

BOARD OF MAYOR AND ALDERMEN

December 19, 2023 at 7:00 PM

Mayor Craig called the meeting to order.

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

A moment of silence was observed.

The Clerk called the roll.

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

Absent: Alderman Stewart

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.

Lou D'Allesandro, 322 St. James Avenue, stated:

Thank you for this opportunity to come before the BMA. Each one of you has a communication from the mayor's office in the city of Sherbrooke, Canada. For a number of years, I have been working on and previous Boards have been working on a sister city relationship with the city of Sherbrooke. We have many things in common. One of the things I think that has really come to the forefront is the biotech industry. With ARMI here and the biotech industry in Sherbrooke really flourishing and with the University of Sherbrooke with 30,000 students a strong medical school and a strong inclination to get involved in the biotech industry, it seems like a closer relationship between the two cities would be in order. This letter that I bring to your attention says that they are interested in doing this and hope that something can be done to create a

further partnership and a sister city relationship between the city of Sherbrooke and Manchester. I would hope that the BMA consider that and move forward with it. In the state, I was Chairman of the NH-Canadian Trade Council and we make three trips, two to Sherbrooke and one from Sherbrooke to Manchester, to extenuate and further this relationship and look at this relationship as a meaningful situation in terms of economic development. The ARMI situation and the biotech industry that is going on in Sherbrooke create a good synergistic relationship that could exist and be very good for both cities. I hope that you will consider this. If you look at the information on your desk, it states that they are interested in doing it and they look forward to the next correspondence and the discussion that will continue at that point. If anyone has any questions, I would be happy to answer them. The last thing I want to talk about is to congratulate and say thank you to the City of Manchester and the Division of Public Works and Parks & Recreation. I came before the BMA and the Parks & Recreation Department to ask that a way be named in honor of General Richard Vercauteren, a Bishop Bradley High School, a Brigadier General in the Marine Corps and a distinguished military officer who passed away. I requested that a way at Prouts Park be named the General Richard Vercauteren Way. We got that done and went through P&R and brought it to the BMA. We had a wonderful event at the site. The way has been named and the sign is up and as a result of that, Mrs. Vercauteren gave the City of Manchester \$10,000 in appreciation for the great work that the city did on behalf of her husband. I think people should recognize that the city made a great attempt to do something right and it came out right and Mrs. Vercauteren responded with a check for \$10,000. Kudos to the city and to Mrs. Vercauteren. To all of you, a very Merry Christmas, Happy New Year and great success in the future. Thank you.

Richard Irving, Ward 2, stated:

Last year at the 11th Annual Tower of Toys Charity Event in the Beacon Building at 814 Elm Street, I donated a Spiderman pillow for a homeless child and free food and drinks with other attendees. Last Thursday I went to the same event to donate a Pez candy dispenser and after getting food and drink, a drunken gentleman grabbed me by my right shoulder and told me the event was private. I later learned it was public. The next time someone advertises for a charity event, they should hire armed security guards at

the Beacon Building to protect attendees from disruptive individuals. Thank you and Merry Christmas.

Rich Girard, 283 Orange Street, stated:

Merry Christmas to you all. Item 5 on your agenda tonight is a change to the zoning ordinance that will give the Zoning Board of Adjustment the ability to grant a variance to the zoning ordinance without the petitioner having to prove that there is a hardship caused by the zoning ordinance on the property. This is with specific reference to sober homes and recovery facilities, which given that the city has over five dozen of them illegally operating today, poses serious risks to neighborhoods across the city. It would create a glide path for these operations to legitimize themselves and it would be an invitation and a magnet for people who want to open these things wherever they live and wherever they come from to come to Manchester which because of the failure rate, the flunk out rate of people in these facilities and I live between two of them so I have first-hand experience, is very high and really a contributing factor to our homeless problem here in the city. It will strip residents of any opportunity to oppose these uses, these high-risk uses in residential areas and leave them subject to the whims of businesses that pose certain risks. I would ask you to at least table it so it can be looked at. This seems to be moving very quickly. If not, please oppose it. Santa Claus is coming to Manchester and it is not just because it is Christmas, the other items I would like to address have to do with spending, particularly the contracts that you have before you from the school district. I could keep you here for a lot longer than three minutes but there are some things that aren't said in your summary of the tentative agreements. For example, with the MEA, it doesn't tell you that it expands the number of positions that are covered by the contract. It doesn't tell you that there are six weeks of paid pregnancy leave that is being offered as a new benefit and while they talk about continuing to reduce the compensated absences, aka sick leave, it doesn't tell you that the number of absences a year is pushing 16,000. When I was chairman of the committee in the 2018-2019 school year, there were 15,807 absences. You were told at the last meeting that the arrangement to try to push these things down had to be redone because of Covid. That was only one year of that contract so what were the results of the other two years that this couldn't be imposed? The other thing it doesn't tell you is that while it says the increase in pay is only "19%" over three years, the fact is

about 40% of the teaching staff will get pay raises of 30% or more over the course of this contract; over the next three years. If you think other unions in the city aren't paying attention to that, that is what happens when you couple step raises with COLA's. You are looking at 30% for 40% of the teachers over the next three years. There are more of course. If you take a look at the principal's contract, they talk about a modest increase in the number of sick days they can bank. It is a 50% increase with a very large unfunded liability. Really quickly, budget wise, in addition to the \$13 million just for next year, we have to find \$3 million to cover the revenue they moved from the health insurance trust as a way of getting around the tax cap, you have to find \$10.5 million to cover the 63 positions that were moved out of the operating budget into the ESSER funds which disappear next year, and you have to find another \$7 million to cover special education costs that they moved from the operating budget to ESSER funds. That is a lot of money folks. It is way above the tax cap. No matter how you slice it, in future years this spending is going to be a problem.

Bob Baines, 70 Rosemont Avenue, stated:

I will try to spread some Christmas joy. Six years ago, I came before this Board when Mayor Gatsas was leaving office to thank him for his service to the city and I am doing the same this evening Mayor Craig. Anyone who assumes the Office of Mayor assumes an awesome responsibility and a lot of personal sacrifice along the way, not only personally but for her entire family. For that, our entire city, this Board and everyone should have a big shout of thank you for putting yourself out there to serve our community in such a distinguished and proud way. I thank you for that. I would like to also acknowledge the outgoing Board members. I recently got elected to the school board not to get involved in politics again because I really am not interested in that anymore but to serve our community. I appreciate the support that is being given to the school board and the students of our city. As I have said many times, you can't have a great city without a great public education system. It just doesn't happen. I want to single out Alderman Cavanaugh. I don't know you very well alderman but I have been in political campaigns for almost my entire life going back to John Mongan versus Roland Vallee; actually, before that with John Mongan versus Mayor Benoit and Gerry Carmen's campaign for mayor against Frank Wageman and obvious other campaigns including my own. I have never witnessed a more distinguished and honorable

campaign for mayor than you ran this time and I thank you for that. I thank the mayor-elect for that as well. It set such a proud example for our city that politics can be conducted in such a wonderful way that you demonstrated during the campaign so I thank you for that. Finally, a few weeks ago an alderman-elect came to my house unexpectedly and sat at our kitchen table and asked about possibly taking my daughter in marriage, our oldest daughter, Christina. That is Alderman-Elect Norm Vincent. I don't talk politics with Norm. He is an Iraqi war veteran and a Boy Scout leader that is guiding one of my grandchildren through his Eagle Scout project and I know that Alderman Cavanaugh offered to help him with his project as well. He is an honorable, decent and good man and if you start off in politics and you are a good person, that is a great place to start. I thank all of you for your service to our community. I know the hard work that goes into it. It was an honor for me to serve in this Chamber and serve the people of this community. I wish you all a very Merry Christmas, a Happy New Year and congratulations for a job well done. Thank you very much.

Chrissy Simonds, 394 Second Street, stated:

I came here tonight to thank Mayor Craig for everything she has done for our city. It is a better place now that she has been here. When I first met Mayor Craig, she was on the school board. She wasn't my school board representative but she came into the store that I worked in, Family Outfitters Thrift Store, and I had a question about my son needing transportation and at that time kindergarten students were not allowed to take the bus. We had an IEP and I asked her if he would qualify because it wasn't for a physical disability. She said she wasn't sure but she found out for me and we have been in contact ever since. When she ran for mayor, we talked about the high school students not being able to take the school bus and I said it is hard enough to get the kids up in the morning and wanting to walk in the winter and I didn't think it should be a barrier. She worked with MTA so that the kids could take the city bus for free, which is a big thing because when you are low income like myself it is hard to come up with money for a bus. Then she asked me to be on the Homeless Task Force knowing that I was formerly homeless due to domestic violence and how passionate I am about being an advocate. I was kind of leery because there would be all these people with big fancy titles and they were a director of this or a director of that and I was just going to be Chrissy Simonds. She said that is what we need, a Chrissy Simonds who has a lived

experience. It meant a lot to me. A lot of people give Mayor Craig a hard time about the homelessness issue and they forget that it is not just the mayor. It takes the Board of Mayor and Aldermen to all work together, not just one person. Just like the President needs Congress and Senate. People forget that local politics are really important and I feel more important than our federal government. I just want to say thank you so much for giving me the "you can do it" and the pat on the back. Somebody told me once that I had really low self-esteem and if I just put in my pocket imaginary little notes when people have said positive things to me when I need it the most, I can pull out those little sentences they have said and make myself feel better. Mayor Craig has done that for me numerous times. I hope that the City of Manchester will realize and appreciate all the hard work she has done and remember that when they have their next complaint or somebody doesn't listen to them. Remember who Mayor Craig is. I also have a friend that is an alderman, Alderman Barry. He means a lot to me because he also takes my phone calls and never ignores them and never tells me he is too busy and doesn't have time. I want to say thank you Alderman Barry and I want to say thank you Mayor.

Joshua Reap, Candia, stated:

I am here tonight representing the Associated Builders & Contractors, which is a trade association that represents 285 construction companies in industry-related firms. I wanted to speak tonight on the proposed procurement ordinance changes that have been discussed and debated. We are concerned with how it is written and would encourage you to table it for further development. We think we can take something and make it better. Ultimately, the reason for the apprehension and the reason we have to oppose it as written is because it is entirely subjective and it is very unclear for contractors that I have spoken with on how this is going to work. In our field, everything has to be clear cut and written clearly as much as possible. You can't build a building if you don't know what it is going to look like and you can't build a building unless the contract documents that you have are clear and easy to understand as well. What you have proposed in front of you today is language that says something to the effect of whether the applicant has a responsible company safety program in place. That is a very subjective, very vague and very ambiguous stipulation. We would suggest going a bit further and saying things to the nature of does everyone have something as basic as an OSHA 10 Card, which is the industry universal standard for training. It is not just a

program but training and safety training is the fundamental basis of anything when it comes to safety. We recommend that you look at that. Other things that are in there too is it talks about whether the company's OSHA incident rates for reported injuries are reasonable. Again, here is another bit of subjectivity. What does reasonable mean? That is just a very subjective term. We would recommend going a step further and tying it to facts and data because in our industry facts and data and empirical information is effectively what you use on the job site every day. The way we look at standards is there are great government standards out there when it comes to BLS data and information that OSHA has. That would be much more applicable here than just something that is very vaguely written. Other things that are in there that are very vague as well is whether or not the applicant has a record of compliance or non-compliance with employment discrimination law or labor laws. Which particular set of laws are we talking about? Are we talking about the federal or are we talking about Vermont's set of standards of loss? It is very vague on that as well. I would suggest looking at something that is more specific in terms of violations that may be applicable on state and federal work. Lastly, when it comes to certifying employees, there is this issue that comes up a lot and I think it is something that is going to require a deeper conversation and that is directly employed or independent contractors. This is an issue that is a hot topic across the country and I think we can come to terms with a bit of language in here that is much more clear, concise and understandable than what is presented to you here. At the end of the day, when I asked contractors what do you think about this, this is their feedback and on top of that I asked what do you think this is going to do to the contract process. It is going to add costs to the procurement for the city. When we have a nearly \$300 million school project that is going to be coming out soon, you are talking double-digit percentage increases possibly for the contractors when it comes to regulatory implementation and when it comes to compliance and all of these other things that go into this sort of thing. With all that considered, I would just ask you to please consider the input from the industry; the men and women who work for you every day have this input that they would like to provide for you. We would like the opportunity to have this tabled and have a deeper conversation to come up with something that is meaningful that makes sure that Manchester residents can work on the job and do it safely and efficiently and be properly trained. Thank you very much for your time and Merry Christmas to you all.

Dam Wright, Manchester, stated:

It is close to the holidays and this is the last time I am probably going to be seeing this group all together in one room so I am not going to spend much time on the stuff we all already know. I assume you all watched the news and heard what we were talking about last week that yes, we have seen unsheltered homeless numbers more than double over the last few years. There is a significant increase in chronic homelessness. This is a product of many factors that are going on within our society and within our city. For those who are still going to be here and for those who are coming in who are clinging to old notions about how we need more law enforcement, I don't know how many times the experts, including Chief Aldenberg, have to say we are not going to arrest our way out of this problem. For those that think the best thing to do is cut off all aid and use tough love and not help these folks in any way, you are not going to starve people out of starving to death. It doesn't work like that. That all said, I didn't come here to be a downer tonight. It is the last time we are going to see each other and I came here tonight to thank you all. I came here to sincerely thank you all for the time you put in. For most of us, we haven't seen eye to eye on every issue with a couple of exceptions. We have had our ups and downs and differences but I know that you all work hard. I have seen you all working hard and I have seen you all working hard to learn more about these problems and how to better approach these problems with data driven solutions and to listen to Director Beloin and to listen to the National Alliance to End Homelessness. You are working and you have been doing so much better. It is sad to see that this group isn't going to be together anymore. I think there would have been some really good things. I hope that the new Board is able to pick up with those good things and continue with those good things. We will see but I came up because I did want to thank you folks and I want to wish you Happy Holidays; all of you.

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

Mayor Craig stated before we head into the presentation, I would just like to share a few thoughts. Serving as mayor of Manchester has been one of the greatest honors of my

life and it is hard to believe that this is our final Board of Mayor and Aldermen meeting. I ran for mayor in 2017 to get Manchester back on track and over the last six years we have collaborated with residents, businesses, non-profits and faith-based communities to improve our city. Together, we have created new opportunities, we overcame challenges and we laid the foundation for Manchester's future. The growth we are seeing in Manchester right now is unprecedented. We are attracting innovative industries and small businesses and fostering an entrepreneurial friendly environment. Manchester is home to an emerging bio-fabrication industry and in the same buildings where we once manufactured textiles, we are now revolutionizing healthcare. We helped foster this industry by leading an effort to apply for a \$44 million Build Back Better Regional Challenge Grant. We were the only municipality in the entire country to win, creating 7,000 new family-sustaining jobs. This is a game-changer for Manchester and for our entire state. We transformed an empty building downtown into the Rex Theatre, reestablished the Economic Development Office, and encouraged public art and community events through our Community Activation Grants. We have helped hundreds of small businesses open their doors and grow with initiatives like the Small Business Grant Program which to date has helped 128 small businesses and more to come. We welcomed the first new airline to the Manchester-Boston Regional Airport in 17 years and we have had fun along the way. We closed Elm Street for Taco Tour, started Downtown Trick or Treat, and took our rightful place as the chicken tender capital of the world. Manchester is once again a city where residents and businesses want to live and work but we recognize that in order to reach our full potential, we had to increase housing. I worked with the Mayor's Affordable Housing Task Force, the Manchester Housing Commission, and Planning & Community Development to come up with solutions to the most pressing issues facing our community and our state. We are undergoing a comprehensive rewrite of our zoning ordinances. We are developing two underutilized city-owned parking lots for housing. We increased opportunities for accessory dwelling units and we allocated \$31 million to affordable housing within the last five years. Today, there are thousands of housing units in development, including over 500 new affordable units and more on the way. Many of these units, including those at the site of the former police station, will house individuals who are currently experiencing homelessness. Communities across our state and country are seeing a rise in homelessness and in Manchester we have wrapped our arms around this

challenge. We created the Mayor's Homelessness Task Force and Department of Housing Stability to better coordinate efforts between city departments, non-profits, and the faith-based community. We are working with the National Alliance to End Homelessness on implementing national best practices. We expanded our city's shelter capacity and opened an Engagement Center; a service-enriched hub where unhoused individuals have access to basic needs as well as housing navigation, mental health and substance use programs, employment resources and more. These efforts have brought a 67% reduction in the number of encampments in the last six months alone. Public safety has always been my number one priority. Together, we funded the largest police complement ever, adding over 30 new officer positions. We increased foot patrols and implemented the city's first gun violence prevention strategy, which resulted in a 52% decrease in gunfire incidents in the first year and we are seeing results. Since I took office, we have reduced overall crime by 12% and violent crime by 38%. Because of our work, Manchester is now a safer city for our residents and our visitors. We are also improving the lives of our employees. We implemented the first in the state Cancer Screening Program for our firefighters, which is already saving lives, approved contracts for all of our city unions, and are undergoing a city-wide compensation study to retain and attract our hardworking city employees. We are making Manchester a community that everyone can enjoy for generations to come. Over the last six years, we repaired 215 miles of roads and sidewalks, which accounts for over 60% of all roads in the city and we won a \$25 million federal RAISE Grant to transform the South Commercial/South Elm Street area making our community safer for pedestrians, bikers and vehicles. Through another \$2.2 million grant, we will add over 500 new street trees in the city, promoting cleaner air, providing much needed shade and enhanced overall well-being. We have invested in our parks and recreation, including a skateboard halfpipe at Rock Rimmon, a new splash pad at Sheehan-Basquill Park, and we completed the construction on the Little Cohas Brook Trestle, providing a major connection between Manchester and Londonderry on the Granite State Rail Trail. For the first time in decades, we improved and expanded local bus service with new routes and increased frequency to South Willow Street and the west side. Manchester built the largest municipal solar array in the state and we have reduced carbon emissions in the city by 60%. Through energy efficiency projects, we are working to keep energy costs down, reduce our city's carbon footprint and help to preserve our natural resources. We

permanently preserved over 2,000 acres of land surrounding Lake Massabesic and opened the new Merrimack water treatment plant ensuring that Manchester residents and thousands across our state have access to clean drinking water. In the middle of all of this progress, a global pandemic hit forcing every single one of us to rethink the way that we serve our residents. Our public Health Department, which is just one of two in the state, responded to 11,000 requests to our Covid hotline, investigated over 30,000 cases of Covid and provided 25,000 vaccinations at over 250 clinics. It was a massive undertaking. Everything we have been able to accomplish has been because of the hard work of our talented department heads and dedicated city employees. You keep our city going every day. Thank you for your commitment to our community. It has been a pleasure working alongside you. Manchester's diversity is our greatest strength. We have created links between city government and our community, increased representation on our boards and commissions, and worked to ensure that all residents feel welcomed, respected and accepted. From increasing funding to our schools, to expanding services to our seniors, together we have made a Manchester that works for everyone. Each of us comes from different backgrounds and experiences. Whether you are a fourth-generation resident like me or your chose to make Manchester your home, we all share a love for Manchester. Our city is stronger because of our community's ability to come together, take on challenges and implement solutions that create positive change. While my time as Mayor is ending in 14 days, I will always be my hometown's biggest supporter. I am grateful for the friendships built, the partnerships fostered, and the trust residents put in me to lead our city forward. I want to thank the members of this Board. It has been an honor to serve with you. Manchester's future is bright and I can't wait to celebrate our city's wins and our neighbor's successes for many years to come. Thank you.

PRESENTATION

2. Fire Department Master Plan Presentation by Dynamix Consulting Group.

Ryan Cashin, Fire Chief, stated with me tonight is Mary-Ellen Harper from Dynamix Consulting Group, Chief Lamothe and Chief Fleury. I want to thank them for all of their hard work on this project. I want to thank all the city residents who filled out the survey and their continuous support of the Fire Department. I want to thank every member of

the department who helped on this project, as well as all of the support this Board has given us during this process. Thank you so much. We contracted with Dynamix Consulting to write this plan in April of this year. Dynamix spent the last several months gathering input and using a data driven approach to assess where the department is and where it should go over the next several years. The Fire Department has built a reputation of service and professionalism for over 100 years. Over the years, the Manchester Fire Department has had to adjust in order to complete its mission of saving lives and property, not unlike when the department changed from steam engines with horses to diesel engines and trucks, any adjustments the department has made over the years start with a plan and a change in culture. We will use this plan to help guide the strategic planning process to move the department into the future. The goal of the department is to adopt a data driven approach to decision-making and aggressively embrace proactive planning initiatives that focus on minimizing risks within the community. We intend to analyze and assess every aspect of the department to improve our service to the residents of this city and to be good stewards of the resources this Board entrusts us with. After the presentation, we humbly ask this Board for a motion to accept the plan as written and to start the strategic planning process. I am now going to turn it over to Mary-Ellen for the presentation.

Mary-Ellen Harper, Dynamix Consulting, stated before I start, I just wanted to publically thank Chief Cashin and his staff. We do these projects all over the country and you have a top-notch Fire Department. We met with firefighters in every one of the stations. You have a good thing going. You have a strong, proud organization and people that really want to serve the community and enjoy the job that they do. They have the support from the firefighters of the command staff and the direction of your department. We don't see that a lot. I would tell you that it is a really positive relationship that you have going on in this town and for that I compliment the entire city. Just really quick, we are going to do an overview of the current fire service delivery in the city, go over the recommendations, talk about next steps and answer any questions that you may have. When we look at service demand, you are going to see that year over year the demand for service continues to increase. The exception to that was 2020 because of the Covid-19 pandemic where everything in the world changed. I tell you that to tell you that as the demand for service increases, if we keep resources the same, what that is

going to do is actually deplete your current performance. If we look at your current performance and decide that you are satisfied with it, we are going to need to continue to add resources just to stand our ground as to where we are. Much like most fire departments in New England, you are going to see that the demand for service is about 80% EMS. You are looking at only about 1.2% fire calls. When we look at your 10 fire stations, we can see that Central Station #1 is the busiest station and that is actually a good thing because as we look at all of the indicators about where your population is and where your demand for service is and where your calls are, we can see that you have fire stations in the correct places to serve your community. Temporal variation tells us when your calls and the demand for service is happening. That is important because as we start looking at deploying resources and where to put them and what time of day, we have data to drive that. So, time of day service demand delivery, you are busy every day of the week but you are busier on weekdays than weekends. That makes sense because you have people coming into the city living, going to school and working here and that drives up your demand for service. Your hour-by-hour service is what we call a whale's tail. It looks almost like a whale kind of floating on the top of the water and it is also very typical of fire service in New England. You are going to see that when people go to bed at night, the demand for service tends to decrease and as they wake up in the morning and get up and start moving around and get more active, the demand for service increases. This is important if we are looking for things like a peak demand unit and you wanted to staff extra units. You would want to look at historically when that demand is and for you it is toward the middle of the day. The service delivery by month, you are a busy department all year round, however, July is your busiest month historically and the reason for that is probably that the weather is good and people are out doing things and when people are doing things, the demand for service increases. We are going to look at a number of indicators just to see where your people, your calls and your fire stations are. We always tell our fire departments that you never want to hang your hat on one piece of information but if we have multiple sources of information and they are all pointing in the same direction, that is going to increase our level of confidence that what we are looking at is an accurate representation of what is going on. So, when we look at the dark colored areas, that is where your densest concentration of your population is located. The lighter areas are where you have fewer people. When we look at where your fire stations are, it is a

good thing to see that you have fire stations predominantly located in those areas that are more densely populated and that is because where there are people there is going to be a demand for service. That is one indicator that you have fire stations in the right locations. When we look at count of incidents, this is important because in some communities you will see that there is a red, which is a heightened demand for service in certain areas and light green or even no demand in other areas. In your case, you have a demand for service, those green, are all incidents that happened throughout your community from 2018-2022. You have a demand pretty much consistently throughout the community and again that tells us that we need those fire stations where they are because you don't have an area where there isn't a demand. Again, where the demand is and where the stations are match up and that is a good indicator. If we look at your incident density analysis, this is a hotspot analysis. This is not how many calls; it is how close they are happening in proximity and where the concentration is. Again, that hotspot is right in downtown which makes sense because that is where your people are and that is where your activity is and you have a fire station right there. Again, that is a good location for a fire station. Secondary to that, the yellow are the next busiest areas and you can see you have a ring of fire stations right in the yellow areas as well so again a good location for your stations. Four to eight-minute travel times. Again, good coverage. You can cover your entire community with a four-minute travel time if your firetrucks are in their stations or their zones. I tell you that because we are going to look at call concurrency and how busy your department is getting. There are times when they are not in their zones but if they are in their stations and ready to respond, they can get there within four minutes. This is your effective response force. The darker colors are where you can get more firefighters. There are two things that we want to take into account with this. The yellow areas are on the outskirts. They are going to have fewer firefighters that we can effectively get to incidents in those areas quickly. We want to take that information into account when coming up with deployment matrixes. We may want to send additional resources to calls in those areas knowing that it is going to take longer to get the resources there. Again, even though we have those dark areas in the center and it looks like we have a good number of firefighters, we are going to talk about call concurrency. That is how many firefighters are on duty. They may not all be available for a call at a certain time because they may be on other calls and there are many times that you have multiple calls going on at the same time.

When we talk about our resource reliability, about 18% of the time you only have one incident going on but when we start looking, 27% of the time there are two incidents and you have another 25% of the time when you have three incidents going on. Those are all times where you may have two or more stations on each of those calls and those firefighters are not available to come to other calls and now, we are creating a situation where firefighters have to leave one zone to go to another one to cover it and that is what contributes to longer response times. Unit hour utilization is going to tell us just how busy your crews are. We want to say that they are able to be available about 90% of the time to be consistently available to serve the community. As units get busy and they start encroaching on that 10% mark, that is going to be a degradation of performance and it is going to lower the ability to respond to community needs. I will tell you that when we look at Engine 11, it is about 7.9%. I would track that data within the next year or two and we may need to look at adding additional resources in that zone in order to meet the demand if it continues to increase. Response continuum is basically the way the public is going to see your demand for service. They call 911 and they talk to a dispatcher and the dispatcher sends the call out to the Fire Department. The firefighters turn out and get into the truck and travel there and arrive. The important thing to your community is that total response time; from the time they call 911 to the time somebody shows up on the scene. That is what they see. We need to break it up into smaller components on our side because we want to look at what is happening in each area so we can look for efficiencies and ways to improve service. Call processing. You guys are doing a fantastic job with your call processing. You are above the standard as far as speed and efficiency so in that regard I would tell you that you are doing a very commendable job. Turnout time. Same thing. You are going to see that it takes a little bit longer to go to fires and that is because firefighters have to put turnout gear and equipment on and it takes a little bit longer to get ready for a fire than it does compared to some of the other calls. Again, they are doing a great job turning out. Travel time is something that I think warrants a little bit of consideration going forward. You are going to see that EMS calls are taking a lot longer to get to than some of the other calls. That is because of the way the deployment is currently going on with AMR and your Fire Department. AMR is not staffing consistently across the city like your Fire Department is. You have stations well located but AMR is moving and they are not always where the calls are going to be. Because 80% of your calls are EMS, that is

really having an impact on your travel time so that may be something you want to look at data-wise and make some goals when looking towards the future. There are definitely some opportunities for improvement there. Response time is going to be from the time 911 dispatches until the time they arrive. You are going to see here that overall you are doing well but again that EMS component is kind of dragging out that 80% of your calls because of the way they are being deployed. This is that total response time from the time somebody calls 911 until the time an emergency responder arrives. With EMS you are approaching on about 10 minutes 90% of the time. Overall, Fire is a whole lot quicker. Again, that is something where I would dig into the data as part of the strategic plan and set some goals for your community and where you want to be and then watch those goals to make sure you are meeting them as you go forward. With that, we have grouped the recommendations into some major categories and we are just going to hit on the categories tonight rather than going through all of the recommendations. The priority recommendations coming out of this study would really be to create two additional Assistant Fire Chiefs. You have a really proud Fire Department with a strong tradition in putting resources into frontline response. Times are changing as the Chief talked about and it is time to start having more people in the planning section and planning to do things a little differently. We still need the firefighters and we need to be able to deploy them but we need to plan to do that in different ways and use data going forward to continue to meet the changing needs of your community. When we look at the overall number for the size of your department, you have a very lean command staff. We would also recommend creating four Chief's Aid/Training Safety Officer positions, putting them on a shift and having them out there. This is great for professional development. You have a lot of people that are going to be moving upward and this gives them the experience, the opportunity and it keeps your firefighters safe. You are going to want to look toward working with compliance NFPA 1710 which is the national standard on staffing for staffing your ladder trucks and your engines. This should be a community conversation as to how many people do you want to staff, what are you willing to pay for, how quickly can you do it and come up with a goal that meets the needs of your community. Then as the demand for service increases so does the demand for training. We do recommend that you add an additional training instructor in order to ensure that the people you have out there are getting the effective training that they need. Additional priority recommendations would

include updating the training program, which they have actually started doing. This is one of the recommendations that they are moving on right now, including establishing formal feedback from the people that are being trained. We talked about exploring the feasibility of building a firefighter training facility. If they could train somewhere where they can actually practice what they need to do under emergency situations, it will make them a lot more proficient when those emergencies occur. Also, getting people out to the National Fire Academy. The more education and training and ideas we can get into the Fire Department; the more ideas they are going to have for what they can do to serve your community. Other major areas are EMS. We talked about looking at those response times with EMS and maybe making some goals and talking about how to be more efficient. Facility recommendations. As you go forward with a building plan, just some basic ideas as far as making sure they have sprinklers and drive-thru bays. Your vehicle replacement program is going to be part of that capital plan. You want to make sure that you have the right number of stations and trucks and that you are doing cancer prevention. Fire prevention. There is definitely a need to increase the number of fire inspectors to be in compliance with getting those again preventative things. That is that focus switch from reactive to proactive where we can get people out there and stop emergencies before they happen. That is the best kind of emergency; the one that never occurs. Then you are going to want to regularly review the city demographics. As your population changes, their needs may change and you want to be in a position to react to those and to make sure that you are putting your resources in the places where they can do the most good. Staffing recommendations. We talked about your command staff being really very small. Logistics and Purchasing Officer is really a point that you need to look at right now. There are better uses for your chief officers than having them run uniforms and equipment around the city. If we can get somebody in there to do that, we can have them focusing on the job of leading the Fire Department. An Emergency Management Specialist position and having that second position in that area. Public Educator, again that proactive getting the messages out to your community and stopping those emergencies before they happen. Then that Data Analysis position. That is the person that is going to track the data and really make sure you have the numbers that you need to get the grants going forward to fund some of the new programs and initiatives. Management components. This is really going to be handled by your strategic plan when you get into this. You have a need to update the

organizational chart and professional development and succession plan. We are going to talk about that as part of the strategic planning process. Then the planning – the mission, vision and values. All of those things should be a collaborative discussion that happens during the strategic planning workshop among your stakeholders. Service delivery. We talked about making recommendations. You really need to have a candid conversation about what is the service your community wants, what do they expect and what are they willing to pay for and then we need to track the data to make sure that you are doing it consistently once you have set those goals. With that, as the Chief said the next step is really going to be the strategic plan. This master plan gives you dozens of recommendations that are our opinions based on industry standards and best practices. The strategic plan is important because it is going to bring your stakeholders in to look at all of those recommendations and say out of all of these things what is important to us as stakeholders in the City of Manchester, prioritize them and decide what you want to do and in what order. Ideally, it should be a collaborative process. I would tell you that the best ones I have ever done include members of the community, elected officials, appointed officials, and members of the Fire Department all coming together and talking about these things and coming up with a collaborative effort. With that, it is usually a one-day planning session. Everybody that comes in as a representative is giving their opinions and then the work goes back to the Fire Department to go ahead and do it but they have the input of the stakeholders to do that. With that, I would be happy to answer any questions.

Alderman E. Sapienza stated thank you for the presentation. Do you have any recommendations for consolidations and/or efficiencies?

Ms. Harper asked as far as what.

Alderman E. Sapienza answered as far as anything to do with the Fire Department. Consolidations or efficiencies?

Ms. Harper stated we recommended that the number of stations is accurate and we saw that with the data you had. The 10 stations you have are truly needed at this point so I don't see any ability to consolidate fire stations. When it comes to efficiencies, if we

have the data collection and the fire prevention and production people, we can actually stop some of those calls before they occur, which in the long run becomes an efficiency because those are calls that you don't need to respond to.

Alderman E. Sapienza asked how would you stop the calls.

Ms. Harper replied community risk education and reduction and preventative measures; really getting more proactive in your messaging and your working with the community to stop the emergencies before they happen.

Alderman E. Sapienza responded you mentioned that approximately 80% of the calls are for EMS. Is there a rough breakdown of what that is? Like what is the largest percentage of those? Would it be overdoses?

Ms. Harper answered we don't get that information. The Fire Department keeps that information and I don't know if they are able to speak to that.

Alderman E. Sapienza asked Chief do you have that handy.

Chief Cashin replied I don't but I can break it down and send it to you, alderman.

Alderman Levasseur asked is there a cost associated with this master plan and all of the changes that you want to make.

Chief Cashin answered the master plan is just a guide that we are looking for the Board to accept. Any of the changes that we want to make would come back before the Board to be voted on.

Alderman Levasseur asked piecemeal.

Chief Cashin replied yes.

Alderman Levasseur asked how many pieces to the meal are there.

Chief Cashin responded at this point it would be hard to say because we are going to work through the strategic planning process and then bring those forward at a later date.

Alderman Levasseur asked do you know how many recommendations there are. I saw something about AMR in there.

Chief Cashin answered there are about 30-40 recommendations. Some of those will make it through the strategic planning process and some might not.

Alderman Long asked with respect to strategic planning or master plans, what is the lifespan of those.

Ms. Harper replied a master plan is usually a 10-15 year look at where you want to be long-term and that is why we are looking at buildings and trucks and succession planning and professional development. The strategic plan is going to be that 1-3 years what are we going to do right now to start working toward that long-term goal. We have about 36 recommendations and you are not going to get them all done during the strategic planning process and some of them you may not want to do. We are going to look at all of those and ask what do we want to do in the first 1-3 year planning phase and what are our priorities and let's come up with a reasonable list of goals that we can expect to attain and start working through those and adopt those as the first phase of your strategic plan. Then as you start getting those things done, you can go ahead and update your strategic plan to include additional goals as you move forward with the idea that at the end of that 15-year plan you will have gotten to the direction you want to go in.

Alderman Long asked in other areas have you seen a change in demographics where the master plan got blown away and had to change significantly or has it been pretty stable around the country.

Ms. Harper answered I haven't had anybody in New England do their second master plan yet. We are still on the first ones because this is kind of a new revelation in New England.

Alderman Long asked and they are still on that first plan.

Ms. Harper replied yes. I will tell you that some of the second-generation strategic plans have evolved and changed. Covid kind of threw a loop to a lot of people that we just didn't expect and fire departments had to react to that. I do another city here in NH and when they started looking at the demographics, they knew that they were growing and changing but what they didn't realize until we came in and showed them was that they had almost 40% of their population not speaking English as a primary language. Well, that changed the way they did messaging for community risk reduction. If we are not speaking to people in their native tongue, they are not getting that information and we can do a better job of educating them if we figure out what languages they do speak. They actually started changing their messaging to be in multiple languages as a result of that.

Alderman Levasseur asked out of all the other fire departments that you have done master plans with, do you know how many of them have their own ambulance service.

Ms. Harper responded not off the top of my head. I have worked with over 300 fire departments in the last couple of years.

Alderman Levasseur asked and you have no idea how many.

Ms. Harper stated their own ambulances I would say less than 50%. It is more common in certain areas of the country than others. Out in the west, it is almost exclusively done. They all run their ambulances so when I get to Washington state, I see that pretty frequently.

Alderman Levasseur asked any difference between smaller urban areas or cities. Is there a difference between the size of a town or a city that comes to your mind or maybe you could get that information for us?

Ms. Harper answered it really just depends on what the community wants. Are you looking for efficiency or are you looking at cost or patient care? There are a lot of different ways to look at that and that is why we recommend that you look at those overall goals, establish the performance goals and what is the level of service you want to give to your community and then talk about what is the best way to provide that.

Alderman Levasseur asked do you find that fire departments are more efficient at it than private organizations.

Ms. Harper replied I came out of a municipal fire department and I did the study for my own department and told my manager from day one that I couldn't do it more economically but I could do it at a better consistent quality because I control my people and the way they provide that service. It is really going to be a matter of how much hands-on does the community want and where do they want that performance to be?

Alderman Levasseur asked and the destination that the ambulances would be leaving from.

Ms. Harper responded yes.

Alderman Burkush stated Chief Cashin thank you for undertaking this project of doing a master plan and bringing in somebody from the outside to look at the way you operate. That takes a lot of forethought to have somebody come in and look at the operation and see what the data is for actual deployment. We did this 30 years ago and we did have three Assistant Chiefs at the time. Since then, there was no way to manage the department without those crucial positions. Everything has fallen down but I thank you.

Alderman Burkush moved to accept the master plan and allow the Fire Department to begin the strategic planning.

Alderman Gamache duly seconded the motion.

Alderman Levasseur asked isn't this just a presentation. We are not doing a motion on this?

Alderman Long stated he asked for a motion.

Alderman Levasseur asked you want us to approve the whole plan.

Chief Cashin answered I would like a motion to accept the master plan so we can start the strategic plan and build off of it.

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

CONSENT AGENDA

Approve Under Supervision of the Department of Highways

3. Pole Petitions:

- 11-1758 (2) Currier Drive
- 11-1760 (1) Massabesic Street
- 11-1762 (1) Brennan Street
- 11-1764 (1) Howe Street
- 11-1765 (1) Faltin Drive
- 11-1766 (1) Dave Street
- 12-0946 (1) Douglas Street

REFERRALS TO COMMITTEES

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

4. Resolutions:

"Amending the FY2024 Community Improvement Program, authorizing and appropriating funds in the amount of Thirty Thousand Dollars (\$30,000) for the FY2024 CIP 412324 Domestic Violence Prosecutor."

"Amending the FY2021 Community Improvement Program, authorizing and

appropriating funds in the amount of One Hundred Sixty-Three Thousand Six Hundred Sixty Dollars (\$163,660) for the FY2021 CIP 711321 Deferred Maintenance - Municipal.”

“Amending the FY2024 Community Improvement Program, authorizing, appropriating and transferring funds in the amount of One Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$100,000) for the FY2024 CIP 610024 Winter Emergency Shelter.”

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT

6. Recommending that the Amending Resolution and Budget Authorization providing for the acceptance and expenditure of funds in the amount of \$30,000 for CIP 412324 Domestic Violence Prosecutor be approved.
(Unanimous vote)
7. Recommending that the Amending Resolution and Budget Authorization providing for the transfer and expenditure of funds in the amount of \$100,000 for CIP 610024 Winter Emergency Shelter be approved.
(Unanimous vote)
8. Recommending that the Amending Resolution and Budget Authorization providing for the acceptance and expenditure of funds in the amount of \$163,660 for CIP 711321 Deferred Maintenance-Municipal be approved.
(Unanimous vote)
10. Recommending that the request from the Health Department to extend various CIP projects to 6/30/2024 be approved.
(Unanimous vote)
11. Recommending that the summary of abatement requests submitted by the Chief Engineer be approved.
(Unanimous vote)

COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RESOURCES/INSURANCE

12. Recommending that the request from the Deputy Public Works Director to add one (1) Recreation Coordinator, Grade 16, to his complement be approved.
(Unanimous vote with the exception of Alderman George-Kelly who was absent)
13. Recommending that the request from the Fire Chief to add two (2) Assistant Fire Chiefs, Grade 27, to his complement and eliminate the Deputy Fire Chief position from his complement be approved.
(Unanimous vote with the exception of Alderman George-Kelly who was absent)

14. Recommending that the request from the Fire Chief to add one (1) Emergency Management Specialist, Grade 20, to his complement be approved.
(Unanimous vote with the exception of Alderman George-Kelly who was absent)
15. Recommending that the request from the Welfare Director to add one (1) Welfare Specialist, Grade 18, to her complement be approved.
(Unanimous vote with the exception of Alderman George-Kelly who was absent)

COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY, HEALTH AND TRAFFIC

16. Recommending that the request from the Parking Manager to allow ABC News to use the Middle Street Lot as its broadcast location for the Presidential Primary Election from January 14 through January 24 be approved.
(Unanimous vote with the exception of Alderman George-Kelly who was absent)
17. Recommending that the request from Mr. Mac's to have the Public Works Department paint "Do Not Block" on the roadway in front of their driveway and install appropriate roadside signage be approved.
(Unanimous vote with the exception of Alderman George-Kelly who was absent)
18. Recommending that the following traffic regulations be approved:

NO PARKING ANYTIME

On Mammoth Road, east side, from Corning Road to a point 80 feet south

Alderman Sapienza

On Chestnut Street, east side, from Webster Street to a point 55 feet north

Alderman Cavanaugh

CROSSWALK

On Calef Road, south of Elmwood Avenue

On Elmwood Avenue, west of Calef Avenue

Alderman Burkush

RESCIND NO PARKING ANYTIME

On Cass Street, east side, from Central Street to a point 55 feet north

(ORD 9842)

Alderman Fajardo

RESCIND CROSSWALK

On Calef Road, north and south of Elmwood Avenue (ORD 1749)

Alderman Burkush

(Unanimous vote with the exception of Alderman George-Kelly who was absent)

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

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

COMMITTEE ON BILLS ON SECOND READING

Commented [M1]:

5. Recommending that Ordinance Amendment:

"An Ordinance amending the Zoning Ordinance, Chapter 155 of the City of Manchester Code of Ordinances, to provide reasonable accommodations to disabled persons by defining "disability" and adopting RSA 674:33, V."

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

(Unanimous vote with the exception of Alderman George-Kelly who was absent)

Alderman Levasseur stated I understand this is going to be sent to the Committee on Accounts, Enrollment & Revenue Administration but I would like to ask Jeff a question prior to it getting to that next committee because I don't know who is going to be on it. On the issue of sober homes that we heard from Mr. Girard, can you give us some more background on that and if it is going to be what he says it is or not?

Jeff Belanger, Planning & Community Development Director, replied this first went to the BMA on 11/21. It then got referred to Bills on Second Reading and it will go to Accounts next. That is how it would work. It addresses any application for a variance for someone with a disability, which includes mental disability under federal law which includes addiction to a controlled substance so sober houses fall under this. I think what is most important for the Board to understand overall is that the request from my office, the Solicitor's Office and outside counsel to bring this language into the ordinance is that this language exists already in state and federal law. There is no legal impact to adopting this language. The purpose of the amendment is to bring the language into the ordinance for ease of use so that people who apply to the ZBA and the ZBA members themselves and the citizens of Manchester have easy access to the laws that apply to them. There is no legal effect here because the laws already apply to Manchester. If you go to page 65 of your packet, you will see the language. There are really two parts to it. The first part is a definition section. That is taken word for word from federal law. The second part is the operative section from state law. That is word for word from state law. That applies to every municipality in the state whether we adopt it in our ordinance or not. Just like the five variance criteria that I believe you are

familiar with. Those are enacted in state law and those apply whether we have them in our ordinance or not. It is the same idea. We are just bringing them in to make sure that people have easy access.

Alderman Levasseur stated my next question is does it actually put more, and I don't want to use the word restrictions, but does it put more safety requirements into someone who is going to have a sober home. In other words, before you didn't have to have a ramp and you didn't have to have an outside elevator or whatever. Is this going to make it safer or easier for these buildings to get a variance or to operate or does it make it a little tougher?

Mr. Belanger responded the way it works is it eliminates...I mentioned the five variance criteria and it eliminates one of them; the unnecessary hardship criteria. That goes away. Again, that is part of state law already today. State law says that if someone has a disability they can apply for a variance and get what is called a reasonable accommodation, which is a federal term that is used in the Fair Housing Act and in the ADA. It means a way for someone to be able to use a property in a way that accommodates their disability.

Alderman Levasseur asked so it actually makes it less restrictive and easier to get a sober home open.

Mr. Belanger answered correct.

Alderman Levasseur stated I would assume and I don't know where it came from but some sorts of addiction are considered a disability.

Mr. Belanger replied exactly.

Alderman Levasseur asked which ones are and is that codified.

Mr. Belanger answered yes in the Fair Housing Act and the ADA. In my layman's understanding, it is every addiction to a controlled substance. It could be alcohol or any

kind of controlled drug. A recovery from an addiction to that is considered a disability under the FHA and ADA.

Alderman Levasseur asked couldn't we assume that a majority of the properties that would be coming in front of the ZBA would have to accommodate way more people than we do now because addiction is quite prevalent. Every single building would...it is not only if you are going to live there but it is also accessibility, correct?

Mr. Belanger replied that is how the ADA works from a physical standpoint. The quintessential example of the ADA is someone who wants to get a variance to put a wheelchair ramp on the side of their house. They use a wheelchair to get around and they want to get a variance because that ramp would impinge on the setback. That is the standard case. They would go to the ZBA and they would say I want a wheelchair ramp and put it in the setback.

Alderman Levasseur asked if I build a really big building and it has commercial on the first floor and an addiction company opens on the first floor of a 70-apartment building, they would get around those particular five prongs and only need four prongs now because they have an addiction center.

Mr. Belanger answered correct if they need a variance.

Alderman E. Sapienza asked Jeff when you mentioned federal and state laws, the FHA and ADA, does the decision still rest with the ZBA.

Mr. Belanger responded absolutely. Every one of these would be a public hearing before the ZBA which would weigh the evidence of the applicant and the abutters. There would be time for anyone who lives nearby to be able to comment and bring evidence in front of the ZBA. They would weigh that and determine whether they find it persuasive.

Alderman Fajardo asked just to clarify, this is how it all works today right.

Mr. Belanger answered yes.

Alderman Fajardo asked and all this is is language that is more easily referenced in the ordinance.

Mr. Belanger replied yes. Today, if someone were to come before the ZBA and ask for a sober house, they would follow this same procedure that we are recommending be written into law. It would be the same procedure.

Alderman Fajardo asked this isn't making it easier or harder.

Mr. Belanger responded no it is not. It isn't changing the status quo. The status quo is already there.

Alderman Levasseur asked so it is not an exemption.

Mr. Belanger answered it is what is called a reasonable accommodation under the ADA and FHA. It is taking the five normal variance criteria and shrinking it down to four eliminating a due hardship but that already happens.

Alderman Levasseur asked so why don't we just have four then instead of five.

Mr. Belanger replied because for everyone else, it is still five. For someone who needs a reasonable accommodation because of a disability, they have four not five.

Alderman Kantor asked who decides if they have an addiction disability.

Mr. Belanger responded there are two answers to your question. The first is what qualifies as a disability under federal law so they have to apply to the ZBA and say we meet the definition of such and such a disability whatever that is and then they need to provide documentation to the Planning Department which eventually goes to the ZBA saying in the case of a sober home it would be we are going to ensure that everyone who comes into this facility has some disability that meets these criteria.

Alderman Long stated my understanding is when you are in recovery, that is considered a disability.

Mr. Belanger replied yes under federal law.

Alderman Long asked not while you are active.

Mr. Belanger answered correct.

Alderman Long moved to accept the report and adopt its recommendation. Alderman Cavanaugh duly seconded the motion.

Alderman Levasseur asked is this retroactive to anything that was already approved or any sober home that may be in litigation. If it comes up on the 16th and it passes, does it become retroactive or is it going forward?

Mr. Belanger replied non-conforming uses only apply to uses that were legally established at the time they became active. So, if someone is illegally operating any use in the city, a sober home or anything else, they don't get a pass because a new law comes into play.

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

COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT

9. Recommending that the request from the Planning & Community Development Director to change the administering department to the Manchester School District, and to change the project description for CIP 713024, School Facilities-Phase I, be approved.
(Unanimous vote)

Alderman Levasseur asked is Tim Clougherty here.

Mayor Craig answered no but Owen is.

Alderman Levasseur stated I think the question I have was answered by Alderman Long but I just want to make sure I get it on the record. The issue of the recommendation to change the administering department to the Manchester School District and change the project description for 713024 School Facilities-Phase I...if you just read it that way it sounds like that but the actual change is that DPW will no longer be involved in the administration or the administering of Phase I or anything to do with that project for the school district. Can you just verify that or correct that?

Owen Friend-Gray, Deputy Public Works Director, answered what we have been doing so far is we have been involved in this project in an advisory type role sort of tangentially. We have had numerous meetings with different school board members, including Dr. Gillis and many others. We are in sort of a complementary type advisory role; however, we are not the direct administrators necessarily of this project. We are not the ones signing the checks or paying the bills. Really that is what this change is for. It is not going to change our involvement or our role at all. It is just going to be so that the people who are signing off on the invoices and the requisitions are people at the school district and not DPW.

Alderman Levasseur asked so the definition of administering is only for administrative responsibilities like writing checks.

Mr. Friend-Gray replied yes and having the final say on what is going to happen and the school district is going to have that final say. However, DPW will be deeply involved and we will have a large seat at the table. We will be constantly going back and forth with the school in an advisory and support manner. We are not necessarily the lead agency on this.

Alderman Levasseur asked what was the normal routine. Without this change, what would you guys have been doing or responsible for?

Mr. Friend-Gray responded I don't believe the way it was necessarily set-up was how it was intended to be set-up by DPW. Without this change, I guess we would be the ones that would need to approve the pay requisitions. That would probably be the only

difference in terms of how it is currently intended to be managed and how it would be managed without this change.

Alderman Levasseur asked what skillset is necessary that DPW has or the school district would not have because I don't think anyone has ever done a project like this. Is the skillset different for approving invoices or knowing what should be paid or if somebody is being overbilled? Is there a skillset involved that DPW has had historically today than what we would be seeing with a project of this magnitude?

Mr. Friend-Gray replied I don't believe that project management is an exclusive ability of public works. There are certainly people within the school district that have overall project management type of experience or skillsets that would allow them to verify that work has been completed to keep up on scheduling, building, invoicing and things of that nature. Does that answer your question?

Alderman Levasseur responded well I see that the Planning & Community Development Director wants this change. Are you guys okay with it?

Mr. Friend-Gray answered yes.

Alderman Levasseur stated less responsibility.

Mr. Friend-Gray stated it is more about getting the responsibility into the correct folks and allowing them to have the ability, as they are going to be managing the project, to also manage the money and not have to have DPW be sort of a go between.

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

Alderman Fajardo duly seconded the motion.

Alderman E. Sapienza stated I suppose this is obvious but you are going to continue to advise on this project right.

Mr. Friend-Gray replied absolutely. We are going to be involved every step of the way. We have been in extensive talks with Dr. Gillis and others at the school district so far and we are going to continue that role. An example of an RFP went out for the temporary units recently and that was reviewed by three different members of our department and comments were given back to the school district advising how we thought it might be better articulated or more clearly presented going out. I do not foresee that changing.

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

REGULAR BUSINESS

19. Confirmations:
Building Board of Appeals
Jacob Pouliot as regular member, term to expire January 1, 2027
Heritage Commission
Lisa Walsh as an alternate member term to expire July 1, 2025
Patrick Long as an alternate member, term to expire July 1, 2024
Planning Board
Erin George-Kelly as a regular member, term to expire May 1, 2025
Retirement Board
Richard Molan as a regular member, term to expire January 1, 2027
Library Trustees
Vanessa Blais, term to expire October 2030
Martha Rossignol, term to expire October 2030
Eleanor Dahar, term to expire October 2025

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

20. Communication from Tim Clougherty, Public Works Director, requesting authorization to waive the City's Snow Emergency Regulations during the Christmas and New Year holidays.

*On motion of **Alderman Burkush**, duly seconded by **Alderman Heath**, it was voted to approve.*

- 21.** Tentative agreements between the Manchester School District and the:
- Association of Federal, State & County Municipal Employees (AFSCME), Local 3912, Paraprofessionals
 - Manchester Educational Association Support Personnel Association (MESPA)
 - Manchester Educational Association (MEA)
 - Directors & Coordinators, Teamsters Local 633
 - Association of Manchester Principals (AMP), Teamsters Local 633

Matthew Normand, City Clerk, stated for the record this would also include the one-year extension for the Certified Instructors that was laid over by this Board on 11/21. It should have been on the 12/5 agenda.

Alderman Long moved to ratify the agreements. **Alderman T. Sapienza** duly seconded the motion. **Mayor Craig** called for a vote. The motion carried with Aldermen **Heath** and **E. Sapienza** abstaining from the teacher's contract vote and **Alderman Levasseur** duly recorded in opposition to all contracts except for the paraprofessionals.

- 22.** Budget projections to be submitted by Sharon Wickens, Finance Officer, if available.

Sharon Wickens, Finance Officer, stated the fiscal year 2024 general fund expenditure fund expenditure and revenue forecast as of December 19, 2023 based on department head estimates is as follows. The current projected general fund operating surplus is \$139,000. The operating surplus is comprised of an expenditure surplus of \$89,000 and a revenue surplus of \$50,000. November health insurance claims were higher than budget expectations. Through November, health costs are running at least \$500,000 over plan. I expect department expenditure surplus to continue to increase as vacancies remain open which will help in turn to offset the higher health insurance costs. The health expenditure line will be monitored closely as we begin the winter season. The forecasted surplus does include \$300,000 from the contingency account. There were 19 retirements through December 15 compared with 8 at this same time a year ago. Severance paid through December 15 is \$754,461 compared to \$425,384 a year ago. The severance reserve account is anticipated to have a balance of \$1,625,902 after all related entries have been posted. You also have the overtime report as of December 9 and a summary by department of severance paid through December 15. The only comment I will make on health care is it is trending \$600,000 to

\$700,000 over plan. We do expect a rebate for pharmacy to come in. That is usually between \$200,000-\$300,000 but December, January and February are typically the highest months. Right now, if you look at the second page of what I had sent, you can see that with the contingency and with some of the surplus that the departments are putting forth, it is covering the shortfall. As we head into December, we will know a little bit more on what we need to do by the first of the year. Maybe more surplus will come from the departments. What I am seeing coming in for December is high and I expect this to continue to grow.

Alderman E. Sapienza stated thank you Sharon. So, this is the outlook for fiscal year 2024 which ends June 30 correct?

Ms. Wickens answered yes.

Alderman E. Sapienza asked is there anything that jumps out at you or any red flags that we should be aware of. I know that is a very general question and I apologize for that.

Ms. Wickens replied the big red flag is health care. As I look at the departments, they are all managing well within their budget. Auto registrations, which is our biggest revenue, looks to be right on target as well as building permits. Those are coming in and they are beating budget a little bit right now. We still have half a year to go so they are not going to project any surplus at this point. If it keeps going, maybe they will. It certainly won't be where we were last year where they beat budget by about \$1 million. Health care is lagging. We have a reserve account that has about \$3.3 million. This \$500,000 is being covered right now but if we start spending contingency that takes away from the money that is offsetting these costs. I don't know. It depends on how bad December and January are. We will have a better picture once December is reconciled. That is usually the first bad month for us and I can already see that claims are higher.

Alderman Levasseur stated I don't want to make your last meeting the longest meeting ever. I apologize. That presentation really went too long I am sorry but otherwise we

probably would have been through a little quicker. I have never seen a surplus number of \$139,000. I am actually feeling my head getting really hot. I have never seen anything like that before. I have seen \$1 million+ surpluses many times in all these years. A \$139,000 surplus...I mean how are we going to make it to May and June?

Mayor Craig stated that is the project until the end of the year.

Alderman Levasseur stated it says the current projected general fund operating surplus is \$139,000.

Mayor Craig responded that is a projection.

Ms. Wickens stated that is what we know today.

Alderman Levasseur stated well we have never had low surpluses like that before.

Ms. Wickens replied we have had low projections and we have actually had projections that have been in the negative where we had to do something to figure it out. Is this great? Absolutely not. I don't see a lot of fires in the departments right now. The departments are managing well and I don't see anybody lagging in revenues. Right now, we seem to be on target. Health care is not great. What you now see before you is being covered by the surplus the departments have projected, which is small. There is also a reserve of \$3.3 million. The reserve could cover this shortfall if you wanted. I always think of that as kind of a last resort but health care is a real problem. There is no doubt about it.

Alderman Levasseur asked on the \$300,000 in contingency, could you remind me what we spent the other \$50,000 on.

Ms. Wickens answered the contingency started at \$312,000. That is what we started the year with. You gave \$5,000 to DPW for some work they were doing on the Hallsville building.

Alderman Levasseur responded I thought we started with \$350,000. My mistake. It was \$312,000?

Ms. Wickens replied yes. Money was needed to keep the tax rate where the aldermen wanted it so we robbed contingency a little bit. You are right.

*On motion of **Alderman T. Sapienza**, duly seconded by **Alderman Fajardo**, it was voted to recess the meeting to allow the Committee on Finance to meet.*

Mayor Craig called the meeting back to order.

25. Report(s) of the Committee on Finance, if available.

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

“Amending the FY2024 Community Improvement Program, authorizing and appropriating funds in the amount of Thirty Thousand Dollars (\$30,000) for the FY2024 CIP 412324 Domestic Violence Prosecutor.”

“Amending the FY2021 Community Improvement Program, authorizing and appropriating funds in the amount of One Hundred Sixty-Three Thousand Six Hundred Sixty Dollars (\$163,660) for the FY2021 CIP 711321 Deferred Maintenance - Municipal.”

“Amending the FY2024 Community Improvement Program, authorizing, appropriating and transferring funds in the amount of One Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$100,000) for the FY2024 CIP 610024 Winter Emergency Shelter.”

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.*

26. 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 Ordinance:

"Amending Chapter 38: Procurement Code of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Manchester by adding additional requirements during the prequalification of bidders associated with the procurement of city construction contracts."

ought to pass and be Ordained.

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

Alderman T. Sapienza duly seconded the motion.

Alderman E. Sapienza stated I want to thank the speaker who came up here who was opposed to this. I tend to agree with him. To me this seems like an excessive and ambiguous regulation. We have to be careful not to choke out industry with excessive regulations. We all have a duty here not to expand the bureaucracy beyond a reasonable level. I am opposed to this.

Alderman Levasseur stated I did speak to one particular business in the City of Manchester that worked on the schools back in 2002-2003 when we had the expansion. This gentleman told me that this would cost them about an extra 15% on the low side if they were to try to get involved in the school district project. I am not only a little bit concerned about that because I know there will be there companies affected but I am also concerned about Continental Paving. They are an open shop and they put all of the asphalt down on our roads. As we know, the cost of asphalt and labor has gone up and now when you add this extra PLA and all of these extra requirements in, I am not sure if they are going to be able to get through the bid or qualify under these new rules. I wish we could have a little more time to discuss this with other businesses. There was a gentleman who came up who represents many of them in the state. I agree with him that putting more restrictions is going to get us less, especially on our buildings. If it is going to be 15% more than we are going to get 15% less as a cost issue. I would respectfully request that this Board table this until the next Board takes hold and maybe until the 16th so we can get more information on this, especially when it comes to Phase I and paving which is a big issue for our city. I think we should be more cautious with the language now. I have been told by one alderman that this doesn't change anything for those bidding. If it doesn't change anything, then why are we making changes?

Alderman Long stated these changes...Mr. Reed that came up represents the union of the non-union contractors, ABC. He spoke with businesses and I appreciate that. This is clearly about workers. I am absolutely in favor of this because this protects workers. The 15%, I don't know where that is coming from. I know contractors that if you throw a little stick in the wheel, they will argue that it is going to cost them 15% more. This has nothing to do with a PLA. If Continental Paving is cheating their workers, then they should have a concern about this. If they are not, then they shouldn't have any concern. I am more interested in protecting workers than listening to contractors who have an issue with this. I don't see where the issue is unless of course they have an issue with being responsible.

Alderman T. Sapienza stated responsible contractors do hire quality workers. The city is going to be better off in the end. Naturally the irresponsible contractors who don't want this are going to throw out all kinds of stories about why it is bad. Responsible contractors in the long run will give the city the best product. If you are a responsible contractor, you have nothing to worry about. Is it vague? I don't think it is vague. Some of the examples that were used are just as vague. Again, responsible contractors will give the city a better value in the long run. Responsible contractors have nothing to worry about. Our department heads know who the responsible contractors are.

Alderman Levasseur responded so basically you are saying that the department heads know who to contract with or who not to contract with so then it is very arbitrary. Obviously, we are running an arbitrary selection process right now if you say it that way and it is going to be even more so with these additional restrictions. You say that we are protecting workers. Are we protecting all workers or just a selection of workers? I would think that a lot of these people who work for good companies and are getting paid well like Continental Paving, Longchamps Electric, Denron and the companies that I am familiar with in Manchester that have done some very good work for the city, are they going to be excluded because there is different language or different hoops or a different health care plan that one organization has versus another?

Mayor Craig replied no.

Alderman Levasseur stated he just said it is about workers. So, if we are talking about workers, what about all workers?

Mayor Craig responded it is not exclusionary. It is all workers.

Alderman Levasseur stated it is all workers that currently fit this criteria. There are probably a whole bunch of people out there that don't fit the criteria but the companies do very good work. I would probably expect that Continental Paving doesn't fit the criteria.

Mayor Craig replied you don't know that.

Alderman Levasseur stated we should have asked before we implement this.

Mayor Craig stated this has been in the public.

Alderman Levasseur replied so what. Does that mean we aren't supposed to discuss it or ask questions because it has been made public? How do we know that we are going to be...

Mayor Craig interjected you will go through the Chair and not just respond to him.

Alderman Levasseur replied I was not finished with my statement and you turned your head to somebody else. I am asking you how do we know who we are excluding? We could be excluding companies we do business with now. Has anybody asked? No. No one has.

Alderman E. Sapienza stated I would like to know what was the impetus for this. What spurred this? Were there a lot of workers out there saying we are not being paid? Were there excessive safety violations going on? What exactly spurred this?

Alderman Long stated Alderman look at Central Street for starters.

Alderman Cavanaugh stated it was that. Some of the contractors we had doing that project have active lawsuits in New York and Massachusetts for wage theft.

Alderman Levasseur responded but that is not a city property that is being built. That is a private business.

Alderman Cavanaugh stated I was asked why it was started and that is why it started.

Alderman Levasseur stated that is a private business.

Alderman Cavanaugh stated we have to protect any worker we can and city tax money. That is what this does.

Alderman E. Sapienza stated currently the contracts do not go to the lowest bidder correct. They go to the lowest responsible bidder currently, right? It goes to the lowest responsible bidder.

Alderman Long replied no it goes to the lowest qualified bidder.

Alderman E. Sapienza responded okay so it goes to the lowest qualified bidder. Great. So why do we need to pile on more regulations?

Mayor Craig stated it is protection.

Alderman Levasseur stated that is a great word by the mayor, protectionism.

Mayor Craig called for a motion to accept the report and adopt its recommendation. The motion carried with Aldermen E. Sapienza and Levasseur duly recorded in opposition.

27. Report(s) of the Committee on Administration/Information Systems, if available.

The Committee on Administration/Information Systems respectfully recommends, after due and careful consideration, that the new income limits for elderly and disabled exemptions proposed by the Board of Assessors be approved.

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

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

There were none.

29. Resolutions:

"Amending the FY2024 Community Improvement Program, authorizing and appropriating funds in the amount of Thirty Thousand Dollars (\$30,000) for the FY2024 CIP 412324 Domestic Violence Prosecutor."

"Amending the FY2021 Community Improvement Program, authorizing and appropriating funds in the amount of One Hundred Sixty-Three Thousand Six Hundred Sixty Dollars (\$163,660) for the FY2021 CIP 711321 Deferred Maintenance - Municipal."

"Amending the FY2024 Community Improvement Program, authorizing, appropriating and transferring funds in the amount of One Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$100,000) for the FY2024 CIP 610024 Winter Emergency Shelter."

*On motion of **Alderman Trisciani**, duly seconded by **Alderman T. Sapienza**, it was voted to waive the reading by titles only.*

*On motion of **Alderman T. Sapienza**, duly seconded by **Alderman Gamache**, it was voted that the Resolutions be Enrolled.*

30. Ordinance:

"Amending Section 33.024, 33.025 & 33.026 (Emergency Management Specialist) of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Manchester."

"Amending Chapter 38: Procurement Code of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Manchester by adding additional requirements during the prequalification of bidders associated with the procurement of city construction contracts."

Alderman Burkush moved to Ordain. **Alderman T. Sapienza** duly seconded the motion. Mayor Craig called for a vote. The motion carried with Aldermen E. Sapienza duly recorded in opposition.

On motion of **Alderman Heath**, duly seconded by **Alderman Barry**, it was voted that all matters pending before the present Board of Mayor and Aldermen and its committees as of January 2, 2024, be referred to the next Board of Mayor and Aldermen.

NEW BUSINESS

Alderman Long stated during the budget process, I thought I had put in the extra money for the mayor's salary effective January 1. I didn't so I want to move to transfer \$20,000 from contingency to the Mayor's salary effective January 2, 2024. **Alderman Burkush** duly seconded the motion. Mayor Craig called for a vote. There being none opposed, the motion carried.

Alderman Barry stated School Board Member Elect Baines said it perfectly regarding the amount of time that people put in as mayor and aldermen in the City of Manchester and I want to thank some of the outgoing members. My good friend, Alderman Cavanaugh, Alderman Stewart, Alderman Trisciani, Alderman Heath, my silent partner Norm Gamache and Alderman George-Kelly and Mayor, of course, you. Thank you for putting as much time in as you did into this city. You are right that it is a team effort and I think we have done a helluva job for the past few years. Thank you to everyone, especially those that are leaving.

Alderman Long stated I want to thank Glen Ouellette for his entertainment this evening prior to our meeting.

Alderman Cavanaugh moved to refer Senator D'Allesandro's request regarding a sister city to Ville de Sherbrooke in Canada to the Committee on Administration.

Alderman Fajardo duly seconded the motion. Mayor Craig called for a vote. There being none opposed, the motion carried.

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

A True Record. Attest.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matthew Hermand". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

City Clerk