

BOARD OF MAYOR AND ALDERMEN

September 5, 2023 at 7:00 PM

Mayor Craig called the meeting to order.

Mayor Craig called on Alderman Long to lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

A moment of silence was observed.

The Clerk called the roll.

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

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.

Mary Roberge, 1023 Merrill Street, stated:

I am a Manchester resident and also a neighbor to Hallsville School so hi I am your neighbor. Unfortunately, this building has deteriorated from lack of maintenance. I have four areas of concern that I would like to bring to your attention with the hope that action be taken. I also want to add that earlier this evening Mr. Gomez did have a conversation with me so I did also list these concerns to him but I think you should be aware of them. One is the trash. The community center is being used for many purposes by different organizations. Unfortunately, not all of these organizations, including the basketball clinic, picks up their trash. My daughter and I have picked up the trash that was left behind by these organizations. Tuesdays are trash day in my neighborhood. This spring, I spent three consecutive Tuesdays picking up the trash and putting it in my trash barrel. Please pick up your trash because it is unsightly and when the wind blows, it comes into my yard and I really have enough to take care of in

my own yard. I would like to talk about the lighting. There are no cameras to monitor the activity at the building and there is insufficient lighting, which has made the building vulnerable to fireworks that are ignited on the building property, vandalism, graffiti, broken windows and people who break into the building late at night. It has also become a hangout for some of the neighborhood kids. There needs to be sufficient lighting on the sides and in the front of the building to eliminate these problems. The bonus to having sufficient lighting is a safety factor for everyone who enters the community portion of the building at night. It is dark and lights are needed. More recently, because the property has not been maintained, there is a bee problem and they are making their home in the overgrown greenery. It is now difficult for me and my daughter to get into our cars parked in our own driveway because of the many bees that are there. Please take care of this problem. Again, because the property is not being maintained, the greenery by the fence is overgrown and it is encroaching my property. Usually, I go over and I try to cut in between the fence and whatever but unfortunately because of the bees I am not doing it. I just want to thank you all for listening to me and I hope we can find some workable solutions. Thank you.

Brittany Ping, 199 Putnam Street, stated:

My daughter just did her 100-word sight survey and she missed 14 going into 2nd grade so I am going to use those 14 words today. I am very happy with the Health Department presenting on suicide awareness. On February 11, 2013, my 56-year-old stepfather took his own life in our family bathroom due to his inability to cope with his chronic health challenges. For anyone listening, you matter and please call 988. Could the communication from NH DHHS come at a better time for our city taxpayers? I don't think so. What an excellent response from Ms. Fox on how Doorways is functioning and improving its communication with the Manchester Health Department and the state. Here we have an opportunity to let the state do as it has provided were we to give them the opportunity. I don't know how many of these words I can hit in three minutes; it is not much time. I want you to know that I oppose the creation of a new department. The function of this department is funded and approved through the end of this fiscal year in its current position. We need to be able to see the results. The city does not need to immediately silo this work in its own department with its own analysts and another price-tag for taxpayers. How much more money do we need to

use creating administrative roles before we say this money is not getting us across the goal line? My condolences to both Aldermen Sapienzas for the loss of your father. My prayers are with you. I have a lot of time but I am almost out of words. I have one word left and I will leave you with my greatest prayer and that is for world peace. Thank you very much.

Rick Blais, 733 Chestnut Street, stated:

I have been a business owner in Manchester for pretty much my entire life. I have a couple of things. One was just touched on about setting up a new homeless department. I don't think that is what we need in the city. I think we need to come up with a plan that can solve this. Every one of you received my email. I didn't get responses back. I talked to a few but that was it. You can fix this in three years if you make a conscious decision to do it. There are a lot of players out there in the private sector willing to help financially and with time; everything. I hope you really start looking at this as an issue that can be fixed, not an issue that we expect that we should live with. A lot of these people need help. They are struggling and the help is there for people who want it. The other thing is I am looking at the notes right now and here we are as a city and I don't know how many taxpayers are aware of it but there is a \$300 million unfunded taxpayer obligation. You are looking at \$267 million that is under pension obligation that hasn't been paid and another \$54 million in post benefits for the employees. We have people who have been working in the city and their pensions are being messed around with. That is very dangerous. I am a financial advisor and having an underfunded pension...I mean people are depending on that to live and I think it is wrong for that not to be publicized more and to come up with some kind of plan to address it. It won't happen in a year. We all know that. Everybody here is on a two-year cycle unfortunately and it is hard to fix things. I think that is another issue besides housing that you really need to address. These people are depending on you. They are not only serving you all the time you are here but they are facing 20-30 years of service. So hopefully you can address that and hopefully some employees learn about that so they can take advantage of putting a bug in your ears as well. The other thing is, I have a study from 2021 about our school district. We have had a lot of issues. Most of you were on the school board and are now aldermen and you are part of this. Our numbers keep going down. We have graduation rates that are in the bottom 50 in

all of NH schools. Math proficiency is in the bottom 50. Reading proficiency is in the bottom 50. Out of 187 school districts, Manchester is 184. We are the largest city here. We have to do something with our education. There has to be an outcome. Students shouldn't be passing 3rd and 4th grade without being able to read at 3rd and 4th grade levels. I am sure you have all seen the studies. That is an important thing that I think we need to address. Maybe we can't catch all of the 18- and 19-year-olds but we should sure start with the younger kids to make sure their proficiencies are up there so that the next generation isn't lost. We need college. You go and talk to some of these deans at UNH or community college here in Manchester and if a kid goes for a two-year degree, they have to pay for three. They spend one year at an extra tuition just because they don't have the basic requirements of high school under their belt. That is a shame. These kids going for a four-year degree end up with a five-year degree. Hopefully you can throw this on the agenda as part of the planning and I think you need to put a committee together to go over that housing issue. It can be fixed in three years. Thank you.

Kathleen Carswell, Amherst Street, stated:

I have quite a few issues but I will bring up a few. First, I hope you vote yes on this homeless issue ordinance coming up because it is needed. There are a handful that don't care. I have caught three different people within two weeks defecating and urinating in business doorways. I had to go around the block and kick them out. They had to go 20 yards to go use the restroom. This is unacceptable. There is either drug dealing going on in my own private parking lot that we share with another apartment building...that has just started. It hasn't been happened in the 20+ years I have been living there. The prostitutes are back again. It took me 20 years to move them two blocks. Do I have to go back out on the corner again and kick them out and be out there until 1 AM, 2 AM or 3 AM? I am not afraid of them. If they shoot me or stab me...I guess the residents in Manchester have to take things into their own hands. We don't get any help from the city. You call and get no response. We are getting tired of it and I am getting tired of being the squeaky wheel because it is not getting any oil. Pretty soon I am going to break down and it is not going to be pretty. Enough is enough. This city has money but we are spending it on stupid and useless things instead of on things that could be very useful. Why don't we take the area that is right

next to the FIT center where people sit in a pebbled area and build a building four or five stories high with an elevator instead of putting the money into another shelter. How many more shelters do we need in this city? It is not needed. There are some people that do need it but there are a lot of people that are on LOW fixed incomes that cannot afford these rent increases that happen every year. Everybody has two feet on a banana peel now and it is sad because a lot of older people now are finding themselves homeless. It is not disrespectful. I would rather be homeless than have my grandparents or my parents be homeless. It is not needed. We worked hard and paid our dues and we need to have the respect. Please take this into consideration before the city...and I am not playing. I have heard a lot of people and talked to a lot of people and they are willing to take this into their own hands because we are not getting any help. The only department that helps us in our neighborhood is the Parking Division. That is sad; very sad.

Bryce Kaw-uh, 639 N. Bay Street, stated:

I currently serve as Chair of the Manchester Planning Board. On July 20, the Planning Board unanimously voted to send a letter to the BMA requesting funding to revamp the city-wide bicycle master plan. That letter is item 28 in your packet tonight. Our goal would be to replace our original and outdated bicycle master plan with one that is based on contemporary data, community feedback and forward-looking best practices. This is important for a variety of reasons including public safety, community health, congestion reduction and increasing quality of life in general for Manchester residents. First and foremost, public safety is a critical issue. Kids should be able to bike to school without sharing a lane with rapidly moving two-ton vehicles. Adults like you and me should be able to hop on a bike for a quick errand or afternoon ride without worrying for our well-being. I think we can all agree that neither people in cars nor people on bikes really want to be sharing a lane with each other but right now we have no choice in most of the city. Improving the design of our city streets can also help improve community health by building a more physically active city. As we all know, physical activity is important and it has lifelong benefits so we should be making it easier for folks to live a healthier lifestyle. This would also help with congestion reduction because every person on a bike takes up less space than in a car. We are a growing city and unless we plan to ban more people from moving to Manchester, we are going to have to come

up with ways to reduce traffic. Giving people the freedom to bike safely, if that is what they want to do, is an important piece of the puzzle. Last but not least, creating an actionable plan for bicycle infrastructure will help increase quality of life. When we talk about improving livability of a community, we often include walkability and bike ability. It is just a nice thing to have. The anticipated cost for a comprehensive rewrite of this plan is \$150,000. While that might sound like an extraordinary number at first glance, it pales in comparison to the funds we expend as a city every year for roadway maintenance. If we are going to spend millions on our streets, then we should at least make sure we have a solid forward-looking plan in place as we go along. If we update our guidelines, then all of those great improvements can be done in conjunction with regular street maintenance projects year by year within the regular budget. As for how we pay for the plan itself, I would recommend against considering contingency. If ARPA funding or grant money is available, that would be great. If nothing else is possible, this effort could at least be considered for the next fiscal year budget. Regardless, it is up to you as to when and how this effort might get done. Hopefully tonight we can at least all agree that having an updated bicycle master plan makes sense and it should happen soon to make Manchester safer, more accessible and livable for everyone in all wards of the city. Thank you.

Scott Elliot, 795 Elm Street, stated:

Thank you for the time to address the Board this evening. I have a business at 1667 Elm Street so I work and live in Ward 3. I witness on a daily basis how a small percentage of the city's residents destroy the quality of life for its residents and the retail environment for many small businesses. I would like to address the creation of a Department of Housing Stability and while we are at it, why don't we just call it what it is, a homeless department. A significant percentage of the homeless population is unemployable due to mental health and substance abuse issues. To me, the unemployable people can't afford "affordable" housing so that is not the solution. Finally, the proof that Manchester is not serious about the homelessness crisis is by sowing the seeds of another government bureaucracy. Thank you.

Mandy Lafond, 412 Notre Dame Avenue, stated:

Manchester has always been a working-class city from its beginnings as a mill town to now but it is getting hard and harder for working class people to afford to live in Manchester with the skyrocketing cost of living and the lack of affordable housing options. Every day I see the effects of poverty in Manchester with more and more people being forced onto the streets each week. Meanwhile, new luxury apartments keep springing up that are out of reach for most in the city. With the high rents, low wages, inflation and a lack of accessible public transportation, it is just becoming increasingly difficult to live in Manchester, especially for young people who are leaving the city and the state for better opportunities elsewhere. Anyone who claims to care about the future of Manchester's economy should be concerned and invested in finding ways to make it feasible for people to live and work here. What does the city plan to do to make housing more affordable? If lack of shelter beds is an issue, why is there not more of an effort being made to lower or control rents and establish more public housing? A lot of effort is being put into branding Manchester as NH's new place to be but we have to ask for who because it seems to me the city is just trying to attract highly paid tech workers to fill luxury apartments while painting over the real issues that the majority of residents are facing. There are real actionable steps that this Board could be taking instead of throwing up your arms at every turn and saying you don't have the power to do anything. If you don't, who does? 78% of NH residents think affordable housing is the #1 issue and yet this Board continually claims its hands are tied and there is nothing to be done. Well, we are here telling you what can be done. I have heard countless people tell you that we need housing options and we need them now. People cannot begin to address the other issues in their lives if they don't have a roof over their heads first. The time for inaction is over and the people of Manchester are demanding more. We are telling you what the solutions are and now it is time to do your job. I just hear a lot of people here tonight who are fed up with how things are being done and I would like to know what is going to be done about it. Thank you.

Greg Wilson, 81 Stark Street, stated:

I was born in Manchester and have lived here a good portion of my life. I am here to talk about the problem of homelessness here in Manchester, which has been a perennial issue. The state of NH has gotten itself in trouble with the Supreme Court

before by attempting to illegalize it. I think it basically comes down to the basic human freedom to be able to exist on the street without constant harassment from law enforcement if you choose to do so. On top of that, we have this constant discussion about jobs and how people need to have jobs to be able to live inside or that people need to be able to get clean from drugs before they can live inside and so on and so forth. There are a million of these excuses about why X people can't live inside right and the truth of the matter is I have known people who were addicted to drugs who lived inside just fine and I have known people who didn't have jobs who lived inside just fine. So, it turns out that these things are not an actual precursor to living inside. Any one of us I suppose, including myself, could end up on the street here in Manchester lickety split. If I lost my job, that could be next month. It pains me to see that we continually try to do the illegalization of homelessness rather than having any actual solutions to the problem. We continually try to offload this problem to private charities and we can look around the country and see how successful that has been. There are never any real, hard public solutions to the problem only the continual attempt to make it more and more illegal to live outside. Even if these people were able to get jobs, half the jobs in the state are getting to the point where they don't pay enough to live inside anymore. We have a \$7.25 minimum wage. You could get a full-time job and sign your entire paycheck over to a landlord and you would still not be able to afford indoor living. I think that the time for talking about jobs or all these other things that are keeping people outdoors has kind of passed and a lot of us realize that is not the case. These people are forced to live outside for other reasons, not some prerequisite reason that is actually stopping them from living indoors. Ultimately, this could be any of us; at least it could be me at any given time.

Armando Martins, 545 Calef Road, stated:

For years, Manchester residents have been feeling the pain of the housing crisis but our government seems to prefer to police people over housing people. The most reliable area of growth every year is the Manchester Police Department. Meanwhile, the investments in housing, shelters, and services are drops in the bucket. Tens of thousands of community members are feeling stressed out and lost because as the cost of living skyrockets and wages stagnate, decent housing becomes unattainable. Many people are paying more than half their income on housing. Half the working class is

one emergency or missed paycheck away from homelessness. Board members should be working tirelessly to solve the housing crisis with courage and creativity. When one joker suggests violating the 8th amendment to sic the police on people living outside with nowhere else to go, he should be easily laughed off. It is very revealing that this proposal was tabled last month right before elections. I am concerned that many officials want to sweep controversy under the rug. This summer, city officials boasted about a plan to create 2,000 housing units in the next couple of years. We are the largest city in a state that is almost 24,000 units short and we are talking about 2,000. Some of those may be affordable, may be, but when we talk about so-called market rate meaning unaffordable housing units, we count units in the hundreds. When we talk about affordable housing, we count in the dozens. Take 1225 Elm Street for example. Out of 35 units, 15 of them will be affordable and that is for people making 80% of the median wage. So basically, tell the over 500 Manchester residents experiencing homelessness that if they make over \$50,000 a year maybe in the next few years they can compete over a couple of units. Tell that to the over 14,000 residents living in poverty. I am concerned, with all due respect, that some well-meaning Board members see the police just like any other city workers who have a role to play in addressing social problems. We are all adults so let's be frank. The police are part of the problem. Police side with bosses during strikes. They side with landlords during evictions. They raid encampments of people forced to live in tents. The only shelter police offer people is Valley Street jail or the Sununu Youth Center. Some local politicians say you can't put a price on public safety. Well, who is keeping the public safe from the trigger-happy cops who shot Waleed and murdered Alex? People would rather jump into rivers and drown than interact with the police. Enough is enough. Amateur hour is over. It is time to try to try something new and bold. Housing first. Every penny spent on repression and harassment should be going towards housing, shelter and services. Take the proposed amendment on camping in public spaces off the table and set the record straight and vote it down decisively. Thank you.

Richard Irving, Ward 2, stated:

With crime, homeless, illegal drugs and lack of affordable housing, Manchester is not a great place to work, live, learn and play. Big spending and government equals tax increases for all residents. That is not right. The average person can't afford apartment

rentals that are between \$1,200 and \$2,000 a month with minimum wage and Social Security benefits. Finally, we must vote for a better candidate for mayor of this city that can tackle all the problems once and for all. Thank you.

Zarek Blair, 404 Notre Dame Avenue, stated:

I am here to talk about the shameful amendment proposed by one of the Board members here around the issue of camping. The decision to table this instead of voting it down is a major misstep. Do you know what we need? More affordable housing. We all live in Manchester and we know how expensive rent is across the city and the state. Tickets and policing aren't going to reduce the price of housing. It isn't going to give people a place to stay but make an already difficult situation even more difficult. The beds at the homeless shelters are almost always full. You complain about people camping out in places but where do you expect them to sleep? This isn't an issue you can push out of sight. We need to address the source of this issue. Let's also mention the hostility of Manchester when it comes to things like public restrooms. Where are people, especially the homeless, supposed to go to the bathroom? If you want a pretty city, you have to put in the work and help the people out of these insurmountable situations. We need better recovery support systems and more of them. We need more mental health support instead of police dealing with mental health crises that could stress someone out even more. What the people of Manchester need isn't more police power or the harassment of homeless people. What we need is more affordable housing and more focus on the social services that benefit the people. More pedestrian friendly infrastructure like having public bathrooms. We need the city to do better for the people; not for the rich or the people you deem deserving of punishment out of sight and not for the police who want to hand out more tickets but for the people of Manchester, homeless or not.

Malinda McCusker, 44 Karin Street, stated:

I have been a citizen and resident of this city for 44 years. To sit here and tell you that I am happy with the way this city is going would be a complete and utter lie. As a taxpaying citizen, I am completely disgusted with this homeless issue or what I would call a crisis going on. Going back 20 years, it would have been confined to one part of the city; what we would have called the inner city, the tree streets. That is where I knew

to go if I was looking for crime, drugs, prostitutes or homeless. You name it. Today, it has spread throughout this whole city. It is a disgrace. These people...I am in opposition of a department; a department that is going to be run by a woman who claims that she is more than qualified to handle the situation. Let me ask you, what results have we seen? Fifteen people moved out of homelessness? Seven people got a damn job? Why should I be paying \$6,000 a year in property taxes for this issue to consistently, consistently get worse? That is the definition of insanity. We started with one shelter. We now have two with a \$1.4 million expansion. \$1.4 million. How long do you think federal grants are going to cover that? How long are federal grants going to cover her salary before it comes down onto property owners and taxpayers such as myself that cannot get police to respond to issues because they are busy with homeless issues. There were eleven in three hours. Joyce, if you think that that is great and that is what you are going to run your campaign on for Governor of this state, you might want to recheck the situation. How much longer will it be before we look like San Francisco? How long is it before we look like Methadone Mile? Do I need to remind you back in December what the shelter looked like? How many times are you going to sweep these encampments and move these people throughout the city, all over the city? On my way here, there were six people on Valley Street pushing carts. Another four were on Elm Street. Two were walking up Huse Road today in Ward 8. Last week, we had a guy going to door to door and when you tell him you have nothing to offer him because that is not my responsibility, that is not my obligation, he wants to get belligerent with my neighbor? At what point do citizens, like another lady spoke of, have to take situations into their own hands? What is going to happen when my dog bites that person? What is going to happen when a resident pulls a gun on another person? Taxpayers are pissed off. You may have hundreds of people here today looking for affordable housing. The more services we offer them, the worse it is going to get. It started with Safe Station. Need I remind you of Camp Amoskeag during Covid? Let's feed these people three times a day? We had 24-hour police surveillance there because of the issues. At what point are you going to listen to the residents?

Don Waldron, 31 Raspberry Lane, stated:

Good evening, Madam Mayor and the Board. I am here to talk about the article you will be hearing regarding the bike master plan. First of all, let me be honest here. You are all

facing some very serious issues and decisions. To come up here and talk about a bicycle master plan after hearing a lot of the testimony almost seems inappropriate to do so. But I encourage everyone to remember that something like cycling and bike-use in a city is something that helps all levels of the community. It is not just something for people on expensive bikes; it is something that can be used by all members of the community and helps everyone at multiple levels. In addition to being a resident of Manchester, I am also a board member of the Bike-Walk Alliance of New Hampshire. I am the chairperson of the Conservation Commission. I represent Manchester on the Southern New Hampshire Planning Commission. I am also on the Environmental Asbestos Advisory Group. I have gotten myself involved in the community. I have heard from people at all different levels, be it regionally and also in the inner-city streets, and what people are looking for and what we need to do for the city. Right now, when it comes to cycling and our bike lanes, we have bike lanes. What I often say is we are a city of bike lanes to nowhere. They don't connect to anything. Cycling in a built environment like Manchester has multiple different appeals. One of them is recreation; being to go out with your family on a nice Saturday morning and go biking around town, go visit a museum downtown, go to a restaurant, go to a Fisher Cats game, that is one element. Tourism, as the city has invested grant money in completing some of the rail trails in the city, one that is going to open later this winter on South Manchester Rail Trail Extension, that is going to connect us to the rest of the state and will bring eco-tourism to Manchester. People will ride their bikes from distant places and Manchester can be a destination. With a complete network they can continue to places like Portsmouth or Lebanon. Also, it will have physical and mental health benefits, and micro-mobility for people who have walking impairments. Most importantly, it is part of an active transportation network that benefits all members of the community. People that may choose to not use a car, or do not have the ability to use a car because they cannot afford it or they don't have the ability to obtain a driver's license, or they are prohibited some other way. Having safe transportation networks for these people on micro-mobility devices, bicycles, or walking, without having to be in fear of being struck by a vehicle because they have to interact with those vehicles is something that is very important for the city and its future.

Scott Silberfeld, 80 Clarke Street, stated:

I'd like to speak in favor of updating the bicycle master plan. I ride just about everyday from Clarke Street, Elm Street, all the way down to Calef Road and South Manchester Bike Trail. First, I'd like to thank the city for improvements they have made over the years. Thanks to the drivers for being more courteous to bikers. It's a lot better than it was several years ago. However, when the mayoral candidates talk about the city's potential once they bring in young and vibrant workers who will go downtown to spend money in restaurants, etc., I'm lucky enough spending a good part of my time speaking with these young people and similar people, and that's not the whole story. If we build up-scale apartment complexes and provide good jobs, they will not come unless the quality of life which includes recreation and commuting also happens. A good part of them do not want to own a car. They want safe alternative ways to get around. Don't improve bike transportation for people like me or any other special group; improve it as a good business decision for the city as it will lead to getting people that will be excited to come Manchester, live in Manchester, spend lots of money in Manchester, and build a strong tax-base. Also, please don't base your decision on an out-of-date plan. That's like building a highway today for 20,000 cars in an area that is booming twenty years ago and is now a ghost town. Smart business is based on as much up-to-date information as you can get. The city like any other business, needs to spend money to make money.

Joy Robertson, 404 Notre Dame Avenue, stated:

A 52% rise of homelessness in one year is not a drug problem, and not an individual solution; that's a social problem. We're here to tell you we need housing. Full-stop. We are part of the 78% of NH residents who know housing is unaffordable. Wildly out of step with the meager wages that are tacked to that \$7.25 minimum. Instead of finding solutions, this body seems more focused on what is called expediency. What I think you mean by expediency is making sure the money keeps flowing in the direction that keeps you in office, that keeps the developers and financiers happy. It is not considered expedient to do something that could actually provide low-cost housing to the majority of Manchester's working poor. No, it seems year after year a new public-private partnership is trotted out that promises to deliver only to be forgotten soon after having failed to make an impact on anything but a shareholder's wallet. By which I mean they got bigger. Instead of solutions, we get embarrassments like Alderman Levasseur's

hateful excuse for an amendment that apparently this body didn't have the courage to kill outright. We are here to tell you to be responsible and clean up after yourselves, to kick the habit of bumping the Police budget, and to bootstrap your way to doing the job you were elected to do. Which is to serve the people. This problem you are facing, and we are being forced to deal with – we here are being forced to deal with – has some solutions that are tried and true, and not altogether too complicated. That is called public housing. While these words may sound shocking, maybe you'd be surprised to know that Singapore, a remarkably capitalist country and remarkably conservative country, has vastly decreased income inequality and poverty through adopting public housing policies since the 1920s. In fact, countries across the world have utilized public policy housing as a way to drastically increase the quality of life for their people. It is proven, it is irrefutable, and it works, and we need to get serious about it because homelessness is skyrocketing and high GDP does not mean much when people can't afford to sleep or eat. One spark can start a prairie fire and in a country which is reeling from the inhumane cost of doing business, the city has a chance to be the beginning of a chain reaction. We can say boldly that prioritizing the profit of a few who may make vagrants of the many is unacceptable. We can come together to build a community that is worth rebranding and that starts with housing people and making that housing stable. This board has the chance to listen to the cries of the downtrodden; this board has the chance to take action. If this board does not see fit to put the needs of the many ahead of the needs of the greedy few, then you may find that the many may one day make their own solutions that cut the few right out of the equation. The choice, Aldermen, stands with you.

Brandon Lemay, 36 Lynx Way, stated:

I want to throw out the top five cities with the highest amount of opioid use in the country. I've been here and I've said this before, but I want to repeat it. Omaha, Indianapolis, Columbus, Nashville, Oklahoma City. Five of the highest drug use for opioids in the country. The five highest rates of homelessness by city in this country are LA, New York City, Seattle, San Jose, and Oakland. Why is it? Are the people of LA, New York City, Seattle, San Jose, and Oakland are they just morally deficient? Do they do more drugs? Not according to the statistics. What is the common factor? Housing is expensive. It is really expensive in those five cities where homelessness is the most

prevalent. It is not a moral defect. I want to get behind this and say that unemployment is not the main issue behind homelessness. Drug use is not the main problem behind homelessness. It is housing affordability. There are many people on active alcohol and substance use addiction right now that are in their housing. There are people that we might characterize as functional. As long as their housing stays affordable, they stay housed. As soon as it's not, they are unhoused. I want to point out that my parents bought their home on the West Side in 1992 for \$89,000. In today's money that's about \$193,000. Not bad. Today it is worth \$400,000. Twice the amount of inflation. That was a working-class West Side home, that a working-class West Side person cannot afford anymore. That's unsustainable. While we're at it, I've been waiting patiently for our redevelopment plan for well over a year. Seventy percent of New Hampshire is single-family home zoning only. What progress are we making to change this? It has been too slow, all while we've been eager to pass more and more ordinances as homelessness increases to punish the unhoused. I really support making the Homeless Initiatives Director its own position, its own department, because it frees us from a lot of what we've done before which is rely on public-private partnerships like I've been critical of Families In Transition for operating a sub-par shelter in my opinion. I want to see us do more, I don't want to see us giving city tax credits and city lands to private developers, I want to see us develop some public housing. I want to see shouting at our Senators and Congressmen, and Governor, whoever, to say Manchester needs more public housing. It is a material lack of housing that is causing homelessness. There are many solutions that have many funny things. I have heard people complaining about defecation in the streets. We need more public bathrooms. We see needles on the street. We don't have safe injection sites. There is no needle exchange run by the city and that was banned in the parks a few years ago without a replacement. We see people in the parks and in front of businesses, give them housing. But no, we want to punish people. We need to stop punishing people, we need to build housing, we need to work on a redevelopment plan and allow for actually more housing to be built as well.

Chris Kokko, 37 Everett Street, stated:

I support the revamped bicycle plan. I think it will do a lot for the city, both for our businesses to allow people who live outside of the walkable area of the downtown be able to come in on more evening and more often without having to worry about parking

to spend money downtown at the businesses, which is overall good for the city. Also, there is a lot of people who ride bicycles throughout our city because they have to, not because they want to. They deserve a safe mode of transportation as well. Also, I want to support public housing. It is the solution. As we've heard tonight, we need creative solutions that will offer more people to live in more different circumstances. If you get people off the streets, you're going to solve the problems that everybody else is complaining about.

David Wagner, 498 Hanover Street, stated:

The city's master plan envisions an affordable city that is a place complete with multi-modal transportation. I want to live in that city. To get there, we need a real plan that supports transportation by bike. I often depend on my bike to get around. I'm also privileged that my partner and I share a car. It is much easier when I drive. The roads are usually safe for my car, there are usually signs and routes from traffic control and there is usually somewhere to park. This isn't true when I take my bike. Most streets aren't safe for me to share with cars. There aren't marked, safe, and efficient routes to get around the city by bike. Anywhere that I go, including City Hall, there is not enough parking or racks for bikes. Not enough racks where I can actually secure my bike. We need better bike infrastructure, because when it is safer and more convenient to bike, more people do. I volunteer at Queen City Bike, which provided a bike valet at Taco Tour in May. Many people chose to bike to that event instead of driving, reducing congestion and pressure to park, simply because there was somewhere for them to secure their bikes. Queen City Bicycle recently provided a new bicycle to a woman who commutes to work everyday in Bedford from Manchester by bike. I can't imagine the commute that she has. More bike lanes, more routes, more signs, would make it easier and safer for people to get to work. They need that option; they deserve that option. We need an updated bicycle master plan to make Manchester a bike-friendly city. I encourage the board to approve the Planning Board's request for the funding for that plan.

James Vayo, 427 Holly Avenue, stated:

You have heard a lot of comments about bicycling and housing. I want to bring up something that ties these two things together. Recently I have taken notice of the city's

management of the city-wide zoning update. In my experience zoning should be a public process. To date, that has not been the case. The city's consultant delivered a whole draft document over a year ago, but it has not been made publicly accessible. I was denied access to the document upon request. It is not available on the city's webpage. Over the past year there has been no information on how that draft plan has been edited or who has been granted the ability to make decisions on the new zoning code. Further, I feel the public will never get to see the consultant's version of this document which means we'll have no basis for understanding how or why decisions were made. I made public comment to this same board a few weeks ago, months ago now, and I'm here to bring the issue up again. It has enormous impact on housing costs and quality of life. It's going to take some effort to build understanding around any proposed zoning but we need to work together to do this, it can't be private until it's ready for public comment for sixty days. Zoning has the potential to solve the problems of land-use and transportation issues and bring about an equitable city. So, to address this lack of information about zoning, by right today I am urging you the BMA to make a request to the Planning Department to put the consultant version of the draft document on the city's project webpage for zoning. It doesn't need to be perfect. It can have a caveat that says this is not the final document. But at least if it is there, everyone will have access to it and understand what the consultant proposed and in a couple months hopefully when the Planning Department is ready to release a full draft, I also again urge you to make a request to the Planning Department that they write a report documenting how they changed and edited this document that was provided by the consultant and what their decision-making basis was for making those changes. Those two things will bring transparency and clarity and some ethics to a process that has been opaque, not acceptable, and potentially is going to lead to a lot of public conflict if it comes out and it is a sixty-day rush to pass. I urge you please make those requests of the Planning Department. Get that document on the project page today.

Jessica Margeson, stated:

I have something to pass out to the Clerk. I have a copy of my speech for all the Aldermen. I have been a housing advocate for fifteen years and a resident of Manchester for twenty-two. I am here to speak on revamping the city's Welfare Department. I recently experienced an eviction which required me to use this system

and the nightmares that I have been hearing about and bared witness to were now coming true for me. I don't want to hold up the city's time but what I went through was horrific. Here are my solutions. We need to establish an outside review committee to review denied applicants. We can do this by redacting their social security number, address, and names, and this needs to be done within thirty days to be sure we are preventing homelessness. All applications should be available on the city's website where applicants can apply and upload their information online. Staff can then verify all information is received and schedule appointments accordingly, making the highest and best use of everyone's time. The needs that bring an applicant into City Welfare are often traumatic. They should only have to tell their story one time and should not have to come back and forth multiple times. A major concern is in the sharing of personal information, and although there is a blanket statement in the welfare guidelines and on the application about this, there should be a clear delineation about exactly who will be contacted and an applicant should have the chance to give prior approval to ensure the safety and confidentiality of all. Three examples. A domestic violence client that was exposed to her abuser; second, this client lost their employment due to repeated calls to their employer; and another, contacting a landlord's attorney without the client's knowledge or approval and creating deals without their input. There can be an exposure for this city as it relates to confidentiality and liability. Furthermore, I contacted three cities regarding their process and found that they were less restrictive and they really try to ensure the preservation of an individual's housing. It has come to my understanding that the Welfare Department has come in under budget two years in a row, during the most critical time for a city with the housing and homeless crisis that we are experiencing. My concern is how many people were denied over the past two years and how many became homeless. Do we keep that data? In closing, I love the City of Manchester and I'd like to be a part of the council that upgrades this system because God knows we need it. Thank you. My case can also be made available to any of the Aldermen or Mayor, or anybody who would like to look at it. My information is on the bottom. I can share with you how they were going to give me \$800 towards my rent as long as I didn't make my car payment. I had another client contact me. She is pregnant. She already has a two-year-old son. The Welfare Department gave them such a hard time that they lost their housing with City Welfare because they weren't able to comply with all the rules. They then told them to get help with one part, they couldn't pay their

ticket. This client who is pregnant with a son who has medical difficulties is now in a Hooksett hotel and got pulled over recently and lost her license and can't even drive to go find a job, get diapers, or do anything now. Because of a silly rule.

Rafael Calderon, 159 Concord Street, stated:

I am a member of the Planning Board. I came here just to support Bryce on this letter he sent regarding the bike situation in Manchester. I want to simply support it because I know a lot of people in the community that could use a better biking situation. I also want to point out, I've been in Manchester since 2007. The biking situation was a lot worse than it is now. I've seen a lot of improvement in Manchester. I think that this situation will get better. Listening to all the serious things that are going on, the housing and the homelessness, I see all of this stuff, and I want to say that throughout my time that I've been in Manchester I have been a community health worker. I wear many hats. Today I am here to support the Planning Board. When I put on the hat of a community health worker, I have seen people in Manchester get emergency food stamps when they needed it, get emergency housing when they needed it to prevent them from going homeless, I have seen things simply become better. So, Mayor Craig, I thank you so much for all you've done because I've seen the city get better. I believe it will continue to get better. We have serious issues that need to be addressed, but I believe the city and the community can come together and fix all these things. I am hopeful that things will get better.

Kathleen Paquette, 70 Grand Avenue, stated:

I am here to express my concerns regarding the creating of the new Department of Housing Stability. First, as someone deeply committed for advocating for our senior citizens, I have reviewed the latest mayoral budget plan and noticed a crucial change. Under this plan, the Department of Senior Services will no longer be an independent city department but will instead become the Healthy Aging branch underneath the Health Department's umbrella. While I understand the need for resource consolidation, I worry that funding a department for the homeless population while simultaneously defunding the department for our senior citizens, may negatively impact our elderly population. Not only that, but it speaks volumes about how the city prioritizes its senior citizens, many of whom have been taxpayers and civic contributors to the City of

Manchester for most of their lives. Manchester needs to do better at prioritizing our cherished seniors. In relation to the creation of the Department of Housing Stability, I have several concerns. First, I am concerned for the potential for Manchester to become the preferred destination for individuals due to the city creating a dedicated department. Manchester has unfortunately become the homeless hub of New Hampshire. I fear that creating a permanent department could inadvertently increase our homeless and addicted populations, straining our resources even further. I also have concerns regarding duplication of services already provided by the numerous faith-based non-profit and for-profit organizations focused on assisting Manchester's homeless population. We were recently informed that the homeless enrichment center slated to open this month aims to centralize these existing efforts. Considering this, I question the necessity and use of taxpayer funded staff in an additional department which may ultimately lead to duplication of already provided services and a waste of city resources. I believe it would be more prudent to assess the effectiveness of the \$1.4 million investment in the newly created shelter and center before committing to the establishment of an entire department. The enrichment center has only opened its doors on September 1. It has not even been open for a full week. So, it would be judicious to evaluate its impact before making permanent and costly decisions to create a new department. With these concerns, I humbly request that you table the creation of the department until you can ascertain the efficacy of existing investments. I appreciate your time and consideration.

Daniel Mowery, Holt Avenue, stated:

I had cataract surgery so I'm trying to read with new glasses. So, please forgive me. First, I want to thank the Manchester Mounted Police, the Manchester Fire Department, and the Manchester Public Works Department for their help with our Holt Avenue block party. This year the block party was a huge success, but as most of you already heard, we had uninvited guests. We had guests that did come that were campaigning which our block party has no campaigning at all. Anyway, we did really well. We appreciate it. Our block party was invaded by uninvited guests, then they went and plastered all over social media. I received a letter from the Board of Health and needless to say we were pretty upset and we were going to cancel it. But, our neighborhood and myself decided we will not block off the street anymore. We will rent a private spot and we will do it on

our own and we will not have to follow the rules. We will still have private invited only guests. Tonight, I am here also about the Housing Stability Department. We have a Housing Coordinator who is making almost \$100,000 if not more. What have we seen? We have more homeless. There are more homeless people out on the street in this weather that are sleeping in tents. What is the Housing Coordinator doing? Is there any evidence of her doing anything? We see nothing. Another thing is, about affordable housing, Madam Mayor I just saw on social media that you want to have a railway come down from Concord all the way to Boston. That train is going to ruin this city. You are going to bring more people from Boston up here and they're all going to want high-end apartment buildings and the poor homeless people and the poor elderly, the poor low-income blue-collar workers are going to be homeless. It is time that we put that trail or railroad to bed. We do not need it in this city. We need to deal with the homeless. We need to put these people in affordable housing. Take care of our elderly and take care of our kids.

Ryan Drohan, Porter Street, stated:

The School Board lives in a fantasy world that the taxpayers have unlimited money. How is the city going to pay for a \$306 million proposal that does not even include a new high school? People are struggling with higher taxes and this makes housing more unaffordable. This board needs to tell the School Board to go pound sand and be realistic in their proposals. Note that they spent \$4,000 in taxpayer money for a drag queen show. It is easy to spend other people's money. In regards to Hallsville, RSA 194:64, has that been followed? The school district shall offer an unused facility for a charter-public school for purchase or lease. I've never heard anything about that; it is kind of swept under the rug. The previous group that leased Hallsville, Southern New Hampshire Services' CEO Donnalee Lozeau was the former mayor of Nashua. It seems like there was some backroom deals. In reality, it was corruption at City Hall and the Mayor's Office to practically give the \$4 million building. Residents in the area don't want a community center that will turn into a homeless shelter. You already did it with the Senior Center that was right next to a school. Apparently, the Mayor doesn't care about the most vulnerable: senior citizens or children. Yet when a tent goes up next to City Hall, it is gone within an hour. You do not need a new department. The homeless is comprised of less than 1% of the city's population. However, seniors make up over 15%

and growing. You got rid of the Senior Services Department, yet if Adrienne Beloin is so overqualified by her own admission, she doesn't need a department to be successful at her job. There is an old parable: give a man a fish, feed him for a day; teach a man to fish, feed him for a lifetime. When you give that man a fish – healthcare, food, whatever – why would you want to get a job, why would you want to learn to fish? We can't keep enabling. I support the change in ordinance 130.13. Remove the red-tape and bureaucracy. There is one thing worse than the homeless in Manchester, it is the politicians that keep enabling the homeless and growing the homeless-industrial complex.

Elyza Agosta, 96 Bayberry Lane, stated:

I'd like to speak to the revamping of the Bicycle Master Plan. I've lived in Manchester for four years and I think it is a great city for cycling. I go everywhere on my bike. I go to work, grocery shopping, I donated a bunch of clothes today by putting it in a crate on the back of my bike. I love it but unfortunately it did take me three years of trial and error going on certain streets at different times of the day, asking around, finally finding someone to show me the way to get to different rail trails around the city. I've gotten honked at, I've gotten hit by a car, I've gotten cut-off by a hearse once. In the end, what I really want is for everyone to experience the amazing cycling in Manchester like I have. I've been able to go out and recreate. I've biked from my house to Bear Brook State Park. We are in an amazing location for recreation, for health, for commuting on bike. But the issue is we don't have a network. If you want to be able to bike like I've been trying to figure it out over the years, you need a network that makes it safe. You need it so that kids can figure out how to use this network. You need it so people of all different comfort levels feel comfortable on a bike. In the end, if you don't have a master plan you won't be able to get there. If you just put a bike lane here or make this street safer or put bike parking here but they are all disconnected, you will never get to a spot where Manchester is safe and accessible by bike.

Florian Tschustschenthaler, 665 Lake Avenue, stated:

I am here to speak in favor of revamping the Bicycle Master Plan. I am an avid cyclist. I am part of the Queen City Bike Collective. I don't own a car, and currently commute only on bike through Manchester. This has worked out surprisingly well. Of course, I am

a child of the pandemic, I work from home. That has allowed me to do that within the City of Manchester. I think we are at a time when there is great opportunity to move cycling forward as an alternative mode of transportation within the city. I think now after all the changes that Covid has brought to the city and to the world, I would really strongly encourage to revisit the master plan and to really update it for a future that is more bicycle friendly in Manchester. I say this as a person who is fairly well off and privileged; but there are a lot of people who will benefit who are not as well off as me. I think we have heard a lot of people speak out on behalf of these people at today's meeting. I want to strongly encourage us to think about cycling as a mode of transportation for the people who not only choose to do it like I do, but also the people who need to do it. As part of my work with Queen City Bicycle Collective, I see a lot of these people. If we can build a comprehensive plan for the city to allow cycling as a mode of transportation that is viable in the city for everyone, we can improve the lives of every Manchester resident.

Mia Engelbert, 235 Lake Avenue, stated:

I didn't expect to be able to speak tonight so I hope you can all bear with me. First, before I say anything else, I'd like to agree with the people who are for the expansion of the bike system. As someone who recently got a bike herself, and would like to ride it around I would like that it would be more accessible to bike riders because some people can't afford cars. I can't afford one. The only reason I have access to a vehicle at all is because my girlfriend drives one. A lot of people might need that access. The bike thing isn't what I came here to speak about. I came here to speak about the homeless ordinance that was proposed. I might not know the specifics of the policy but what I know is that I would rather see time, money, and resources expended on keeping people from being homeless in the first place and housing the people who are already homeless. Instead, it seems to me that the city has suspended a lot of effort on harassing the homeless and trying to keep them out of sight instead of trying to help their material circumstances. I don't think that is right. I guess that is really all I have to say, because I don't really know what else to say. I want to see people housed and fed. I want to see them able to live without being harassed.

Lucas Zamoyski, 23 Vernon Street, stated:

I was hoping to come up here and say that I really want to bike more, but as an earlier gentleman mentioned that felt inappropriate with all the issues that everyone else has been talking about. I'm going to try to combine the two. I think we should look into the improvement of bike infrastructure in the city. There was one planning commission that said there is 820 acres of off-street parking and driveways within one mile of downtown. I think if we can improve our bike infrastructure and allow for more active transportation, that seems like less cars and a lot of opportunity for housing that everyone is mentioning they need here. From my perspective, recreation and transport, that is awesome. There are a lot of people that don't have that choice. They need their bicycle; they need to walk. Some people unfortunately need wheelchairs to get around and it is not practical in the city as it is. I think you guys have done a great job getting the grants, but if we bring more people in and more jobs in, these problems are going to get exasperated if you're not prepared to establish another method to get people from where they are to where they need to be, which is ideally from their homes to their place of work. The more people you can move from where they are to where they need to be, the better this community will be, the stronger this community will be.

Griseliz Glenn, homeless, stated:

I usually write something up to read to you but I'm going to go with the flow today. I want to make people aware that I know they think and have this perception that people are trying to get a free dollar or trying to get a free house or whatever they can from the system, and there are some people that are like that, but the majority of the people that are homeless or need help are there because they need the help. Not because they need an extra dollar from the city or the state, they are there because they need the help. Not because they are trying to get something free. The ignorance boggles my mind sometimes. I've been coming here every month speaking at these meetings. When I first started coming, I came to bring to light the City Welfare and how I was being treated. I look at all of the faces up here and look at all of you people up here, and I don't see anyone up there that is representing me. I don't see anyone up there that has my best interests when they are making their decisions. I don't see anyone up there that cares about what actually is going on in the lives of people like me. You are just

trying to push a side of the city by raising the amount of taxes, raising the property taxes so the landlords have to raise the rent, that's all you're trying to do. You're not trying to solve this problem. You're trying to push us out of Manchester is what you're trying to do. It is clear, so don't stand up there and deny and act like you guys care when you don't really care. I've been coming here for months and no one has reached out to me. No one has reached out to me about how I was treated by the Chief of Staff of the Mayor, no one reached out to me about how City Welfare was treating me, no one reached out to me about my grievances that I've filed. You don't care. I can't come up here and expect it. That's why we have the homeless problem right now, because nobody cares. Nobody cared when it started off with five people, and nobody cares when it is however many it is now. To create this department so we can laser-focus on the homeless issue, why isn't the homeless issue the laser-focus already? Why isn't that the main talk of every single one of your conversations? Why are we up here talking about bike paths when we have people in the way of riding their bikes? That's absurd to me to even be discussing something like that. To even be talking about the homeless department to laser-focus on homelessness, why isn't that the focus already? You need to get this thing together, man. It's up to you guys to make the decisions and pass these votes. We put you in those chairs for a reason. Not to close us out and push us out of Manchester, to actually help.

Grace Kindeke, 39 Porter Street, stated:

I am a lifelong Manchester resident and a homeowner. I've been up here several times in solidarity with my community members who are up here fighting for affordable housing, who are here to call out the nonsense of increasing criminalization of their community members who are houseless. Here as a loving member of this community, I urge you all to open your hearts, minds, ears, to many things you've heard before but also to things you've heard today. To really dig deep because what we're looking for is more. More from you, more from the committees, more from this government. I find it funny; I've said this before in past times, the house that I live in now that I pay taxes in, I am also a taxpayer, a home-owning taxpayer, that house that we bought at \$260,000 in 2018 is now also worth about \$400,000. Far more than my husband and I could afford. Funny enough, we left Boston because we couldn't afford to live in Massachusetts, and we thought well at least we could always go home. But it has become increasingly clear

that we are one of the lucky ones to be able to come back and make and be able to afford in Manchester. So, I've heard from many elected leaders, including some of the folks sitting right here in front of me about the need that we have to use the infrastructure that currently exists. To use police, jails in order to address the issue of homelessness. That we need a stop-gap solution for now. It is clear that the stop-gap isn't working and instead it is dividing our city, increasing tension and conflict, and widening the gaps of inequality within our community. A department to mitigate homelessness is a solution that hasn't been tried yet. So why not? We have departments for all sorts of things. We have money that goes into all sorts of places. Why not invest our city resources in our structure to support something that has clearly become and has been for a long time an increasing problem? We have resources to put into increasing criminalization and banding about the idea that using crumbling trauma-soaked institutions where people experience unspeakable horrors including assault, harassment, and loss of life is the solution. Using Valley Street Jail, using the Youth Detention Center, instead of using the other surplus buildings that we have kicking around. One is right in my backyard, Hallsville School, in order to create these solutions. Manchester has an opportunity to lead, to innovate, to live up to the rebranding that we are determined to undergo. If we can be the chicken tender capital of the world, we can afford to feed and take care of our own people. If we can invest in big time bio-medical tech companies to grow human organs in historical mill buildings, then we can dream big, reach higher, and decide that instead of maintaining the status-quo, instead of criminalizing people trying to survive, we can create affordable housing, and innovate a humane plan for our city such as bathrooms, trash receptacles, hell, even investing in these bike lanes that folks are asking for. If you give people more options to actually call people home, we have the opportunity to lead. Being a city is not a bad thing. We can be an incredible one if we choose humanity over criminalization.

Bree Whalon, houseless, stated:

I am formerly at 397 Wilson Street here in the city. I say formerly because I am one of your unhoused people. I wrote a few things down because I'm not so good at this anymore. The time for discussion, new organizations, departments, studies, and boards has long passed. We need solutions, funding, and action. You have been presented numerous creative ideas over years yet have acted on none. I sit here as a person with

no evictions, no criminal record, excellent rental references, and almost a decade completely sober. Yet I have no home simply because I have multiple sclerosis, which is an incurable progressive neurological disease and it prevents me from working enough to pay out skyrocketing rents. I'm a successful local artist, and I even have my own small business but if I make a single dollar more, they take my social security. I live each day with a possibility of waking up unable to walk. Yet I need to somehow make four times my monthly income to qualify for any landlord in our city. Even sharing with a roommate, I'd still need more than double what I'm allowed to make. There is no help, there are no programs, there are no services. There is no way out for me. We spend countless dollars on police response, hospital visits, street clean-up, and so much more, instead of funding the root of the problem which is creating stability with housing first. For the first time ever, I was turned away from the worst and last resort in our city in the middle of summer: New Horizons. I had absolutely nowhere to go. What will this winter look like if that was what our summer looked like? Accordingly, to the 2023 housing report, our average rental cost in this county alone has increased almost 50% over the last five years. How do we survive? Why has my own home state become inhospitable to me? Why is my life not worth saving? We rely on you all for change yet you are turning a blind eye to your neighbors and even your elders. Trust me, I've been in those shelters, and it is really sad to see. I am angry, disgusted, and truly defeated. Change our zoning. Make landlords unable to refuse people based on low-income housing vouchers. Stop approving luxury apartments and end the war on poverty.

Dan Molloy, 2367 Elm Street, stated:

Thank you for the efforts you've already made on homelessness. There is obviously more work to do. As a citizen, I appreciate you all taking the time to listen to that important issue. However, tonight I am here to talk about biking and I'll make some connections to that and our housing situation. My name is Dan Molloy and I am a Ward 1 resident. I have lived in Ward 1 forty of my fifty years on earth. Probably about 35 of those riding a bike. I volunteer for QC Bike Collective, as well as Manchester Moves, maintaining our trails as well as our bike fix-it stations. Myself, I ride about 3,000 miles on these city streets each year. Often with my two children, four and six years old on the back of my cargo bicycle. It is quite a site to see. My kids are pretty loud and I dare say pretty cute, too. Of course, I am biased. People often strike up a conversation and talk

about how great it is to see us on a bike. I ask them why did you take your care here. Their answer is I am scared to death to ride a bike in this city and I am surprised that you put your kids on your bike. It is a real issue. I have a lot of experience riding a bike but I'll tell you that on my way here riding my bike tonight I was only almost hit once. At a spot where our best effort at bike lanes are poorly designed so that drivers exiting a business have no line of sight to see me approaching. Thankfully I have an extremely loud horn on my bike and avoided a collision. Bike-ability equals livability and affordability. If people are having a hard time affording housing, they are also having a hard time affording transportation. Jobs require movement. Counseling, treatment require movement. The precious moments of getting your kid to school require movement. So, good bike infrastructure is needed as an integral part of our housing and transportation planning. So, Bryce's plan should be funded as it is modest, timely, and prudent for a city struggling with affordable housing, a surge in new downtown housing units and people that need to move about the city in those units many of which don't have cars. All of this will also help increase the recreation opportunities in the city and make Manchester a more welcoming place for all.

Molly Lunn Owen, 313 Walnut Street, stated:

I have been on the city's Planning Board since 2020. I am here to speak in support of the revamp of the bike master plan proposed by the Planning Board Chair. I see this as a solution to our city's overlapping crisis of affordability, of mental health and the becoming crisis of climate change. I could bore you with statistics and tell you that rents increased about 37.5% in the past four years. I can tell you that my salary has not increased 37.5%. I can tell you the day-to-day impact that has had on my family's finances, on my mental health and on the future that I hope to build for my children. When I ride my bike downtown, I can show up right to my place of work, hop off my bike, lock it up to a bike rack and walk inside with the biggest grin on my face that you will ever see. When I drive to work, I spend about \$6/day in parking. That is about \$30/week and over the course of a year that is over \$1,000. I replaced my breaks last week for about \$700. A friend of mine who lives downtown was able to give up her car recently and she estimates that she spends about \$6,000 less a year because she doesn't have car maintenance. You could say that biking is a luxury but I would say it is a necessity and it is one of the many solutions to the affordability crisis that you folks

are dealing with and I applaud your work to work toward some of these solutions. I encourage you to consider the bike master plan as an investment in our city's future as we see more individuals wanting to move to Manchester, and from personal experience as we see more individuals impacted by mental health challenges. I am sure I am not the only person that you have encountered who has struggled with post-partum depression. I read in the newspaper last year that almost 1 in 3 young girls have considered suicide in the past year. Those two statistics, my personal experience and what I hear about young people who my daughters might turn into make me really scared. I would say the ability to bike safely around your city makes an incredible difference not only in your physical health and ability to get to work but also on your mental health and your feeling of belonging and connection to the city that you call home. I am not a climate change scientist so I can't tell you a huge amount about climate change but I can tell you the difference it makes when I walk by a car compared to when I walk by a bike and the fumes that I am breathing in and that my children might have to deal with down the road. That is something I am considering, especially as a member of the Planning Board who knows that we might see some climate refugees coming to Manchester in the near future because we are fortunate to live in a city that might be able to escape some of the worst impacts of climate change and we want to make sure we can have a city where everyone can walk and bike around regardless of their income and regardless of their comfort on a bike. I am a very comfortable biker, not with this one because she is not old enough to bike yet but I encourage you to support the revamp of the master plan because I know that an investment like this in our city's future might take years and many steps to turn into the goal but as a non-profit leader, I know that you have to start with a goal or else you can't aim for anything so I encourage you to support this proposal. Thank you.

Matthew Normand stated that concludes our speakers but I would note for the record that we have communications that were forwarded to the Board from Joan Porter, Matthew Grote and Benjamin Godbout.

Mayor Craig asked is there anyone else present wishing to speak.

Dam Wright, Manchester stated:

I know I am probably the last person you want to hear from about 130.13(B). You all know that I was the one that exploded that last November to help over 100 people with no place to go to at least be able to provide themselves with some basic shelter from the elements and security from threats or attacks, which now include drones. As a result, we spent three months with a giant tent city in the middle of downtown that got named after the mayor. I never wanted that. If people have to live in tents, it shouldn't be on the sidewalk all crammed together with no trash cans and being cruelly denied any bathrooms or port-a-potties the whole time. There should be a designated area for public camping with some basic but reasonable rules and ideally some support, especially with all the land the city has or could easily get for something like this. Anyway, I doubt if anything I say is going to matter when you consider this tonight but I do want to make a couple of key points. Isn't it better for everyone if they do have tents? I mean we always hear these complaints about not wanting to see homeless people and the things they do to survive including drug use or going to the bathroom and all of that sort of thing. That could all be concealed, along with lots of their belongings that people say look trashy, if you let them have some tents. What if it was you? Really think about that. I know it will never happen. You wouldn't be in those chairs unless you had multiple levels of support networks to ensure that you never end up on the streets with nothing but what if it did happen? What would you do? Where would you go? The shelters are full. You can't be on private land. You can't be in parks. The only public land where you are allowed is sidewalks. Now, your city leaders are saying that you can't even shelter yourself there against the elements for your own safety. If it rains, you and everything you own gets soaked. If someone comes by to throw things at you or drop them on you from the sky, oh well. How long do you think you would stay healthy? How long do you think you could stay sane? Do you really think you could avoid any need to self-medicate with alcohol or highly addictive and deadly street drugs? How motivated would you feel to be a good neighbor or a good citizen and clean up after yourself and treat the rest of the people in this city with courtesy and respect? Please think this through before you vote. Think about the consequences. Think about what is better for everyone. Think about what would happen if someone was doing this to you. Think about how every time you have tried to get these people to stop doing things you don't want in places you don't want by using

consequences instead of incentives it has always blown up in your faces. Think about the upcoming elections and which party you should be running with if you are actually going to support something like this. Most of all, think about the alternative of just giving them a place to go. Thank you.

Glenn Ouellette, 112 Auburn Street, stated:

You haven't seen much of me because I, myself, have a health crisis that I am dealing with. Our golden years are not very pleasant, at least for me. I have here an eviction notice yet my rent is paid. My rent gets paid by the 22nd of every month. I used to work 32 hours a week at Home Depot but because of the soft market I am now working 12 hours or less per week. That does not take care when you lose have your income. My rent has come down about \$45. That is fine but that is not half the lost income. Ten years ago, I was charged over \$500 for bed bugs that were all over the building. It was illegal then and it is illegal now. Ten years later, what was off that market is now back on this. The city provides trash pick-up. You pick-up trash in my neighborhood twice a week because we are downtown. It is Tuesdays and Fridays. Yet in 2015, for two straight months, I was charged for trash. We now have a new policy in our neighborhood that if your bags are broken and they find your name or your information on the bags of trash around the barrels, they will charge you to collect that trash. Every night I see people doing just that; coming into our trash areas, opening the trash cans, and emptying them. That is not fair for the neighbors who live there. They are not the ones who broke those trash bags. Here is something I don't understand. I don't understand how you are taking away the Senior Services Department for a huge population of our city who have worked all their lives and combining it with the Health Department. You presently have the Fire Department that has combined with the Homeless Department and now you are making that into a department. That is very counterproductive because you took one away and you put one in. That makes no sense. The last thing I want to say is that I have always paid for my rent. Where I live now, I will have been there 23 years come December. Rents don't only go up. When you lose your income...three years ago I earned \$27,000. This year I am going to barely earn \$18,000. Next year I won't be working at all. I be allowed because the doctors won't let me. How am I supposed to stay in Manchester? If I do get evicted, you will probably see me down in a tent in the cemetery. We have to live somewhere.

Pushing the tents around all over the city is not a solution. Resolve it and stop wasting taxpayer's money. Thank you.

Mr. Mitchell, 88 Worthley Street, stated:

I am new to Manchester. I just moved here about two years ago. I travel a lot for my job all across the country and one thing that I can assure you is that homeless is not a Manchester issue; it is country wide. It is not an issue that Manchester is going to be able to fix in any way, shape or form ever unless communities across this country work collectively as a collaborative to face the issues together. That is the only way you are going to solve it. I do believe that housing is an issue. I am a property owner and also a landlord. My property taxes in my first year here went up. Property values go up. I am one of the fools that bought a house for \$400,000 just last year. At 2.875% interest rate, my rental income doesn't even come to the maintenance cost of my rental property. It doesn't even cover half of my mortgage. I currently rent to somebody on a fixed income and I take passion in providing that service to them so they have a place to live but that income is capped. It doesn't cover half of the mortgage. I don't even have enough money from their rental income to subsidize the maintenance costs of the property that I am renting to them. That is okay but as a service that Manchester provides, that is something that Manchester can look into for low-income people. The second thing is or the main issue of why I came up here is you can look at policing homelessness and house them in prison or you can provide housing for them on this side of the wall. You are only transferring resources and capital from a police state to a social service state. It is going to cost you the same amount of money, if not more, to house them in Valley Street than it would be to house them in a shelter. That is all I have to say.

Dennis Higgins, Manchester, stated:

I am staying at the Beech Street shelter. You have a lot of passionate people here tonight and there are a lot of issues going on. I have a lot to say about Beech Street but I will leave that alone for a while because I am sure they are trying their hardest to get their issues resolved. First, a shout out to the Fire Department for looking after us all the time. The Chief is awesome. The same with the Police. I have no issues with them personally. They have a job to do and it comes from the top down. They are not just

cruising around looking for homeless people to bug. That is not what they are doing. They have things to do. They have a click it app and that is probably more than half of their job when people are riding around clicking it all the time. A shout out to Mary from 1269 Café. She gave me some good ideas about how to handle some stuff and the Bike Collective is awesome. Whatever they have to do, they are doing it right. I will tell you that much. To roll up the sidewalks every day or clean them on Wednesday or whatever it is and the fact that you are throwing out all of the stuff that people have...I know that it seems kind of strange or it doesn't look right or whatever it is but whatever they have, that is their whole life. So, if you are just going to throw their stuff away, you are just creating more problems all the time. I am not saying that some stuff doesn't probably need to be thrown away but you can't keep rolling people up and moving them around. It is creating what I call absolute mayhem down on Manchester Street. Last year, and you may not agree, but I thought it was safe. You could go down there and nothing was happening. Granted there was a police car parked there all the time but that was good. Now, it is absolute mayhem. It is not a place you want to go and you are talking to someone who has lived on the street his whole life recently and has been in some pretty bad places. This is right up there. You can't trust anything or anybody. I know that everyone thinks they just have to solve this problem but there is no solving homelessness. It is a problem we are going to have forever and something where we are just going to have a net out there to catch as many people as you can and get them turned around and back into the work force. The affordable housing thing. I know that they want you to build more housing but how is the city supposed to supply housing for everybody? How are you guys supposed to tell landlords how much to charge for rent? I don't see how that happens. Maybe tax breaks or something. Affordable housing is obviously something we need but how you go about it, I don't know. As far as the bicycle trails and stuff, that is a good thing. This city is an easy bike ride. It really is. I wouldn't know what to do without my bike and I am kind of getting tired of everybody taking them when they don't like see them. I am trying to do the right thing and sell and buy stuff and not boost at the mall or sell drugs. I am trying to work on bikes and to get this pushback all the time is really starting to get annoying. Keep it up guys. I hope you figure this one out because it is not easy and you have a lot of people that are pretty mad right now so good luck and everybody have a good night.

Abby Easterly, 80 Clarke Street, stated:

I have been involved, I have had the privilege of being involved as a volunteer with QC Bike for the last eight or nine years. I am here to talk on behalf of and to support the bike master plan that has been brought forward. I think it would be really beneficial for our city in many ways. On my way here tonight, I stopped by one of our local establishments and Jose was there behind the counter doing kitchen work as he does. Jose is a regular user of the QC Bike's services. He has given me the quote that keeps me going if I get really tired. Jose was thanking us for helping repair his bike. On his days off, which are Mondays, which are not our days on, but we make allowances to be sure we can hit that. He was thanking us and I said to him I know your bike is very important to you. Jose said to me, Abby, my bike is my car. So, I ask that in the same way we provide good services for people who use cars, let's try to do some for those who must use bikes and those who want to use bikes. It will be good for our whole city.

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

Mayor Craig stated we have a presentation, but I just want to say something while many people are still in the gallery. I appreciate you coming in this evening and sharing your thoughts. As someone said, there are a lot of passionate statements stated tonight. I want to talk about a few things. The projection state-wide is that New Hampshire needs 60,000 housing units by 2030. This is a statewide crisis that we are in right now. It is important to talk a little bit about what the City of Manchester has done to address this housing crisis as well as homelessness. Right now, there are 500 new affordable housing units in development. We are re-doing our Zoning Ordinances. We have funded partnerships with MHRA to increase the number of public housing units, and right now there are 48 units at Kelley Falls; new units in development. Along with those, we are increasing the number of landlords who take Section 8. We have funded a city shelter, we have funded an engagement center, and we are funding dozens of non-profit partners who are doing incredible work within our city. It is important to talk about when I am saying funding that it is federal funding that comes into the City of Manchester. We have put \$14 million into our affordable housing trust, again, to increase affordable

housing options in the city. We have the National Alliance to End Homelessness coming into Manchester to work with us. Their mission is to prevent and to end homelessness across this country. We got them to come to Manchester, and we are funding them through a partnership with the Bean Foundation and the Charitable Foundation. We advocate at the state level for changes that we can't make locally. A number of the things that were mentioned today and tonight are not things that the City of Manchester can implement. They have to be changes at the state level. We are fortunate to have state representatives here who heard your comments and I am sure they will be bringing that back. I want you to know we have been proactively going to the state and advocating for inclusionary zoning and other things. Tonight, we are proposing a Housing Stability Department to make sure we are consolidating efforts to address one of the biggest issues that our community is facing. Our continuum of care is funding Housing First, which I completely support. We know there is a housing crisis; there is an affordable housing crisis in our state and country. We are working on it and care about it, but Manchester cannot solve this on its own. I do want you to know, we hear you. We know we need to do more, and we are working to do more. The last thing I want to mention is a few individuals came forward and mentioned that the city has cut funding to our seniors. I want to clarify that we are actually increasing funding to our seniors by consolidating the Senior Center into the Health Department. We have hired a community health worker who now is doing outreach to our seniors. The work with the Health Department in conjunction with the Senior Center is now providing more services and more opportunities to our seniors than ever before. We absolutely agree with you when you said we should be doing more for our seniors, and I want you to know that the budget that was just passed this year reflected that. I think it is important that we all understand that. With that, I'd like to call forward Director Anna Thomas, Patricia Cardy from Manchester Mental Health, and Kelly Rafferty from the Elliot Hospital. They have a suicide prevention month presentation.

PRESENTATIONS

2. Suicide Prevention Month Presentation by members of the Health Department, Elliot Hospital and the Mental Health Center of Greater Manchester.

Anna Thomas, Public Health Director, stated as the mayor mentioned, I am joined tonight by Patricia Cardy who is the President and CEO of the Mental Health Center of Greater Manchester, and Kelly Rafferty who is the Executive Director of Solution Health Philanthropy and Community Benefit, and the Mary and John Elliot Charitable Foundation, which are all part of the Elliot Health System. Just like all of you, they are incredibly busy people in our community. I want to thank them for taking the time to be here tonight. If you don't already know, both of these organizations and others I'll mention are anchor institutions within the City of Manchester. They are tremendous partners with us for improving the health and wellness of our constituents. The Mental Health Center of Greater Manchester is a private, non-profit system and community mental health center. It has served the Greater Manchester area for more than sixty years and provides a broad range of services to 11,000 people annually, including business leaders, their employees, educators, veterans, seniors, and thousands of children in the community. It is the largest provider of outpatient behavioral health services in New Hampshire, with 450 employees operating over thirty programs. It is also affiliated with the Geisel School of Medicine at Dartmouth, established in 1890. I was an intern at Elliot Hospital during my undergraduate degree and I take great pride in that. Elliot Health System is the largest provider of comprehensive healthcare services in Southern New Hampshire. The cornerstone of Elliot Health System is Elliot Hospital which is a 296-bed acute care facility located here on the east side of Manchester. We have Catholic Medical Center on the other side of the city, which is licensed for 330 beds. Together, Elliot Hospital is also home to Manchester's designated regional trauma center, urgent care centers, a level-three newborn intensive care unit, Elliot Physician Network, Elliot Specialists, a center for cancer care, Elliot Senior Health Center Visiting Nurse Association of Manchester and Southern New Hampshire, and Elliot one-day surgery center, and Elliot's at River's Edge, and Elliot's pediatrics. Along with other community partners, such as Make It Happen, who is also here, and the VA Hospital in Manchester, we felt it was important to call attention during the month of September which is National Suicide Prevention Month, to some of the work that is being done in this area. Unfortunately, many of you hear about suicide when you see something on the news. We have unfortunately had some suicide attempts off the bridges that makes headlines in the papers. There are certainly more of that happening in the community. We want to talk about the intervention working taking

place. In your packet there is some local cited data. On average every year, we lose about 22 Manchester residents due to suicide. We experience over 500 suicide or self-harm related visits in our hospitals. In the time that we had public comment, we are losing about one person every eleven minutes. So, in that time during public comment, we lost in this country about ten people due to suicide. This is significant. One in ten of high school students in the region of Manchester, including the eight surrounding towns, have reported in the Youth Risk Behavior Survey that they have attempted suicide at least once in the past twelve months. Nationally, suicide rates are at an all time high and it is a leading cause of death not only nationally but locally. We experienced not only one death by suicide every eleven minutes, but also seventeen veteran suicides per day. As community leaders we all share the responsibility of preventing any of these deaths from occurring. To hear more about what is happening on the local level, I'd like to ask Patricia Carty to speak about the zero-suicide initiative, followed by Kelly Rafferty on Elliot's investment in this space.

Patricia Carty, President and CEO of the Mental Health Center of Greater Manchester, stated 135; that is the number of lives impacted for every person who dies by suicide. We know for many that number is much higher. Many people who die by suicide have a mental illness that is often undiagnosed and untreated. Right now, the second leading cause of death in people ages ten to twenty-four is suicide. An estimated ninety percent of people, of that sixty percent, are diagnosed with depression which is the leading cause of despair. Suicide itself is considered a death of despair. How many of us know someone, love someone, work with someone who lives with depression or some type of mental illness? I imagine most of us in this room. Suicide is an issue that touches all of us, whether we know it or not. From 2011 to 2021, New Hampshire saw a nine percent increase in suicide deaths. The recent preliminary data from the CDC indicates that nationally in 2022, we saw the highest number of suicide deaths on record. Somewhere over 50,000 deaths. Within the past year, we know that at least three of our citizens sadly ended their lives on our Manchester bridges, resulting in significant emotional and financial impacts on our city. For the past five years the Mental Health Center and some of our partners, the VA, CMC, Elliot, have been working on a zero-suicide initiative and an evidence-based framework for preventing suicide within health systems. We believe that even one death by suicide is too many. Zero suicide is our goal, however, we

believe that through our existing partnerships and with your help we are well positioned to make a significant impact in preventing suicide in our community. The research is clear that when we reduce access to lethal means it helps prevent deaths by suicide. There are many methods and means that we don't have a lot of control over. Bridges is one that we do. Research indicates that installing barriers on bridges prevents deaths and it is that simple. Any of the big cities that have put barriers up where there have been challenges have seen that it is preventative. As members of this community, it is our aspiration and our responsibility to help prevent suicide. We can and we must do more. Each of us here today has an important role to play in suicide prevention. It is our belief that suicide prevention is everyone's business. Imagine how many lives we can positively impact if we all work together to make zero suicide a reality in Manchester. Thank you for your consideration.

Kelly Rafferty, Executive Director of Solution Health Philanthropy and Community Benefit, stated Elliot Health System is dedicated to the care and support of those facing behavioral health needs in the communities that we serve. Partnerships between and among various community organizations and all levels of government are essential to addressing the crisis facing so many in our community. As a community convener of health care resources and programs, we are supportive of implementing proactive measures that prioritize the well being and safety of individuals facing such challenges. Suicide prevention strategies including signage and bridge barriers placed in these vulnerable areas can play a vital role in saving lives. By installing bridge barriers, we create physical barriers that can act as a deterrent and reduce these risks in these actions leading to suicide. Additionally, incorporating suicide hotlines and resource signage on bridges and in other vulnerable areas in our community provide immediate access to assistance to those facing a crisis. Signage of this nature serves as a reminder to these individuals that they are not alone and that support is available. These signs offer a glimmer of hope and a life line to individuals who may feel trapped or overwhelmed by their current circumstances. We have a vital role to play in suicide prevention. Together, we can make a tangible and positive impact and save lives of those in our community.

Ms. Thomas stated in summary, I was unaware that there is actually nearly one hundred bridges in the City of Manchester. I did not know that. When you sit down and count them, there are that many. You all approved in this past year's budget bringing all of the bridges up to state standards. There are only a handful left. At this point, one of the additions that is being considered by community partners to bring to you as an idea and maybe to have you think about this, is could we get signage on a handful of bridges that seem to have a higher propensity for this suicide risk. It would be simple signage to remind people that there is help out there. We want to remind everyone here that there is a suicide and crisis lifeline which is 988. We ask everyone to push that information out among your constituents. To consider that now that all the bridges will be brought up to state standards, the one addition might be on a handful of those to add signage promoting the 988 suicide and crisis lifeline for people to have as a resource. Again, to also increase awareness in the community. We don't need to stop with the bridges, we could be putting other posters and messaging around other city departments and resources to make sure that it is promoted throughout the community.

Alderman Long stated instead of signs and posters what about call stations.

Ms. Thomas stated can you elaborate on that.

Alderman Long stated Bridge Street Bridge is a bridge that people jump off of. Could there be a call station put there instead of a sign say call this number?

Ms. Thomas stated San Francisco is an example of a community that has had to do that. They have phones installed in the bridges. They have also gone to great lengths to add barriers to bridges which has been an enormous deterrent. The only difficulty is it is costly. It is an added expense. It has to be manned and connected to a hotline. It is not out of the question, but it is a resource issue. This was the smaller step to take to at least increase awareness and call attention that there is help available.

Ms. Rafferty stated research indicates that the first line to tackle is the barriers. The signage is really to tackle the ambivalence. Most people at the time of approaching from a suicidal standpoint, there is always ambivalence. Having signs saying get help, there

is hope out there, are things that deter that issue of ambivalence. Everything is on the table on terms of what can help, but those are the two at least from a research standpoint.

Alderman Fajardo stated with the bridges, how does the state figure into that as far as highways.

Ms. Thomas stated I would have to talk to Director Clougherty. From what I understand, there are some state and national standards that would have to be met. In this case, because the language that you would want to add to the bridge is beyond what the standard language is, that is more within local control. It would be something that would have to be installed based on your approval of whatever that language looks like. The other challenge is if we put signage on a handful of bridges it would have to go at each end on both sides, so four signs per bridge.

Alderman Fajardo stated I was thinking more about the increasing of barriers.

Mayor Craig stated we did fund some of those in our budget.

Ms. Thomas stated the next step would be adding the signage to some of the bridges.

Alderman Kantor stated there are so many people that are affected by suicide whether it is jumping off a bridge or overdosing with drugs. Did you say there were three in one year? What were your numbers?

Ms. Thomas answered three that we knew of. It is difficult to track because not all of the calls come in to our first responder system in the same way. We have had many attempts. There have been a handful, a smaller number, of those who have actually used the bridges as a method. It is troubling.

Alderman Kantor stated it is troubling. The needles, is that part of the program? Passing out needles for drugs? Do you know what I am talking about?

Ms. Thomas stated I am not sure.

Alderman Kantor stated the needles for people that are using. They come back.

Ms. Thomas asked the needle exchange.

Alderman Kantor stated yes.

Ms. Thomas stated these are independent programs. The needle exchange would be for those who are using drugs and for harm reeducation purposes. This is for those who are unfortunately attempting or dying by suicide which is separate from the needle exchange program.

Alderman Kantor stated I understand. I think that so many people use drugs to attempt suicide. It is enabling with the needle exchange. I'm bringing my personal opinion where I'm completely compassionate. I'm just wondering what those overdoses were that people have passed away from.

Ms. Thomas stated it is important to know the leading means of death by suicide is firearms. By far, it is the most common means. From there it is poisoning which is overdoses. Most of those are oral medications. It is hard for us to know. This year for instance, we had three on bridges. We have statistics on the people because we get notified. We won't have any of that confirmed for two years. The statistics are two years behind. The top three have not changed: suffocation and hanging.

Alderman Kantor stated that is very sad.

Ms. Thomas stated and one extra point, I am also the designee on the Overdose Fatality Review Commission for the state for Manchester. In our exploration of other overdose fatality review commissions in other states, they do blend. They look at overdose fatality along with suicides. Your point is well taken that these things have some synergy in some cases. In this context we were just starting with the bridges and physical structures. The programming is a much larger need.

Alderman Kantor stated I agree. So many people are suffering and they need help.
Thank you for everything you are doing.

CONSENT AGENDA

Accept BMA Minutes

3. Minutes from the 8/1 Special BMA , BMA and Finance Committee meetings.

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

4. 50/50 Sidewalk Petitions

Commercial:

- 708 Pine Street
- 764 Hall Street

Residential:

- 21 Meadow Lane
- 30 Porter Street
- 68 Kearney Street
- 76 Jewett Street
- 101 Crestview Street
- 108 Seams Drive
- 144 Whipple Street
- 146 Manning Street
- 184 Wedgewood Lane
- 294 N Bay Street
- 391 Oak Street
- 618 Hanover Street
- 630 Amherst Street
- 801 River Road
- 827 Chestnut Street
- 1583 Belmont Street

Information to be Received and Filed

5. Communication from Matthew Normand, City Clerk, advising the Board that we will be increasing our wedding package total to \$300 effective October 1, 2023.

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

8. Resolutions:

“Amending the FY2023 Community Improvement Program, authorizing, appropriating and transferring funds in the amount of Two Hundred Thousand

Dollars (\$200,000) for the FY2023 CIP 212023 Gatehouse TST Initiative.”

“Amending the FY2024 Community Improvement Program, authorizing and appropriating funds in the amount of Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$50,000) for the FY2024 CIP 410524 ALERRT Integrated Response Training.”

“Amending the FY2024 Community Improvement Program, authorizing and appropriating funds in the amount of Sixty Five Thousand Dollars (\$65,000) for the FY2024 CIP 410624 Full Scale Active Threat Exercise.”

“Amending the FY2022 Community Improvement Program, authorizing, appropriating and transferring funds in the amount of Twenty-Three Thousand Thirty-Four Dollars and Forty- Seven Cents (\$23,034.47) for the FY2022 CIP 810922 ARPA - Manchester Economic Development Office.”

"Amending the FY2024 Community Improvement Program, authorizing and appropriating funds in the amount of Seven Hundred Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$750,000) for the FY2024 CIP 810924 Compensation."

"Amending the FY2024 Community Improvement Program, authorizing and appropriating funds in the amount of Six Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$600,000) for the FY2022 CIP 712122 Replacement of Fire Station 9 (Calef Road)."

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

COMMITTEE ON BILLS ON SECOND READING

9. Recommending that the following Ordinance Amendment:

“Amending Chapter 91 Solid Waste & Littering of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Manchester by establishing eligibility requirements for collection, and modifying volume restrictions and various definitions.”

ought to pass and be referred to the Committee on Accounts, Enrollment & Revenue Administration.

(Unanimous vote with the exception of Aldermen Gamache and George-Kelly who were absent)

10. Recommending that the following Ordinance Amendment:

“Amending Chapter 71: Snow Emergency Regulations of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Manchester to change from odd/even to monthly parking on city streets during snow emergencies and to allow for more efficient cleaning of streets following snow storms.”

ought to pass and be referred to the Committee on Accounts, Enrollment & Revenue Administration.

(Unanimous vote with the exception of Aldermen Gamache and George-Kelly who were absent)

11. Recommending that the following Ordinance Amendment:

“Inserting Section 36.60 Municipal Economic Development and Revitalization Districts to the Code of Ordinances of the City of Manchester.”

ought to pass and be referred to the Committee on Accounts, Enrollment & Revenue Administration.

(Unanimous vote with the exception of Aldermen Gamache and George-Kelly who were absent)

COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT

**12. Recommending that the Amending Resolution and Budget Authorization providing for the transfer and expenditure of funds in the amount of \$200,000 for CIP 212023 Gatehouse TST Initiative be approved.
*(Unanimous vote)***

**13. Recommending that the Amending Resolution and Budget Authorization providing for the acceptance and expenditure of funds in the amount of \$50,000 for CIP 410524 ALERRT Integrated Response Training be approved.
*(Unanimous vote)***

**14. Recommending that the Amending Resolution and Budget Authorization providing for the acceptance and expenditure of funds in the amount of \$65,000 for CIP 410624 Full Scale Active Threat Exercise be approved.
*(Unanimous vote)***

**15. Recommending that the Amending Resolution and Budget Authorization providing for the transfer and expenditure of funds in the amount of \$23,034.47 for CIP 810922 ARPA - Manchester Economic Development Office be approved.
*(Unanimous vote)***

**16. Recommending that the request from the Fire Chief to apply for the Firehouse Subs Foundation Grant in the amount of \$15,200 be approved.
*(Unanimous vote)***

COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RESOURCES/INSURANCE

**17. Advising that the recommendation of the Risk Manager made during non-public session at a meeting on August 1, 2023 was accepted.
*(Unanimous vote with the exception of Alderman George-Kelly who was absent)***

COMMITTEE ON LANDS AND BUILDINGS

**18. Recommending that the request from the Airport Director for an amendment to the existing ground lease agreement with Electronics For Imaging, Inc. for property located at 12 Innovation Way, Londonderry, NH, be approved.
*(Unanimous vote)***

19. Advising that the proposed easement agreement from Dockside II Condominium Association for the property located at Riverfront Drive (Tax Map 105, Lot8A) has been received and filed.
(Unanimous vote)
20. Recommending that the proposal for a mural on a bridge pillar beneath the Bridge Street Bridge near 500 Commercial Street be approved.
(Unanimous vote with the exception of Alderman Levasseur who voted in opposition)

COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY, HEALTH AND TRAFFIC

21. Advising that the citizen proposal for an amendment to Ordinance Section 71: Snow Emergency Regulations has been received and filed.
(Unanimous vote with the exception of Aldermen Stewart and George-Kelly who were absent)
22. Advising that the request from Stark Brewing Company to have city fees waived for their Micro Comedy Show scheduled for August 13, 2023 has been received and filed.
(Unanimous vote with the exception of Aldermen Stewart and George-Kelly who were absent)
23. Advising that the inquiry from Brad Pernaw in reference to parking in front of the Common Man Roadside restaurant at 451 Commercial Street, specifically regarding the installation of a park & pay kiosk, has been received and filed.
(Unanimous vote with the exception of Aldermen Stewart and George-Kelly who were absent)

*HAVING READ THE CONSENT AGENDA, ON MOTION OF **ALDERMAN CAVANAUGH**, DULY SECONDED BY **ALDERMAN HEATH**, IT WAS VOTED TO APPROVE THE BALANCE, WITH **ALDERMAN LEVASSEUR** DULY RECORDED IN OPPOSITION TO ITEM 20, AND **ALDERMAN T. SAPIENZA** ABSTAINING FROM ITEM 17.*

Information to be Received and Filed

6. Communication from Mayor Craig to the NH Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS) regarding the Doorway Program, as well as the response from DHHS.

Alderman Burkush stated thank you Mayor for providing us with information on the meeting that you had with the State DHHS on the effectiveness of the Doorway System.

A lot of us have been working, and every city department has been working very hard on this crisis. Board members also have been trying to base our decisions on reliable data. It is apparent that the state is not providing us any data or help to go forward. Do you have any other updates on this?

Mayor Craig stated no that is the latest. We had a good meeting. The state recognizes the importance of data. They uploaded data and I took a look at it. What I saw from the data put up was that on average five people per month over a six-month period were actually getting into services they needed. They said many other people are getting help. They took the data down, it was incorrect. They are looking at it. My hope is that they will get some correct data up there. They are going to work with the Health Department to do that but it goes beyond just the data. I'm sure you noticed that the Manchester doorway does not have an on-site clinician. It is not in an accessible location. In fact, it is next to probation and parole. They don't employ a certified recovery support worker. Many of the other Doorways throughout the state have these things. It is important that we continue to advocate for this. There is a lot of money going toward this and we need to make sure that it is meeting the needs of our residents and that is what I will continue to do.

Alderman Burkush stated thank you for that information.

*On motion of **Alderman Burkush**, duly seconded by **Alderman George-Kelly**, it was voted to receive and file.*

REFERRALS TO COMMITTEES

COMMITTEE ON ADMINISTRATION/INFORMATION SYSTEMS

7. Communication from Aldermen Burkush & Stewart regarding the elimination of the Comcast Canadian channel.

Alderman Burkush stated Comcast Cable has removed the Canadian channel from their service. I have received calls along with Alderman Stewart and your office also about the lack of service. I have contacted Comcast. I am asking the Board to approve a letter tonight from this Board requesting the reinstitution of the Canadian channel. The Comcast response was they provide streaming of it. Elderly people I talk to are not up

for streaming. They watch mass, they watch shows. We could at least try to get the service restored for them.

Alderman Burkush moved to send a letter to Comcast regarding the Canadian channel. **Alderman Stewart** duly seconded the motion.

Alderman Long stated I am not sure if the Canadian stations are charging Comcast more for that. I don't know the reason why they cut it. Are they charging them more?

Alderman Burkush stated I talked to a Comcast representative in Concord. He said it was due to low usage. The residents that I talk to say they didn't have any option to get it.

Mayor Craig stated we get a lot of calls.

Alderman T. Sapienza stated they used to come here to explain things first.

Mayor Craig stated we can send a letter and invite them to our next meeting.

Mayor Craig called for a vote. *The motion carried unanimously.*

REGULAR BUSINESS

- 24.** Communication from Talia Burghard advising the Board of her resignation as a member of the Zoning Board of Adjustment effective October 1, 2023.

*On motion of **Alderman Long**, duly seconded by **Alderman Cavanaugh**, it was voted to accept the resignation with regret.*

- 25.** Communication from Peter Macone advising the Board of his resignation as a member of the Central Business Service District Advisory Board.

*On motion of **Alderman Long**, duly seconded by **Alderman Heath**, it was voted to accept the resignation with regret.*

26. Communication from Robert Ross, DDS, advising the Board of his resignation as a member of the Board of Health.

*On motion of **Alderman Gamache**, duly seconded by **Alderman George-Kelly**, it was voted to accept the resignation with regret.*

27. Confirmations:
Board of Trustees of the Trust Fund
Patrick Duffy as a regular member to succeed Monique Pratt, term to expire January 1, 2026
Conservation Commission
Lauren Zielinski as a regular member to succeed Isaac Rugali, term to expire August 1, 2026
Manchester Public Television Board
Thomas Craig as a regular member to succeed Dave Wihby, term to expire July 1, 2026
Planning Board
Stephen Meno as an alternate member to succeed Laura Diaz, term to expire May 1, 2025

*On motion of **Alderman Cavanaugh**, duly seconded by **Alderman Long**, it was voted to approve the confirmations.*

28. Communication from Bryce Kaw-uh, Chair, Manchester Planning Board, requesting one-time funding in the amount of \$150,000 to hire a consultant to draft an updated Bicycle Master Plan.

Alderman Levasseur moved to receive and file. **Alderman E. Sapienza** duly seconded the motion.

Alderman T. Sapienza stated I fully support this concept. It is \$150,000, I don't know where the money is going to come from. A price tag of \$150,000, I don't know where that money is coming from at this particular moment. To me that should be a budget issue. It is not an emergency so I don't want to take it out of contingency at this particular time of the year. Maybe in the last month of our fiscal year we might be able to find the funds within the budget. If we have some surpluses. Tonight, I don't know where the money would come from.

Mayor Craig stated I want to check to see if there is a way that we can start this process with a start of funding it. The other thing is with the Build Back Better Regional Challenge, we are undergoing a transportation equity study and potentially a bike plan could be part of that for the entire city. I think it is worth keeping this going. I agree with the individuals who came forward speaking in favor of this. I agree with you that funding right now is an issue. I'd like to look at alternative ways to get this started this year with planning and funds that we have available.

Alderman Fajardo stated could we potentially vote to approve it with a caveat that once the funding is secured. We heard that there is a potential for grant money or extra ARPA funds. Is that a possibility at this point?

Mayor Craig stated I don't think there are any ARPA funds available. There could be potential grants available.

Alderman Burkush asked can we refer to committee to study funding sources rather than kill it.

Mayor Craig called for a vote. Alderman E. Sapienza requested a roll call vote. Alderman E. Sapienza, Kantor, and Levasseur voted yea. Alderman Cavanaugh, Stewart, Long, Fajardo, T. Sapienza, Trisciani, Heath, Burkush, Barry, Gamache, and George-Kelly voted nay. The motion failed.

On motion of **Alderman Levasseur**, duly seconded by **Alderman Cavanaugh**, it was voted to refer the item to the Committee on Community Improvement.

29. Communication from the Manchester School District requesting authorization to transfer any revenue and expenditure surplus into the Teaching and Learning Expendable Trust Fund for fiscal year 2023.

Alderman Heath moved to approve the request. **Alderman Long** duly seconded the motion.

Alderman Levasseur asked how much is going in and what is the Teaching and Learning Expendable Trust Fund.

Mayor Craig stated it is my understanding that there will be \$3,352,113 into the trust with \$3.2 million coming through revenue surplus. The trust fund is classroom teaching and learning; books, curriculum, and training.

Alderman Levasseur asked what is going to happen with the \$12 million coming from the state. Has that already been sent by the state to the School Board or does it come through us?

Mayor Craig stated it is going before the School Board Monday and then it will come to this Board.

Alderman Levasseur asked it already came to them.

Mayor Craig answered no it has not yet.

Alderman Levasseur stated so we still have a vote on that.

Mayor Craig stated I think it is \$32 or \$35 million.

Alderman Levasseur stated there was just a single number of \$12 million I thought.

Mayor Craig stated no it is in the \$30 million range.

Alderman Levasseur asked is that straight cash or is it a grant.

Mayor Craig stated adequacy grant.

Alderman Levasseur asked when we vote to give them that is that going into trusts.

Mayor Craig stated the district can come before us and talk to what they are going to use it for.

Alderman T. Sapienza asked what would happen to this money if we didn't vote for this. Is it supposed to come back to us?

Mayor Craig replied I don't think it would come back. I don't think so I think annually any surplus goes into their trust accounts.

Alderman T. Sapienza asked do we approve what trust account it goes into.

Mayor Craig answered no. They make the recommendation of the trust account. Every year when there's a surplus, they come to this Board to request approval.

Alderman Fajardo stated just to clarify this is surplus that they have from their budget last year so it would go into their trust fund. It is not surplus that is coming from the city, it's on the school district side.

Mayor Craig stated correct. It is being put into a trust. If you want to have them come to the next meeting to speak to it, we can. The surplus is a result of several factors. New Hampshire retirement reimbursement for 7.5% of fiscal year 2022 expenditures, reimbursement for Chrome books, and interest at a higher rate.

Alderman T. Sapienza stated my question is we are allocating this money to go to a particular trust fund. If we didn't allocate it to go there, could it go somewhere else. It's just a curious question. You mention it is a surplus from the retirement account, which we know every year we hear we are many millions of dollars in the retirement accounts. Maybe we should put it in that account.

Alderman Long stated my understanding is if we don't approve this, that money goes to the DRA and the tax rate gets reduced by that \$3 million. They don't get to put it into another trust fund. If we say no, that surplus gets sent to the DRA.

Alderman T. Sapienza stated we don't actually send money to the state they just change the tax rate correct. I'm asking the question. Do we know for sure? Let's get the answer.

Bob Gagne, Assessors, stated I came all the way down to tell you I don't know. To be honest, that's a question for Finance.

Mayor Craig stated every year we have approved it. I would assume it would bring the tax rate down if we didn't but I don't know for sure. It has always been approved when it has come before this Board. We can table it if you want and they can come before us.

Mayor Craig called for a vote. *There being a tie, Mayor Craig voted to approve. The motion carried.*

Alderman T. Sapienza asked can we still get the answer as to where the money would go if we didn't make that recommendation.

Mayor Craig stated yes, we can.

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

The Committee on Community Improvement respectfully recommends, after due and careful consideration, that the Amending Resolution and Budget Authorization providing for the acceptance and expenditure of funds in the amount of \$53,300 for CIP 410824 Highway Safety Grant be approved and referred to the Committee on Finance.

*On motion of **Alderman Cavanaugh**, duly seconded by **Alderman Heath**, 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 request from Steve Hoeft, BSO, to extend the project end date for CIP 411722 NIBRS Crime Statistics Software to 9/30/2024 be approved.

*On motion of **Alderman Long**, duly seconded by **Alderman Heath**, 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 request from the property owner of 244 Bell Street for subordination of City liens in the amount of \$81,883 be approved.

Alderman Trisciani moved to accept the report and adopt its recommendation.

Alderman Long duly seconded the motion.

Alderman Long stated I wanted to confirm that there was no cash taking from this move. It was to pay down a debt so they are not taking any cash equity of the house, right? I didn't hear that during the committee meeting and I wanted to make sure of that.

Jeff Belanger, Planning & Community Development Director, stated there was an appraisal on the house for \$575,000 and there is a \$213,000 equity or something like that. They are refinancing the house and they are using it to pay off some other debt.

Alderman Long stated they are not pocketing some equity out of this.

Mr. Belanger stated no this is all going back in.

Alderman T. Sapienza asked is the loan amount the same or are they taking cash out to do something else with it.

Mr. Belanger stated they are taking cash out because they have a number of liens that have been placed on the property as a result of other work they had done. They improved the property through our programs. They are consolidating that and taking some out to pay off other debts.

Alderman T. Sapienza stated so they are taking cash out.

Mr. Belanger stated the currently valuation after an appraisal is \$575,000. The amount of the new mortgage is \$343,000. The difference is \$231,000. They have \$231,000 in equity that they are relying on.

Alderman T. Sapienza stated right. That's not the question. With all due respect, that has nothing to do with the question we were asking. What the appraisal is is irrelevant to the question. What was the loan that is ahead of ours? We were in second place. How much was in front of us originally? More or less than what is in front of us now?

Mr. Belanger replied the St. Mary's loan is \$130,000.

Alderman T. Sapienza stated there was \$130,000 and then we were next. Now how much is there? \$231,000?

Mr. Belanger stated \$343,000.

Alderman T. Sapienza stated we used to be second to \$130,000.

Mr. Belanger stated there were two: \$130,000 and then one from Neighborhood Housing Services NeighborWorks for \$47,500.

Alderman T. Sapienza asked \$130,000 and \$47,500. Then it was us?

Mr. Belanger replied yes.

Alderman T. Sapienza asked what is it now.

Mr. Belanger answered the new mortgage is \$343,000 and we are behind that.

Alderman T. Sapienza stated it used to be \$170,000 now it is \$343,000.

Mr. Belanger stated yes.

Alderman T. Sapienza stated ok, there you go. The simple answer is yes they took money out. They put more money in front of us which we never used to allow. We started allowing that the last couple of years. Just making the point that we asked a question and we had to beat around the bush to get the answer.

Alderman Trisciani stated if you look at the liens that are secured, in most cases those are liens that as long as they are in the house will be reduced and wouldn't be paid back anyway because that is HUD Programming money.

Mr. Belanger stated correct. These don't get repaid until and unless there is a sale of the property.

Alderman T. Sapienza stated or foreclosure or tax lien.

*Mayor Craig called for a vote. The motion carried, with **Alderman T. Sapienza** abstaining.*

The Committee on Community Improvement respectfully recommends, after due and careful consideration, that the request from Kristen Clarke, Traffic Engineer, to apply for a U.S. Department of Transportation SMART (Strengthening Mobility & Revolutionizing Transportation) grant be approved.

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

*On motion of **Aldermen E. Sapienza**, duly seconded by **Alderman Fajardo**, it was voted to recess the meeting.*

Mayor Craig called the meeting back to order.

33. Report(s) of the Committee on Finance.

The Committee on Finance respectfully recommends, after due and careful consideration, that Resolutions:

“Amending the FY2023 Community Improvement Program, authorizing, appropriating and transferring funds in the amount of Two Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$200,000) for CIP 212023 Gatehouse TST Initiative.”

“Amending the FY2024 Community Improvement Program, authorizing and appropriating funds in the amount of Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$50,000) for CIP 410524 ALERRT Integrated Response Training.”

"Amending the FY2024 Community Improvement Program, authorizing and appropriating funds in the amount of Sixty Five Thousand Dollars (\$65,000) for CIP 410624 Full Scale Active Threat Exercise."

"Amending the FY2022 Community Improvement Program, authorizing, appropriating and transferring funds in the amount of Twenty-Three Thousand Thirty-Four Dollars and Forty- Seven Cents (\$23,034.47) for CIP 810922 ARPA - Manchester Economic Development Office."

"Amending the FY2024 Community Improvement Program, authorizing and appropriating funds in the amount of Seven Hundred Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$750,000) for CIP 810924 Compensation."

"Amending the FY2024 Community Improvement Program, authorizing and appropriating funds in the amount of Six Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$600,000) for CIP 712122 Replacement of Fire Station 9 (Calef Road)."

"Amending the FY2024 Community Improvement Program, authorizing and appropriating funds in the amount of Fifty-Three Thousand Three Hundred Dollars (\$53,300) for CIP 410824 Highway Safety Grant."

ought to pass and be Enrolled.

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

34. Report(s) of the Committee on Accounts, Enrollment & Revenue Administration, if available.

The Committee on Accounts, Enrollment & Revenue Administration respectfully recommends, after due and careful consideration, that the following Ordinance Amendments:

"Inserting Section 36.60 Municipal Economic Development and Revitalization Districts to the Code of Ordinances of the City of Manchester."

"Amending Chapter 91 Solid Waste & Littering of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Manchester by establishing eligibility requirements for collection, and modifying volume restrictions and various definitions."

ought to pass and be Enrolled.

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

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

The Committee on Public Safety, Health & Traffic respectfully advises, after due and careful consideration, that the following traffic regulations be approved:

NO PARKING ANYTIME

On Commercial Street, east side, from a point 168 feet north of Dow Street to a point 10 feet north

On Commercial Street, east side, from a point 237 feet north of Dow Street to a point 10 feet north

On Commercial Street, east side, from Granite Street to Pleasant Street

Alderman Long

On Hanover Street, south side, from a point 125 feet west of Tarrytown Road to a point 145 feet further west

Alderman Fajardo

RESCIND PARKING REGULATIONS: METERS – 10 HOURS 8AM-8PM

On Commercial Street, east side, from Pleasant Street to Phillippe Cote Street (ORD9356)

Alderman Long

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

The Committee on Public Safety, Health & Traffic respectfully recommends, after due and careful consideration, that the request from Hope for Recovery to use the Arms Lot for its Hope Recovery Festival event scheduled for Saturday, September 30, 2023, be approved.

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

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

There were none.

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

The Committee on Lands & Buildings respectfully recommends, after due and careful consideration, that the request from the Chief of Parks, Recreation & Cemetery for an allocation of \$5,000 to the Public Works general fund for a reuse analysis of Hallsville School be approved.

Mayor Craig asked is it the Chief of Parks that this should go to.

City Clerk Normand stated that is where the request came from.

Mayor Craig asked for the building. What are you looking for? I want to make sure we are allocating it to the right place. Parks and Recreation is the right place as long as it is not just focused on parks. That is consistent with what the committee wanted? Public Works?

Alderman Long answered correct.

*On motion of **Alderman Heath**, duly seconded by **Alderman Cavanaugh**, it was voted to accept the report and adopt its recommendation, with **Alderman Levasseur** being duly recorded as voting in opposition.*

38. Ordinance Amendment:

"Amending Chapter 32: Boards, Commissions and Departments of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Manchester by creating a new §32.023 Department of Housing Stability."

(Note: This item was tabled on 05/16/2023 in the Committee on Accounts, Enrollment and Revenue Administration. Upon petition of Mayor Craig, under Rule 16, it has been brought forward to the Board of Mayor and Aldermen for consideration.)

Alderman Heath moved that the Ordinance Amendment ought to pass and be Ordained effective upon passage. **Alderman George-Kelly** duly seconded the motion.

Alderman Levasseur stated technically speaking I don't know how this came on to the agenda when it was on the Accounts Committee. I have been told we had this in Accounts, Enrollment and Revenue Administration Committee. It has been there waiting. You may think there were sticks in the mud for some reason why it was being left there, but actually there was a thoughtful process of wanting to watch the process of housing and homelessness that has unfolded over the last six months. I don't know why this got pulled out of our committee without a vote. It got pulled off our committee. I'm not the chairman of the committee, but it got pulled out of our committee.

Mayor Craig stated I did it.

Alderman Levasseur asked without a vote when there is a process for that committee. If there was a 3-2 vote not to approve, the minority of those two could have written a

minority report and asked for that minority report to come to this Board. Then they would have been able to bring the issue up to this Board and then have a vote that day. For the Mayor to come out and obviate what was going on in our committee, take this out of our committee, then put it on an agenda because you want to get it done and not go through our committee process...I have been on this Board for twelve years and I have never seen this done but I have seen minority reports come out of committees. It could be a 4-1 vote and the person who loses the vote could always bring their report up. It has been a process we have used. I don't understand why we have to do this. It should go back to the Accounts Committee. We should have another vote and if there is a 3-2 vote, then the minority should bring it back in October and do it the proper way. Supposedly there is a charter rule in there that allows the Mayor to do this. What number is it?

City Clerk Normand responded Rule 16.

Alderman Levasseur stated I read that. It doesn't even make sense. It doesn't have a mechanism for the Mayor to just go into a committee and pull something off because she just feels like it. It is not the proper way to do things in this city. It is not the proper way to do things on the Board. We have never done it before since I have been on this Board. This isn't a precedent we should start. It is a simple thing. The chairman could have brought in a minority report.

Alderman Heath stated it was tabled.

Alderman Levasseur stated you can bring it in anyway.

City Clerk Normand stated the rule states that the Mayor or any three Aldermen could bring something out if something is hung up in committee.

Mayor Craig stated which has happened in the past.

Alderman Levasseur asked when.

Mayor Craig stated it has happened. In any event, it is consistent with the rules of the board which is why I did it.

Alderman Levasseur stated somebody read the rule to me and explain to me how the process works and how the mayor has gotten this authority. You must have really worked hard to bend that language to go in your direction.

Alderman Fajardo stated my understanding is that it was not voted on; it was tabled. I don't think the minority report applies in that sense.

Mayor Craig stated it doesn't matter. This is following the rules of the board.

City Clerk Normand stated Rule 16 states that it shall be the duty of every committee of the Board to whom any subject shall be especially referred, to report thereon at the earliest convenience. Upon written petition to the City Clerk by the Mayor or by any three members of the Board, any subject previously referred to a Committee shall be brought forward and placed on an agenda at the next regularly scheduled meeting of the Board.

Alderman Levasseur stated no wonder we need our French station back. I didn't understand of that.

Mayor Craig stated three Aldermen or the Mayor can write to the Clerk.

Alderman Levasseur replied but it was in our committee.

Mayor Craig stated that is what that means.

Alderman Levasseur stated you pulled that out of our committee.

Mayor Craig asked does anyone have any discussion about the content.

Alderman Levasseur stated I have plenty to discuss about that, I just want to get through the technical part of how it got here first. Nobody has any questions about this?

Alderman Barry stated if we are going to make this a department what goes on with it. Is the person that is going to be appointed as the head of this department, is he or she going to be able to house that department with staff? Where is the money coming from for staff if we make it a department? I am not ready to approve this myself. I don't think we have seen enough evidence that we need it. Until we do, I just think it is premature to bring this up and to make this a department. If it ever becomes a department, because of the fact that we are spending over \$1 million for 39 Beech Street, I would highly recommend that whoever gets appointed to be the department head that they are actually housed at 39 Beech Street to oversee that project. That is the biggest project we have right now to deal with homelessness. That person should be there day in and day out.

Mayor Craig stated we have a shelter operator there.

Aldermen Barry stated no. Whoever is running the department should be overseeing it. Not someone hired from the outside.

Mayor Craig stated they are.

Aldermen Levasseur replied no they are not.

Mayor Craig responded yes, they are.

Alderman Levasseur stated no.

Mayor Craig stated they are doing that plus many other things.

Alderman George-Kelly stated we need to remember the public comment that came today regarding the fact that homelessness is the biggest issue in our city; a priority for everybody in our city, and in order to make it that it needs to be its own department. I

don't know why we are talking about who is going to be appointed. We have a Director of Homeless Initiatives who would be the director of this department and oversee the initiatives that are happening. When we talk about things like running a shelter, her job is to make sure that the structures are in place, to make sure the shelter is running in an effective and efficient way, and no effective or efficient manager is in a shelter day in and day out. They are in the community, they are working with community partners, they are partnering with other city departments and other non-profits throughout the community to make sure they have a continued pulse on the issue and they hire the right people that they trust to be able to run the shelter. We have all of those things in place. The only thing that we are missing is the step of being able to make Adrienne the director of a department in our city. We need to stop discussing this because we are going round and round in circles like we have been for months, and pass this today.

Alderman Long stated I'm not in support of this. We need data; I've been asking for data for forever. I don't have data. I gave the benefit of the doubt for the engagement center. I'm insecure about that. I gave the benefit of the doubt to approve that. I want to see what the data is from the engagement center before we go to a department. What is that job description on the department? Is it the same as the Homeless Initiatives Director? It is the same. I didn't see any housing in the Homeless Initiatives Director's position. That is where I am confused. That isn't much of the matter, but the matter is the data to show where this department is going to take us. I don't see the difference in her job from being a department head to being a homeless initiatives director. I see the exact same thing. I don't know what a department is going to deliver to the city. I don't know. Not knowing, I can't vote for it right now.

Alderman T. Sapienza stated we have already heard from the Fire Chief and from the Director of Homeless Initiatives about why they want to make it a department. To Alderman's Barry concern about who is going to get hired, if they are going to hire somebody they are going to have to come here for approval. If they create a position, they have to come here for approval. We are not approving other positions. Is that right?

Mayor Craig stated yes.

Alderman T. Sapienza stated anything new has to come here to get approved. There is no raise for the department head in this, for the new department head, right?

Mayor Craig answered correct.

Alderman T. Sapienza stated this vote tonight isn't going to cost me a dime unless I follow it up with other votes, and I get a department head and a director asking for a name change.

Mayor Craig stated and it takes Fire out of it.

Alderman T. Sapienza stated and to relieve the Fire Chief somewhat.

Alderman Levasseur stated you heard your comments and I heard the other comments, and one of the comments was that we took a beautiful senior center with a department head and then we decided to put it under the umbrella of the Health Department. Fine. I have watched for the last twenty-three years or so, I've watched how long it took us to just marry the Parks Department in with the Highway Department; consolidation. I watched how difficult it was to try to marry these departments and put them together so we can consolidate them so we're not building bigger government, hiring more employees, and putting more debt and more taxes on the taxpayers of this city. Now I see a system, what we are doing here, is bologna. First of all, it should go to the taxpayers on a vote. This should have been put to a vote to the people in this city whether they wanted this department. This isn't just some magic wand we wave and all of a sudden, we are just going to make a department appear. This is a very serious move. First of all, we are going to have to change all the red books because now we are adding a department to it. What really ticks me off is you already have the person hired yet you have no description of what the job duties are. You don't even have the qualifications for what the job duties are. I bet these just happen to fit within the job qualities of the person who is the Homeless Coordinator. How nice is that? I can imagine that many people in this city would love to apply for that job, especially from out Planning Department. By the way, we have a Planning Department. We have a Zoning Board and a Planning Board, which could handle this. You could take the Homeless

Coordinator, put them in the Planning Department and have them work out of there. Since they are in charge of planning for the city, they probably know better than anyone about stabilization of housing and the affordability of housing, because they are the ones that approve every single building project that comes into this city. Where does this person get the qualifications to be coming in here and making decisions or pressing buttons on a computer to go and find us an advisor that will probably come in and tell us what we don't have in this city? What we don't have is federal government buildings, the low affordable housing that is based on how much money you actually bring in. Over the last five years we spent all this money. The federal government hasn't built one high-rise, not one low-income high-rise. That's what the city needs and that's what these people know we all need. Manchester doesn't build houses. We approve projects and plans for housing. We don't build them. When we are putting together a department of the city it is a pretty damn big step because it is stepping on a lot of other department heads in this city who have been literally coming up from the bottom jobs and working twenty-five or thirty years to get a department job. Becoming a department head in this city is an honor and a prestige that people work their tails off to get. You are creating a position and a department for somebody that is hired that when you get home tonight and you look at your emails, we just got a five- or six-page email from the Homeless Coordinator telling us all the stuff that's been going on I guess in the last month or so. It looks to me like it is all regurgitated and all the same stuff about the new hire that she hired. This is the person...we have one meeting a month and we get an email at 7 o'clock tonight from our Homeless Coordinator giving us some updates on homeless coordinator stuff.

Mayor Craig stated she is a director.

Alderman Levasseur stated whatever you want to call her. The director. I apologize. Don't just wave and let's just put it in a department like it's no big deal. We are creating a department which creates a whole lot of other things. We are doing it when we don't need it because we have a Planning Department. We have a Planning Board and a Zoning Board. The people in the Planning Department are the ones that are responsible. They just came in with a master plan. They explained it to us. They showed us where they want to build cluster housing. Where is the expertise in the person? If you

put this Planning Department position together it better be posted. It should be posted for anybody else to apply. We are going to miss out on somebody who is probably more qualified for this position.

Mayor Craig stated we actually did post this job.

Alderman Levasseur stated this department hasn't been created so it is impossible to have done that.

Mayor Craig responded she is the director. We did. She was hired as a director.

Alderman Levasseur stated so then call the department what it should be called. The Department of Homeless Coordination and don't make up some silly name like the Inflation Reduction Act that the federal government threw at us. This name means housing stability. Housing stability is a Planning Department function.

Mayor Craig stated I am pretty sure the Board came up with this suggestion last time we discussed this.

Alderman Levasseur stated you made up the name.

Mayor Craig stated no I didn't.

Alderman Levasseur responded we didn't make it up.

Mayor Craig stated the Board did. This Board came up with it.

Alderman Levasseur stated we all had a big brainstorming thing together and we came up and put words on a big thing. I must have missed that one. Since I have never missed a meeting, I don't think so. So, you're not going to post this job is that what you're telling us?

Mayor Craig stated no.

Alderman Kantor stated I have been down to the homeless shelter and I have been to some clinics. It is really sad out there. We should be working with all the non-profits. Do we have a list of all the non-profits?

Mayor Craig responded we do.

Alderman Kantor stated we should be working in synergy to really help people.

Mayor Craig stated I absolutely agree. We are doing that.

Alderman Kantor stated I think what is really interesting is I was down at a place that is described as On the Road to Wellness. It is a beautiful place and it is what Adrienne described. It is already working down on South Willow Street right next to the DMV. I am confused.

Mayor Craig asked what are you confused about.

Alderman Kantor stated my confusion is there are only forty beds. We didn't increase the bed size. We already have so many non-profits that can actually help people. This just doesn't make sense to create a department when there has been no success yet. There are a lot of people that I have spoken to in the non-profits that there is no collaboration. I think we need to work on the collaboration first. A homeless department means that it is not going to end homelessness.

Alderman Heath stated tonight for two hours we listened to homeless. The homeless situation is the biggest problem in our city. We hear it every single day from all different places. We need to focus on something to move it forward. A department makes total sense. Adrienne is doing a good job. She is reporting information to us in a manner in which we should all be able to understand it. It is very well written. I think we should vote and make a decision. This is silly that we are fighting like this about this. We have been talking about this problem for a long time. Tonight, we heard it again and again. I have been an Alderman just barely two years. I have spent two years on this Board and

all we have talked about is the homeless situation. Making a department to address that situation is the most logical move I can think of.

Alderman E. Sapienza stated not all the input during those two hours was in favor of expanding the bureaucracy. A lot of folks spoke against that as well as a lot of my constituents from Ward 8 who are concerned about expanding the bureaucracy. So, all of the input that we heard from the folks wasn't necessarily in favor of this. I wanted to point that out.

Alderman Kantor stated we have a health crisis and a mental health crisis and a drug addiction crisis. We need to get to the root of the problems. Creating a department is not it. Adrienne can work with anyone. It is really about just getting the job done and collaborating. I am totally against this.

Alderman Long stated the job description is the same for the department head. How about the description of the department?

Lisa Drabik, Human Resources Director, stated there is a short description in the ordinance creating the department. It follows the same format as the language creating all the remaining departments. It is a very short descriptor. If I could interject, if you'll recall when the discussion about this started it was just going to change from the Director of Homelessness Initiatives to the Director of Housing Stability once the motion was made to change the department to Housing Stability. That was the only change made at the time - to the title. I want to clarify that. It is the same job description that we used when we recruited Adrienne and went through that recruitment process.

Alderman Long stated I am not clear on what you are trying to tell me.

Ms. Drabik stated you had asked the question if the job description had changed. The only thing that had changed was the title. That is all. It is the same job description with the same tasks that we used during the recruitment process when we hired Adrienne.

Alderman Long asked what are we expecting from this department. DPW, we know what we expect. Police Department we know what we expect. Fire Department, all the departments, we know what we expect. Do we know what we are expecting from this department? Without the data I don't know. I heard we have to do something to move it forward. No, we have to move homelessness forward. I get that. To do something just to do something, I don't get that.

Mayor Craig responded to be clear we're not doing something just to do something. Right now, it is within the Fire Department and the Chief is the head of it. Adrienne knows the most about homelessness. That is what her experience is in. While the Chief right now is the Director, we are proposing that she is the Director because she is the one with the knowledge who has the experience dealing with this population. The letter that I sent in suggesting this, I mentioned that homelessness is a top priority for city initiatives, a high-profile issue, the city is requiring a strong connection to the press, the BMA, and the community. It is complex and encompasses issues of housing, employment, substance use, mental health. To Alderman Kantor's comments, violence, crime, infectious disease, social inequality. These homelessness initiatives demand both emergency response and long-term planning that includes homelessness prevention and solutions to the national public health crisis as a result of what we heard about tonight which is a lack of affordable housing and the substance abuse epidemic impacting children, adults, and families. Each of these populations has their own network of providers and systems and we have to make sure we are working together. They had a meeting today but many departments are working together to address this issue. We need someone to lead all of these departments.

Alderman Long asked and that is not happening now.

Mayor Craig answered it is to a certain extent but it is going to Chief Cashin and that is not appropriate.

Alderman Long stated I get that but I don't know why it was put in the Fire Department.

Mayor Craig stated it is your prerogative not to understand. I can't help it. As the Mayor, seeing what is happening internally and with all of the departments, and knowing that Adrienne comes to the table with the experience and she has been working on this day after day, it makes sense to me and we will see if it makes sense to most of the aldermen that this becomes a department. We need to take it out of the Fire Department. I did look at other departments where we could put this and it doesn't fit.

Alderman Levasseur stated we have a rule about debating everybody. You are the Mayor debating everybody. I have never brought it up.

Mayor Craig replied I am not debating.

Alderman Levasseur responded you are debating.

Mayor Craig stated Alderman Long asked a question. I was responding to his question.

Alderman Long stated no, I appreciate it.

Alderman Barry stated earlier in the meeting, Alderman Burkush brought up something and I agree with him. You wrote a very nice letter that you sent to the state in reference to getting data and in reference to Doorways and other projects the state is overseeing. We, too...Alderman Long is correct and I know back in June I had suggested and asked for data from Adrienne in reference to 39 Beech Street. This was back when we were proposing to extend the lease on that building. We were promised to get that data. One of my biggest concerns is that we continuously have forty people that go to 39 Beech Street. We don't want 39 Beech Street to be spinning their wheels. We hope that those forty people that continuously go to 39 Beech Street eventually leave Beech Street. This is a shelter. A shelter is a shelter; it is temporary. A shelter is not a home. Unfortunately, that is what some of the people that are there are actually saying to some of the outreach people that I have talked to. They said this isn't a shelter for me, it is my home. We can't have that. We need the outreach people to go over there and work with these people so they can get them on their feet and back into jobs. They should be coordinating whatever the labor sources are in the area that will have vans that are

willing to go there to pick them up to bring them to work during the day time. My understanding is the people that are there, a lot of them are staying there throughout the day and night. They just don't have the ambition to get out into the world and try to make themselves better people. It is sad because some of them are suffering from mental illness and that is something that we can't control and neither can they. We need to assist them. But going back to June when I requested that we start getting data of the people who are attending there, we want the names, we want to know who is there, we want to know what they have been doing.

Mayor Craig replied you can't have names.

Alderman Barry stated I'm not talking to you.

Mayor Craig stated you can't. There are HIPPA violations. You can't have names, just to be clear.

Alderman Barry stated I get it. We still need data.

Mayor Craig stated you got data at the last meeting.

Alderman Barry stated we want to know how many people are going there, how many are repeaters, and how many are new people. We are not getting that.

Mayor Craig stated she came forward at the last meeting and presented.

Alderman Barry responded she did a presentation.

Mayor Craig stated that was data in that presentation.

Alderman Barry stated we need data on the forty people that continuously go there. That is what we need.

Mayor Craig stated that is what it was.

Alderman Barry stated no. Not even close.

Alderman Cavanaugh stated a lot of what Alderman Barry says I agree with, but we have to make a move. We are talking about other department heads that want that leadership. I agree with what you are saying and I think part of getting that is to get this department running. Have her take it over and do what you are saying. We have had these same arguments for probably three or four months now. It is the same argument going back and forth. I'd just as soon call the question and move to approve.

Alderman Levasseur stated I have a couple of technical questions. Does a department have to be funded in a yearly budget? It is a legal question. Maybe our City Clerk knows. Does it have to be funded? If it is not funded, does it mean it no longer exists?

Mayor Craig answered Economic Development wasn't funded.

City Clerk Normand stated the Board can decide.

Alderman Levasseur stated it was still an actual department but it wasn't funded.

Mayor Craig stated correct. Then we funded it through ARPA.

Alderman Levasseur asked what is the budget going to be for this particular department.

Mayor Craig stated it is funded through a Health Department grant. I don't have it in front of me.

Alderman Levasseur asked just what the salary is now.

Mayor Craig stated yes, and in the last budget you all approved another employee in that department through ARPA not taxpayer dollars.

Alderman Levasseur stated this budget is funded from now until June 30.

Mayor Craig stated ARPA funds are until 2026.

Alderman Levasseur stated the lease on 39 Beech Street runs out on June 30.

Mayor Craig stated yes.

Alderman Levasseur requested a roll call vote.

Alderman Kantor stated there is not enough transparency and accountability. That is where there is a big problem. There are clients at the shelter that say there are staff members that are using substances. We as caring people really need to investigate how this place is being run. It is important. I was told I wasn't supposed to go there. All of us aldermen are not allowed to go there. There is a lack of transparency and accountability. That is a big problem. Since it is a health issue, it can go under the Health Department to oversee that since Chief Cashin doesn't want it.

Mayor Craig stated the biggest objection is – trust me, I looked for another department for this to fit in and our departments and department heads are maxed out and it doesn't make sense for this to fit into a department or I would have done it – the expertise that we have right now to address this challenge is with Adrienne.

Alderman Kantor stated I tend to disagree. I believe in tough love.

Mayor Craig *called for a vote.*

City Clerk Normand clarified the motion and stated this would be effective upon passage. The copy that was submitted back in June was for an effective date of July 1, 2023.

Aldermen Levasseur, Long, Kantor, E. Sapienza, and Barry voted nay. Aldermen Cavanaugh, Stewart, Fajardo, T. Sapienza, Trisciani, Heath, Burkush, Gamache, and George-Kelly voted yea. The motion carried.

Alderman Levasseur stated get ready for some serious budget battles when the next mayor is in.

39. Resolutions:

"Amending the FY2023 Community Improvement Program, authorizing, appropriating and transferring funds in the amount of Two Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$200,000) for the FY2023 CIP 212023 Gatehouse TST Initiative."

"Amending the FY2024 Community Improvement Program, authorizing and appropriating funds in the amount of Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$50,000) for the FY2024 CIP 410524 ALERRT Integrated Response Training."

"Amending the FY2024 Community Improvement Program, authorizing and appropriating funds in the amount of Sixty Five Thousand Dollars (\$65,000) for the FY2024 CIP 410624 Full Scale Active Threat Exercise."

"Amending the FY2022 Community Improvement Program, authorizing, appropriating and transferring funds in the amount of Twenty-Three Thousand Thirty-Four Dollars and Forty- Seven Cents (\$23,034.47) for the FY2022 CIP 810922 ARPA - Manchester Economic Development Office."

"Amending the FY2024 Community Improvement Program, authorizing and appropriating funds in the amount of Seven Hundred Fifty Thousand Dollars (\$750,000) for the FY2024 CIP 810924 Compensation."

"Amending the FY2024 Community Improvement Program, authorizing and appropriating funds in the amount of Six Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$600,000) for the FY2022 CIP 712122 Replacement of Fire Station 9 (Calef Road)."

*On motion of **Alderman Cavanaugh**, duly seconded by **Alderman Stewart**, it was voted to waive the readings by titles only.*

*On motion of **Alderman Heath**, duly seconded by **Alderman Burkush**, it was voted that the Resolutions ought to pass and be Enrolled.*

40. Bond Resolution:

“Authorizing Bonds, Notes or Lease Purchases in the amount of Two Million Dollars (\$2,000,000) for the 2024 CIP 410724 Body Worn Cameras.”

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

*On motion of **Alderman Long**, duly seconded by **Alderman Trisciani**, it was voted that the Bond Resolution ought to pass and be Enrolled.*

NEW BUSINESS

Alderman E. Sapienza stated I would like to ask City Assessor Bob Gagne if he could look into the city's Veterans Reduction on Property Taxes. I have some constituents asking me about that. Get back to us with how it compares and contrasts to current state law. How it aligns with state law.

Alderman Cavanaugh stated I would ask department heads as well as city employees, we have the compensation study that is going out and the surveys being filled out, I think we are at 25%. I would love to see that up to 80%, 90%, if not 100%. I would love to hear from the employees especially. We have talked a lot about this and to get that participation as high as we possibly could would be great.

Alderman Long stated I want to make people aware that guardian ad litem positions are needed in the City of Manchester with the Court Appointed Special Advocates, CASA. They do that, they train you, it is rewarding. I did it for five years. If anyone is interested, I am going to send public TV their contact information. Anybody interested in pursuing that, Manchester is in need of GALs, which is a volunteer job.

Alderman T. Sapienza stated I'd like to give some follow-up on comments regarding access to the zoning report that was published. Can we get Mr. Belanger up here?

Jeff Belanger, Planning & Community Development Director, stated thank you for the opportunity to address that.

Alderman T. Sapienza stated you heard the comments earlier. Can you address that issue?

Mr. Belanger stated yes. We have currently in our possession the second draft of the Zoning Ordinances that have come back from our consultant. We hired a consultant who has nationwide experience. We are working with them to draft an ordinance that is right for Manchester. I completely understand the desire for the speakers who came out tonight to see a draft of this. We want to get it done as much as anybody else does. I'd be happy to share whatever communication we've gotten so far from the consultant but I'd prefer to do that once the first draft is actually made public. We are going to submit a public draft when it is all done. We have a draft ready. It will go to the public. There will be a robust public process. It will take as long as it needs to take to make sure that all Aldermen and all citizens are happy, at least the majority, with the ordinance. We have no interest in doing anything other than that. We want to make sure this is absolutely what this board wants to see. That will take as long as it takes. Anyone who commented tonight or anyone else will have every opportunity to comment on it.

Alderman T. Sapienza asked so you have a draft and you are making changes to it now. The input to the changes is coming from the Planning staff I assume.

Mr. Belanger stated yes at this point it is. We want to get a draft that is as good as we can get it for the citizens of Manchester right now. We want to get that out. The firm we hired has great national-level experience, but we feel like we are bringing a lot of knowledge about the city to this draft. We want to marry those together and get a draft as good as we can get it.

Alderman T. Sapienza asked was there was public comment prior to them putting this draft together.

Mr. Belanger answered absolutely.

Alderman T. Sapienza asked when it is delivered and made public there will there be ample time. There is not a set time?

Mr. Belanger answered it is as long as this Board would like it to take. There is not a set time. One of the commenters mentioned a sixty-day process. We have no agenda on how long it needs to take. We want it to take as long as this Board wants it to take. There is opportunity right now to submit comments through our website that we have up. However, there was an in-person process that lasted three days.

Alderman T. Sapienza asked can people still send in suggestions.

Mr. Belanger replied absolutely. This is where the master plan becomes the Zoning Ordinance in a way. The Zoning Ordinance is informed by that master planning process. It is highly detailed. This is a legal document that effects every business and home in this city. We need to make sure that we are getting it right and that we don't release something that might have real estate impacts that aren't fully thought through. So, we are taking our time to make sure that it is right for the city.

Alderman T. Sapienza stated funny you should mention the master plan. I'm wondering why the bicycle plan wasn't a part of the master plan already.

Mr. Belanger stated it is a separate plan.

Alderman T. Sapienza asked when can we expect it to be made public.

Mr. Belanger responded we are still in the process. We hope to get our draft back to the consultant within the next month or so, hopefully. I was planning to give an update to this Board by letter at least in October to let you know where things are six months from the last update I gave you in April. I hope that by then we will have a draft back. As I said, these are highly detailed documents. As an example, Concord started theirs in 2019 and they still working on it. Boise, Idaho just adopted one and it took them over three years. There is one in New York that just came out and it took them three years. These things take time. We are taking our time to make sure it is done right. The main concern that I'm hearing from the commenters is that the public is not going to be

included and it is just going to hit the streets and become law and they are not going to have a chance to comment. That's not the case.

Alderman Fajardo stated the concern I also heard was around understanding where the recommendations start and where the public draft ends. Have you given thought to a process where we are able to see the changes that are recommended at the department and local level? I agree with you that we don't want to make public something that could create havoc but more so to understand the process of getting there. You don't have to answer that question right now, but that was part of what I heard. If that is something that can be taken into consideration, I am sure that would be appreciated.

Mr. Belanger replied to answer your question we are happy to release that. I would prefer to not do it until the staff draft, the draft we believe is our best effort at providing a Zoning Ordinance, is released. If people want to compare them that is fine. As I said, these are laws that affect people's homes and businesses. We don't want to create confusion by releasing a draft that isn't what we are going to propose and people may make decisions based on that which won't be accurate.

Alderman Long stated I want to verify that the consultant version is electronic.

Mr. Belanger stated it is.

Alderman Long stated I am very satisfied with the way it is going right now with what you're planning on. I believe the public is absolutely going to be involved. However, there are some people, God bless them, that want these very details. Did I hear you say that the consultant version will be released once you put out your draft?

Mr. Belanger stated we would be happy to do that. To be clear there have been two versions so far. They submitted one and we submitted comments back and got a second version. We are bringing comments back to them again. We'd be happy to release both of theirs they have submitted to us.

Alderman Long asked so the public will see the consultant's version.

Mr. Belanger answered if that is the will of this Board, we'd be happy to do that.

Alderman Long replied yeah, why not.

Alderman Trisciani stated this has nothing to do with the Zoning Ordinance. We have followed the same process we followed with the master plan. There was plenty of time for input. The consultants did a great job, unfortunately, we do need to reconcile some of what the consultants came up with, what is state law in New Hampshire and with how we can play with that. I appreciate the process and I think we keep it going the similar way we did the master plan. There will be additional input. I have more of a fun announcement. September 20 is the annual city employee's barbeque. We have a team of city employees working on the Quality Committee as we put this together. This event is fully funded by donations. We are thankful that the Fisher Cats, Coca Cola, and MacIntyre Ski Area have come through to help us as well as some other companies and vendors that work with the city. My request to the aldermen is the same as in the past, and we will send an email out to you and anybody who has the inclination to donate to help this can make checks payable to the City of Manchester Quality Committee. Get them over to Phil Croasdale in Water Works and we would appreciate any support in showing our appreciation to our city employees.

Alderman Heath stated I want to remind everybody that the Ward 7 block party is going to be held September 9 from 12 PM – 3 PM. We have all kinds of good things happening. We have the Manchester Police Department, Fire Department, face painting, and good things going on. Please join us.

Alderman Kantor stated September is prostate cancer awareness month. Men are very important. Women have to remind the men in their lives to check to their prostates. I lost my dad eight years ago. Early detection saves lives. We are having our 7th annual event down at Stark Brewing Company. It is from 5 PM – 8 PM and \$20 per ticket on September 9. If anyone wants to join us, it all goes to cancer patients, but all cancer patients, because everyone matters.

Mayor Craig stated I want to thank the Parks and Recreation Department. They are opening up the splash pads this week because of the heat. They will be open Tuesday through Friday of this week from 4 PM – 7 PM, the Dupont and Sheehan-Basquil from 1 PM – 7 PM, which is much appreciated for the families. The Municipal Primary Election is Tuesday, September 19 from 6 AM to 7 PM. The State of the Manchester School District presentation is Thursday, September 21 at 4 PM at the Rex Theatre. The Celebrate ED festival is Saturday, September 23 from 10 AM until 4 PM at Veteran's Park. The Citywide Arts Festival is from September 11 through September 17 on Hanover Street. The Manchester Employee Art Show is for all employees, retirees, volunteers, elected officials, or immediate family members and artwork should be submitted by September 11.

TABLED ITEM

- 41.** Report from the Committee on Public Safety, Health & Traffic recommending that Ordinance Amendment:

“Amending Section 130.13 Camping in Public Places of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Manchester.”

ought to pass and be referred to the Committee on Bills on Second Reading for technical review.
(Unanimous vote with the exception of Aldermen Stewart and George-Kelly who were absent).

Alderman T. Sapienza moved to remove the item from the table. **Alderman Heath** duly seconded the motion. Alderman T. Sapienza requested a roll call vote. Aldermen T. Sapienza, Kantor, Trisciani, Heath, George-Kelly, Stewart, and Fajardo voted yea. Aldermen Levasseur, E. Sapienza, Burkush, Barry, Gamache, Cavanaugh, and Long voted nay. The vote resulting in a tie, Mayor Craig voted yea. The motion carried.

Alderman T. Sapienza moved to receive and file. **Alderman Fajardo** duly seconded the motion.

Alderman Levasseur stated a couple people who have commented said if we remove the language from the camping ordinance that the City of Manchester put in place that

people would be thrown in Valley Street Jail and we would be criminalizing camping. All it does is take away the extra language that the city put in from the state ordinance which specifically says there would be no camping in public spaces. Our ordinance added the extra language that there will be no camping in public spaces unless there is no shelter available. We are the only city or town in New Hampshire that has that ordinance, that has that addition, which is an entitlement. If there is an actual bed available, we can remove people from public areas. This is not something that would have been done like a sweep of any sort. It gives the Police, and the Chief did want this change, it gives them the ability to have discretion to be able to move someone from an area that they could be blocking or causing doors not to open; public issues. It is being more in line with what the state law is. I beseech this Board and the legislature and the Mayor, to go up to the state and actually create the statute that is exactly the one we have. The only city in whole state of 326 towns and cities, and Manchester has the entitlement that we can't move anybody out of a public space unless we have a bed. We are handcuffing our police. We are handcuffing ourselves. It should be a state law; every town and city should be joining us in the same exact ordinance that we have. This is another thing that gets broadcast across the state through our newspapers, social media, channel nine, Ink Link, that tells people come to Manchester you can sleep anywhere you want in public space and guess what they can't remove you or move you. I am tired of people saying that the Supreme Court weighed in on this. No, they have not. It is a ninth circuit decision. The ninth circuit does not have any jurisdiction over the first circuit which is what we are in. All I want to do is strike the language. It gives us more flexibility. That is all it is. It is not a harsh mechanism. The Police have used discretion; they know how to use discretion. Now before they remove someone from a public space, they have to make the phone calls to find out if there is shelter or not. Everyone talks about our Police being overrun and overworked and the fact that we don't have enough officers, there are injuries and vacations, we are understaffed, and we are calling upon the Police Department to do the jobs of social workers. They shouldn't have to do that. They should be able to have the discretion that they need to move people or whatever the reason is. Not to criminalize anybody, but the ability to be able to move them without concern of being sued. The question is whether or not somebody would take us to court. To do what? To take us to court because we are moving people out of public spaces when we have a state law that says you can't camp

in public spaces? All we want to be able to do is give the law the same weight at the state level so our police will not have to be worried about getting sued and the city getting sued. I don't understand why this is so controversial. It isn't. We have the right to move them if there are extra beds. I will ask one last thing. If you are going to say receive and file and get rid of this and keep this ordinance in place, ask yourselves how many beds will be enough. If we only have 100 or 200 beds, and we have 300 people that are homeless, you can't move those other 100 people around because you don't have enough beds. Maybe it is 500 and we have to have 500 beds. Then it is 1,000. Then we have to have 1,000 beds. Again, everybody puts all of this on Manchester and Manchester alone. Our people are tired of it. They are sick of it. The businesses are tired of it. They are sick of it. I'm tired and sick of it. Mary said she has been here for two years and it is all we ever talk about. I have been doing this for however many years this has been going on. The phone calls, going door to door and talking to people...we're not talking about the tax cap anymore. All they talk about is crime, vagrancy, homelessness, and so many people I spoke to over the last few weekends won't come downtown to enjoy our restaurants or come down here to walk. This is a step in the right direction to give our Police the ability to enforce the state law. It is not to criminalize people. No one is ending up in Valley Street Jail. They don't end up there when they rob a 7-11 for goodness sake.

Mayor Craig stated the Solicitor should probably respond.

Emily Rice, City Solicitor, stated what I'd prefer to do is once the discussion is completed, I'd like to explain the law.

Alderman Stewart stated I agree with Alderman Levasseur that this Ordinance Amendment isn't going to do anything because it is not. It doesn't address any underlying issues, and I don't think it does what you say it is going to do. It is not going to give the Police the opportunity to remove people forcibly. This is a violation level offense we are talking about. At most, it removes a tiny barrier for the Police to be able to give a citation which is just a ticket. That's all we are talking about. There is no forcible removal and there is no arrest. There is no sweeping of encampments or tents off of sidewalks. This is a smokescreen. I'm happy to vote to receive and file this. The

Solicitor can correct me if I'm wrong. Let's stop talking about this and figure out an actual solution, not a smokescreen.

Alderman T. Sapienza stated when this ordinance was on the books, the way it is now, we had a big problem over on Pine Street. The public came here and asked us to take care of it. This ordinance didn't stop us from taking care of that. I'm ready to vote.

Alderman Long stated my understanding is there was going to be language drafted. It doesn't seem like that has been in the works.

Mayor Craig stated we will have the Solicitor weigh in after everyone is done.

Alderman Long stated specific to that, my understanding was there was going to be some language drafted that we could take a look at. I do have concerns. There were people camped out right on my sidewalk. That happens where I sit and have my smokes and offer them a couple. I asked them how they were doing and they yelled at me telling me they had a right to be there and that I couldn't move them off the sidewalk. That boldness, and I told the couple, I'm just asking you how you are doing. I am not asking you to move. I think there is a confusion out there. I don't understand how the state can say you need permission to do this and we say no you don't need permission. If there is no place available, you can do this. I don't understand how that's not circumventing state statute. Maybe that can be addressed, too.

Solicitor Rice stated this is obviously a very emotional and complicated issue that the Board and the public and everyone else has been dealing with in Manchester for many years. It has been the predominant issue of my tenure here as City Solicitor. We provided a lot of guidance over the years. I have brought each one of you a little treatise that I put together for background. I did do what you asked me to do. I prepared an amendment to 130.13 but at this point I just want to respond to some of the discussion. 130.13, which is referred to colloquially as the camping on sidewalks ordinance, was passed by the BMA in 2021. It was also amended to reduce the penalty from \$1,000 to \$250 at the request of the Board. We have tried our best to provide the Board with guidance that we think informs the law across the country and here in our city. I think it

is important to recognize that this Board's powers are limited. We are a non-home-rule state which means this Board does not have the power that many other jurisdictions enjoy in other states to criminalize conduct. This Board cannot create something as a crime which does not exist under state law. In terms of what the Manchester Police have in their toolbox, I am not going to comment. That is the Chief's purview. What I will say is that the Manchester Police Department has authority under the ordinances and all of the statutes in New Hampshire, one of which has received some discussion here tonight and which became the subject of attention back when the campers on the courthouse grounds were told to leave by the state, RSA 236-58. Under both that statute and 130.13, what the Police do is issue a citation. There are laws and other ordinances which do address things like people camping on public land other than sidewalks, people blocking doorways, people obstructing the sidewalk, etc. I think there are a number of tools in the toolbox and I do not understand the Police Department to be removing people from locations purely for violations of 130.13 which is the anti-camping ordinance nor would I recommend that they do so which is not to say that individuals who are obstructing or resisting arrest or engaging in other criminal conduct are not arrested if they refuse to leave. However, the Manchester Police Department on a daily basis, I'm happy to be corrected, what they do is practice their de-escalation training and they utilize that and all of the other laws that are available to them. If you want to take a look at a potential draft amendment to 130.13, I'd like to talk with you about my advice on that in a recessed meeting. It is important to preserve our open discussion, lawyers and clients, but that is my take on what the discussion has been so far in terms of what the applicable law is at this time.

Alderman Levasseur asked if we are not a home-rule state, which we are not, then how does the City of Manchester have the ability to weaken a state statute. Some may argue it strengthens the state statute; I think it weakens it because it puts us into a position that is in conflict with the state statute. The state statute is clear on its face. You are using the same exact language to start with the state statute as it is referred to in our ordinance. Then you advised us that we would add in this language that says we can't move people out of public spaces if there are no shelter beds. Where do we get that authority and that power as a Board if we are not a home-rule state to add that language into a state statute?

Solicitor Rice answered I don't believe that is what is occurring. What is occurring is that there is a problem and solution. The Manchester Police Department has the authority to enforce the state statute and also to enforce the ordinance that is under discussion. I do not believe what is occurring by virtue of the current version of 130.13 is amending or diluting might be the word, the state statute.

Alderman Levasseur stated but it is adding to it.

Solicitor Rice responded they are two separate laws.

Alderman Levasseur stated our ordinance follows the state statute. We added language to it. Preemption says we can't do so. You say you don't find that there is preemption; I do but I don't know because I honestly haven't done enough federal research and state statute research on how that works. But it sounds to me, since we are not a home-rule state, that we are in violation of the state statute by weakening the state statute. I don't know who would bring a claim against us or if the state would if they wanted to have the AG's Office to step in and say you watered down a state statute. Our state statute says specifically you can't camp in public spaces. That is what it says. Our ordinance used to say you can't camp in public spaces and then you convinced us to add the language which we did. I was asleep at the wheel unfortunately and didn't understand that addition to the state statute but we are in violation or in conflict with a state statute and I don't see how we can argue that we are not. It is ok if the rule allows us to make it stricter or less restrictive but I am not sure which way this is; is this more restrictive or does it weaken us? It sounds to me like it weakens us, our position against the state. I appreciate your patience. You and I have gone around and around on this.

Solicitor Rice stated I love to debate the stuff but I don't want to take everybody's time this late at night. I would simply say that whenever – again, I don't accept the premise which is that they are in conflict but even if they could facially be read as being in conflict I think under the fundamental rules of statutory interpretation if they can be read to peacefully coexist that's the way that one should read them and that's the way I read them. I think they are two different tools in the toolbox and I don't see them as being in

conflict with each other. Moreover, I don't think there has been any constitutional challenge to the state statute since I believe that you and I are both aware of back in 2013 which was well before the decision in *Martin v. Boise*. I don't read them to be in conflict. I do not think the ordinance in any way weakens the statute that the legislature in its wisdom decided to pass to at least partially address this issue. These are two of many tools in the toolbox.

Alderman Levasseur stated since we both disagree on that, our positions, is there a third party that would weigh in on this. I didn't know who I would speak to. I tried to talk to a state representative who knew somebody who was an attorney at the state legislature that I could call and have a discussion with so I could think about possibly filing for a declaratory judgment in our Superior Court to get this weighed one way or another. I do know that we argued for at least three years whether we could remove anyone from the sidewalks and you locked heads with me on that for three years. When tent city came up, we pushed and pushed and it took fifty people to come out here to get the city to finally do something and go to court and we won. I bring that up because the judge in his opinion did cite the ninth circuit unfortunately and did bring up the fact that he felt better about removing the tents off the sidewalks because we had additional beds. But the question is how many additional beds do we have to have before we end up getting so overwhelmed that we are keeping ourselves stuck in the same circle of hell. That is where I am having a hard time.

Solicitor Rice responded I understand.

Alderman Long stated with respect to Police, they are following the statute. They can follow the statute is what I heard which is if there are open beds. In Manchester they have to follow the ordinance and not the statute? Our ordinance has the statute in it but they are charged with following the ordinance, correct?

Solicitor Rice answered the Manchester Police Department always, in my experience, is concerned about following the law. Whatever the applicable law may be. So, the enforcement provision of 130.13 is not part and parcel of the state statute. We can talk about whether or not in a specific instance that procedure, which comes from the *Martin*

v. Boise case and the constitutional principles underlying that case, should apply in the application of the statute by the Manchester Police Department. That would be a discussion I would have with the Chief as the city's legal counsel on the time based on the facts and circumstances.

Alderman Levasseur stated I would like it on the record that when we say that there are beds available, that does not only mean beds being available in Manchester. It means beds available anywhere that there are beds available across the state, correct?

Solicitor Rice replied correct.

Alderman T. Sapienza asked across the country.

Alderman Levasseur stated if you want to bring them to Massachusetts, no problem. I hope people understand that with this ordinance when we say you cannot move somebody if there are no beds available, that does not mean only in Manchester. I hope people who are out there listening understand that.

Alderman George-Kelly stated it does mean beds that they can realistically have access to and across the country is not realistic. If there was a bed in Concord that City Welfare could arrange for them to have a bed and a shelter, then sure.

Mayor Craig stated and 211 is supposed to connect people to beds.

Mayor Craig called for a vote on the motion to receive and file. Alderman Levasseur requested a roll call vote. Aldermen Levasseur, E. Sapienza, Barry, Long, and Kantor voted nay. Aldermen Heath, Burkush, Gamache, George-Kelly, Cavanaugh, Stewart, Fajardo, T. Sapienza, and Trisciani voted yea. The motion carried.

Alderman Long stated the Solicitor said she has some language for us but she wants to discuss it in recess. Should we have that on the next agenda?

Mayor Craig asked do you want to do it at the next meeting.

Alderman Levasseur stated let's do it now.

Mayor Craig stated we will recess at the next meeting and go through it.

*There being no further business, on motion of **Alderman Levasseur**, duly seconded by **Alderman George-Kelly**, it was voted to adjourn.*

A True Record. Attest.

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

Clerk of Committee