

BOARD OF MAYOR AND ALDERMEN

May 2, 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 Gamache.

A moment of silence was observed.

The Clerk calls the roll.

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.

Mark MacKenzie, 319 W. Erie Street, stated:

I have the honor as a State Representative to represent Wards 1, 3, 10, 11 and 12 in the city. I appear today to appeal to the Board and to the citizens of Manchester to join together on what I think is a unique opportunity to save some property which is currently known as the Sununu Center. House Bill 46 passed the House and, therefore, put in play approximately 150 acres of prime land in the City of Manchester. The land is located, as you may know, off of River Road. It goes from River Road all the way to the Merrimack River. You may hear more about what the conditions of transfer or sale of that property will be. I am not sure we have the greatest leverage in this discussion but I think the Board should use whatever they have to make sure that the citizens of Manchester have the opportunity to look at that property and develop a concept about what we think should happen with the 150 acres of land that we will never regain if it is given away to developers. We don't have a lot of green space in Manchester. We don't have a lot of walking trails. We don't have a lot of places to picnic and relax and have a good time. I don't know what the final disposition of that property will be and maybe it

will be a combination of different things but whatever it is, I would hope that this Board and the people of Manchester are the ones driving the bus and that we are able to come up with a plan. I commit myself at this point to try to organize a community effort to be able to bring together people in the City of Manchester to have a discussion.

Charlie Alinghaus, who is the Director of Administrative Services...he and I have had a discussion. They are currently looking at how that is going to be disposed of. There are attorneys looking at how the sale will proceed. It is going to happen and it is going to happen probably within the next 18 months so we don't have a whole lot of time. Let's work together and find a way to have our say in what happens to that property in the City of Manchester. Thank you.

Susan Letendre, 45 Tory Road, stated:

I come tonight to introduce a new organization that has moved into Manchester. I am part of a board of a non-profit organization for a semi-professional women's football team called the NH Rebellion. We are part of the Women's Football Alliance, which is an international league of 65 teams in Canada and the United States. We now call Manchester our home. We are 1-0 for the season. We won our first game in Connecticut a couple of weeks ago and we have our first opening game this weekend, Saturday, May 6 at 5 PM at Gill Stadium. All we are really looking to do is generate some buzz around the team. Games are free so it is a great opportunity for families to come out. There will be music and football and nothing can bring a community together like a sporting event. We are really looking forward to being part of the community. We are looking for opportunities to do some community outreach in the future and hoping to generate some fans within the City of Manchester. Thank you very much.

Kathleen Carswell, Amherst Street, stated:

I have a few issues that I would like to address if I could. Mayor Craig please help us with low fixed income for the very long-time residents of Manchester to have stable housing. Rent control is needed. We need to have something done with this. Covid is over and many landlords are getting very greedy. They are upping their rents \$200, \$300 or more per month every year since Covid. That to me is ridiculous. I have friends now that are probably going to have to live in a car because they can't afford their rent and there is nowhere to go. It is not livable on a small, fixed income. It is pretty sad

when your parents have to bag groceries to make ends meet in their 70's and 80's and you see them in the grocery store where they can barely stand for whatever hours they have to make ends meet. We need to give them some dignity and respect that they are due. They should be able to live in peace and not stress and worry. They worry enough if they haven't paid their rent or for their medication or utilities. I know, myself, because I worry each money after I pay my rent whether I pay for my medication, food or utilities. Whatever I have left, I have to split up or I go without. Please, if we can get some kind of rent control and housing for the very low fixed income people because there are no apartments for the prices we need for ourselves and people who are disabled like myself. Please have something done about the people begging for money on the street corners and in the small median strips on the busy roadways throughout the city. Someone is going to get hit or killed and it is getting bigger. You see them on more and more and more corners. Third, can we please start working on getting the sewer pit in the Valley Street Cemetery out of there? Everyone says that they are working on it but how many more years does my family and thousands of other families have to smell and see it when we go to the cemetery to pay our respects to our families? Lastly, believe me when I say that I will be back month after month until things start to change for the long-time residents of Manchester. To close out, I would like to ask if you could also give the respect to the women on the Board and give them the correct title on their signs, Alderwoman, instead of Alderman. That would be greatly appreciated. Thank you.

Brittany Ping, 408 Rimmon Street, stated:

I have come and talked to you guys wearing a lot of little hats. I am kind of sad to announce...I am not leaving west Manchester so sorry. I am not sad about that part but I am one of those greedy landlords that has to sell my property because I chose not to raise rents on my multi-family. Instead, I have chosen to lease back my apartment that I live in in my three-family home. Alderman Gamache grew up in my home. I will rent it back at market rent and find a home so I am on the apartment hunt just like everybody in front of you. So my market rents, which were at \$1,300/month are now going to \$1,800 in nine days because that is what market rent is. I chose not to do it and I am cash poor and house rich. So that is what greedy landlords are up against if they choose not to raise rents in Covid times. I didn't mean to tell you guys that but it is just

hard. It is hard to be in that position and take that stability from my children. I have a six and an eight-year-old. I am choosing to get out and pay my debt and do that to the tenants that live in my building. Unfortunately, that is what is best for my family. So maybe I will have a new address the next time we talk. I am here to speak against the proposed homeless engagement center planned to be run by a new city department that is rumored to be possibly at the current Elks location. I can pretend like you know my face and my name and that is fine and I know that we have been here for months right. Business owners come to the Board and say in public we can be part of this as a long-term solution. We have a long-term homeless issue and we want to be part of a long-term homeless solution. The community and non-profits come forward and say hey we provide services for this community and we have beds for the short-term and ideas for the short-term and hey we want to be empowered for long-term solutions let us help. Citizens in Manchester, the woman who just spoke before me, and myself have come to this Board time after time expressing our concerns on the growing number of encampments, the growing amount of drug paraphernalia that we are finding in parks and on the side of the road. I do non-profit work for community involvement and engagement and for litter pick-ups. That is just how we started. It is a simple thing. It is really strange when the first thing that anyone who is starting a pick-up says if you see a needle we have little flags for you. That is sad. We have parks. We have wonderful parks. We were talking about the increase in property crimes and break-ins and things that we are all starting to get worried about. There is a gentleman who sits at the corner of Maple where Cumberland Farms just got shut down and I am terrified that I am going to hit that man in his wheelchair at least once a week. Anyway, we are all here and we are asking for long-term solutions. I absolutely understand that little things make a difference. I am encouraged that even though it is not my preference, the city does need help with housing stability. I do believe we have a good department. I am asking that we look for long-term solutions when we are empowering that department to make decisions for housing stability and not short-term solutions. The non-profits are already saying we are ready to do it right now. If the city is making this investment, it should be for the long-term. Thank you.

Arnold Mikolo, 73 Clinton Street, stated:

I am here today to support the Board and Committee on Community Improvement on the request to apply for an Urban Forestry Grant. This grant is aimed to provide funding to increase street canopy coverage in low-income neighborhoods through the planting of trees. I believe that this great program would extremely be beneficial for our community. Trees have been shown to reduce air population, mitigate the urban air temperatures and provide calming effects. Planting of trees in low-income neighborhoods can also help to reduce environmental inequity and improve the quality of life of residents. I think this grant is an incredible opportunity for our city given the fact that we already have the tree 50/50 program. This would improve that program as well as improve the quality of life for low-income residents. Thank you very much.

Winter Trabex, 200 Hanover Street, stated:

I had the opportunity this past weekend to go down to Tyngsboro, MA to see the Manchester Rebellion practice and what I saw is they are a very hard-working, dedicated group of women committed to playing professional football. I would just like to say that they are possibly looking for a place to practice during the winter and I was wondering if there are any city facilities that may be available to them at a discount since they are a non-profit organization. That's it. Thank you very much.

Hugh Bishop, 48 Chauncey Avenue, stated:

Chauncey Avenue is a road that you have to cross the railway line in order to get to. At the far end we have the tracks going down through the woods and all the homeless people down there; maybe not all of them but a lot of them. It is bad enough that we see them. I mean we feel sorry for them but it is bad enough that we see them. We know what they are doing down there and where they are going to the potty but when they do eventually move on, we have huge piles of rubbish and mess that is not getting cleaned up. Well maybe it is getting cleaned up but we don't know whose job it is to clean it up and we certainly don't have the capability to clean it up. These folks come and go. I have lost a propane tank at some point in the last three years and some friends have lost some seat cushions from their boat. We don't know who did that and there is not really any point in reporting it because you have no evidence. The real issue for me is that in the summer I don't go down to Elm Street looking for al fresco dining anymore. I gave that up about four years ago. I go elsewhere for my sitting

outside dining. My restaurant spend that would be at least twice a week doesn't happen in your city. I take my dining elsewhere. That is something to consider and maybe there are other people like me who feel the same way. Thank you.

Griseliz Glenn, Homeless, stated:

I am a homeless mother with two children and I just came to share my experience in the last month, since March 15, when I was locked out of my apartment. At that time, I received assistance from City Welfare. I had asked if I was able to get the landlord to negotiate if City Welfare be willing, because I went there for assistance, to see what we could figure out. I was told that that ship had sailed and I was placed in a shelter on Lake Avenue, Families in Transition. By the end of the appointment I received paperwork that said the charge was \$315 for 14 days at the shelter. I had \$289 to my name available to me on that date. At my next appointment, I was to pay \$200 out of that \$289 for shelter reimbursement. Then when I went to the appointment I didn't have the \$200 because I registered my vehicle and obtained a storage unit to put the rest of my things that I left in my apartment. When I didn't have the money to pay, the following week I would have received my social security benefits because I am on disability of \$826 that I receive month. Out of that \$826, I was to pay \$525 back to City Welfare for shelter reimbursement and if I didn't pay it, I wouldn't be able to go back to the shelter. The reason it was \$525 even though it was 14 days was because it was three weeks and instead of the \$200 initial dollars I was charged for the first 14 days, she imposed the entire amount of \$350. So instead of \$200 it was now \$350 so I paid \$525 out of the \$826. On that day, we came to learn that my income tax had been issued and before my appointment on that date I had called your office Mayor to speak with you and I spoke with Marina who is the Community something or other explaining the situation because the other families that stay in the same place that are there through the actual shelter, which has seven beds and four are City Welfare's, they pay 30% based on their income for reimbursement. Everyone that is there through City Welfare, the four families, which at that time was only three because one of the rooms was empty, pay \$175/week or \$25/day. She told me I wasn't going to be able to return if I had my income tax money which would have brought me to \$5,000 and I needed to go...Shannon told me that I should perhaps rent a hotel room. That was her suggestion to me because if City Welfare kicked me out that was my problem basically. I have that

recorded, the conversation. I have all of my interactions recorded and the way that I have been treated this last month is outstanding and beyond to the point that my mind is boggled and I don't understand. I go to the Mayor's Office and I get the police called on me. RSA 165 says that if I cannot provide my basic needs, I should be helped and 165:b says they can recover the funds if I am not placed in a financial hardship. I am in a homeless shelter in a financial hardship and I am being asked to reimburse them during that time, not after but while I am staying there. Thank you.

Mariana Beer, 252 Willow Street, stated:

I am here in support of item 11 on your agenda on the Committee on Lands & Buildings. Thank you for your support of public art that celebrates Manchester's future and inspires others to embrace the city as their own. Arms Park received a beautiful splash of color with the James Chase work and I am sure that Jyl and David's work will further improve and highlight as a great spot to hang out. I am going to pause for emphasis here. There is no reason for concrete gray to be the default color of a city as vibrant and resilient as Manchester. Thank you and have a good night.

Tammy Garthwaite, 166 Varney Street, stated:

I am here to adamantly and very specifically oppose the potential homeless facility that is being discussed in the Elk's Lodge location. This neighborhood is completely, 100% inappropriate to introduce the homeless element into more than it already is. You have walking distance to two schools, the senior center, the tower where many seniors live, numerous businesses, etc. It is also a gateway to our city. Anybody getting off of I-93 northbound or southbound to go to a baseball game, yes that is what you are going to see. If that is the welcome message that we want to portray as a city, then we are doomed because we have to do better than that. There are about 115,000 people who live in Manchester now. That means more than 99% of them are not homeless and not living outside of a home. What is the city doing for the 99% of the people who are playing by the rules and paying their taxes and getting up and going to work every day who do all the things they are supposed to do but have to contend with drug addicts passed out in their driveway because those are the pictures I got yesterday since that article came out? When WMUR has to put a piece on the news about the trash on the railroad that is absolutely filthy and disgusting. That is the image of what people see in

Manchester because that is what our city is becoming sadly. The Friends of the Piscataquog River Park spent Saturday morning with about 40 volunteers from the Queen City Rotary and a couple of different banks and all sorts of neighborhood folks cleaning the trash and debris and needles out of that park which should be an absolutely beautiful park where people want to go and walk. We dragged out mattresses and shopping carts and tents and tarps and needles and sleeping bags and articles of clothing and trash and more trash and more trash. Between Saturday afternoon and yesterday afternoon, three tents had been sent up along the hill in the same area we had just cleaned Saturday morning. Sure the police can come and shoo people along but there are homeless encampments everywhere. Before coming here today we drove by the dog park. There are two tents behind that. There is a tent behind the West Football Field. There are tents along the Piscataquog River. There are tents in every little nook and cranny of woods in this city because we don't have a good plan. We don't have a long-term plan. We just keep handing out more stuff that attracts more people to our city who are looking for a handout. We need to worry about the 99% of the people that are working to take care of themselves and not just that small slice. I have compassion for somebody who is suffering from mental illness. I have compassion for somebody who is struggling from addiction but we have to help people and they have to want to help themselves. We can't just give them more and more and more. Thank you.

Louis Calitz, 63 Durette Court, stated:

I, too, am testifying against the Elks Lodge as a location for a homeless services center. Pretty much what Tammy covered, it is completely inappropriate given that location in the City. That exit off the freeway is the most used entrance into Manchester and that is where a lot of visitors come in. It would just create the wrong impression of Manchester. I know there is a branding exercise being paid for by \$1.5 million. It doesn't make sense that you want to brand the city but you have this homeless center right at the entrance of the city. What are people going to remember? The brand you are trying to create through advertising or what they see on the streets? I think that is about it. Thank you.

Dam Wright stated:

I just heard some interesting things there about the right place to put a resource center. There is never a right place. Nobody is ever going to want it in their backyard. No matter where you put it someone is going to complain. What I am not hearing is any alternative solutions. I am not hearing people recognize that the way we are going to start dealing with getting folks off of the street is to have places like this to bring them into to connect them with services. This is not a handout. This is an attempt to start long-term solutions. You can't just throw together a long-term solution immediately. The stuff that is being talked about with regards to investing in long-term solutions, we need to be doing that while we are dealing with what is happening right now because as you are hearing, there are tents everywhere. There are people everywhere. They have no place to go and what is happening is the same thing we saw last spring. They are being chased from place to place to place. We get complaints about the railroad tracks and people got chased out of there so now there is a big mess to clean up. They are going to chase them out of the next place and there is going to be a big mess there. No, people aren't going to stop to clean up their mess when they are getting chased out of a place. That is just human nature okay. I think we need to continue to work towards the viable solutions and the types of things that Director Beloin has been talking about in terms of being able to bring folks to places where we can connect them with the services they need while we are working on long-term things such as affordable housing and extremely affordable housing. When you are living on the streets and living in a tent, this isn't about doing all the right things. This is about surviving. Your day-to-day existence is so bleak and so miserable and so hard that all you can do is try to survive and a lot of times that is going to mean trying to escape the horror of your life and the moment you do that you are going down the pathway of addiction and then you are dealing with those problems. A lot of people who started with addiction problems on the street were kids who were taken off of their Adderall or Ritalin too early so now the only thing they have to deal with those psychological issues because they don't have proper health care in place or mental health care is to turn to methamphetamines or crack cocaine or other uppers like that. Opioid users. A lot of them started with the over prescription of pills. Others because they are in so much pain out there. What do you do when you are in pain out there? What happens when Ibuprofen and Tylenol aren't going to do it anymore? Sometimes you just need to be able to sleep but you haven't been able to sleep for days because you have been up watching your stuff. You are too

paranoid about what is going to happen to you because you get attacked all the time and you get treated with disdain. You have a scarlet H on your and people won't even look you in the eye. Sometimes you have to stay up to watch your stuff. This is why people end up down in those woods. They shouldn't be demonized for it. They should be helped and that is what we are trying to do. We are trying to bring them into a place where we can get them connected with the kind of help that works for them. To that note, we are also trying to keep them alive so I am happy to say that on the 24th of this month I will be hosting another free Narcan training and distribution event. This time it will be at Waypoint at 464 Chestnut Street at 6:30 PM. Please mark your calendars. I would love to see you folks there. You will learn a little bit more than you did with the three-minute version I was able to give you last time. Let's keep the ball rolling like Dennis said. Let's keep up the good work and keep things moving forward please. Thank you.

Owen Westover, 372 Lake Avenue, stated:

Today I share a poem that I have written that captures the spirit of Manchester's working class in recognition of the recent International Worker's Day on May 1. It reminds us of the strength and unity and the urgent issues that they face – rising cost of living, lack of workforce housing and deep wealth inequality. As a representative of those who sell their labor for a wage, I urge us to address these challenges. Let's honor our city's history and its workers by striving for a just future where the essence of the working class is not hardship but hope.

In Manchester's core, where no walls ascend
a tale unfurls of might that won't bend;

Where once the loom, the spindle sang,
the working class their spirits rang;

Beneath the shade of the towering mills,
a struggle stirs, a fire it fills;

Oppressed, confined the working hand,
demands their right to own the land;

Their wages bound, their dreams restrained,
a wealth divide they can't contain;

A rich man's refuge these walls transform,
while common folks their voices warn;

Once teeming with the sweat and strife,
these mill stones grind their way through life;

A twisted fate these walls so great,
now privileged, an unfair state;

No more a humble working space,
these halls of brick with wealth embrace;

The toilers hopes a distant rang,
the grinding gears, a dream restrained;

Yet through the anguish dark and deep,
a spark ignites, a future leaps;

For worker's day, a beacon gleams,
reminds us all of their valiant dreams;

In unity the strength of sound,
the working class shall make their ground;

No more confined by a shadows long,
a brighter day, a future strong;

For deep within the fire ignites,
a tide of change, the wheel takes flight;

The struggles faced and shadows dire,
shall light the path for hope to aspire;

Let's not forget their courages play,
the working class in Manchester's core;
a force united forever more.

As mill walls loom, a challenge grand,
will shape a future shadows withstand;

In unity, they will soar above,
and claim the life they are worthy of.

Dennis Higgins, Homeless, stated:

Last week I talked about not dropping the ball. I mean you guys are here and you are the policymaker in the city here. You are the ones keeping things going. The tents all over the place, you only have yourselves to look in the mirror for. Everybody was in one

place. I was really close to getting out of the situation I was in down there because I had to struggle to survive every day the way it was. Now I am back there and it is like it is so far away when you get back to that point. It is an everyday fight. Of course, we want to take care of the 99%. That is a no-brainer but where do you put them? I don't think I know where the Elk's Lodge is but there are so many things, it is never going to be solved. Homelessness is not something that is going to be solved. We are not going to go there it is we did it, yay. Every generation and every group of people and everything...there is new things happening all of the time. There are so many different people that become homeless that you want to make a net to catch as many of them as you can and try to get them turned around and back to where they are supposed to go. Mental health is a big one. I just want this committee or you guys to keep going in the right direction. You don't want the citizens to keep coming in here and telling you that they are finding people on their front lawn. Obviously that is not working. That is not what this is all about. In the last 10 years the city has been going in the right direction I think. I lived in Nashua for a long time and then I moved up here. You can definitely see it. I don't see them but are the Police Chief and Fire Chief here. It is comforting to know that those two leaders, and we are so lucky to have those two...I mean I don't know if you realize this but I was at 1269 before it closed one night and there was a call and all of the sudden I realized it was the Police Chief pulling a regular beat. You don't see that anywhere. Also, the Fire Chief. I don't think I have seen anyone back up his people more than him. You don't want to lose either one of those guys. I think that would be another ball dropped right there. I have so many things I want to talk about but just know that this is not going to be something where you can say okay it is over with it and we don't have to deal with it anymore. It is something that is going to go on all the time. Everywhere you go, people are getting chased out of the woods. You have to find someplace to keep them centrally located. Obviously the businesses downtown don't want them there and in the outlying areas the citizens don't want them. I don't know what to say. I don't use and I don't leave stuff anywhere. I don't pollute. I didn't grow up in a dumpster and I don't leave trash anywhere. It is something that you have to keep working on. Don't think that we are going to solve this. It is going to be something where you just want to put the net out and get as many people as you can to get them going in the right direction. Adrienne is another person that you guys are so

lucky to have. She has vision and knows what it is going to take to get everybody going in the right direction. Have a great night and be safe.

Brandon Lemay, 36 Lynx Way, stated:

I am a volunteer with the Manchester Housing Alliance. I didn't plan on speaking tonight but I did want to address a speaker, Tammy. I am not going to lie. I was a little angry when I first heard the way that she talked about the houseless but I am trying to be more positive and I paused and I thought I want to empathize with Tammy because Tammy and I have common ground and it is that we are frustrated. I think most people in this room are frustrated too. When I see tents in the woods near the location that a man almost died just a few months ago in the very same spot, I get angry too. I do. I think we all do. This does affect all of us. It affects the people living in the tents the most. I really just want to underline that but it is upsetting that in the country that went to the moon and fought in multiple world wars; fought valiantly in wars and those same people that fought in those wars are currently living in those tents in Manchester today. Why? We can do anything as a country. We could end Veteran homelessness. We could end all homelessness if we wanted to. It is a matter of priorities. How can you shower for your job when you do not have a shower? If I don't shower for a week and I show up to my job, I am going to get written up. I don't know if that is how it works at your jobs or if you have jobs. We need a system in place but we also need a Governor that is going to work with the city. We need to make sure that we are innovating new solutions here. We need to implement a statewide housing first model. We need to be doing this in Manchester and in Rochester and in Keene. Every single community in NH generates homelessness. Not every single community actually provides for their homeless and that is a fact. Yes, there is a little bit of that. We are taking in some of the houseless from the rest of the state. My philosophy is you are here right now so let's take care of you but yes other cities and towns should be more responsible and pitching in too. We need to have leadership at the state level. We can have the best leadership here in the city but it is a home rule state. I am just going to cut this off right here. Thank you so much. I want us to really think about the fact that we are both frustrated even if we don't agree necessarily on the solutions or why people are houseless. Thank you.

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

PRESENTATIONS

2. Presentation of the City's Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR).

Jennifer Heon, Financial Analyst II, stated I am here to introduce the city's audit team from Marcum. This is Scott McIntyre and Andrew Gordon and we have Megan with us as well. They are going to present the city's FY22 audit.

Scott McIntire, Marcum, stated as Jen said, I am one of the partners at Marcum which was previously Melanson. I can speak about that if the Mayor and Board would like. I am here tonight to give a very quick overview of our results of your audit for the year ended June 30, 2022. I will get into the opinion and the numbers in just a minute but as I like to when appropriate, and it certainly is in this case, give the Board probably the most important communication you can hear from us and that is letting us know that our audit of your financial statements went well. What that really means when we get into the weeds is when we looked at your books and records, we found them to be in good working order. The accounts were reconciled on a regular and timely basis. As a result of that, we did not need to propose any significant adjustments in order for your financial statements to be materially fairly presented in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP). If that sounds like it is a repeat communication, that is because our standards, the auditing standards, require us to report to you if any significant adjustments were needed in order for your statements to be materially fairly presented. Again, in fiscal year 2022, none were needed. Two very quick required communications deal with whether or not there were any disagreements between how to apply GAAP between the city and our firm. There were no significant disagreements in the application of GAAP. The last of the required communications deals with estimates. There are several in your financial statements, the largest of which deal with your net pension liability in the related accounts, your net OPEB, which is the other post-employment benefit liability, as well as the estimated useful lives of capital assets and things like that. Part of our audit standards require that we review those estimates

and compare them to trends. On things like that, we find that the estimates in the actuarial assumptions that you used in your net OPEB and net pension liability to be very sound and reasonable and consistent with other communities. With that, I understand that the Board has a copy of the document. I am going to turn to only a couple of pages in here. The first is print page 12. If you have an electronic copy, it is .pdf page 20. This is our opinion on your financial statements. It may look different but it says the same thing it has in the past. That is that in our opinion, after following the standards that we are required to follow, your financial statements are materially fairly presented. It looks different only because our standards change just like accounting standards change and we had to restructure the report. Starting with what we did and concluding with our opinion, this opinion starts with just that. Our opinion and then it tells you the basis we followed to reach our conclusion. The bottom line is it is a clean or an unqualified opinion on your financial statements. Following that is pages 16-27. That is a management discussion and analysis. I am going to skip over that. It is a great resource to go back to at a later point in time. I am going to print page 29 and pdf 37. It is important for readers of your financial statements to recognize that there are both a long-term perspective and a short-term perspective. I will talk mostly about short-term perspective. In our opinion, no conversation about a local government's financial statements would be complete without talking a little bit about the long-term perspective basis of accounting. For local governments in the United States, it is all about your net pension and your net OPEB which stands for Other Post-Employment Benefits. If you look at that first column of numbers on print page 29 or pdf page 37, a few inches down from the top, you see your non-current liabilities due within one year and then due within more than one year. Most of that is your net pension and your net OPEB liabilities. A real quick point of reference. Your net pension liability is about \$194 million. It is down significantly from the prior year but I would want to point out to the Board that much of that deals with the fact that you measure that liability as of 6/30/21 and the investment returns through 6/30/21 were significantly different than they have been in the last year. While that liability has come down, it is in all likelihood going to go back up when it is measured at 6/30/22 when investment returns weren't what they were in the prior year. All I really wanted to talk about on the long-term perspective of accounting, even with such a comprehensive report, most readers of your financial statements are going to turn to print page 32 or pdf page 40 and they are going to focus

on the first column of numbers. Very quickly though before I talk about your general fund, which is that first column of numbers, in the second column going left to right, your Other Grant Fund, triggered out to be a major fund in FY22. That is defined by GAAP. Why that turned out to be major this year is because the ARPA money that the city received was reported in this Other Grant Fund. In accounting standards, you receive that money upfront and once you spend it you will then recognize the revenue to match the expenditures. So if you look on here you see an unearned liability of \$35 million. I just wanted to point out that that is where your ARPA money is fiscally accounted for and reported and because it is such a significant dollar value, it did trigger to be a major fund this year and that is why it is showing as a separate column. Back to the general fund, I wanted to speak about the third number up from the bottom or the unassigned fund balance which had a balance as of 6/30/2022 of \$11,075,000. That is virtually unchanged from the prior year. In the prior year it was \$10.8 million and has gone up to \$11.1. So there is a little bit of an increase. As a point of reference, I would want to point out that the unassigned fund balance of \$11.1 million represents just under 7% of your FY22 general fund expenditures. I think that is important because rating agencies typically like to see it between 5% and 10%. Just a couple of other numbers on this page. The one row above the unassigned fund balance you have your assigned fund balance of about \$2 million. Most of that is your encumbrances and open purchase orders that will be carried forward and honored in FY23. Above that is your committed fund balance of \$6.2 million. Much of that is your general fund reserves including the reserve for capital, health insurance reserve, general liability reserve, severance and some transportation reserves. The very last thing I want to point out is two pages forward. Print page 44 and pdf page 42. Again, it focuses on the general fund. I point this out because I think it is the way a lot of financial institutions and credit rating agencies look at your operating statement, your statement of revenues and expenditures. The focus really is on that first column of numbers, third number up from the bottom. You see the net change in your fund balance in parenthesis. It is \$615,000 indicating that the outflows of resources for the fiscal year exceeded the inflows. As written up in your MB&A, your management's discussion and analysis, if you look under budgetary results you will see that licenses and permit revenues for FY22 were down about \$1.2 million and also the parking revenue was down. I understand that things look a little bit different here in FY23 after speaking with Jen and Sharon before the

meeting but for FY22 those two revenue sources that were below expectations were really what was driving that \$615,000 which is indicative of outflows of resources in your general fund exceeding your inflows. One of the things I did not point out in our opinion is something called an emphasis of matter which is probably a strong term because it is really not that important but our standards require us to do that. During FY22, the city implemented what is known as GASB or the Governmental Accounting Standards Board 87 statement dealing with leases. It is a very comprehensive statement. There are some new standards that will be effective for both FY23 and a few years after that as well. I won't get into too much detail but do know that the accounting standards change regularly. It was only a handful of years ago that we were dealing with GASB 54 and we are now up over 100. So the accounting standard setters change. It is not us. We just make sure you follow the rules; we don't make the rules. They have been rapidly making changes to the standards. The city as a whole needs to keep an eye on this. I know Finance has but we think that this group should be aware of these coming changes. It is a year away but there will be a vote about a year from now as to whether or not the reporting model that we just talked about, which was the long-term perspective and the short-term perspective, will change. Know that there are a lot of changes coming to governmental financial statements in the coming years and there is work to be done to be prepared to implement the new standards. With that, I know it was a super quick walk-through but we will try to answer any questions that the BMA has.

Alderman E. Sapienza stated for clarity, you mentioned that you don't see any real red flags here correct.

Mr. McIntire responded right I don't see any red flags. It is certainly comforting to know that the revenue sources that were under what the budget was in FY22 have seem to have turned around in FY23.

Alderman E. Sapienza stated you also mentioned that there is a pension liability of \$194 million. That sounds like a red flag to me.

Mr. McIntire replied that is a great question and one I often get and it is always a good reminder for me to maybe slow down and take a few extra minutes to talk about that. It is a huge number but I think some context can be added to it. Your \$194 million is a combination of really two. There is a third system but...

Alderman E. Sapienza interjected the old city one.

Mr. McIntyre responded yes the old system. It is very small but the \$194 million is predominantly made up of your proportional share of the NH Retirement System and your proportional share of the Manchester Employee Contributory Retirement System. I think what is important, in addition to understanding the dollar value of the liability, is when are these funding schedules expected to mature. Some of the new reports just came out for FY23 very recently. With respect to the NH Retirement System, that liability is scheduled to be fully funded in about 17 years. Your question is a good one and it is a reminder for me to put that perspective in there. While it seems like a daunting amount of money, and it is, the funding schedule that the state has requiring all of the local governments to...well it is not just the local governments but the state government as well if they keep contributing at the same level that liability will be amortized down to zero in about 17 years.

Alderman E. Sapienza asked do you have a breakdown. Is it 50% state and 50% city and we will just forgo the other one for the sake of brevity?

Ms. McIntire answered I have a breakdown but I would have to look it up for you.

Alderman E. Sapienza stated we are familiar with the state retirement. So the city one is also underfunded correct? Is that what you are saying?

Mr. McIntire stated it is following its funding schedule. To say that it is underfunded...if what you are saying is they are an underfunded liability then yes.

Alderman E. Sapienza stated moving on with other post-employment benefits, would that be medical.

Mr. McIntire replied yes.

Alderman E. Sapienza asked how is that affecting the city because when a city employee retires my understanding...let's say they are police, fire or a school teacher, if they are an early retiree which is that they are retired but not yet 65 years old they can stay on the plan but they are going to pay 100% of the premium. So it might be \$900/month. Are you saying that the \$900/month that the early retiree is paying doesn't suffice and cover the cost of their care?

Mr. McIntire answered no that is not what I am saying. I will try to define it a little bit but before I do I will remind you of what I said a little while ago. We don't make the rules. GASB looks at OPEB this way. You referenced a police officer or firefighter as an example. If they are retiring at retirement age and paying a blended rate, they would pay the same rate as someone who is younger and newer to the workforce is paying. The accounting standards require you to measure that subsidy because that older individual, soon to be or is just retired, is paying the same rate that a new officer or a new firefighter is paying who might be significantly younger.

Alderman E. Sapienza stated well they are paying more out of their pocket. They are paying 100%. Let's say it is \$900 month. So when you say the same rate you mean \$900 and \$900 but the 25-year-old that is currently employed is only paying 20% of that \$900.

Mr. McIntire responded I am trying to describe it that if it is \$900 for example, the soon to be retiree is paying the same amount as the 24-year-old and as a result, standard setters have said then the city is really subsidizing this soon to be retiree's cost by only requiring them to pay the same amount that the 24-year-old is paying.

Alderman E. Sapienza replied but they don't pay the same amount. The person who retires from the city at say age 50 or 51 or 52 and is an early retiree, they can stay on the city's plan but they are pulling the full freight out of their pocket.

Mr. McIntire stated correct.

Mayor Craig asked what is your question Alderman E. Sapienza.

Alderman E. Sapienza asked what constitutes this post-employment benefit. What constitutes that liability because that person who retires is paying approximately \$900/month out of their pocket. So that \$900 doesn't cover what their cost is. Is that what you are saying?

Mr. McIntire stated if they were to buy it individually and not in the plan of the entire population of the City of Manchester employees in your example they would pay significantly more than the \$900. However, they are part of a blended pool. Some might be 55 and some might be 45, 35 and 25. So they are paying at a blended rate so the standard setters have said that if I am 55 and Andrew is 25 and we are paying the same amount, I am getting a benefit that the city is paying for because you are only requiring me to pay the \$900.

Alderman E. Sapienza replied the city is not paying it though. If you are an early retiree, the city is not paying it. The retiree is paying 100% out of their pocket.

Mayor Craig stated we went through this last week.

Alderman E. Sapienza responded I know and it is not matching and that is why I want clarity. What constitutes the post-employment benefit liability because the early retiree...

Mayor Craig interjected he is answering it but you are not getting what he is saying. There is a disconnect.

Alderman E. Sapienza stated there is. They are paying more out of their pocket than the active employee. They are paying say \$900/month out of their pocket.

Mr. McIntire stated but if they weren't part of the city's overall pool plan, they would probably pay and I am just making up a number here, say \$1,500.

Alderman E. Sapienza asked so the \$900 they are paying doesn't cover it.

Mr. McIntire answered no.

Alderman E. Sapienza asked so that is a liability.

Mayor Craig asked Lisa do you want to jump in.

Lisa Drabik, HR Director, stated if I could just interject, I think the confusion is coming from the fact that we are talking about the premium. The premium is set for everyone. Under the law, we have to pool everyone, including our early retirees. So you are pooling the 25 year olds with the 55 year olds, etc. up to Medicare age. So the premium is set let's say for a family plan at \$900. What the city pays pursuant to collective bargaining agreements or what have you for the current employees is different. I think what Mr. McIntire is talking about is the premium is the same because it is the pool premium.

Alderman E. Sapienza stated okay let's move on. So that is the state retirement. Now with the city retirees they pay from day one of their employee 1.25% toward their medical subsidy. Then when they retire, if they are an early retiree and stay on the city's plan they get a subsidy from the city. The state retirees don't but the city retirees do. Again, is that not covering it? The subsidy that they are getting when they retire that they paid into, does that not cover their expenses?

Sharon Wickens, Finance Officer, responded the subsidy that they get is just a portion of the premium. Say it was a \$1,500 premium and they were getting \$500 through the subsidy, they would have to pay the other \$1,000 to make that \$1,500 whole.

Alderman E. Sapienza replied right. So that subsidy they are getting represents...that is part of the liability. That is part of the post-employment benefit liability. It is not

covering it in other words; what they paid in with that 1.25% that they paid in from day one of employment is not covering it.

Mr. McIntire stated I don't disagree with you.

Alderman E. Sapienza stated I am just looking for clarity here. What I am understanding is the benefits that they have aren't covered by the pool that has been created. It is a liability to the city.

Mr. McIntire responded from a long-term perspective it is yes.

Alderman Levasseur asked if you could turn to page 115, I am hoping that is the one that talks about the pension debt. The first line on 2022 you have total pension liability of \$426,344,434. What is plan fiduciary net position?

Mr. McIntire answered that would be the fund balance if you will of the retirement system. The assets minus its own liabilities. It is essentially assets of the Manchester Employee Contributory Retirement System.

Alderman Levasseur asked so that is where you end up with the \$139 million.

Mr. McIntire replied yes. That would be the total liability less the assets set aside to pay those liabilities.

Alderman Levasseur asked so what is the real number we have to be concerned about. Is it the \$139 million? That is what we owe because we have assets to cover a certain portion of the big debt which is \$426 million?

Mr. McIntire responded yes.

Alderman Levasseur asked on the percentage basis of 67.38%, how do we rate compared to other cities and towns that you audit. You don't have to just speak about

Nashua. They are close to us but maybe other cities that are in the 100,00-120,000 population range. Are we in the ballpark percentage wise?

Mr. McIntire answered that is a great question and one that is super hard to answer. The City of Nashua has a very small pension system for their public works employees only. Otherwise, they are strictly a member of the NH Retirement System as is virtually every other governmental entity in the state. Manchester is a little unique in that it has its own system. For me to say that the 67%...I really can't compare that to anyone because you are unique in that you have your own system. You still contribute to the statewide system for certain employees.

Alderman Levasseur asked how about when you audit another company that is not a government entity or maybe a government entity that has a 401K plan. Are they in the 67% range or are their liabilities different than what their net position would be? Are they in the same percentage boat as we would be meaning if we were to switch it to a 401K? Not that it would ever happen but if we changed it to a private 401K plan would we have this much debt of \$139 million?

Mr. McIntire replied my answer to your question will not be from a 401K perspective but from other governments because we do audit other governments in other states. In the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, some of the larger cities have their own systems. If I compare you to...I would put governments that have their own pension system in Massachusetts in really three buckets. There are some smaller communities that have their own system that are between 90-98% funded. The middle bucket if you will of the three buckets I am trying to describe are around 65% funded and you are slightly more than that. There are a number of large cities in Massachusetts that are still around 55% funded. I don't think, if I was to compare you with other cities of comparable size in Massachusetts, that the 67% is out of line. It is fairly consistent with other governments.

Alderman Levasseur stated I have one last question and I don't know if I picked this up in the proper way but I saw something on the agenda that said that we have to bond money to pay the pensions. Did I read that right about the \$20 million?

Mayor Craig stated the Board did bond in 2001.

Ms. Wickens stated in 2001, we bonded the old pension system, which is a closed plan. Every year, the Trustees send a letter to let you know the status of that plan.

Alderman Levasseur stated is that included in the debt number in the audit or is it a different number altogether.

Mayor Craig responded it is the old pension plan.

Ms. Wickens stated I believe the old pension system is in there but it is so miniscule.

Alderman Levasseur stated the reason for the question is how are we paying this down. Are we bonding money to pay our obligation which would seem to me to be a reverse way of getting out of this situation. My understanding is that bonding was for a different plan but are those plans combined in this one total number?

Mr. McIntire replied when we were talking about page 115, that is only on the city plan. There are other pages that deal with the NH system. The old system is really, relative to the other two systems, so small that I am not prepared to talk about it given its relative size to the overall liability.

Alderman Levasseur stated okay. What is the way that this number, this \$139, is paid for? How does that number get brought down, if at all?

Mr. McIntire answered your contributions to the city retirement system are set. Those amounts which are the contributions from you, the employer, and the employees are designed to cover two things. One is the normal cost. That is the cost each year of the benefit that each active employee is earning. Another piece of that contribution is designed to cover the unfunded piece so overtime and as I said with the state system the number is about 17 years. If you keep doing what you are doing with the state system for 17 years, that liability eventually gets down to zero or close to it because obviously investment results are going to differ from expectations every year. I don't

have off the top of my head the number for the Manchester system in regards to how many more years until that unfunded liability is amortized. I certainly wish right now I had looked it up.

Alderman Levasseur stated the actuarial can't be keeping up with this number with longevity and people living past the expected age.

Mr. McIntire responded that is one of the key assumptions that goes into these valuations and why I refer to them as significant estimates. They are significant numbers because of their size but certainly the assumptions like mortality tables, I am not going to say they change every year but they change very often based on experience studies that are done. The mortality tables are certainly one of the assumptions that we look at to determine whether or not they are fair and reasonable. Your actuary does it as well. So those things are factored into these liabilities.

Alderman Levasseur stated I would like to have a really good conversation with you but I will do that over the phone because I have a lot more questions and I don't want to take up the Board's time. Thank you for this information.

3. Update from Adrienne Beloin, Director of Homelessness Initiatives.

Adrienne Beloin, Director of Homelessness Initiatives, stated I want to introduce you to Jake King. You have heard a little bit about him but Jake is our current manager and the person who is running the operations at the Beech Street Shelter. I wanted him to come today as we are giving an update on how things are going with the Beech Street Shelter and delivering on all of the different data points we were hoping to gather at this point. I will go through a presentation that should probably take about 10-12 minutes and afterwards we can entertain any questions that you all have. I did want to mention that in addition to Jake's current role, he was also involved with the Homeless Resource Center in Manchester years ago when it was here. So he also has some institutional knowledge of that and that might be helpful to us in our discussion as well. Here is the basics of the guests we are serving at the 39 Beech Street Shelter. We have served a total of 177 guests. This is the male and female breakdown which is of no surprise.

That is our typical breakdown for male and female. Over here we have the age breakdown. I think it is somewhat interesting to note that the largest group of folks that we have are between the ages of 36-50. We also have these two purplish triangles here. We have folks that are all over the age of 50 so a significantly older population. How do we stabilize vulnerable people? What we are going to present to you today is built on a time and true concept of building trust with folks and then creating connections from that trust to services and then having that result in stability. To do that, we are going to be providing comprehensive wraparound services in one easily accessed location. We were able to implement a survey with the 40 individuals that are staying with us at the shelter. You might remember in my past reports that a good 30 of those 40 have been with us almost since the beginning of the shelter opening so we had some really good data. The length of time homeless for these individuals that we surveyed...it is interesting that many of them, the larger portion of them, have been homeless for greater than one year. When you look at the time homeless in Manchester, there is a really significant portion here that have been homeless in Manchester...I think I kind of put a type there with some of them who were in Manchester prior to their homelessness episode but they have been in Manchester for greater than one year. We have asked them where will you go after June 30 and a significant amount of them said that they did not know; 19 of them. Street or encampment was about 10 and the other breakdown is here. We have assessed these various different pieces from them asking them if they have storage needs, which most of them did, whether or not they had disabilities, which a fair amount of them do, mobility issues and benefit needs. Three of them are veterans and three of them do not have health insurance. We checked into the barriers to housing. Twenty-eight of them have very, very low income, 12 have no income at all, 11 have no phone and 10 of them don't have an i.d. We wanted to assess their housing. Three of the guests actually have housing vouchers and they are without an apartment to apply a housing voucher to. Our coordinated entry system is the CoC unfunded mandate that the city CoC does have in place. It basically matches individuals and families to housing based on a vulnerability index. That coordinated entry system is the path for folks to be connected to dedicated homeless subsidized housing. About 50 of our guests, all of whom qualify to be on this list, are actually on the list. Assessment on health, mental health and substance use. Eighteen out of the forty did not have any provider connections at all to

any of those resources. Eighteen of them really wanted health interventions right away and were hoping to speak to a nurse somewhat soon. Fourteen of them were looking for mental health support and asking for that. Seven of them wanted us to connect them to substance use support. All of this surveying is a really great place for us to go ahead now and make the list. These are all the groups that I have mentioned in the past that we are currently connected to. They have all raised their hand and said they want to come and help us in any way they can. Many of them volunteer at the shelter on a daily basis. Some of them have volunteered to come and do a resource fair where they can set-up tables alongside other providers. Some will come and do a table on their own. The people are really enthusiastic about coming and providing the services. As an example, those three veterans will be able to by name have the staff round up those three folks and get connected to the Veterans Count Program, Harbor Care or the VA. Outcomes. We have been able to manage some outcomes in our short time of having the emergency winter shelter open. The Manchester Welfare Department has served 15 of our guests. They have been coming on Thursdays and they have made connections to low income housing opportunities, sober residential programs, food stamps, income benefits, i.d.'s, and phones. Ten of our guests over the time that we have been open have gone to detox directly from the shelter. Three of our guests have found housing solutions. This is data put together by our closest partner, Manchester Mental Health. They come in every single night with a rapid response team to check on our guests, even if they haven't been called to respond to a psychiatric emergency. They also come on Mondays and do office hours. They put together the stats that they have been providing to us since we have been operating as a warming station and they had 53 visits to the shelter and helped 50 people. One of them has been moved into permanent housing with their support. Also for 30 folks they have removed barriers to essential needs. Those are things like barriers that get in the way of people accessing housing like i.d.'s, birth certificates, criminal record issues and that kind of stuff. Twenty-nine individuals have had referrals made to mental health and physical health services. Our Manchester Police Department did a report on about a 1,000-foot radius of the shelter to take a look at any reports that came their way. This is just a sample of some of the things that were on that list. I am going to go ahead and send you all the entire list so you can take a look at it and see what the stats are like but these were a few that I thought potentially might fit into some homeless-related concerns. This is a

report that looked at the month before we opened the emergency shelter and the months that we have been open in comparison. This Manchester Fire statistic is really interesting. You might remember that I mentioned in one of the last time I reported to you all that we had 45 calls for service to the Fire Department for medical issues, including seven non-fatal overdoses in the first two months that the shelter was open. Over the last month, there have been no calls for service and no overdoses on site. It is a phenomenon that we think is surprising and we really think it speaks to...you heard me say that we have been kind of ramping up in our operations and smoothing out some of our operating procedures like getting our staff trained and having things move into a smooth groove. I think with that we have shown that there is a lot of stability for many of the same folks that have been in that shelter. They haven't had to have any overdoses responded to and no service calls for falls or chest pain or anything like that. I don't want to leave out the YWCA on Brook Street and their emergency winter shelter that we are supporting through the end of June. I will just breakdown the stat for you a little bit but they have served 38 women and 35 of them they have managed to increase the income for while they have been staying with them. For 24 of those women, they have been able to remove some barriers to housing for them. For 20 of those women, they have been able to do mental health connections. For 14, they have been able to make substance use disorder connections for them. For 7, they have been able to give domestic violence support. It is of no surprise that they have such good outcomes. The YWCA has expertise in trauma that is significant to the female homeless population. With their domestic violence expertise, they have been able to easily connect people to those resources. I would like you to meet a couple of our guests. Short video presentation. Now is where I am going to transition from Beech Street to really fold-in to what our next initiative is going to be around the engagement center. I want to tell you more about the model. The model really builds on a little bit of what we were able to do at Beech Street in a short time for an emergency shelter. The engagement center is really intended to be so much more. It is a similar concept though where these different items here are what we can all...we can't argue that these are basic needs that all of us need to have – clothing, community, storage, hygiene, meals, safety and communication. Basically those basic needs are here in the center and what the engagement center model does is it builds off of those basic needs to connect to the other pieces that people need for stability. Basic needs tend to be the catch for folks. It

brings people in. For example, if you are serving meals...I know at my last shelter we used to have waffles on a particular day and every Waffle Wednesday was the time the case managers did different housing activities because that was the way to catch people when they came in. You centralize the basic needs in one place and then through that relationship that people build with the facility, with the staff, with the space, they start to get comfortable and then you can introduce them to the various other things. With mental health and substance use, the kinds of things you introduce at those moments of engagement are things like peer counseling with other people who have been through it, harm reduction, treatment, and recovery support. Around their income, you introduce things like getting connected to food stamps and other benefits, employment and career training. For their health, you look at nutrition and connect them to primary care and to foot care. That is a big thing for the homeless population that the general population doesn't always understand. Also urgent care which is frequent and necessary, and general wellness. Housing is a big one. These are all the types of things that get in the way for folks when they are looking for housing. They need to have identification. We would run regular i.d. clinics probably every week on the same day so that people could make traction on that or if they miss it they could come back the next week. Vital records. Finding their birth certificates and having a place to store those things. People often lose their vital records constantly because where are you going to keep them and how are you going to keep it dry. Legal support. Lots of folks have criminal record issues and other kinds of legality issues that stand in the way between them and housing and connecting them to obviously affordable housing and transitional housing options. The last one is community. That is really building on community that the homeless population already really excels in but really setting up structural social activities for them in support groups. Why the engagement center model works? It serves all regardless of where in Manchester you are staying. It serves folks that are inside emergency shelters, staying in encampments, staying in doorways, or staying on someone's couch; it serves everyone, even folks that have maybe moved into housing and aren't so sure how to manage some of those pieces of being in housing. They can come back to the engagement center and get stabilization support. It is also centralizing resources and system homelessness response. I mentioned the coordinated entry as an example of that. We have a list where we connect people and match them on a monthly basis to housing opportunities. One of

the big issues and why 50% of our folks at Beech Street are not on the list is because nobody has been able to capture them and have them do the assessment that it takes to get on the list. We would centralize that activity at the engagement center and every single person that comes to the engagement center would be introduced to that assessment and supported. The assessment takes a lot of time. Maybe they need a break. That kind of support can happen in a setting like that. The setting would be low threshold meaning that there is not a lot of barriers for people to come inside. For example, if someone is intoxicated, they would still be welcomed in but certainly it is structured meaning that if you are intoxicated and you come in it doesn't mean that your behavior can be such that you are disturbing the community or that you are not in control and things are unsafe. That is kind of the balance of those two things. The staff are trained in motivational interviewing, trauma-informed care, harm reduction, de-escalation techniques and specialized training. One of the things I thought of here when I wrote specialized training is it would probably be a great idea to introduce staff to learning something about the sex trafficked population and how to best engage with those folks. Also, it positively engages the community and the guests. 40% of folks that stay in emergency shelter on average are only in the shelter for a two to three-week period for the entire year. That is a huge chunk of people and it just really speaks to the transient nature of the business. If we have an engagement center in different city hubs across the state of NH, those folks will have places where they can actually make traction on their mail, on their housing applications and all of those different pieces because they can't always do it at the shelter if they are not staying there regularly and they don't get connected to case management. This is Matt Bouchie. He is the lead of our homeless outreach team for the Mental Health Center of Greater Manchester. Matt was also around when the homeless resource center was in Manchester before. He is going to speak to that. These stats that I put up here have come from their agency. It speaks to a little bit of what their outreach is like in the rest of the city. I showed you the stats on the outreach they do at Beech Street but this is the outreach they are doing to the rest of the encampments and the folks that are unsheltered. There are about 140 people that they have been able to meet with out there. That number is as recent as March. This is the breakdown of where they are from. Short video presentation. This is the last slide and it points out that we wouldn't be alone. If we open the engagement center in Manchester, we would be following the footsteps of Concord who has a

homeless resource center that is very successful for that population there. I don't know if you have seen in the news recently but Keene is actually opening up soon a new 48 bed emergency shelter and it also includes an all-inclusive homeless resource center that is open to all populations, not just the shelter residents. Also, Portland, ME just opened a huge resource center that is also open to everyone. This is the model that has been replicated across the country and it really represents where we are right now in homeless services. All of the other major cities have gone through what we have gone through as well. We had encampments and we moved them and they have shown back up and we have gone through different things. This is the thing that people do now because this is the thing that is showing makes sense. That is the end of my presentation and we are here to answer any questions you may have.

Alderman George-Kelly stated thank you Adrienne and Jake for coming today. I really appreciate all of the work that you guys have done and just the outcomes that you are able to show us and the real statistics that you are able to bring to the table that are showing how the work that has happened so far has been successful. I also think it is important to just note that this model is currently being used in our city. We have a drop-in center for young people, as young as 12 and all the way up to the age of 25. One of the reasons why that population of 18-25 year olds is so small at the shelter is because those young people are being served most often by Waypoint and only seeking shelter in other places when beds at Waypoint are full. When we think about this drop-in center, we already have proof in our own community about how successful things like an engagement center are and the things that can happen in those places. I am really excited to be able to see this model replicated and used for the older adult population that are above the age of 25 so that they, too, have access to basic needs services. You are exactly right that those are the things that get people through the door because when they are trying to survive, that is what their priority is. Having structured opportunities to engage with a variety of services and resources, but also ways to connect and have community and to build their skills and to learn...I am super excited for this to come to the city. I was around and doing this work when the previous homeless centers were here and I am glad that we are reconsidering the idea of putting those forward. I am really excited about this presentation and I just appreciate all the work that you have put into developing this plan and bringing it to the Board.

Alderman Long asked can we get a copy of the presentation. There were 177 guests. What was the timeframe?

Ms. Beloin answered since we opened.

Alderman Long asked so February 2.

Ms. Beloin stated we may have started at the end of January but right around that time.

Alderman Long asked and through April what.

Ms. Beloin answered this information was pulled last week.

Alderman Long asked regarding the survey you did, was that of the 40 people or the 177.

Ms. Beloin replied it was the 40. Some of our stats like the age and some of the pieces were taken from some intake data but there were a lot of people with birth dates of 2023 for example. Some of the data was not great so we were lucky to do a hands-on survey because that is often the best way to get current information.

Alderman Long stated you mentioned the housing list and that there were 55 people on it.

Ms. Beloin responded there is a coordinated entry list. There are hundreds of people on that list. Out of our guests, only 50% or 20 of them are actually on that list that matches you with homeless opportunity housing.

Alderman Long asked so that puts them on a list for housing.

Ms. Beloin answered yes. It is through the Manchester CoC which you know is the largest funding resource that we have in Manchester for homeless response. Many of

the housing opportunities that are on that list that can be matched to are places like Families in Transition which has some housing that gets on that list. It is almost like the CoC funded housing is on that list. Now other landlords can also join. Anyone can offer their housing units to this. We can have it populated any which way and that is potentially one of the incentive programs that we would look at as we look at next steps and larger picture initiatives.

Alderman Long asked how quickly are people moving off of this list into housing.

Ms. Beloin replied that is a good question. I think there are three or four people moving a month.

Alderman Long asked with respect to the engagement center, I heard about success but what does that mean.

Ms. Beloin answered success is moving people out of homelessness into stable housing. To do that, you want to stabilize them in their mental health and in their income and in their housing. If you have services that provide that stability, that often can be the way that they have a path out of homelessness. For example, if somebody comes and they are able to work and we offer an employment program on-site like for example if we had a commercial kitchen I would maybe suggest that we have a chef and a program where folks who otherwise would not ever be allowed in a kitchen setting and take on a real job would be able to be brought in and given opportunity and a skill set and that could translate into a reference in a real job placement after that. That is an income source that now can afford that person a rooming house or sober home. That is a way that can be a path to housing that is faster than we can build housing to move them into.

Alderman Long asked is there a timeframe for that from beginning to end.

Ms. Beloin responded it is individual to each person. Some people move very, very quickly. Some people get connected to rapid rehousing opportunities where they move into housing with 20-30 days. Our CoC has some rapid rehousing programs where you

get a voucher through a voucher program and then you can apply that voucher. We have three folks in our shelter right now with vouchers in hand that are active. There is no apartment for them to be put into or no person to advocate with them and make those calls or a way to clean up and show up for that appointment to meet a landlord; all of those kinds of things. It takes a short time for some people to bounce out of homelessness and it is very brief and for other people it can take longer. If you have criminal record issues that have to be changed then that is something you need to chip away at.

Alderman Long asked what is the longest someone would have a barrier.

Ms. Beloin replied as you can imagine, some people have had barriers in place for years and years. It really depends on how motivated someone is, how engaged they are with services and whether or not their barriers can be removed little by little. I have seen people with some of the worst cases of all of the different barriers have those things removed but it takes engagement and you have to keep the motivated and that is where the skill comes in from the providers to kind of have that happen.

Alderman E. Sapienza stated with respect to the location of the engagement center, can we just go ahead and say where that is at this point.

Ms. Beloin answered no.

Mayor Craig stated there is no set location.

Ms. Beloin stated we are looking at multiple properties right now.

Alderman E. Sapienza asked what are those properties.

Ms. Beloin responded we are not discussing the properties. That is why when we discussed the property we did it in a private session. We have determined that any sort of properties we are looking at we are not discussing publically and when we do actually

have a property confirmed that will come back to this body and that will be a vote and a public conversation.

Alderman E. Sapienza asked so there has been no deposit put down and no signing of a purchase and sales agreement.

Ms. Beloin answered correct and you would know because you would have to vote on it.

Alderman E. Sapienza asked so we don't want to say what any of these...there are multiple possibilities out there. How many are you looking at? Three or four?

Ms. Beloin responded two or three.

Alderman Levasseur stated I am a little bit nervous about the fact that we are going to find a location and then we are going to come here and vote for it. People in this city need to know about it before we vote for it so they can at least opine on it.

Mayor Craig stated it would be on an agenda prior to the meeting.

Alderman Levasseur stated I don't know about that. I am glad you are saying that publically because I think if a lease comes in and we have to approve it before we can make it public because we have to agree on it...I don't know if that is where it gets into some cloudy areas as far as 91-A stuff because we would be discussing a 91-A issue. I just want to make that clear. I think the people in this city have a right to know before we get there. Maybe there will be a good location that people will be fine with and that will make some of these votes a little easier. As you know, there is a big outcry right now and this happens whenever you have these type of centers. The people in this city have a right to know what is going in their neighborhoods. That is why we have a Planning Board and a Zoning Board. We have to treat this the same way. I was a little bit surprised about a few things in the presentation. Ten people do not have an identification. How are they able to get inside a building and become one of the people living there or even just be able to exist in society without an i.d.? Why is that?

Ms. Beloin responded the way you just described it is exactly the way they feel.

Alderman Levasseur asked why don't they have an i.d.

Ms. Beloin answered because they lose it all the time. Sometimes it gets stolen or it falls out of a pocket. It also costs money to get an i.d.

Alderman Levasseur asked how do you know that who you are dealing with is not a criminal or a serial rapist or sex offender if they don't have an i.d. Do you do any background checks on anyone who gets to stay in the shelter before you let them in?

Ms. Beloin replied I think some of them have criminal histories for sure and that is the welcoming of the engagement center...

Alderman Levasseur interjected I am not talking about the engagement center. I am talking about the shelter bed they have now.

Ms. Beloin stated we are not doing background checks.

Alderman Levasseur stated okay. I am not here to judge you and I am not here to yell at you. I am not making any judgments. I just want to have questions answered please. I don't want to put you on the defense. I just have questions. A lot of this is new to me. I cross-examine people for a living but I don't mean to come off that way. I was very surprised also that Brook Street is going to be closing in June.

Ms. Beloin responded we are funding them through the city until June 30 because it is part of our winter emergency effort from the EOC. The Y since the beginning when they agreed to come in as the operator, they said their plan is to secure funding for the fiscal year themselves. They are actively doing that right now.

Alderman Levasseur asked so the city wouldn't be funding them.

Ms. Beloin stated right but we hope that Brook Street will go on with the same model.

Alderman Levasseur stated that would be tough if they didn't stay open because it is all women in that building.

Mayor Craig stated they are requesting money through CIP which I included in my budget.

Alderman Levasseur asked if we closed on April 30, where would those people have gone.

Ms. Beloin answered we gave them a survey to ask them...oh if we were to close on April 30.

Alderman Levasseur asked well where will they go on June 30.

Ms. Beloin replied I think it would have been similar. Had we closed on April 30, I think the folks would be in a very similar situation to what they are now looking at June 30. I think many of them are planning on staying outside because they either are not comfortable with emergency shelters...I think only four people said they would be somewhat willing to go to an emergency shelter and certainly all four of those folks or whoever is willing we are going to help them make that transition to any emergency shelter they agree to go to. I think a lot of folks expect to go outside. They have been outside even before they were at Beech Street and many of them have no idea what is going to happen. I think it is often a day-to-day existence for folks that are in trauma of homelessness and there is not a whole lot of pre-planning and looking ahead unfortunately.

Alderman Levasseur asked when you did the interviews with the people that you showed us, who did that interview.

Ms. Beloin responded it was Carole from Ink Link and she is putting out a story today – a two-part story on the success of Beech Street.

Alderman Levasseur stated I thought maybe it was our own department that may have done that but I would have liked to have an interview where we could see why they come to Manchester. Why and how did they find out about Manchester if they are not from here? Questions like that. Why are you here and how did you get here and what is your plan if we close in 30 days or 60 days? It would have been a nice to know.

Ms. Beloin stated most of our folks, the overwhelming majority, have been in Manchester longer than a year.

Alderman Levasseur stated I have been in there and I have never seen any of those people on the streets around the Elm Street area. Where were they staying and where are they going?

Ms. Beloin replied I have never seen any of those people either and I work in homeless services. It is not the kind of thing where you would recognize them.

Alderman Levasseur asked do you know how many camp sites we have currently in the city.

Ms. Beloin answered I do not have a number.

Alderman Levasseur stated there was a list being generated on an every two weeks or monthly basis and it was supposedly being updated whenever one was closed.

Ms. Beloin stated we have a weekly meeting where we monitor all of the live active encampments and something that came up this week was we talked about how we are in the process of cleaning the list up because some of them are duplicates. People call them different names for example and we are trying to get more sophisticated to kind of geo-locate the actual space because someone will mention a description and then a different description and it is actually the same. It is a little difficult to figure out but we could have maybe 12 or something.

Alderman Levasseur stated I just went away for five days and I heard of six new ones. I can't keep up. One other issue is in your professional opinion as somebody who has been doing this for a long time and I saw your article from Simmons that you gave where you graduated and they interviewed you, why do we have as many people as we do in the City of Manchester?

Ms. Beloin answered because there has been an increase of homelessness across the country. We had an epidemic of substance...

Alderman Levasseur interjected why are they attracted to Manchester. I just checked on Google and there are 234 cities and towns in NH. If every single city and town took two people, that would be 468 which would clear out Manchester. We could actually keep two. Why are they attracted to us?

Ms. Beloin stated I think since they are high in Manchester...

Mayor Craig interjected if I can remind you Alderman Levasseur, two to three years ago every mayor in the state wrote a letter to the Governor because their number one issue, not just in Manchester but in other places where there are mayors was homelessness and is homelessness. This isn't just a Manchester issue.

Alderman Levasseur stated I guess my question would be is it because we provide services.

Ms. Beloin responded I don't think so at all.

Alderman Levasseur stated that is what I am looking for.

Ms. Beloin stated in my professional opinion, and I have said this before, people come to urban centers because that is where their survival skills can actually be expressed. It is where they can panhandle and where they can share resources with other homeless individuals and it is where the transportation often is to get around. It is where there are

spaces often times, not in our city, but other cities have public restrooms. It is often an easier spot for someone to get the needs that they have met.

Alderman Levasseur replied I appreciate that answer but what we all believe or what many of us believe is it is because we provide a great deal more services than 230 other cities and towns in the state but you disagree with that.

Ms. Beloin responded I disagree that they come for the services. I think the services respond to who is here for other reasons. Would you agree with that Jake?

Jake King answered yes.

Alderman Levasseur stated I won't go into the engagement center but Mr. King you said you actually worked at the last engagement center we had. I heard horror stories that it got much bigger than expected and more people showed up than we expected and that it got destroyed. Is that an accurate statement or not an accurate statement?

Mr. King replied that is not accurate at all.

Alderman Levasseur asked what is the real story then.

Mr. King stated the real story is, just like the gentleman on the video from Manchester Mental Health said and there are several providers still in the area that used to go there, when I got there and I am a former law enforcement, former military, I was brought in to reign it back in but when I got there it was like romper room. We turned it around and we got more providers in there then you could imagine. We had people from the area, and I think you can find it because everything that goes on the internet stays on the internet, who were very vocal about disliking the engagement center towards the end saying it was a great place. It was the same people who didn't like it. The horror stories that people are hearing, that is all of the fear mongering when people start to see whatever it is they see and they say things that just are not accurate. We had more people engaging at that day center and the day center was not destroyed. Actually during my year and a half to two years of being there got improved upon and improved

upon and improved upon. One of the reasons I am here is just to be able to speak to it. I was there 40-60/week every single week. It was a wonderful community. We did have a lot more people than we expected. I don't remember the number exactly but 95% of them were Manchester residents for at least a year or two. They were not attracted to Manchester because of the services. The services, and I brought printouts of a couple of articles that were written about it, were responses to the needs of the homeless. The business community came here and said please get them out of our doorways and out of the parks and out of where we are trying to make our living so we did. We were a response to the need. We did not look around and say look at this beautiful, clean city with no homeless people let's start a homeless center because that makes sense. We were literally a response to the need and I think that people just need to understand that.

Alderman Levasseur stated I appreciate your comments. Thank you.

Alderman Burkush stated there is some misinformation that says if you make it comfortable for people they will continue to come and not be engaged and not care about bettering themselves. Could you speak to that?

Mr. King responded that is misinformation. Like I said, I am former military and former law enforcement and for the last 10+ years I have run leadership and team development through wilderness survival. My livelihood depends on understanding the human condition and the human psyche and how people respond to stress. I will tell you this is why I love working for her because she gets it. It was up on that presentation that if you make people comfortable, they no longer perform from survival mode and can actually start to understand what they need to do to better themselves. If you keep people in survival mode and you keep people day-to-day just trying to figure out how to be alive, they will always be in survival mode. You have to make them comfortable. It is not making it easier to be homeless. It is making homeless individuals or the unhoused comfortable enough to get out of survival mode, trust you and access services. This issue of homelessness has been since the dawn of modern man and yet so many people think we should have people housed in a month or two. It just doesn't work that way. There are so many barriers to get through and so many things that we have to

deal with. It takes time and it takes trust and making them comfortable. We don't make them comfortable so they can just sit around and do nothing.

Alderman Burkush stated I have been to the shelter twice and I have talked to the residents there and you are doing absolutely phenomenal work. I am one that has been on the trail around Nutt's Pond quite extensively and I have talked to some unhoused individuals and I try to spread the word about the work that you are doing. Thank you.

Alderman Barry stated thank you for your presentation. If you don't believe that the people that are homeless come here for services, then why are we offering services?

Ms. Beloin answered because the ones that are already here...I keep mentioning that we have 125 at least that are not even in our shelter with Jake right now. That is 125 people out in these different encampments in Manchester. Right now, they are here in Manchester and they need to have a service to draw them away from the doorways and away from the businesses and away from the downtown into a place where they can rehabilitate and I think that would be a benefit to our entire city.

Mayor Craig stated just to be clear too, when you say we are providing the services, non-profits are providing the services.

Alderman Barry replied well that was my next question. Do you think we should stop financing our non-profits that offer the same services since people aren't coming here for them?

Ms. Beloin asked are you asking if we should stop funding the non-profits.

Alderman Barry stated the city, state and federal governments give a lot of money to non-profits in the City of Manchester. I disagree with you. I think people do come here because of that. I think we are a magnet. We have a lot to offer here like treatment centers, Hope for NH Recovery, FIT, homeless shelters that we provide, as well as Suboxone clinics and Methadone clinics and Manchester Mental Health. We have a lot

that we offer and they do come here for that. There is no doubt in my mind that they are here for those services.

Mayor Craig stated I just want to clarify the record. Many of the entities that you just named the city does not fund. I think that is important. I also think it is important to differentiate whether people come here for the services or whether they need services. There is a big difference between that.

Alderman Barry stated maybe you didn't hear me earlier when I said city, state or federal funding. None of that happens here in the city?

Mayor Craig responded I can't control what the state funds. I wish I could.

Alderman Barry stated but I mentioned city, state and federal.

Mayor Craig replied yes and the CIP budget is coming before this Board so if anyone wants to make any changes, you can do that.

Mr. King stated I am going to break this down because that is my job; to break things down for people to fully understand. This is not me talking condescendingly to you. When I break things down, I break them down to the lowest common denominator which is typically me. I have to say it in a way that I would understand. Whether they are coming to the city for the services or they are already in the city, that is a chicken or the egg conversation that is going to go down in history with no answer because people are going to want it to be one way or the other for whatever purpose. I am just going to say this right now. There are a ton of encampments out there right. There are so many more people still out on the streets than in shelters even though we have a 40 bed shelter and a 100+ shelter. Would you rather those people were out on the streets – the criminals, the sex offenders, the drug addicts, the people with mental health issues, or in a facility with me and my staff. Forget about what we are offering them or what we are doing. Would you rather they were walking down Elm Street panhandling or they were in a building with me and my staff even if we were just giving them a backrub? If you say you would rather they were on the street, then there is something wrong

whether you like them or don't like them. At least with us, you know where they are and we will deal with the issues that arise.

Alderman Barry my next point is we are offering a day engagement center from 9-5. So you are not going to be with them for 24 hours. You are only with them, if this even comes to fruition, from 9-5. You don't have any control of them after 5 PM or before 9 AM right?

Mr. King answered correct.

Alderman Barry stated this is huge and one of the things you mentioned, which I have a very big concern with is sex offenders. You know as well as I do that there are quite a few people that are sex offenders that are in our homeless population. One of the things that is being proposed is that they use whatever facility we have for a day engagement center as an address to collect mail. I was in law enforcement for a long time also and that concerns me. One of the things I don't want is I don't want an engagement center or any facility that is in a residential area. I don't want any facility in an area that is next to schools. One of the addresses listed in the paper yesterday and I know we can't talk about but it was in the paper.

Mr. King replied I completely understand what you are saying and we probably don't think that differently on the subject. I am just going to say it point blank and it is not really my heart in this but would you prefer the enemy you don't know or the enemy that you know? They are in our community anyway. They are in encampments and behind buildings and in hallways. They are where we aren't keeping track of them. In an engagement center, whether I am running it or Bob is running it or Sally is running it, it doesn't matter. They are going to know where they are at least for that eight-hour period of time. I am sorry but my military background tells me that I would much rather know where the people I am uncomfortable with are.

Alderman Barry stated one last thing for now. There were quite a few organizations listed. Why aren't these people who are homeless taking advantage of those organizations now as we speak?

Mr. King answered they don't have the ability. I will tell you that the company that I run, I have a doctor and a psychologist and we study the human condition. I will send you a link to a great Tik Tok video that talks about it. All people are different. You wouldn't ask somebody with no legs to run up the stairs at the same speed as somebody with legs. People who have gone through trauma and people who have ADHD and people who have co-occurring conditions do not have the same processing ability as us. They look at a lot of these resources as the enemy because they have been hurt by the people they trusted and now these people are saying trust me I will help you. Those are the barriers that we will have to get through. You don't get through them in a tent. You don't get through them if you are staying in an alleyway. You get through them by building trust whichever way you can and you have to build trust differently with every single individual because they are all, like me, broken in a different way.

Alderman Barry stated to follow-up with that, if the homeless population right now are centrally located in the downtown area whether we like it or not, do you think that by putting an engagement center miles away that would benefit them.

Mr. King responded if we could get them there.

Alderman Barry asked how would you get them there.

Mr. King replied buses, vans...I don't know. I don't think the locations that are being talked about are far away from where they are. I will tell you one particular place that has been brought up a couple of times is a three-minute walk from my home where my children are raised and I am very comfortable having it there. I am only saying that because that is not as far away from where they all are as we would like to think. It is not that much further away than the Beech Street shelter is.

Alderman Barry asked so we will provide buses to and from.

Mr. King answered no. I am saying that would be a solution if it were that far away.

Ms. Beloin stated it needs to be accessible. I agree with everyone's concerns. It is very difficult to find an ideal location. If we could find one where we don't have to mitigate concerns for the community...I would have those same concerns as a community member. We have to go with where we have an option and if there was something that was farther away, we would have to come up with a way to make it accessible and that would be part of the planning.

Alderman Stewart stated thank you for the presentation and being here tonight. I agree Director Beloin that there are a lot of concerns out there. We have heard them tonight. I think there are a lot of assumptions and some misinformation. People just don't know what is what and I think they are understandably concerned. I appreciate the presentation and I appreciate seeing this data. I loved the slide that broke out the 1,000 feet from 39 Beech Street. I would love to see something like that with regard to an engagement center and other engagement centers across the region and across the country so we can see what those types of calls for service look like. I know Jake you said that you are comfortable with it being three minutes from your house but not everyone is at that point yet and I don't know if they ever will be. You are right that it is going to be very difficult to find a spot where people are all thumbs up. That said, one thing that I think would help to make the case is data. I heard people tonight saying they think this, they believe that and they feel this. Those are all valid things but at the end of the day I think we need data to show not just what the impacts are to neighborhoods, which is very real and of concern to residents but also what the outcomes are. I would like those numbers too. What are other engagement centers seeing and what kind of results are they delivering? I know you mentioned the one in Portland being the gold standard or at least the one that might be replicated if I heard it correctly.

Ms. Beloin stated that is just a new one that has popped up.

Alderman Stewart stated well if there are some that are more established in cities comparable to Manchester, I would love to see their data. I think as we go through this process to figure out what the best solution for Manchester is, being able to have those

numbers around to be able to make those comparisons and learn from others would certainly be very helpful to all of us coming to a good solution.

Alderman Fajardo stated thank you both for your work and the presentation and data that you have provided thus far. I wanted to build on the point that Alderman Stewart raised about the slide you showed of the 1,000-foot assessment. On that slide, everything was showing no increase. Were there any increases? I know you said you have a list.

Ms. Beloin replied there were a few. I picked ones that showed no increases. I will show you the whole list. It is very lengthy and some of it is a little hard for me to interpret myself. The Police Chief is here and we were chatting about it earlier and he is pretty impressed with the low level of calls and the general easiness around the area since we have been operating the emergency center.

Alderman Fajardo responded that was my sense. It is not a perfect situation but I would advocate similar to Alderman Stewart that when people are left to imagine things on their own I think they often will create a narrative that isn't helpful. I do think it would be helpful and in the name of transparency and everything else to see what some of those increases were in. Maybe not all of them, as you said, can be interpreted in a way that is fully applicable or logical or whatever but where they could be I think it would be helpful to see that so we can have a sense of the full picture. Again, just to mitigate the possibility that people will fill the blanks on their own.

Ms. Beloin stated it is a constant mitigation. So in our monthly planning team that is internal with the city, police and I were talking today about if that engagement center comes to fruition that we need to problem solve around police presence in a way that doesn't intimidate the folks so that they can't come to the center but really provides a lot of support for the surrounding community. We would come up with a creative solution for that particular program that would be different than another city street.

Alderman Fajardo stated in my own reading, and you are the expert and I am not, but I feel like I have seen what would just be considered best practice for that kind of

reassuring of the community and different measures that can be taken to kind of ease the sense of discomfort. Maybe it doesn't take it away all together but...

Ms. Beloin interjected I think at the very least I would hold forums with neighboring people and invite them into conversations to really involve them and when they have open places like this in other communities, that is one of the number one things that has helped to put people at ease.

Alderman George-Kelly stated I just want to make one last comment. I think one of the things that is important to note when we are talking about things like this is that there is a difference between just a day center where people can just go and use it as a warming center or cooling center and an engagement center that actually has services. Because when there are services and programming in groups and things like that happening that help people kind of get out of that survival mode and start to engage in other things, the likelihood of the engagement in this kind of activity decreases. When we have a lot of people who are in survival mode in one place with none of those things, that is when those things go up. So I think when we are talking about this I think it is really important to remember the intention and goal of having all of that programming and engagement happening in this space because that is what helps mitigate the risk of these kinds of things.

Ms. Beloin stated I agree. Emergency shelter is often rule based where you let people know where they can't go and let them know when it is lights out and those kinds of things. The engagement center is expectation based where you bring people in and set expectations around community expectations. It is a real learning zone and they appreciate and respect the staff because the staff appreciates and respects them. They don't want to cause any sort of negativity towards the staff and they don't want to make it look bad for the center. They want to create a community around them that reflects well on them.

Alderman Levasseur stated as far as the services, I do believe that is why they come but I also think it is because they have a lot more opportunity to get drugs and alcohol because we are an urban center. It is not Bedford where you can't drive around at all

hours of the day and night from campsite to campsite. I think that is one of the other reasons. The issue as far as wanting to know who the people are walking around and whether I want them inside or outside, you are talking about sex offenders and some of these criminals. You do know that our county jail is at 25% capacity because of our bail laws. If we went back to our original bail laws, I think a lot of these people would be incarcerated and getting help. That might not sound good but they would be getting a lot more help than what they are getting. That is just an opinion. One thing you brought up was your company. Do you have a company that does this?

Mr. King responded I have a company that does something else that is akin to this.

Alderman Levasseur asked do you have any other shelters that you are running that are like ours in Manchester.

Mr. King answered not currently. We ran the Concord Cold Weather Emergency Shelter for a few years.

Alderman Levasseur asked so when you are not doing this one you won't be doing one again.

Mr. King replied potentially that is correct.

Alderman Levasseur stated so you have a lot of experience with this type of business. Do you usually do a full 24 hours one or is it more like a day or night one?

Mr. King responded I have done a combination of both. I used to run the Concord Homeless Resource Center as well.

Alderman Levasseur asked are there any plans in place regarding closing the center on Beech Street.

Ms. Beloin asked what do you mean.

Alderman Levasseur answered well for the people there. Are there any thoughts to what is going to happen to them?

Ms. Beloin replied we are actively planning. The point of the survey was not just to get data for the Board but for us to really get a good assessment of what their needs are so that we can have them leave on June 30 with as much service connection or housing connection or anything like going to detox. Many people do make decisions in the final hours of when a resource is ending and sometimes that is a way to catch people when their motivation is a little higher. We will do everything we can to transition who we can.

Alderman Levasseur asked where are we at FIT. Do they have beds available?

Mayor Craig answered they had one bed available last night. They have been at capacity. Statewide I believe there were 19 shelter beds available this morning and the belief is that they will all be taken tonight.

Alderman Barry stated in reference to 39 Beech Street and what you are proposing for the engagement center and the programs you are offering at the engagement center, I assume you already implemented them at 39 Beech Street. How successful have they been?

Ms. Beloin responded at a lower level because we started the emergency winter shelter as an emergency winter shelter. Jake and his staff were hired to come and just do operations. We have only a couple of people on per shift. They are managing getting people food and making sure the beds happen and monitoring the bathrooms and those types of things. They are not case managers and they don't have the capacity to provide that role. We have asked providers to come in and we have had them coming in. Like I said, Manchester Mental Health has rapid response there every evening walking through and checking in on everyone, even if they are not responding to a call for an emergency situation. Matt of Manchester Mental Health comes every Monday and holds office hours to connect people to mental health and other benefits and other resources. GateHouse goes there to connect people to detox. We have The Doorways coming there. We are doing everything we can. Now after the survey we are going to

ramp up as much as we can. I mentioned resource fairs with people coming in with tables. We could have an i.d. clinic. We can try to check in with our church supporters in the community because maybe they want to help raise funds to pay for people's i.d.'s and birth certificates and we can set-up a program to do something like that. Those are the kinds of things we would do and all of that would be programmed in a much more professional and planned out and permanent way when the engagement center is open because we can co-locate these services and have a schedule and have a space set-up for them with a computer and printer and all that kind of stuff. I mentioned in my last talk that the Manchester Housing Authority is hiring a full-time person to be co-located at an engagement center with us so they can do full-time housing navigation. That is not something that is happening a lot in the city.

Alderman Barry stated I would suggest that you do start offering the same services that you plan on offering and I would start tomorrow. You can have almost two full months to do it and it is going to give us a good indication of what is working and what is not working.

Ms. Beloin responded we will certainly try. These things take effort to ramp up. Every step of the way, we will build it.

Alderman Long stated speaking of GateHouse. Is there going to be an update on the contract?

Ms. Beloin answered yes. I was focused on getting through tonight but I will put something together and send it out because we have had our first tracking.

Mayor Craig stated thank you very much for coming forward tonight and getting the information that the Board suggested. Jake, it is nice to have you here. I want to thank you for pulling together a great group of folks running the shelter. You have done wonderful work.

Mayor Craig stated I would like to go to Item 18 since the school district is here.

18. Discussion with Jenn Gillis, Superintendent, regarding special education students being sent home due to lack of service providers.

Jenn Gillis, Superintendent, stated the team and I have prepared...we worked to understand the request to bring us before you this evening to speak about nursing services in our schools and one-to-one assignments within special education. I want to first note that this evening we will be delicate in how we present information as we will protect student confidentiality in our responses. In regard to the concern that was brought forward about students being sent home, I need to say that that statement does not align with the service delivery model we deploy. We use a special education team to determine services, monitor progress and amend plans as students show growth. In the event a staff member, such as a nurse, is not available for a specific day or days, the team first works to identify a substitute. In the event a substitute is not available and/or an alternate plan is not available to maintain the safety and continuity of services for the student, the plan with the IEP team, individual education plan, is crafted to remedy the missed service. I want to remind you that the parent/guardian is a member of the IEP team. Given the importance of home to school communications in regard to service delivery, we have a series of people available for parent/guardians to speak to if they feel services have not been provided or they have concerns about their student's IEP, progress or plan. This list of available staff members includes the following starting at the building level and I do want to make one quick note. We do try to handle concerns or questions at the building level as they are closest to the student's service delivery. We have the case manager for the student, assistant principal as each school has an assistant principal assigned to oversee special ed within the school, the principal of the school, the district special education team...we have two assistant directors who would be directly related to the work going on in the school and/or any of the questions coming in. We have two network directors. They are assigned to two of the networks within our district. We have a chief of student services located at the district office. We have two assistant superintendents, one who oversees nursing services and one who oversees special education services. I sit at the bottom of that list. Given our current state of staffing, we have engaged in the following actions and activities given the local, state and national workforce shortages for nurses. We have recently, as of last Friday, entered into an MOU with the Manchester Fire Department to assist in providing detail

coverage for schools with a vacancy. I want to quickly qualify that is a remedy to fill any vacancies we have that pop up. For example, we had two nurses call out this morning. We were able to fill those two vacancies with details to make sure our schools were staffed. We have engaged in legislative actions to modify our hiring requirements which had originally looked to hold a Bachelor's Degree. We have been looking to move that down to an Associate's Degree. One of our nurses has been key in that work and has been very steadfast in her advocacy for that reduced degree level. We worked with our nursing supervisor to float nurses to provide building and individual student coverage. We have negotiated contracts with 11 service providers and exhausted their staffing pools to fill our needs. I do want to note that in our budget you saw reflected a large increase in our contracted service provider line. That is because we did use contract service providers to fill vacancies within our district. We have continued our investigation of staffing development pipelines with local colleges and universities and we maintain ongoing dialogue with the nurses' union. In review of the work to date, our large nursing pool which includes 22 school-based and 32 one-to-one assignments, I am pleased to note that we have seen positive gains with the addition of the MOU with the Fire Department. I want to, however, stress one important piece. Our nurses have been working very hard to meet the needs of our students and the addition of the MOU is designed to allow additional resources to complement their work, not take away from their roles in our schools. While we have used only six details in a short amount of time, since last Friday, initial feedback from both the schools who have had a detail to date and from the Fire Department members who have filled the details, has been very positive, collaborative and focused serving the needs of our district, and most importantly, our students. Before I close, I would like to extend my appreciation to Chief Cashin for his open mind and willingness to help us meet the needs of our district in the area of health care for our students. The partnerships that we have within city services are remarkable and for each partnership I am very thankful. I do want to remind us, as we move into any questions, that we will answer questions in a way that is reflective of protecting student confidentiality.

Alderman T. Sapienza stated thank you for coming tonight. I appreciate it. I know everybody is working hard and I know you have an incredibly tough job to service this city. We have gone through a number of superintendents because it is such a tough job.

You started your presentation...are you denying that children have been sent home because services are unavailable?

Superintendent Gillis responded I would hesitate to say anything about a specific child being sent home.

Alderman T. Sapienza replied I am not asking about a specific child. Has a child been sent home because services were not available?

Superintendent Gillis answered what I will say is if we are not able to safely provide for that student's care or the continuity of the services that we are providing to them, we do work with their families and if we miss a service, if we are missing a day of service, we look to figure out a way to recover that service that has been missed. So do we have times when a person is out sick and we have to make an adjustment in what that schedule looks like? Of course we do but then we flex back to that IEP team to look at how we can restore the service that was missed.

Alderman T. Sapienza asked is that a yes.

Superintendent Gillis replied sure. I will give you an example. If we have a nurse that is assigned to a case and that nurse is out sick and we can't find an available nurse to fill that space and it is not safe for that student to come in, yes, but we would then be looking to restore that service.

Alderman T. Sapienza responded right but it is not about a nurse who is out sick. How many openings do we have for paraprofessionals?

Superintendent Gillis responded we have filled a number of our para positions right now with contracted service providers. That is one of the biggest bumps in our budget for the current year. I believe we had 81 openings for paraprofessionals. Sixty-one have been filled with contract service providers leaving a small pocket of vacancies. Our schools do look then to double up services, cross-over services and make sure that we are finding efficiencies within the school day.

Alderman T. Sapienza stated again I am not trying to criticize. I am trying to shine a light on a problem because I know kids have been sent home because the services aren't there. I know it is not because a teacher called in sick. It was a planned vacancy for months that wasn't filled and the child was sent home due to an issue we saw coming for months. I don't blame you. I know it is a structural problem but we have to admit it so that we can solve it. We don't have enough language therapists or occupational therapists or physical therapists. They are doubling up like crazy. We have to admit it.

Mayor Craig stated from a workforce perspective, we talk about this at almost every meeting of the Board of School Committee. It is the same thing we talk about here where we have so many positions available in DPW and the Police Department; almost every department here in the City of Manchester. There is a workforce shortage throughout this country and it is not unique to Manchester.

Alderman T. Sapienza stated we can't keep denying it. I asked a simple question about are we sending kids home or not and I got a whole long song and dance and I had to ask repeatedly to get the answer out there that yes we have. We have a problem. I have done my best on this Board to get as much money as I can to the schools. I can think of one time I didn't support the schools in the six years I have been here. We have to admit that special education is falling part. The director of student services that left even said it.

Mayor Craig stated I disagree with that statement.

Alderman T. Sapienza responded well you can but we have to admit we have a problem so we can solve it.

Mayor Craig stated we have a workforce shortage.

Alderman T. Sapienza stated when I see kids getting sent home because we don't have the services...

Mayor Craig interjected Alderman T. Sapienza you are using one example and we are not going to talk about that one example.

Alderman T. Sapienza asked how many times has that happened in this school year or in the previous school year. Do we even have a record of that?

Superintendent Gillis replied I am not sure if you are asking me for a general number or you are asking me for a specific case.

Alderman T. Sapienza responded I am asking you for a specific number. How many times have we sent students home because we were unable to provide the services in their plan?

Superintendent Gillis answered to my knowledge, in this school year, we have a very small number of students who have been impacted to the nature you are describing. In those cases, I have had contact with those families or a member of my team has had contact with those families in addition to the school-based teams. I don't have a lengthy list of students who were sent home as you may be wondering about. I have a very small number of students that have been impacted at that level.

Alderman T. Sapienza asked so how many students is it and how many incidents is it.

Superintendent Gillis replied I am going to be very careful to say that number because I need to protect some of our student confidentiality. I cannot go into...I just can't go into student cases. It is a very small number which would essentially give me some connection to who that student or that family is.

Alderman T. Sapienza responded I don't buy the student confidentiality thing. I am asking for a number like 20, 30, 10 or 4?

Superintendent Gillis stated I said less than a handful.

Mayor Craig stated she said less than a handful.

Alderman George-Kelly stated Dr. Gillis thank you for coming. I appreciate you being willing to have this conversation with us. You mentioned that when this kind of thing happens that the IEP team would work to recover that service for the student. Can you give us an example of what that means? What does it actually mean to recover a service?

Superintendent Gillis stated we had a recent nurse that was going to be vacant from a position. We worked within that school team to identify other resources and supports within the school so that team was able to identify using a paraprofessional to help support and then link to the school nurse so that the service is provided. The team has to go back in and look at how can we flex with the services that we do have available and how do we meet the schedules that we have. We have our contracted service providers in...we are looking to make sure we are finding every efficiency we can so if a provider is absent we are looking for a pocket in the day for another provider to try to help fill that service.

Alderman George-Kelly asked can you tell me a little bit about how you would make a decision that the Manchester School District doesn't have the ability to provide for a student's needs and we would have to look for out-of-district schooling for a student.

Superintendent Gillis answered the IEP team would actually be the one to deliberate that and they would go through the full student file to determine what is in the best interest of the student and what placement would be least restrictive for them. We are always looking to make decisions that keep them in the least restrictive setting first and then they go through that step process to increase those levels of support as deemed necessary by that team.

Alderman George-Kelly asked when you say least restrictive setting, what we are really trying to do is keep our young people in school where they can be with their same aged peers learning and growing rather than in environments that might be more like

therapeutic schools or residential programs so we are going to do everything we can to kind of piece together services to make that happen.

Superintendent Gillis replied correct. We are trying to keep them in their home community and we are trying to keep them connected to their peers within their social group and connected as they are moving through their schooling to known providers and known services within the district.

Alderman Fajardo stated I don't think anyone is trying to deny it is a concern but I also think that it is just the reality of the situation that we are in, not just within the school district. I am repeating back what I heard because I feel like I don't hear you trying to deny a problem. I also don't feel like I necessarily know what a handful is. That is somewhat subjective but maybe percentage wise...I am gathering that it is very limited relative to the larger student population. I think if there is an opportunity for us to hear maybe in a non-public setting what the percentage is just so that we can get a sense of what the...

Mayor Craig interjected that is not the purview of this Board. The BOSC doesn't even get it.

Alderman Fajardo stated okay fair enough. I will retract that then. My point being that I feel like you are being forthcoming with the information you can share and it is reality of the situation we are in in the school district and in the city and it feels like you have a plan in place to try to address it where you can.

Superintendent Gillis stated I will offer this. It is not just Manchester. This is statewide. I meet with other superintendents who are experiencing the same shortages in their districts. They, too, are looking for creative ways to solve those workforce shortages. We have contracted with 11 different providers to try to pull in more and more service providers so it is covering those OT, PT, and speech paraprofessionals, those RBT positions that we have pulled into the district. We are not not looking for humans. The reality is that there are not humans hiding out there that we are just not bringing into the district. We are exploring all of those workforce pipelines. We are looking at local

colleges and universities. Let's talk about how do we bring people in and grow them into these positions and safeguard them so they are also able to provide service for our students. We have really gone way out of every box that is available. I know that I cause Ms. DeFrancis a lot of stress when we have that service provider contract budget line increasing but that is the position we are in right now. We are lucky at this moment in time to be able to use ESSER funds to cover those costs but we have had to stretch deep and we have exhausted many, many of those pools. If there were extra staff out there, we would certainly be trying to find them. We are exhausting every avenue we can right now to get them.

Alderman Barry stated thank you for coming and assisting us with what our concerns are. I did read in the paper about the contract with the firefighters to help out. What I am hoping and I am sure you guys have already addressed it, is the fact that some of these students need specialty supervision like with a registered nurse. With the added resources of the firefighters, obviously I wouldn't want a firefighter to be with a young female student so I am hoping that with that in mind that would free up some of the RN's to focus on some of the students that they need to focus on.

Superintendent Gillis replied you are correct. We have an amazing nursing supervisor. This morning when the two call-outs came in, she and I were on the phone early. I ended up reaching out to the Chief to say we have two call-outs. Then what we do is she essentially triages what schools need what level of care and where do we need to move our resources to make sure we are covering those levels of care. It is important to note that our nurses have done tremendous work on behalf of our students. This is to help take off that stress on them. A number of them have been floating through the school year trying to make sure we are covering and that we have the right service delivery for the students who are in our different buildings. This is really meant to pull that pressure off and let them catch a little bit of a rhythm back in their school and let us redeploy. If we need a different level of nursing support for a particular student, we can get that deployed. This is just giving us a little bit of breathing space right now.

Alderman Barry stated I certainly understand the frustration and concern, especially as a parent for their child. Nothing means more to them than their child. I know that

Assistant Superintendent Amy Allen is here with us tonight. She assisted me a couple of years ago with one of my constituents who called for help and it was in reference to a registered nurse that had to be with a certain child. I certainly appreciated that. Thank you.

Superintendent Gillis stated I said earlier the chain of contacts that families and guardians can explore. That team is also talking behind-the-scenes. So once we know there is a case that is presenting with a staffing concern, the team goes to work to try to figure out what other options we have. We are always trying to work back at that school level to keep the connection at the school. However, we have a deep team at the district office looking to help and troubleshoot options.

Alderman Levasseur asked Ms. DeFrancis what are you expecting for a surplus this year for the school district.

Karen DeFrancis, Finance Officer, replied we are not looking at a surplus at this point. We do have a surplus on our revenue side of about \$1.8 million but on the expenditure side we are showing some over expenditures in mostly the line items that Dr. Gillis is talking about, professional and technical services. As of this point, we do expect to put the \$1.9 million revenue surplus into a trust.

Alderman Levasseur stated the reason for my question is I was hoping it wasn't a monetary issue for why we aren't able to get occupational therapists.

Superintendent Gillis stated no. We have been contracting with a number of contract service providers and we are exhausting the pools that they also have. We started with a smaller pool of about four and we kept expanding that pool to different service contract providers that we could bring in to service the needs of our students. We are using ESSER funds to help with that.

Alderman Levasseur asked so if someone was available, you would have the money for them.

Superintendent Gillis answered correct.

Alderman Levasseur stated on the issue of hiring firefighters to fill part-time nursing positions, they aren't qualified to be an occupational therapist correct.

Superintendent Gillis replied no.

Alderman Levasseur asked so if you are down an occupational therapist, you are still going to have this unfortunate issue of having to keep someone home.

Superintendent Gillis responded not necessarily home. We might be in the position where we have to double up a service on a different day. So if a student misses a service we might have to double a service. A nursing vacancy is really the most acute, which would impact our ability to safely have a student in a building if their level of medical care or service was at that point. That would be the trigger that would say we need to talk about a different plan for that day.

Alderman Levasseur stated when I read the letter, I was impressed that at least you guys were thinking outside the box. My only concern at the time I read it is as far as liability. Are you covered for a child coming into an office with a part-time firefighter who is not...I don't know what the qualification levels are for a nurse versus a part-time fireman? I know they are EMT's generally and paramedics general but whether or not that is enough to be able to make a recommendation to get someone to a hospital or give an aspirin or whatever.

Superintendent Gillis replied we had two teams look at it. We had the city side look at the MOU and we had the district legal team take a look at the MOU to make sure we had all of those boxes checked. I will say that our nurse supervisor does a really nice job of articulating schools that have a higher level of need.

Alderman Levasseur asked so you are moving people around and then filling in where you are not too concerned.

Superintendent Gillis answered correct. Also, we have two schools where we have two nurses on staff. What we have done and what we did this morning was make sure we had a typical nurse on board and then we used one of the details to backfill. So we were able to move to make sure we had the students covered.

Alderman Levasseur stated I feel your pain. It is really hard out there, especially nurses. They are finding jobs in the private sector that weren't readily available five years ago. Good luck.

Alderman Long asked on another note, I just wanted to take this opportunity on behalf of the Board to thank Ms. Allen for her dedication to the City of Manchester and wish her the best of luck in her new position.

Jim O'Connell asked can I say something Your Honor.

Mayor Craig answered no. We are all done. If this causes more questions...

Mr. O'Connell interjected it might but that is not the intent. We are sitting here in a minefield of potential liabilities and exposures, etc. In terms of individual students, as an example, we can't talk about that. In terms of things that would affect staff, sometimes if we talk about changes in staffing and staffing in different departments it becomes user identifiable. You can't go there. We have obligations, legal obligations, that are a significant exposure for the city that we need to have services in place in order that students...while I interjected at this point is because I want you to know that the system is under stress. We know that the nursing issue for instance is a national issue and a regional issue. I commend the administration for doing the work they are doing and the imagination of having the agreement with Chief Cashin with the MOU is great but that actually is a symptom of the problem. The system is under stress. We have staff at home tonight who may not be watching us but they certainly will hear about it and they know in their buildings they are under stress. We know our nurses have been stretched in all kinds of ways and when it gets to the point of not actually having somebody, a lot of other stuff is being done before you get to that point. So when you ask a question, Alderman T. Sapienza, about how many kids were sent home, that

might have a finite answer and I think we heard it. It is a handful and that may be four or five. I don't know. I can't tell you.

Mayor Craig stated it is less than a handful.

Mr. O'Connell stated I do know that the system can be under great stress...let me put it this way. A district struggling to put the services in place before you ever get to send a kid home right. I just want to be clear Your Honor.

Mayor Craig replied I don't know that you are being clear. I heard something different from Dr. Gillis. I think this is something that many districts are struggling with in this state and throughout this country. What the district is doing right now is everything they possibly can, given the workforce shortage, to meet the needs of our students. If we are not in a given day, we are doubling up but by the time they leave during a school year, they are receiving the services as per the contract that we have with them.

Mr. O'Connell stated for the Board's information, and I know you know Your Honor, as an example we have line items blowing up in our budget. Anybody who watches our meetings knows this. We can tell you about our special services line. Ms. DeFrancis can tell us it is \$7 million over this year. The reason for that is we are bringing in people from agencies to perform services because we don't have the capacity normally. Just in this year, we are \$7 million over in special services. That is how much we have spent to bring people in. Our special ed transportation line is at \$13 million.

Mayor Craig asked why are you doing this.

Mr. O'Connell answered so the Board understands. We can't talk about individual stuff. There are 29 public representatives who represent this city. Fourteen on the BMA and fourteen on the BOSC and you as the Mayor. I worry about this Your Honor and this is my only point. If you come before the Board and I agree with everything that Dr. Gillis has said and I know that she and her staff have gone over and above, I get that and there are staffing shortages and there is a national issue...it is an Atticus of the conversation you spent two hours having earlier tonight on the homeless situation. You

can say two things. You can say the homelessness situation is a state and national problem and you can say we are doing lots of things in Manchester as best we can and at the same time you can say and we are leaving people without services and we have a lot more to do. Both of those things can live. I haven't said tonight...I haven't going to say that people are not receiving services but I am saying that the system is under stress. For the people involved in that stress situation who are struggling to meet the task we are giving them, it needs to be said publically that there are real stressors in our public education system. I have been saying as you know for years, and you will love this as an end line Your Honor, if we were to get funded at the average per student funding that students in this state get, the Manchester school district would have \$57 million more a year in its budget. You can't take \$57 million out of a budget and not expect there to be problems as a result.

Mayor Craig stated I just think you need to know your audience.

Alderman Long stated while I have Dr. Gillis and Karen here, if you were going to get more adequacy grant money could you spend that on IT and the diversity initiatives you are looking for.

Ms. DeFrancis asked in other words if the adequacy came in higher than in the budget that we presented; yes, we would be able to use that money for other line items within the budget.

Alderman Long asked so for those two items specifically you would be able to do that – IT and the diversity initiatives.

Ms. DeFrancis answered yes. We could utilize that adequacy money for any of our line items.

CONSENT AGENDA

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

4. 50/50 Sidewalk Petitions

Residential:

- 221 Ray Street
- 601 Hall Street
- 685 Hanover Street
- 708 Belmont Street
- 783 Belmont Street

Information to be Received and Filed

6. Communication from Comcast regarding changes in the Xfinity channel line-up.

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 nine months of FY23 has been accepted.
(Unanimous vote)
10. Recommending that the following ordinance amendment:
- “Amending Section 36.40, Chapter 79-E Community Revitalization Tax Relief Incentive, by providing for additional years of potential tax relief and limiting the time upon which substantial rehabilitation or replacement must begin.”
- ought to pass and be enrolled.
(Unanimous vote)

COMMITTEE ON LANDS AND BUILDINGS

11. Recommending that the proposal from Jyl Dittbenner and David Hady for murals on the bridge pillars in Arms park be approved.
(Aldermen Long, Fajardo, T. Sapienza and Trisciani voted yea; Alderman Levasseur voted nay.)

*HAVING READ THE CONSENT AGENDA, ON MOTION OF **ALDERMAN CAVANAUGH**, DULY SECONDED BY **ALDERMAN LONG**, THE CONSENT AGENDA BE APPROVED.*

Information to be Received and Filed

5. Communication from the Trustees of the Trust Fund regarding the city's old system retirement plan.

Alderman Long asked was there any communication with respect to how the unfunded liability...I heard that they had 17 years in which they were going to decrease it. They asked me at the last term to put a couple of bills in and I did and while those bills were in motion they asked me to pull them. It was like a \$12 million savings. I don't know if they have other initiatives to decrease the unfunded liability.

Ms. Wickens stated what you are talking about now is the city's retirement plan. This is that very small old pension fund that really doesn't have anything to do with that. However, to your point on the city's retirement plan, yes like the state they also have a plan in place to get it down to zero. I am not sure if it is 18 or 19 years. That is their plan. What you are looking at in Item 5 is the old pension fund which has 59 participants in it and two active employees that aren't on this yet.

Alderman Long stated I am thinking that maybe GASB will change the criteria for unfunded liability where it will be higher. Maybe they will change what you are required to have an it would show an unfunded liability being higher. Is that possible? It sounded to me like there are some changes coming and I think it might put our feet more to the fire on these guesstimates on unfunded liabilities. Is that a concern?

Mayor Craig stated we are just talking about the old system here.

Ms. Wickens stated Item 5 is strictly the old system and that is running out.

*On motion of **Alderman Long**, duly seconded by **Alderman Cavanaugh**, it was voted to approve the report and adopt its recommendation.*

REGULAR BUSINESS

12. Nominations:

Zoning Board of Adjustment

Guy Guerra to succeed himself, term to expire March 1, 2026

Office of Youth Services Advisory Board

Marcus Ponce de Leon as a regular member to succeed Manny Content, term to expire January 1, 2026

Heritage Commission

Steve Hebsch as an alternate member, term to expire July 1, 2026

Stanley Garrity as a regular member to succeed himself, term to expire July 1, 2026

Parks & Rec Commission

David Flurey to succeed himself, term to expire July 1, 2026

(Note: Pursuant to Rule 20 of the Board of Mayor and Aldermen, these nominations will layover to the next meeting of the Board.)

13. Report(s) of the Committee on Lands & Buildings, if available.

The Committee on Lands & Buildings respectfully recommends, after due and careful consideration, that the Solicitor be authorized to execute the purchase and sale agreements for 1080 Montgomery and 416 Central Streets for the amounts offered at the public auction.

*On motion of **Alderman Long**, duly seconded by **Alderman Cavanaugh**, it was voted to receive and file.*

14. Report(s) of the Committee on Bills on Second Reading, if available.

There were none.

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

The Committee on Community Improvement respectfully recommends, after due and careful consideration, that a NH DHHS grant in the amount of \$160,000 be accepted and that the Amending Resolution and Budget Authorization be referred to the May 16 Committee on Finance meeting.

*On motion of **Alderman Heath**, duly seconded by **Alderman George-Kelly**, it was voted to accept the report and adopt its recommendation.*

The Committee on Community Improvement respectfully recommends, after due and careful consideration, that a NH Department of Safety grant in the amount of \$32,092.53 be accepted and that the Amending Resolution and Budget Authorization be referred to the May 16 Committee on Finance meeting.

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

The Committee on Community Improvement respectfully recommends, after due and careful consideration, that a NH Department of Safety grant in the amount of \$34,183.72 be accepted and that the Amending Resolution and Budget Authorization be referred to the May 16 Committee on Finance meeting.

*On motion of **Alderman Heath**, duly seconded by **Alderman George-Kelly**, it was voted to accept the report and adopt its recommendation.*

The Committee on Community Improvement respectfully recommends, after due and careful consideration, that the \$1,000,000 FY24 School Paving project, which is part of the Mayor's FY24 budget, be approved.

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

Alderman Levasseur asked who is responsible for the bond payments. Is it the school district?

Mayor Craig answered yes.

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

The Committee on Public Safety, Health & Traffic respectfully recommends, after due and careful consideration, that Chief Cashin be authorized to enter into a Hazardous Incident Response Agreement with the NH Department of Safety's Fire Marshal's Office.

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

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

There were none.

- 19.** Communication from Sharon Wickens, Finance Officer, advising the Board that the city's general fund has an excess of \$3,100,000 in revenues available for appropriation in FY23.

*On motion of **Alderman E. Sapienza**, duly seconded by **Alderman Heath**, it was voted to refer the supplemental appropriation resolution to a public hearing and the Committee on Finance.*

- 20.** Application for Community Revitalization Tax Relief Incentive, RSA 79- E, for property located at 150 Dow Street.

*On motion of **Alderman Trisciani**, duly seconded by **Alderman T. Sapienza**, it was voted to refer the 79-E application to a public hearing to be scheduled by the City Clerk's Office.*

- 21.** Ordinance:

“Amending Section 36.40, Chapter 79-E Community Revitalization Tax Relief Incentive, by providing for additional years of potential tax relief and limiting the time upon which substantial rehabilitation or replacement must begin.”

*On motion of **Alderman Fajardo**, duly seconded by **Alderman Cavanaugh**, it was voted to waive the reading by title only.*

*This Ordinance, having had its final reading by title only, on motion of **Alderman Burkush**, duly seconded by **Alderman Fajardo**, it was Ordained.*

NEW BUSINESS

Mayor Craig stated I want to mention that the Taco Tour is this Thursday, May 4 from 4-8 PM downtown. There are over 90 participating businesses and there will be two stages with music this year. The Ward 6 Special Election is Tuesday, May 9 from 6 AM-7 PM at McLaughlin Middle School. Also, the Hillsborough County budget hearing is Thursday, May 4 at 10 AM at the Hillsborough County Complex, 239 Mast Road in Goffstown.

TABLED ITEMS

*On motion of **Alderman Long**, duly seconded by **Alderman Cavanaugh**, it was voted to remove the resolutions from the table.*

22. Budget Resolutions:

“Appropriating to the Parking Fund the sum of \$5,259,137 from parking revenues for the Fiscal Year 2024.”

"Appropriating the sum of \$20,681,387 from Sewer User Rental Charges to the Environmental Protection Division for the Fiscal Year 2024.”

“Appropriating to the Manchester Airport Authority the sum of \$41,664,536 from Special Airport Revenue Funds for the Fiscal Year 2024.”

“Appropriating to the Manchester Transit Authority the sum of \$1,594,761 for the Fiscal Year 2024.”

“Appropriating to the Manchester School District the sum of \$191,759,220 for the Fiscal Year 2024.”

“Appropriating all Incremental Meals and Rooms Tax Revenue Received by the City in the Fiscal Year 2024 and held in the Civic Center Fund, for the payment of the City’s Obligations in Said Fiscal Year under the Financing Agreement.”

“Appropriating to the Manchester School Food and Nutrition Services Program the sum of \$5,819,971 from School Food and Nutrition Services Revenues for the Fiscal Year 2024.”

“Raising Monies and Making Appropriations of \$177,283,166 for the Fiscal Year 2024.”

“Appropriating to the Central Business Service District the sum of \$258,000 from Central Business Service District Funds for the Fiscal Year 2024.”

“Resolution ‘Approving the Community Improvement Program for Fiscal Year 2024, Raising and Appropriating Monies Therefore, and Authorizing Implementation of Said Program.’”

*On motion of **Alderman Long**, duly seconded by **Alderman Levasseur**, it was voted that the Budget Resolution “Appropriating to the Parking Fund the sum of \$5,259,137 from parking revenues for the Fiscal Year 2024” ought to pass and be Enrolled.*

*On motion of **Alderman Long**, duly seconded by **Alderman Cavanaugh**, it was voted that the Budget Resolution “Appropriating the sum of \$20,681,387 from Sewer User Rental Charges to the Environmental Protection Division for the Fiscal Year 2024” ought to pass and be Enrolled.*

*On motion of **Alderman Long**, duly seconded by **Alderman Levasseur**, it was voted that the Budget Resolution “Appropriating to the Manchester Airport Authority the sum of \$41,664,536 from Special Airport Revenue Funds for the Fiscal Year 2024” ought to pass and be Enrolled*

***Alderman Long** moved that the Budget Resolution “Appropriating to the Manchester School District the sum of \$191,759,220 for the Fiscal Year 2024” ought to pass and be Enrolled. **Alderman Fajardo** duly seconded the motion.*

Alderman T. Sapienza asked don't we typically wait for the budget process for that. We can possibly give them more right?

Alderman Long answered I know that the House passed a bill where in 2024 they are getting \$13 million. That is at the Senate now. They can reduce it but they are not going to reduce it. That is why I asked the question on the adequacy grant and if they could use that for the IT item and the diversity item. That was a total of \$1.7 million. They wanted \$500,000 for IT for those tv's they write on.

Mayor Craig stated the school district and the school board have to determine how to utilize the money and allocate the funds. This Board can only provide the funding. It is up to them to say how the money is going to be used.

Alderman T. Sapienza stated those other budget resolutions are enterprise funds and the money is going there regardless but this one to me is still a fluid number.

Alderman Long stated in the past they have asked us to give them their budget as early as we can so they can start the hiring process. They get a better pool of applications early. If we wait until June, those applicants are diminished.

Alderman T. Sapienza responded I understand that.

Alderman Long stated that is why I told them that we would be looking to approve their budget at this meeting.

Mayor Craig stated in my proposed budget, I did allocate to the schools the most that I could under the tax cap as well.

Alderman Levasseur stated I caution this Board that the first three that we voted on have no effect on the tax cap but the one that we are going to be voting on here will affect the tax cap because you are basically...I am more than happy at this point because the Mayor gave them the tax cap...let me ask you Mayor, was this the tax cap number you gave them. When you came in with your budget I think it came in at 3.7%. Was that tax cap number 4.9% that you gave the school district or the same as on the city side for the percentage?

Ms. Wickens stated it was the full 4.96%.

Alderman Levasseur asked so you are at the tax cap number of 4.96% on the school district side but the total budget you came in with was lower than the tax cap number by a percentage and a half. We learned two weeks ago that we are \$1.4 million short on health care or we have to contribute \$1.4 million...

Ms. Wickens interjected \$2 million.

Alderman Long stated plus the 3% that we gave back so it is going to be \$2 million right.

Ms. Wickens replied correct.

Alderman Levasseur stated so we are short the \$2 million. The Mayor did not have that number and did not put that into her numbers when she presented her budget. You are looking now at adding that \$2 million onto the city side without making any reductions anywhere else so you are now over the tax cap by 2%. It is one percent per million so that 3.7% becomes 4.7% plus another million is 5.7%. I don't know if the revenues we are going to get are going to bring that number back down but we are going to need to make sure we put money into the other reserve accounts. We really want to be careful until we get to know the final revenue numbers and we are just beginning May so I caution this Board not to vote for that number yet to see what Alderman Long comes in with for a budget. I could ask you all that stuff now and I don't know if you want to go over it Alderman Long but I think we should be cautious on this one now to see what our end number is going to look like. I don't know if there is going to be a vote to override the tax cap or the revenue issues on our side that we are now in the hole on for the health insurance. Plus, health insurance numbers from April have obviously not come in.

Ms. Wickens replied I do next to get them soon.

Alderman Levasseur stated I think we should just be careful. I would like to give it to them but I don't want to put us in a box this early. I caution the Board to wait on that.

Mayor Craig stated I just want to clarify something Alderman Levasseur. The budget I presented was at 3.37% not 3.7%.

Alderman Levasseur replied so you came in at 3.37% but you gave the school district the 4.96%. So on the city side you had more opportunity with revenue to bring that number a little bit lower. So that is the total for the city including the school district?

Mayor Craig answered correct.

Mayor Craig called for a vote on the motion. The motion carried with Aldermen E. Sapienza and Levasseur duly recorded in opposition.

*On motion of **Alderman Long**, duly seconded by **Alderman George-Kelly**, it was voted that the Budget Resolution “Appropriating to the Manchester Transit Authority the sum of \$1,594,761 for the Fiscal Year 2024” ought to pass and be Enrolled.*

***Alderman Long** moved that the Budget Resolution “Appropriating all Incremental Meals and Rooms Tax Revenue Received by the City in the Fiscal Year 2024 and held in the Civic Center Fund, for the payment of the City’s Obligations in Said Fiscal Year under the Financing Agreement” ought to pass and be Enrolled. Alderman Cavanaugh duly seconded the motion.*

Alderman T. Sapienza stated didn’t I see a letter saying we had extra money in the rooms and meals tax and it didn’t have to go to the civic center.

Ms. Wickens replied well it does to pay the debt service. Not the entire amount will go over to the Trustee. We have to pay the city’s obligation under the financing agreement which is the debt service payment of \$5,140,000 every year in January. That piece has to go over and once we have satisfied that, we can keep the residual as long as the debt service reserve fund is full and it is.

Alderman T. Sapienza stated the resolution says all the money.

Ms. Wickens responded it says all incremental meals and rooms tax for the payment of the city’s obligation under the financing agreement.

Alderman T. Sapienza asked so if there is extra money we don’t have to send it over because of this even though it says all on it.

Ms. Wickens answered I read it to mean we have to hold it and make sure we paid our obligations and once that is done we can keep the rest.

Alderman T. Sapienza stated okay I just want to make sure we can keep the rest.

Ms. Wickens replied yes that is what we are doing.

Alderman Levasseur asked is that \$3.1 million over.

Ms. Wickens answered yes it was \$3.1 million over this year and next year it should be \$4+ million.

Alderman Levasseur asked so we have \$3.1 million that the mayor used in her budget the way she wanted to use it.

Ms. Wickens responded the \$3.1 million is to be used in this fiscal year, FY23. It has nothing to do with the FY24 budget. In the FY24 budget, if you look at the finance line...

Alderman Levasseur interjected what is the projected number for the FY24 budget.

Ms. Wickens stated I am thinking we are going to get about \$10.1 million and we owe \$5,140,000. Those revenues are in the budget on the finance line.

Alderman Levasseur stated so that leaves an extra \$4 million in our FY24 budget.

Ms. Wickens replied right and there you go. When you said that after she funded the city and the school district at 4.96% we came to 3.37% because we have all of that money in revenue that we never had before.

Alderman Levasseur stated just hear me out. We just voted for the school district budget and that is set in stone. In order to actually give them any more money if the Board wanted to give them any more money, we would have to do a supplemental appropriation. You can't now change that number. Hear me out. Did the mayor have any advantage of that money in her...you did a FY24 budget?

Mayor Craig answered yes.

Alderman Levasseur asked so what did you use for a number. \$3.1 million for the extra revenue? You gave some of that meals and rooms money to other things. I don't have the budget book in front of me.

Mayor Craig stated if you look on page 73...

Alderman Levasseur interjected what number did she use.

Ms. Wickens replied Finance's revenues went up about \$4 million for the meals and rooms. We aren't sure what the actual amount is going to be.

Alderman Levasseur asked so what did the mayor use.

Ms. Wickens answered she used \$4 million.

Alderman Levasseur stated now she is saying it is close to \$4 million so there is an extra \$900,000.

Mayor Craig stated if you look at pages 72-74 it goes through the cash projects that I suggested.

Alderman Levasseur stated but again you used \$3.1 million above and beyond paying our obligation to the civic center.

Mayor Craig answered yes and then \$4 million for next year, FY24.

Alderman Levasseur stated okay but just to let everybody know, just because she put that \$4 million into wherever she did, we as aldermen can change that around and put the money into other things. We boxed ourselves in again with the school district number.

Mayor Craig stated no. It wasn't in the school district. This is on the city side.

Alderman Levasseur stated you wait until you see what happens in June when we put the budget together and you start playing with all of these numbers. You don't have a map in front of you. You don't know what the revenues are. You haven't seen a sheet. You don't know what is going to be going where and where you could have made some adjustments. Maybe you guys have already done it all and we are just in the dark over here on the rest of the Board or maybe none of you give a damn. That is what I think.

Alderman Long stated that is not the case at all. If we were to give anything more to the school district, we would need a vote to override the tax cap.

Mayor Craig stated right.

Alderman Levasseur replied that is not true.

Alderman Long responded yes it is. They got the 4.96% increase.

Mayor Craig stated I gave them the full tax cap budget.

Alderman Levasseur stated the whole tax cap number is what we vote on, not a certain tax cap from one spot or another. Those revenues could bring those numbers down.

Mayor Craig stated no Alderman Levasseur you are incorrect.

Alderman Levasseur replied no. We don't have two separate tax cap numbers we vote on every year. We vote on one tax cap number.

Mayor Craig responded correct combined. You can only go to a certain point with one or the other.

Alderman Levasseur stated that is not true.

Mayor Craig replied it is completely true. Ms. Wickens can you please weight in on this.

Ms. Wickens stated it is the way we have been calculating it and actually the school board makes that calculation in their budget presentation.

Alderman E. Sapienza stated maybe Sharon can answer this. Exactly how viable is the mayor's proposed budget at this point? In other words, if we don't come up with another budget, let's say nobody presents one, can we still use the mayor's budget?

Alderman Levasseur stated that is the default budget.

Ms. Wickens stated by default the mayor's budget would become the budget.

Alderman E. Sapienza asked even with what has already been voted in in the last couple of meetings. We can still use the mayor's tax cap budget as the default budget?

Ms. Wickens stated everything that has been voted in is what the mayor presented.

Alderman E. Sapienza asked our last meeting on health care and this meeting on...

Ms. Wickens interjected you are right. The mayor did not address health care so if the mayor's budget becomes the budget, you have a huge health care hole of about \$2 million or maybe more.

Alderman E. Sapienza asked so we could still use the mayor's budget but we would have deficits we would need to deal with.

Ms. Wickens answered you would absolutely have to deal with that and you don't have a reserve to cover it. The reserve is \$1.8 million.

Alderman E. Sapienza asked then how would we deal with it exactly.

Ms. Wickens replied you would have to make it up elsewhere like with layoffs and things like that. You would have to make up money.

Mayor Craig stated as aldermen, you have the opportunity to modify my budget. While I appreciate the road you are going down it would be irresponsible. That is why you have this opportunity.

Alderman Levasseur stated that is what I just said.

Mayor Craig stated the school district budget is at the tax cap. If you are going to override the tax cap, Alderman Levasseur, you should have let someone know.

Alderman Levasseur stated I didn't say I was going to override anything.

Mayor Craig stated the city side isn't at the full tax cap so there is an opportunity to do things there.

Alderman E. Sapienza stated I am just trying to play "what if" for a second.

Mayor Craig replied right but I guess you should meet with Sharon and think about doing a budget. Any one of you can put together a budget.

Alderman E. Sapienza stated I understand that any one of us can put together a budget. I understand that.

Mayor Craig stated it is really easy to say have this budget be the default or no I don't want that budget. I would encourage to try to participate in the process.

Alderman E. Sapienza stated that is what we are doing.

Alderman Levasseur stated I don't think anybody said we want a default budget or a different budget. We are just asking questions. These guys are new and I think what you just gave for a speech should have been given three months ago to explain the

process because yes we can craft our own budgets and there is such a thing as a default budget. I don't think many people here understand that. There is a lot of revenue out there that could come in or might not come in. There are a lot of unknowns on May 2.

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

*On motion of **Alderman Long**, duly seconded by **Alderman Cavanaugh**, it was voted that the Budget Resolution "Appropriating to the Manchester School Food and Nutrition Services Program the sum of \$5,819,971 from School Food and Nutrition Services Revenues for the Fiscal Year 2024" ought to pass and be Enrolled.*

*On motion of **Alderman Long**, duly seconded by **Alderman Heath**, it was voted that the Budget Resolution "Appropriating to the Central Business Service District the sum of \$258,000 from Central Business Service District Funds for the Fiscal Year 2024" ought to pass and be Enrolled.*

Alderman Levasseur asked of that \$258,000, how does that breakdown budget wise. We used to have to pay a director a salary? How is that broken down? Can we get a report on that before we vote on it? Does all of it go to city services now?

Mayor Craig stated Jodie is coming up.

Jodie Nazaka, Economic Development Director, stated in one of the past BMA meetings, the CBSD Advisory Board sent in their letter of recommendation appropriating the \$258,000. While in the past all of that money was broken up into four quarterly payments to Intown Manchester, the advisory board is now taking funds and reallocating them. I don't have the breakdown in front of me right now but I can say that \$100,000 is going to support a downtown clean-up crew and \$50,000 is to support CBSD events and another \$30,000 for downtown beautification, \$20,000 for lighting and so on. The \$258,000, rather than going into one entity is now broken up into separate pools.

Alderman Levasseur asked so are we getting more bang for our buck now that we don't have a director.

Ms. Nazaka replied I would like to say yes. I think in the last year we took the opportunity to work with the advisory board and speak directly with the taxpayers in the district to see what it is they are looking for and what it is they want.

Alderman Levasseur stated you are basically the director now.

Ms. Nazaka responded I wouldn't really say that.

Alderman Levasseur asked well who is in charge of getting the lights and hiring the people and who supervises those guys now.

Ms. Nazaka answered I have been taking on that role, myself and the other staff member in the Economic Development Office. We have been playing the interim role for the last year. The hope is that once everything is reallocated and we have better control over it that it will kind of run itself and the advisory board will continue each year to reallocate the funds how they are best suited.

Alderman Levasseur asked who is the clean-up crew under; parking.

Ms. Nazaka replied right now they are seasonal temporary employees under DPW but with the new positions that were just approved at the last meeting, they will move under the Parking Division in this new Downtown Maintenance Division that we are creating.

Alderman Levasseur asked do they give you a chargeback on that or do you just send them the money.

Ms. Nazaka started on July 1, we will be giving a lump sum in support of these positions to the Parking Division.

Alderman Levasseur asked who is dealing with the concerts in the park.

Ms. Nazaka stated luckily we are still able to pay for these due to a very generous donation that was given last year from Jones Street Investments. That money supported the movies in the park. It is a partnership now between the Economic Development Office, the Mayor's Office, the Library and Parks & Recreation.

Alderman Levasseur asked but it doesn't come out of that \$258,000.

Ms. Nazaka answered it does not but we do have funds to help support that though.

Mayor Craig called for a vote. *There being none opposed, the motion carried.*

Alderman Long moved to put the two remaining budget resolutions back on the table.

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

*There being no further business, on motion of **Alderman Stewart**, 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.

City Clerk