

State of Maine

County of York

City of Saco

- I. **CALL TO ORDER** – On Monday, July 16, 2012 at 7:00 p.m. a Council Meeting was held in the City Hall Auditorium.
- II. **ROLL CALL OF MEMBERS** – Mayor Mark Johnston introduced the members and determined that the Councilors present constituted a quorum. Councilors present: David Tripp, Leslie Smith Jr., Marie Doucette, Philip Blood, Arthur Tardif, Eric Cote and Marston Lovell. City Administrator Rick Michaud was also present.
- III. **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**
- IV. **GENERAL**
- VI. **CONSENT AGENDA**

A motion was made by Councilor Blood and seconded by Councilor Smith to approve all eight (8) items on the Consent Agenda.

- 1. Approval of Minutes – 07/02/2012
- 2. Approves the First Reading of the amendment to the Saco Code, Chapter 112, General Assistance Program, Appendix A – GA Overall Maximums, and the amendment to Article VI, Section 6.8(B) of the General Assistance Ordinance – City of Saco, and further move to set a Public Hearing for August 6, 2012.
- 3. Ordains and approves the Second and Final Reading of the document “Proposed Amendments to the Saco Zoning Ordinance Pertaining to Places of Worship, April 10, 2012”.
- 4. Ordains and approves the Second & Final Reading of the document titled: ‘Proposed Amendments to Section 1111 of the Saco Zoning Ordinance, Related to Time Limits on Site Plan Approvals, June 18, 2012.
- 5. Ordains and approves the Second and Final Reading of the document “Proposed Amendments to Section 805 of the Saco Zoning Ordinance, Related to Stormwater, April 10, 2012”.
- 6. Ordains and approves the Second and Final Reading of the document titled, “Proposed Amendments to Section 414 of the Saco Zoning Ordinance Related to Multiple Dwellings on a Lot, May 29, 2012”.
- 7. Ordered that the City Council confirm the Mayor’s appointment of Richard Petersen of High Street to the Zoning Board of Appeals, for a 5-year term to expire in January 2017.
- 8. Ordered that the City Council approve the “ Warrant and Notice of Election, calling a Regional School Unit No. 23 Budget Validation Referendum for July 31, 2012.”

The Motion Passed with seven (7) yeas.

The Complete Item Commentaries are listed below.

2. 2012 General Assistance Amendments (First Reading)

General Assistance Ordinance Appendix A, Proposed Figures dated July 1, 2012.

Appendix A - GA Overall Maximums

# IN HOUSEHOLD	OVERALL	MAXIMUMS
	Current	New Proposed
1	\$742.00	\$667.80
2	\$827.00	\$744.30
3	\$1042.00	\$937.80
4	\$1322.00	\$1189.80
5	\$1563.00	\$1406.70
EACH ADDITIONAL	\$75.00	\$67.50

Amend Article VI, Section 6.8 (B) of the General Assistance Ordinance adopted by the municipal officers in the Town/City of _____, to be effective on and after July 1, 2012, as follows:

- B) **Housing.** The administrator will provide assistance with rent or mortgage payments that are reasonable ~~and/or~~ within the allowed maximum levels and in accordance with the housing assistance limits and exceptions provided in Title 22, section 4308, subsections 1-A and 1-B. See Appendix C of this ordinance for the current year's housing maximums. It is the applicant's responsibility to find suitable housing, although the administrator may help the applicant find housing when appropriate. The administrator will inform the applicant of the allowed housing maximums to assist the applicant in his or her search for housing. The allowed maximum for any applicant will be the categorical housing maximum representing the minimum dwelling unit space necessary to adequately shelter the applicant household. Applicants requesting assistance for housing that contains more bedrooms than are necessary for the number of household members will be provided assistance according to the maximum level of the number of rooms actually needed.

3. Zoning Ordinance Amendment: Places of Worship (Second & Final Reading)

"Proposed Amendments to the Saco Zoning Ordinance

Pertaining to Places of Worship, April 10, 2012"

(Proposed language is underlined. Language proposed for deletion is ~~struck through~~).

Amend Article 3, Definitions, by adopting the following definition, and inserting in alphabetical order.

“Places of Worship: a building or structure, or groups of buildings or structures, that by design, construction or intent are primarily intended for conducting organized religious services and associated accessory uses. A Place of Worship may include but is not limited to a church, synagogue, temple, mosque or other facility that is used for prayer by persons of similar beliefs.”

Amend the permitted use lists of Article 4 by deleting Church in the places indicated and replacing with the new term, Places of Worship. I-2 is the one exception; Churches are not currently allowed, but we propose to add Places of Worship as a permitted use.

410-1. R-1 LOW DENSITY DISTRICT (Editor's note: includes R-1a, R-1b, R-1c and R-1d except where otherwise noted.)

PERMITTED USES

1. Single family dwellings
2. Agriculture, excluding livestock
3. Public parks and playgrounds
4. Public and private schools, excluding commercial schools
5. ~~Churches~~ Places of Worship

410-2. R-2 MEDIUM DENSITY DISTRICT

PERMITTED USES

1. Single family dwellings
2. Two family dwellings
3. ~~Churches~~ Places of Worship

410-3. R-3 HIGH DENSITY DISTRICT

PERMITTED USES

1. Single family dwellings
2. Two family dwellings
3. ~~Churches~~ Places of Worship

410-4. R-4 GENERAL RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT (Amended 1/3/95)

PERMITTED USES

1. Any use permitted as a matter of right in the R-2 District

410-6A. B-2a HIGHWAY BUSINESS DISTRICT

PERMITTED USES

41. Churches Places of Worship

410-6B. B-2b HIGHWAY BUSINESS DISTRICT

PERMITTED USES

42. Churches Places of Worship

410-6. B-2c and B-2d HIGHWAY BUSINESS DISTRICT

PERMITTED USES

1. Single family dwellings
2. Two family dwellings
3. Churches Places of Worship

410-7. B-3 DOWNTOWN BUSINESS DISTRICT

(See also special size limitations in portion of B-3 district, Section 733-1)

PERMITTED USES

18. Churches Places of Worship

410-9. B-5 MARINE BUSINESS AND RESIDENTIAL

PERMITTED USES

7. Churches Places of Worship

410-9-A.. B-6 HIGHWAY BUSINESS AND COMMERCIAL DISTRICT (Amended 2/12/02, 1/6/93, 12/5/94, 3/2/92, 2/19/02, 4/7/03)

PERMITTED USES

1. Churches Places of Worship

410-12. I-2 INDUSTRIAL BUSINESS DISTRICT (ed. note: includes I-2b district at former Maine Turnpike Exit 5) (Amended 8/1/88, 9/19/88, 3/2/92, 3/16/92, 4/1/91, 6/4/91, 7/6/93, 7/6/93, 2/28/94, 2/19/02)

PERMITTED USES

20. Places of Worship

410-14. C-1 CONSERVATION DISTRICT

PERMITTED USES (Amended 11/5/01)

11. Churches Places of Worship

(END: 'Proposed Amendments to the Saco Zoning Ordinance Pertaining to Places of Worship, April 10, 2012').

4. Zoning Ordinance Amendment: 1111, Time Limits on Site Plan Approvals

**“Proposed Amendments to Section 1111 of the Saco Zoning Ordinance,
Related to Time Limits on Site Plan Approvals,
June 18, 2012 ”**

Amend Section 1111 as follows. Language proposed for deletion is ~~struckthrough~~, while proposed new language is underlined.

Section 1111. Time Limits on Site Plan Approvals

If substantial construction is not commenced within twelve (12) months of the Planning Board's approval of a site plan, the site plan approval shall be null and void. Substantial construction shall mean the completion of a foundation, addition, or other evidence satisfactory to the Planning Department. The deadline may be extended for ~~one~~ two additional twelve (12) ~~six (6)~~ month periods by the City Planner ~~Planning Board~~ upon the written request of the applicant. The written request for an extension must be submitted before the date of expiration of the site plan approval. After the site plan approval has expired or an extension denied by the City Planner ~~Planning Board~~, the applicant may reapply for site plan review at any time without prejudice.

The City Planner ~~Planning Board~~ shall approve the request for an extension unless ~~the Board has become aware of~~ one of the following occurs:

- a. additional information that indicates that the plan does not meet the standards of the zoning ordinance;
- b. failure to meet a condition of approval;
- c. an amendment in the zoning ordinance that prohibits or alters the proposed site plan.

(END: 'Proposed Amendments to the Saco Zoning Ordinance Concerning Section 1111. Time Limits on Site Plan Approvals, June 18, 2012.')

5. Zoning Ordinance Amendment: Stormwater Runoff (Second & Final Reading)

**“Proposed Amendments to Section 805 of the Saco Zoning Ordinance,
Related to Stormwater
April 10, 2012 ”**

Amend Section 805 as follows. Language proposed for deletion is ~~struckthrough~~, while proposed new language is underlined.

805-1. STORMWATER QUANTITY

Adequate provisions shall be made for the disposal of all stormwater from a proposed development through a stormwater drainage system which will not have adverse impacts on abutting or downstream properties. All projects subject to Site Plan review ~~disturbing less than one acre~~ shall be designed to meet the requirements of this Section, 805-1. All projects including one acre or more of disturbed area shall meet the requirements of this section, 805-1 and the requirements of ~~the Site Location of Development Law, 38 MRSA, 481—490,~~ the Maine Stormwater Management Law, 38 MRSA Section 420-D, and regulations promulgated thereunder, specifically Chapter 500 and 502, having been ~~an~~ amended on December 21, 2006. In determining if the threshold is met, all disturbed area created after the effective date of this provision shall be included in that total.

805-2. STORMWATER QUALITY

Sites shall be designed to minimize the amount of impervious area with a focus on reducing vehicle areas including parking, drives, and service areas. All activities, including the enlargement or modification of existing uses, that involve the creation of a total of more than ten thousand (10,000) square feet of new impervious area or one (1) five (5) ~~or more~~ acres of new disturbed area shall manage the quality of the stormwater runoff to meet the following standards. In determining if the threshold is met, all impervious area or disturbed area created after the effective date of this provision shall be included in the total. In the case of enlargements or modifications of existing uses that drain in more than one direction, the treatment standard shall apply to any watershed or subwatershed in which the amount of impervious area or disturbed area is increased.

(END: 'Proposed Amendments to the Saco Zoning Ordinance Concerning Section 805. Stormwater Run-Off, April 10, 2012.')

6. Zoning Ordinance Amendment: Two Dwellings on One Lot (Second & Final Reading)

Proposed Amendments to Section 414 of the Saco Zoning Ordinance Related to Multiple Dwellings on a Lot, May 29, 2012.

(underline) represents new language, while ~~struckthrough~~ is language to be deleted)

SECTION 414. MULTIPLE DWELLINGS AND/OR USES ON ONE LOT

A. Except as permitted under Section B below, ~~n~~No more than one single family or two family dwelling and its accessory buildings as regulated by this Ordinance may be located on any one lot except in the case of multi-family complexes that meet all other applicable sections of the ordinance. Commercial buildings may be permitted on the same lot as single family and two family dwellings in business districts only, provided that the

combined uses and buildings are in the same ownership, remain in the same ownership, and meet the lot size requirements of Table 412-1, Line A.

B. A second single family dwelling or two family dwelling in the same ownership as the first may be located on a lot only if the street frontage requirement, without variance, is met for each principal building or structure located on the lot, and the placement of the buildings will allow division of the lot in conformance with the minimum lot and yard regulations of the District in which it is located, as expressed in Table 412-1.

7. Confirmation of Mayors Reappointment to the Zoning Board of Appeals

The Zoning Board of Appeals consists of seven (7) members appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by the City Council for a term of 5 years.

Primarily, the Board, after public hearing and majority vote of its members, will decide administrative appeals, planning board appeals, variances, historic preservation commission appeals, shore-land variances, and denials of building permits.

Mayor Johnston has appointed Richard Peterson of High Street, to a 5-year term on the Zoning Board of Appeals.

8. Warrant and Notice of Election for Regional School Unit No. 23

Regional School Unit No. 23 composed of the City of Saco and the Towns of Dayton and Old Orchard Beach, submit the Warrant and Notice of Election to the Mayor and Council to call a Regional School Unit No. 23 Budget Validation Referendum for July 31, 2012.

Once countersigned by the municipal officers, the Warrant and Notice of Election will be posted on or before July 23, 2012 by Chief Paul or his designee.

V. AGENDA:

- A. **(Public Hearing) Zoning Ordinance Amendment campgrounds in the R2, R4 and B2c Zones.**
- B.
- C. Councilor Blood read the background. A motion was made by Councilor Blood and seconded by Councilor Smith to open the Public Hearing. The motion passed with seven (7) yeas.

There were no comments from the public .

A motion was made by Councilor Blood and seconded by Councilor Doucette to close the Public Hearing and to set the Second Reading for August Sixth (6). Motion passed with seven (7) yeas.

- D. **Emergency Ordinance Chapter 82 Consumer Fireworks.**

Councilor Cote read the background. A motion was made by Councilor Cote and seconded by Councilor Blood to consider the Ordinance. Motion passed with seven (7) yeas.

Councilor Blood and Councilor Lovell both spoke in favor of the proposed ordinance.

Councilor Lovell asked Chief Brad Paul about the enforceability of the Ordinance. Chief Paul responded that the proposed Ordinance would be very enforceable and even more so over time. Many complaints are still coming in and the Chief warns that this Ordinance will not entirely stop fireworks being set off in Saco, because the State of Maine is still allowing them to be sold.

Mayor Johnston asked Chief Paul if the City should draft an entirely new Ordinance. Chief Paul responded that this Emergency Ordinance would be sufficient.

Councilor Cote said that allowing fireworks in Saco hasn't worked out. Councilor Smith asked the Chief if the fireworks that we are now seeing are actually legal in the State of Maine. The Chief responded that the fireworks that we are seeing now are not the small firecrackers of the past. These fireworks are comprised of multiple explosive devices with a much higher explosive capacity.

Councilor Tardif said that he did not believe that this Ordinance would stop the fireworks from being set off. Since it is the first year that they have been available in Maine, they are being purchased and used a lot.

Mayor Johnston then polled the Council for a vote on the Ordinance. The motion passed with six (6) yeas and one (1) nay.

A. (Public Hearing) Withdrawal of a Single Municipality from a Regional school Unit petition.

Councilor Lovell read the background. Councilor Lovell then read an email that was sent to City Administrator Michaud and to Mayor Johnston, regarding a point of order.

A motion was made by Councilor Lovell and seconded by Councilor Tardif to open the Public Hearing. Councilor Cote said that state law requires that this Public Hearing take place in light of the petition that has been received. Councilor Lovell stated that before RSU #23 existed, The City of Saco had a fully functioning School System which was well funded. The Motion to open the Public Hearing passed with seven (7) yeas.

Roland Michaud, Member of the RSU #23 Board from Saco, said that the relationship between The City of Saco and RSU #23 was built on two flawed assumptions: First, the threat of financial penalty that the State of Maine had said they would impose on communities that did not join an RSU, and second, that communities can mold their partners in this type of relationship. This is the fourth year of the RSU and Saco finds itself spending its funds while other communities make the decisions as to the disbursement of those funds. Mr. Michaud referred to the 20/20 Committee and stated that perhaps some functions could be shared, while maintaining the individuality of the communities involved. It had once been thought that there was a hope of this plan working.

Donald Osmond, Hillview Heights – Mr. Osmond said that after three (3) years, it is time to get control back again.

David Labbe, 17 Richard's Way – Mr. Labbe said that this is a hot issue, and thanked the Council for setting aside the funds necessary to begin investigating the withdrawal. He said that the RSU is a dysfunctional relationship. He said that his family received a letter from the Superintendent's office, stating that there was a possibility of moving students from Saco Middle School to the Loranger School. He also said that the data that had been given by the RSU was illusive, and that any attempt to question the RSU was dismissed as being rude.

Mike Gerrity – RSU #23 Maintenance Director – Mr. Gerrity said that the School Departments did not initially want the RSU, and that the workforce has done a good job of pulling together. Many efficiencies have been corrected, and the public needs to get good facts before a decision is made.

Peggy Flynn – 15 Sweet Street. Mrs. Flynn said that she has young children and that she respects the schools. She went to the RSU Budget Meetings and met parents there who felt the same way that she does. The question is "What is best for Saco?" The test results that are being shown do not show improvement over the old system. And she realizes that data can be "spun" in any number of ways.

Tracy Collins – 378 Main Street – Mrs. Collins wanted to make three (3) points. First, people need to fully understand that there are two issues currently before the people of Saco, The RSU Budget, and the Vote to Withdraw from The RSU. I will cost extra money if The City votes down the proposed budget now. Second, there is a difference between a petition to look into withdrawal from The RSU and actually filing to withdraw from The RSU. She asked the Council to please keep the process transparent. Third, if it does cost the City more to withdraw from The RSU, then who would benefit from this? How does Thornton Academy fit into this equation? How can we not combine services; won't we simply be entering into another type of union?

Karl Carrigan – 184 North Street – The people who signed the petition to withdraw want a cost benefit analysis of staying vs. leaving. "Let's not withdraw under the gun, as we entered under the gun." There is a larger picture: We can bring together all of the great ideas of the various communities. We need to think bigger than the way things used to be. The tough part is over. In regard to the emotional distress of busing kids, we are now in a global community. We need to start looking at things that way now. The communities of Saco and Old Orchard Beach are only three (3) miles apart. We need to remove the "Sacred Cows", change the school names to "Awesome" and "Really Terrific". The cost of tearing the RSU apart would be greater than the cost of getting along. A school is not a building, but rather, a way of getting along and educating students.

Tara Travis – 9 Promenade Avenue - Mrs. Travis stated that she is a teacher, and thanked the Council for the opportunity to speak. She said that secretaries and custodians run the world. She said that she had a great passion about this issue, but felt that she was being told to "Sit down, shut up and pay" by the RSU. There are some good ideas about vocational schools that have been suggested. With the letters that have been coming home from the schools, she feels that we cannot trust that what is promised will happen.

Tiffany Hampton – Labonte Avenue East – She stated that she is not for withdrawal or for staying at this point. Kids need to have an education. The older population sees their tax bills going up. The Council needs to look at The RSU, but also at how to get grants to help people pay their bills for their necessities. How do we ask for cuts for things that educate children? We need to pass this budget with very few cuts.

A motion was made by Councilor Lovell to close the Public Hearing. A motion to amend was made by Councilor Lovell, dropping the motion to order the Council to perform, and leaving the motion to form a Withdrawal Committee from RSU #23. Councilor Tripp seconds this motion. The motion to amend passed with seven (7) yeas.

Returning to the main motion, Councilor Cote stated that he was always against the formation of the RSU. The old School System with Dayton ran well. The Council used to be able to work with the School Board. The old SAD District was good, and was a shared venture. If the Town of Old Orchard Beach wanted to be a part of that, it would be O.K.

Councilor Blood said that this is not an easy matter. The RSU was flawed from the start. This issue is about the children of the community. There is a lot of emotion circulating around this issue. It will cost more money to go back. We must take a careful look at the numbers.

Councilor Lovell asked the City Administrator if Saco was not large enough to operate its own School System. The City Administrator said that it was his understanding that a minimum number of students needed to operate a School System outside of an RSU was twenty-five hundred (2500), and that Saco had a larger number of students than that. Councilor Lovell stated that a good school system costs money, but if that money is going to schools in Saco, then Saco citizens will support it. Councilor Lovell said that he never saw written notification that Saco would be fined for not joining the RSU, but that the City migrated that way. Councilor Lovell stated that he would like to see a Saco School System.

Councilor Smith said that he was always against the RSU idea, and that there were too many people telling The City how to spend its money, and that The City had too little control. He stated that we should develop an educational format to benefit all of Saco's students, not just those bound for college.

Mayor Johnston asked Councilor Lovell to outline the twenty-two (22) step process for withdrawal from the RSU, detailing the involvement of the Citizens, and The State of Maine, and the negotiations that would be involved. Councilor Lovell then outlined that process.

A motion was made by Councilor Lovell to close the Public Hearing and to recommend that the voters authorize the filing of a petition for withdrawal from RSU #23 with the Board of Directors of Regional School Unit #23 and with the Commissioner of Education, and to authorize the expenditure of thirty-thousand dollars (\$30,000.00) from The City's Undesignated Fund Balance , including the Statement of Purpose beginning with "Saco Seeks to operate as a single Municipal School Unit", and ending with "It is our opinion that the differences and complexities that exist in this particular arrangement are structurally, behaviorally, and quantitatively irreconcilable." The Motion was seconded by Councilor Tripp. The Motion passed with seven (7) yeas.

B. (Public Meeting) FY 13 Regional School Unit 23 Budget

Councilor Tripp read the background. A Motion was made by Councilor Tripp to open the Public Meeting, and seconded by Councilor Lovell. The Motion passed with seven (7) yeas.

Vangel Cotsis – 8 Scrimshaw Lane and Petitioner began a presentation to the Council by respectfully disagreeing with the Superintendent's position, as was presented two weeks prior. He stated that the Superintendent's explanation about Saco's artificially low funding level over the previous year was actually due to a 3.6 million carry forward from the two prior fiscal years. Saco was also more efficient, being at 7% over EPS vs. Old Orchard Beach which was 20% over EPS.

The Superintendent has said that Saco's Educational Mil rate has been going down since the formation of the RSU. In fact, information from the City's Finance Director's Office showed that the Mil rate had increased since the creation of the RSU.

Saco has 59% of RSU students but only pays 55% of the RSU costs. However, this is due to the greater efficiencies of the Saco Schools, with a student to teacher ratio of 15 to 1, as opposed to Old Orchard Beach's student to teacher ratio of 10 to 1. Old Orchard Beach has 20% of the students, but 34% of the teachers. In looking at each school within the RSU as a cost center, the Old Orchard schools rank the highest in cost per student, while Saco schools are the lowest in cost per student. There are inconsistencies in the Special Education portion of the budget, and therefore that information was not part of this presentation.

Saco is paying an unfair share of the Additional Local portion of the RSU Budget. There is a shortfall between the portion that Old Orchard Beach should be paying and what they are actually contributing of \$1,114,541.00. Mr. Cotsis believes those funds are being made up elsewhere.

RSU #23 has been compared in the press to the Scarborough and Gorham School Districts, each of which employ 3 teachers over EPS. RSU #23 employs 38 teachers over EPS, which is significant, because that accounts for 58% of their budget. Prior to joining the RSU, Saco was 7% over the EPS, while Old Orchard Beach was 20% over EPS, both communities now at 15.51 as part of the RSU.

In regard to new school construction, there is no guarantee which construction project will begin first. The question is not where the money would be spent, but rather, how will a cost sharing formula reconcile a significant disparity of costs among municipalities in the RSU to renovate or construct new schools. The cost sharing formula assigns 63% of the cost of facilities to Saco. These figures are from Linda Hildebrand who is a resident of Saco and a mathematician by training.

Mr. Cotsis then outlined how individual town subsidies are all received into one operating account for the RSU. Each subsidy that is issued for an individual community does not benefit that community, but rather the RSU as a

whole. Every dollar of excess spending in Old Orchard Beach results in a .63 rise in Saco's local share. " You cannot apply a formula to costs that are not equally shared by 3 communities and expect equitable results."

In regard to Thornton Academy, its costs for tuition are based on the state average tuition rate, plus 5% for IVF. According to the contract with Thornton Academy, if actual tuition and enrollment are lower than anticipated, the RSU receives a credit back from Thornton. The RSU will have received a credit of \$684,000.00 from Thornton for the first two years of this contract, and that trend is expected to continue. What appears to be an increase in the costs for Thornton Academy was a budgetary plan that was agreed to by the RSU and Thornton Academy at the beginning of the current five year contract.

If the RSU is actually at 15.51% above the EPS for 2013, did we really achieve synergies, or did we redistribute the efficiencies of one town to another?

Mr. Cotsis concluded by stating in summation that there are different ways to interpret the same numbers, and that he had demonstrated different conclusions than the Superintendent had proposed two weeks earlier. There is more at stake in this discussion than how to interpret these numbers. There is the formidable task of determining what to do about the buildings that are now the responsibility of the RSU. Every proposition is expensive, and each community will be looking to get the most for their tax payers and their educators. It is a difficult process for a single community during good economic times. Mr. Cotsis stated that he did not believe that the City of Saco was interested in a long and drawn-out debate about who would receive what, when that would be, and who was picking up what portion of the bill. He said that the RSU was bringing about bad feelings between the communities, and it was not his intention to blame the Old Orchard Beach of today for mismanagement in the past. This discussion is not meant to be taken personally, but rather, it is about seeking out and understanding the facts and the realities.

Mr. Cotsis said that a group of Saco parents began questioning the RSU leadership, in the interest of advocating for their children, their educators, and the taxpayers of the community, and have been characterized as malicious, misinformed, and mean-spirited. A recent editorial from the highest level of the RSU described them as a juggernaut of disillusionment.

Mr. Cotsis said that his children are the reason that he has become interested in the withdrawal from the RSU. He said that he needs to balance out his contribution to their education today, with his contribution to their education in the future, and that the increase in taxes to support the RSU detracts from his ability to save for their college expenses. He also said that he felt he needed to remove the threat of his children being redistricted to another school, in order to make things that don't make sense, appear as if they do. He finished by saying that he needed Saco to take back control of its educational process, and to eliminate the controversy that would surely be ongoing.

Patrick Phillips, Superintendent of RSU #23 spoke in response to the Cotsis presentation, saying that he would offer a more complete response at a later time. In regard to that presentation, he said that it dealt with Saco's place within the RSU. He pointed out in regard to the current budget that he felt it was reasonable, that RSU #23

was the only district in York County to present a budget lower than the previous year's. Most of the people at the most recent budget meeting approved of the warrant articles by 85% to 90%.

Mr. Phillips said that it was necessary to point out that Saco's share of the local contribution had been going down over the past several years, which was a situation that needed to be corrected. If The City of Saco wanted to re-configure the cost sharing formula, there is a method for doing so under the law, similar to what had been done by vote last November. He said that the RSU needed to remind people that there could have been a more forward looking analysis done about potential budget increases previously, not on the expenditure side but on the revenue side. The RSU Board and the City of Saco could both have done a better job of anticipating the budgetary "cliff" that everyone says we are now approaching. He also wanted to remind everyone that while Old Orchard Beach schools do not run as efficiently as Saco's, Old Orchard Beach has been paying and would continue to pay a disproportionate share of the cost of education because of how the formula is set up, primarily because of its valuation. Mr. Phillips contends that this is a revenue problem and not a spending problem, and doesn't understand how people can argue that if the RSU is spending less and is receiving lower revenues, that the budget should continue to be reduced further.

Mr. Phillips said that he had to counter Mr. Cotsis's claim that Young School would not be the first building to be replaced within the RSU. He said that the facilities management team had identified it as a priority, and that he had recognized it as a priority upon becoming Superintendent. He also finds it amusing that Saco was more than happy to join the RSU and to have the debt service for Burns School retired by the RSU, but now doesn't want to remember that fact. He recalled that that figure was approximately \$12,000,000.00 that the other towns in the RSU helped to pay.

In regard to the Thornton Academy tuition, Mr. Phillips asserted that the tuition costs are not the only funds that the RSU pays to Thornton, as there are Special Education costs and other things that are not reflected in the tuition. He said that it would be great since Thornton Academy received \$10,000,000.00 in taxpayer money if there was more transparency from Thornton Academy, but there isn't. It was asked at one of the RSU budget meetings if Thornton Academy would be willing to publish its budget, but its Board of Directors has apparently decided against that, so it remains a closely guarded secret as to whether or not Thornton Academy is operating efficiently. It might also be nice to elect a new Board of Directors to Thornton Academy, but those directors are appointed and not elected.

Tracy Collins 378 Main Street asked if the EPS represents a bare minimum for education. Ron Michaud responded that the state says the EPS is adequate. Ms. Collins said that the current polarization needs to stop. The communities and interested parties in the communities should sit down and settle their disagreements. The communities cannot afford to go their separate ways.

Carl Carrigan – 184 North Street said that the idea of sending students to another community is a misnomer, and that we should consider the RSU as one educational community. We need to concern ourselves with providing an education for all children, and we need to pass the proposed budget. Next year, during the budgetary process, we need to look at the question of the RSU and its budget so that none of the children in any of the RSU towns have problems.

Tiffany Hampton - Labonte Avenue East asks if this question is about the current budget. The issue of the RSU brings about a great deal of emotion. Can this current budget be changed? If not, then we should pass the budget. People think that the question about withdrawal from the RSU and the proposed budget are linked. We should pass the RSU budget, and then assess the question of continued participation in the RSU.

Michael Gerrity – Head Custodian of RSU #23 then spoke in favor of passing the proposed budget, and also spoke in favor of Thornton Academy and the RSU.

Beth Johnston – Vice Chairman of the RSU #23 Board of Directors asked if this meeting was being broadcast over Channel 3. She said that the reason for her question was because this meeting and the vote that the Council would make are very important. We are potentially spending taxpayers money to study withdrawal from the RSU and spending taxpayers money to hold elections. In addition, she said that Thornton Academy charges the state allotted amount for tuition, and that it cannot charge more.

A motion to close the Public Meeting was made by Councilor Tripp, and seconded by Councilor Smith.

A motion not to support the proposed RSU budget was made by Councilor Tripp and seconded by Councilor Lovell.

Councilor Tripp then said in regard to the current increase in the RSU budget being a revenue problem and not an expenditure problem, that if expenditures cannot be controlled, then revenues will never be sufficient.

Councilor Lovell then said that Saco's City Budget was reduced from a 14% increase to a 6.2% increase, a much more workable level, and that the RSU should recognize that fact.

Mayor Johnston said that the RSU Budget should be passed, separate from the question of withdrawal.

Councilor Lovell said that the Council was in place to serve Saco, and that The City of Saco was being asked to carry the full burden of the increase that is being proposed by the RSU. The RSU Board Members should know every part of the budget. If all High School students within the RSU were sent to Thornton Academy, it could potentially save the RSU a lot of money.

Councilor Blood said that there was no attempt to adjust the original RSU budget. The first time it was introduced, \$90,000.00 was added at the Public Meeting. This time, only that increase had been removed. Tax bills in Saco will be going out, and the RSU will still be funded on the original budget.

Councilor Lovell asked if Mr. Phillips slide presentation could be available for viewing, and Mr. Phillips responded that he could send that information.

Councilor Cote asked how many RSU #23 budgets Saco has now been involved in, and whether or not the Council had made a recommendation before. He said that he did not believe that the community would care what the Council's recommendation was in regard to the budget vote.

A vote was then taken on the motion to recommend that the proposed RSU #23 Budget ought not to pass . The motion failed 4 to 3.

A motion to recess the meeting was made by Councilor Cote and seconded by Councilor Lovell. The motion to recess was passed with seven (7) yeas.

Attest: _____
William T. Rankin, Deputy City Clerk