to add an item to the regular agenda for discussion with community members about future projects that residents are considering as opposed to submitting an application being the only way to speak to the board.

## **NOMINATIONS, APPOINTMENTS AND ELECTIONS**

### **Nominations Requiring Council Confirmation Vote:**

- A. Scott Orzechowski for re-appointment as a member of the Conservation Commission for a term of 3 years

***Councilor Witham made a motion to approve the nominee. The motion was seconded by Councilor McNair and passed 8-0 by voice vote.***

## **LAY ON THE TABLE**

- A. Resolution 19-26 – Vote to Approve the Somersworth School Board Recommended Open Enrollment Policy for the SAU 56/Somersworth School District

***Councilor Witham made a motion to remove Resolution 19-26 from the table. The motion was seconded by Councilor Austin and passed 8-0 by voice vote.***

***Councilor Austin made a motion to adopt Resolution 19-26 as submitted. The motion was seconded by Councilor Paradis-Catanzaro***

Discussion:

Councilor Austin commented the resolution is not dissimilar to other actions that many other communities in the State have implemented. If adopted, the Council authorizes the School Board to create an open enrollment policy for the Somersworth School District that is in compliance with current State law. He feels it is important that the Council support this resolution.

*The motion passed 8-0 by roll call vote.*

## **CONSIDERATION OF ORDINANCES AND RESOLUTIONS**

- A. Second Reading of Ordinance 10-26 – To Amend Chapter 13D, Noise/Nuisance Control Definitions, Noises Prohibited, Exclusions and Exemptions, and Penalty, and the Addition of a Section, Noises Created by or Emanating from a Motor Vehicle

***Councilor Paradis-Catanzaro made a motion to amend Ordinance 10-26 by to section 13D:4 B iii by adding the following “This may include operating at an unusually high engine speed”. The motion was seconded by Councilor Gibson.***

Discussion:

City Manager Moore recommended postponing any immediate action on the amendment. He expressed concerns about the lack of input from the Police Department on the specific language change. City Manager Moore emphasized the importance of ensuring that any ordinance language is enforceable and practical, suggesting that the Council either table the motion until the May 18<sup>th</sup> meeting or simply defer it until staff and the Police Chief could review the proposed changes and provide feedback. He also noted that ordinances are typically drafted with input from legal counsel to ensure clarity and enforceability.

Councilor Laura Barry expressed concern about the enforceability of the proposed amendment language. She stated that she would be worried about how the wording could be enforced in practice and therefore recommended obtaining input from the police department regarding the language and its implementation.

Councilor Witham agreed and stated that the use of the word “unusual” in the proposed amendment struck him as nebulous, noting that what is unusual to one person may not be unusual to another. He indicated that this wording alone gave him pause and added that the entire ordinance caused him concern due to the extensive wordsmithing involved. He described the situation as one where “you know it when you see it, or in this case, when you hear it,” but acknowledged that it was difficult to define clearly. Councilor Witham commented that while everyone understood the objective of the ordinance, his repeated review of the language led him to different interpretations each time. He concluded that the ordinance required significant rework, especially if additional language was to be added, and expressed appreciation for the pause recommended by the City Manager.

Councilor Gibson stated that he largely agreed with the concerns about excessive wordsmithing in the proposed ordinance. He emphasized that his primary concern was with the technical aspects of enforcement, particularly given that the State of New Hampshire no longer conducts vehicle inspections. He questioned how “legal” noise levels would be defined and enforced, noting that what is considered improper noise to one person may not be considered improper to another. He observed that only a few communities in the State have decibel meters to monitor noise levels and suggested that, without such equipment and a clear enforcement framework, it would be difficult to enforce an ordinance of this type. He referenced past practices where obviously improper mufflers, such as glass packs, could be more straightforwardly cited. Councilor Gibson concluded that meaningful enforcement of the proposed noise provisions would likely require a significant change in policing approach and equipment, as well as clear criteria, and therefore agreed with the City Manager that the ordinance should be reworked into a more manageable form based on additional research.

In response to these concerns, Councilor Paradis-Catanzaro agreed to withdraw her motion, with the consent of Councilor Gibson. Councilor Austin then suggested, and the Council agreed, that the amendment should be re-referred to the Public Safety Committee for further review and recommendations.

B. Second Reading of Ordinance 11-26 – To Amend Chapter 34, Exemptions and Credits, Section 34.3 Service-Connected Total Disability

***Councilor Witham made a motion to adopt Ordinance 11-26 as submitted. The motion was seconded by Councilor Gibson.***

Discussion:

Councilor Witham explained that the proposed ordinance is intended to ensure that veterans who currently receive property tax exemptions are able to maintain the highest exemption level available to them. He noted that recent changes in State law would otherwise have negatively affected these exemptions, and that the local legislation is designed to effectively counteract those impacts so that veterans continue to receive the same level of credit.

Councilor Gibson expressed strong support for the ordinance, emphasizing that he favors any measures that assist veterans, particularly those with disabilities. He acknowledged their honorable service and the sacrifices they have made for the Country, and stated that he wishes the City could do even more for them.

Councilor Barry voiced her support as well, concurring with the previous remarks. She indicated that the ordinance will likely be revisited in the following year and stated that she looks forward to those future discussions, but believes it is important to take this step at the present time.

***The motion passed 8-0 by roll call vote.***

C. Second Reading of Ordinance 12-26 – To Amend Chapter 20, Building Codes, Section 20.L Fees, Fines, & Penalties, Section 1 Building Permit Fee Schedule and Section 20.L.4 Reinspection Fee

***Councilor Barry made a motion to adopt Ordinance 12-26 as submitted. The motion was seconded by Councilor Cameron.***

Discussion:

Councilor Witham expressed appreciation for Director Mears' presentation and noted that while the proposed changes would increase certain fees, the overall budget impact would be minimal given that these fees represent a very small portion of the City's revenue. He emphasized that the primary benefit of the proposal is the simplification of the permit process for builders, making it easier to calculate fees and supporting the City's goal of being business-friendly. He commended the work that went into the proposal.

Councilor Cameron agreed, stating that the streamlined process is now much simpler and better for applicants, and thanked staff for their hard work on the changes.

***The motion passed 8-0 by roll call vote.***

**CITY MANAGER ITEMS REQUIRING ACTION**

A. To Authorize the City Manager to Accept the Amendment to the COSSUP Grant in the Amount of an Additional \$82,000

***Councilor Barry made a motion to authorize the City Manager to accept the amendment to the COSSUP grant in the amount of \$82,000. The motion was seconded by Councilor Witham***

Discussion:

Councilor Barry expressed strong support for accepting the funds, noting that when grant money is available the City should take advantage of it. She emphasized that people outside the immediate community are also excited about the concept and hope to see similar initiatives in their own areas. She

highlighted the educational value of the program and the collaboration with the Police Department and the assigned officer, stating that she views acceptance of the grant as a clear “no brainer.”

Councilor Austin agreed, stating that the work supported by the grant is very important to the community. He underscored that the funding comes from a grant rather than taxpayer dollars, which, in his view, makes acceptance of the grant an obvious choice and something the City should proceed with.

Mayor Gerding added that he frequently talks about this grant program and promotes it as a positive example of what the City is doing. He described it as a “cool thing” the City has underway and indicated pride in the City’s work under the program.

***The motion passed 8-0 by roll call vote.***

- B. Vote to Ratify a 1-Year Collective Bargaining Agreement between the City of Somersworth and the Somersworth Public Administrators Association (SPAA)

***Councilor Witham made a motion to ratify 1-Year Collective Bargaining Agreement between the City of Somersworth and the Somersworth Public Administrators Association (SPAA). The motion was seconded by Councilor Gibson***

Discussion:

Councilor Witham commended the City Manager for clearly outlining the negotiation process and the constraints imposed by the current economic climate and recent health care challenges. He noted that, despite the tight confines of maintaining a tax cap compliant FY27 City budget, successful agreements were reached. He credited both the City’s negotiation team and the labor groups for their willingness to adapt, recognize the City’s fiscal realities, and ratify the agreements. He further emphasized appreciation for City staff who work long and difficult hours, often without public recognition, and acknowledged the difficulty of attracting and retaining employees in a competitive regional market.

Councilor Gibson expressed his support for Councilor Witham’s remarks, stating that the city has a great group of people who deserve full credit and support.

Councilor Paradis-Catanzaro concurred with the prior comments and highlighted that, for all three agreements under consideration, it was especially positive that they were achieved without requiring a supplemental appropriation, remaining within previously established budget parameters. She expressed appreciation for this outcome.

***The motion passed 8-0 by roll call vote.***

- C. Vote to Ratify a 1-Year Collective Bargaining Agreement between the City of Somersworth and the Public Works/High Division AFSCME Council 93, Local 863

***Councilor Austin made a motion to ratify 1-Year Collective Bargaining Agreement between the City of Somersworth and the Public Works/High Division AFSCME Council 93, Local 863. The motion was seconded by Councilor Gibson and passed 8-0 by roll call vote.***

- D. Vote to Ratify a 1-Year Collective Bargaining Agreement between the City of Somersworth and Water/Wastewater Employees Association

***Councilor Gibson made a motion to ratify 1-Year Collective Bargaining Agreement between the City of Somersworth and Water/Wastewater Employees Association. The motion was seconded by Councilor Cameron and passed 8-0 by roll call vote.***

**OTHER**

There were no other items.

### **COMMENTS BY VISITORS**

Richard Brooks, Ward 1, spoke regarding the proposed noise ordinance. He acknowledged the difficulty of defining and enforcing such an ordinance, particularly given the technical and automotive aspects involved, and noted that some provisions may be hard to defend in court. Brooks emphasized that the core issue is gunshot-like noises—whether from actual gunfire, firecrackers, or vehicle backfires—which can trigger PTSD, distress pets, lead to unnecessary police responses, and generally disturb residents. Drawing on his long experience in the automotive field and his past New Hampshire inspection license, he offered his expertise to assist staff and the Public Safety Committee in revising the ordinance language and suggested that the specific phrasing he had proposed could significantly improve enforceability. He reiterated his willingness to help draft further amendments and invited Councilors and staff to reach out to him.

Ethan Clark, Ward 1, expressed appreciation that Councilors support veterans' tax discounts. He stated that he had previously committed to residents that he would continue raising two issues during comments until there is some form of resolution or clear process communicated: tax breaks for elderly and income-related tax exemptions, and the condition of Rocky Hill Road. Clark requested an update on what the Council is discussing or planning regarding the elderly and income-based exemptions so that he can relay accurate information to constituents who are following the issue. He also asked for a more predictable and consistent schedule for filling and maintaining Rocky Hill Road, noting that residents in that area are often forced to backtrack and drive an additional distance to reach Route 108 because the road remains in poor condition, with the Council having indicated that full paving is not on the agenda. Clark requested that staff or council provide updates on both the tax exemption questions and the maintenance plan for Rocky Hill Road so that residents can better understand what to expect.

### **COUNCILORS SEEKING TO BE RECOGNIZED**

Councilor Paradis-Catanzaro thanked the members of the public who spoke and noted that the Community Outreach and Communication Committee has a meeting scheduled for the following day. She suggested that this would be an appropriate venue to discuss how to make information about tax and income-related exemptions easier to find on the City's website. She offered to email the relevant links to the resident who had requested them so that they could be shared with others. Councilor Paradis-Catanzaro also thanked Richard Brooks for his ongoing engagement and practical suggestions regarding the noise ordinance and indicated that staff and the Public Safety Committee would likely draw on his expertise as they revisit the ordinance. In addition, she expressed appreciation for Ashley Forrest and the Forrest family, acknowledging their advocacy following a tragedy on Old Rochester Road and commending their efforts to promote pedestrian safety. She encouraged residents walking at night to make themselves more visible, such as by using headlamps or reflective gear.

Councilor Witham provided several observations and concerns. He reported that a cable contractor has been doing substantial work on various City streets and expressed dissatisfaction with the quality and consistency of their traffic control. He noted that some flaggers perform better than others, and that in some locations a uniformed police officer is present while in other similar situations there is none, leading to a lack of uniform practice. Councilor Witham asked staff to identify the contractor, clarify how long the work will continue, explain how the City permits and oversees such work, and determine what criteria trigger the requirement for a police presence. He also described instances where the contractor has looped large amounts of cable around existing poles and wires, including a location where the cable is striking a new school zone sign and its solar panels, potentially causing damage. He urged that the City hold the

contractor accountable for any damage to municipal infrastructure. Councilor Witham then turned to conditions at Noble Pines Park, noting a marked increase in e-bikes and e-scooters being operated through the park, across the splash pad, around the basketball courts, and even onto the ball fields, creating safety hazards and, in the past, causing damage. He believed that e-bikes and e-scooters are not permitted in City parks but pointed out that there is currently no signage to that effect and suggested that posting signs would be a useful first step. He also reiterated ongoing concerns about dogs off-leash and dogs on the ball fields, describing Noble Pines Park as an “alternative dog park” and calling for at least some enforcement presence. Finally, Councilor Witham revisited previous concerns about the curb appeal and functionality of the fire station. He noted that the lawn and newly planted shrubs are not in acceptable condition despite the significant investment in the building and reported that apparatus currently must exit from the rear because the front doors are inoperable and have been under repair for about a month. He requested renewed attention to landscaping maintenance and to completing the door repairs in a timely manner.

Councilor Austin spoke to recognize and commend the City manager and staff for their work since the manager’s arrival. He stated that the results are evident in both the legislation brought forward and the committee work undertaken, particularly in how the City has reorganized and streamlined its approach. Councilor Austin highlighted the restructuring of the City’s fee structure, noting that it is now easier to work with and amend as needed, and he pointed to improvements observed during the budget process and in the fee-related actions taken at this meeting. He emphasized that the City Manager and staff have devoted substantial effort to reviewing internal policies and procedures and making them more efficient, and he offered a public “shout out” in appreciation of those efforts.

Councilor Cameron spoke about the Forrest family and their advocacy on road safety. She stated she is honored to have received safety vests from the family and acknowledged that the community group they are involved with often works close to the roadway. Referring to the tragedy on Old Rochester Road, Councilor Cameron praised the Forrest family for turning their loss into meaningful advocacy aimed at encouraging drivers to slow down, pay attention, and support safer conditions for pedestrians. She expressed deep appreciation for their ongoing efforts and offered a direct note of thanks to Ashley Forrest for the work being done to raise awareness around walking safety.

Councilor Laura Barry indicated that she had no additional comments to offer. She noted that the topics she intended to address had already been covered by previous speakers.

Councilor Gibson expressed agreement with Councilor Witham’s concerns, particularly regarding e-bikes and e-scooters. He stated that their use is “out of control” in some cases and that many operators appear unfamiliar with basic rules of the road or common-sense safety, even though he acknowledged that some users are responsible. Councilor Gibson voiced concern that as these devices become more prevalent, the community could see serious injuries or fatalities similar to those occurring in larger cities. He stressed that riders are far less protected than vehicle occupants and that he does not want to be the driver involved in a collision with a rider behaving unsafely. He urged exploration of options at the local level to better regulate or control e-bikes and e-scooters. He also concurred with the criticism of the cable contractor’s traffic control practices and supported seeking improvements there. Turning to the noise ordinance, he stated that he is not an expert and believes that the Council should rely on the Police Department and the City Manager for guidance on how best to proceed. He expressed hope that the City can develop an approach that is workable and fair both for enforcement and for the general public, particularly as vehicle technology creates more opportunities for excessively loud or obnoxious modifications.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

***Councilor Cameron made a motion to adjourn at 8:48 p.m. The motion was seconded by Councilor Gibson and the motion passed 9-0 by voice vote.***

Respectfully Submitted,

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Kristen LaPanne, City Clerk



## City of Somersworth – Ordinance

Resolution No: 19-26

### **VOTE TO APPROVE THE SOMERSWORTH SCHOOL BOARD RECOMMENDED OPEN ENROLLMENT POLICY FOR THE SAU 56/SOMERSWORTH SCHOOL DISTRICT**

March 16, 2026

WHEREAS, the Somersworth School Board has adopted an “open enrollment” policy in accordance with current law NH RSA 194-D:3; and

WHEREAS, NH RSA 194-D:3 requires the legislative body of the School District to approve the policy following a public hearing;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED; that the City Council of the City of Somersworth hereby votes to approve the Somersworth School Board recommended policy to:

- a) Establish SAU 56/Somersworth as an open enrollment school district (per current State law), and
- b) Cap exiting students at 0% (in accordance with current State law), and
- c) Cap entering students to the greatest extent possible (within the legal parameters of current State law).

Authorization	
<i>Sponsored by:</i> Mayor Matt Gerding	<i>Approved:</i> City Attorney
<i>Councilors:</i> Donald Austin Crystal Paradis-Catanzaro	

**City of Somersworth – Resolution 19-26**

**History**

First Read Date:	03/16/2026	Tabled:	04/06/2026
Public Hearing:	04/06/2026	Removed From Table:	05/04/2026
Second Read:	04/06/2026		

**Discussion**

*3/16/2026*

***Clerk LaPanne performed a first reading of Resolution 19-26.***

Councilor Austin requested to be added as a sponsor of Resolution 19-26.

***Resolution 19-26 will remain in first reading until the call of the Chair.***

*04/06/2026*

***Clerk LaPanne performed a second reading of Resolution 19-26.***

***Councilor Austin made a motion to table Resolution 19-26. The motion was seconded by Councilor Vincent and passed 8-1. Councilor Witham opposed.***

*05/04/2026*

***Councilor Witham made a motion to remove Resolution 19-26 from the table. The motion was seconded by Councilor Austin and passed 8-0 by voice vote.***

***Councilor Austin made a motion to adopt Resolution 19-26 as submitted. The motion was seconded by Councilor Paradis-Catanzaro***

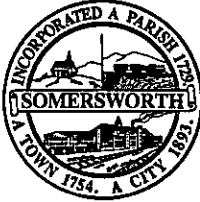
Discussion:

Councilor Austin commented the resolution is not dissimilar to other actions that many other communities in the State have implemented. If adopted, the Council authorizes the School Board to create an open enrollment policy for the Somersworth School District that is in compliance with current State law. He feels it is important that the Council support this resolution.

***The motion passed 8-0 by roll call vote.***

<b>Voting Record</b>		<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
Ward 1 Councilor	McNair	<b>X</b>	
Ward 2 Councilor	Vincent	<b>EXCUSED</b>	
Ward 3 Councilor	Gibson	<b>X</b>	

Ward 4 Councilor	Paradis-Catanzaro	X	
Ward 5 Councilor	Michaud	X	
At Large Councilor	Witham	X	
At Large Councilor	Austin	X	
At Large Councilor	Cameron	X	
At Large Councilor	Barry	X	
<b>TOTAL VOTES:</b>		<b>8</b>	<b>0</b>
On 05/04/2026	Ordinance 19-26	<b>PASSED</b>	<b>FAILED</b>

	<b>City of Somersworth – Ordinance</b>
	Ordinance No: <b>10-26</b> <b>TO AMEND CHAPTER 13D, NOISE/NUISANCE CONTROL DEFINITIONS, NOISES PROHIBITED, EXCLUSIONS AND EXEMPTIONS, AND PENALTY, AND THE ADDITION OF A SECTION, NOISES CREATED BY OR EMANATING FROM A MOTOR VEHICLE</b>

April 20, 2026

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SOMERSWORTH THAT the Ordinances of the City of Somersworth as amended, be further amended as follows:

**Amend Chapter 13D:2, Noise/Nuisance Control, Definitions by adding the following definitions:**

Motor Vehicle means any self-propelled vehicle not operated exclusively on stationary tracks, including ski area vehicles. (NH RSA 259:60)

Vehicle Tune means the process of modifying a vehicle’s engine control unit (ECU) through software or hardware applications or installations, to change the vehicle’s performance, power, fuel economy, or drivability

**Amend Chapter 13D:3 Noises Prohibited – Unnecessary Noise Standard, Section J. Pile Drivers, Hammers, Engine Repair, Etc. by deleting it in its entirety and replace it with the following:**

Pile Drivers, Hammers, Engine Repair, Etc.: The operation between the hours of 9:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m. of any construction equipment, including but not limited to: cranes, excavators, bulldozers, front end loaders, lull or any other heavy equipment, pneumatic hammer, air compressor, nail guns, saws electrical hoist, mechanical or other engine repair devices or other appliances, the use of which is attended by loud or unusual noises.

**Amend Chapter 13D by adding Section 13D:4 Noises Created by or Emanating from a Motor Vehicle as follows and renumber the sections thereafter:**

**13D:4 NOISES CREATED BY OR EMANATING FROM A MOTOR VEHICLE**

- A. A person operating, or in control of a parked or moving motor vehicle shall not operate or permit the operation of an amplified sound system in or on the motor vehicle so as to produce sound that is clearly audible more than fifty (50) feet from the exterior of the motor vehicle except as otherwise authorized.
- B. A person shall not operate a motor vehicle so as to make any loud, unusual, or unnecessary noise occasioned by any one or more of the following actions by the operator:

- i. Misuse of power exceeding tire traction limits in acceleration (aka: Burnouts, or laying rubber), or excessive acceleration where there is no emergency.
- ii. Misuse of braking power, exceeding tire traction limits in deceleration where there is no emergency.
- iii. Rapid acceleration by means of quick up-shifting of transmission gears with either a clutch or manual transmission or automatic transmission.
- iv. Rapid deceleration by means of quick down-shifting of transmission gears with either a clutch or manual transmission or automatic transmission.
- v. Racing of engines by manipulation of accelerator, gas pedal, carburetor, or gear selection whether the vehicle is in motion or not.
- vi. Use of a straight pipe exhaust system, meaning any straight through exhaust system that does not contain baffles or otherwise does not meet the definition of muffler as defined above.
- vii. Use of a vehicle tune, modification of the fuel air ratio, modification of the exhaust system to include the mufflers, catalytic converters, or a combination of any or all of the above which causes the vehicle to backfire, shoot flames from the exhaust, or otherwise create a condition where unburned fuel is ignited in the exhaust thereby causing loud, unreasonable, or disruptive sounds including bangs or pops (similar to the sound of gunshots).

**Amend Chapter 13D:5 Exclusions and Exemptions, Section B. Exemptions by deleting Exemptions (2) and (5) in its entirety and replace with the following:**

(2) Noise from domestic power equipment operated between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m. during an actual outage at the location it is being run.

(5) Noise created to perform emergency work to restore property to a safe condition during or following an emergency or repair work to repair critical infrastructure that has suffered a failure, or work required to protect persons or property from exposure to imminent danger.

**Amend Chapter 13D:6 Penalty by striking *The penalty for a first offense shall not be less than \$100.00* and replace it with the following:**

The penalty for a first offense shall not be less than \$100.00 nor more than \$250.00

This Ordinance shall take effect upon its passage.

Authorization	
Sponsored by Councilors:	Approved:

Kenneth S. Vincent Laura Barry Donald Austin Richard Michuad Crystal Paradis-Catanzaro	City Attorney
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**City of Somersworth – Ordinance 10-26**

<b>History</b>			
First Read Date:	04/20/2026	Tabled:	ξ
Public Hearing:	05/04/2026	Removed From Table:	
Second Read:	05/04/2026		

**Discussion**

*04/20/2026*

***Councilor Witham made a motion to suspend Council Rules to allow for a first reading of Ordinance 10-26 by title only. The motion was seconded by Councilor Vincent and passed 9-0 by voice vote.***

***Clerk LaPanne performed a first reading of Ordinance 10-26 by title only.***

***Ordinance 10-26 will remain in first reading until the call of the Chair.***

*05/04/2026*

***Councilor Paradis-Catanzaro made a motion to amend Ordinance 10-26 by to section 13D:4 B iii by adding the following “This may include operating at an unusually high engine speed”. The motion was seconded by Councilor Gibson.***

Discussion:

City Manager Moore recommended postponing any immediate action on the amendment. He expressed concerns about the lack of input from the Police Department on the specific language change. City Manager Moore emphasized the importance of ensuring that any ordinance language is enforceable and practical, suggesting that the Council either table the motion until the May 18<sup>th</sup> meeting or simply defer it until staff and the Police Chief could review the proposed changes and provide feedback. He also noted that ordinances are typically drafted with input from legal counsel to ensure clarity and enforceability.

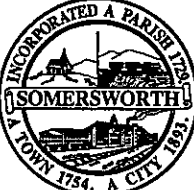
Councilor Laura Barry expressed concern about the enforceability of the proposed amendment language. She stated that she would be worried about how the wording could be enforced in practice and therefore recommended obtaining input from the police department regarding the language and its implementation.

Councilor Witham agreed and stated that the use of the word “unusual” in the proposed amendment struck him as nebulous, noting that what is unusual to one person may not be unusual to another. He indicated that this wording alone gave him pause and added that the entire ordinance caused him concern due to the extensive wordsmithing involved. He described the situation as one where “you know it when you see it, or in this case, when you hear it,” but acknowledged that it was difficult to define clearly. Councilor Witham commented that while everyone understood the objective of the ordinance, his repeated review of the language led him to different interpretations each time. He concluded that the ordinance required significant rework, especially if additional language was to be added, and expressed appreciation for the pause recommended by the City Manager.

Councilor Gibson stated that he largely agreed with the concerns about excessive wordsmithing in the proposed ordinance. He emphasized that his primary concern was with the technical aspects of enforcement, particularly given that the State of New Hampshire no longer conducts vehicle inspections. He questioned how “legal” noise levels would be defined and enforced, noting that what is considered improper noise to one person may not be considered improper to another. He observed that only a few communities in the State have decibel meters to monitor noise levels and suggested that, without such equipment and a clear enforcement framework, it would be difficult to enforce an ordinance of this type. He referenced past practices where obviously improper mufflers, such as glass packs, could be more straightforwardly cited. Councilor Gibson concluded that meaningful enforcement of the proposed noise provisions would likely require a significant change in policing approach and equipment, as well as clear criteria, and therefore agreed with the City Manager that the ordinance should be reworked into a more manageable form based on additional research.

In response to these concerns, Councilor Paradis-Catanzaro agreed to withdraw her motion, with the consent of Councilor Gibson. Councilor Austin then suggested, and the Council agreed, that the amendment should be re-referred to the Public Safety Committee for further review and recommendations.

<b>Voting Record</b>		<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
Ward 1 Councilor	McNair		
Ward 2 Councilor	Vincent		
Ward 3 Councilor	Gibson		
Ward 4 Councilor	Paradis-Catanzaro		
Ward 5 Councilor	Michaud		
At Large Councilor	Witham		
At Large Councilor	Austin		
At Large Councilor	Cameron		
At Large Councilor	Barry		
<b>TOTAL VOTES:</b>			
On	Ordinance 10-26	PASSED	FAILED

	<b>City of Somersworth – Ordinance</b>
	Ordinance No: <b>11-26</b>  <b>TO AMEND CHAPTER 34, EXEMPTIONS AND CREDITS, SECTION 34.3 SERVICE-CONNECTED TOTAL DISABILITY</b>

April 20, 2026

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SOMERSWORTH THAT the Ordinances of the City of Somersworth as amended, be further amended as follows:

Amend Chapter 34, Exemptions and Credits, by deleting section 34.3, Service-Connected Total Disability in its entirety and replace it with the following:

Section 34.3 Service-Connected Total Disability

The City adopts the provisions of RSA 72:35, for an optional property tax credit on residential property for a service-connected total disability. The service-connected total disability tax credit shall be \$3,250 effective April 1, 2026.

This Ordinance shall take effect upon its passage.

<b>Authorization</b>	
<i>Sponsored by Councilors:</i> David A. Witham Donald Austin Kenneth Vincent Laura Barry	<i>Approved:</i> City Attorney

**City of Somersworth – Ordinance 11-26**

**History**

First Read Date:	04/20/2026	Tabled:	
Public Hearing:	05/04/2026	Removed From Table:	
Second Read:	05/04/2026		

**Discussion**

*04/20/2026*

*Clerk LaPanne performed a first reading of Ordinance 11-26.*

*Ordinance 11-26 will remain in first reading until the call of the Chair.*

*05/04/2026*

*Councilor Witham made a motion to adopt Ordinance 11-26 as submitted. The motion was seconded by Councilor Gibson.*

Discussion:

Councilor Witham explained that the proposed ordinance is intended to ensure that veterans who currently receive property tax exemptions are able to maintain the highest exemption level available to them. He noted that recent changes in State law would otherwise have negatively affected these exemptions, and that the local legislation is designed to effectively counteract those impacts so that veterans continue to receive the same level of credit.

Councilor Gibson expressed strong support for the ordinance, emphasizing that he favors any measures that assist veterans, particularly those with disabilities. He acknowledged their honorable service and the sacrifices they have made for the Country, and stated that he wishes the City could do even more for them.

Councilor Barry voiced her support as well, concurring with the previous remarks. She indicated that the ordinance will likely be revisited in the following year and stated that she looks forward to those future discussions, but believes it is important to take this step at the present time.

*The motion passed 8-0 by roll call vote.*

<b>Voting Record</b>		<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
Ward 1 Councilor	McNair	<b>X</b>	
Ward 2 Councilor	Vincent	<b>EXCUSED</b>	
Ward 3 Councilor	Gibson	<b>X</b>	
Ward 4 Councilor	Paradis-Catanzaro	<b>X</b>	
Ward 5 Councilor	Michaud	<b>X</b>	

At Large Councilor	Witham	X	
At Large Councilor	Austin	X	
At Large Councilor	Cameron	X	
At Large Councilor	Barry	X	
<b>TOTAL VOTES:</b>		<b>8</b>	<b>0</b>
On 05/04/2026	Ordinance 11-26	<b>PASSED</b>	<b>FAILED</b>



City of Somersworth – Ordinance

Ordinance No: 12-26

**TO AMEND CHAPTER 20, BUILDING CODES, SECTION 20.L FEES, FINES, & PENALTIES, SECTION 1 BUILDING PERMIT FEE SCHEDULE AND SECTION 20.L.4 REINSPECTION FEE**

April 20, 2026

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SOMERSWORTH THAT the Ordinances of the City of Somersworth as amended, be further amended as follows:

**Amend Chapter 20, Building Codes, Section 20.L Fees, Fines, & Penalties, Section 1 Building Permit Fee Schedule, by deleting Appendix A in its entirety and replace it with the following:**

The City Council of the City of Somersworth does ordain that according to the provisions of IBC 2009 § 109 (or current addition as adopted by the State) shall apply as follows:

20.L.1 BUILDING PERMIT FEE SCHEDULE

Services	Fees
Residential Building Permit (with labor)	\$50 application fee + \$10/thousand dollars cost of construction
Residential Building Permit (w/o labor)	\$50 application fee + \$12/thousand dollars cost of construction
Commercial/Industrial Building Permit	\$50 application fee + \$10/thousand dollars cost of construction
Demolition Permit	\$100 for structures up to 1,500 SF. Structures >1,500 SF; \$100 application fee + \$10/\$1,000 cost of demolition work
Plumbing Permit	\$50 application fee + \$10/thousand dollars cost of plumbing work
Mechanical Permit	\$50 application fee + \$10/thousand dollars cost of mechanical work
Electrical Permit	\$50 application fee + \$10/thousand dollars cost of electrical work
Subsurface Sewer Disposal Installation or Repair Permit	\$35
Septic Bed Bottom Inspection Fee	\$35
Fee/Penalty for non-permitted work	The applicant shall bear the cost of the original permit fee and may incur a penalty of the same amount as the fee. This penalty shall have a maximum not to exceed \$500.00
Re-Inspection Fee	\$50

COMMERCIAL/INDUSTRIAL-THIRD PARTY INSPECTIONS	The expense of such third-party inspections is the responsibility of the applicant
Permit Renewal Fee	\$50

**Amend Chapter 20, Building Codes, Section 20.L Fees, Fines, & Penalties, Section 4 Reinspection Fee, by striking \$25 administration fee and replace it with \$50 administration fee**

This Ordinance shall take effect upon its passage.

<b>Authorization</b>	
<i>Sponsored by Councilors:</i> David A. Witham Donald Austin Kenneth Vincent Laura Barry	<i>Approved:</i> City Attorney

City of Somersworth – Ordinance 12-26

**History**

First Read Date:	04/20/2026	Tabled:	
Public Hearing:	05/04/2026	Removed From Table:	
Second Read:	05/04/2026		

**Discussion**

04/20/2026

***Councilor Witham made a motion to suspend Council Rules to allow for a first reading of Ordinance 12-26 by title only. The motion was seconded by Councilor Vincent and passed 9-0 by voice vote.***

***Clerk LaPanne performed a first reading of Ordinance 12-26 by title only.***

***Ordinance 12-26 will remain in first reading until the call of the Chair.***

05/04/2026

***Councilor Barry made a motion to adopt Ordinance 12-26 as submitted. The motion was seconded by Councilor Cameron.***

Discussion:

Councilor Witham expressed appreciation for Director Mears’ presentation and noted that while the proposed changes would increase certain fees, the overall budget impact would be minimal given that these fees represent a very small portion of the City’s revenue. He emphasized that the primary benefit of the proposal is the simplification of the permit process for builders, making it easier to calculate fees and supporting the City’s goal of being business-friendly. He commended the work that went into the proposal.

Councilor Cameron agreed, stating that the streamlined process is now much simpler and better for applicants, and thanked staff for their hard work on the changes.

***The motion passed 8-0 by roll call vote.***

Voting Record		YES	NO
Ward 1 Councilor	McNair	X	
Ward 2 Councilor	Vincent	EXCUSED	
Ward 3 Councilor	Gibson	X	
Ward 4 Councilor	Paradis-Catanzaro	X	
Ward 5 Councilor	Michaud	X	
At Large Councilor	Witham	X	
At Large Councilor	Austin	X	

At Large Councilor	Cameron	<b>X</b>	
At Large Councilor	Barry	<b>X</b>	
<b>TOTAL VOTES:</b>		<b>8</b>	<b>0</b>
On 05/04/2026	Ordinance 12-26	<b>PASSED</b>	<b>FAILED</b>



## CERTIFICATE OF COVERAGE

The New Hampshire Public Risk Management Exchange (Primex<sup>3</sup>) is organized under the New Hampshire Revised Statutes Annotated, Chapter 5-B, Pooled Risk Management Programs. In accordance with those statutes, its Trust Agreement and bylaws, Primex<sup>3</sup> is authorized to provide pooled risk management programs established for the benefit of political subdivisions in the State of New Hampshire.

Each member of Primex<sup>3</sup> is entitled to the categories of coverage set forth below. In addition, Primex<sup>3</sup> may extend the same coverage to non-members. However, any coverage extended to a non-member is subject to all of the terms, conditions, exclusions, amendments, rules, policies and procedures that are applicable to the members of Primex<sup>3</sup>, including but not limited to the final and binding resolution of all claims and coverage disputes before the Primex<sup>3</sup> Board of Trustees. The Additional Covered Party's per occurrence limit shall be deemed included in the Member's per occurrence limit, and therefore shall reduce the Member's limit of liability as set forth by the Coverage Documents and Declarations. The limit shown may have been reduced by claims paid on behalf of the member. General Liability coverage is limited to Coverage A (Personal Injury Liability) and Coverage B (Property Damage Liability) only. Coverage's C (Public Officials Errors and Omissions), D (Unfair Employment Practices), E (Employee Benefit Liability) and F (Educator's Legal Liability Claims-Made Coverage) are excluded from this provision of coverage.

The below named entity is a member in good standing of the New Hampshire Public Risk Management Exchange. The coverage provided may, however, be revised at any time by the actions of Primex<sup>3</sup>. As of the date this certificate is issued, the information set out below accurately reflects the categories of coverage established for the current coverage year.

This Certificate is issued as a matter of information only and confers no rights upon the certificate holder. This certificate does not amend, extend, or alter the coverage afforded by the coverage categories listed below.

<b>Participating Member:</b> City of Somersworth One Government Way Somersworth, NH 03878		<b>Member Number:</b> 293	<b>Company Affording Coverage:</b> NH Public Risk Management Exchange - Primex <sup>3</sup> PO Box 23 Hooksett, NH 03106-9716	
Type of Coverage	Effective Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Expiration Date (mm/dd/yyyy)	Limits - NH Statutory Limits May Apply, if Not	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>General Liability (Occurrence Form)</b> <b>Professional Liability (describe)</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Claims Made <input type="checkbox"/> Occurrence	7/1/2025	7/1/2026	Each Occurrence	\$ 2,000,000
			General Aggregate	\$ 10,000,000
			Fire Damage (Any one fire)	
			Med Exp (Any one person)	
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Automobile Liability</b> Deductible    Comp and Coll: <input type="checkbox"/> Any auto			Combined Single Limit (Each Accident)	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Workers' Compensation &amp; Employers' Liability</b>	7/1/2025	7/1/2026	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Statutory	
			Each Accident	\$2,000,000
			Disease - Each Employee	\$2,000,000
			Disease - Policy Limit	
<input type="checkbox"/> <b>Property (Special Risk Includes Fire and Theft)</b>			Blanket Limit, Replacement Cost (unless otherwise stated)	
<b>Description: Proof of Primex Member coverage only.</b>				

State of New Hampshire Department of Justice 1 Granite Place South Concord, NH 03301	<b>Primex<sup>3</sup> NH Public Risk Management Exchange</b>  By: <i>Mary Beth Purcell</i>  Date: 7/1/2025  Please Contact: <b>Primex<sup>3</sup> Client Service Center</b> 603-225-2841 phone 603-228-3833 fax
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