

BOARD OF MAYOR AND ALDERMEN

January 3, 2023 at 7:00 PM

Mayor Craig called the meeting to order.

Mayor Craig called for the Pledge of Allegiance, this function being led by Alderman T. Sapienza.

A moment of silence was observed.

The Clerk called the roll.

Present: Aldermen Stewart, Long, Fajardo, T. Sapienza, Sharonov, Trisciani, Levasseur, Heath, E. Sapienza, Burkush, Barry, Gamache, George-Kelly

Absent: Alderman Cavanaugh

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mayor Craig advised that the purpose of the public comment session is to give residents of Manchester the opportunity to address the Board. All people wishing to speak will have up to three minutes to do so and any comments must be directed to the chair.

Any resident wishing to speak will come forward to the nearest microphone, clearly state their name and address when recognized and give their comments.

Peter Ramsey, Manchester, stated:

I am proud to be here tonight and tell you thank you very much for the courage you have to serve in public office and run for office. I have done so and very much appreciate your commitment to our hometown of Manchester. I will treat you with all the respect you deserve as elected officials. I have lived here a long time, raised a family and consider myself one of the luckiest people in NH. I love Manchester, NH. I love my job. I am proud of our city. I have watched downtown for over 25 years and seen the wonderful improvements across all of our neighborhoods. The reason for our city's success is simple. It is our people. It is our neighbors. It is our families. It is our friends. It is our colleagues and our commitment to caring about each other. My friends here tonight behind me, many, many business people, are here to tell you that we have

a duty to help the homeless folks of Manchester. One month ago there were 10 tents on Pine Street. Now there are almost 100. I think I counted 95 today. We have to consider this a public health crisis. People are dying on our sidewalks and having babies in the woods. Please let me introduce my good friend, Christine. I have known her for a long, long time; over 20 years. She owns and operates Kinder Tree Learning Center directly across the street from the encampment. Her windows look out onto it. She takes care of over 30 little kids every day from all walks of life. I have been there when parents pick up their kids. I was there today and threatened by a person as I was standing and waiting for her to come to the door. She hands the children one by one to their parents. These are working parents trying to pay their bills and work in our city. She has witnessed open drug use, sex on the streets, public urination, defecation, fights, etc. She pays taxes and now she needs our help. She has a right to safely go to work every day and greet her customers. If we say no to her, then we say no to Hanover Street and then City Hall Plaza and then goodbye to downtown and the city we love. We all care. We all know there is not one answer to homelessness but we must work on it every day. There have been many good ideas suggested already. Pods are being done in Burlington, VT. That is a great idea. County land use is another good idea. Driving them home to ones they love. Crisis housing with warm beds. More drug and mental health care. There will be 10 more ideas in the next couple of months but we must not say no to doing something. We need to include all of the city's resources. We need the help of every city employee and all department heads. This is all hands on deck. We suggest a city-wide crisis taskforce, a special Aldermanic committee and deadlines of May 1 as we start to solve this serious crisis. I am willing to help. Ask me what I can do to help. We need to do something. Thank you Madame Mayor.

Norri Oberlander, Manchester, stated:

I am a Manchester landlady and owner of North End Properties, LLC, established in 1990. I own 10 properties in this amazing city which has provided my family with a great place to start and grow our business. As a daughter of New Yorkers, downtown Manchester has personally afforded me the urban atmosphere I have always yearned for. I absolutely love downtown Manchester. I want to be a part of the homelessness solution. I lay awake at night brainstorming ways to improve this issue because I have an obligation to my tenants and to my employees to protect my family-owned business

and properties but I want to do this in a way that also protects human life. What is occurring in the streets of Manchester is inhumane and it is time for the city and the business community to come together and find solutions. This issue is not getting the attention the city needs to thrive, let alone survive. Manchester landlords and business owners, many of whom I befriended and networked with, see the issue of homelessness and realize it cannot be fixed by City Hall alone. I know business leaders that want a seat at the table to either volunteer their time or donate their funds to solve this issue while finding a balance of not becoming a magnet. Whether you are for or against the housing pod program, my simple email campaign raised \$44,000 which equates to the construction of 11 pods thus far. I raised \$44,000 from a simple email. I never even picked up the phone. Does that prove that landlords and business owners want to help? When politics play a role in the subject of homelessness, we all become divided. Therefore, we need to stop the division and come together as a whole community. It is time to get everyone to the table or people on the streets will continue to die and cause risk to others and we will watch our city decline both from a residential and commercial point of view. Don't label me as a Republican as I stand up here today just because I am a landlord and don't label me as a Democrat because I am raising money for homeless people. This is not a political issue. Label me as a human being who is trying to protect the city and all aspects of life. Finally, the main reason I am here tonight is I own the parking lot across the alley from the Pine Street tent city, therefore, I am currently at ground zero and have been for several months. At this point, it has become impossible to operate a business with so much risk involved. We are way past the conversation of all of this being unsightly. We are now talking about the risk of death. Why are we waiting around for more deaths to occur? I hope you look at me and see a woman who refuses to give up or stand still. A woman who believes in collaboration and a woman who believes in this city. I will go to the ends of the earth to protect my tenants, my employees, my family and my properties and I will stop at nothing to protect my father's legacy. To me it feels like the city is accepting the Pine Street tent city as is and where it is. Therefore, I feel like I am on an island by myself and in the Twilight Zone. I am hopeful that we can work together to restore the downtown I know and love. Thank you for your time.

Amanda Robichaud, Hooksett, stated:

I sit before you tonight as a person who brings you a bit of expertise on the current unhoused situation that the city is facing here and possible solutions or recommendations on how to address it. We are all well aware of the issue at hand but not many people typically come up here with an actual solution to fix it. That is why I am here. I want to start by introducing myself. I am Amanda Robichaud and I work for Gatehouse Treatment. It is a substance abuse program out of Nashua, NH. I am their Northeast Director of Business Development and I also work there as a licensed nurse's assistant. My job is to be a resource to all patrons seeking help for substance related matters. Over the past six years I have worked closely with the city by providing outreach to the unhoused folks. Specifically, this past year I was able to place 74 unhoused patrons from Manchester into a treatment program for substance related needs. Our efforts have been mentioned at a few of these meetings before. I wanted to share a glimpse of insight for all concerned patrons tonight to help you understand the barriers I am being met with daily while trying to place these folks into treatment. To some it may seem as though the mayor, police or fire aren't doing enough. Then others may see it as maybe the Governor isn't doing enough. I am here to tell you they are all actively trying their best to help these patrons. Our city has the Farnum Center, 1269 Café, at least 30 sober homes including Starting Point, mental health providers, the Manchester Doorway, and places like the Hope Center; all resources for some of these unhoused folks to get the services they need or so it may seem. The bigger problem we are facing is the need for detox. I have met with these folks on the corner of 199 Manchester Street. I have been in Victory Park, Bronstein Park, Veteran's Park, in back alleys, at the bus stop, and so many other locations. I honestly do peer-to-peer outreach almost weekly for the city. Almost all of your patrons have some sort of underlying mental health need and in most cases it is co-occurring disorders such as mental health and substance misuse. I know this because I have worked in roles that required me to do the ASAM or bio-psy socials so believe me when I say it is mental health related. The issue is not that we can't be out there planting the seed for recovery or real change. I do that daily as well as the above-mentioned programs. The real issue is we have two hospitals spin drying clients in and out of their waiting room. Why? Because Medicaid doesn't pay enough for detox and these are for profit hospitals. Patrons don't score high enough on the CIWA test to identify as needing detox during

the initial intake showing signs and symptoms of physical withdrawal; mainly because they are still intoxicated whether that be from alcohol, meth or opiates. The hospital provides a letter of medical clearance and these folks end up in programs like mine and many others. Unfortunately, in most cases the patrons don't admit to the program because their withdrawal symptoms have become so bad that they now need medical attention landing them back in the ER only this time it is usually via ambulance. Imagine the Manchester Fire Department arriving to a fire in the city and requiring to see the homeowner's insurance policy before putting out the fire. Sounds crazy right? Time is of the essence and you only have so long to do the job sufficiently before it is a total loss. Now imagine the Fire Department doesn't think your homeowner's policy is going to pay enough for the damage that has been done so they decide they don't want to put out your fire and they leave you to figure it out alone. That is exactly what is happening to these patrons. They muster up the will and seek help for their addiction only to be met with we don't accept Medicaid for detox. The only way they can get a real detox in the hospital is if they are admitted for another treatment service that would essentially provide higher reimbursement rates. It is actually quite sad when you think about that isn't it? It is all about money and not about saving lives which seems ironic for a hospital don't you think? The government has funding in place for all sorts of different things and nothing to address Step 1 in this process, which is ultimately detox. I am well aware of programs like The Doorway and Farnum. I am also not here to bash anyone but resources that are available on a whim are not currently working for you and the city and you need to start thinking outside the box which is where I come in. I am willing to participate on any board you may have as I already have a plan of action built for this exact need but it is not just a city problem. It is a state issue that needs to be rectified accordingly. I have a number of people I can call upon to help detox these folks ready to go but I will need the city and the state to help incentivize these programs accordingly. Again, my name is Amanda Robichaud, I work for Gatehouse Treatment and my phone number is 603-370-7762. Anyone struggling tonight can call me directly. They can also call our admissions team. We are open 24/7. At the end of the day, we need to get these people off the street and into the right places for the right levels of care. We have to utilize the resources accordingly.

Victoria Sullivan, 1056 S. Beech Street, stated:

Mayor Craig, your letter to Governor Sununu today was a flag of surrender. You have surrendered your position as leader of the city and laid it at the feet of the Governor. You clearly have no plan or ability to lead our city. You must do what is right and you must resign. Upon your resignation, the funds received from the state and federal government to address homelessness and addiction must be audited. For years, I have presented solutions to this Board in regards to the homeless crisis. I have stated on debate stages, in op-eds and in public statements that I had a plan of action and what that plan was. My warnings and plans were disregarded by many of you, but especially you Mayor Craig. I first asked for your resignation after the murder of Daniel Whitmore, the 75-year-old veteran that was stabbed to death in a vicious attack on the trails by my home; the same trails that children use to access the little league field. I asked for your resignation because you have used your position as leader of this city to deceive people and tell them that the trails and the city were safe. They are not safe and your negligence has cost lives and endangered our children. My once safe neighborhood saw two car thefts, a person threatened with a knife in their own yard and multiple overdoses this weekend alone. Alderman Burkush, you should be especially ashamed as this is your neighborhood and they call you the Ghost Alderman. The lack of leadership in our city resulted in nearly 100 deaths on our streets in 2022. Overdoses and violent crime are on the rise and frankly Manchester cannot survive another year of your leadership. You ran against Gatsas twice and neither time was homelessness a campaign issue. This is a situation that you have created, you have ignored and you have grown. You also firmly planted the opioid epidemic and crime on Gatsas when you ran yet you are now blaming the Governor. When Gatsas was mayor, you said Manchester is now known more for our struggles versus our strengths and that must change. We have a far worse reputation now than we did prior to you taking office. I agree with you that must change. The change, Mayor Craig, begins with you stepping down. Your letter of surrender to the Governor confirms that that is what is best for the city. On a positive note, I was encouraged to see the Homeless Director discussing change of use for some buildings as this was part of the plan that I have consistently presented to this Board for the last four years. I have reached out to her and I am hopeful that she and I can work together to bring the items in my comprehensive plan to

fruition, including addressing the gaps in services, bringing the businesses, the faith-based community, the non-profits and the private entities together to come up with a formative plan. I understand that when I presented the plans for the first time four years ago the situation was not as overwhelming as it is today but as they say, the best time to plant a tree is 20 years ago or in this case it was four years ago. The next best time is today. I will end by asking you once again, and this is with all sincerity, please resign along with the other 11 who do your bidding. You have failed Manchester and new leadership is needed to save our city.

Brittany Ping, 408 Rimmon Street, stated:

I am here for a different piece of the homeless puzzle and that is the real estate side. I am a NH real estate licensee and a realtor. I am also a director of property management for 58 C class or workforce housing multi-family buildings here in Manchester accounting for roughly 275 units in our city. I am an agent for small investors that see promise in our city. Most of them have owned their multi-family properties for eight or less years and most of them own 1-25 units. I have a fiduciary responsibility to advise my clients on the market rent and follow their requests for vacancy rentals and rent increases. As someone that has created and maintained a proprietary analysis tool for rental rates, I can point you to the single most reason for the drastic increase in rent rates; the new property assessments for 2022. These assessments from 2021 transitioned Manchester residential and mixed use property owners from 60% responsible for the tax load of the city to 70%. I am not here to argue the necessity of this assessment to be completed by the state but to ignore it as the primary cause and blaming greedy landlords for raising rent rate and increasing homeless is disingenuous. I owner-occupy a three-family in my neighborhood. You know them as the bread and butter of workforce housing in our fair city. The assessed value of my property went up 61% and with the adjusted tax rate, that meant my taxes went up 15% without anyone on this Board having to vote. This is what I found to be the average for three-family properties in our city and 6-8 family units, again an even bigger workforce housing magnet, reached an average of a 28% increase. I brought poor Mr. Keyes here and he doesn't know how to speak for three minutes so he is going to waive his time. There was a 38% increase on one of his buildings in taxes without any of you having to vote. In addition to the assessment increases, the 2022 budget

increase was approved but not in effect then we would learn of water/sewer increased rates and now we have the 2023 budget so I am still uncertain if we have reached the plateau of what market rent rates will do in our city. We are all hoping for it in real estate. Let me tell you that. These assessment increases also increase the property insurance. It is not my area of expertise but insurance companies can't renew your policy if it is over a 25% increase. So guess how many cancellation notices I got for Manchester? 58. Property insurance increased over 25%. All of this at a time when rental vacancy rates were under 1% and historic home sale prices were still happening and that is the environment that created a 40% jump, not greedy landlords. I have seen journalists and advocacy groups start to target and put hits out on investors that bought these workforce houses during a pandemic for moving rent too quickly. I got an email today with one of those articles and the subject was "die." It was "die" and there were some words in that email. If I have time, I want to leave you with one anecdote. In 2019, on the day that those letters went out, I closed on my first investment property, a duplex in my neighborhood that I am so excited about and my mortgage in one year has gone from \$1,900 to \$2,300 and that is the only reason...banks do not like it when you have big unexpected tax increases that are due three months in arrear when you close on a property. So when did I become greedy? When I invested in my neighborhood? When I want to see and invest in a buildable lot next to my property, next to the beautiful Valley West Condos? I just want to make it clear that blaming rent increases and homelessness on greedy landlords is disingenuous. Thank you very much.

Cairnie Pouorney, 294 Hampstead Road, stated:

We have heard from a lot already and I am sure we are going to hear from a lot more. I had something written but I am going to wing it. I think we all know that this is not a single issue problem. This is not only people who have drug problems or only people who are doing crimes or only people...this is a bigger problem all in all. This is that our cost for groceries is going up and this is that someone who is just starting out is trying to get into a home that...yes fantastic I am thrilled that we have raised the minimum wage for city workers to \$15/hour but the fact is that it should be closer to \$23/hour for the times we are living in. When you are trying to get into a place and you have to put a down payment, first month payment and the last payment, it is impossible to get your head above water to get yourself into a place. This is not one single issue. This is not

going to say put rehab facilities in and we are going to solve this issue or put in affordable housing and we are going to fix this issue. This is a structural issue all in all and that is a lot in your hands. I admit that and it is a lot out of your hands and there is a lot that you can't do but what I am asking you to do...there are non-profits and there is the state. It is your job now to work hand-in-hand with them to get the grants and get the programs. Do your job. Work with them and come to a deal and get something done. We are having children born in the woods and we are having people die on the sidewalks. I think we can all admit that is not the city that we want. I grew up in this city and I love this city more than anything else and I want it to succeed but this has always been an issue here and it is always going to be. We are the largest city north of Boston. People are going to come here so why don't we finally invest in creating the programs to support them the best that we can by putting in rehab facilities and putting in more mental health and putting in more affordable housing? I get it. It is a big project and not going to be done by tomorrow but we need to see progress. Right now we are seeing progress on parks and on pools and on street art and I love it and it is making our downtown beautiful and bringing more people here but we are throwing our citizens into the trash for it. I get it. I get it but as someone who has had inconsistent housing myself and has been living in my car on and off, it is not just criminals. It is working poor. It is people who cannot get themselves on their feet. I understand that it is an issue that is more complex than any of us can singly solve. There is NY and there is LA and there is Paris and there are hundreds and hundreds of cities that have faced this before us. We can learn from them and bring in the programs that they have tested and proven but now we have to put the work behind it. We have to actually work for it just like we are working on affordable housing and just like we are working on the parks and just like we are working to bring small business in. This is going to continue to drag our city down. Please just try. Thank you.

Marc Cusson, 148 Manchester Street, stated:

I represent the Ukranian American Citizens Club which is a social fraternal order at 148 Manchester Street. Our front entrance is directly behind the Manchester Fire Department. I just wanted to say that the club has been chartered there since 1930 and I can tell you that I can't remember anybody ever turning away any Manchester charity that has knocked on our door looking for a donation. We pride ourselves on being a

very charitable organization. We have been there since the 1930's as I said. I can go through the list of charities that we have supported but I am going to cut right to the chase. On Saturday morning when I came to work to close on our books for the month, I was told by a Manchester police officer that I couldn't get inside our building because it was an active crime scene. They were collecting evidence. While I certainly understood that, I think you can understand my frustration. I can remember a time when I used to be upset with our opening staff because they failed to stock our refrigerators or they failed to make sure there was ice in the proper receptacles. Now I get aggravated with them because they fail to check our doorways to see if people have urinated or defecated in them or they fail to check our parking lot to see if there have been hypodermic syringes left in there. I write these checks so I know and our property taxes are paid to the City of Manchester. Our food establishment license is paid to the City of Manchester. Our business license is paid to the City of Manchester and our Place of Assembly permit is all paid to the City of Manchester. So when I say I am a practical person, I find it hard to believe that I am going to be referred to the State of NH and a statewide problem to fix these things. I think we are good business people and we are good tax payers and good citizens and we deserve better than what we are seeing in that neighborhood right now. If I am lucky enough, I will see our Centennial Anniversary in the year 2030 but quite frankly, the way things are going in that neighborhood right now, we cannot maintain a membership. Nobody wants to come see a local house band who is playing classics from the 70's if they can't get down the sidewalk or if they are harassed every time they park their car a half a block away because they don't have a spare dollar bill on them to hand out. I share your altruistic values about people who need help and people who have fallen on bad times but quite frankly I have gotten to the point where our small group of 125 people can't help the whole world so I am looking to the city leaders to fix this problem because I think we are holding up our end of the bargain and I would encourage you to do the same thing. Thank you.

Patrick Garrity, 471 Silver Street, stated:

First and foremost, thank you for your service to the community. I know it is hard sometimes. I have been a lifelong resident of Manchester and I am here to represent, as the Treasurer and Financial Officer, 168 Manchester Street which is the Winona

Social Club which is on the northeast corner of Pine Street. We are ground zero. That was evident on Saturday morning. Anybody who doesn't understand, we fall under the same statutes and rules as any American Legion and so on. We have been located at that site since 1987 so we have been long-time business owners there. I know there are some misunderstandings. We are the owner of the building. I know there has been some miscommunication thinking we can't get in touch with the landlord but we are the landlord. We own the property and the building. It doesn't make me happy to come here today but this has been going on too long. I am here to tell you what we deal with on a daily basis. We deal with first and foremost the cleanliness of the corner. As you have heard from past speakers, people defecate and urinate constantly. Our members who want to come in after having dinner downtown to have a drink or maybe hear the DJ or converse with their friends that they have had for years have to walk out to their car in our parking lot and step in feces or step on needles. That is just unacceptable in my eyes; unacceptable. Harassment is constant from the people in the area. I personally in the past have asked people to please get off our front steps so our members can enter and they will hurl bottles at me from across the street at 199 Manchester Street. I don't want a physical confrontation and I don't want our members to have physical confrontations. Foremost is the safety of our members and our employees. Daily, myself or a board member of this business gets a call from a bartender or a patron who doesn't feel safe to leave. We have called the Manchester Police Department repeatedly and they have done a wonderful job. Chief Aldenberg and Chief Cashin are doing a wonderful job. I understand as I am a retired first responder myself and I know what they go through daily but something needs to happen. We don't receive our mail. We don't receive the newspaper. It is a constant thing. We spent \$7,000 on a security system which is used all the time and on a regular basis by the MPD. We have detectives in there on a weekly basis looking at videotape which we are glad to provide for them but not just on the corner but looking up and down Hanover Street and so on and so forth. We pay over \$18,000 in real estate taxes and fees to the City of Manchester; \$18,000 and this is what we have to do. It is unacceptable. Something needs to happen. I know it is not pretty what you are hearing but this is the truth. I have given my business card to Clerk Normand. My email address and personal cell phone number are on there. Please call me and come by and take a look. I know we have had aldermen there in the past. Alderman Levasseur

was there on Saturday for the stabbing. I had to literally spend an hour and 20 minutes cleaning the steps of 168 Manchester Street because they don't touch private property. I had a lot of cleaning to do. They cleaned up the street and the sidewalk but they didn't clean the steps and I understand that they are not required to and they can't but that is what we had to do in order to use the front steps for our members to come in and enjoy themselves watching a Saturday or Sunday afternoon football game. We are asking and pleading with you. We need something to happen and I am willing to take questions after. I will stay for the rest of the meeting. Please contact me if you have any further questions. Thank you again for your service.

Thomas Daskal, 223 Manchester Street, stated:

I am a lifelong resident of Manchester brought up on Manchester Street not far from the soup kitchen. I went to Central High School and graduated from Plymouth in 1990 and then went to work at the family business. My brother and my mom are sitting behind me and my brother will be speaking next. We are separate but together if you can understand that. When I got out in 1990 I came into the business and was taken aback at the soup kitchen next door and the homeless people and the prostitutes. That was a small problem compared to what is going on now. The trash and the defecation right in the doorway that you have to step over to get into your place. That is not bad enough but now everyday...Exhibit A (bag of needles). Every day I have to pick these up from my property; every day. That is not bad enough. Yesterday I asked a gentleman to move his tent out from in front of my mailbox so I could get my mail and another person who was walking up the street said you don't have to move that tent. Don't listen to him. I told him to mind his own business. He got up in my face and threatened me. He is the guy that got into the fight on Saturday and he had a big scar on his head and said he was a gangster and was going to take me out. That is what I had to deal with yesterday. Today I see a guy near the pizza place that isn't a pizza place anymore but a Mexican place, booting up right there. I am going to tell you all that. He was booting up in front of me. I know there is hearsay but a homeless person that I know who lives inside at the soup kitchen...he lives inside. He doesn't live outside but he said everyone in the tents, and this is hearsay, is outside because they can't do their heroin inside so they are outside in the tents. This right here (pointing to bag) is evidence that they are booting up. I don't know what you guys are going to do but it is really affecting

me. I go home at night and can't sleep. They are moving up the street. I knew it was going to happen. Now they are in front of my place and I got no mail today because the girl is afraid to walk by them and deliver the mail. It is out of control. I think that all of you people should take a little hoof up Manchester Street from Pine to Union and take a look. It looks like the dump. It is disgusting. Then you send somebody up the street to pick up their garbage. It is not making a difference because it is all over the place. I pick up garbage every day. Are you going to send somebody up to take orders for lunches for them next? Do we bend over backwards for the heroin addicts that put a drag on our society, don't contribute anything, and tie up our health care system and you are letting them camp on the sidewalk but I can't walk down the sidewalk? I have to walk in the street. When I was 18, me and my buddy were throwing a Frisbee across Elm Street and a policeman gave me a ticket for being a pedestrian in the roadway. Now, they are playing football in the road and you can't even drive up the street. You can't even drive up the street. They won't get out of the way. What do you do? You can't do anything to them. What am I going to do? Please tell me. What am I supposed to do? I can't confront these people. Just picking up the needles I am running a health risk. Do you understand? This is crazy. This is out of control and we need to do something. I am not for you resigning mayor but you have to do something to help us because everybody here is suffering. Ho is going to speak. He owns the Saigon Market. I told him I felt bad for him when he moved in here because it is a disaster. The other businesses here...the daycare is losing business. We are all losing business. Our apartment building where I grew up is up the street and actually a tenant saw somebody come into the yard and boot up in the middle of the night. The hookers are bringing their johns into the yard to do their business. I am not making any of this up. You can tell I am pretty heated because you can ask my wife. I can't sleep at night. My stomach is turning and I am worried. I am worried that something is going to happen to me and I am going to lose everything because of someone who has nothing. Thank you.

Ralph Brutus, 148 Merrimack Street, stated:

I want to start by thanking the city council for hearing us tonight. I am the owner of Brutus Auto Repair and Service located at the corner of Merrimack and Pine. My building is in back of the Families in Transition building. I am here this evening to

discuss my concern regarding people without housing situated in our area. I have run Brutus Auto since 2000 and for the past 23 years I have been a business owner highly involved in the local community. I have always felt safe in my business. I have been there on countless nights over the years well after midnight and never feared for my safety or for my employees. This is no longer the case. My daily employees are picking up needles as well as feces every day. My customers are scared to pick up their vehicles after dark. I have installed additional security in my building including additional cameras in trying to keep my business safe and secure. The sidewalk surrounding my business, as well as others, is filled with those who are without shelter. We can no longer use the sidewalk or often times the parking lot where parking spaces are filled with people and the spots are blocked. I have video and photos documenting the area surrounding my building. It is quite disturbing. The people in this area are verbally abusive to my employees, patrons and those who are walking to other businesses. It is my belief that the problem has escalated significantly since the police station moved to a new location. The homelessness issue is significant in the city and in my opinion not being addressed appropriately. Myself, as well as many other business owners and home owners, have worked tirelessly trying to get this issue addressed. We have been told that once the snow hits they will move. This is not the case. The issue goes well beyond the weather. Manchester is in need of serious revitalization since the pandemic. This issue is a hindrance to this process and is forcing businesses to sell and move to other areas. It is no longer viable to run a business in downtown Manchester and those patrons who would frequent these businesses are being intimidated and choose to no longer frequent our businesses as the hassles involved outweigh the good. Families in Transition is a wonderful organization and do much good work in our community. Unfortunately, the homeless problem in the city goes well beyond what they can handle. The building is too small to serve the needs of the community and there is not enough help to ease the problem. I am empathetic and sympathetic to the needs of these people. All I can say is I have been here for 23 years and I have always felt safe in the city. This is the first time I ever felt that my own kids can't even visit my business or my grandchildren because I don't know what is going to happen at any given time. I appreciate all of you but please do something soon because I am looking for somewhere else to go. Thank you.

Michael Ketchen stated:

Good evening Mayor Craig and Aldermen. I spoke to you guys a couple of weeks ago and I said that I was going to be the honey. Tonight might be the vinegar unfortunately. I am one of the people from the outside looking in. I am not from Manchester. I am a real estate investor and a real estate developer who has decided to move forward with trying to be part of the solution on Manchester Street. I don't envy the position that any of you are in, especially you Mayor Craig. However, you are elected and it is the position you are in. What I believe in is leading from the front and that is what we are trying to do. I want to tell you what is happening and I am going to invite each and every one of you aldermen over the next two weeks to meet me at that project at 57 Manchester Street and you, Mayor Craig, to walk it. What happened yesterday is totally unacceptable. I am working tirelessly to bring new business to Manchester Street to try to lead from the front. I am bringing a prominent restaurant from Londonderry who has agreed to lease two spaces, one of which is being vacated by a business that I worked to get in there because they feel unsafe and they are tired of cleaning up human feces in the back driveway. I have had to put up a fence. I have had to put barb wire on the fence. I am having materials stolen. Despite all of this, I still go forward because I believe in this city and I believe in this opportunity. Again, I am leading from the front. However, we are now getting to the point where we had to kick out two people shooting up yesterday from the front stoop only to step in human feces on our way to the job site. It is now unsafe. I am having a hard time getting contractors there and this is a project, by the way, where we are one of only thirty-one investors in the entire state of NH to win the InvestNH grant. I have 18 months in which I have risked \$500,000 of my own capital to provide 13 affordable housing units on Manchester Street. I plan to provide this housing to local artists and people I truly believe can help turn around this area. Again, I am leading from the front so I am holding each and every one of you accountable to reach out to me to schedule a time to come walk the property in the next two weeks because I want solutions. I am also going to go on the record tonight that I will contribute \$10,000 to any action committee that anybody wants to put together but I want a plan within a month. I am happy to speak about it. I am happy to offer solutions. I am happy to contribute any way I can because this is going to take the private and the public sector. This is going to take elected officials, non-profits and for profits but the

time for action is now. You are losing businesses and you are losing good residents and you are turning outsiders like me away. We have an opportunity and you all get to decide which way it goes. Thank you for your time.

Jennifer Brooks stated:

Thank you all for your service. I have been asked to share my experience as well. I am the General Manager at the new Residence Inn by Marriott right over here on Lake Avenue. I am here as well to voice my concerns and frustrations with the downtown environment that we have been subjected to since our opening in November 2020. I simply want to stress that my main concern since day one has been the safety of my beloved team members and Marriott guests. We have been forced to implement security measures beyond my wildest belief all to do our best to set up a little bubble around our little Marriott Hotel. Downtown hotels are envisioned to be vibrant and busy with foot traffic in and out. We have to have so many controls in place to limit who uses our public restrooms and who eats our complimentary hot breakfast buffet each morning. Doors of the only entrance we have now at the hotel are locked from 10 PM until after breakfast every day. These types of restrictions certainly don't set off a good indicator to travelers as they come to our city for the first time. Since opening, we have had our own private security seven days a week, twelve hours a day. We had to change companies as the initial company was not experienced enough to deal with the situations taking place. Events, confrontations, interactions, etc. with locals that I personally and my team have had over the past two years have taken the hospitality out of our jobs. Here are just a few comments that have come back on the guest satisfaction surveys from travelers that have visited your city: "not a good location to walk around the area", "neighborhood is not the best", "hotel is nice and new but the location feels a little sketchy", "area around the hotel not really safe for walking and going out to dine", "Manchester has a homeless problem that they should address with a decent shelter for these people", "I will say there is a noticeable transient population here in Manchester and given that this location is downtown, homeless folks are everywhere and sometimes even hang out around the property", and lastly "love the accommodations and staff but not all the homeless people in the area, would not stay there with my child." The stresses that this environment has put upon local businesses and even law enforcement has been overwhelming. There have been far too many

occurrences when we had situations at the hotel where my team has called 911 and it takes hours and even multiple calls back to find out the status to come and assist with a situation. No fault to them. I know they have to prioritize their calls, however, my fear is that my hotel may unknowingly be the next headline. I am simply here tonight to share with you what our day-to-day looks like while operating a hotel in the downtown area of Manchester. There are four hotel operations in this downtown area and I am sure they are enduring the same level of frustrations that my team has. I am hopeful that you as the leaders of this city hear us tonight and understand that we are giving 110% to the success of our business and to provide a positive and safe experience to travelers coming to Manchester but this situation downtown is certainly not advocating this city in the best possible light to the travel and tourism opportunities in NH. Thank you for your time this evening and as Peter said, let us know how we can help.

James Daskal, 223 Manchester Street, stated:

I don't have a lot of poise so I can't do the speech that I had planned. I have been a lifelong resident and worked at a business in Manchester. The garage I run is Blue Line Garage and it has been incorporated since 1957. Lately I can no longer get into my property. I can't get into my property and I can reiterate everything everyone else has said about the issues and the problems but I feel like I have been here my whole life and I wonder why my city has abandoned me. When I call to have these people removed from my property so I can go to work, they don't come. I am being financially hurt. I have had to resort to working out of another shop. I want to know why you abandoned me. I want to know why you have not enforced the laws and the ordinances of the city and removed people from the sidewalk. When I had cars parked on Manchester Street for longer than an hour, I got tagged because of a parking ordinance and I paid them all; forty years of it. From what I understand, you are supposed to have a permit to occupy the sidewalk. I don't see them with permits out there. They are suffocating me and my business; my livelihood and it is getting dangerous. They are not lying about it. They own the street. I no longer own the street. I pay all my bills. I pay the city. You know all of that. Enforce the laws. Enforce your ordinances now. I can't wait for you to solve this politically. I need action now. I need them off of my building and off of my fence before somebody, anybody coming down, innocent people, somebody in the wrong place at the wrong time gets hurt and it will happen. If it snows

and the plow hits one of these people, I am sure you already know. Enforce your laws and your ordinances now and disburse this. Where they go is not really my concern but I understand it is your concern. It used to be a nice little neighborhood when I was a kid working there. Now it is the just the bowels of Manchester.

Victoria stated:

I am speaking for Mr. Ho of Saigon Asian Market on Union Street, a family owned business of seven years. We want to bring up the main issues of homelessness on Union Street. They have been loitering on our property, doing drugs in broad daylight and leaving used needles everywhere. There is a huge homeless encampment for blocks across the street from our store. Because of that, the homeless hang out in the store's parking lot leaving a lot of trash, unused needles and waste on our property. We have been getting a lot of customer complaints. They feel scared to park in our parking lot or even put their groceries away. The homeless have approached our customers and loitered around the entrance. We have had customers who get in their vehicles and are unable to leave because a homeless person blocks them and refuses to let them go. Some of our patrons bring their kids or are elderly and, therefore, seeing all of this happen is very inappropriate and it is a safety issue for minors and everyone involved. Mr. Ho, the owner here, has to pick up these used needles every day in the parking lot and that poses a health risk to him because if he pricks his finger, he can contract a blood borne disease such as HIV, Hepatitis B or Hepatitis C. The staff have also asked the homeless to leave but whenever they do, they are verbally and physically abused which endangers their lives and God forbid they endanger our patrons' lives. Overall, the staff and patrons feel like they have to watchful and observant of the mental states of the homeless people if they are loitering and doing drugs in broad daylight. That shouldn't be a stressor at all. The homeless need better mental health care and it is evident that they are not getting the care or resources that they need. Overall, this has been an ongoing issue for years on end for the business. The issue has only gotten worse and we need to nip the bud of the problem now. We don't want to see someone we care about get hurt. I don't want to see anyone's siblings or family get hurt; those that work at the store. We don't want to see our patrons get hurt and of course we don't want the homeless to hurt themselves. Please help us fix this problem. Thank you.

Jamie Brassill, 150 Golfview Drive, stated:

I am very concerned about the homeless situation and the people living outside and I was hoping that you could look at each individual person and their situation that they are in. There are a lot of young people out there and some people that don't know how to access the services that they have available to them. I am especially here today because my friend, Mr. Ho's Asian Market...we went shopping over there the other day and there were tents all over the front of his parking lot and people couldn't get in. We asked them to move their tents and they were mad and there was an altercation and people were fighting over a tarp. They didn't want to move away from the parking lot. If the people can't get into his parking lot, he is going to lose business. They are just driving by and afraid to go into the store. It is just really concerning because I don't want him to go out of business. He is my good friend and he has tolerated it for a long time and really hasn't stood up for his rights but he has every right to ask them not to be on his sidewalk. I was just hoping that you could try to take care of that area better so that he can operate his business without having the stress on his shoulders. That is all. Thank you very much.

Ken Tassey, 226 Karatzas Avenue, stated:

Thank you for the opportunity to share my experience. I am here to be of support to the Ho family – Tong and Kim Ho and their children and relatives. My wife and I have been patrons of their business since they owned the business on South Willow Street going back to 2005 I believe. We were disappointed when they closed up shop there but delighted when they built a building on the corner of Manchester and Union Streets about seven years ago because it meant that we wouldn't have to drive 30 minutes or an hour to Boston or somewhere to get the Japanese and Korean food that we like to eat. My wife is not a complainer at all. Not in the 33 years of our marriage has she been a complaining type of person but during her visits to the store she has brought home some concerns about getting in and out of the parking lot or the store because of the homeless encampment. Needless to say, this is not an indictment on our homeless brothers and sisters. We know that there is an issue that needs to be resolved there which is a much deeper problem and more involved. I am here really to support their concerns about their declining business and complaints from their customers. I shop there myself two or three times a month and recently when I was there in the evening

after dark there were a couple of people directly across the street that looked at me while performing an act of sex just behind the car. When I drove by just a few days ago with my windows closed on a cold day, the smell of human excrement was coming into my vehicle even with the windows closed. It was that bad. I have noticed the tents are moving closer and closer to the entrance and now they are directly across the street from their entrance and there are people from the encampment going in and coming out of their parking lot. If there are places in the City of Manchester that are centers of community that bring culture and members of ethnicities into one place to commune, particularly where they do their shopping for their food and their dinner, breakfast and lunch I would say that the Saigon Market is one of those institutions so please do what you can. We implore this body to take action to really prioritize this issue and to do what you can, particularly for this family who have made immense sacrifices just to be here and from what I understand eating rolls and water for two or three years while they were building their business. It is just an incredible story. Thank you very much.

Meagan Clickner, 28 Helen Circle, stated:

I am speaking on behalf of Saigon Asian Market located on Union Street. I have been shopping at Saigon over the last few years and I have noticed the extreme increase in the homeless population on Union Street. This horrific situation is only amplified as customers have to walk past the scenario daily. As a young woman in a busy city, I am becoming increasingly concerned for my own safety as well as every other customer that must walk past the tents and used needles as they walk even the short distance from their car to the door. I am often faced with homeless asking for money or drunkenly stumbling into my path forcing me out of their way. This causes extreme distress and I am certain that many other Saigon Market customers feel the same. This has often made me feel hesitant to shop on Union Street. Quite frankly it is scary, uncomfortable and I am concerned for the business of Saigon Market. This family-oriented market provides so much for this amazing city and the Greater Manchester area. I know of customers that drive over two hours just to shop there. To see this unfortunate situation put this market at risk of losing their valued customers and ultimately their business should be a priority of the city. As a customer and a close family friend of the owners, I ask that you please make the changes and take the

actions necessary to help with this increasingly prevalent issue. Thank you for your time.

Dam Wright, Manchester stated:

Most of my friends couldn't make it out because it is too hard to survive in the rain and keep your stuff and yourself dry. I wanted to get to something that I didn't get to last time. I am glad that Dennis did and I want to thank the Fire Department and the Police Department very much for the excellent work that they have been doing. The Fire Department has their outreach and they handle these medical calls so they save more people than I have. There was even a firefighter that came out today to give some very much needed help to a lot of people when he was off-duty. That was great to see. The Police Department has been universally respectful in dealing with this problem. They have been universally fair. I know that some people have wanted to rant online about citations but they don't know what they are talking about. We want to have everybody there keeping three feet clear for wheelchairs and walkers who need to get in and out of the shelter or in and out of these businesses so people being cited for that is actually something that mostly elders in the community are supportive of. I also wanted to say some positive things about what I have been reading about some of your actions like the bringing in of Andrew Warner to help with overdose death prevention. Thank you. Thank you. That is one of the hugest things we can be focused on right now; the deaths so thank you for that. I have heard great things about him and I look forward to seeing what happens with that. Reading the words of the new Homeless Initiatives Coordinator was very, very inspiring. I am very happy to hear that there are going to be directional changes in the way that we deal with these problems. That is wonderful and we have been waiting on that for a long time. I like that she is speaking with a sense of urgency because that is obviously needed very much right now. Two things I am not hearing that I would like to hear something about are plans to actually go out and talk to the people who are being affected by this and not just the business owners but the people who have to actually live on those sidewalks. You need to know why they are out there and what it is going to take to get them someplace better. You have to talk to them. You have to talk to somebody that is out there all the time. You have to find out what is going on out there. You are not going to be able to make the right decisions and the right steps unless you have the right information. The other thing...I love what I am

hearing about the plans and the foundations that are being laid with Andrew Warner and the Homeless Initiatives Coordinator, however that is laying foundations. There is no movement being seen. The folks living on the streets aren't seeing any changes day-to-day in what is going on out there as people are dying and not just the ones you read about by the way. Those aren't the only friends we are mourning right now. Something needs to happen. I think the very simplest, easiest possible thing you can do right now for the folks that are on those streets and the folks that are here tonight is port-a-potties. Tomorrow. It is that simple. Make the call and put them out there. Put them by the Fire Station or put them on the sidewalk and call it camping gear. I don't care. You can do it. Port-a-potties so that there is not stuff everywhere – in the alleyways and in the doorways and everything. It is that simple. Sharps containers might also be a good idea from everything that we heard tonight. That is all. Put that out there. Do that tomorrow. Show that you are making some movement. Show them that you want to do something. I know you do but you gotta do it and you gotta do it tomorrow. Please. You can make a huge, huge difference for all of these people and all of the folks out there just by doing that and then let's get back to what we were talking about which is getting them a different place to go as I have been saying the whole time because that is the only thing that is going to stop this.

Glenn Ouellette, 112 Auburn Street, stated:

For six years we have been fighting this battle. It didn't happen today. Port-a-potties is where it started from; toilets. One part of the city has toilets available in their park and the other one doesn't. Why are we dealing with one area and not the other? Port-a-potties are very important for a reason. You can't treat people like animals and we are doing that. We can't sympathize with those that are criminalizing and threatening our community when they are destroying property. No one is above the law. I have been saying this for a long time now. Arrest those that are creating the problems. If they do something illegal, arrest them. Let our police officers do their job. Give them more leniency. Let them do what needs to be done. Our Fire and Police Departments have done a lot. How many of you see them day-to-day? They go through a lot and it hits you in the head after a while because it is repeat, repeat, repeat. Last night at midnight between the Salvation Army and where I live behind the SNHU Arena, I was awakened by someone doing what I call the drug dance, the overdose drug dance, going through

all of the garbage cans and emptying them. I opened the door and yelled to pick up the garbage and then he lost it. I went back in. I wasn't going to get any closer. This is what is happening at night on our streets. You will never solve the drug problem if you don't get rid of it. We need help and the state needs to come in. I am tired of hearing that this is a Manchester problem. It is a state problem. You just got a \$44 million grant. Some of you are planning to use it to lift the city. Before you lift the city, you have to come out from under the ground and solve the problems and the problems didn't start today. They have been growing. It is out of this world. We live in a different downtown than we did 10 years ago and that is the sad part. I walked here today and saw a lot of garbage along the fencing of the county courthouse. That was never like that. I saw buildings...I saw one store on Manchester Street that has been there for four or five years shut down now. I have seen people going into the Greek restaurant back and forth and the owners who are in the process of building a huge building have to go there every day and reseal it. It has to stop. This city will not be safe until we solve the problem of the homeless. Just moving them around...that is what happens. The neighbors are noticing it. Moving them around does not solve the problem so please create a committee and involve citizens, not just the government. Citizens who see this every day. Thank you.

Dennis Higgins, Manchester stated:

A lot of people are pretty pissed off and I get it. A lot of stuff has been going on. Maybe you haven't been hearing it all but the toilet thing has been mentioned by everyone who talked so I don't know what we are missing here. I don't know if anyone is listening but that is a serious problem. As far as dumping the stuff on the Police and Fire Departments, that is not the answer. Both departments do an awesome job. I have to admit that the Police Department has a lot of patience. I don't know how some of these guys do it but I know if I was a police officer I would react differently. The trash problem. I don't know why anyone hasn't driven by and seen that there are like two barrels. I am not talking about the barrels that people have requisitioned from other properties. There might be two barrels in that whole neighborhood and we have about 100 people there plus the people in the shelter. Where are they going to throw their trash? That is a no-brainer. I don't understand why it has taken this much. Education is basically where it is going to start I guess because you have to teach these people

not only how to live again in a house but how to get off the drugs and how to get job skills. That is really where it is going to be. It is not just building new homeless shelters or just giving them stuff. There is a lot of waste I think, too. There is a lot of people giving them stuff. The city is very giving. There are a lot of good people out there but it is not coordinated. One day you will get five people bringing you hats and the next day 10 people bringing you socks. I don't expect it to be a government run thing but there has to be some way to direct the people towards an agency. They have the head of the homeless at the Fire Department. Maybe she can help and say this is what we need and this is what they are going to get. I see what is going on. I am not a user. I don't use drugs. I certainly don't disrespect any businesses and I get what they are going through like the Winona Club, the Saigon Market and the two garages that are across the street that are basically vacant. I don't understand how these guys can do it. The same thing with the Ukranian Club. How does anybody own a business there? The only one that is okay is the store because everyone has to use that. There is also a page you might be able to take out of Mary's book at 1269 Café. She runs a pretty tight ship so that is someone you might want to talk to. If you are going to have a committee on homeless people, you might be well advised to have someone who is homeless on the committee so you can talk to them directly instead of having to stop the meeting and go out and ask what is going on. It has gotten to the point where it just doesn't feel right. Two weeks ago I said it felt okay but it doesn't feel that way now. Something is going to happen. What is going on out there is becoming mayhem. I don't know how you are going to solve it but there are so many different things that need to happen. There are people on the edge that are just giving up. We have towns now shutting their homeless shelters down and sending people to Manchester because they say you can live on the sidewalk. That can't fly. I understand that you don't want to be throwing these people off the sidewalk because the ordinance says it's okay but we also have to do something about that. What are they doing to do? Set up shop out in front of City Hall? That probably wouldn't go over very well. It would be nice to get some extra barrels down there and port-a-potties. I don't know what else to say. Something needs to happen and just dumping it on the Police and Fire Departments is definitely not the answer. I hope you have a nice night and we get this done because it is getting pretty bad.

*On motion of **Alderman Long**, duly seconded by **Alderman Stewart**, it was voted to take all comments under advisement and receive and file any written documentation presented.*

CONSENT AGENDA

Accept BMA Minutes

2. Minutes from the November 15 BMA and Finance meetings, and the December 6 BMA meeting.

Accept and Remand Funds

3. Donation of \$1,000 from the Wieczorek Family to the Manchester Fire Department.

Approve Under Supervision of the Department of Highways, subject to funding

4. 50/50 Sidewalk Petitions

Residential:

- 378 Vinton Street

Information to be Received and Filed

5. Communication from Peter Chiesa, Deputy City Solicitor, providing an update on pending lawsuits against the City.

REFERRALS TO COMMITTEES

COMMITTEE ON BILLS ON SECOND READING AND PUBLIC HEARING

6. Communication from Jeff Belanger, Planning & Community Development Director, regarding an amendment to the Zoning Ordinance to reduce school impact fees for small dwelling units.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

COMMITTEE ON ACCOUNTS, ENROLLMENT AND REVENUE ADMINISTRATION

7. Advising that the update on the Revolving Loan Fund has been accepted.
(*Unanimous vote*)

8. Advising that the Finance Department reports:

- Accounts receivable over 90 days
- Aging report
- Outstanding receivables

have been accepted.
(*Unanimous vote*)

9. Advising that the Financial Report for the first five months of FY23 has been accepted.
(*Unanimous vote*)

*HAVING READ THE CONSENT AGENDA, ON MOTION OF **ALDERMAN T. SAPIENZA**, DULY SECONDED BY **ALDERMAN E. SAPIENZA**, IT WAS APPROVED.*

REGULAR BUSINESS

10. Confirmations:

Art Commission

Catherine Schmitz as a regular member, term to expire December 1, 2025

Board of Trustees of Trust Funds

Ryan Callaghan to succeed himself, term to expire January 1, 2026

Highway Commission

Amber Cannan to succeed herself, term to expire January 15, 2026

MHRA Board of Commissioners

Stephen C. Duffley, Sr. to succeed himself, term to expire December 31, 2025

OYS Advisory Board

Lara Quiroga to succeed herself, term to expire January 1, 2026

Rick Chretien to succeed himself, term to expire January 1, 2026

Margaret Teague as a regular member, term to expire January 1, 2026

Retirement Board

Richard Bunker to succeed himself, term to expire January 1, 2026

Senior Services Commission

Lee Drysdale to succeed himself, term to expire January 1, 2026

Water Commission

Patricia Cornell as a regular member, term to expire January 1, 2026

Garry Haworth as a regular member, term to expire January 1, 2026

Housing Commission

Nick Gray as an alternate member, term to expire January 1, 2025

Joseph Wichert moving from an alternate to a regular member, term to expire January 1, 2025

Planning Board

Laura Diaz as an alternate member, term to expire May 1, 2025

*On motion of **Alderman Burkush**, duly seconded by **Alderman Heath**, it was voted to confirm the nominations as presented.*

11. Report(s) of the Committee on Community Improvement, if available.

The Committee on Community Improvement respectfully recommends, after due and careful consideration, that the request from Kristen Clarke, Traffic Engineer, for authorization to apply for a NH Department of Transportation CMAQ Grant in the amount of \$3 million to promote air quality improvements to reduce vehicle emissions be approved.

*On motion of **Alderman Stewart**, duly seconded by **Alderman Trisciani**, it was voted to accept the report and adopt its recommendation.*

12. Reports(s) of the Committee on Public Safety, Health & Traffic, if available.

There were none.

13. Report(s) of the Committee on Human Resources/Insurance, if available.

There were none.

14. Tentative agreement between the Manchester School District and the Manchester Certified Instructors.

*On motion of **Alderman Long**, duly seconded by **Alderman T. Sapienza**, it was voted to ratify the agreement.*

Mayor Craig stated I first want to just thank the business owners for coming forward and for offering your support and assistance in addressing this complex issue. It is important to note that a lot of work has been done to address this and I do want to thank, as many of you did in speaking, the Fire Department, Police Department, Welfare Department, Health Department, Planning Department and DPW who are addressing this situation on a daily basis. We are working extremely hard. It is important to note as many stated that while we all live in and love Manchester, this is not just a Manchester issue. This is a statewide issue and an issue across our country that we are grappling with. It is important that we do have collaboration across communities and from the

state to really address it. When you look at what we are seeing at the local level, our non-profit providers who have been working on this extremely hard, are maxed out. I think that you are seeing that when you look at FIT. That is the largest shelter in the entire state with 138 beds. There was one bed available last night for a male and there were two women turned away. That is in Manchester. When you call 211, there are very few, if any, shelter beds open across the state. So it is really important that we do look at this from a statewide perspective so that we are providing the services for individuals not only in Manchester but in other communities. Someone did mention today, Dennis mentioned that individuals are coming from other communities to Manchester. We have data to support that. We need to make sure that the resources and supports that we have in the city are available in other communities so individuals can stay in their home community and get the support that they need. If we could have Chief Aldenberg, Chief Cashin and Adrienne come forward, they have been doing an awful lot of work on this to give an update to the Board. I am happy to go through the funding that has gone forward on this because I know there have been questions about that as well. Again, I do want to reiterate that this isn't something that the Manchester community can solve on our own. I do appreciate the business community coming forward and offering support. A couple of things I can think of that we are going to need your help with and we will follow-up but the resources and staffing is extremely low so we are going to need to really activate our community and volunteers in this city to help us in addressing the needs of this community. Then we are going to need help potentially finding another space for a shelter. We met today and I know you have been working on this pretty much every hour of every day and I was wondering if you could give the Board and the public an update on where things are and where things are going.

Ryan Cashin, Fire Chief, stated we did meet today and had a very good meeting. We discussed many different options. One of the options we discussed was possibly finding space for more shelter beds. I think that is vitally important and a need that we have. We also have to find people to staff the shelters because that is the biggest problem or hurdle that we see now. We have been brainstorming several different ideas on how to get there. I don't think we are at a place right now where we definitely have a concrete idea. We are still trying to work some stuff out. I know that we will be

looking at several different buildings first thing tomorrow morning to see if there are other options out there that we can add on top of the warming station so we can provide the best options we can to every single homeless resident in the City of Manchester.

Mayor Craig stated two things. One is I am sure you all received the letter that I sent to the state. They own a building in the City of Manchester, Tirrell House, that has been used as an SUD residence that FIT used to operate. That is sitting vacant and they are currently heating it. We asked the state if we could utilize that building as another shelter. I have not heard back from the state but I am hopeful that is an option we can do and that will get women off the streets because they are currently being turned away at FIT. We know staffing is an issue at FIT right now. In the past, as we all know and for the public's information FIT has operated a temporary winter shelter for the City of Manchester and the City of Manchester has funded staffing for that. They are not able to accept additional funding from the city right now. We have offered it but they just don't have the staff to do it and they are not able to accommodate when there are beds available. We need to come up with a solution to staffing which again is why I asked the state to consider the National Guard. It is something that other states within our country are doing and we have done it in NH. Again, I hope the state is responsive to that because we really could use the assistance not only in the City of Manchester to open up an additional shelter but again in other locations throughout the state. The one other question I have for you is we have the Emergency Operations Center plan right now. It is something that this Board approved. We had said as a group that if beds at the shelter are full and the warming station is full, which right now it is not, and temperatures drop to a certain degree, and they haven't yet, we would open up the Cashin Senior Center from 7 PM until 7 AM. Given the situation right now, is that something we can do in the evenings as a temporary solution until we can find a more permanent solution?

Chief Cashin replied on a temporary basis that is absolutely something we can do.

Alderman Barry stated we have heard from quite a few people and they have had enough. I honestly don't feel that it is right that they can camp on our sidewalks; I really don't. I never thought it was a good idea and I still don't. We have been told that we

can't enforce it and we can't arrest them because we don't have a place for them to stay. You heard what they are doing. If any one of us on this Board or anyone watching or whatever had a business or lived in that area, we would be pissed. We really would be. We need to do something. They shouldn't be staying there because they don't behave. I know it is not all of them. I know there are some people that have a lot of pride and unfortunately are in the situation that they are but there are a lot of them that just don't follow the rules. There is a reason why they can't go into FIT when they did have space. It is because they don't follow the rules. I get it. Some of them are suffering from mental illness and we have talked about that issue for quite a long time. I think it is getting to a point now where we have these poor business people that are working hard to keep their businesses afloat and they are losing customers. Not only that but they are picking up hypodermic needles and cleaning up human waste. It is not fair to them. We as a city should be doing something and if it comes down to enforcement, we need to...I know we can't find a place for them and it is unfortunate that we can't but they are blocking the sidewalk and leaving a mess behind. Our DPW Department is constantly down there cleaning up after them.

Allen Aldenberg, Police Chief, stated we have taken enforcement action alderman.

Alderman Barry responded I am not saying you haven't. I am just saying they shouldn't be there.

Chief Aldenberg stated in the month of December we arrested 21 people at 199 Manchester Street or on Pine Street. That is 21 arrests. You and I both know the way the court systems are operating right now and I think we agree that we are not going to arrest our way out of this problem. I have people down there every day. My entire Community Affairs Division should be doing other things rather than dealing with the homeless problem in the city. They are not engaging in community policing at the level that I would like because they are focused daily, eight hours a day of their shift, on that homeless shelter. That is frustrating for me as well. We will continue to do our part down there but I think vacating people from the sidewalk is only going to move and create the problem somewhere else and we will be back having this discussion three months from now from perhaps business owners on Webster Street if they decide to

set-up up there or somewhere in the south end. We are going to keep kicking this can down the road because we want to move them off the sidewalk. I am compassionate to what the business owners are experiencing but it is bigger than that. I just legally cannot go over there and kick people off the sidewalk with a lawful reason to do so.

Alderman Barry stated I agree with that Chief and I know that this bail reform is killing us.

Chief Aldenberg replied it is more than bail reform.

Alderman Barry stated I get it but that is part of the problem. You arrest them for whatever infraction they are doing and they are right back out in an hour. It is not just the homeless people but for instance that incident you had the other day with the stand-off. The guy got out and he does the same thing. It is just never ending.

Chief Aldenberg stated I just don't want to put my police officers in a position where we do something potentially illegal and then as a city we are all going to be in a bad place. It is easy to sit here and say just move them right but it is my police officers that have to go there and do that action and if they are taking illegal action as an agent of the government, then I am not comfortable with that and I am not the guy to do that if that is what you want done.

Alderman Barry responded well the ones that aren't behaving we can discuss further. The Tirrell House, is that going to be a solution? Who is going to monitor it?

Mayor Craig answered we would have to staff it.

Alderman Barry stated we have a gentleman that comes to every meeting and speaks out for the homeless. Why isn't he monitoring their bad behavior? Why isn't he talking to them and working with them to knock it off? He is not here right now. He leaves right after he speaks but every two weeks he shows up and he gives us this big speech about the homeless and what the city needs to do. The city has done a lot. Like the Mayor said, we have done a lot for the homeless population and we are going to

continue. We feel bad for them but there comes a point where they have to behave and do what they are supposed to do. For crying out loud, I don't think that speaker who comes here every week would appreciate it if they went to his house or his property and set up tents there and there was human waste and needles and all of that stuff.

Chief Aldenberg replied I couldn't agree with you more.

Alderman Barry stated I feel bad for your Chief. I know you guys are doing a great job.

Chief Aldenberg stated all city departments are. I think we are all getting a little fatigued with this problem, not just the people behind us but all of the city departments. If there is another creative solution...we are looking at a disorderly conduct statute to see if there is a public safety concern that between myself, Health and Fire we can articulate. I am working with Greg Muller from the Solicitor's Office to see what we can do on that avenue but again that will only be short-term if we have a public safety concern. It would be something that would allow us to remove people from that sidewalk but once that public safety concern is addressed and mitigated we will kind of go back to where we were.

Alderman Barry stated I have one more comment. Affordable housing is not going to help the people that are homeless on Manchester and Pine Street. They will not be able to afford affordable housing. We can charge \$100/month and they wouldn't be able to afford it. We have to find something whether it be in the City of Manchester or on the outskirts or in Concord or wherever; somewhere. Everyone has to pitch in because we can't just continue to carry the burden.

Chief Aldenberg replied to that point, Sgt. Mackin as you know is out there every day and even he has told me as recently as yesterday and today that the majority of the people out there now he does not even know. If my police officers out there every day no longer know the names and faces of the majority of the people, that goes to your point that again we are taking on the burden of this problem across the state.

Alderman Barry stated I agree and I know exactly what is going on. In my opinion they are being coached to come here. Thank you.

Alderman Levasseur stated my stomach is turning over and boiling with so much anger inside myself from trying to stay cool and calm while I listen to the never ending excuses from you people and these department heads and this government. I am sick of it. I am sick and tired of this nonsense. I am sick and tired of being the bad guy. I am sick and tired of coming in here and having to hold department heads responsible and then taking it on the chin for it with my business and my restaurants and my reputation. They tried to have me arrested over a freaking parking ticket. You know what. That is my job I guess. I am the DH. I have to come in here and stay the stuff that no one else has the guts today. You should quit today because you just told everybody in the city that you won't move them.

Chief Aldenberg responded you want me to quit alderman.

Alderman Levasseur replied yes because what you just said was I am not...

Chief Aldenberg interjected we are doing our job out there. We are doing our job within the confines of the law.

Alderman Levasseur stated I don't mind if we have an argument in public.

Chief Aldenberg responded we are not. I am telling you what I can do legally.

Alderman Levasseur stated please don't talk over me. I am not being disrespectful. You just said I am not going to move them. You just said that you are not going to have your officers do something that is illegal. It is not illegal to move people off of sidewalks when they are blocking the sidewalks. It is not illegal to move people who are defecating on the streets and pissing all over the place. I was down there. It is Camp Piss & Poop. That is what it smells like. It is not illegal for people to go down there, like I was down there on Saturday, and feel threatened? I was lucky that there were police officers down there and I was with Pat because I didn't feel comfortable. I sure as hell

didn't feel comfortable. When I have an officer who is the man in charge of the law in this city saying I am not going to move them...these people came here for an answer tonight and the answer is they want them gone and I want them gone and the Mayor didn't address that in her opening salvo. What she addressed was the same bull crap I have been hearing for the last six years. Another letter that has been sent annually to the state. I don't care about the state. This is a Manchester issue and a Manchester problem. I asked the City Solicitor who has been here six years and she can't tell me who owns the sidewalk. She fills our heads with some nonsense about the 11th Circuit far left bull crap decision about the fact that we can't move people off the sidewalks because it is Constitutional? I read the decision. It is bull crap. It doesn't say we can't move them. It says if there are no beds you can't arrest them for homelessness but it doesn't say, and it says specifically in the 75-page decision that you can move them if they are obstructing the sidewalks which they are. I drove by tonight. They are not obstructing only the sidewalks. They are obstructing the streets. I don't want to be the heavy. I don't want to talk down to you. You and I have a good reputation. We work well together but you just said you are not going to do anything about it. You know what? That City Solicitor over there has been selling this city on this bull crap 11th Circuit bull crap decision that has nothing to do with this city and if it is a decision then we need to stand up to it and move them out of here and let the ACLU come after us and we will fight them in court. We are our own circuit. You people don't own these businesses down here. You don't live down here. You don't own the storefronts. You don't have to worry about paying the electric bill, the gas bill, the employee bills and the taxes. You don't have to worry about it. I do. I have had businesses down here. I have lived down here and I own property down here. If I don't know how these people feel, nobody does. We have been sitting on our hands for all of these years doing nothing. I don't care if we move them. Keep moving them. Keep rousting them. Keep moving them. Let them go to Webster Street. Let them go to Stark Park. Let every single person in this city have to deal with it so they will know how these people have to deal with it just like we moved them out of Firestone and just like we moved them out of the north end and just like we moved them over at Walmart. Move them. Get them off the streets. They have disrespected this city and they have disrespected us as people and they have disrespected our businesses and our property owners. They have disrespected the law. I sat there for two hours at ground zero. It is not funny. It is not

cool. It is disgusting and despicable and inhumane behavior on the parts of people who don't give a flying hoot about us or the law or those businesses. I saw a man swearing at Pat Garrity saying the most vulgar things I have ever heard. They disrespected your police officers. They yelled at them and swore at them. They talked down to them. It is scary to be down there. It is not real. It is not real. You know what is real? For the first time in six years that I have sat here and listened to real people, real property owners, real business owners. They just came out and poured their hearts and souls out onto this Board and you sit there and tell us you are not going to move them. I will move them.

Chief Aldenberg stated maybe I used a bad choice of words.

Alderman Levasseur stated this is ridiculous. It is beyond ridiculous.

Chief Aldenberg stated we have been citing city ordinances for encumbering the sidewalk but you know how far a city ordinance goes. You know that. If there is another avenue that we can take of course we will take legal action where and when we can. I think you know that. We do that every day. We are out there every day dealing with this problem. We are just as frustrated as you are and as they are.

Alderman Levasseur stated your job isn't to be frustrated Chief. Your job is to get them out of there. Get them out.

Alderman Levasseur stated tell us now please who owns the sidewalk in front of FIT. You have had two weeks to figure that out.

Mayor Craig asked can you please be respectful.

Alderman Levasseur answered no. I have had enough and I have had enough of you. I don't care what you people think anymore because you are all sitting here and doing nothing. You just point fingers and blame me for just saying what needs to be said.

Chief Aldenberg replied to say that we do nothing alderman...

Alderman Levasseur interjected not you. I am talking about the aldermen right now.

Chief Aldenberg stated well you are talking to all of us up here like we are second rate as well.

Emily Rice, Solicitor, stated I would be happy to take a deep dive on all of the laws that apply and on the efforts of the Manchester Police Department and Fire Department. I think it is unwise to do that in public session unless of course the Board wants to vote to waive the attorney/client privilege in which case I would be more than happy to speak on the record publically. We can recess the meeting and have a very robust legal discussion. I think the Chief is correct that there are many city ordinances and state criminal laws that are being enforced at that location and every other location. I understand that Alderman Levasseur disagrees with our interpretation of the 9th Circuit case in Martin vs. Boise which has been a subject of discussion with this Board many, many times. When the Supreme Court decided not to review that decision, the City of Boise just so that everybody understands, spent close to 14 years in federal court in litigation. I don't know how much that cost but I don't see anything in NH or the City of Manchester that distinguishes that holding in any way but I want to point out and underscore that that holding is very, very limited. That case just stands for the proposition that individuals can't be ticketed for lying or sitting on a sidewalk if there is a place for them to go. This Board adopted an ordinance consistent with that decision back in 2021. I provided the Board with a 53-page memorandum that Greg Muller from my office wrote. It outlined all of the ordinances and all of the applicable state criminal statutes and outlined legislative options that could be taken to try to address this problem. Understanding that many members of this Board are new since that was distributed, I sent that out to the Board again at the end of November 2022. I would note that it is an attorney/client privilege document. I would just underscore what both chiefs have said which is that we have been working very hard on this issue. It consumes a great deal of our time and a substantial portion of our budget. We have been very candid about the reach not only of that decision but all of the other advice that we have provided on the subject. If the Board wants to waive the attorney/client

privilege, I would be more than happy to continue but I think that is all I can really say on the public record.

Alderman George-Kelly stated I just want to take a couple of moments to thank the city departments for the work that they are doing and the fact that they are showing up for this every day. I am excited to have Adrienne at the table and to have Andrew at the table. I think that it is a step in the right direction in solving this issue. As we know, addiction is a disease. Mental illness is just that. It is an illness and I am unwilling to cast out our unhoused neighbors. I am willing to have hope for folks who do not have the ability to have hope for themselves and I think that today we heard that there are a lot of other members in our community who are willing to have hope for our neighbors and our city. I believe that if we are determined to do so we can provide resources and figure out how to get those people through the doors. I believe that if we work together in collaboration with experts in this city and with business leaders and the individuals with lived expertise in homelessness in our own community we can make that happen. I am willing to do anything that is within my power to provide those individuals in the street with the basic human right of housing and I am willing to work with anybody in this community that wants to work with us to make that happen because I believe that we together have the experts, the determination and the willingness to truly end homelessness in our community because we are here and we love our city and I am truly grateful for the people at this table willing to do this work with us so thank you.

Alderman E. Sapienza stated I have a question for Chief Aldenberg. In reference to the complaints from the business owners we heard earlier, do you have a guess as to how much is due to the homeless? In other words, is it strictly the homeless or is it just social dysfunction and includes those that do have homes?

Chief Aldenberg asked in that area around 199 Manchester Street.

Alderman E. Sapienza answered yes that general area where the garages are, etc.

Chief Aldenberg replied a vast majority of that is attributed to the homeless population, if not all.

Alderman E. Sapienza stated this would have to be done through the state legislature but I would like to see a return to the county indigent farms or at least have that looked at. It is the state legislature that would have to take that up.

Alderman Stewart stated I would also like to thank all of you for what you are doing. Navigating this is not easy as we all know. There are lots of obstacles and challenges and lots of people's rights to balance, certainly for those who are living on the street in tents. They have rights. They are human beings and American citizens and a very vulnerable population that is certainly entitled to rights. Also, I would like to thank the members of the downtown business community that came out to speak tonight. This group also has rights and I think that is something that we don't hear much about in these conversations. Their rights are just as equal as other people's rights under our system of laws and government. I appreciate all of the members of the downtown business community and property owners coming out and sharing their challenges and their frustrations. I think it was very powerful for us all to hear that and very sobering certainly to hear the very graphic specifics of what you are dealing with day in and day out. It is not something that is going to be solved any time in the immediate future but I appreciate your willingness to offer to lend a hand because as we have talked about here tonight and previously, this is a city issue and a state issue and a non-profit issue and the business community and the faith community. We need all hands on deck for this. It is going to take all of us. Thank you for your willingness to help out and for sharing your perspectives because it is something that if we don't address, specifically downtown, this is the engine of Manchester economically and culturally. If downtown goes, that is not good for anyone. Thank you.

Alderman Trisciani stated I just want to take us way back to the beginning of this conversation. Chief Cashin and Adrienne, I think you guys would know this offhand but what have the numbers been at 1269 Café at night for the warming station?

Adrienne Beloin, Homelessness Initiatives Director, replied it has been about half capacity.

Alderman Trisciani stated so she is at about 53 and probably seeing 25 people. I know if we needed we have some flexibility with her where we can flex that up before we even use the Cashin Center. I don't have a problem opening the Cashin Center for this. I was on board with that from the beginning. One of my concerns is that if we haven't even maxed out 1269, I am not sure that is really going to help us with the situation we are in today. Is there an issue...we know we don't have a safe environment for women right now but could we do the Cashin Center with transportation for maybe just women? Is there an issue with them not feeling comfortable in a mixed shelter for safety reasons? Is that a reason women aren't going to...I know 1269 runs a clean operation but in some cases is that a concern for women?

Chief Cashin responded we did have an in-depth conversation with FIT and 1269 to follow-up with the women who were being turned away. We are trying to follow-up with them on a daily basis. I believe that a small women shelter is vital to the city. I do think that the old Tirrell House is a perfect place for that. If we were to make...I don't think we have the ability to make the Cashin Center strictly a women's shelter but I do think it is a vital need in the city. I think the data does point to that and we are going to explore some other options on that. Staffing a women's shelter does become a little more difficult and we are looking at those issues as well.

Alderman Trisciani stated thank you Amanda Robichaud because I know you have been doing a lot of outreach. I think one of the other challenges we have as a city is we don't have any super low to no barrier solutions for people that need to detox. This is a huge problem for us and this is a lot of people that are on that sidewalk. I know we recently received some money from opioid settlements that could be put towards things like this because I am assuming that as long as it is harm reduction and opioid use we can use that money. I believe another settlement came in last week, more money came into the state of which Manchester will get a part of. I would love to task Adrienne and Andrew with looking at some ways and maybe bring Amanda in with her experience in what she is doing for outreach and what she is doing to get people into rehab. There is a challenge and it is absolutely heartbreaking when you know that a gentleman who was just in a fight is released from the hospital back onto the streets. People that come out of our court system...one of the young women that died on our streets was released

from the criminal court system and nobody tracked here. Nobody was there for her and we don't have anybody following-up and this is a huge problem that we have to solve and I am hoping that we can start coming up with plans. For those of you who spoke tonight, thank you but I am challenging you to go a step forward. We sent a letter to the state today. Our mayor and seven other mayors signed that letter. Tomorrow there is an Executive Council meeting. Call our Governor. Where has he been since this has been happening? Has anyone seen a statement from him on what recently transpired in Manchester? I have seen nothing and we need your help at all levels. Coming here, yes, and we need to support you and we are trying to work for you but we need more. We need you to take it to the next level as well. If you need guidance on what to do and what to say, call us. We are all available to you and we will work with you and we appreciate your willingness to work with us because it is going to take the community to solve this. Thank you.

Alderman Long stated two weeks ago I heard there were 25-30 tents there. Do we know how many tents are there today?

Ms. Beloin, Homelessness Director, answered today there are 43.

Alderman Long asked so it has been growing.

Chief Cashin responded yes.

Alderman Long stated I agree with the businesses and the fact that this is urgent, as in tomorrow urgent for me, because these businesses are hurting. These businesses are losing their people. They are losing their customers. We didn't hear it any clearer than we heard it today. The fact that it is expanding...is there some way we could look at starting to remove 5-10 a week or a day or something little? I know it is about a location to place them in. I spoke with Amanda and The Doorway is turning people away. It is then left on us. Is there a way we can start moving...I am looking to move people off the sidewalk there? Being down there, you have them give you the 3' on the sidewalk but two hours later they are back on the street. I drove down there and got a lot of fingers and whatever. That is the first time. I drive down there every Friday and this

was the first time, actually it was Saturday, that I drove down there and they weren't moving and I was getting fingers and what are you doing here. I have a Lincoln Continental and they think it is a limo. To me it is unconscionable that we don't control that street. I spoke to the homeless people there and they were cordial to me, however, I didn't identify anybody that was from Manchester. That is another issue we have to look into. With respect to the toilets, we heard all the businesses talking about feces and urine and needles. \$110,000 gets us a trailer with two bathrooms, two showers for women, two urinals and two showers for men. It can be moved wherever you want it to be moved to. Could we invest in something like that? I will talk to FIT to get it into their designated area that nobody is allowed in or...

Mayor Craig interjected we will have to find a place for it and it will have to be staffed because we had, as I am sure a lot of these businesses remember...

Alderman Long interjected I understand that but these have timers on them.

Mayor Craig responded it doesn't matter. They would still need to be staffed because there were illegal things happening and that is why we got rid of them.

Alderman Long stated okay then let's staff them. That is what I am saying. We should insure at the least that there are no more added. I was at Saigon Market on Saturday and they were getting close to their parking lot. Now I am hearing they are in front of their parking lot. I don't want to wait anymore. I have an issue with not being able to move them. Chief you go by what you go by and I respect that. I am not about to tell you how to do your job. I am not that expert but I think the current situation is at an emergency level and if we can start by making a plan to remove 5-10...maybe GateHouse can help us. They took 74 people. It can happen. After talking to Amanda, she told me about The Doorway. We have to come up with our detox program. That is something we need to come up with. We need to take care of the situation ourselves.

Mayor Craig stated I don't want to interrupt you but there is \$6 million going to The Doorways statewide and if they are not working the way that they should be, we shouldn't sit quiet. That is a lot of our taxpayer dollars going to a program and if we

have experts here that can help us make it better, we should make sure that the state understands how to do that.

Alderman Long responded I don't dispute that. With respect to the county, it is the commissioners that make those decisions, not the delegation. The state representatives don't make those decisions. I wish we did because the decision would have been made and we would have an encampment on county land right now.

Alderman E. Sapienza stated the county is operating under state law. You would have to change that.

Alderman Long replied the county commissioners can say yes you have five acres that you can use for whatever you want so what do you want to do with it. By the way, it is going to cost \$2 million so do you want to appropriate the money and they could say yes.

Mayor Craig asked and they have that money correct.

Alderman Long answered yes. I am looking for \$110,000 for this traveling bathroom and shower that I saw that is also heated to go somewhere around there. The property outside the first fence is FIT's property and they put up that second fence on the alleyway?

Mayor Craig answered yes.

Alderman Long stated also sharp containers. I doubt they are going to use them but let's put a couple of them up. It won't hurt to try. Hopefully the businesses won't have to clean up the mess and pick up the needles. If we can start moving 5-10 people a week and be assured that starting today that is not going to be expanded...if somebody goes today and puts up a tent we have to tell them now.

Mayor Craig stated we could open the Cashin Center in the evening so there would be beds available for individuals until we find something. The people that are living outside

right now to your point are not going to the warming station. We can't make them go there and it is not a bed but we could potentially have beds at the Senior Center when it is off operations and there would be beds available for individuals. I think the other thing that we have been talking about as a group is storage. While the city has been providing storage for individuals, there is a need for people to be able to access their items. I know that is something that Adrienne has brought up and this may provide an opportunity where we can get the stuff off of the sidewalk and into a storage unit and hopefully get people into a shelter bed with services.

Ms. Beloin stated these are good ideas. I first would like to say that this is my third meeting here and I just really appreciate the public comment. I find a lot of truth in the comments that have been made. I really appreciate them and I think that they are really important and they come from all angles of the problem. I think we are on the cusp of something here. You know that I am in my first month of being on the job. I am a director solely focused on homelessness. On Day 1 of the job we have a director solely focused on substance use disorder and we are on the cusp of something different. We are on the cusp of pulling together as a group. I have great support coming from the CoC and the community partners that want to work in a refreshed way with each other and with the city. We are talking about national consultancy to get people who really understand the best practices and the evidence that has been proven by other communities to figure out what the right fit is for Manchester because we are unique and we need to have the right fit. The other thing is we are reviewing best practices here and coming up with...between the two directors that I just mentioned we have clinical expertise and lived experience and experience providing services to people. Speaking with homeless individuals and knowing that story is not something that anyone is afraid to do in this kind of leadership. We are at the cusp of something and we need a little time to put together a plan. Things that people have mentioned are all good things that have been coming up. We need to vet those and get something in the immediate and work on some long-term plans too. When you talk about the bathrooms and stuff, that is spot on because it is basic needs. These folks are suffering with trauma and we need to figure out ways to mitigate that trauma to have any hope of moving them anywhere right. Basic needs are hygiene and their belongings and we can all relate to that. I think we are moving in the right direction.

Alderman Long asked could we use Freed's Bakery to put the bathroom and shower trailer.

Mayor Craig responded we would have to work with the property owner. I would leave it up to the team to determine where the appropriate place is.

Alderman T. Sapienza stated obviously the homeless problem is a big problem and if we solved that we would solve the businesses' problems as well but I think at this point we have been working really hard on the homeless problem and we have to focus more on helping these businesses. We have to think of that as a separate problem because the businesses can't wait for us to solve the homeless problem. We need to think in two different tracks. One is helping the businesses and I think Alderman Long just went over some good ideas. We need to think of this in two separate ways. The other thing is I want to thank all of the city departments. I know you are working hard. I can't imagine the work you do day in and day out. I appreciate you doing that. Please don't quit Chief; either one of you. Please don't quit. I am quite sure I am talking for the super majority of this Board. Please don't quit. I think we should probably go into non-public session to talk to legal counsel before we adjourn.

Mayor Craig stated we have a few other people who want to speak first.

Alderman Fajardo stated I just wanted to ask about the Cashin Center. Is it possible...I know this plan is just being discussed but is it possible for individuals to bring some belongings with them if they were to go to the Cashin Center?

Chief Cashin responded with the initial plan we have right now the answer is no they won't be able to bring their belongings into the Cashin Center.

Alderman Fajardo replied that feels like it is a barrier.

Ms. Beloin stated it is a barrier. I think as we have been talking, we are identifying that as a barrier and people need to have storage in order to engage in what we are offering

them. I think that is part of the problem-solving in the immediate. We need to figure out what we can do.

Alderman Fajardo stated I would like to echo the gratitude to this team and all of the city departments and our community members and business owners as well. I echo Alderman George-Kelly's comment that in the midst of a very trying time there is hope. Thank you.

Alderman Levasseur stated I am just wondering if there is going to be a letter going to the four Congressmen of this state; the four Congressmen that are in those positions right now collectively voted for about \$6 trillion in spending over the last four years without any thought to homelessness in this state for sure. As far as sending money directly to this city or dealing with what is a national...as you said it is not only Manchester but statewide and it is not only statewide it is national yet we have nobody giving a hoot about this major problem which is a money problem obviously. When is that letter going to go to the Congressmen?

Mayor Craig answered I sent them a copy of the letter that I sent today so they all have a copy of that. I think it is important to note that as a result of the federal delegation, the City of Manchester received \$43 million in ARPA funds directly to the city. 53% of that funding went to affordable housing or to addressing the root causes of poverty and overall health of our community. Just to refresh, it is eliminating food deserts, community health workers, the home visit program for newborn babies to cut down on medical treatment, the MPD addressing crime by environmental design...so a significant amount of those funds went towards addressing this issue but certainly they have been kept up-to-date on what is happening in the City of Manchester and are very supportive. I think it is also important to note that much of the funding that the state has allocated to addressing this issue – the InvestNH for example, the \$100 million, was as a result of the federal delegation ARPA funds. So they actually have done an awful lot to address this issue statewide.

Alderman Levasseur stated not enough. I just wanted to go over this one other issue because we keep hearing about the 9th Circuit and the reason why we can't move them.

The 9th Circuit decision is only binding law in the states in the 9th Circuit which is California and that area. Notably, however, it appears to be the first federal court of appeals holding that the 8th amendment prohibits criminalizing people experiencing homelessness or sleeping outdoors. However, specifically, and this is in the opinion, “we in no way dictate to the city that it must provide sufficient shelter for the homeless or allow anyone who wishes to sit, lie or sleep on the streets at any time and at any place. Even where shelter is unavailable, an ordinance prohibiting sitting, lying or sleeping outside at particular times or in particular locations may well be Constitutionally permissible. So, too, might an ordinance barring the obstruction of public rights of way and the erection of certain structures.” The reason why I bring this up, and it is important because it has been the excuse that has been used by department heads in this city for not moving people off of sidewalks. The decision narrowly and specifically states that you can’t arrest a person for being homeless for lying on the sidewalk. Nobody here wants any of those people arrested. Nobody wants them put in jail. Nobody wants to diminish them by giving them citations, violations or arresting them. What we want to do is move them out of the way. The ordinance that was in place as an ordinance that arrested people for homelessness and sleeping on the sidewalks. We are in a different world here. I am not telling the Chief to arrest them. I am asking him to move them and you have that right to do so within even that decision alone that says it more than once. I read a lot of the analysis that went along with that particular decision and even some from the ACLU. They agree. We don’t want to arrest them so let’s stop using that as a barrier and an excuse for moving them off the sidewalks.

Chief Aldenberg stated I think perhaps this is a worthy discussion that we should have further with the Solicitor. You may be right. I am not disagreeing with you but I think maybe it is a deeper discussion that we should have to find out if there is an avenue there. I totally agree with you. If we can do that legally and stand behind that as a city, then sure let’s have that deeper discussion. I am all for having that. I am not opposed to doing that as long as we are doing it legally. I don’t think that is unfair as the Police Chief, and I think you would agree, to make sure we are not putting our employees in a precarious situation out there that where we are potentially doing something illegally. That is what I meant with my prior remarks. If we can get to that point where you want

to get to legally so we can stand behind it, then that is a discussion worth having. Perhaps that is what we should do in non-public.

Alderman Stewart stated Director Beloin I appreciate your comments. What I heard was you are going to upstream and downstream interventions that need to be taking place and looking at the long term, medium term and very, very short term to address the situation. I believe I read in a recent article that you used the phrase "sense of urgency". I certainly was glad to hear you use that phrase because I think it is super urgent. In fact, just as we were sitting here in this discussion tonight I had somebody send me a copy of a letter from the Kinder Tree Learning Center at 162 Manchester Street dated tomorrow informing the parents that they are closing the business in June and selling the building specifically citing the issues in the neighborhood and those experiencing homelessness in particular. These consequences are getting very, very real not just for the business community and property owners but this is affecting childcare which is another challenge that we are going through that working families in the city are facing. We are seeing this ripple effect. It is not just isolated. This is very complex and complicated and has tentacles that stretch all over. I just wanted to illustrate that point for all of us to say these are the kinds of things happening as a result. Thank you.

Alderman Barry stated just to address the usage of the Cashin Center, is it the best place for a warming shelter. Probably not. Can we use it? Probably but I would hope that we are going to have someone there for security and to monitor what is going on inside because there are a lot of places where people...this is open during the day time for our seniors to enjoy and we want to make sure it continues as a place for them to enjoy. If we are going to use cots and whatever during the nighttime, they should be removed during the day or put in storage somewhere and people using the shelter have to behave themselves and be monitored. They are there to keep warm and to get a good night's sleep. I think that is important because it scares me to death. We hear horror stories over at FIT about people who don't behave themselves and they get thrown out and are not welcome back. As long as it is monitored and secured, I am fine with that.

Chief Cashin stated the Cashin Center will be monitored and secured if it is opened. It will be monitored and secured by my people as well as people from the Police Department.

Mayor Craig stated I want to go over quickly some of the funding that the city has allocated because it has come up in public comment. I think it is important to note that the funding from the state that comes into the City of Manchester to address homelessness goes directly to the non-profits to provide services. It does not come to the municipality. The municipality has spent \$2.1 million in federal funds with the CoC that has brought about 164 units of permanent supportive rapid rehousing and transitional housing. Through the CIP program that this Board approved, \$3.85 million has been allocated for 434 people supported via homeless prevention, rental assistance, emergency shelter, permanent affordable housing and again the ARPA money of \$4 million for affordable housing and the additional funding to address the root causes. There are a lot of funds being allocated. We have the CIP process coming up very soon and I think given the issue that we are talking about tonight, we should think strategically about putting more money toward it so that we can do more to address this critical problem. It is not going to come as good news to other non-profits who receive funding but I think that this is the number one issue facing our city and we need to make sure that we are focusing in the dollars, the limited dollars that we have here, to make a difference with what we are doing. Just one other point I want to mention and it did come up today but the City of Manchester has two major hospitals located here. When people are released from the hospital, whether they are from Manchester or not, and they are homeless if they don't want to go home they are released to the city. If there are no shelter beds, they are released to the streets which is why, again, we are advocating for medical respite throughout the state. The City of Manchester is home to the Hillsborough County Jail. Again, when individuals are released from jail and they don't want to go back to their home community and there are no shelter beds or they don't want to go to the shelter, they are released to the Manchester streets. There was someone here that talked about the stabbing on one of the trails. That individual's last known address was Nashua. He was arrested and went to Valley Street Jail and was released into the community of Manchester and then committed that heinous crime. I think, again, we have to acknowledge what we have and what we are dealing with in the

city. The Doorway is located in the City of Manchester, and not just treating Manchester residents. Manchester has 36% of the state approved sober homes and 38% of total sober beds in the entire state. Manchester has a population of 12%. We are home to the largest state-funded shelter. Being a state-funded shelter, FIT has to meet the state requirements which means they have to accept anyone from the state who wants to go there. If there are no beds, they are not getting in and they are on the streets of Manchester. So this is a complex issue that the city is dealing with. There are many people that we are partnering with to address these issues but I think it is important that we understand this is extremely complex and again the city, the department heads and the city employees are working extremely hard. We appreciate you being here and we appreciate you sharing your stories. We are sorry about what you are dealing with but there is a sense of urgency and we are doing what we can. I hope that we can address it sooner rather than later. I think getting the shelter beds up and running as soon as we can will be a good step forward. Again, if anyone can help with volunteering, that will be needed.

Alderman E. Sapienza moved to recess the meeting to meet with legal counsel.

Alderman Heath duly seconded the motion. Mayor Craig called for a vote. The motion carried with Alderman Levasseur duly recorded in opposition.

Mayor Craig called the meeting back to order.

Chief Cashin stated briefly to recap, we are going to work on multiple avenues to try to solve the issue at 199 Manchester Street. One of the things we are going to do is open the Cashin Center immediately and continue on a parallel road to look for better shelter options for women and men concurrently and separately. We are going to look into more policing in the area on a 24/7 basis. We will continue doing outreach. We are also going to investigate various other resources to try to help out the residents that are currently on Manchester Street and try to be as compassionate and understanding as we can to also understand that the business owners as well as the people there have rights and they need to be taken care of.

Alderman E. Sapienza asked so the Cashin Center is going to have two roles. It is still going to function as a senior center?

Chief Cashin answered yes. In the day time it will be a senior center and at night it will be a warming station.

Alderman E. Sapienza asked and the increased police presence is actually going to be a detail. It won't just be more patrols?

Chief Aldenberg answered it will be an overtime assignment. Again, I won't force officers to work and it will be an optional assignment. If they want the overtime, they can take it with specific instructions as to what is going to be expected during that eight-hour overtime shift.

*There being no further business, on motion of **Alderman Long**, duly seconded by **Alderman Fajardo**, it was voted to adjourn.*

A True Record. Attest.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matthew Normand". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Clerk of Committee