

BOARD OF MAYOR AND ALDERMEN

April 2, 2024 at 7:00 PM

Mayor Ruais called the meeting to order.

Mayor Ruais called on Alderman Burkush to lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

A moment of silence was observed.

The Clerk called the roll.

Present: Aldermen Morgan, Goonan, Long, Fajardo, T. Sapienza, Kantor, O'Neil, Levasseur, Terrio, E. Sapienza, Burkush, Barry, Vincent, Thomas

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mayor Ruais 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 must sign up with their name, address and topic prior to 7 PM. Once called, they will have up to three minutes to speak and any comments must be directed to the chair and concluded when their time is up. If the Clerk calls their name and they are not present to speak, they will not be given a second opportunity. Any resident wishing to speak will come forward to the nearest microphone, clearly state their name and address when recognized and give their comments.

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

I serve as Chair of the Manchester Planning Board and I wanted to speak to you this evening as a last resort of sorts to save a couple of my fellow Planning Board members. On the agenda this evening, Mayor Ruais proposed to replace Eliza Augusta and Sean Sargent despite their eligibility to serve another term. It has been standard practice for the volunteers who give their time to serve on a community board or commission to be given the opportunity to serve another term if they are interested, are eligible and have done a good job. Both Sean and Eliza have proven themselves as dedicated public servants with level heads, sound judgement and a commitment to our city. Sean is an advocate for common sense on the Planning Board and he was the driving force behind

the successful ADU zoning improvements that the city implemented last year. Eliza for her part is a young engineering professional who has quickly gotten up to speed in the few months she has had on the Board. We need more young people like her to step up and give back to the community. I have enjoyed serving alongside Sean and Eliza and I believe that they still have so much more to offer if given the chance so I would ask you, Mayor Ruais, and all of the aldermen here tonight to not go through with replacing these two members of the Planning Board. They are eligible for reappointment, have done a good job and are on record supporting the Mayor's recent efforts to proactively reform our ordinances. They are honorable volunteers who would keep giving back to our city if given the chance. If Sean and Eliza are to be removed from the Manchester Planning Board, please at least thank them for their service and please explain why you view their replacement as a helpful move for the city. Thank you.

Richard Girard, 283 Orange Street, stated:

In December 2019, Max Latona, who has been nominated for a position on the ZBA, told the NH Business Review "I think it is the responsibility of us as a community to provide housing to those who live in the community or those who would like to live in the community. It is a matter of justice and fairness when we have highly restrictive zoning regulations that make it impossible for young people to start families." Since then, Latona has led the development of the NH Zoning Atlas. While Latona and others affiliated with the effort claim not to take sides in the ongoing debate over potential changes to state law and local zoning ordinances, it is clear from the two dozen or so stories in which he has been quoted that he has a point of view. In an article in the Monadnock Ledger Transcript, Latona said there are a lot of people, not-for-profit developers that want to build homes but they can't and the reason they can't is there is something restricting them and that restriction is what we just refer to as restrictive zoning. In another NH Business Review article published last October, Latona was referred to as "one of the leading advocates for statewide policy changes that encourage the construct of more housing, particularly affordable housing." Last May Latona was part of a webinar discussion about accessory dwelling units that included Ben Frost from the NH Housing Finance Authority who is also part of this atlas project, and James Vayho who came before this Board presenting himself merely as a resident from Ward 7 to endorse the pending zoning ordinances but who in reality is a former

project manager for Southern NH Services and is Senior Vice President of Planning and Development at MPACT Collective, a development company that among other things builds high-density residential projects. Others involved in backing the Zoning Atlas include the NH Office of Planning & Development and the Community Loan Fund, both of which are focused on providing high-density low-income housing, Jason Sorens, the founder of the Free State Project and a zoning opponent generally, and the Charles Koch Foundation whose affiliated organization, Americans for Prosperity, has consistently advocated for eliminating zoning regulations. Though for different reasons, they all want radical changes to allow for much greater density. In addition, the Zoning Atlas is a subsidiary of a national effort led by Sara Bronin who has a long history of advocating for changes to local zoning like those pushed by the Federal Department of Housing & Urban Development under the Obama & Biden administrations. While I don't begrudge Mr. Latona his policy advocacy, I do believe it disqualifies him from being a member of the Zoning Board. The ZBA is a quasi-judicial body that exists to make exceptions to the city's zoning ordinances when specific hardships exist. It is not a place to which people with publically presented policy preferences should be appointed. Neighbors must trust that their evidence was fairly heard and evaluated before a decision was rendered. Policy advocates who have a clear and consistent policy predisposition simply will not be seen as honest brokers. Because of this, I ask the Board not to approve Latona's appointment as a full member of the Zoning Board of Adjustment. Thank you.

Jose Marte, 62 Trahan Street, stated:

I am here to talk to you guys about a simple plan that would end up to 80% of the homeless population here in Manchester and it will cost you pretty much just a phone call to your state representatives and lawmakers. Under Chapter 463-3, all parents are created equal under the law meaning that unless one parent is deceased, both parents have equal right, duty, responsibility and power. A lot of the homeless people out on the streets are parents that cannot deal with child support and what happens is they undergo a spiraling mental health that drags them down in their jobs and they perform poorly which leads them to losing their jobs and their home ultimately becoming homeless. I urge you guys to take a little bit of time to talk to people like Ross Berry and other state legislators and state representatives to strengthen these laws to help parents keep not only their children at home in a loving and equal environment but also to end homelessness. I know because I became homeless many years ago. I had to pay child support and had to do a lot of things that weren't legal. I overcame a lot of hardship and a lot of obstacles. I am just asking that you guys pick up the phone and call your state representatives. I do apologize because this is my first time here. I want to try to end this homeless thing that has been going on for far too long. I have noticed that since Judge Green retired in 2012, there have been a lot of cases that have been 50-50 and I have seen a lot of people spiral into homelessness because of this. Thank you for your time and thank you for listening to me complain. Have a great night everybody.

Jessica Margeson, Hanover Street, stated:

I am here speaking on behalf of myself tonight. I live in Ward 4 on Hanover Street in Manchester. Tonight, what I am here to speak about is affordable housing. Some of you guys may have noticed when you came in the front door, unless you were already up here, we had a small gathering outside to speak on truly affordable housing. Being on the Manchester Housing Commission, it was a goal of mine to try to increase affordable housing. I am only one person on this commission. Yes, we do need all forms of housing on all different levels but I want to remind everybody that someone at 100% AMI has many choices while someone at 30% or 50% only has a few. They cannot go to another apartment higher than what they can qualify for while they wait for another one. We wait in shelters and we wait in our vehicles. I, myself, had to sleep in

my vehicle for five weeks due to the lack of affordable housing out there. There wasn't a room or something I could get in quick enough. I was able and lucky enough, through the amount of people I know, to find another room to rent eventually. Even I, with my resources and what I do know, still had to do that. What I noticed while I was out there is how many others there were. I was homeless during the PIT count so a true representation...we always say take the number you have on paper and multiply it by three. That is so real. Out of those five weeks, I got to stay in a hotel for three nights. During those three nights is when the PIT count occurred by had I been in my vehicle, I probably would have hidden. It is not something I wanted to go through in the middle of the night and I probably would have been asleep. The numbers we see on paper are not real. While I slept out there, I met many people and I was able to spot the signs quicker if someone was living in their vehicle while I was in mine. There are so many people. What I wanted to bring forward is you guys already have the Manchester Housing Quick Guide. When you take a look at that at your 30%, 50% and 60% AMI, the rents that they show underneath there, we know we don't have that. When we have one person at 30% area median income with an income of \$22,250, what they qualify for is \$556/month. We don't have that out there. We ask that the next group of housing to be created be truly affordable. We have 1,522 in process or build at 100% AMI while we have a staggering 379 at 30-80%. We need to fix the numbers and we need to even them up. The 30% to 80% represent your workers downtown, those who work in the grocery store, in schools, Fire Department and Police Department. Thank you very much.

Madeline Jones, Manchester, stated:

Have you missed me? Where did we leave off? Last time I spoke here, a resident who came to speak on a different topic used the last few seconds of his time to incorrectly claim that what is happening to the people of Gaza is not a genocide because a genocide is when 6 million people are killed because of who they are. Let me be the first to say that the Holocaust was a vile crime and that all people who lost family and loved ones during it should be recompensed in any possible way and anyone responsible for mass killing should be punished to the fullest extent. If you would like to pass a resolution about the disgusting actions of the Third Reich, I would support it. However, those actions are not what myself and others are here to discuss and what we

are here to discuss is still happening right now. Allow me to put the scale of what is happening in Gaza into perspective for you. I have tried to do this for you before if you remember when I reminded you that just as you or I are unique individuals, each of the 29,000 people murdered by Israel are also. The number of slain Palestinians is now 41,000 by the way. That is 12,000 people who would still be alive today if our government had called for a ceasefire in February. The Gaza strip is only 141 square miles total. Imagine driving from Livingston Park here in Manchester to the Trader Joe's in Tyngsboro and then picture four square miles on either side of that route. That is the size of the Gaza strip. Now imagine that the entire population of NH or in other words 1.2 million people lived in that small area. The average population density would be four times higher than Manchester's is currently. Israel has dropped the equivalent of more than two atomic bombs worth of munitions in that area. One hundred and fifty people have been killed for the crime of living where their fathers and grandfathers lived per day. At least 40% of those martyred are children. To quote directly from the United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Crime of Genocide, which was directed by the creator of the word genocide, Raphael Lemkin, genocide means any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy in whole or in part a national, ethnical, racial or religious group such as killing members of the group, causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group, deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part. You could not more succinctly summarize the acts of violence committed by Israel these past six months. It is inarguably genocide. Don't take my word for it. I encourage anyone listening to look into the International Court of Justice case against Israel from January of this year. We are not deluded into thinking that 13 or so many of you alone could stop the slaughter of Palestinians in Gaza but we are not deluded for wanting to live in a place that denounces collective punishment of civilians. We are not deluded for wanting our local government to declare that it does not support crimes against humanity. It is not only for our souls that we raise this plea dear members of the Board; it is for your souls and your humanity. Thank you.

Griseliz Glenn stated:

I am a homeless mother of two although my children are in DCYF custody right now because I am homeless. I find it kind of astounding that you do the Pledge of

Allegiance at the beginning of the meeting but they are empty words. Do you guys even hear what you are saying when you recite the Pledge of Allegiance or are they just redundant words? I pledge allegiance to the United States of America and to the republic for which it stands, one nation under God with liberty and justice for all. If you look around Manchester, you don't see liberty and justice for all anywhere. I am curious to know if any of you have watched any of those videos that they have referenced when talking about the ceasefire because if any of you have, I don't know why it would be so difficult to just say the words they are asking you for, to ceasefire. What does it cost for you all to come to agreement and say ceasefire knowing that it is not going to stop it? It won't do that but it will show where we stand – one nation under God; under God with liberty and justice for all, not just people from the United States but for all. That is what we are supposed to be representing but you don't see that around here. You don't see that from our own elected officials. You don't see that from people who work for the city. You don't see that from the police. You don't see that from anywhere around here. We can't tell that. It is disappointing and it is a shame that you all stand up there and pledge allegiance to the flag and don't do any of the words that you are quoting. I wasn't planning on speaking about the ceasefire but I had to say that. Also, I know that in the last few times I have come here I have heard about the rebranding that you are all doing and I am curious. Are you really expecting that you are going to be able to rebrand Manchester without first addressing the homeless issue? You can't even walk down Elm Street for two minutes without seeing a homeless person. How are you going to rebrand the city when you have that many homeless? It doesn't make any sense. How do you even talk about rebranding Manchester when you have to take care of this issue before you rebrand? You aren't going to be able to rebrand Manchester but if you try to what are you going to be rebranding when there is still the issue of homelessness that is going to cause issues for your rebranding. Thank you.

Bradley Conway, 236 Boutwell Street, stated:

Ramadan Mubarak to all the folks out there who are celebrating and breaking their fast right now. I am here tonight because I think the City of Manchester should do more to reflect the will of its residents and do its part to join the global movement for Palestinian solidarity. The people in Gaza continue day after day to suffer the most unspeakable horrors imaginable. Our federal representatives, and I am talking about Chris Pappas,

Maggie Hassan, and Jeanne Shaheen, are pretending they are oblivious to the horror that they are afflicting on Palestinians and they somehow can't hear the public's outcry. Obviously, I am pretty disappointed that the Board of Mayor and Aldermen don't have the courage to use their resolution power to speak truth to power on behalf of the residents of Manchester. It should go without saying that it is truly a nightmare to be a resident of Manchester right now because not only are we being gas lighted by our federal representative delegation, but despite months of testimony in this room aimed at convincing this Board to stick up for its constituents, you have all chosen to gaslight us at the city level by refusing to acknowledge the way our federal leaders are abusing their power and the public trust. For the record, I believe the BMA, most especially the Mayor, are culpable in this ever intensifying catastrophic moral failure in NH's leadership. As I understand it, most of this Board voted to never consider a ceasefire resolution because it is not germane to city business. To be fair though, our ceasefire resolution covered many issues and it was not limited to the topic of ceasefire. It also covered the urgent necessity for the provision of humanitarian aid to millions of starving people, the release of both Palestinian and Israeli hostages, and it called for an end to U.S. military aid to Israel; an issue that directly affects all taxpaying Manchester voters and, therefore this committee. Tonight, I want to bring your attention to the fact that our ceasefire resolution also contained a clause for divestment. For those on the Board who might not know, divestment is the opposite of investment. The City of Manchester is most likely in a position to move money around to position itself in a more ethical way to help pressure Israel economically in pursuit of a ceasefire and a free Palestine. I would like to read to you the divestment clause that was in our ceasefire resolution. It seems pretty relevant to the City of Manchester to me. Let me know if you agree. Be it further resolved that the Manchester Board of Mayor and Aldermen shall establish a committee to identify, divest from, and prevent business with all entities involved in the U.S. Israeli military industrial complex. We want to see the city take its money out of any investments that make the genocide in Palestine possible. Again, this is a municipal issue. You can try to wiggle and weasel your way out of it all you want, but the fact remains that you could do something to help starving people and stand up for your constituents yet so far have decided not to. Thank you so much and I have some materials for distribution. It is the divestment resolution draft.

Salaam Odeh, Manchester, stated:

I have no hope that any of you would be involved with the ceasefire or even care for the ceasefire resolution. However, I do have some issues and I am going to address those directly with the mayor. I did talk to your office on 3/22 three times requesting a 15-minute meeting with you one-on-one. I was told that they would get back to me tomorrow yet no one ever did. However, I called today and was shocked to be attacked by a Ms. McKenna Gladysz defending the actions of the bully that we have here who is attacking me on Facebook publically. I am not a public figure, Your Honor, and I am being attacked. I am being attacked and put in harm's way. If anything happens to me or to any of my children, I would hold him responsible and hold you responsible for my safety and my children's safety. Now the other flag that I have, and I have never supported anybody, not Hamas or any organizations. We asked for a ceasefire. The other flag that I have in my house is the Navy. My son is a soldier. He is in harm's way and you want to put me and my family in harm's ways for speaking the truth and wanting to be on the right side of history? The same goes for you Crissy Kantor. I am sorry but she has also been active and sharing photos of us. Again, we are not public figures. As of December 2012, I am not a public figure anymore. I finished serving as a state commissioner on the status of women in the state of NH. I want us to be safe. We did respect the rules but the city belongs to the people of Manchester. Really only today after I was attacked by Ms. Gladysz, I felt like this is a circus. This is not the City of Manchester. You are all here to serve us okay. We voted for you to be in those seats to serve us and look after us. We are trying to make Manchester be better. Thank you and free Palestine.

Glenn RJ Ouellette, 112 Auburn Street, stated:

I am here tonight to speak about housing. Before I do that, I noticed that the trees on Elm Street by Veteran's Park have come down as they should because they are rotten. I am hoping that the wells remain. If you guys destroy those wells, you will have once again wasted taxpayer money. There are people out there that wait for the bus and there is no place to sit. Some of them are homeless. We need to have some type of credibility here. I am going to go to housing. Of the roughly 2,500 apartments you are building in this city between last year and 2025 and 2026, 300 are for affordable housing. We are not talking workforce but just affordable housing. Today, we see a lot

of seniors losing their homes because the rents are going up and up and up. Their incomes are not going up. Most of you on this Board remember that if your father died and your mothers were in charge of raising the children, that was their job in those days, they got a part of their husband's income. Well \$525 to \$800 doesn't cut rent let alone anything else. Just remember that. Affordable housing is for those that need it. I understand that we are about to hire some 7,000 new employees for the ARMI plant and I think that is fantastic so you also need expensive housing. I understand that but this city doesn't only need expensive housing. It needs housing in every single category. When we could house roughly 600 people that are homeless, it is time that this Board include the 974 school students that are considered homeless. I am not talking about those that are in dire need because they are about to be homeless. If we don't take care of these children now, we will lose them to the gangs and crime. They will be our problems tomorrow. Our job is to save them. I ask you to please when you vote for things that are very important to our city like housing, that you vote for it and you accept the federal money that comes in because those are our dollars. In NH, we only bring in \$.57 of every \$1 we give to the government. Thank you very much.

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

PRESENTATION

2. Health Insurance Update with representatives from USI, Anthem, Human Resources, and Finance.

Lisa Drabik, HR Director, stated I want to introduce who is here tonight from USI and Anthem. They will be doing the majority of the presentation. Sharon and I are sitting up here because we want to be able to answer any questions you may have. We work cooperatively with these folks on a weekly, monthly and sometimes daily basis so we wanted to be here to present this to you as a united front. We have Lianna Della Torre, she is a Senior Vice-President from USI who is our benefits broker. From Anthem we are lucky to have two representatives here tonight. We have Milan that I know most of

you know. He is the Account Executive assigned to the city and James Montecalvo is the Vice-President of Sales for Anthem. With that, I will turn it over to Lianna.

Lianna Della Torre stated I am here tonight to provide you with an update. Some of it is good news and some of it is not the news we want to be sharing but part of my job is to thoroughly evaluate the city's data and provide the results to you so you can make an informed decision. Kicking off with the presentation, we will provide you with a high-level background of what has transpired with the City of Manchester's employee health plans, review the numbers, what is working, a seven-year historical look back and share some information about other municipalities in our ongoing efforts. Starting with the positives, at USI we have something called a managed carve-in pharmacy contract with our Anthem partners. This is something that we negotiated on the back end for our clients hand-in-hand with Anthem and Carelon which is Anthem's pharmacy benefit manager. We have this contract set-up to provide deeper discounts and higher rebates. This is somewhere where we partner with a firm called Truveris and this is really getting into the weeds but just as a high-level overview, Truveris works to audit every single pharmacy claim that comes through to make sure that what we have contracted with Anthem is ringing true. With that being said, an example of the impact that this is making for the third quarter is we will be receiving \$380,000 back alone in pharmacy rebates and our projection in rebates for FY24 is \$1.2 million. That is in rebates alone. Potential population health management strategy. There was a great article outlining the proposal in today's *Union Leader* and really the goal is to help make employees healthier, live longer and save the city dollars in the future. This is not a quick fix. This is preventive and will help us to catch illnesses quicker. We know that when you catch something at an earlier stage it is less expensive all around. We also align medical and dental plans so that dependents are now eligible for coverage up to age 26. This was not the case before. We found it to be confusing for employees and received great feedback on that. We also made an HSA, which is a health savings account vendor change. We moved to a vendor called HSA Bank. This provided some cost-savings and better customer service for the City of Manchester members on the health plan. Lastly, we will speak about SmartShopper. The engagement of SmartShopper continues to rise year over year. We rolled out a targeted communications campaign which was kicked off this year to re-engage members who haven't been active in the

past few years. To touch upon SmartShopper. Again, enhanced communications plan for FY24. We have been steering non-engaged members to use SmartShopper. This is triggered behind-the-scenes in the SmartShopper system and led internally by behaviors of consumers and any upcoming appointments to help steer them to higher quality facilities which are less expensive. From 2022-2023, we increased net savings by \$180,000. That includes total savings plus the amount paid out to employees for SmartShopper. We want to give you some context here on how a small population of members can make a huge impact on the plan. When you have a high-cost claimant, it can certainly drive your health insurance spend for the year. That is what insurance is for and that is why we have it but we wanted to share a snapshot. For fiscal year 2023, we had an average of 2,815 per month. This includes employees, early retirees and all covered dependents. The net cost, so the cost after we put in stop-loss reimbursements and any rebates that we get back, was \$24.1 million. Of that \$24.1 million, \$6.45 million is for care provided to 29 people equaling 27% of the fiscal year 2023 spend. For 2024, where we are as of today the city's health care plans cover an average of 2,814 per month. Through the month of February, and again we are showing you a snapshot in time, the city has spent \$16.9 million on health care including \$3 million for 10 claimants. That is 18% of our fiscal year spend so far. Something important to point out is half of those 10 claims are cancer claims. Now Anthem would like to share some stats as well.

Milan Varagic stated we focused on some of the stats as well just to show you what is really going on out there. I work very closely with your employees and their dependents as many of you have seen me around different departments. I just want to make the statement that these are your employees in need and thankfully they have this great insurance that you offer to them because as you can see, many of them were sick and they really needed this care. Many of them got the care in the right settings. A majority of them did end up in Boston but unfortunately that is caused by cancer as you can see. Right in the middle where the red arrow is, you have really had some problems with cancer over the last 18 months where a lot of your employees and their dependents have cancer. If you can see on the red box, there was an increase of 54% for high-cost claimants which is per member per month. All of that was mostly driven by cancer and musculoskeletal. Many of these people have gone to Boston and gotten the right care

in the right settings thankfully because you offer them great insurance. There are some really good numbers on here as well which are on the bottom right corner. As you can see, 76.7% of your employees and their dependents actually do go see their primary care. So, when we read the article in the *Union Leader* this morning, we actually applaud you for doing something like that because we strongly do believe that if you encourage your employees and their dependents to get early screenings, we can catch certain things at earlier stages and provide them better care. At the same time, on the bottom right you can see 63% of the overall population does get their annual wellness check, which is great. I think that is a really good number but we can do better than that. I think that with HR and USI we can increase that number even higher. On the bottom left under pharmacy, Lianna had spoken about the special contract we have for the City of Manchester. Anthem has been a true supporter of the city ever since we managed your care. We kept your pharmacy trend at 2.8%, which is phenomenal. You probably have already heard stories about all kinds of different medications out there increasing. We have kept your trend at 2.8%. That is a really good number to see. That is just a quick overview of what is happening. There are a couple of more slides I would like to walk you through. On this slide I am trying to compare the current fiscal year with the last three fiscal years and it really comes down to why are your claims up. Your claims are up because of high-cost claimants unfortunately. It is an unfortunate situation. These people were sick, they needed the care and they got the care. That is why those costs are up. Here is a quick snapshot that will help you understand and visualize what is really happening over time with high-cost claimants. I do want to make a statement and say we can project as much as we want and can but things change very quickly and can change very quickly when it comes to the claims and overall medical conditions. If you look at the 2022 year and the second to the last claimant, in 2022 that claimant only had \$9,000 in total claim spend. Let's look where that claimant ended up in 2023. Unfortunately, that claimant had in excess of \$1 million in claims in less than 12 months. This is why your employees have health insurance because it provides them security and access to good care. You never know when someone will take a turn for the worse and I think this slide really shows you how quickly things can change when you have certain conditions. If you look at 2023 and take out claimant #1 and #2, you yield \$2.3 million. Nobody could have projected this and that is why where we are here.

Ms. Della Torre stated here is the bottom line. From our perspective, we aren't collecting enough through the working rates and what the working rates are are what the employees, retirees and the city puts into the health care plan. To fund FY25, these are the projections. We are currently collecting through the city and employee working rates, \$24.4 million and the projection for FY25 is \$28.4 million. That is a difference of \$3.9 million needed for FY25. We also wanted to share a historical look at the city's increases to health insurance working rates and again that is what the employees are paying as well as what the city is contributing. Overall, as you can see for several years the adopted increases were 3% or less. I cannot speak to what happened prior to my partnership with the city but since then we have taken a deep dive into the data and I am presenting the information we have available so you can make an informed decision. As you can see, we came on board at 2023 and it shows the recommendation based on projection and the approved amount. Again, we are not alone and as you can see here other municipalities are facing the same increases as the City of Manchester. We are not alone. Our overall recommendation is an increase in health working rates of 16%. Dental would be a 5% increase to working rates, which is the equivalent of \$90,000 but our suggestion is to focus on funding the health care, getting caught up with the rate increase and keep dental rates flat so no increase there.

Ms. Drabik stated if I could, I wanted to provide some additional context to you with regard to what a 16% increase actually would be because I know it is a big number. It is not a number we want to be presenting and it is not a number that employees want to hear and I am sure it is not a number you want to hear. In real dollars, I want to provide what this would mean. This is based on an 80/20 cost share. There are different cost shares with the different union contracts. It is either the city pays 80% and the employee pays 20% or it is 85% and 15% or it is 83% and 17%. For simplicity purposes, I am providing you with the 80/20 cost share. This is the "worst case scenario" from an employee perspective if they are paying 20%. We only have two plans that our employees can choose from now. It is the HMO plan or the high-deductible plan. If you focus on the column that is highlighted, all the way to the right indicates the additional amount per week that would come out of the employees' paycheck if we adopt a 16% increase. For example, if someone is on the HMO plan, a

single person, it is an additional \$7.06 per week. A two-person plan for the HMO is an additional \$14.19. For a family plan it is an additional \$18.98. For the high-deductible plan, for a single it would be an additional \$6.69 per week. A two-person would be \$13.42 and a family plan would be \$17.26. I just wanted to provide the context on what this would mean in real dollars to an employee's paycheck.

Ms. Della Torre stated lastly, we wanted to share some of our ongoing efforts. Lisa mentioned earlier that we collectively are always analyzing the information and discussing new ideas. Sometimes it is daily to be honest. A few of the ongoing efforts we wanted to share. These are high level again and ideas that we are considering. A claims audit. There are also other strategic vendor partners out there that analyze specifically high-cost claimants up to a certain level and do a deep dive into those claims. We mentioned the population health management strategy which again is preventive. It isn't a quick fix but we do believe that it will show cost savings in the future. As we approach union negotiations, talk about different plan design discussions and things on our radar.

Ms. Drabik stated that is it for our prepared presentation. I know that this is a lot of information and we would be happy to answer questions and engage in discussion. Again, that is why we all wanted to be up here. I did want to mention that open enrollment starts May 1 because we bill a month in advance for premiums. We have a plan year that starts July 1 so we have to start billing for premiums in June which is why we do open enrollment the whole month of May. We are here asking for the Board's consideration and a motion to adopt the proposed rate increase or whatever the Board desires. Our role here is simply to provide the information understanding that we are not the decision makers. Thank you.

Alderman Levasseur asked does that start on July 1.

Ms. Drabik answered yes.

Alderman Levasseur asked do you have a monetary number or the total amount. Is that per plan or per person?

Ms. Drabik responded the numbers I provided on the screen out of the weekly paycheck...

Alderman Levasseur interjected I see it says \$6.69 and then \$13.42 and \$17.26. So that is just per employee?

Ms. Drabik replied that is correct.

Alderman Levasseur asked do you have a total for what that increase will be for the year.

Ms. Drabik stated for example, if an employee was on a single plan, the HMO would be an annual increase of \$366.

Alderman Levasseur stated I can do the math times twelve. I just wondered if you had a global number.

Ms. Drabik responded no I don't.

Alderman Levasseur stated well you would have the global number but it would matter as to what percentage we approve. These numbers are based on 16%, correct?

Ms. Drabik answered yes.

Sharon Wickens, Finance Officer, stated just to keep it in perspective, we need to raise \$4 million. If we raise this by 16%, the amount coming into the plan would be \$800,000 for the employees and \$3.2 million for the city.

Alderman Levasseur asked is that \$3.2 million already included in the mayor's budget.

Ms. Wickens answered the mayor included \$1.4 million and the reason he did that is because that is what we were projecting we were going to have for a shortfall this year.

He didn't have these numbers so he said the best I can do is just cover where I know I am at now and that is what he did. If you were to use \$1.4 million, then we would need the difference between \$1.4 million and \$3.2 million if we were to fund this at 16%.

Alderman Levasseur asked and if we went to 8%, we would have to come up with \$3.6 million.

Ms. Wickens answered if we went to 8% with the mayor putting \$1.4 million knowing what he knew then, we would need another \$200,000 for the city so that would be \$1.6 million and the employees would contribute \$400,000.

Alderman Levasseur stated I was subtracting the \$400,000 and adding it to the \$3.2 million. Is that correct?

Ms. Wickens responded if you went to 8%, it would be \$1.6 million that you would be reducing from that.

Alderman Levasseur replied and we would be on the hook for the \$400,000 more if we only charged \$400,000 because you have it in your formula as \$800,000.

Ms. Wickens asked so you are saying if we did the 8% how much more would the city need to do besides...so for every percent it is another \$250,000 that the city would have to pay above and beyond the \$1.6 million.

Alderman Levasseur asked do we have to vote on this tonight or can we do it at the next meeting.

Ms. Drabik responded last year we did do it at the second meeting in April. I would ask for the Board's consideration on voting tonight if possible. A vote tonight would be the best-case scenario for HR because we are using a new system this year, Munis, for open enrollment so we are building it for the first time. We are looking for the most time to be able to input the rates and make sure that everything works correctly. If the Board elects to wait until the next meeting, we will make it work.

Alderman T. Sapienza stated when I look at page 4 of your presentation, I see the numbers for FY24. It says through February 2024 the city spent \$16.9 million. That is for nine months, right? So how are you getting to \$28 million on page 9 if you have \$16.9 million in nine months? Are you expecting a \$12 million quarter coming up?

Mayor Ruais stated that \$28 million is for FY25.

Alderman T. Sapienza stated my question is if you spent \$16.9 million in nine months...

James Montecalvo, Anthem, interjected eight months.

Ms. Della Torre stated on page 15 it shows you the breakdown of the renewal estimate versus the projected expected claims.

Alderman T. Sapienza asked what are you pointing out.

Ms. Della Torre stated if you look all the way to the bottom under the financial summary, you can see revenue generated through working rates for the active population is \$21.6 million, revenue generated through working rates for early retirees is \$2.7 million and that totals \$24 million. When you look at the actual renewal estimate all the way to the top, that is all the projected claims, the admin fees, stop-loss, the employer contribution into the HSA accounts, PCORI fees, and then we subtract out the estimated rebates, that renewal estimate comes to \$28.4 million. So, we are collecting \$24.4 million in working rates and the pre-renewal is calling for \$28.4 million.

Alderman Long asked would it be helpful if we revisited our stop-loss insurance.

Ms. Della Torre answered that is something we do every single year. We take it out to the market. If we were to carve out the stop-loss from Anthem, because right now it is under Anthem, there would be a fee. We would have to take that into consideration as well. One thing we did when USI came on board was we asked for a rate cap of 40%. So we will never get more than a 40% increase in our stop-loss and there are no new

lasers allowed either. We have a great stop-loss contract. Could there be wiggle room at some point with the total stop-loss premium fees that we are projecting right now? That would be a question for Anthem but we have looked at the worst case scenario. Every single year we have gone out and gotten quotes from stop-loss carriers.

Alderman Long asked are we at \$250,000.

Ms. Della Torre answered yes individual stop-loss is \$250,000.

Alderman Long asked so on the page with high pay-outs, is that actually what we are paying.

Mr. Varagic answered no we pay back those numbers through the stop-loss. Anthem continues to be the most competitive when it comes to stop-loss. The City and USI do take this out to the market but we continue to provide the best stop-loss for you.

Alderman Long stated I appreciate that. With the high-cost claims, is there anything we can look at? We have a substantial amount of lives at 2,815. Could we look at cutting deals on the high-cost claims? Is that a possibility?

Mr. Varagic responded we do that for you now. These folks, when you look at page 8, to get to that level there are many different approvals that employees and their dependents have to go through. We try to walk a fine line and not just allow them to go down to Boston right away. We first try to see if there is any place here where they can be taken care of. When you get to the point where they are in their condition, these people have to be here unfortunately; they have to be here.

Alderman Long asked any thoughts on coordinating with other municipalities where we can come in with say 10,000 lives.

Mr. Varagic replied there are ideas around pooling the stop-loss with other municipalities where you could get a better price based on the sheer size and certain things like Health Trust does when it comes to that yes but when it comes to raw claim

dollars, because you are self-funded these are your claims. We try to manage them the best we can. Once again, most of these claimants I personally know and have helped. They needed to be here.

Alderman Long asked Sharon so 1% is \$250,000 so if we cut it to 8%, we would be looking for \$2 million, however, the mayor has \$1.4 million so we would be looking for \$600,000.

Ms. Wickens answered if the mayor put in \$1.4 million, you would be looking for \$200,000. The city's portion would be \$1.6 million and the employee's would be \$400,000.

Alderman Long asked so if we did 8%, we would be looking for \$200,000.

Ms. Wickens replied that is correct.

Alderman O'Neil stated I have learned over the years that there is a story behind things from you, Milan, and your colleagues at Anthem. Just to say there is cancer doesn't tell me anything and I know we have to be careful about HIPAA laws but knowing what type of cancer is helpful or what types of cancer are driving these claims is helpful so we know where to focus prevention. I don't know if that is something that can be talked about publically.

Mr. Varagic responded I would be happy to have conversations like that behind closed doors. I have been at this now for 13 years and I have seen certain instances where we have had these discussions and we got many phone calls the day after telling us that you are talking about us. Yes, we know.

Alderman O'Neil stated there is a story behind it. What are the cancers that are driving this? Just cancer is a pretty broad statement. I just have to say that sometimes the skills needed are beyond anything here in NH. I had a family member whose treatment had to be done in Boston. It wasn't cancer. So, there is a story. What are the cancers

and what can we do? Breast cancer? Prostate cancer? Whatever it may be, what are the cancers and what is the story?

Ms. Della Torre responded if you are asking if there are any trends with the cancer diagnoses we are seeing, over the last two years there hasn't been any notable trends. What has been the issue is when the diagnosis took place and what staging it was at. That is really where we are seeing the costs.

Mr. Varagic stated I would also add, and for the record I am not speaking for your population but there is a trend out there. Of course, we all know that breast cancers are out there. It happens at a higher rate than we have seen before. Also, lung cancer has been on the rise. Colon cancers in the younger population have started rising. Unfortunately, even for those in their 40's. I just turned 40 myself and I am starting to see claims for 40-year-olds dealing with colon cancer. There are a few different cancers. When it comes to your population, I would be more than happy to speak behind closed doors. We can even prepare a presentation to go into detail.

Mayor Ruais stated it is a topic for non-public.

Alderman O'Neil stated but that is what I think is important. Just to say cancer is up doesn't tell me anything. What cancers are up? The second item is orthopedic related on that list?

Mr. Varagic responded more musculoskeletal; yes.

Alderman O'Neil asked what does the last one mean.

Mr. Varagic answered this is actually a good one. This is just folks doing the right thing and seeing their primary care doctors and specialists and getting their wellness screenings done. We would love to see this number get way up there and I will divert a little bit. I applaud the Fire Department and Chief Cashin for doing what they have done with Dartmouth, Anthem and Fire in screening all Fire employees for a few different things. A few were skin cancer and lung cancer. We did it together and screened, I

believe, 350 people. We actually found one person who had cancer and that person has been taken care of and they are back to work. I strongly believe in wellness screenings and promoting wellness screenings. We will standby and help you with that.

Alderman O'Neil stated so 76.7%, that is all members of the plan and not just the current employees.

Mr. Varagic responded yes and I am actually seeing some really interesting shifts when it comes to that. These members are getting very educated and using the right providers. I would say in this city we have many different providers that are phenomenal but there are some that are less costly and members are starting to pick the less costly providers to go and see like Derry Medical Center. That is phenomenal to see because that helps with the overall plan.

Alderman O'Neil stated I listen to my primary care physician and when he tells me to do something, I do it. Is there any data that shows that our employees are not following the guidance of their primary care physician?

Mr. Varagic answered not necessarily. I think some providers do better than others just like with anything. I think from an Anthem perspective we are starting to do more creative things with our friendly providers like focusing on how we contract with them. We are starting to contract value-based care which means we are not just going to pay you for a visit, we are actually going to pay you based on how you manage that patient. At the same time, we are providing our providers data. For example, if I went and visited five different emergency rooms in the last two weeks trying to find something, Anthem would be sending that data to my primary care physician and asking them to call and see me and ask what is going on and why I went to five different emergency rooms. We are starting to do very creative things when it comes to that which also helps you because you are paying those providers based on what type of care they are providing.

Alderman O'Neil stated regarding ongoing efforts, I found in my time with the city that we need to create, and I don't think we have, department advocates or train the trainers

because the opportunities to get employees to come into City Hall are limited. Chief Aldenberg is not pulling patrolmen off to go and sit in a training. That has to be done at the Police Department. Tim Clougherty is not pulling people off of garbage and bringing them in. Same for Chief Cashin. Combined those three departments have a lot of employees. We have to create these advocates in our departments. SmartShopper is one that you and I have spoken about in the past, Milan. I don't know if that is going on and that is what I think we need to do.

Ms. Drabik stated if I could address that, we don't have a formal advocate program but I am proud to say that Michelle in my office and our other folks work very hard to partner with all of the pay clerks across the city. So essentially the HR person in each department, particularly the bigger departments as well as the union representatives. We communicate with them regularly and we send them information ahead of when it goes out to their employees and ask them to share it with their members. We are doing a series of benefit fairs where we will have all of our vendors available for the employees to visit. We will walk them through the online enrollment process hand-in-hand. We are providing training. We are doing as much outreach as we can.

Alderman O'Neil replied I agree with you and that was not directed at Michelle because she is fabulous. What we have to do is get that first phone call to be made and that is not what is happening. Sending them emails doesn't do any good. Unless the people working in the Police Department get an email from the Chief or Assistant Chief or a Division Commander, they are probably not looking at it based on my conversations with people over the years. The same with the Fire Department. If there are people coming in at the end of the shift...I don't even know if they all have emails. How we get that first step...Michelle is fabulous and I agree if you make that call to Michelle you get an answer. How do we get more people to make that call or email Michelle? That is where I think the train the trainer or advocates within the department to capture people at shift change or in the locker room is so important.

Alderman T. Sapienza stated my question Sharon is you gave us the example of the 80/20 split and how a 16% increase would affect that. My question is how do you reconcile that at the end because you are basing this on a projection? The claims could

be higher or lower so if I am an employee and I am supposed to be paying 20% and we come up with a number before the year starts, how do I know at the end of the year that I paid 20% and not 16% or 24%?

Ms. Wickens asked as an employee.

Alderman T. Sapienza answered well as anybody. How does the city know they paid their 80%? How does an employee know they paid their 20%?

Ms. Drabik stated what we do is establish the premium or set the premium and then the employee pays 20% of that amount and the city kicks in the other 80%. Part of this rate setting process, and I will let Lianna speak because she wanted to talk to you about how the projections actually work.

Ms. Della Torre stated on page 15 you asked how we got from that \$16 million to \$28 million and I wanted to share that we have to trend forward from where we are at right now. We can see behind-the-scenes also any claims that have been incurred or are out there but haven't been applied yet. So, between the information and the claims that we have and the information that Anthem has, that is the projection – the \$28 million. I didn't say it as eloquently before so I apologize.

Alderman T. Sapienza stated my question remains if we are supposed to have an 80/20 split how do we...it is not an 80/20 split of the cost it is an 80/20 split of the projection.

Ms. Wickens replied it is an 80/20 split of the premium.

Ms. Della Torre stated we take our projection and we build our working rate. The working rate is what the city is paying on a weekly basis and what an employee is contributing on a weekly basis. We base the split off of that amount, the 80/20, for the year.

Alderman T. Sapienza stated and it is not reconciled at the end of the year right. So you are basing your split on a projection and then whatever comes in at the end it could be more or less than 80/20.

Ms. Wickens responded if it is more, we have a reserve fund that those funds go to. That hasn't happened in quite a while. We have been behind the eight-ball for quite some time. If we are behind in what we are collecting, then the fees are more and that is what we are coming to you and saying; we are over plan. We are projected to be \$1.4 million over plan currently. I will have a new reconciliation and maybe that will go down a little or it may go up a little. Just to take the \$16.9 million that you are looking at and that is eight months, that is about \$2.1 million a month and we have four months left so that would be \$8.4 million and once you add those together, we are at \$25.3 million. So, you are right there again.

Mr. Varagic stated the employee never pays more than 20% even if you are over.

Alderman Barry stated one of the positive things that I am a true believer in is SmartShopper. It is a great incentive. It looks like from 2022-2023 the employees have done really well and saved \$180,000. Out of the high-cost employees, do you guys reach out to them and give them ideas on where they can go to offset some of the costs? I hope they know there are incentives out there to go somewhere else and get the same exact treatment.

Mr. Varagic stated I think that with this AI technology that you have heard about, SmartShopper is becoming smarter as well. They have the data and understand who is getting what types of services and they are proactively going after the folks that might potentially need a colonoscopy or an MRI and sending them marketing materials saying you might have an appointment coming up and don't forget you can go to say Quest Diagnostics or another lab or another more cost-effective provider. SmartShopper is proactively mining the data and looking at what is happening and trying to reach out to those people.

Ms. Della Torre stated and you have nurse case management when Anthem is involved as well.

Mr. Varagic stated the point is this was, if you remember the SmartShopper program started here as a pilot program and yours was the first account when we started and this was the best year that we just had.

Alderman Barry stated just to follow-up on what Alderman O'Neil was talking about with the advocate for each department, you might have someone that has benefitted and if they are willing to talk about what their benefit was to other people in their department or within the city to let them know what they received back for being smart and going to cost-effective providers...lab work is lab work whether you go to Quest or Dartmouth-Hitchcock. They are taking your blood but you are getting reimbursed if you go to Quest or another cost-effective lab. The same thing with MRIs and other procedures that you may benefit from that may give you \$250 or \$500.

Mr. Varagic stated I invite you all to attend one of our open sessions that will be coming in April. You would be surprised at how educated some of these employees are. We actually have some of the leaders in the departments speak about their specific locations and how they save money by using SmartShopper.

Ms. Della Torre stated Michelle has champions in most departments who will actually speak to their story and successes.

Alderman Barry stated Michelle and your whole staff, Lisa, is awesome. I have reached out to them for myself and others and they have been right on it. The problem that I have is I did the numbers on the 16% weekly and for the HMO single it is like \$367 per year and a two-person \$737 and a family \$986. That is for the HMO and for the HSA it is \$347 for a single, \$697 for a two-person and \$897 for a family. It is substantial for the employees to hit them with this especially when we just went through contracts and there was some give and take. We know that when you negotiate you give them a COLA or a pay raise but you also take some from health. Now we are going to hit them in midstream with this. I know Alderman Long brought up 8%. It is tough and

unfortunate that we are here, especially when this is the first time I have heard of it. It is kind of tough for me to come up with an answer or a decision tonight.

Alderman Vincent stated I agree with Alderman Barry on that and that is where I was going. I look at these numbers and I think it is tough to ask people...let's put on our typical employee hat. They are not looking at \$7/paycheck. They are looking at \$367/year because in the world we live in we have to plan accordingly. I know we all shop at grocery stores and that is all I have to say about that. I agree and I do have a hard time making a vote on projections, even though I understand the projections. 16% is huge; that is a huge number. We are in a budget period and crunching numbers and I don't think realistically that I can make a decision today on this because there are still factors in play with the budget and whatnot. I think that is a lot. I understand what you are saying. If we project what we are projecting and we are under that, that is good. I am confused as to what happens then. If we project this high number and let's say people use SmartShopper more and we save money...I mean if you tell somebody you are going to charge them an extra \$1,000/year, it is going to motivate them to use SmartShopper and I get that but if we go below that number what happens with that number?

Mr. Varagic answered it is a good thing that you are self-funded because you pay the claims and if the claims do not come, you just omitted paying those additional funds and that money stays in the budget.

Alderman Vincent asked and if we go over the projected amount.

Ms. Wickens answered if we come in under budget, the amount that we have in the health care that we don't spend goes into the reserve account. We haven't done that in quite some time. You know that when I have been doing the budget projections right now I have \$1 million that is being covered by surplus because we are short. We can exhaust that budget and then we have to pay for it somehow. Now we have a reserve but that should always be kind of a last resort for making surplus...the mayor had to deal with a \$1.7 million hole in his budget because so much surplus was used. While I agree with using some surplus, \$1.7 million is kind of a lot and we struggled with that.

You want to kind of get as close to this as you can. Now I am speaking candidly. The mayor put in \$1.4 million. He put it in not because of this; he didn't know about this. So, \$1.4 million would be a 7% increase. That is already in the budget without doing anything. He already put that there. That is a 7% increase. Like Alderman Long said, if you did 8% it is \$200,000 more. 16% is a lot; it is really a lot for me. It is a lot for me to look at that money. Do I think we need to fully fund health care? I mean we are down but I can't see going past 12%. That would be funding it...I do think that it is a projection and things could come in a little bit lower...

Alderman Vincent interjected then why didn't we say 12%.

Ms. Wickens stated I am willing to roll the dice on some of it. At the end of the day, it is money and maybe that is just because I work in finance.

Alderman Vincent stated I get all of that but if we are talking 12%, why didn't we say 12%. Why did we say 16%?

Ms. Wickens responded I am showing you this is what our experts are saying. I am not an expert in health care.

Alderman Vincent stated I do get it all. I am just trying to rationalize it for when we tell these employees. That is just a lot of money.

Ms. Drabik stated the city is certainly...we are in a unique position because we are self-funded. We are the ultimate payer of the claims. All of this is based on projection in order to try to figure out what we would need for next year to pay the claims so we are not going over budget. There is an art and a science to it. We view our role as look the data is the data, here is the data, we want you to have the data so that you know what we would project to fully fund the plan. We understand if you look back at the history of what the increases have been, up until 2023 when USI came on board, they were 3%, 2.7% and that sort of thing. We are, to be frank, kind of digging out of a hole. Last year USI recommended 10% and the Board decided on 7% and we are running at a deficit this year. I just give you all of that for context.

Ms. Wickens stated it very well could work out to be 16%. I just don't know.

Alderman Vincent stated let's say the vote isn't done tonight. What is your timeframe to tell...realistically how do we work this with the employees if we make the vote in two weeks versus tonight? Is that enough time for you to get this information and push it out to employees because May 1 is right around the corner and I know that is when we have open enrollment so we need to have these numbers finalized by that time. Can you do it if we vote in two weeks versus tonight?

Ms. Drabik answered we can do it. It will be tight but we can do it. I would like to give the employees the benefit of time of course but my folks are topnotch as Alderman Barry noted so we will get it done and built in the system if you all decide to wait until the next meeting to vote. I do need a number by that meeting so that we can get it going for open enrollment.

Alderman Vincent asked this affects the retirees as well correct.

Ms. Drabik replied yes it does.

Alderman Vincent asked and everything is the same.

Ms. Drabik responded yes; the same rules apply to them. Whatever we charge the employees, the total premium gets applied to the retirees as well. Thank you for pointing that out.

Mr. Varagic asked do we want to clarify that Lisa because this applies to early retirees, not the others. I just don't want any of my retirees out there worrying about their increase.

Ms. Drabik answered no one who is on Medicare or the Medicare Supplement Plan. This is just the city's plan for folks up to the age of 65.

Alderman Terrio stated I just want to understand the numbers. We are estimating an increase of 16% and the city is funding 7% so the employees are funding 9%. Is that correct?

Ms. Wickens replied no that is not correct. The mayor funded \$1.4 million only to fund what we thought would be the deficit this year. He hadn't seen any of this. Then I said in my head well if \$1.4 million is already in there what would that be now that I know these numbers and it would be 7%. So the city would be 7% which is \$1.4 million and \$350,000 would come from the employees so the total would be \$1.750 million of this \$4 million. If the mayor put \$1.4 million in the budget just saying what I know right now is we are over plan, now that we know the numbers what would, on the city side, \$1.4 million be? It would be 7% of this \$4 million. The city would pay that and then we would get \$350,000 from the employees. At 12% because I am trying to use round numbers, that would be \$1 million more to the budget.

Alderman Terrio asked where is the other money of the \$4 million coming from.

Ms. Wickens answered it doesn't so now if we go over plan, we have a reserve but there is only \$3.3 million in that reserve. We can try to cover some of that with surplus. The mayor's budget is very tight and I don't know how much surplus we are going to get in 2025.

Mayor Ruais stated so the city has to pay for it no matter what. The question is where does it come from? Is there a heavier cost shift or increase to the city employee side or do we dip into the reserve?

Alderman Terrio responded that is my question. What is your plan? Where do you see the money coming from?

Mayor Ruais replied that is a conversation for all of us to have. There has to be a consensus of the Board because if we are going to increase rates, that is not something I can do unilaterally. That is something that the Board has to determine. What is the increase we want or how much do we want to dip into the reserves?

Alderman E. Sapienza stated just to be clear, when we say increasing the rates on the employees we are strictly talking about non-affiliated correct.

Ms. Drabik responded no this is for all employees.

Alderman E. Sapienza stated but we have contractual obligations with the unions.

Ms. Drabik replied we have a contractual obligation to provide them with certain plans but the city sets the rates and what we have contracted with them is their cost share. So do they pay 20% or 17% or 15%. That doesn't change. The overall premium can change.

Alderman T. Sapienza stated I am still struggling with that 80/20 split. If the city is putting in \$1.4 million, that should represent 80%. So really, I don't think we should ask the employees for more than their 20%, which would be about \$350,000.

Ms. Wickens stated \$1.4 million is 80% of \$1.750 million. If you are increasing rates by 7%, that \$1.750 million would be subtracted from the \$4 million so you are still looking for like \$2.25 million.

Alderman T. Sapienza responded my point is though that if the city is supposed to put in 80% and they are only putting in \$1.4 million...

Ms. Wickens interjected which is 80% of what...the employees are doing the same thing.

Alderman T. Sapienza replied not if we are asking them to put in 16%.

Ms. Wickens responded no. That was just if the city was doing 7% and the employees were doing 7%. That is what brings you to the \$1.75 million and you would be well short.

Alderman T. Sapienza stated well you are well short of the projection but my point is if you have an 80/20 split whatever the city puts in, that should represent 80% and if the city is not putting in...if you have an 80/20 split, the employees' share is 20% of the employer's share right. Twenty into eighty?

Ms. Wickens answered if we were doing 16% then the city should...

Alderman T. Sapienza interjected we are not talking about 16%. We are talking about 80/20. If it is the city's position that \$1.4 million is 80%, we shouldn't ask the employees for more than \$350,000. That is my point.

Ms. Wickens stated so the city would be contributing \$1.4 million which is 7% and the employees would contribute \$350,000 which would total 7%; yes. I am sorry.

Alderman T. Sapienza stated my point is that we should charge the employee the same as the city is putting in, not have the city put in \$1.4 million and then come along and ask the...basically you are asking for the employee to put in half as much as the city is putting in now.

Mayor Ruais stated they move together.

Ms. Wickens stated right they were moving together. We weren't asking employees...

Mayor Ruais stated if the contribution goes up for the city employees, the amount of money that goes into the budget has to increase a comparable rate. They move together.

Ms. Wickens stated yes. If the city was putting in \$1.4 million, which is what the mayor did...

Alderman T. Sapienza interjected my follow-up question is if we vote to charge the employees 16%, is that going to force the budget to include their 80% or is that still a number we can move around.

Ms. Wickens stated we are self-funded. Last year, we put in a little bit more money to keep the rates lower for the employees but it wasn't enough. If we were going to charge the employees 16%, the city should be at \$3.2 million to be even.

Ms. Drabik stated it is a hard concept to wrap your mind around because the city is not actually paying a premium anywhere. The employee is paying a premium out of their paycheck but the city's portion is 80% of the cost of what we are saying the working rate is but the money is not going anywhere until it is paid out in claims.

Alderman T. Sapienza stated right but I am thinking like an employee. Right now I am thinking if I am an employee and I have to put in 20%, I want to see my employer's 80% and what I am seeing is \$1.4 million so I am saying I shouldn't be charged more than \$350,000. That is just math. It is not hard to wrap your head around.

Ms. Wickens stated that is 7%.

Alderman T. Sapienza stated until I see that budget line go up more than \$1.4 million, I am not going to go over 7%.

Alderman Morgan stated Lisa I have a question for you. You extended the service agreement with USI. Did you get quotes from any other providers or brokers to maybe get better savings or better rates? No disrespect but obviously you want to get quotes.

Ms. Drabik stated I had a conversation with the mayor about this much earlier this year. Just so we are clear, the city doesn't actually pay USI anything. USI gets paid through commissions, if you will, from the savings they bring us related to their contracts with other vendors and that sort of thing. It is a zero-cost proposition to the city, if you will, understanding that different vendors bring different other vendors to the table and that sort of thing. So, because of where we are in the HR Department quite selfishly with the compensation study, with the changeover on the HRIS system, and the fact that I believe, I mean since I have been here USI has provided great service to us and we are in the middle of considering a number of initiatives going into union negotiations, we

didn't feel like it was a good time to go through an RFP process for a new broker which would be a major undertaking so we just extended the agreement for another year.

Alderman Morgan stated I appreciate that but wouldn't you think there would be a possibility to save some money if you got other quotes. There are other companies out there and we didn't really go out and look at that.

Ms. Drabik replied we are absolutely willing to evaluate whether it would be a good time to do that in the next fiscal year. It is just for all the reasons that I mentioned we decided it wasn't the time to do that. Again, the city doesn't pay USI anything. It is my understanding that with the previous brokers it was the same sort of arrangement. That is how the brokerage agreements usually work. So, it is not costing the city anything. USI's compensation from how they receive it is capped as well. We feel like we are getting very good service and a good deal. That is what I can say tonight.

Alderman Morgan asked if we increase the insurance split to 70/30, what would the savings be for the city.

Ms. Drabik answered we can get those numbers for you but I want to set the stage. The 80/20, 85/15 and 83/17 are set in the union contracts right now so unless and until we renegotiate those...the more employees put in of course the less then the city would contribute or not contribute but be on the hook for if you will.

Alderman Kantor stated following-up on what Alderman O'Neil was saying, everyone has a story and I was wondering about the story of Covid and if you have the data on whether the uptick in turbo cancers is a result of getting the shot or not getting the shot. Also, how we reacted to Covid with the lockdowns and mental health and all of that. How has that impacted us today? Is that part of the reason why our insurance has gone up?

Mr. Varagic responded that is a good question. It is still very early to try to partner how that all works but we do have some data to show you regarding how many of your

employees had Covid and things like that. Long Covid is a thing as well and we track that for sure. We do have some of that data that I could provide behind closed doors.

Ms. Drabik stated if I could just add, we are certainly not immune and I think everyone would agree, to the delay in care that some people experienced due to Covid. We are now catching things at a later stage perhaps due to that.

Alderman Kantor stated yes that was my big concern since a lot of us couldn't get to the doctor for early detection and I am sure that affected us as well.

Mr. Varagic stated yes and you just have to keep in consideration also that municipality demographics tend to be older compared to the other private businesses and that has an effect as well to what is happening with claims right now.

Alderman Kantor stated there is good news with Ivermectin being really good for long Covid.

Mr. Varagic replied yes.

Alderman Kantor stated thank you for everything you are doing.

Alderman O'Neil stated I was going to ask a somewhat similar question because I think access to health care was very difficult during Covid. That was a great point that Alderman Kantor just made about that. Is this uptick because people didn't get to the doctor in time?

Mr. Montecalvo stated what we are seeing from other groups as well...one of the slides said you are not alone so there is something that has happened with delayed care. We truly believe that there was an impact because what we are seeing now is people are not going in with Stage 1 or Stage 2, it is Stage 3 or Stage 4. The impact of that and trying to quantify it would be a very difficult study. We do believe that there was delayed care and that has increased costs for knee replacements and hip replacements and those kinds of things. There are multiple factors.

Mr. Varagic stated this is national data too. You can see it from United Healthcare and others. They are specifically talking about their quarterly earnings where they are definitely seeing orthopedic claims in an uptick for the population between 50-65 due to delayed care.

Alderman O'Neil stated my Irish guilt was getting to me. I bashed Michelle earlier and Michelle is fabulous and I just want to clarify that. She is fabulous. Milan, I think you were around when Anthem was not our administrator and the employees encouraged us to go back to Anthem. I just want to say thank you because you continue to provide high quality health care options for our employees. I want to thank you for that.

Mr. Varagic replied thank you, Alderman. Anthem continues to stand with the city. We are in the city and have over 350 employees in that building on Elm Street. We support Elm Street and will continue to support the city any way we can.

Alderman Levasseur stated it says on page 15, and I have a couple of questions that I would like to get through as quickly as possible so we can move on from this but I don't know if we need a motion to table this for two weeks but if we do, I will make the motion that we do not make a decision on this until the next meeting on the 16th. Whether the Mayor thinks we need one or not, he can accept that motion. In the first place, on page 15 where you have the 2024-2025 per employee per month premium, is that higher than it was a year ago? Is that a projected cost or where does that number come from? The \$1,727.80 on the top right-hand corner per employee per month? Is that just claims for a person? What is the premium then? We keep talking about the premium. For some reason I thought that was the premium but you keep saying you set a premium. Where was the premium set?

Ms. Della Torre answered per employee per month, the \$1,727.80 is the projected claims for medical and prescription per employee.

Alderman Levasseur asked and per month.

Ms. Della Torre replied yes.

Alderman Levasseur stated so that is the premium and that is how you set it. My question is we pay 80/20. They pay 20% of the premium. What is the premium? They should want to know what their premium is. I know what my charge is per month if I work for a normal employer or if I buy it on my own and they tell me that my insurance is \$24,000 a year and I know I have to pay that monthly. So, what is the premium? Is it separate for a single person?

Ms. Drabik interjected that number does not represent the premium. That is simply the claims; the anticipated claims.

Alderman Levasseur stated I would imagine it is not that much. I assume it is a lot lower.

Ms. Drabik stated for example if someone is on the HMO, for a single plan the total premium is \$1,108.62/month. However, that is split 80/20 for example of 83/17 meaning the employee is only paying 20% or 17%.

Alderman Levasseur stated this gets to my point. Here is the point I want to make. I don't understand why there has to be a vote by this Board to increase an overage request or an increase in the price. The price is going to increase next year. Why doesn't that just get put into the 20%? If the premium is \$1,000 and our premium is expected to go to \$1,200 for that plan because of the increase of the \$4 million, if you average it out and did the total number and divided it by 12, why do we have to take a vote? I don't see anybody in the real world getting a vote by a board that says okay you guys have to pay a 16% increase based on our projections which may be right or may be wrong. Maybe you will get a rebate and maybe next year you get a lower increase. Why are we taking a vote on this Board if it is 20? The 20% is the cost of the premium and if the premium goes up, they pay the 20% all the time straight-forward and it is always the same. There is no negotiation and no pressure on a board to say okay in the middle of the night we have to decide if it is 16% because the costs went through the roof or they went up because we have unfortunate instances of people getting sick

which is why we have insurance. Why do we have this debate? Why does this Board have to vote on this when it is 20? If the premium goes up, you pay 20% of it no matter what and if it goes down, it should go down.

Ms. Wickens responded it was always like that, Alderman. The very first time they took a vote was for FY23 when USI came on. That was the first time that we came before the Board to ask for a vote.

Alderman Levasseur asked why did you ask for a vote.

Ms. Wickens answered I want to say because it was going to be high...

Alderman Levasseur interjected but before that they just got their increase in the mail.

Ms. Wickens stated what happened was before it would come through and USI would meet with the Finance Director which at the time was Bill and Jane Gile and they would determine the increase. Sometimes Bill would look at it like I kind of did and I am thinking 16%, I was kind of leaning towards 12%, and they would set the rates and you wouldn't know anything about it. Well, you would...

Alderman Levasseur interjected right. You would know it when you got the increase in your check in July.

Ms. Wickens stated well employees would have been notified that it went up.

Alderman Levasseur stated that is the way it should be done. There shouldn't be a vote by this Board to do anything and make everybody feel like...we didn't set the rates and we don't set the premiums and we don't wave magic wands to make people be healthy. I don't know where it came from and if it was a policy change or a vote of a policy change but I don't believe there was a vote on a policy change. I have been on this Board for all of these years and I have only seen it one time and that was last year when again people on this Board were felt to feel like we are sticking it down these employees' throats. Well, if you are an alderman or a mayor or an employee, you get an

increase. In the world outside of government, you get an increase. I don't know who makes the vote but I don't think the employees know about it until they get their premium adjustment. When Comcast goes up, they don't call me and say should we only give them a 6% increase because the BMA is going to pay the rest of it. They just say give us our increase.

Ms. Wickens stated I think the reason it came before the Board and I do think it was 2023 and it was because the rate coming forth was very high and the mayor thought that the Board deserved to know about it. I believe it was a 10% or 11% increase where consistently it has been 3% or 4%. This was crazy.

Alderman Levasseur stated I think you guys put it on us because you didn't want to put it on yourselves or whoever makes those decisions. I don't think this Board has any obligation to vote on it. It should be a policy decision of the HR Department or just based on the fact that you guys are the ones that do the numbers and you are in charge of making those numbers. We can't be in control of whether there is an increase or not and I think it is really...first of all when the mayor makes his budget projection number that is a tax cap number. When we go to increase the employees' rate, that is a revenue number so it brings in revenue and doesn't increase the tax rate. If we decide we are only going to charge 50%, we have to eat it on our side and our tax rate goes up. It is a shared cost and it is insurance which is a collective numeric number that is shared by all city employees who get sick. That is why we have insurance. There are 10 unfortunate people costing a little more but when looking at the numbers and dividing them out, in 2023 the total cost was \$24.1 million. That is \$2,080,800 per month. If you look at this year the way the projection is going, it is \$2,112,000 per month. So that is not a major increase. It is less than a 9.9% increase. For the eight months that we are talking about through February and then until June 30, it doesn't look like we are going to have a major increase. When you look at the \$6.45 million for the 29 people and then you look at the \$3 million for the 10 claimants, it looks like we are going to come in lower in the next four months than that claim number. I am not sure what the projection is but you are at \$3 million for 10 claimants which you say is above and beyond the normal cost and 18% of the FY24 budget is going to 10 people where last year 27% went towards 29 people. It looks like it is lower so wherever the \$4

million is coming from, you guys are the experts and you are the ones doing these numbers and you are the ones putting the premiums together. Somebody makes a decision on what the premium is. It is not this Board. We do not set the premium. You set the premium and you are the one or whoever does the FICA and the Medicare and the deductions...you guys do that in your computer and you punch the numbers in so why do we have to play this game that we have to make this vote. It is 80/20. Twenty percent of the premium is what they pay if there is an increase and it should be that way. I have some other points I would like to make. That is just one point. I know that is a lot of stuff coming at you guys fast but you are coming at us. We have two weeks to make a decision. We have open enrollment coming. The mayor was told to come in with \$1.4 million and that was going to be rough? You didn't tell him \$4 million when he put his budget together.

Ms. Wickens responded we didn't have that information yet.

Alderman Levasseur stated but you made a projection of \$4 million. He put his budget together a week ago.

Ms. Wickens stated I didn't make this projection.

Alderman Levasseur stated well whoever gave him the numbers...we are talking a \$1.7 to a \$4 million change. That is a little bit dramatic when he put his budget together. You are talking about an almost \$2.3 million increase since his budget numbers were given to him and he did his budget a week ago. Now you are coming to this Board and saying well you guys vote to increase the employees' contribution when it is already contractually in there – 80/20. Whoever is on the 80/20 has to pay it in a collective system like we are in.

Ms. Wickens stated well I was just going to say...

Alderman Levasseur interjected you want to tell me that you didn't know that the projection was going to be \$4 million. Today you want to tell me that? Really? You didn't know that? Well, you guys need better communication then.

Ms. Wickens stated we knew it was going up but we didn't know by how much.

Alderman Levasseur stated it is kind of a big deal right. I just want to say that the increase starts in July.

Alderman Levasseur moved to table this for two weeks.

Mayor Ruais stated I don't think we have to take a motion tonight. We can talk about it in two weeks. We can get clarification as well.

Ms. Drabik stated if I could just offer this, this is only my second year of participating in this process and I was informed that it would require a vote of the BMA because it is part and parcel of the budget. That was my understanding of why we were coming to the BMA with an increase like this. I don't know if Matt Normand can add any additional context.

Alderman Levasseur replied you came from Londonderry. How did they do it in Londonderry?

Ms. Drabik responded they were part of Health Trust and Health Trust told them what their increase was. To your point, we are in a unique situation here because we are self-funded. We are determining what we think we will need every year to fully fund the plan. We don't have an outside insurer if you will. We are not part of the Health Trust risk pool where they tell each municipality...

Alderman Levasseur interjected and you didn't come up with the number of \$4 million and neither did Ms. Wickens right.

Ms. Drabik replied right.

Alderman Levasseur stated our experts that we hired came up with that number correct.

Ms. Drabik answered correct.

Alderman Levasseur stated so you are not on the hook for there...are we going to argue with them and say no we just want to bring in \$2.7 million or \$3 million. Is that what we are going to do because that is not prudent is it?

Ms. Drabik responded no and again maybe I am not expressing this artfully but because we are self-funded, we get to decide; we collectively as a city get to decide how much money we think we need every year to devote to health care.

Alderman Levasseur stated but we already have a contract. It is 80/20.

Ms. Drabik replied that is just the cost share.

Mayor Ruais stated the best thing to do is wait two weeks. There are questions that we need to answer and I don't think a consensus will be drawn tonight. We will revisit this in two weeks.

Alderman Kantor asked what is the percentage of people that get health insurance and are there any incentives for the employees to jump on their spouse's insurance to give the city a break.

Ms. Drabik stated yes, we do provide an employee opt-out amount, if you will, of \$4,000 per year if they elect not to take the city's insurance. That is also something that has been negotiated with the unions and something that can be changed to further incentivize people. These are all things that we are discussing as we go forward.

Alderman Kantor responded awesome. I just know how expensive insurance is.

Alderman T. Sapienza stated I want to thank you for bringing this to us tonight. I want to thank these two department heads and I want to thank the experts from Anthem and USI. What the Chairman fails to understand is you are asking us to approve a projection. We don't have a rate dictated by an insurance company. This is a \$24-28

million expenditure and we are looking at a \$4 million question tonight. I appreciate you bringing that to the Board. I think the reason you bring it to the Board is because it is the right thing to do. It is tax money and goes in the budget. It is our job to balance the interests of the taxpayers and the employees because the taxpayers need the employees. We need the employees. It is our job to approve the projection clearly. I want to thank you for being here and for all you have done on this. I do wish it was a little earlier but I really appreciate all of the effort you put into this. The idea of beating up department heads...I hope that makes somebody feel good.

Alderman Levasseur stated I was not beating up department heads. We should not be self-insured anymore.

Alderman Long asked if you didn't come to us, what would we need in the budget.

Ms. Drabik answered if we unilaterally, I guess, said that insurance rates are going up 16%...I will let Sharon answer how she would handle it from a budget perspective.

Ms. Wickens stated to Alderman Levasseur's point...

Alderman Long interjected I don't want to hear that.

Ms. Wickens stated it does kind of matter. He is saying, and it always was like this, when the budget was set the rates increased and we increased the employee's portion and funded health care to the best of our ability in the budget. Maybe it wasn't the exact percentage. Back then I don't really know but at the end of the day, if we didn't fund it enough, we had to pay for that be it through the reserve account or with excess revenues. It had to be paid for. We try to get it in the budget and the mayor tried to get what he knew was going to be a shortfall this year into the budget and that was the prudent thing to do at the time when pencils were down. Then when there was a bigger increase, there was a decision made by Mayor Craig to come to the Board because it was so large. If it is the will of the Board that it should not be handled this way, we have no problem going back to how it was before. We were only doing as directed. If you want us to come to the Board that is fine and we will do that but to Alderman

Levasseur's point, before it wasn't like that. We got the increase from the experts and we set the rates accordingly and it was not a Board vote. This is very recent. It happened in 2023. I think we need some direction because we want to do what is right.

Alderman Long stated well it has been at 3% and 4% so it didn't have to come to the Board. When it was 11% and now 16%, it has to come to the Board. If you didn't come to us, what would the city's 80% be at 16%?

Ms. Wickens responded \$3.2 million. Say we said we were going to charge the 16% but the \$1.4 million is all that is in there. We still have to pay if it is under plan. It will have to hit the reserve or surplus to pay it. It is not like if we were to set the rates, we are going to come to you and have a hammer over your head and say you have to put \$3.2 million in there. You are going to have to pay for it one way or the other. Either you are going to budget for it or we are going to roll the dice. It is just that is the way it is.

Mayor Ruais stated I think we will work over the next two weeks and come up with a response. I will work with the aldermen to come up with a consensus so we can get the rates set.

Alderman Levasseur asked regarding the \$24 million that we were billed, how much was billed by the health care providers. I am an attorney. I get a case where the client has \$40,000 worth of medical bills and Medicare pays \$10,000 of that \$40,000. Of that \$24 million, how much were we actually billed and how much did you guys...obviously you must have stopped that number at \$24 million that was actually billed. Do you know that number?

Mr. Varagic replied off the top of my head I don't know the exact number but I can probably back into it. We average about a 60% discount so add 60% to that number.

Alderman Levasseur stated so we are talking about \$36 million and you brought it down to \$24 million because you fight with them. Do you not give them the same formulas as say NH Medicaid?

Mr. Varagic answered we wish we could get those.

Alderman Levasseur asked why can't we. Is it because we are a sitting target because we are self-insured?

Mr. Varagic responded not necessarily. We use our power. In NH we have over 500,000 members and we use the power we have. When we go to Elliot, we say we insure 500,000 members and want X, Y and Z for contracts with you specifically and we do that with each provider. We use our sheer volume.

Alderman Levasseur asked are Medicare and Medicaid formulas set by federal statute and we don't have that benefit.

Mr. Varagic replied correct.

Alderman Levasseur stated okay I appreciate that. Thank you. I was not being mean to you. I am just very frustrated because this was not a process that we ever did.

Alderman E. Sapienza asked are we going to get a ruling as to whether or not we are going to have a vote.

Mayor Ruais replied that is what we are going to work on going forward and I will inform you about the direction that I would like to take for the aldermen budget as you guys take it over. Thank you all. I really appreciate you coming in.

CONSENT AGENDA

Accept BMA Minutes

3. Minutes from the 02/20/2024 Finance and BMA meetings, 03/04/2024 Joint BMA/BOSC meeting, and the 03/05/2024 Special BMA Public Hearing and BMA meetings.

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

4. 50/50 Sidewalk Petitions

Residential:

- 50 Park Avenue
- 66 Maurice Street
- 193 Platts Avenue
- 20 Rowell Street
- 381 Arah Street
- 95 Villa Street

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

COMMITTEE ON ACCOUNTS, ENROLLMENT AND REVENUE ADMINISTRATION

5. Advising that the update on the Revolving Loan Fund has been accepted.
(Unanimous vote)
6. Advising that the Finance Department reports:
 - Accounts receivable over 90 days
 - Aging report
 - Outstanding receivableshave been accepted.
(Unanimous vote)
7. Advising that the Monthly Financial Report (unaudited) for the first eight months of fiscal year 2024 has been accepted.
(Unanimous vote)

COMMITTEE ON LANDS AND BUILDINGS

8. Recommending that the request from IV T, LLC to deem property located at 896 Goffs Falls Road surplus to city needs, dispose of said property through direct sale to IV T, LLC and authorize the Mayor to sign the deed without covenants (as amended to strike vesting title to surplus land in the City of Manchester) be approved.
(Unanimous vote)
9. Recommending that the request from the Water Works Director to deem 2.5 acres located on Cohas Avenue surplus to city needs and that the department be allowed to sell said property be approved.
(Unanimous vote)

*HAVING READ THE CONSENT AGENDA, ON MOTION OF **ALDERMAN TERRIO**,
DULY SECONDED BY **ALDERMAN LEVASSEUR**, THE CONSENT AGENDA WAS
APPROVED.*

JOINT SCHOOL BUILDINGS COMMITTEE

- 10.** Advising that its change order policy was amended as follows:
- Changed amount from \$50,000 to \$100,000 on Items 2 and 4
 - Replaced "Department of Public Works" with "Manchester School District" on Items 2 and 3
- (Unanimous vote with the exception of Alderman Terrio who was absent)*

Alderman Long stated I am just wondering if these are within our procurement code – change orders going from \$50,000 to \$100,000 and I don't have to go through the Joint...under \$100,000 I don't have to go...it goes from \$50,000 to \$100,000. That is pretty substantial for change orders. That is a lot of money, \$100,000.

Mayor Ruais stated I would agree. This is a notice from the Joint School Buildings Committee of the change so there is nothing for us to vote on. It is an informational meeting about a vote that was taken by the Joint School Buildings Committee.

Alderman Long asked and they have that authority.

Mayor Ruais answered correct. That is my understanding. This committee report is just advising us of this change.

Alderman Long asked so it is not the School Board, it is the Joint School Buildings Committee that has the authority to say they are only going to review change orders that are over \$100,000.

Mayor Ruais replied that is my understanding.

Alderman Long stated I don't see how that can happen. I really don't. I don't see those six people having that authority. I don't know who looked at it or what statute allows that. I don't see anything in the statute that addresses the Joint School Buildings Committee. It looks like the Board of School Committee has the authority. The BOSC has to review these, correct? Any change order under \$100,000, the BOSC has to approve, correct? That is my understanding.

Mayor Ruais stated this is specifically for the Joint School Buildings Committee Priority I project.

Alderman Long stated well when it was at \$50,000...let's say the change order was for \$28,000, the BOSC had to take a vote.

Alderman Vincent stated you are correct. It says that \$100,000 or less may be executed by the Manchester School District. Anything under that it is the school district's call and doesn't even have to go to the Joint School Buildings Committee. They are giving all the authority to the school district. You are 100% right.

Alderman Long responded we have procurement codes. I will have to look at the statute and see if the Joint School Buildings Committee has that authority. If I am a contractor, I am coming in with \$98,000 change orders and reeling you right in. That is my concern. It is not an action item and I get that.

Alderman Levasseur stated anybody who voted in the positive on our Board who sits on that committee could file a motion to reconsider.

Alderman O'Neil stated all we were doing was updating a 25-year-old number of \$50,000. That is all we were doing is making it a number that seemed reasonable in today's world. I will take the message back to the committee.

Alderman Long moved to acknowledge receipt of the report.

Alderman Levasseur stated he can make a motion to advise the committee to reconsider and I will second that.

Alderman Long responded I don't think that is within our purview. I am hearing that it is their purview.

Alderman T. Sapienza duly seconded the motion. Mayor Ruais called for a vote.
There being none opposed, the motion carried.

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON ALCOHOL, OTHER DRUGS, AND YOUTH SERVICES

- 11.** Recommending that the Housing Stability Department be housed at 39 Beech Street.
(Unanimous vote)
- 12.** Recommending that the Beech Street Shelter require some form of identification and if the person doesn't have anything, that the shelter assist them in getting it.
(Unanimous vote)
- 13.** Recommending that all policies related to the Beech Street Shelter be reviewed by this committee.
(Unanimous vote)

Alderman Burkush called Adrienne Beloin forward. Thank you for coming. I have a couple of questions regarding the letter that you sent us the other day in reference to your office at City Hall and can you comment on these recommended changes before us.

Adrienne Beloin, Housing Stability Director, asked so there is the office move and then you asked me to comment on the other changes that are being proposed out of the three things. I just want to be sure. I mean for the office change, we have a plan to have my office move and we also have a plan in place where we are going to be transitioning the operations of the shelter to another provider once that gets identified soon into the new fiscal year. So, there is going to be a time soon enough when we won't be operating the shelter so that is one of the most practical reasons. The other major issue with whether or not offices should move to that location is that we really need that location to provide the services that we have been talking about to the guests there. So, if we are really serious about wanting to have employment services and having case management services on-site and enticing providers, those are the consultation spaces that they have to do that work in and we don't want to give that up for any reason if we are going to prioritize that activity. Also, the oversight is not necessary. We have stacks of staff in management levels doing the different operations. Those are things we haven't discussed at all. So, there are a lot of details and more that can help explain. I provided the memos that you saw, the myriad of

different things I am focused on so that you can appreciate a little bit more kind of what is on my plate. Just like any other department head, I would require an appropriate setting for me to have conferences with people, sit with people, and be away from the public so that I can do my work. I certainly love to engage with the public and I am at the shelter all the time and I was there most of the day today. When I am there, quite frankly, I am on my feet and giving elbow support to people and meeting with guests and talking with them and walking around and taking inventory of things and checking things out. That is the nature of the work that I do there so there wouldn't be a utility of me having the work that I do that is statewide and locally coordination wise at that location. That is the piece around the office. Do people want to ask questions about that before we move to the other two points?

Alderman Fajardo stated I guess I would address my question to the Chair of the committee, Alderman Thomas. What problem is this solving?

Alderman Thomas responded the reason the committee recommended this was because we were hearing and also seeing that not many things were done at the shelter that should have been going on like having service providers come in. People are coming in, getting what they need and going out. We wanted to see a lot more agencies coming in. Also like we said in our meeting, things were not really going on and to have oversight in that shelter would be really good.

Alderman Fajardo asked can you specify the things that aren't going on. We get the data that X number of service providers are seeing X number of individuals. Again, what is the problem?

Alderman Thomas answered the data can show that but like we said in our committee meeting, when Alderman Barry and I were there for a little under two hours we saw one person come in for a disabled individual, which was great, but we didn't see anything else going on.

Alderman Fajardo asked do you mean people aren't coming in to access services.

Alderman Thomas replied no like agencies aren't coming in so that was not a good thing. Also, we saw a whiteboard that was empty for scheduling and things like that. It kind of showed us that nothing was going on, even that day that we were there unfortunately.

Alderman Fajardo stated for two hours.

Alderman Thomas stated I know it was two hours but people have been saying thank you for that recommendation. The Fire Chief is at the Fire Station and the Police Chief is at the Police Station. A director of daycare has to be at a daycare center.

Alderman Fajardo responded she is not the shelter supervisor.

Alderman Thomas stated but she is the Director of Housing Stability. One of the jobs is to oversee the Engagement Center really.

Alderman Fajardo replied that is one facet.

Alderman Thomas stated there are a lot of moving parts.

Alderman T. Sapienza moved to receive and file Item 11. Alderman Fajardo duly seconded the motion.

Alderman Long stated you mentioned that you discussed with the mayor that you are going to be put in an office somewhere.

Mayor Ruais stated there are multiple moving pieces to this part. Included in the budget is a number to rehabilitate and move...we have a staffing crunch here in City Hall as you know with Planning, HR and the Solicitor. When we were initially having the conversations about office space, we were looking at McGregor Street and rehabbing that space and moving X amount of offices to that location which would open up spaces downstairs in City Hall for additional offices that we need. The conversation then came up about Water Works and bonding the project so then Lincoln Street would potentially

become available which would alleviate a lot of the pressure and concerns about staffing. So, there are a lot of moving pieces to this and when we would have office space available. I spoke with Director Croasdale on Monday asking if we were to approve the bond for the new building, is there office space available right now to move either portions of HR or the Solicitor over there which would open up space there as well. That timeframe is murky right now because I want to get a consensus of the Board on what makes the most sense. If we are going to do a bond for Water Works, then I don't want to do a \$700,000 bond across the river. We don't need to do that. Those things are up in the air. To the point about accountability and oversight, one of the conversations that we have been having...so tomorrow I have my monthly department head meeting and we are meeting with the relevant department heads to put together a work plan or talk about what a work plan looks like to upgrade security at the Engagement Center as is the will of the Board. I spoke with Director Beloin to match that timeline. The direction I gave was I want a work plan for the security upgrades by the first BMA meeting in May so that would be May 7. What I talked about with her was having a work plan in place to address the concerns about not enough programs going on and not enough activity going on and employment services whether it is the VA or how do we operationalize the need to get licenses. We talked about putting a work plan together in the same timeframe. So, by the first BMA meeting in May, the idea is that we will be able to look at both of those work plans to address concerns about oversight and accountability. I think if the message that is being sent is we want to do more there, we can address that through the work plans that will be delivered to the Board. That is a long answer to a short question.

Alderman Barry asked Director Beloin do you just not want to go over there. You don't want an office there?

Ms. Beloin answered there would be no issue about me not wanting to go over there. It is not the right decision for the work that we need to do. Housing is not an emergency shelter. I think we can all agree to that. So, if I am the Director of Housing Stability, I shouldn't be focused on running an emergency shelter as best as we can run an emergency shelter. We need to get these people into housing and we need to source affordable housing for them and that is a much bigger, macro level position. It is not the

right setting for me to work in the shelter. It also would be stepping on toes of the management structure that already exists of a contractual arrangement that we have with staff. There is a site director and managers and supervisors on shifts. They don't need another person coming in and confusing them and I certainly don't need...

Alderman Barry interjected did you say there is a site manager.

Ms. Beloin answered yes.

Alderman Barry asked who is that.

Ms. Beloin replied Jake King.

Alderman Barry asked how many days a week is he there.

Ms. Beloin responded he works 40 hours – 20 on-site and 20 off.

Alderman Barry asked 20 on-site and 20 off.

Ms. Beloin answered yes and there is always a manager on...

Alderman Barry interjected that is my whole point and that is why I made the motion that we need someone there for oversight. We don't have anyone there. Twenty hours a week for someone to be on the property isn't...in my opinion, that just doesn't make it work. When we discussed this a year ago when you were hired, I would hope everyone's goal was to not only get people off the streets and into a shelter...it wasn't just to hide them from the public. I know we had a problem with tents and everything in front of 199 Manchester Street and I get it. I have been adamant in saying that is not what we expected or that is not what I expected. I don't want them just off the street. I want them to get the help that they need. Without you there or your assistant or both of you there during the day time...20 hours doesn't cut it for a site manager.

Ms. Beloin responded I don't think you know anything about whether or not the program is successful or what our workflows are...

Alderman Barry interjected I don't think it is successful right now.

Ms. Beloin stated or what is happening with the oversight. There has been very little discussion with me about any of the workflows we currently have in place. I would love to sit down and tell you how we actually do business and the community providers that we have coming into that space would be terribly insulted to think that you are saying they are not doing any work there. They are extremely proud of what they have been doing.

Alderman Barry responded I never said I don't think they are doing any work there...

Ms. Beloin interjected that is the model of what we are...

Alderman Barry interjected the people that are working there, the staff, are doing a great job but they need oversight. They don't have it. They don't have oversight.

Ms. Beloin stated there is no indication that anything is not working in the direction that we want it to be working in. There has been no indication of an incident or an issue that...

Alderman Barry interjected when we went there on that Friday, and grated we were there for two hours but keep in mind that we have to go over there by invitation only and make an appointment with you to go over there which I am totally against. I think if I want to go to see the Chief at the Police Department, I am going to walk in there and ask if he is available. The same thing at the Fire Department or Public Works...that is just the way the city operates.

Ms. Beloin stated the emergency shelter is working perfectly and we are working on getting housing.

Alderman Barry stated when we walked in there, there were about 50 people sitting around. They weren't engaged. They were engaged with each other but like Alderman Thomas said, there was no one there. There were no outreach people there and no organization there working with them and that is what we want. We want to make sure that these outreach workers at these organizations that we depend on are available. Why weren't they there? We want them there on a daily basis and we want you or Owen there to oversee the operations. Twenty hours a week for a site manager...Jake does a great job when he is there but 20 hours is not good to be off-site. We need to focus there. Thank you.

Alderman Thomas stated I absolutely agree with Alderman Barry. We talked about this an awful lot, especially when we did go and meet with you on that Friday. You did mention that you had three staff during the day. Was that including Jake King?

Ms. Beloin answered no. There is three staff that are scheduled to be there.

Alderman Thomas stated and you also kind of looked at me and gave me a concern about some staff which made me mention oversight. You also mentioned that there were three offices in the back that were rarely used you said because not many agencies come and not many individuals want to go and meet with them.

Ms. Beloin replied that is not what I meant to imply at all. We have, as you saw in my data presentation, I am very impressed with the amount of provider activity we have on-site; very impressed. We have massive amounts of activity and interventions happening on-site throughout the day. The couple of hours that you were there on a Friday afternoon, you saw one provider from Manchester Mental Health that you knew and we didn't point out or ask if any of the other people in the room were providers or not and you wouldn't know. Outreach workers, you wouldn't necessarily know who they are. So, we saw one and you didn't ask me to point out who was there and we didn't ask the staff to point out who was there and you don't know what activities were happening during the day but we have lots of data, and it is not just my data but it is the data from these partner agencies. If you are insinuating that I am not telling the truth about what is happening there, then you are insinuating that they are not telling the truth

about what is happening there because this is their data and this is their work and that is very important. What I did say about those offices is that we offer those consultation spaces. We haven't had a lot of providers or guests that have wanted to go into the back room to meet with them but we like to provide those options. As we build different provider opportunities like The Doorways that started today, if they are doing an insurance reinstatement with someone to get them to detox, it may be that the back room is more appropriate than the larger room where they have to share information in front of people. So, there is utility of being able to expand. The design of that space is so that we can expand. We just opened in September. We have been at this for five months building up this activity and filling this out and it has been a trajectory that is going up. We are extremely proud of the work that we are doing and this is absolutely the direction and the way we should be going.

Alderman Thomas replied I understand that but also when you say that you have been open since September, in your memo to all of us you highlighted really great things and I appreciate that but those are works that just came up very recently. The Doorways like you said just started today. I know you mentioned that Hope was coming in. These are things that have already been in Manchester for a very long time and they should have been there last year. That is what we are trying to say.

Ms. Beloin responded so Hope for Recovery and The Doorways this week is this week's work of soliciting partners to come on-site but all of the people I listed in the presentation have been built up since September. It is pretty impressive how many people we have gotten to partner with and how we have built this and what we have on-site. It is more than any other shelter has on-site for provider collaboration. The providers are extremely excited about this opportunity to see their guests and it is working. I would love to be able to show you how. I think maybe we need to have a different type of discussion so that we can show you what we are doing and you can have more assurance of what is happening but the goals are the same. We need to connect people to services and we need to help them recover from homelessness. This is what we do. There is no lack of urgency.

Alderman E. Sapienza stated earlier you said something to the effect of you are the Director of Housing Stability and your focus isn't the emergency shelter. Can you explain that a little bit more please because I am not really clear on that?

Ms. Beloin answered emergency shelter is not the solution to homelessness. We needed to open an emergency shelter because we had emergency issues with people being unsheltered and outside last winter so we opened an emergency winter shelter for three months because we needed to offer an alternative to a large encampment that we had downtown. We added that capacity of 52 beds between Brook Street and Beech Street in order to respond to that crisis that we had and then we decided that we were going to continue it and continue it and open the Engagement Center and here we are a year later. Emergency shelter is an unfortunate emergency response meaning that it is not the appropriate place for people to live forever, right? I think we can all agree that we don't want people to live in an emergency shelter forever but we are getting them out of the cold and we are getting them connected to services and having hygiene and things like that accessible to them. The next steps that I would like to focus my attention on, and I support the mayor's plan to transition the shelter to the community partners because we don't feel like the shelter should go away. It is serving a purpose to keep people inside but I would like very much to be able to turn my limited attention to the other goals of preventing people from falling into homelessness, paying attention to those kids being identified in schools and what is going on with their families, figuring out how we can stop people from losing their housing and then building more affordable housing on the other side of homelessness.

Alderman E. Sapienza replied so that is a lot of macro right there. I am surprised. I really thought your focus was 39 Beech. So, in a typical day, you are doing other things like you just mentioned right?

Ms. Beloin answered yes.

Alderman E. Sapienza asked do you have any information on who has found gainful employment, if anyone.

Ms. Beloin asked do you mean since you last asked me a couple of weeks ago.

Alderman E. Sapienza replied yes.

Ms. Beloin stated I don't know.

Alderman E. Sapienza stated this is the third time now that I have asked you. Has anybody found a job?

Ms. Beloin responded we are still looking for employment resources to connect people to and that is what I would like to use some of those provider rooms for. I mean it hasn't been an easy match to find providers that work with the homeless population that get people jobs. I would very much like...no one has mentioned an opportunity to me that I haven't wanted to follow-up with. I would really solicit your support in finding a community partner that does that. We have Job Corps coming. It is limited in what we can do but it is definitely a goal. Of course, we want people to find employment.

Alderman E. Sapienza stated well I really thought that 39 Beech was your main focus but apparently it was not. I hear so much abstract stuff that you are saying and I don't know but it sounds like a runaway bureaucracy to me. Thank you.

Alderman Fajardo stated it sounds like there is discomfort around the level of supervision. To me I think to underscore your point, there is an opportunity to just look at the hours and the coverage by the person whose job it is to supervise the shelter. I feel that if that is the problem, the solution feels a little bit different.

Alderman Terrio stated first let me say that I have never been in the shelter but I agree with Aldermen Barry and Thomas. I think there needs to be more oversight and here is why. I drive by the shelter every day. I live on South Cypress so I go down Beech and make a left onto Cilley Road and drive up the hill. What I see routinely from the outside of the shelter is I see homeless people; they leave and I don't know if they are not allowed in during the day or whatever but they are sleeping...it is routine for me to see people sleeping in the doorways of the buildings around the shelter. That is very

common. The other thing that is very common is they will come out of the shelter and they will beg...you know where Aroma Joe's is, it is almost like they do shifts. I will see different people at different times of the day. I see a man in a wheelchair there very frequently. I believe he is missing his legs. He is there a lot and his friends are there a lot. They also go down to South Willow and beg at the different intersections.

Ms. Beloin responded yes; we know him.

Alderman Terrio stated about two weeks ago, there was an altercation out in front. Fortunately, one man stopped me so I went around while the other two seemed to be getting into a fight. The other thing is when I was running for election, I walked every street in my ward and the people in that part of Ward 7 are very unhappy. The reason they are unhappy is bikes are being stolen in the neighborhood and cars are being broken into at night and people are stealing change, etc. We are not talking about major crimes but there are a lot of things that are going on that seem to be connected to the shelter that shouldn't be going on and there needs to be more oversight. People are just sleeping in doorways all around the shelter. Of course, there was the fight and then them begging. As Alderman Barry said, he wants to see an improvement. Those things are not...we are just enabling them at this point. If they are just begging, getting in fights and sleeping in doorways during the day, we are not really helping them. We need a change in behavior. I want to help them but what I am seeing is not an improvement in their lives.

Ms. Beloin asked should we expand from 40 beds to 140 beds in order to give them a place to stay because we definitely have a bunch of people on our waitlist that are probably sleeping in those doorways waiting to get into our shelter.

Alderman Terrio replied this is in the middle of the day. I assume...

Ms. Beloin interjected we are open during the day every day seven days a week from 9 AM until 5 PM.

Alderman Terrio stated what we need to be doing is asking them to get jobs and helping them get jobs.

Ms. Beloin responded that is what we are doing inside the building.

Alderman Terrio stated the last time you were here I asked if you required people to work and you said no, I do not require them to work. I think a job is the best social program in the world or one of the best social programs. Not asking people to work is not a good idea. I think you have the education as a social worker. We just need a change of direction because what we are doing right now is not working. Thank you.

Alderman Levasseur stated tomorrow I am going to send out an email to all department heads that work in the city to find out if they are okay with where they work and if they want to change places or work in different buildings. You are an employee of the city and you work for the Board, you know that. Many members of this Board would like to have you work out of that shelter. I think you're pretty gifted at multi-tasking and I don't think it matters where you are. When you started a year ago, you started in the Fire Department and moved to the Welfare Department and now you are in the Health Department so I don't see what the big deal is about you moving over to the shelter and doing all of the things that you do. I don't think the office or the location that you are in is going to make any difference in how you manage things but I do believe that if you are there things will get done better. I think people will be more attentive and I think the employees will know the big cheese is in the building. I know that as a restaurant owner for 35 years I left to go somewhere and came back and the place ran a lot better when I was in the building than when I was out. This is more of a policy issue. I don't think it is supposed to be an argument. It is nice that you get to actually air your grievances or talk to us and tell us you prefer not to be in there. I don't believe you have the right to tell us where you want to work or not work. I don't know who told you that you had to be in the other three locations. That building is open 128 hours a week as you know. You have a site manager who is there 20 hours a week. That is deplorable in my mind. Again, I actually thought you would be happy to move there. Your energy...I think you would be excited about actually working...if I was the coach of a baseball team, I would want to be on the baseball field do you know what I mean. I wouldn't want to be on the

football field. I would want to be where the action is and see what is going on. This Board is excited and we still think that a lot of good things can come out of that shelter and we think if you are there things are going to improve. That is why we want you there. It is not a personal attack or some kind of surreptitious game that anybody is playing. We just believe that if you are there the oversight is going to be better and while the cat is away the mice will play. Whether you want to believe it or not or you think that these employees are all great and I am sure they are, they will even be greater and will be better and I think you will do a much better job and I think it will give a level of comfort to many members on this Board that you are really watching that place and still working with everybody else and doing all of the things that you do. That is my perspective. I don't see this as a punishment. I don't see this as anything bad. I think this is where you should have been from the beginning and I think we would have seen a lot more things moving a lot quicker if you were on the premises.

Ms. Beloin replied I can appreciate that perspective but because this is the field of work that I have been in for so long, I understand what it actually means to be running a shelter. I understand what it means to be doing my position and what the positions are of my staff and I don't want to have us be set up in a way that the shelter is not going to be as effective. We have the same goals, which is that we want the shelter to be effective and we want these people to move out of homelessness into housing and I am the person who understands how best to do that because of the years of practice and trial and error and understanding that.

Alderman Levasseur asked do you think the site manager with the title site manager should not be on the site 40 hours. Do you think that 20 hours is enough?

Ms. Beloin answered we are saying a lot of titles and things like that. Why don't we figure out some sort of way to have a committee or something or have a conversation with me...

Alderman Levasseur interjected who is we.

Ms. Beloin stated we is the relationship between the Board and myself as the director. Let's talk about how it is that I can help you understand the different roles that we have in the shelter, what people's different responsibilities are and the structure of oversight that we currently have. You are saying we don't have oversight and there has not been an indication that something is not working. We have an amazing amount of service delivery on that site. We have very low incidents. We have the lowest amount of overdoses compared to the other shelters in Manchester because of the way that we manage things safely despite our population being more sick. We have a lot of really special things to be proud of and we have reduced outside homelessness as a part of this programming.

Alderman Levasseur stated wow you really don't want to go there, huh. Whatever. We will make the vote.

Alderman T. Sapienza stated good luck. We will be looking for a shelter operator pretty soon when we don't have a homeless director.

Alderman Goonan stated I think it is unfortunate that we are making a determination on whether you are doing anything over there based on a couple of hours on a Friday. That is my opinion. Myself and Chief Burkush have been over there and I believe your statistics. I believe all of the department heads' statistics. I don't know why this is happening. I think on some level it may be a personal thing. That is my opinion. I think you are in a tough position. I really do. I think you are doing some good work. I don't think these things happen in the blink of an eye. This has been open since September. I know you have a lot of people over there that are working and you have a lot of outside vendors coming in doing work. I talked to Manchester Mental Health and I know they are there a lot. I am happy to see some of the other folks coming in. I believe you have dozens of people coming in; dozens of organizations coming in trying to help. I just wish we would believe the department head that she is doing the work. I think it is probably one of the most difficult populations amongst our homeless that you are dealing with every day. It is very difficult to place those folks. Alderman E. Sapienza is 100% correct. I don't think anybody took a look at what your real job description is. I think they just assumed that you were going to run the shelter and that is your number

one thing. It is about homelessness and the big picture. I appreciate what you are doing there and I think it is going to take a while to build up to that point. We have six months now until we are going to make some sort of a change. I personally don't think it is fair to put you there for a short time and on top of that I am not sure who has been in those rooms but Alderman Burkush and I went and there is nothing in them. They are 6' x 8' rooms that are used for some of the non-profits to come in. Two of the rooms are storage rooms and were full. There is one room that is not full. I don't know if we have to have IT come in and I don't know what the cost of that would be. I just don't think it is an appropriate spot. You would essentially be in the living and sleeping quarters and I am not sure how anybody could get anything done. That is just part of your oversight. If you look at her job description it is not what you think.

Ms. Beloin stated even if I improved the oversight, if we were cranking on all cylinders of everything that we do there because of my being there and cracking the whip, it is not going to create housing for people okay. If I got more people jobs and more people health care and more people connected to mental health and substance abuse services, it does not create apartments for them to live in with those wages and that sobriety. So, we are doing that but there is another issue that we have to tackle and that is building affordable, deeply subsidized and supportive housing for these folks. We also have to prevent the bucket loads of people falling into homelessness. This takes a significant amount of systems level work and this is the work that I am prepared to do.

Alderman Barry stated because Alderman Goonan brought it up, I didn't base my thoughts on a two-hour visit. This has been my thought for quite a long time about getting people off the street and into the shelter...that is why we had a nice contract with Gate House which we lost. They left for whatever reason. In my opinion it was working out great and they were getting people into treatment. That was one aspect of it. The other one that Alderman E. Sapienza brought up is employment. I think that is huge. When you have 50 people sitting around, some of them walking in with their cardboard signs where they were just out panhandling, it just doesn't feel good for me. I am asking why? Why aren't these people out working? Some of them I get are suffering from mental illness or are handicapped and can't go into the workforce but there are

quite a few in there that probably could. I know you mentioned Job Corps. How often do they go in?

Ms. Beloin answered I would have to look it up to tell you.

Alderman Barry stated you should know that. I appreciate the fact that you will get back to us with that information. Again, I think it is important...I am not picking on you. I am just frustrated with the whole thing. Even if you weren't in the picture I would still be frustrated because I want it to work. I think I worked really hard when Gate House came in. Alderman Long and I when we first met with Amanda, she was very excited about it. I think her and Shane did an awesome job. They are not there anymore but they were getting people off the streets and into rehab. They would have had it much easier working inside that shelter getting people help but they left. I am sure part of it was because they were burned out because that is a tough job.

Ms. Beloin interjected do you know how many of those people that they got off the street into treatment were back on the street.

Alderman Barry responded yes and we know that happens and you should know that that happens. They can go in and out of there 10 times but you know what, the 11th time if it works that is great. I don't have a problem with people that go in and come out. Hopefully they are going to go back in and see the light. I know we discussed your thoughts on the Farnum Center and the fact that you didn't think they were acting in good faith because when you called them or other people on your behalf called them to take people in, they were not available but they always tell us and others that they are available. The state gives them a lot of money.

Ms. Beloin replied it is an admissions process issue. I don't want it to go down that I said they didn't do something in good faith. I think that there is an admissions bottleneck that happens where people who are homeless need to access treatment on demand right? You understand that and we have talked about that. Farnum's admission process isn't always catering to that population. That is what we were going to work on.

Alderman Barry responded you also mentioned that you have called them and they are not available and don't answer the phone.

Ms. Beloin stated meaning that admissions process.

Alderman Barry replied right but they should be. Someone has to be there. If someone is ready to go for treatment at 2 AM and they call and there is no one available to take them in and they say call back at 8 AM when someone is manning the phones, that six hours is lost. That person is not going to go. We have already lost them and we don't want that. I want these people to be productive; the ones that can. As far as affordable housing goes for those people that are in there that are homeless, some of them it may pertain to but most of them it does not. Most of the ones I see couldn't afford \$100/month never mind \$1,500 or \$1,000. They just can't afford it. There are people that are working, and Alderman T. Sapienza brought it up a couple of weeks ago, very hard to make ends meet but they are still struggling. They might be making \$15 or \$20 an hour for a family and they can't afford to live in an apartment. They just can't do it but there are other ones that it is not going to affect at all.

Ms. Beloin responded this is something that I deeply understand. I have dedicated my entire career to this. This is something I deeply understand.

Alderman Barry replied but you understand that there are people in there that whether the rent is \$100 or \$1,000 it is not going to have an impact because they won't be able to afford it.

Ms. Beloin answered right. So, we need to work with that right? We have made an enormous amount of progress in this past year that we should be really proud of and we shouldn't lose any momentum in where we are going. I know it is very hard for you to understand what the work is that we are doing because this is not your field of work but the entire army of people that do this work on the ground feel differently. They feel like we are in a better place than we have ever been. We can have them march up here and talk about that in front of you if that is what you need in order to believe in what we are

doing but the data that I showed is very impressive and it is important that we don't lose track on that.

Alderman O'Neil stated Adrienne, I wish you would stop talking down to the Board like we are dummies. We are responsible for every aspect of government in the City of Manchester, including what you do. I can tell you observations I make. I talk with homeless people. So, stop talking down to us like we are dummies and don't know anything about the work you are doing. There have been people homeless in this city for a long time. There have been people with alcohol and substance abuse issues. I have been quiet until you just made that comment. You don't think we understand. We understand, and more so than you, we are responsible to the citizens for understanding. Please be respectful to us about that.

Alderman Long stated I am seeing issues with 39 Beech Street. I am seeing a size issue and I am seeing you coordinating with other non-profits coming in trying to get them to help us there. It is not conducive to setting up those meetings. You would have to set up a meeting somewhere else. I see that. However, I don't know the industry of police work but I know what they do because they tell me. I think there is a communication issue. I don't get enough information. Questions that I have asked don't get answered. That is the issue that I have. As Alderman O'Neil said, I am responsible for setting policy on things that I don't know so I have to learn everything I can as quickly as I can so I can make an informed decision. That is our responsibility. I think that is where the disconnect is. We are not getting answers to questions and that is how we are informed to make these policy decisions.

Mayor Ruais stated we have a motion on the floor to receive and file Item 11. Mayor Ruais called for a vote. Alderman O'Neil requested a roll call vote. Aldermen O'Neil, Levasseur, Terrio, E. Sapienza, Barry, Vincent, Thomas, Morgan and Kantor voted nay. Aldermen Burkush, Goonan, Long, Fajardo and T. Sapienza voted yea. The motion failed.

Mayor Ruais stated we will now address Items 11, 12 and 13.

Alderman Terrio moved to approve all three reports. Alderman Levasseur duly seconded the motion.

Alderman Long stated on Item 13, policies are normally set by standing committees. I don't know if it is okay to have policy set by special committees.

Mayor Ruais stated it says they will review the policies.

Alderman Long stated I don't know if we want to get into that. Usually, it is Administration that reviews policies. In this report, it says the special committee will recommend the policy and send it to the full Board. Is that protocol Mr. Normand or Solicitor Rice?

Matthew Normand, City Clerk, responded if the Board is inclined to accept that report as it is stated they could. This is a special committee that has been established to deal with this issue specifically. If the Board prefers to do what it traditionally does with policy decisions or draft policies, they could send it to Administration as well.

Alderman T. Sapienza stated this committee is for alcohol, other drugs and youth services, not for homelessness.

City Clerk Normand replied I understand but those issues have traditionally gone to that committee. This Board doesn't have a homeless committee.

Mayor Ruais stated that committee has jurisdiction over the homelessness issue.

Alderman Levasseur stated I can change the name if you would like.

Mayor Ruais called for a vote on the motion to approve Items 11, 12 and 13. Alderman Terrio requested a roll call vote. Aldermen Terrio, E. Sapienza, Barry, Vincent, Thomas, Morgan, Kantor, O'Neil and Levasseur voted yea. Aldermen Burkush, Goonan, Long, Fajardo, T. Sapienza voted nay. The motion carried.

REGULAR BUSINESS

14. Communication from Emmanuel Uwizeye advising the Board of his resignation as an alternate member of the Conservation Commission.

*On motion of **Alderman O'Neil**, duly seconded by **Alderman Long**, it was voted to accept with regret.*

15. Nominations:

Zoning Board

Max Latona to be elevated to a regular member, term to expire March 1, 2025

Nick Taylor to succeed himself as a regular member, term to expire
March 1, 2027

Kathryn Beleski to succeed Anne Ketterer as an alternate member,
term to expire March 1, 2027

Craig St. Pierre to succeed Michael Simoneau as an alternate member,
term to expire March 1, 2027

Fire Commission

Michael Doyle to succeed himself as a regular member, term to expire
May 1, 2027

Bill Mortimer to succeed Paul Harrington as a regular member, term to expire
May 1, 2027

Central Business Service District Board

Travis York to succeed himself as a regular member, term to expire May 1, 2027

Donald Stokes to succeed himself as an at-large member, term to expire
May 1, 2027

Peter Richard to succeed Michael Craig as a regular member, term to expire May
1, 2027

Arts Commission

Lauren Boisvert to fill a vacancy as a regular member, term to expire
December 1, 2024

Planning Board

John Goeman to succeed himself as a regular member, term to expire
May 1, 2027

Brian Beaupre to succeed Elyza Agosta as an alternate member, term to expire
May 1, 2027

Kevin McCue to succeed Sean Sargent as a regular member, term to expire May
1, 2027

Lead Exposure Prevention Commission

Arnold Mikolo to fill a vacancy as a representative of a community advisory
group, term to expire March 19, 2025

Glory Mukendi to fill a vacancy as a resident whose family has experienced lead
exposure, term to expire March 19, 2025

Board of Registrars

Bill Houghton to replace Ron Giroux as a regular member, term to expire
May 1, 2026

(Note: Pursuant to Rule 23 of the Board of Mayor and Aldermen, these nominations will layover to the next meeting of the Board.)

Alderman Long asked can we have a discussion about these at this time.

Mayor Ruais answered this is just the nominating process and the discussion could happen at time of confirmation. If there is a question you have, we can address it under new business.

16. Confirmations:

Office of Youth Services Advisory Board

Brett Morin as a regular member, term to expire January 1, 2027

Board of Trustees of Trust Funds

Adam Bergeron as a regular member, term to expire January 1, 2026

*On motion of **Alderman O'Neil**, duly seconded by **Alderman Vincent**, it was voted to confirm the nominations as presented.*

17. Communication from Allen Aldenberg, Chief of Police, requesting authorization to execute a contract that includes indemnification language with the Behavioral Health Improvement Institute at Keene State College.

*On motion of **Alderman Long**, duly seconded by **Alderman O'Neil**, it was voted to approve.*

NEW BUSINESS

Alderman Long stated we had a few people speak about nominations. I know of one nomination that is replacing a woman that only served for two or three months. Here is a volunteer on the Planning Board. I was there when she was there and she was doing fine. I thought she was good and she was the niche of...it is not good in my opinion to have all developers or all realtors or all attorneys. We need a good mix of people. She was an average woman that had unique questions that she would ask developers that I wouldn't ask because I am not living like she is living in an apartment and riding her bike all over the place, which I thought brought value to the table. I don't know why they are getting replaced before their term expires.

Mayor Ruais responded I have the appointment capability because the term that she is currently serving under has expired. I think that is what this two-week period is for. I am nothing if not collaborative. I would be happy to sit down with you and hear any concerns. Alderman Fajardo sent me some suggestions for nominations on the Lead Commission and Planning Board as well. I have extended an offer to anybody on the Board. If you have suggestions for any openings on boards or commissions or any concerns about any nominations that I have made, I would be happy to hear them in the interim two-week period that we have.

*There being no further business, on motion of **Alderman Levasseur**, duly seconded by **Alderman O'Neil**, it was voted to adjourn.*

A True Record. Attest.

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

Clerk of Committee