

BOARD OF MAYOR AND ALDERMEN

June 4, 2024 at 7:00 PM

Mayor Ruais called the meeting to order.

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

A moment of silence was observed with Alderman Long requesting that everyone keeps Mr. Carignan in their thoughts and prayers.

The Clerk called the roll.

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

Mayor Ruais stated in keeping with the new tradition that I started last month with recognitions, we have a number of challenge coins and thank yous that I would like to extend really quickly to start the meeting. When I call your name, please come forward. We have the Piscataquog River Local Advisory Committee. Alderman Barry wanted to make sure that we recognize you this evening so if you want to come up really quick, I have a thank you. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to each of the volunteers for your invaluable contributions to our community through your dedication to the PRLAC, which was established in 1994. The PRLAC plays a crucial role in preserving the river's natural beauty and health. Your tireless efforts have insured that despite being in close proximity to Manchester, the river remains predominantly a natural or rural stream. With 95.7% of its 65-mile length free flowing, the river stands as a unique and treasured asset in New England offering pristine water quality and a wide array of recreational and educational opportunities for the public. This committee meets monthly and is dedicated to protecting and enhancing the river. The outstanding water quality maintained by the PRLAC's diligent work not only benefits our environment but also enhances the overall well-being of our community. Thank you so much to all of the volunteers. I have a Proclamation for Cindy's retirement from the Police Department.

WHEREAS Cindy McClay commenced her dedicated service to the Manchester Police Department on February 17, 1984 assuming the role of Clerk Typist I within the esteemed Records Division and through her diligence and

commitment steadily progressed to the position of Clerk Typist II thereby showcasing her invaluable contributions; and

WHEREAS Cindy's unwavering dedication and exceptional performance led to her appointment as Records Clerk on July 26, 1986, a role in which exhibited exemplary professionalism and proficiency further enhancing the efficiency of our esteemed department, and

WHEREAS recognizing her exceptional capabilities and commitment to duty, Cindy was duly promoted to the position of Juvenile Unit Secretary, a testament to her competence and effectiveness in handling critical responsibilities within the organization, and

WHEREAS Cindy's tenure within the Manchester Police Department saw her position elevated to Administrative Assistant I in October 1999, a milestone reflecting her continued growth and invaluable service to our department's administrative departments, and

WHEREAS Cindy's unwavering dedication integrity and proficiency rendered her an indispensable asset within the Records Division where she displayed unparalleled competence and professionalism throughout her illustrious career, and

WHEREAS her commendable service in various capacities Cindy gracefully returned to the Records Division in October 2015 embodying the spirit of adaptability and steadfast commitment to the mission of our department, and

WHEREAS Cindy's steadfast dedication, unwavering loyalty and exemplary service have left an indelible mark on the Manchester Police Department earning her the admiration and respect of colleagues and superiors alike, and

WHEREAS it is with deep gratitude and profound appreciation that we acknowledge Cindy McClay's remarkable contributions to the MPD and extend our heartfelt congratulations on her well-deserved retirement on May 31, 2024,

BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED that the Mayor of Manchester, Jay Ruais, on behalf of the citizens of our great city hereby recognizes and honors Cindy for her decades of dedicated service, professionalism and commitment to public safety wishing her a fulfilling and joyous retirement after a career marked by excellence and distinction.

Could I have Zakai, Josiah and Aidan come up? These are my buddies from Smyth Road. I promised these guys a challenge coin when they first came and did the Pledge of Allegiance. All three of these young gentlemen attend Smyth Road School and the Boys & Girls Club each morning. Since the first day of school, they took it upon themselves, Josiah and Zakai, to escort Aidan off the bus every single day and supporting him in everything that he needs at school. The autism program at Smyth Road is an essential and integral part of the fabric of this school and these three young men have become incredible buddies showcasing something truly special in the Manchester School District. Last but not least, we have a birthday to celebrate. Could I

have the Honorable Sylvio Dupuis come up please? Mayor Dupuis turned 90 years' young yesterday. If you will indulge me, I have a Resolution.

WHEREAS Sylvio Dupuis born in Manchester in 1934 has dedicated his life to the betterment of our community through extensive public service and professional excellence, and

WHEREAS Sylvio Dupuis pursued higher education at St. Anselm College and the Illinois College of Optometry leading to the establishment of his medical practice as an Optometrist on Manchester's west side in 1957, and

WHEREAS Sylvio served as Mayor of Manchester from 1972 until 1975 during which time he began preparations for the Bicentennial Celebration and played a pivotal role in addressing the 1973 energy crisis redeveloping Pine Island Park, restoring the City Hall spires and developing a Latin American Cultural and Social Center, and

WHEREAS under his administration Manchester received a federal 701 grant to study flooding, identify historical sites and buildings, wetlands and soil studies leading to significant construction projects including the West Side Arena, Senior Living Facilities, a new mass transit system and the rebuilding of the Queen City and Notre Dame bridges, and

WHEREAS Sylvio's extensive community service includes his roles on the Board of Directors at Bank East, Energy North, the NH Charitable Trust Foundation, and the Currier Gallery of Art, and

WHEREAS in January 1975 he became the founding President of the Catholic Medical Center in Manchester further serving the public as Director of Health & Human Services for the State of NH, and

WHEREAS along with his wife Cecile has raised four children embodying the values of family and community dedication, and

WHEREAS Sylvio Dupuis now celebrating his 90th birthday continues to be a revered figure in Manchester whose record as Mayor offers a detailed and inspiring account of his contributions to the City,

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Jay Ruais, Mayor the City of Manchester on behalf of the citizens of Manchester do hereby extend our heartfelt congratulations and best wishes on the occasion of his 90th birthday and recognize his outstanding service and lasting impact on our community

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

speaker will come forward to the nearest microphone, clearly state their name and address when recognized and give their comments.

Lauren Boisvert, 11 Greer Street, stated:

I am a Ward 12 resident of Manchester. As a fourth generation Manchester resident and the Community Communications Director for Manchester Proud, I stand before you today to urge you to not make any cuts to the school district's budget. For years, Manchester has faced negative attention due to the constant changes in leadership and budget cuts within the school district. I witnessed this turmoil firsthand during my time as a student in the school district. However, in recent years our district has made significant strides forward and it is crucial that we maintain this momentum. Dr. Gillis' mid-year update highlights the tremendous progress our schools have achieved. We are adding a dual language immersive program allowing our students to become bi-lingual and better prepared for a globalized world. We have expanded career connected learning opportunities ensuring that our students are ready for the workforce and future careers. The alignment of the curriculum with the portrait of the graduate ensures that our students are not just academically proficient but also well-rounded individuals prepared for life's challenges. We have also expanded professional development for all staff ensuring that our educators are equipped with the latest skills and knowledge to provide the best education possible. Our facilities planning work aims to create 21st century schools; environments where students can thrive and succeed. Transportation Department improvements have streamlined operations and enhanced the support provided to our families. We have also seen improvements in literacy and mathematics through the I-Ready Program. Culturally appropriate meals have been introduced insuring that all students feel included and cared for. These are just some of the remarkable achievements and I am only scratching the surface. Bringing in my personal voice as a Manchester resident who recently got married and is thinking about establishing roots, the momentum and the current work happening in the district makes me want to establish those roots here in Manchester. With the work happening in the bio-tech field, more young people are being attracted here to Manchester. Our school district is how we insure we attract them to choose not only to work here in Manchester but to live here in Manchester. Cutting the school district's budget would jeopardize all of this progress. Our students, educators and community deserve better. We cannot

afford to go back to a time of instability and reduced resources. Instead, we must continue to invest in our schools ensuring that every student has an opportunity to succeed. I urge you to consider the long-term impact of your decision tonight. Our schools are the foundation of our community's future. Let us build on the successes we have achieved and continue to support our students, educators and families. Thank you for your time. Together, we can ensure a bright future for Manchester and onward.

Kara Dow, Rosedale Avenue, stated:

I am a grandparent raising a grandchild. If we take away more funding from the school system, we are hurting what all of you are trying to build up, which is our city. The more you take away from the education system, the more you are going to lose all the people who are supporting it; all of these young families and everybody. I didn't want to send my grandson to Manchester public schools because they suck. They are so much better. He had the greatest experience starting at Bakersville School. If you start taking away more funding, you are going to have people going elsewhere. I didn't want to live in Manchester. I wanted to be elsewhere. I was forced to live here. Now, I am trying to keep all of the younger people, the newer generation, to stay here. If they leave, the city is going to crumble. We need the new people and they need the new education.

Jake Morese, Greer Street, stated:

I am here to speak about the issue that should deeply concern all of us, the proposed unacceptable budget reduction to the Manchester school district. This is not merely a financial decision. It is a decision that will profoundly impact the future of our children, our community and ultimately our society. I urge you to vote against this budget reduction and I would like to share why maintaining or even increasing funding for our schools is essential. First and foremost, a well-funded school district is the foundation of a thriving community. When the schools have the resources they need, they can provide a high-quality education that equips students with the skills and knowledge necessary to succeed in life. This success is not just measured by test scores but by the development of well-rounded individuals who can think critically, solve problems and contribute positively to society. Our community wouldn't reflect fondly upon such a cut in school funding but instead would observe its deleterious effects as the students in the Manchester school district are put at a disadvantage compared to students in areas that

value the importance of adequately funded schools. By voting against this budget reduction, we are not just making a financial decision, we are making a statement about our values and our commitment to the next generation. With respect, even considering such a budget reduction of our public schools is part of why so many people have lost faith in our elected officials. You were not voted to these positions of power to reduce opportunity and effectively suppress the potential of Manchester's youth but rather to help build a better society with each subsequent generation. Our schools are among the last publically funded resources that we should ever consider cutting the budget for. Let us stand together to ensure that our schools are adequately funded and that our children are well prepared for the future. Thank you.

Sandra Almonte, Biron Street, stated:

I am a small business owner here in the center city and have been for the past 23 ½ years. I have three boys, two that graduated from West High and I have one left. I am here to ask you to please not reduce our school budget. In the budget we currently have, we are already cut short. Our students and families and newcomers...the city is growing so if the city continues to grow and we don't have a good school system will they really stay? Some of my fellow business owners send their kids somewhere else. They send them to private schools or to charter schools or they move out of Manchester because they do not want to have their child, sometimes with special needs, in the Manchester school district because there are too many students in the classrooms. If we continue to cut the budget, how are we expected to have a future for our families? How is the Queen City supposed to grow and become more prosperous? I have always been an advocate for the center city because that is where the most underserved families live. As families continue to immigrate to Manchester, where are they supposed to go? Where is the future of our city if the school, which is supposed to be the most important part of a child's education...how are we supposed to move forward? Please, I am asking you to not cut the budget. Then of course as Lauren mentioned, the momentum that we have already gained with Dr. Gillis' past years, we don't want to lose focus of that. Let's continue to grow and to get more teachers and more educators into our system. Thank you.

Nikki Dudley, 250 Village Circle Way, stated:

I am here to ask that when the time comes for the Board to approve the current proposed budget for the school district no additional cuts be made. I first came to Manchester five years ago as a City Year AmeriCorps Member and I was lucky to serve at Henry Wilson Elementary School. Serving here in Manchester changed my life because of the amazing educators and students that I met. Today, I am still with City Year and still living in Manchester and am now working at Henry Wilson and Parker Varney. Just today, I was on a 3rd grade field trip to the Library and Fire Station where we took a tour of the library, planted a pollinator garden and got to explore the big trucks and that was only the morning. In the afternoon, we played our annual staff versus student basketball game. Yes, the students won and they stormed the court full of joy. All of these experiences and more are made possible by educators who consistently go above and beyond. There is a common phrase in education that says it takes a village to raise a child. In approving this budget, we would continue to ensure that all of our children have access to a school village that supports their learning and overall well-being by retaining transformative educators, cultivating positive experiences, and bridging the gap to resources they would otherwise go without. Thank you.

Leslie Want, 623 Belmont Street, stated:

I have been the Ward 4 school board member since 2016. I am here this evening because after calling Alderman Long I became aware that the budget was going to be taken off the table tonight and voted on. Most citizens are not aware that this is happening tonight although it looks to me like maybe the word has gotten out. I find this very disturbing. The way our taxpayers' dollars are spent are probably the most important function of the Board of Mayor and Aldermen. The Mayor's budget was presented months ago but we all know that it is rarely the Mayor's budget that is used. Nine times out of ten, it is an alternative budget put forth by an alderman or a group of aldermen that gets passed. This makes perfect sense actually because while the Mayor presents his budget in March, that leaves almost a full quarter of the year for additional revenue and expenditure surpluses that need to be accounted for before finalizing the budget. The real problem here is that the budget or budgets that are being discussed here tonight have never been made public. So, taxpayers will not get the

chance to give their feedback on how their tax dollars are being spent and that is a shame. You are all elected by the citizens of this great city and you are supposed to represent us but it is obvious that you don't want to operate in a transparent manner that would allow us to weigh in on decisions that you make that will greatly impact our lives. The school board put forth a responsible tax cap compliant budget that would serve the children and families of the Manchester public schools in a multi-page document presented at a school board meeting. All information regarding that budget was available to the public on our agenda in complete transparency. Mayor Ruais' budget cut that tax-cap budget by \$4.2 million. I am deeply disappointed in the BMA for operating in such an opaque manner and pulling the budget off the table and voting on it when no one but you have seen it. You owe it to your constituents in the city that you serve the ability to scrutinize any budget you put forth and the opportunity for us to give feedback when you are deciding how to spend our tax dollars. I am asking if anyone on this Board has the integrity to call for a rule change so that future budgets will be visible in the light of day for all to see and comment on before a vote is taken. Thank you.

Jason Bonilla, 463 Central Street, stated:

I am a school board member representing Ward 5 (comments made in Spanish). Yes, you heard it all in Spanish because you all also represent that community. I am urging you all to continue to support the public schools in Manchester and pass the Mayor's budget. We need to stop playing games with our kids.

Rick Blais, 733 Chestnut Street, stated:

Thank you for having me speak tonight. You know I don't envy any of you at all to go through a job like this and not getting paid. I am coming with solutions. I think a lot of people come in not knowing. There is a lot of emotion back here that I have been listening to. I just want to introduce myself. I grew up here in Manchester and ran my businesses here for the past 45 years. I graduated from Central High School. I want to take a few minutes to address some concerns, particularly for the benefit of the new members of the Board here who might not be fully aware of the way the school board members actually misrepresent the true budget and their expenses. First, it is essential as representatives of the taxpayers...that is who we are but the school board also has that responsibility and I don't think they take it as seriously as you guys do. So, to

ensure that there are funds being used wisely, that is the important thing for any elected official. If a system isn't working after decades of investing hundreds of millions of dollars, simply pouring more money into a system that is not working isn't the solution. Education is evolving. Our city needs to stay ahead of the changes and the evolution that is taking place in education and in order to do that I think we need to look at our city and stay ahead of that curve. Graduating students for decades that lack the basic reading skills and math...a lot of them go to school not for a four-year degree but for five years because the first year they have to get remedial math and English out of the way. They shouldn't have to pay tuition for that. We should have given them that as a high school student. Unfortunately, the way the system is run, their interest is pushing kids through the system. That failure right there is going to ruin a lot of people's lives and we see it today in the workplace. If you are hiring people, any of you that do that, you see the quality of worker that is coming out and it is not what we expect. Yes, there are a few that have good skills that you are willing to hire. We need a competency-based program for education. We can't just pass a kid because they are graduating 4th or 5th grade. If they can't read at their level, they need to stay in that class until they master those. There is a whole different thing but unfortunately the system is set up, especially with our union and again I don't dislike unions. My father was in a local union here but we need a competency-based program. The school district has a budget right now where they hide money in trust funds, specifically the teaching and learning trust with over \$15 million. That is a slush fund. They have access to use that money to pay for things but when they have a surplus, they take it and rather than by law returning it back to the city coffers, they put it in their special funds. This year what you should do is look at making an amendment to the budget, and I don't know what the budget is, but to take \$8 to \$10 million out of that teaching and learning trust fund and let them take the money from the budget. Now you will have \$8-\$10 million in the city coffers for other departments. I am tired of driving over the same pothole on the Amoskeag bridge for the past eight years. It is happening. I ask you to address this and I think you should hire an independent auditor to go and look at the school district and to look at the school board members that approved this trust thing. It is very vague and not clear whatsoever. I think the citizens are looking more for some clarity and some real transparency in government and I think this Board has the power and will to do that so

we can give our kids a better education. If we keep using the current systems, we are not going to do it.

Ken Tassey, Ward 6, stated:

I come before the Board with a concern regarding the city budget that will likely be discussed this evening in the tabled items. The first thing I would like to ask the Mayor, and I am not expecting you to do this but I am asking that you break protocol on the agenda since probably 95% of the people who signed up to speak tonight came here to talk about the budget. I think it would be better if this were discussed and voted on tonight while the majority of the people are in this room. That is just a suggestion. One of the concerns that will be discussed on that section of the agenda will be the budget and whether to leave a school board surplus of, depending on who you speak to, somewhere between \$8 and \$12 million untouched. There is an opportunity to announce to the taxpaying people and the renters in this city whose rents have gone up astronomically who are already dealing with economic hardships and difficulties and single parents who are being asked to pay \$1,800 or \$2,000 a month for a two-bedroom apartment...we have an opportunity here in Manchester to give them a break on something; on something. To reduce the taxes for the people who own properties in the city and those expenses flow to the tenants who are living in our city as well. As a former member of the school board, I was more often than not a single vote against 13 or 14 other members in consequential decisions that totaled I would say over the course of the two years in the hundreds of millions of dollars. I mention this simply to emphasize that this city's policies and the school district's policies and the taxpayer's money have been controlled by a politically aligned monopoly of board members following the lead of a few people. A balance has been restored to the force here and there is an opportunity tonight to make that right. I concur with Mr. Blais that an independent audit by a company that is not cronies with any of the Board members here with a committee devised to monitor or select that auditor so that the school board money and the slush funds that were just mentioned by Mr. Blais are properly investigated and taken to task. Thank you very much. I would ask the Board tonight to vote to find some relief for taxpayers in this city which affects everything else that happens around the city.

Jose Marte, 62 Trahan Street, stated:

I have been here in Manchester for over 30 years. I came from the Dominican Republic in the pursuit of a better life. During the prior administration, I know that Joyce Craig completely destroyed this city and ran it down to the ground. Yes, I am talking about some of you Democrats that followed her like a little puppy dog. I knew that voting for the right people such as Jay, and thank you for all you have done so far...I really don't care what people are saying behind me. Have a nice day. Joe Levasseur. I know that you have a talk show and thank you for informing us on a lot of things. Thank you for the great job that you have done. Crissy Kantor. Thank you as well for being informative about everything. I don't know every single one of you. Some of you I really don't care to know. I just know that coming into this administration from Joyce Craig was going to be a nightmare. I remember a long time ago that Barack Obama said to Trump that it was going to take a magic wand to restore the economy. I know that it is not going to happen overnight here in Manchester. I know that it is going to take time and I have faith in every single one of you that I voted for to restore balance back here. I know that whatever decisions you guys make soon about budget cuts it is going to be a hard one but it is going to be the right one. Thank you for your time and have a wonderful night.

Julie Turner, 285 Ray Street, stated:

I am here this evening to ask for the appropriation of the \$227 million to the Manchester School District for FY25. As you know, Manchester schools are the least funded per student in the state. Our students receive \$16,600 from the state while the average spending per student is \$24,700. While that is no means the fault of anyone here, it is a fact that the Manchester school district is forced to do more with less each year. I sit on the Finance & Facilities Committee for the school board and I cannot imagine that anyone watches those meetings so I will take my time here to share a few facts. First, we review the expendable trust each month. It is a fund that is used for catastrophic needs should they arise in areas like healthcare, special education services or transportation. That fund is broken into six categories and we may not cross-spend from those categories. If we have extraordinary costs in our healthcare, we may only spend from the healthcare expendable trust. This past March, our trust fund was audited by an outside CPA group. After a rigorous audit, the outcome was that the Manchester

school district received top marks of 220 entities in the state. We did not receive any compliance or financial statement findings and the balance we keep in those funds were deemed appropriate for the size of our district. The auditor concluded her findings by mentioning that she has three other districts in the state that will be facing deficits at the end of June as a result of having little to no money in their trust funds. As you can see, these are one-time monies that cannot be used for salaries or items outside their intended category. Secondly, we discussed the McKenney-Vento Act. If you are unfamiliar, the school district is responsible for transporting students who are experiencing homelessness to and from their school of origin. What that means is that if a Central student needs to live with an aunt in Keene, we are required by law to pick up that student, drive them to Central each day, and return them to Keene each afternoon. The McKenney-Vento Act does not specify mileage or a time limit to travel to the school, nor does it care if we have to cross state lines. It only requires that the district provide transportation to the student's school of origin. It is not hard to imagine that Manchester has more homeless students than some of our surrounding towns and it is a costly requirement. That cost comes out of our expendable trust. Often times, we discuss granular items down to the penny. Last month we had a riveting discussion over differences between winter inspections, winter maintenance and snow removal. We did not want to be paying three times for shoveling and we weren't – thanks Mark. The reason that such a lame topic is discussed at length and then sent to Mark Gomez at Parks & Recreation and then brought back to the school board is that we are exceedingly mindful and excruciatingly careful with each and every dollar that we are spending. We pay attention and we ask the questions so that we are being responsible with the taxpayer's money and with the purse we have been given. For more detailed facts like those, please tune in to future Finance & Facilities meetings. We have extraordinary students in our district. Some of them have extraordinary needs. There are no coffers and there is no surplus. There are just hard-working loving teachers, exceptional administrators and countless dedicated staff doing the best they can with the least amount of funding in the state. Tonight, I ask for your continued support to help break down barriers, combat external forces that our students are facing, and provide every student with the assistance and resources they need. Please fund our schools.

Ron Rousseau, 78 Vandora Drive, stated:

Back in November 2023, a company called Community Options Incorporated bought a single dwelling house on my street that is only a couple of doors down from me. They put somebody in this house that is a special needs person and was diagnosed with autism and lower functioning on the scale. That is what the manager told me. This person is wreaking havoc in the neighborhood. He is wandering into yards. If doors are unlocked, he is walking into houses. Saturday night I personally watched him walk into my neighbor's house across the street with two workers that were by him. They would not go into the house. One stayed outside and one eventually went inside. My neighbors across the street had to forcefully take him out while he was hitting the workers. When they got him out onto the street, he went down to the next house down and into that person's house. There was a little confrontation but they got him out of the house. There is a problem in the neighborhood. There are a lot of kids. This kid is violent. We have him on a Ring camera and he is hitting his aide. There is a problem with this. I don't know how somebody can just walk into a neighborhood and place somebody with special needs there and get away with this without any regulations. The police have been called 17 times. They will not come back. They refuse to come back to speak to this individual. What is going to happen when he walks into somebody's house? How are we supposed to defend ourselves if he is just blatantly walking into a house? There are children in the neighborhood and people who are scared to death. Now people can't leave their doors unlocked because this guy may wander in. There is talk about people buying locks with combinations so that he can't get in. Why should we have this burden? Why is this left on us? Are there any regulations? Is there anything anybody can do about this? It is going to end up bad. There is no getting around this. He is going to do something or he is going to wander into the wrong house. I urge this Board to take this into consideration and if there are laws and regulations, this has to be addressed. You don't know. If this company is allowed to do this, they may be fixing to buy houses all over Manchester. How would you like to have this company buy a nice house in your neighborhood and have them plop two or three patients in there and now you have to deal with them? We are not equipped to deal with this kind of problem and we shouldn't have to deal with it as citizens, especially when we have nowhere else to turn. I urge you to look into this situation please and pass some kind of law or regulation or something. Thank you very much for your time.

Rich Girard, 283 Orange Street, stated:

I would like to start with a word of thanks tonight. I would like to thank several aldermen who took me up on the offer to assist with the budget when I came here after the Mayor released his for public hearing. I sincerely enjoyed discussing it with you all and working with you and I appreciate the time that we have spent together. I would like to also thank Sharon Wickens, the Finance Officer. I was working with Alderman Kantor today and after some back and forth with emails we decided to call and she was gracious enough to speak with me and Alderman Kantor and thanks to her, we were able to iron out some numbers that Alderman Kantor and Alderman Vincent I believe will be presenting to you tonight. I wanted to say thank you. I would like to make a couple of points about the budget you are going to see tonight because while it does contain a tax cut, it could have a bigger tax cut. Among the things that could be done are taking the surplus from the schools and instead of putting 1/3 into the severance account and 1/3 into the rainy-day fund as is required by ordinance, \$2.67 million for each, 10 of you could vote to take some of that money and put it against the taxes. Just another \$4 million out of that \$5.4 million would cut the taxes that you are going to see tonight by another \$.32 or another almost 2%. There are things that you could do here in this budget. I would like to say a thing or two about what you have heard regarding school spending. One of the tricks of school spending is they don't actually count all of the money that is spent when they do the per pupil calculation. Part of the presentation that you will see tonight, and I will share a little bit with you here, is in FY20 the school budget, including all federal fund that are not appropriated by this Board but spent by the school board, was \$197 million. The current budget all in is \$279 million or almost \$280 million. That is a per pupil increase of \$14,925 to \$23,601 in four years. Half of that \$82 million increase came last year because the prior Board decided to take more than \$35 million from the state that came in extra aid and just turn it over to the schools. There has been an enormous increase in spending all the while school enrollment has fallen by 10% in that same four-year period of time. The final thing I would like to say is on people working together to cut the taxes. Your Honor, respectfully, you sent out more than a dozen mail pieces or other pieces saying that you were going to not only honor the tax cap which the school budget doesn't do because it falsifies revenues to increase spending and I explained that before, but you said you were going to cut taxes.

I wish you would work as hard with your Republican aldermen to actually provide the tax cap that you promised this city over and over again as you have in pressuring aldermen on this Board to not support a budget that cuts taxes. Respectfully, you made that promise to the voters of this city and I wish you would actually honor that promise instead of actively dissuading people from helping fulfill it. Thank you.

Steven Dillon, 470 Silver Street, stated:

I am here from NYC and I have lived here in Manchester for the past four years. I urge the Board and aldermen to not let the taxes be raised for homeowners such as myself here in Manchester as the rising costs of food, gas and electric have been devastating for all of us, especially the young moms and dads in our community trying to build a family and feel that it would be detrimental and devastating for all young people. Also, most importantly, our senior citizens, older men and women, who already cannot afford to pay their bills, especially those on a fixed income. I also now very much would like to be the voice of our community going forward so that we can keep our community healthy and thriving. I am going to keep it short and sweet. Thank you so much for hearing me tonight and thank you Jay for all of your hard work. You are amazing as is Crissy and the Board of Aldermen. God Bless all of you and thank you so much for all you do for all of us.

Sue Corby, 2094 Elm Street, stated:

I am here to join with those who realize the importance of having a strong education system in our city; who believe that a city thrives in large part or dies in large part based on its education system and even more importantly I join with those who support the individual kids in our city. I strongly believe that we need to give them all that we can in their growing years so that they will have their best shot at life and so that they will become fully functioning, fully participating adults when they graduate. I hear people say that the schools have plenty of money. I disagree. Numbers are facts but facts get manipulated and interpreted by people who have biases and in some cases people who have axes to grind. The city that falls at the bottom of the list of per pupil spending in the state does not have plenty of money. The Board of School Committee proposed a budget that complies with the tax cap and it reflects the basic needs of the school system. The budget should have been accepted. We can't build a great school system

if we don't adequately fund it. I realize that the budget must be decided on in June and that so far, we only have the Mayor's budget to consider. I also realize that anyone on this Board can propose tonight an alternative budget and that that budget could raise or cut the school allocation. I would hope that if an alternative budget is presented, and if it does decrease the school allocation from what you initially proposed, I would hope that you would not vote for that budget. In addition, I would suggest and I would hope that if there is a budget presented that substantially changes the budget that we were able to comment on last April, that somehow you figure out another way to have a session where people can comment because we are commenting on something that was proposed in March. If that changes, that needs to come out for public comment. I realize there is not a lot of time but thank you and thank you for all the hard work you all do coming from the best place you can come from. I appreciate it.

Brittany Ping, 199 Putnam Street, stated:

I routinely love to use my three minutes of public comment. Thank you very much. Obviously, you guys all know where I stand in regards to any budget that is going to come in front of this Board. I am absolutely for giving the citizens of Manchester a break. I want to thank you all for cherishing public education, each and every one of you. I don't care what anyone else tells you on either side of the aisle that comes in front of you. I know that you do and I know that you cherish our city servants and I know that you cherish our city and her people. It is a thankless job. It is not one where you get a whole lot of praise or if you do it is from one side or the other so thank you very much. A lot of the conversations here are emotional appeal and I thought about how to explain what I do on a daily basis and see class rentals and bring it to you. I just keep hearing how we are defunding and all of these things so I went to go pull up Manchester NH student achievement. The top Google result was Manchester, NH student death today. That is what Google thinks. That is the number one search and that just breaks my heart. I know that people who don't agree with me about what our city is doing...that is the state that we are in. We come here with high emotional appeals wanting our way or the highway and do what I say please and please and please. These emotional appeals are rooted in the distress that our community has and the problems that we are facing and they are real and there is a family that is mourning the loss of a child today. I am not saying because that is a new story today but that is a

routine thing that is Googled enough where Manchester, NH student the next word was death. I just want you to keep that in mind. Everybody here, whether I agree with them or not, that is why we are coming here today. We are trusting you to make these decisions and really give each other the benefit of the doubt in what you are bringing to the table because I know that you are getting calls Chris and I know that you are getting calls Dan and I know that you are getting calls Pat...I know because I am calling you. Maybe not all of you specifically but I am and I am telling you the anecdotes of the family that wants to move away from the new Beech Street school district and move to the Jewett Street school district because they are looking for a three family and they don't want to get their child displaced and if they do, they want to move into a different better school. I am hearing from the new ARMI hires that are making \$70,000 and are looking for furnished apartments. I am telling you those guys are giving me a run for my money. They know the percentage of rent that they are going to pay. I am hearing from people in this city who love this city. We are all in trouble. I can't believe I am going to tell you to pass Joyce Craig's budget if we have to please we need zero; we need zero. We don't need 3.8% and we don't need 5.6%. We need a break. We need zero. Thank you.

Erin Kerwin, 291 Ray Street, stated:

I got home today and I opened up my mail and in it was my tax bill. It is big. It is a big bill and probably one of the larger bills that we pay for living in our house and it makes me pause and think about what does this bill pay for. What are taxes? Taxes are actually connected to services. It pays for police and fire and trash collection and roads and on the educational side it pays for our schools. I am looking at the many services I get for that bill and it actually seems like quite a deal for what I get. Manchester is a city that I want to live in. I love it here and I want this city to continue to grow and become even healthier. I am here tonight to ask you to approve Alderman Long's budget for the next fiscal year. We need a robust public school system for our community to grow and to be healthy. There are many great new opportunities for people in Manchester and we need to be a city that attracts the workers to live, stay and educate their families here. Ideally, the schools would have been fully funded and received the full \$232 million it requested, which still fell under the tax cap but compromise must happen. I am asking for you to please pass the Mayor's budget. As you know, the budget for the

school district is built upon the previous year's appropriation. As a result, the proposed amount of \$227 million for the school district will create a cumulative impairment in the budgets for the years to follow. If we truly want to see Manchester grow in 5, 10 or 15 years, we need to make the investment today to get there. Please do not underfund the school district by considering budgets that gut the schools more. Do not offer tax cuts as the expense of our kids, educators and families.

Victoria Sullivan, 1056 S. Beech Street, stated:

I am here tonight as I have been several times before to ask this Board to respect the citizens that have elected you. I don't know if you heard but when she said that her tax bill came in there were a lot of people gasping because they are afraid now to go home and see what is sitting there on their table waiting for them. There is a lot of buzz about the housing crisis in Manchester. The fact is that there are apartments that are available. There just aren't apartments that are affordable and much of that is because of the decisions that have been made in these chambers over the years. Every time you increase property taxes, you are harming homeowners who are the young families who are trying to buy their first home and the elderly who have paid their dues and now live on fixed incomes and all of the families in between. You are also placing a rent increase on those living in apartments across the city as the landlords need to recoup those tax increases through their rents and their fees. I recently got a call from a young couple in the city who could no longer afford where they were living. They got a rent increase. They ended up moving to a hotel because they were essentially homeless and had no place else to go. That is not sustainable. This is what I am hearing across the city over and over and over again. Your decisions directly impact the homelessness as I have stated previously in these chambers. Those circumstances lead to increases in substance abuse and in domestic violence. It isn't a budget that just impacts departments. You are making the financial decisions for every citizen in this city. We are living in very difficult economic times. Groceries, heating, gas and interest rates are all financially burying families. People are sitting at their kitchen tables trying to figure out where they can save some money and what expenses they can cut out. This Board needs to do the same. In recent years, the city has received millions in property tax relief by way of meals and rooms tax from the state yet we have never received property tax relief. In fact, my taxes, like most of our residents, have seen regular tax

increases and that is not okay. The budget that has been presented is disrespectful to the hardworking folks of our city who elected you to be stewards of change. They were fed up by the status quo and entrusted you to put them first. I understand that some of this is fallout of years of decisions made by the former administration but you now have the power to do what is right. It is my hope that you will present a second budget that represents the will of the people and shows Manchester citizens and businesses that they have been heard. I hope that you will do the right thing by them with a budget that provides property tax reductions instead of increases. I also ask that from here on out any additional state money that is sent to this city for tax relief is used for its intended purpose; to help the citizens of this city and not to continue to fund special projects. There should be no more politics as usual in Manchester. Thank you.

Valerie Revet, 191 Vandora Drive, stated:

Ron Rousseau was up here earlier talking about a person who has been housed in what appears to be a group home in a residential single-family home area that up until this person arrived was very quiet and never saw a police car. Now I am told there have been 17 calls on this person. He came to my house one day. I was home alone. Fortunately, I have big dogs but he came to my house and scared the heck out of me. I am told now that the police won't respond. I pay taxes. I pay a lot of taxes. I can't understand how this whole thing could have happened. I don't know if they need to be licensed or if they have to have a permit or if he could be arrested for trespassing for coming into people's homes. What if he gets hurt on my property? Am I going to be responsible? I don't think so. I shouldn't be. Anyway, I am in fear for my safety. I want this person and this whole group out of our neighborhood. I don't believe it belongs there. We are a family neighborhood of single-family homes, not group homes for disabled people or whatever their problem is. Thank you.

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

I would like to give you all a short break from thinking about the budget by asking that you support Traffic Engineer Kristen Clarke's request to evaluate the creation of a TIF district in the South Elm Street area. TIF stands for tax increment financing and at a high level this is another tool for economic development that the city could have in its toolbox. Designating an area as a TIF district allows the city to proactively invest in

beneficial infrastructure in an area with the knowledge that this investment will stimulate development in that area and that leads to an increase in the property tax revenues for all of the parcels in the surrounding area that are now more productive. This increase in revenue is then used to pay down the incurred cost of the infrastructure. Basically, it pays for itself. With the RAISE project in mind, a TIF district could prove to be a super smart and fiscally responsible way to achieve some of the incredible infrastructure upgrades for our city. Now there will be a lot more information shared during the presentation plus an opportunity for Q&A with someone who is actually an expert in the matter. That is not me. I will leave my remarks on that topic here although I did mention fiscal responsibility so I guess it is time to go back to the budget. I would like to echo the remarks heard by those that came before me to advocate for a fair, fiscally responsible budget that meets the needs of our community while adhering to the tax cap. While I do not fully agree with Mayor Ruais' proposed budget, especially with how it fails to fully fund the Manchester school district, I recognize that some folks actually want to see a significant city-wide budget cut instead. Everyone is certainly entitled to their own opinion, but cutting education, transportation or infrastructure funding in the name of fiscal responsibility is short-sighted at best. We often call those investments for a reason. They help us build the Manchester of the future that we want to see. Saving money is a noble goal but none of us should feel comfortable with blindly cutting things out of the mayor's proposed budget without naming what we deem worth sacrificing. Which services will be impacted if a hypothetical new budget comes forward that cuts millions of dollars in spending? Will we be increasing class sizes at Webster Elementary School in Ward 1? Will we be reducing student services at Smyth Road in Ward 2 or halting all road repaving in Ward 6 or Ward 8? Maybe forcing all multi-unit apartments in the building to use private waste collection instead of DPW toters. That was not very popular in here. My point is that we spend money on things here in Manchester as a community because we want, people want and expect municipal services of a certain quality when living here. We have to be clear eyed about what that means when it comes to budget increases or budget cuts. Please consider the ramifications of your actions tonight and do not undercut Mayor Ruais' budget. Thank you for your time.

Jim O'Connell, 265 Prospect Street, stated:

I am a member of the Board of School Committee. I am coming before you tonight to talk about the budget. It is hard to know where to start. I think it is unconscionable to think about reducing the school budget from the amount proposed by the Mayor. The Mayor's budget represents \$4 million less than what the school district would have had under the tax cap. We have been told for years the tax cap, the tax cap, suffer it when it is .3% and 1.3% because the day will come when we will be able to give the students in Manchester something because it will be allowed under the tax cap. Then those who have been talking about that for years decide the tax cap is here now but oh no it doesn't work now. We should remember that in the out years right that we are here tonight and you didn't really mean it when you said you have to suffer when the tax cap is low but now that it is higher you are going to make the kids suffer anyway. This is the least well-funded per capita school district in the state. The state has been dragged screaming to the point of admitting that they are not performing their Constitutional duty required under the NH Constitution that it fund schools adequately. In light of that, they decided to send additional money to the City of Manchester for its students. It was not largess. It wasn't enough and when they sent it, they said it wasn't enough. They sent money to the city in order that we finance our schools better and now we have aldermen proposing to take that money, hard won and fought, not enough to give us the education our students need, and it could be taken for other purposes. So, there are a lot of things that have been said here tonight that are inaccurate and untrue. I find it surprising that aldermen will go to outside people, former elected officials, and those who haven't been successful electorally and can't get elected and ask those who have vested interests and are known to be unsupportive of public schools...I would suggest you talk to Dr. Gillis and talk to Karen DeFrancis, our long-term financial leader. As was pointed out by a member of the school board here earlier on, Julie Turner, our district is audited every year and we have been commended as was pointed out. Our district budget was seen to be pristine. The idea of talk about slush funds? We have accumulated over time by careful stewardship of the public's money, reserve funds that allow us to have money if and when it might be used and it is regularly used for different purposes. The last thing I want to say is something important that I have never said in this chamber before. Tonight, there is the whiff in this room that hasn't been here previously of something beyond normal dealing. Bargaining on a budget is fine and

exchanging ideas about what should and should not be done is fine but when you cross the line to blackmailing the Manchester school kids unless you get what you want, that is not bargaining. When you start saying to you Mayor that if I don't get what I want I am going to come in here and rip \$10 million out of the students of Manchester or else, that is not normal politics. That is dirty politics and we have never had that in this city before. Thank you.

Salaam Odeh, 679 S. Porter Street, stated:

I was born and raised as a Palestinian refugee and I am a mother of a Navy Seal on active duty as well. I am here today to talk about the ceasefire resolution. Before I bring that up, I just want to say that the Israelis are on full attack of Rafah where one million Palestinians are sheltering in tents. As the genocide goes on, taking uglier turns by burning innocent people alive in the middle of the night, such barbaric evil crimes committed by the IDF on Palestinian land. Now we have what is called the tent massacre. We will not stand by and watch the most horrific holocaust of innocent, indigenous, Semitic Palestinian people and fold. As of today, over 15,000 innocent Palestinian children have been murdered. We will not stop and we will not rest. Now myself and every activist have been publically bullied and made fun of on social media and put in harm's way by Joe Kelley and Crissy Kantor with the blessing of Mayor Ruais. It is really disgusting that we are all adults and we get bullied and made fun of. You are a public figure. I can bully you all I want but I have no time and energy...I was not raised like that and I don't want it to go down that way either. However, we want this genocide to stop and we will not back down. We will not be intimidated either. Also, for each and every one of you, I don't know if you would like me to bully you and call you the specialist like other people have been going around and saying or you, Joe Kelly, making fun of all the homeless people and bullying them right and left. However, we will continue to come here and ask for a ceasefire resolution. This is our right. Free Palestine.

Madeline Jones, 21 Rosemont Street, stated:

You might be wondering why I am back. Shockingly, after eight months of relentless bombing, the Israeli military continues its onslaught against my family's homeland. The last time I was here, you raised some points that I would like to address. The first is

why we are bringing this matter to the Board. What does it have to do with Manchester you asked? My colleagues and I, your constituents, have spent hours over the past few months outlining the connection between Manchester and Palestine. Despite the fact that our country is spending our tax dollars on the Israeli military that is relentlessly dropping bombs on a population of mostly children, the fact that we have a modest population of Palestinian, Israeli, Muslim and Jewish citizens here, the fact that war crimes are being committed every day in our name. You don't know what this had to do with us? I don't know how to help you if you haven't been listening. Considering the main subject of tonight's meeting, I want to highlight the subject of taxes. Our federal government just voted to contribute an additional \$14 billion to Israel. What could Manchester do with our share of that instead? The next point raised by Crissy Kantor boils down to what about Jewish people? What about then? The actions of the Israeli military are not a reflection of the beliefs or purpose of Judaism as a religion. Countless Jewish people are speaking out against the ongoing genocide. One of the most prominent being Professor Annalise Oreleck of Dartmouth University who was arrested earlier last month at the Dartmouth encampment. In her words, the war on Gaza is the moral issue of our time because this is a genocide. By the way, the subject she teaches is Jewish history so please don't tell me she isn't well-informed enough to make that statement. In our speeches to the Board, our focus has primarily been on the humanitarian crisis in Gaza and the ongoing genocide there. The fact that we say we want peace and you hear we hate Jewish people, it is reflection on you, not on us. Israel has just rejected a 12th ceasefire deal so they continue their assault on the Palestinian people. Israel is committed to destruction, not to peace. On this note, I want to emphasize the damage this genocide is having on the people of Israel as well. Since October 7, the families of the hostages held in Gaza have been protesting outside of Benjamin Netanyahu's house and the Israeli parliament begging for a ceasefire to bring their family members home. Four more hostages have recently been killed by the Israeli bombardment. If you really care about the remaining 100+ people held by Hamas, you will call for a ceasefire. Not to mention, by the way, that almost 9,000 additional Palestinians have been taken hostage since October 7, many of whom are also being held in detention camps also known as concentration camps, in deplorably inhumane conditions. I want to remind you that our tax dollars are funding this. Again, I beg of you. What would you do if these were your families being starved, bombed,

burned, and tortured? Would you sit there behind your desk and say it is not your problem. As long as I have life in my body and as long as the war in Gaza continues, I will demand peace and freedom for all people including and especially the millions of people in Palestine whose only crime is being alive. Thank you.

Bradley Conway, 236 Boutwell Street, stated:

You all need to hurry up and do something to stop the genocide in Gaza. Israel continues indiscriminately bombing and maiming and starving real people who have stories and hopes and dreams and families, all with our tax dollars in violation of international law and all standards of moral decency. The reality is that one thing has changed in the last few months and it is that residents of Manchester feel more helpless and ignored by their representatives at all levels of government, including here at the city. I wonder, is someone on the Board able to name another issue, aside from divestment from Israel and ceasefire, where scores of Manchester residents put forth a resolution, spoke regularly in support of at City Hall, and their concerns were completely ignored and swept under the rug? At what point does the Board decide that issues raised by constituents are important enough to act upon? The way the Board has ignored so many constituents who call on the city for divestment and ceasefire, gives the strong impression that you are recusing yourselves from doing your job and I think also you won't feel awkward or lose any good ground or any good favor with NH's federal representative delegation, including Pappas, Shaheen and Hassan. Factually speaking though, through their continued support for military aid to Israel, Jeanne Shaheen, Maggie Hassan and Chris Pappas are accomplices to multiple tens of thousands of murders, to causing more than 100,000 injuries, and depriving millions of people of basic necessities such as food, clean water, electricity, medicine, medical care, telecommunications, education, sanitation and housing for more than eight months. Their crimes against Palestine are heinous, deliberate and repetitive but most importantly they are profitable. Israel is a foreign government and it has successfully lobbied these reps with hundreds of thousands of dollars to look the other way and give Israel political cover. The federal delegation makes the decision every day to go out and arm the genocide some more and the Manchester Mayor and aldermen in turn, cover for the federal delegation. These people are real butchers and I don't want to be too paternalistic but maybe you shouldn't want to be friends with these people so

desperately. Make a name for yourself and tell them to stop facilitating the torture and murder of millions of Palestinians. You shouldn't need their approval. In the meantime, the Board's inaction on this issue is felt deeply in this community. I can't remember one person who has come to speak against our proposed resolution and we have been publically firing and posting for several months. Speaking pragmatically, our proposed resolution outlines how residents of Manchester want the city to make a strong statement of solidarity with Palestine. The support we have generated for our resolution has been gathered with the purpose of opening demonstrating that NH's state and federal leaders are clearly more concerned with providing political cover for Israel's campaign of genocide than for the well-being of their actual constituents. I also want to point out that for months we have been calling on the City of Manchester to establish a committee to ensure that city funds are not invested in companies that are arming or enabling the genocide. Please disclose, divest and push the city to move forward in divesting.

Angie Rodriguez, 236 Boutwell Street, stated:
Joe Kelley...

Mayor Ruais interjected please direct your comments to the Chair.

Ms. Rodriguez stated someone on this Board had just actually asked if the man a few speakers ago was speaking to him and I just want to know if he was then what. Anyway, every meeting this group of aldermen sits before me refusing to acknowledge that there is a full-blown genocide occurring in Palestine right now. I keep thinking to myself as we sit here in front of you twice a month and spread facts, why aren't any of you changing your minds? Then it hit me. You are predatory, capitalist puppets. Not only are you such, but there is one of you that has a very disgusting past and a very dirty present might I add. I am talking to you, JKL. You sit on the council and play high and mighty all the while telling lies and being untruthful to your community. It kind of reminds me of that time in 2014 when Atty. General Joseph A. Foster had to release a statement regarding your deplorable behavior and persistent lies regarding Manchester police officers and then, and I quote, "as a result of Levasseur's complaints, the office promptly undertook an investigation in order to determine the validity of each of those

claims and if necessary to determine the appropriate action to take against the wrongdoers.” Investigators interviewed over 15 witnesses. Concluding most interviews about his complaints, he avoided further attempts to interview him for over four months effectively stalling the investigation until January 2014. A general attorney calling you untruthful. The embarrassment you must have felt regarding that one. Not more embarrassing than the 3.6 stars that you have on your law firm on Google.

Mayor Ruais stated that is enough. You have to direct your comments to the Chair. This is not the appropriate venue.

Ms. Rodriguez replied it is relevant and you are taking up my time. It is relevant to the genocide happening in Gaza right now. As if you didn't learn your lesson from the embarrassment of that situation, you ended up in hot water again for stating that Black Lives Matters protestors should be cleared out. [Constituent removed from the chambers.]

Lisa Howe, 24 Greenfield Street, stated:

I have daughters at Webster and Hillside. A couple of months ago, I asked some of you to fully fund the school board's recommended \$232 million budget to meet the full needs they have identified to adequately serve Manchester's students, a balanced tax cap compliant budget. I noted the desperate needs of our buildings and that our teachers need adequate resources. Now that the budget has sat on the table for two months, and I understand the best likely outcome or as I would say the least bad outcome would be to fund the proposed amount of \$227 million, I ask you to please pass that amount tonight. Our schools are in a holding pattern to be able to plan for next year. This includes Hillside and McLaughlin who are preparing to expand their schools. I am frankly alarmed to hear that there may be an effort to make what I would consider catastrophic further cuts to the school district budget tonight. I am also extremely disappointed as others have noted that as a resident and tax payer that proposal has not been made public. It would be wrong to pass that budget tonight for process reasons. More importantly, it would be wrong to pass that budget because of the devastation it would cause to our schools. Do we really want to strive for the bare minimum? If you are trying to strengthen our city, this is not the way to do it. The

children of Manchester are our future. As a working parent, the wife of a manager of a local family-owned business, and someone who invests in our city, I can tell you that if you slash the budget of schools the message you are sending is that Manchester doesn't care about the education of our kids. If you care about public education, look to surrounding towns. Actions speak louder than words. For the first time, I am not truly wondering if I can keep my kids in Manchester schools because I am worried about how the schools will bear these cuts. Today, I went to my younger daughter's band concert. She also has a field hockey jamboree later this week. My older daughter got hooked on volleyball in middle school and also got to try track. These are extracurriculars that will make them well-rounded, will help them be successful in life, and is part of what makes them excited to go to school. It is experiences they deserve and both are getting what I believe is a great education. One of my older daughter's highlights this year, ironically after what we just heard, was having a Holocaust professor speak at her school and tomorrow she goes to an honor roll dinner. I have to wonder what of these things would survive massive cuts you may consider tonight. How many teachers will get cut? What programs? How will their education suffer? I can't imagine. Do you know what cuts you are voting on? Please fund the school district budget tonight. Please pass at least the \$227 million proposed by the mayor. As you provide the appropriate COLA increases to other departments, an increase that appears off the table for our schools, please don't inflict further cuts to our schools. Please don't cut taxes based on the backs of our kids. That would be shameful. Thanks for your service.

Jessica Gifford, 3 Falcon Crest Way, stated:

I am a proud resident of Manchester. I was born and raised here. I am a graduate of our schools. I went to Central. The great education that I received in Manchester allowed me to go on and have a wonderful life. I went to Johns Hopkins University and worked abroad for many years for the government. I recently decided to move back here and raise my family here. I am a proud mother of two children. My daughter goes to Weston. I am a proud teacher in the Manchester school district. I love to be able to teach here and give back to my community. I am so proud to be a foreign language teacher here in Manchester. That is something that allowed me to have a very meaningful career in life and I love helping our new generation of students to prepare themselves. We are finishing up the school year right now. We have about a week left

and I love to see how much my students have learned this year and how they are able to communicate now in another language after just one year and how they have so many opportunities and possibilities they are excited for; to travel, to study and to work. I moved back here three years ago in order to send my children to schools here in Manchester. I decided to raise my children here in the schools where I was raised. This is the biggest and most diverse school district in the state. I am so excited for our dual language immersion program that is going to be happening next year. As a bilingual family and a multi-racial family and a multi-cultural family, we chose to raise our family here specifically in Manchester, NH. I appreciate the voices who came before me – Jason Bonilla speaking in Spanish and sharing the voice of our Spanish speaking students. Thank you so much for creating a pathway for dual language in Manchester. Some of our best resources right now are the amazing teachers that we have. They are passionate and educated and dedicated professionals. So many times, we look at our schools and we see things that aren't working but there is so much good that is happening in our schools right now. Our students are amazing. Our teachers are amazing. We have great programs and great extracurriculars and so many amazing partner programs that help our students to thrive and succeed. Please do not remove any funding from our current school budget. I just found out about this meeting maybe half an hour before it happened. It is well over my daughter's bed time but we waited so that you could hear our voice. Please maintain the budget as is. Please do not cut the budget. Our schools are amazing and our teachers are amazing and my daughter wanted to say something as well. She doesn't want to say anything anymore but she did want to say how much she loves her school and her teachers. She said I love my school and I love my teachers because the teachers are great. Thank you for allowing us to share our voice and thank you for the work and service that you all do for Manchester.

Dam Wright, Manchester, stated:

I know budgets can be very difficult. I have done large public budgets myself so I do want to thank the mayor and everyone here who has put a lot of work into this and those who aren't here. My concern is that I am not seeing a recognition in this budget for the need for increased investment in city-funded and city-operated solutions to the problems that are being caused by homelessness in this city, both for the people who

are homeless and the people who aren't. In fact, I am seeing the opposite of that. I am seeing the defunding of the city shelter and engagement center at Beech Street. I know there is a hope that we might find a community partner to take that over and I certainly hope that does happen. If we lose those 40 beds, that is going to be significant, especially where Families in Transition is reducing capacity at 199 Manchester Street and when we have no idea what is going to happen with the winter warming station. We know it is not going to be the 1269 Café and it won't be the engagement center if it is not ours so we could see as many as well over 100 placements where people were able to be inside last winter that might not exist this winter. I have heard several Board members say that they don't think the city should be in the shelter business. Why not? Aren't we in the business of everything important in this city? Police, Fire, Health Department, Welfare Department, Library, Schools, Parks, Public Works? If it is important, we have a department and we fund that department and work to make the city better through that. I don't know why this would be different, especially when we are already spending the money. If you look at the money that we do spend dealing with the problems that result from the homelessness crisis, that is a lot of money; a lot of money going to police and fire and the ambulances. It is a lot of money going into cleaning up camps and getting rid of them as soon as you hear about them. There is a whole ton of resources being thrown into that. There are the resources going into cleaning up Manchester Street at least once a week. I am down there on Wednesday mornings and see all of the trucks that come in from DPW and all of the police officers. I am looking at that as somebody's rent for six months and we are just going to do that every single Wednesday so we can say that we are...so what they move to the park for a few hours before they come back? This doesn't seem like sound investment and if we are going to go back to only dealing with the problems after they occur and not putting money into preventative city-funded and city-operated solutions, I have no doubt that these problems will continue to get worse for everybody in the city. I hope I am wrong. I would love to see you prove me wrong and I think everybody else in the city would love to see that too. Good luck.

Noelle Speight, 195 Vandora Drive, stated:

My husband and I have lived at this address for almost six years now. We have definitely taken a lot of pride in where we live – our property, our neighbors and the

community that we live in. Recently a house on my street was purchased as a community home with some lower functioning adults. Our neighborhood has kind of shifted. This is the type of neighborhood where you know who lives next to you. You know your neighbor and you know something about their life. This individual has kind of caused a lot of safety concerns. As a mother of a young child and an expectant mother, this concerns me. This individual has gone door-to-door up and down our street trying to get into homes or ringing doorbells or walking through yards. I think someone mentioned maybe not fully clothed walking down the street. I think if this was a regular functioning person, that would be trespassing and that would be trying to break in and enter. I know several of my neighbors have expressed that he has gotten into homes. Again, this is a neighborhood where people have lived for 30 years. They are not locking their door all the time. They trust the people that live near them. I hope this isn't just a vent session. I am a concerned mother and a concerned neighbor. I feel like a purchase like this through the housing...whoever bought it it was shady for them to not inform us about what was going on next door. I feel a little blindsided by that. Then as my previous neighbors mentioned, this individual has been pretty visibly violent hitting his caretakers. His caretakers aren't able to manage him. I heard from my neighbors that now police aren't even coming when we are calling for help because apparently, they say the caretakers can take care of him but if he is being belligerent, what are we supposed to do? Now I am scared because I have a young child. Now I have to live in my house with my doors locked 24/7? That is just crazy. Let's just say this individual is taken out of this home and moved somewhere else. Am I going to have to constantly live in fear? Is my door going to have to be locked? I am scared to leave my garage door open to take my dog out. I hope this is something you consider and I hope that this is not just a vent session. Thank you for your time and I appreciate what you do.

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

PRESENTATIONS

2. Presentation from Jeff Belanger, Director of Planning and Community Development, regarding the proposed updates to the Zoning Ordinance.

Jeff Belanger, Planning & Community Development Director, stated my goal tonight is just to make you aware of some important upcoming milestones for the new Manchester zoning ordinance. First to quickly orient you to the big picture of what we are doing, we are in the middle of a multi-phase process to modernize Manchester's land use regulations. This started early in 2019 when we contracted with a consultant to help us write a new master plan for the city. When any town or city thinks about rewriting land use regulations, the master plan is really the right place to start because it documents the vision the citizens have for how their community should develop in the future and it lays the foundation for all land use regulations that come after. When the master plan was completed in 2021, we moved on to the most complex phase which is the drafting of a zoning ordinance. That process is almost complete as I will talk about more in a minute. The third and final phase of the process will be rewriting the subdivision and site plan regulations. These are the regulations used by the Planning Board and they apply mostly to large scale development. Compared with the zoning ordinance, these will be much simpler to write and should be the quickest of the three phases. When the whole process is done, the zoning ordinance and the subdivision and site plan regulations will be combined into one document called the Land Use Code.

Development projects usually need to consider both the zoning ordinance and the subdivision and site plan regulations so we want them both to be part of one document. That should make it easier for property owners to find the information they need. That is the overall timeline but what I want to talk to you about tonight is what is coming up for the rest of the year. I will start with what may be the most important announcement of the presentation which is that the first draft of the new Manchester zoning ordinance will be published on June 21. It will be available for download on the zoning ordinance website and be available in paper form in the Planning Department. The publication of a new zoning ordinance is a big deal. It has only been done three times before in the city's history so I want to make sure that there is plenty of explanation to go along with the release of the ordinance. That is why on the same day, June 21, I and other members of the Planning staff will be getting a lengthy presentation in this room to walk through the ordinance. I will start at the beginning and discuss each chapter to the end of the document. Now June 21 is a Friday and if spending your Friday evening listening to a long presentation about zoning is not your idea of a good time, don't worry. The

meeting will be recorded by Manchester Public Television and a link to the presentation will be on the website so you can watch at any time anywhere you want. This presentation will be just the start of introducing people to the new ordinance. The exciting stuff will come after. Throughout the summer, the Planning Department will be working to get feedback on the ordinance from the people of Manchester in a couple of ways. The first will be to host 12 public meetings, one in each ward. The goal of these meetings will be to explain, in detail, how the new zoning ordinance would affect each ward and to provide ample opportunity for people to ask questions and make comments. We want to be sure that everyone's ideas are taken into account. To help make these meetings successful, we will be partnering with the professional meeting facilitators at the UNH Cooperative Extension. Their role will be to encourage discussion and record people's comments. Running meetings like these are what the people at the Cooperative Extension do. They have many years of experience in this work and have been phenomenal partners to work with so far. I am really looking forward to what they can bring to this process. The days, times and locations of the meetings are on the screen but there is no need to write anything down as they will be posted on our website. We have scheduled each meeting for either a Wednesday at 6 PM or a Saturday at 10 AM. Although each meeting will be geared toward the ward in which it takes place, that does not mean that people from other wards can't show up. We understand that meetings during the week may be better for some people and meetings on weekends might be better for others and that is why we picked Wednesdays and Saturdays. We will be happy to talk about different wards at any meeting, which is one of the reasons we are budgeting two hours per meeting. We don't actually expect it to take that long but we want to leave room for discussions to go where they are going to go. That is the first part of the public engagement for the summer. The second part will be a survey. It will ask a range of different questions about zoning topics from housing to parking to signs and many more. To make people aware of the survey, we will be sending a letter to every household in the city, which is more than 56,000 in all. The letter will inform people about the ward meetings and it will also have a QR code that people can scan with their phones to take the survey. The survey can also be taken on a computer by going to the website and we will make paper copies available to anybody who would prefer to take the survey that way. In addition to sending out the letter to households, we want to get the word out to businesses as well

so we will be working with the Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce and of course the Economic Development Office. To help us with the survey, we will again be partnering with the UNH Cooperative Extension as they have staff who create and administer online surveys. They are going to help us make the survey run smoothly on phones and computers and on paper. We will also be partnering with the UNH Survey Center to help us write the survey. The UNH Survey Center is a group of statisticians and other professionals who administer surveys at the Durham campus. They run some of the most important and comprehensive surveys across the state for things like the Presidential Primary. They have been doing this work for many years and they will help us create questions and generate accurate responses and a reliable set of data. Speaking of data, we expect to have a lot of it. At the end of the summer, after the conclusion of the public meetings in September, the UNH Cooperative Extension will write a report that catalogs all of the comments, questions and ideas that come out of the meetings. The survey will also end in September and we will have access to all of those responses. If we can get just 5% of households to respond to the survey, that will be 2,800 responses. The purpose of gathering all of this data will be to inform how we finalize the zoning ordinance. The zoning ordinance released on June 21 will be a first draft. It is a draft that the Planning staff and our consultant have written based on ideas contained in the master plan and we have done our best to follow what the master plan says but as I said at the start of this presentation, the master plan is a description of a community's vision for future. It is an aspirational document that speaks in generalities. Zoning ordinances are legal documents that require much more specificity. So, the staff and our consultant have necessarily had to interpret and extrapolate from the master plan to write the zoning ordinance and our goal with all the public engagement throughout the summer is to give feedback on what we did. We want to know what people think about the new ordinance and about land uses generally so that we can apply those comments to the draft ordinance and put it in final form. Creating that final form is an important job. It is a job that will require judgement calls because even with all the data we plan to collect, there are going to be many questions that may come up and we need a group of dedicated and well-informed citizens to help provide direction on where to take the final ordinance. That is why the city will be forming a Steering Committee to guide the writing of the ordinance's final draft. This work will make a real impact on the policy preferences expressed by the zoning ordinance. The membership

of the Steering Committee will be comprised of delegates from the BMA, Planning Board, Zoning Board, Heritage Commission, Housing Commission and three citizens chosen by the mayor. I would note that the BMA has one more delegate on the committee than the other boards do and that is because while the other boards and commissions work with zoning in one way or another, it is the BMA that has the authority to adopt the zoning ordinance. The adoption of a zoning ordinance is a legislative action and this Board is the legislative body for the city so your involvement is highly important in the process. As for the three citizens chosen by the Mayor, it is important to bring voices from outside of government into the process. We want people who are about the city and bring a different perspective from those of us who do this sort of thing every day. To determine who will serve on the committee, the boards and commissions will select their delegates from among their membership. I will actually be meeting with the Housing Commission to talk to them about the selection of their delegate. For the three citizen members, we would like to get a letter of interest and a resume no later than June 28. Application can be made through the website or by emailing luc@manchesternh.gov. People are also welcome to use paper mail and of course people are always welcome to call me or another Planner at the Planning Department with any questions. To wrap up this brief presentation, here is a summary of the upcoming milestones. Something that I didn't mention before is that we will hold a meeting in October to share the data we collected from the community meetings and survey so that everyone has a chance to be aware of what people said. As you can see toward the bottom, there are approximate timeframes. That is because at this point we just don't know the extent of the edits that will be required in the first draft of the ordinance. If everyone loves it and they say don't change a thing, that will make editing pretty quick. If, however, the public and Steering Committee want to make a lot of edits then that will of course take longer. The last item on the list is about adoption. As I said earlier, the BMA are the body that would adopt the ordinance. That normally takes five total meetings with committees and the full Board and that is why there is a range of timeframes there. That is all I had for you and I would be happy to answer any questions.

Alderman Long stated I am wondering if MDC could appoint a person to be involved.

Mr. Belanger answered I think they would be able to make a good application as one of the three citizens to be involved but if you would like to add that to the list of bodies, I don't think that is a problem. I think we would want to get consensus from this Board as you are the ones who are going to be adopting this. I would certainly have no objection to that.

Alderman Fajardo stated thank you very much. I know this has been a massive lift and I know a lot of people are really excited about this. I just wanted to take a moment to mark the milestone for you and your team and for the city. Also, I want to acknowledge how thorough your plan looks to engage the public so thank you for that.

3. Status update from Kristen Clarke, Traffic Engineer, regarding the City's Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) grant project, and a request to allocate \$24,150 from contingency for a TIF District evaluation.

Kristen Clarke, Traffic Engineer, stated thank you for having us here tonight. I am going to hand it over to our consultant team to give you a brief presentation and an update of the city's RAISE grant project.

JoAnn Fryer, Fuss & O'Neil, stated we are your consultant for the design of this project. Here is an agenda for our brief presentation. We will be reviewing the scope, components, status, schedule, budget, additional funding needs for the project and the request that we have for you tonight to keep the project moving forward. The project scope for the RAISE Manchester Connecting Communities. The purpose of the project is to improve safety, connectivity, and mitigate congestion in the City of Manchester's millyard area. RAISE Manchester is an investment in making Manchester's downtown and millyard transportation and pedestrian corridor safer, more walkable, bikeable and less congested while creating opportunities for future growth. The need is for east/west options for vehicles, bicycles and pedestrians to further revitalize the City of Manchester's millyard district. This project is a key step towards implementing previous planning by the city, in particular the city's 2006 Downtown Strategic Development Plan and the 2021 Manchester Master Plan, both of which articulate many of the central ideas embodied in the RAISE Manchester project. This project is an alignment with additional planning efforts by strategic city partners, including the 2017 Manchester

Connects Multi-Modal Transportation and Land Use planning initiative, Southern NH Planning Commission's Manchester Transit Oriented Development Plan and the Workforce Housing Initiative. This is a once in a lifetime investment for the city, which is anticipated to support redevelopment and creation of new development, including office, retail and residential development with a value of approximately \$590 million. This project fills in the missing gaps in Manchester's transportation infrastructure that were identified during the charrette that was held in 2019 to investigate what components should be included in the grant application. The city submitted a grant application for RAISE and the US DOT awarded the city a \$25 million grant for this project, which included a commitment by the city of \$5 million in matching funds for a total commitment to date of \$30 million. The proposed action with the RAISE grant and city matching funds includes new roadways and bridges, vehicular, bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. The map on the right shows the project area with north being up and to the right. Queen City Avenue is along the southern border of this area. The Merrimack River is to the west. Granite Street is along the north edge of the boundary and Elm Street and Willow Street are along the eastern boundary. Each of the four individual elements within the project are shown in highlighted areas there and we will talk about them in a little bit more detail in the coming slides. Each element improves safety concerns unique to the location of the improvement, as well as serving to create discrete connections that mutually support each other as well as building upon other adjacent infrastructure improvements to extend far beyond the limits of the project. These connections are the foundations to provide leverage for the private development of surrounding properties to create housing, jobs and accessibility throughout the region. We will talk now about the four individual project components. The largest component is a new roadway extending South Commercial Street to Elm Street including a multi-modal bridge over the CSX railroad tracks behind the Delta Dental Stadium to improve the connection between the east and west sides of the tracks, alleviate traffic congestion on Granite Street during peak times, and provide alternative access to Elm Street. This part of the project will also include a shared use path for cyclists and pedestrians. It will begin at the riverwalk, which is near the top left of the picture above and will continue through the parking lot between the Riverwalk Apartments and the parking lot for the stadium up to the new roadway and all the way up to Elm Street. This crossing is a critical connection that will impact traffic patterns

throughout the city, including addressing congestion on I-293 and increase safety and accessibility between the east and west sides of the city. The improvements will also include significant upgrades to drainage and sewer infrastructure to address existing issues and accommodate the project construction. This shows a view of the shared use path and roadway from the proposed new intersection with the stadium parking lot and riverwalk and to the left of the picture is the new bridge extending up and over the railroad. This new roadway will provide a secondary access to the stadium and the residential development adjacent to the stadium, significantly decreasing emergency response times to this area. The multi-use path from the bridge, as I noted earlier, crosses to the right and then goes between the apartment building and Fisher Cat Stadium to connect to the riverwalk trail and the Hands Across the Merrimack Bridge and out to trails into Goffstown. The next element we are going to talk about is a new rail trail, the Central Manchester Rail Trail, which will begin at Elm Street connecting with the shared use trail that I spoke about in the previous slide. It will connect at the existing current Gas Street/Elm Street intersection, which will be upgraded to the new intersection for the extension of South Commercial Street. This signalized intersection will be upgraded with the project, as well as adaptive signal upgrades along the Elm Street corridor of five additional intersections which will significantly improve traffic operations along the corridor. The Central Manchester Rail Trail will connect from Elm Street down the trail and over to Willow Street in the connector that is shown there to the right of the picture linking up to the large residential area to the east of the project and creating bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure so that folks on the east side can get all the way over to the west side via the riverwalk and the Hands Across the Merrimack Bridge as previously noted. The trail itself will be raised above the current rail bed elevation to approximately the surrounding property elevations to increase visibility and safety along the new corridor. This slide shows the complete extent of the proposed length of the trail that continues all the way to Queen City Avenue. A new crossing signal is proposed to stop traffic and allow the trail users to safely cross Queen City and connect to the recently completed South Manchester Rail Trail, which is just on the other side of Queen City Avenue. The Central Manchester Rail Trail is a critical final link in the regional bicycle network that has trails extending from this location down to the NH state line and over to the seacoast as well as to the west as we previously discussed. The next element of the project is at South Willow Street and Queen City

Avenue where there is a proposed peanut roundabout replacing the current signalized intersection to improve mobility and safety. It will keep traffic moving at safe speeds to reduce accidents, delays and emissions. Other infrastructure improvements here include storm water treatment where none is present today, as well as adding flashing beacons for the pedestrian crossings at the south end of the peanut. Significant soil excavation is expected here to accomplish this construction and that soil will be reused on the trail corridor to raise the grade as previously noted. The last piece of the infrastructure is a new pedestrian bridge across Granite Street to connect Commercial and South Commercial Streets. Cross-walks will still be present for users on Granite Street across both Commercial and South Commercial Streets so those heading east and west will still cross at cross-walks but those heading north or south would be using this new pedestrian bridge. There will be steps at the intersection, as well as ramps along Commercial Street and South Commercial Street and then ramps heading east up Granite Street towards the Commercial Street intersection. This is a heavily utilized pedestrian location with the ballfield on South Commercial Street and UNH Manchester on the northwest corner of this intersection. Separation of the major pedestrian movements from the vehicular movements will increase pedestrian safety and comfort while adding vehicular capacity to reduce queue lengths and improve the level of service for the intersection. This in turn will reduce congestion, delays and emissions. This is a view looking east to show the new pedestrian bridge over Granite Street which will provide a new gateway to downtown. The current schedule for the project includes completion of the project design, permitting and property acquisitions this fall with the submittal of the plans, specifications and estimates (PS&E) submission to the Federal Highway Administration for approval to proceed with soliciting contractor bids. Assuming that goes well, in early 2025 we anticipate having the obligation of the federal portion of the funding for construction, which will allow the city to put the project out to bid and seek contractors. Construction could begin as early as the summer of 2025 with all construction needing to be completed by September 2029 per the grant agreement. I am going to turn the presentation over to Owen to speak about the project costs.

Owen Friend Gray, Deputy Public Works Director, stated in 2021 when the grant was awarded, the estimate at that time was \$30 million. In 2024, the most recent estimate

we have for this project is now \$50 million. Obviously, that is roughly a \$20 million delta. What drove these large increases in costs? One, the railroad changed hands from Pan Am to CSX at the end of this application process and right after the grant was awarded. It turns out CSX has different design standards than Pan Am does and our bridge over the railroad went from roughly 150' of a single span to over 600' with a five-span bridge. Obviously, that carries heavy implications as to cost. Also, we have seen roughly a 30% increase in inflation and construction costs in general. Then there were a few other changes from public input desires from when we submitted the application and a few unknown site conditions that we have learned since. How do we address the \$20 million delta and probably more importantly than that, how do we not lose \$25 million from the feds that they have already guaranteed us by ensuring that this project comes to fruition? Our proposal at this point in time is to research the possibility of a TIF District that would encompass the area of this project. The figure to the right shows the area that we are proposing with Granite to the north, Queen City to the south, Pine to the east and the river to the west. You can see that carries all of the major elements and it also has a significant opportunity to open up this southern millyard area as we are terming it which is currently an underutilized asset in the downtown area due to the lack of good infrastructure in the area. So, what does a TIF District evaluation cost? It is \$24,150. RKG is a company that we have used to do TIF analysis for us in the past. While we believe that this TIF is absolutely economically viable, we had to provide with calculations of our own on our application for the RAISE grant, we are not an ultimate authority on this and asking for \$24,150 with action tonight from the BMA to come out of the contingency account to pay for this study so we can potentially realize the increased revenues from this improvement to this area. We are anticipating a TIF differential currently of \$20 million. That is the differential in the project and as JoAnn mentioned earlier, our initial estimates show over \$500 million in potential increased taxable buildings and land in this area from these improvements. With that, I would like to ask the Board if there are any questions for us and our team here tonight.

Alderman Terrio stated you said a large driver of the increase was because CSX has different design requirements.

Mr. Friend Gray replied correct.

Alderman Terrio asked can they be required to contribute money.

Mr. Friend Gray answered they are not contributing anything at this time and I don't know of any mechanism or legal way that we could ask them to contribute.

Alderman Terrio replied do they have air rights to where the bridge is. Is that why?

Mr. Friend Gray responded it is air rights but it is primarily the encroachments on their tracks. Pan Am was willing to sell land to the city and allow abutments within their right-of-way. CSX does not allow that so we had to basically span their entire right-of-way. That was the big change.

Alderman Levasseur asked why do we need to create a TIF if it is just \$20 million. It is not like the other one we are going to try to do downtown where the projects...who is going to be paying for the TIF? It doesn't seem like there is a lot of real estate there.

Mr. Friend Gray answered there is more real estate than you might realize but it is not just the real estate that is there. It is increased value of the real estate. The estimates that we have seen are \$590 million in increased potential real estate values from increased access to this area. The idea when you set-up a TIF is that it actually pays for itself over a period of time and then afterwards the city just realizes those additional revenues after the initial investment.

Alderman Levasseur asked how does it pay for itself.

Mr. Friend Gray replied by an increased tax base.

Alderman Levasseur asked so the value of the property that is there will go up so you will get more tax revenue.

Mr. Friend Gray answered correct.

Alderman Levasseur asked why a TIF. Does it allow you to focus on...I didn't see a drawing or anything of where that TIF is going to go. It is not just that area that is going to benefit from all of that. It is going to be all the way up South Willow. It is not just one single project. It is a monster project affecting South Willow, Willow, Queen City, Elm Street, Canal, Bedford...how big is the TIF?

Mr. Friend Gray responded here is the picture. So, Granite to Queen City...it is the black highlighted area. Granite to Queen City and then Pine to the river. That is roughly our first proposal but part of what RKG will be asked to do is analyze this area and see if it is viable and feasible. If they don't believe it is, we can look at potentially expanded the TIF area but there are laws and regulations on how TIF's are created. They can only be a certain percentage of your city's land area. I don't know the number offhand but I do know that there are rules and regulations behind that.

Alderman Levasseur asked can the property owners included in that border weigh in on whether they want to be part of a TIF or is it not up to them but completely up to this Board.

Mr. Friend Gray replied I believe TIF's are created solely by the Board. Public input is obviously always a good thing but is not necessarily a requirement of a TIF as far as I know.

Alderman Levasseur asked do they feel an immediate impact of an increase in taxes or is it just long term when the values go up after a revaluation.

Mr. Friend Gray answered it would be something related to and tied to revaluations as time goes on.

Alderman Levasseur asked so it is not a special tax on them with an extra bill.

Mr. Friend Gray responded no. Their property would need to increase in value because of these changes. That would need to be realized by the Assessor prior to any increases or changes.

Alderman Levasseur asked does the implementation of a TIF lower our rates for bonding.

Mr. Friend Gray replied I can't answer that question.

Alderman Levasseur stated I don't understand why we have to create a designation. Is it only the values are going to go up if the TIF is created or are they going to go up if the TIF is not created? What are the financial ramifications for us? I guess over the long haul you think we are going to get more money because we created a TIF but if your values are going up because you are in that wonderfully great new area, you don't need to create a TIF. You just have your values going up because of where you are located.

Mr. Friend Gray stated without the additional funding, the values in this area wouldn't go up because the project wouldn't happen.

Alderman Levasseur stated you can get the additional funding from us without having to create a TIF.

Mr. Friend Gray replied we could ask for a \$20 million bond but I don't believe we have \$20 million worth of bonding this year and we need to be signing contracts for the full value of this in the near future. We are absolutely open to exploring other ideas if that is something that the Board is willing to entertain. We thought this was the least impactful approach that we could come up with at this time. We are also pursuing federal grants and other ideas to try to get funding for this area as well.

Alderman Levasseur asked regarding all of the buildings and property owners, especially the railroad, are all of the deeds and legal work done to acquire whatever access you need including right-of-ways, easements, licenses, etc. Is that done?

Mr. Friend Gray answered no. That process is currently ongoing. We are actively working on that with numerous property owners in the area.

Alderman Levasseur asked when do you want us to vote on the TIF.

Mr. Friend Gray replied I am not asking for a vote on the TIF tonight. What I am asking for is a vote on \$24,000 to have the TIF studies by a professional organization to determine and prove to us whether it is viable or not, which is something required prior to being able to bond the TIF.

Alderman Levasseur asked how long do you have for the \$25 million before it expires.

Mr. Friend Gray answered we need to have it encumbered by 2029 and it needs to be fully built out. We anticipate a four-year building schedule on this so we really need it going by next spring.

Alderman Levasseur stated we have a lot of things that are all coming together in 2026 it seems. Thank you.

Alderman Burkush stated I have a question for the Finance Director. Could we bond the \$24,000?

Sharon Wickens, Finance Officer, answered we could but I think it would be better to have it come out of contingency because if we move forward with this, it is a reimbursable expense meaning we would be able to pay back the contingency account.

Alderman Burkush moved to transfer \$24,150 from the contingency account for a TIF District evaluation. ***Alderman Barry*** duly seconded the motion.

Alderman Long stated this is an exciting project. Thank you for working on this. The federal grant of \$25 million, is that a maximum?

Mr. Friend Gray answered yes. It is actually the maximum that has ever been awarded to a municipality.

Alderman Long asked and the city's match has been realized already.

Mr. Friend Gray replied it is currently \$5 million and the BMA has already allocated that.

Alderman Long asked so you are setting up a TIF for the \$20 million. Would that be a performance bond Sharon? Is that what that is called? The TIF would be to pay back the bond. Is that called a performance bond?

Ms. Wickens answered it is not a performance bond. It would be a TIF bond. The funds would come into the TIF account and not be comingled with anything else other than what they are doing for that project. The money generated for that area would pay back the bond.

Alderman Long asked so the TIF money is the added value of the properties that are located there. Is that correct? Is that what qualifies something to go into a TIF?

Ms. Wickens responded yes. The values of the property would be set at a point in time and then any increase in value, that money would go to pay off the TIF. It is possible you could pay off that bond more quickly. That has happened in other communities.

Alderman Long asked and we anticipate more buildings going there because this will beautify that area. The new buildings that go there, would all of that tax revenue go into the TIF like if there was an eight-story apartment building put up? Would all of that tax revenue go into the TIF?

Ms. Wickens replied it would if it was built after that measurement in time. Yes, you are absolutely right.

Alderman O'Neil stated just to follow-up on Alderman Levasseur's questions, it is not only existing buildings but there is property down there that this will open up opportunities to develop correct that today cannot be developed.

Mr. Friend Gray responded right due to limited access and egress. There are a lot of areas in the south millyard, especially if you look north of Elliot at River's Edge and in

and around MTA. Those areas are large tracts that are underutilized due to very limited access currently.

Alderman O'Neil stated as I understand the TIF, it is for future opportunities.

Mr. Friend Gray stated yes.

Alderman O'Neil stated I have a question for JoAnn. It looks like there are four key construction components. Will those be one contract or will they be put out individually?

Ms. Fryer replied currently our plan is to put them out altogether. One of the challenges is that we want to make sure that they are coordinated together and we feel that advertising them as one as soon as possible is going to get the best pricing for the city.

Alderman O'Neil asked and what is the best guess today.

Ms. Fryer answered the total project is \$50 million and construction is around \$40 million.

Alderman O'Neil stated thank you all for your work on this.

Alderman Vincent stated I just want to stress the importance of safety. As you know, there are a lot of people who do their shopping on the west side and they have to go to that Market Basket so a lot of these projects are going to affect a lot of those individuals who may have disabilities or even drive on scooters. It is very challenging for them as it is now and I think we are just adding more obstacles for them. I hope we are taking into consideration if somebody has a difficult time walking, they don't have to go all the way down that street to get on the ramp and come all the way back up to cross over. These are just things that I want to stress the importance of because the west side is heavily populated with a lot of people that do make that commute and that peanut roundabout...I don't know what the foot traffic is going to look like around that. I am hoping it takes mobility into consideration.

Ms. Clarke responded currently at that intersection there are no cross-walks at all so a pedestrian cannot get through that intersection without crossing in front of live traffic. By slowing traffic down getting into that intersection and providing safer crossings for pedestrians, we really do hope it activates the pedestrian's base and connectivity.

Alderman Vincent stated that is exactly what I like to hear. It is being looked at and considered and that is what I wanted to be sure of so thank you.

Alderman Morgan stated I am trying to understand the whole TIF thing. Is there any way we can get an expert like Bob Gagne to come up and talk about his views on this and if it makes sense and is appropriate? He is more of an expert on this than anybody here in the building. I would love to hear what he thinks about this if he wants to come up. I don't want to force him.

Robert Gagne, Assessor, stated I came down because I do want to speak to this. This Board could fund this conventionally with a bond for \$20 million and have it be part of your budgets going forward. If you agree to do that, that works. You have to check with Sharon as to what that means going forward as far as how it eats into the cap space you have. If you do it with a TIF, many of those new buildings that go in like that example of an eight-story building, whatever that value is, all of that gets redirected to the TIF. It is not put into the general fund. It doesn't make any difference on anybody's tax bill anywhere in the city, including in the TIF. It is the same rate and the same tax bills. It just redirects that money so it helps with the issues with the tax cap. You can do it either way. If you want to save the effort of doing a TIF, approve a bond to do the project like you normally would. If it is going to be an issue with budgets going forward, then explore the TIF and see if that is a better alternative. One other thing I will tell you is if you do a TIF, no more 79-Es in that area because you need the revenue. Part of adopting that TIF is you don't entertain any applications for a 79-E in that area and a lot of that area is in the 79-E plan.

Alderman Kantor asked is it possible just to go forward with the \$24 million and do half the project.

Mr. Friend Gray answered no. Due to the way the grant was awarded, we have to keep all of the primary components to the grant. We have already value engineered this pretty hard to actually get down to the \$50 million number. Our original estimate was higher. We worked pretty hard to try to skinny this up but unfortunately no. It is not like we can just pick one piece and go with that. We do need to still have all of the elements.

Ms. Clarke stated if we were to remove one piece, they would take away whatever federal funding we had in the application dedicated towards that piece at a minimum and if the Federal Highway Administration doesn't think that we are still accomplishing the overall goals of our project, they could take away more. That would be a discussion we would have to have with them.

Mayor Ruais called for a vote on the motion to transfer \$24,150 from contingency to DPW for a TIF District evaluation. *There being none opposed, the motion carried.*

CONSENT AGENDA

Accept BMA Minutes

4. Minutes from the 04/16/2024 BMA and Finance meetings, and the 05/07/2024 BMA.

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

5. 50/50 Sidewalk Petitions

Commercial:

289 Concord Street

Residential:

31 Clement Street

166 Manning Street

170 Oakland Street

185 Villa Street

270 Pearl Street

290 Myrtle Street

335 Ledgewood Road

509 Lake Avenue

540 Shasta Street

1044 Hayward Street

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

COMMITTEE ON ACCOUNTS, ENROLLMENT AND REVENUE ADMINISTRATION

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 ten months of fiscal year 2024 has been accepted.
(Unanimous vote)
8. Advising that the update on the Revolving Loan Fund has been accepted.
(Unanimous vote)
9. Recommending that Ordinance Amendment:

“Amending Sections 70.57 Parking Rates and 70.78 Basic Penalty of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Manchester to include updated parking rates and citations.”

ought to pass and be Enrolled.
(Unanimous vote)

COMMITTEE ON ADMINISTRATION/INFORMATION SYSTEMS

10. Recommending that the Review & Release Policy for non-public minutes be approved.
(Unanimous vote with the exception of Alderman Thomas who was absent)

JOINT SCHOOL BUILDINGS COMMITTEE

11. Advising that the Manchester School District Priority I status and financial report for April 2024 submitted by LeftField has been accepted.
(Unanimous vote with the exceptions of Alderman O'Neil and School Committee Member Soule who left early)

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

REGULAR BUSINESS

- 12.** Nominations:
- Arts Commission
Flo Minton to fill a vacancy as an alternate member, term to expire December 1, 2025
- Conservation Commission
Levent Akinci to fill a vacancy as an alternate member, term to expire August 1, 2027
Susan Boucher to succeed herself as a regular member, term to expire August 1, 2027
Biram Saidybah to succeed himself as a regular member, term to expire August 1, 2027
Donald Waldron to succeed himself as a regular member, term to expire August 1, 2027
- Office of Youth Services Advisory Board
Stacy Champey to fill a vacancy as a regular member, term to expire January 1, 2027
- Heritage Commission
Laura Gamache to fill a vacancy as a regular member, term to expire July 1, 2027
- Parks & Recreation Commission
Jen Drociak to succeed herself as a regular member, term to expire July 1, 2027
Erika Connors to succeed herself as a regular member, term to expire July 1, 2027
- Senior Services Commission
Veronica Schlender to fill a vacancy as a regular member, term to expire January 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.)

- 13.** Nominations submitted on behalf of the Planning Board for the Manchester Representatives to the Southern New Hampshire Planning Commission:
- Elyza Agosta as a full member, term to expire June 30, 2028
 - Kevin Sheppard as an alternate member, term to expire June 30, 2028

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

- 14.** Communication from JoAnn Ferruolo, Assistant City Clerk, submitting the warrant for unlicensed dogs to be committed to the Chief of Police.

*On motion of **Alderman Levasseur**, duly seconded by **Alderman O'Neil**, it was voted to commit the warrant.*

15. Communication from Thomas Hilton, Election Administrator, requesting the polling hours for the September 10, 2024 and November 5, 2024 state primary and general elections be set for 6:00AM to 7:00PM.

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

16. Communication from Jeff Belanger, Planning and Community Development Director, requesting approval of an amendment to the Master Development Agreement between the City and the Lansing Melbourne Group for the development of the Pearl Street and Hartnett Parking Lots.

***Alderman Long** moved to approve. **Alderman Barry** duly seconded the motion.*

Mayor Ruais called for a vote. The motion carried with Alderman O'Neil abstaining due to having done some sub-contract work on some of their projects.

17. Communication from Anna Thomas, Public Health Director, requesting the installation of suicide prevention signage on five City bridges.

Anna Thomas, Public Health Director, stated I am joined by Kelly Rafferty who is the Executive Director of Philanthropy and Community Benefits for Elliot Hospital and they are part of this proposal.

Alderman Terrio asked Anna is this coming from you or did somebody give this to you to forward on to us.

Ms. Thomas answered this was something that we first brought to the Board back in August. It was really in response to several unfortunate events that had occurred. One really significant during 2023 of a young person that I think was very public and there is this sort of correlation happening with some of the bridges in the city. This is coupled with a much larger campaign that we briefed the aldermen on at the time back in August, including Zero Suicide, which is a Mental Health Center initiative, along with some of the work that Makin It Happen has done in the region along with the state. There is a roll out of 988 as you know, which hopefully everybody is aware of. That is the number and contact that we want people to use in the event that they are having a mental health crisis or any other needs. This is just one more step towards pushing that

campaign out in the community. There is collaboration not only with Elliot Hospital but the Mental Health Center, Makin It Happen, and the VA Hospital and their prevention program as well. I think it was really through the discussions of all of us that we thought let's bring this forward as a concept because many other states and communities are starting to roll this out. In fact, the state of Washington has mandated this for all of their bridges and parks that are being built. We thought it would be an important discussion to have with all of you to consider that for the five bridges proposed. This is something that Elliot Hospital is willing to take on the expense for. We have involved Director Clougherty in the installation portion of this and certainly DPW would be willing to take care of that.

Alderman O'Neil asked Anna who is your target for this. Somebody that might be looking or is struggling or is it an education piece as well?

Ms. Thomas replied I want to say it is all of the above. Assistant Chief Marr just gave me some data and I can share some of it. At least with what we have been tracking in the city, there is a combination of actual suicides, death by suicide, and then attempted suicides. Our first responders have been tremendous in saving many lives. For as many deaths as we have had, we have had as many lives saved. In the last few years there have been about 10 of each. In addition to that, they have also received calls for check condition, mental health issues, and medical problems associated with the bridges. On average, the first responders are going to about 25 calls a year and that is the full gamut. It might just be somebody in mental health distress who needs somebody there for them. I actually drove out to the bridges yesterday to kind of do my own recognizance and put myself in the shoes of maybe somebody who is contemplating dying by suicide. I was taken aback by...we had a presenter that came out to Manchester a few years back, Kevin Hynes, if you are familiar with him. He is one of the very few survivors of the Golden Gate Bridge. He attempted to die by suicide and less than 1% of the people who have jumped off the Golden Gate Bridge have survived. He made a pact with himself the day that he went to go take his life. He said I had a plan and I was going out there and I knew exactly how to get there and all I wanted to see is if somebody smiled at me and if someone had smiled at me at that moment, I would have changed my decision. This is one of those cues. Is there a

chance that that could have changed someone at that moment? I don't know for sure. I can't give you 100% that this is a sure thing but I think any kind of awareness and any kind of education and any kind of connectivity to a resource might be the difference between life or death even for one person and I think that is absolutely worth it.

Alderman O'Neil asked and the intent would be for these signs to be on the end of the bridges on each side.

Ms. Thomas answered yes.

Alderman O'Neil stated I don't think it is a great comparison but I think the panhandling signs, you can't read them so I hope the message is direct and right to the point.

Ms. Thomas stated you have a sample of what is being proposed in your packet.

Alderman O'Neil stated thank you both.

Alderman Terrio stated Anna I would think that most people who commit suicide do it with a gun or hanging or some kind of asphyxiation or a drug overdose. You said you have the statistics. How many people have died by suicide in total and how many have jumped off a bridge? I can only think of two bridge jumpings.

Ms. Thomas responded it is about 20 per year in this community. We are tracking a rate that is comparable to national trends as well. If you were to look at the attempts versus the actual deaths by suicide, you are talking about a few a year that are true deaths by suicide and then certainly more attempts. I think it kind of depends on how you want to define it. When you think about how people choose to attempt suicide, certainly a firearm and jumping are the most lethal. Once you make that decision, there is no turning back. There are other forms of attempts of suicide that offer a little bit of buffer in time. This is why these are a little bit more serious and why we want to act upon them to just reduce that risk even further.

Alderman Terrio asked how many people have committed suicide by jumping off a bridge in Manchester.

Ms. Thomas replied in the last three years it is 10 and unfortunately one was 14 years old.

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

18. Communication from the NH/VT Chapter of the Associated Builders and Contractors requesting various amendments to Chapter 39: Procurement Code of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Manchester by adding additional requirements during the pre-qualification of bidders associated with the procurement of City construction contracts.

Alderman Terrio asked didn't we vote on this in February.

Mayor Ruais replied it was in January and during that conversation, I believe it was Alderman O'Neil who asked...what I had said was I had met with both groups individually and it didn't seem like they were far apart. I made that comment because I voted in the majority to receive and file that ordinance. Alderman O'Neil asked if I would be willing to sit down and meet with both groups again and I did. I think we sat down in February or March and I said look you guys didn't seem like you were far apart so would you be willing to come together and draft something that is agreeable to the industry and agreeable to unions and they said yes. About a month ago, they sent us a letter with a proposed ordinance that both groups could agree on. I made some calls to other contractors and they were perfectly fine with this amendment. It seems to me that if these guys could get together and agree, this is a good compromise.

*On motion of **Alderman Long**, duly seconded by **Alderman Levasseur**, it was voted to direct City staff to create a draft ordinance amendment and refer it to the Committee on Bills on Second Reading for technical review.*

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

The Committee on Community Improvement respectfully recommends, after due and careful consideration, that the request from the Engineering Project Manager for permission to apply for a grant from the Active Transportation Infrastructure Investment Program be approved.

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

20. Report(s) of the Special Committee on Alcohol, Other Drugs & Youth Services, if available.

The Special Committee on Alcohol, Other Drugs & Youth Services respectfully recommends, after due and careful consideration, that the amendment to the lease agreement between 39 Beech Street, LLC and the City of Manchester for use of the building located at 39 Beech Street be approved.

***Alderman Barry** moved to accept the report and adopt its recommendation. **Alderman Thomas** duly seconded the motion. Mayor Ruais called for a vote. The motion carried with Alderman Levasseur duly recorded in opposition.*

The Special Committee on Alcohol, Other Drugs & Youth Services respectfully recommends, after due and careful consideration, that the amendment to the Professional Services Agreement between East Coast Evolution Leadership, LLC and the City of Manchester for management, staffing and operation of the shelter and engagement center at 39 Beech Street be approved.

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

The Committee on Human Resources/Insurance respectfully recommends, after due and careful consideration, that the request from the Police Chief for the following changes to the department's complement:

- Remove one (1) vacant Police Officer position, grade 19
- Add one (1) Police Sergeant position, grade 22

be approved.

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

21. Ordinance:

“Amending Sections 70.57 Parking Rates and 70.78 Basic Penalty of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Manchester to include updated parking rates and citations.”

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

*On motion of **Alderman Long**, duly seconded by **Alderman Goonan**, it was voted to Ordain.*

NEW BUSINESS

Alderman Levasseur stated the Clerk is handing out a memo that states:

As you are aware, on May 21, 2024 the Board was notified of the upcoming retirement of Robert Gagne with such retirement to be effective July 31, 2024. Pursuant to the procedure for appointment of city officers adopted by the BMA on 10/17/2006, a screening committee was formed to interview candidates for the soon to be vacant role of the Assessor department head, who also serves as the Chair of the Board of Assessors. The screening committee was composed of myself, Alderman Morgan and Alderman Goonan. The Human Resources Director posted the position and conducted interviews of qualified candidates on May 29, 2024. On behalf of the committee, I am pleased to nominate Michael Hurley for the role of Assessor Chair. Michael was hired by the city in November 2008 as the city's commercial assessor and has ably served in that role since then. Michael is also a current member of the city's Board of Assessors. This will be a promotion to the role of Chair and department head to become effective August 1, 2024. Michael's resume is attached for your review. This will layover until the July meeting.

Congratulations, Michael.

Alderman Long asked will we be replacing Mr. Hurley's position.

Alderman Levasseur answered we will. The job has been posted and I believe we have a qualified candidate. Thank you.

Alderman O'Neil stated just a shout out and a thank you. Many of us were Boy's Club kids growing up. Diane Fitzpatrick of the Boys & Girls Club has been named Executive

of the Year nationally by the Boys & Girls Club of America. That is pretty big. Maybe we can have her in to recognize her formally. I think as a club kid myself and as the father of a club kid I am very proud. She has done a great job.

Alderman Long stated I was looking at the teacher of the year awards and I was flabbergasted as there were 11 teachers from Manchester that were nominated. I looked at other towns and we just surpassed them. I don't know if they picked the finalist yet but there were two from Manchester in the final five or six which I thought was commendable to our teachers in the city.

Alderman Kantor stated prostate cancer affects so many men in our lives and Father's Day is coming up and if we can remind the men in our lives to get a PSA test, which is a simple blood test...I lost my dad to prostate cancer and Alderman O'Neil has gotten it. Early detection is key. God bless everyone.

Mayor Ruais stated that is something that runs in my family as well. I appreciate the reminder.

TABLED ITEMS

*On motion of **Alderman Long**, duly seconded by **Alderman Burkush**, it was voted to remove this item from the table.*

22. Budget Resolutions:

"Appropriating to the Parking Fund the sum of \$5,068,749 from parking revenues for the Fiscal Year 2025."

"Appropriating the sum of \$25,255,603 from Sewer User Rental Charges to the Environmental Protection Division for the Fiscal Year 2025."

"Appropriating to the Manchester Airport Authority the sum of \$40,558,119 from Special Airport Revenue Funds for the Fiscal Year 2025."

"Appropriating to the Manchester Transit Authority the sum of \$1,657,544 for the Fiscal Year 2025."

"Appropriating to the Manchester School District the sum of \$227,982,610 for the Fiscal Year 2025."

“Appropriating all Incremental Meals and Rooms Tax Revenue Received by the City in the Fiscal Year 2025 and held in the Civic Center Fund, for the payment of the City’s Obligations in Said Fiscal Year under the Financing Agreement.”

“Appropriating to the Manchester School Food and Nutrition Services Program the sum of \$5,819,971 from School Food and Nutrition Services Revenues for the Fiscal Year 2025.”

“Raising Monies and Making Appropriations of \$185,401,207 for the Fiscal Year 2025.”

“Appropriating to the Central Business Service District the sum of \$258,000 from Central Business Service District Funds for the Fiscal Year 2025.”

“Resolution ‘Approving the Community Improvement Program for Fiscal Year 2025, Raising and Appropriating Monies Therefore, and Authorizing Implementation of Said Program’.”

Alderman Long asked does anyone have a proposal. I have one that I would like to present to the Board. I am going to present to you the amendment that we made to the Mayor’s FY25 budget. The general fund adjustments were...I believe you have a copy of them. It is the breakdown starting with Assessors. It is behind the list of departments that was emailed to you.

Matthew Normand, City Clerk, stated it was emailed on Friday and there are copies being handed out right now as well.

Alderman Long stated the changes that we made to the Mayor’s presented budget were we put \$24,800 into the Assessor’s Office for appraisal software that is going to help them expedite assessing. In the City Clerk’s Office, we put in \$51,000 for the election workers’ pay and to increase that. We also increased their Comcast revenue estimate by \$100,000 and 50% of that is going to the city election workers’ pay. Out of the \$2 raised, \$1 will go to the election workers’ pay. We increased the Solicitor’s salary line by \$101,096. We added \$210,000 to the second injury payment from the state. The Economic Development Office will get a Project Coordinator effective January 1. We increased the interest income in Finance by \$600,000 and \$900,000 for meals and rooms revenue. In Planning, we added \$150,000 in additional revenue from building permits and that was an increase from the mayor’s budget. Fire will receive a firefighter

effective January 1. That is the \$27,589. The Health Department will receive an epidemiologist at \$34,003. This new budget charges for toters for DPW, which is \$61,000. We needed to bring health insurance to the 10% increase that we voted on and that is an additional \$600,000. We realized some rebate rates after the mayor and Sharon spoke with Anthem. We also realized savings for the stop loss insurance. With the firefighter in January, the next three are related to the firefighter, epidemiologist and MEDO's project coordinator. We received contingency by \$108,000 to lower the rate. Cash CIP. We received \$163,000 from ARPA funding from Fire, which took care of both Police and Fire. The Assessor has requested \$700,000 be placed in the overlay account. Statutorily we are required to pay that. We added \$313,000 and there are some motions that we will bring forward to meet that \$700,000. Surplus is \$1,032,000 and we used all of it to reduce the tax rate. There will be a motion for that also because it is a three-way split and we need a motion to allow it all to fall to the tax rate instead. There is a decrease in revenue that was realized but just misrepresented from whomever at the school district so there is a decrease in their revenue which I believe, Sharon, doesn't affect the tax rate. Correct?

Ms. Wickens replied that is correct. We did not pick up that particular loss when the mayor presented his budget but we had the revenues that would offset it so it kept the mayor's budget at the 3.86%.

Alderman Long stated I am not sure how you want to move forward Your Honor. Do you want to allow questions on all of this or move to the CIP budget?

Mayor Ruais stated I would be happy to move to CIP.

Alderman Long stated Alderman Burkush has the update on the CIP budget.

Alderman Burkush stated after consulting with the mayor, we are not going to do the McGregor Street bond which freed up \$700,000. Regarding the league partnership program bond, we are going to have Parks & Recreation perform a complete assessment of all our fields so they are not ready to move on that bond yet. We added a bond for Perimeter Road which has extensive erosion from storms. For rail trail

maintenance, we added \$100,000. Wolf Park maintenance which is repurposing fields. It used to be little league and now they are going to be turned into pickle ball. At Sweeney Park we are adding basketball courts. We also added Precourt Park fencing, which is home to Manchester South Little League and South Soccer, at \$50,000. That takes care of CIP bonds. For CIP cash, we funded the police FUSUS Crime Center Platform for \$50,000. As Alderman Long stated, we funded ShotSpotter with a combination of CIP cash and ARPA funds. For the Health Department, we appropriated \$13,200 for additional parking. We had to increase welfare general assistance by \$50,000. Fun in the Sun we funded at \$50,000. That is \$300,200 for CIP cash.

Alderman Long stated the result lowers the mayor's proposed tax rate increase of 3.86% to 3.59% and reduces bonding requirements by \$250,000. With that said, I would look for a second for the following motion or are there questions?

Alderman Long moved to transfer \$403,748.02 from CIP 810924 Employee Compensation Study to the city overlay account. That requires 10 votes because it came out of one-time funds and is going back to one-time funds. We need the 10 votes to transfer that money into the overlay account, which statutorily we are mandated to do.

Alderman Levasseur asked where is that on your sheet.

Alderman Long responded it is not on the original sheet. This adds it. This motion adds it to our budget.

Mayor Ruais stated this was part of the discussion that we had a couple of weeks ago on the compensation. We said we were going to take the remaining balance of that. What he is proposing is that we take the remaining balance of the compensation study and use it to cover the loss that we have from the \$700,000 that we have to put into the overlay account. That is the Mall of NH. It is just taking that money that we voted to remove from the compensation study project and move it over to cover that \$700,000 deficit.

Alderman Barry duly seconded the motion. **Alderman Long** requested a roll call vote. **Aldermen Long, Fajardo, T. Sapienza, O'Neil, Terrio, Burkush, Barry, Thomas and Goonan** voted yea. **Aldermen Kantor, Levasseur, E. Sapienza, Vincent and Morgan** voted nay. The motion failed.

Alderman Long stated okay so that motion fails and we are now increasing the tax rate. Those of you who just voted no, you increased the tax rate.

Alderman Long moved to suspend Ordinance 35.032 transferring the fund balance surplus allocation intended for the rainy day fund and severance reserve account to effect an allocation of \$1,032,000 to reduce the FY25 tax rate. Any excess FY24 fund balance by year end will follow the ordinance as intended. What this does is by ordinance any surplus is split between the rainy day account, severance and lowering the tax rate. Instead of taking 1/3 of the \$1,032,000, we are going to take it all to lower the tax rate. If we don't get the 10 votes, the rate increases.

Mayor Ruais stated this is \$1,032,000 and \$1 million is .4% on the tax rate.

Alderman Terrio asked is this the 5% above the reserve.

Mayor Ruais replied no. This is the surplus that came in after my budget was presented. What he is suggesting is taking that and putting it all to lowering the tax rate.

Alderman Terrio asked if this doesn't pass with 10 votes, what would be the tax rate.

Mayor Ruais answered 3.99%.

Alderman Terrio stated so 3.99% and this will go down to...

Alderman Long interjected can I ask Sharon. The last motion failed, the \$403,000. What effect does that have on the rate which we are currently looking at as 3.59%? Does it increase that?

Ms. Wickens responded the \$400,000 did not go to the overlay account so we would have to increase that to the \$700,000 but we would be using all of the surplus so the rate is then 3.80%.

Alderman Long asked so it would be 3.80%...

Ms. Wickens interjected from the 3.59%.

Alderman Long asked just on this next motion.

Ms. Wickens stated if the \$400,000 failed, which it did, and you use all of the \$1,032,000 to lower the tax rate, the rate would be 3.80%.

Alderman Terrio asked can we get a reconsideration on the first vote because we are increasing taxes if we don't do that.

Alderman Long stated I will second that. Actually, Your Honor, you need to be in the majority. I voted with the majority and I will move for reconsideration.

Alderman Terrio stated otherwise we are going to increase the tax rate.

Alderman Long stated correct.

Mayor Ruais stated just to reiterate, this is a roll call vote on moving the \$403,748.02 that we eliminated from the compensation study and moving it over to cover the \$700,000 deficit in the overlay account. This needs 10 votes.

Alderman Terrio stated right otherwise the taxes on everybody is going to go up a certain amount. I would ask everybody to vote in the positive.

Mayor Ruais called for a vote on the reconsideration. Alderman Levasseur requested a roll call vote. Aldermen Levasseur, E. Sapienza, Vincent, Morgan and Kantor voted

nay. Aldermen Terrio, Burkush, Barry, Thomas, Goonan, Long, Fajardo, T. Sapienza and O'Neil voted yea. The motion carried.

Alderman Long asked wasn't that vote just to reconsider and now we have to make the motion again.

City Clerk Normand answered correct.

Alderman Long moved to transfer \$403,748.02 from CIP 810924 Employee Compensation Study to the city's overlay account. ***Alderman Barry*** duly seconded the motion.

Alderman Terrio stated parliamentary inquiry. I am confused. Didn't we just vote on that?

Mayor Ruais stated that was a vote to reconsider.

Mayor Ruais called for a vote. *Alderman Levasseur requested a roll call vote. Aldermen Levasseur, E. Sapienza, Vincent, Morgan, and Kantor voted nay. Aldermen Terrio, Burkush, Barry, Goonan, Long, Fajardo, T. Sapienza, and O'Neil voted yea. The motion failed.*

Alderman Terrio stated parliamentary inquiry. If we are not using it for the overlay to make up for the shortfall because of the decrease in taxes at the Mall of NH, can that money still be used to lower the tax rate? Can we stick it somewhere else to lower the tax rate?

Ms. Wickens asked can you stick the \$400,000 somewhere else.

Alderman Terrio answered yes. Can I put it somewhere else to lower the tax increase?

City Clerk Normand stated you would still need 10 votes.

Ms. Wickens stated the Assessor is going to ask for the \$700,000. In the tax rate, he was only funding \$313,000. He was going to try to use that \$400,000 so we wouldn't have to make it \$700,000.

Alderman Long stated so statutorily we are required to do the overlay. When the Assessor needs money to reimburse for taxes, we are required to do that so what is going to happen is come whenever, November, December or October, the Assessor is going to come to us and say we need \$300,000. We have to find \$300,000 to give to them. That is the effect of not paying this. Pay now or pay later. I found a way to pay now but if you want to pay later and it is the will of the Board, I will accept that.

Alderman Long moved to suspend Ordinance 35.032 transferring the fund balance surplus allocation intended for the rainy day fund and severance reserve account to affect an allocation of \$1,032,000 to reduce the FY25 tax rate and any excess FY24 fund balance by year end will follow the ordinance as intended meaning any increased revenues will add to this \$1,032,000 to decrease the rate. ***Alderman Barry*** duly seconded the motion. Mayor Ruais called for a vote. Alderman Levasseur requested a roll call vote.

City Clerk Normand stated for the record, that motion also suspends Ordinance 35.051.

Aldermen Levasseur, E. Sapienza, Vincent, Morgan, and Kantor voted nay. Aldermen Terrio, Burkush, Barry, Thomas, Goonan, Long, Fajardo, T. Sapienza and O'Neil voted yea. The motion failed.

Alderman Long asked can Sharon give us...we went from 3.86% to 3.59% but are we still at the 3.86% right now with both of these motions failing.

Ms. Wickens answered with both failing, the amount that you can use in surplus is \$344,000. It now has the tax rate at 4.07%.

Alderman T. Sapienza asked for that last vote we needed 10.

City Clerk Normand answered yes. It was to suspend the ordinance.

Alderman Long stated the other motions are on the appropriations. Is there anybody else who has something coming forward before we make motions on the appropriations?

Alderman T. Sapienza stated I have a motion to make.

Alderman Long stated there is a certain way we have to amend them.

***Alderman T. Sapienza moved to provide to the Manchester school district \$230 million.
Alderman Fajardo duly seconded the motion.***

Alderman Levasseur asked is that in their budget.

Mayor Ruais answered no. \$227 million is what is in Alderman Long's budget. They are asking to increase the funding to the schools by \$3 million.

Alderman T. Sapienza stated it is actually \$2.1 million.

Mayor Ruais responded that is correct. It was \$227.9 million.

City Clerk Normand stated so as I understand the motion, you are looking to amend the appropriation resolution to the school district the sum of \$227,982,610 with a new balance of \$230,000,000. Is that correct?

Alderman T. Sapienza replied yes.

***Mayor Ruais called for a vote. Alderman Levasseur requested a roll call vote.
Aldermen Levasseur, Terrio, and E. Sapienza voted nay.***

Alderman Burkush interjected and asked Sharon what the tax rate would be if they did this.

Ms. Wickens replied if you approve this and do nothing else to change the sheet, we are at 4.87%.

Aldermen Burkush, Barry, Vincent, Thomas, Morgan, Goonan, Kantor and O'Neil voted nay. Aldermen Long, Fajardo, and T. Sapienza voted yea. The motion failed.

Alderman Long stated I am getting a sense that there is something else coming up. So, we went from 3.86% to 4.07%.

Mayor Ruais stated I don't think anybody on this Board is going to support that. I think...what gets us to the end of the month? Can I veto something that allows us the opportunity to go back to the drawing board and bring the two sides together so we can work on a compromise? I think we are going to be at an impasse here. I don't think that there is anybody on the Board that is going to support anything over 4%.

Alderman Levasseur moved to table and move the meeting to next Tuesday, June 11.

City Clerk Normand stated I would just note for the record that the School Board is in this room next Tuesday. We could kindly ask them to use their facility at the district.

Alderman Levasseur asked could we do it on Monday unless it is a holiday.

City Clerk Normand replied the School Board is in here as well on Monday.

Alderman Morgan duly seconded the motion to table.

Alderman Barry stated I am not going to support that. You put your budget together in March I believe and presented it to the Board. We had plenty of time. We worked our tails off – myself, Alderman Long and Alderman Burkush to get a budget together. Out of courtesy, we made sure that every Board member, including the mayor, received a copy of our budget on Friday. My understanding is there is another budget from other people on this Board who didn't give us that courtesy and didn't show us what their

budget was. They are coming forward with supposedly a budget tonight and that is where we are. I know we had so many people out in the audience that wanted a lower tax rate. 3.59% from the mayor's tax rate was pretty good. We mastered it I thought in a very good way. Everybody should be happy, including the school board and the superintendent and the taxpayers in Manchester. Now we are going in the reverse direction.

Alderman Long stated we have been very transparent on everything we have done. I have 13 members and they were all made aware of whatever I was going to do. That is the fair way. We also had meetings with the mayor to keep it open. We also invited any alderman who was working on a budget to sit with us so we could work collaboratively to come up with an agreement. The only ones who showed up to the meeting were Aldermen Burkush, Barry and myself. I don't know how much more we could have done to reach out to everybody to say let's work together as a Board to come up with a compromise budget that we could all agree on.

Alderman Levasseur stated a motion to table is non-debatable. We have already had two people debate it. We are not going to keep debating a motion to table. Let's just take the vote and move on.

Mayor Ruais called for a vote. Alderman O'Neil requested a roll call vote. Aldermen O'Neil, Terrio, Burkush, Barry, Thomas, Goonan, Long, Fajardo, and T. Sapienza voted nay. Aldermen Levasseur, E. Sapienza, Vincent, Morgan, and Kantor voted yea. The motion failed.

Mayor Ruais stated the concern that I have right now, and we appreciate all the work that has gone into this and I was in some of those meetings as well, is that there is not at present the 10 votes to make the transfers that we would need to in order to keep the rate low. The only budget that would come forward that would have votes is up over 4% which I know from conversations none of us would approve of.

Alderman Levasseur asked can we have a five-minute recess.

Alderman T. Sapienza stated tonight is the scheduled meeting. Tonight is the night to do our work. Let's get our work done tonight. Does the Chairman have a budget? This is my 10th budget cycle and the Chairman has always brought a budget forward. Where is the Chairman's budget?

Alderman Levasseur replied I will bring it next week.

Alderman T. Sapienza stated better late than never.

Mayor Ruais asked is there another budget to be considered. Okay, if there is no other budget to be considered the one that would now come to me as Mayor to veto would be over 4%. I don't think that is something any of us would approve of so I don't see another option but for going back. We can't reconsider those votes at this time.

Alderman Long stated well there is one that we can. The \$1,032,000 we can. The reverter budget is the Mayor's budget. That is 3.86%.

City Clerk Normand stated that would be after June 11. This Board has until June 11 to resolve this issue and either amend your budget or do nothing and your budget goes into effect after June 11 by Charter.

Mayor Ruais stated I don't think anybody here wants to support a 4% so I don't see any other option but to go back in the next few days...I don't think anyone here is going to support a 4% increase and that is where we are at right now. I think we have to table this.

Alderman T. Sapienza stated 3.86% is your budget.

Mayor Ruais responded right but that doesn't include the surplus of \$1 million in revenues that we have received since that time.

Alderman T. Sapienza stated everybody knew we were coming here tonight.

Mayor Ruais stated I will veto my own budget because I am not going to let that \$1 million sit there. I would rather have it go towards the tax rate.

Alderman Long stated I would rather see that too so we can work until June 30. I don't know what people's schedules are. I know I am going to see my grandson in California tomorrow and I won't be here.

Mayor Ruais asked if somebody brings forward my budget that I put forward on March 28 and I veto that do we get until June 30.

City Clerk Normand answered I guess technically that could happen.

Mayor Ruais stated I don't see another option at this point. It seems we are at an impasse. Nobody here wants to support a 4% tax increase and there is no agreement on the 10 vote that are needed so I don't see another alternative besides vetoing my budget and we will work until the end of the month.

City Clerk Normand asked so you are looking for a motion to approve your budget that you are then going to veto.

Mayor Ruais answered yes.

Alderman Fajardo stated I want to comment that all things being equal on trying to hit 4% or otherwise, I do think that there is credibility to the criticism of this Board that we have dragged our feet and backed ourselves into a corner on the timeline. To the extent that we are putting ourselves and the city and the school and the departments...putting everybody in a bad position, that is our own doing. Just to make that very clear, there is an opportunity...I appreciate getting the email on Friday and I am thankful that you at least took that step but the public didn't get to see that and I don't know what my constituents think of this budget or any other budget that may or may not come up. I want to call out that I don't think we have done a service to the taxpayers of the city when this is how we do it.

Alderman Long moved to approve the Mayor's budget. Alderman Barry duly seconded the motion.

Alderman T. Sapienza asked if you veto your own budget then we have until the 30th. Is that what I understand to be correct?

City Clerk Normand stated the Mayor by charter has the authority to veto any action of this Board. If their action is to approve his budget, he could technically veto that and the Solicitor agrees with that. That by charter would give you until June 30.

Alderman T. Sapienza asked which we do not have otherwise.

City Clerk Normand answered correct. You have until June 11 by charter.

Alderman T. Sapienza asked so if we pass it and he vetoes it then we have until the 28th. What if it doesn't pass in the first place? Does that change the deadline?

City Clerk Normand replied we would be right back where we were before the vote.

Alderman Long stated I have a parliamentary inquiry. The fact that you are vetoing your budget...if we don't come up with a budget on the 30th does it revert to your budget? Could the Solicitor give us an answer?

Mayor Ruais responded she is looking for an answer.

Alderman T. Sapienza asked what about the other budget resolutions on the table. Can we approve any of those?

Mayor Ruais asked are you talking about the ones like school food & nutrition.

Alderman T. Sapienza answered yes and we have CIP also.

Mayor Ruais stated I think we can just veto my budget.

Emily Rice, Solicitor, stated pursuant to Section 6.04 of the Charter, it reads "The Board of Mayor and Aldermen shall adopt the budget on or before the second Tuesday in June of the fiscal year currently ending." Then it talks about what the adoption shall include and then it says if there is a veto, action by the Board of Aldermen on any veto shall be completed by June 30.

Mayor Ruais stated so we pass my budget and I veto and then we have until June 30.

Solicitor Rice responded it is very unusual but I don't see anything in the Charter preventing that.

Alderman Fajardo asked would there then be a special meeting.

Mayor Ruais stated we would call a special meeting. I think I would sit down with several people from either side and figure it out and call a special meeting when we feel comfortable that we have the 10 votes.

Alderman Long stated that doesn't answer my question. If on the 30th we don't agree to a budget, does it revert back to the Mayor's budget even though he vetoed it.

Solicitor Rice responded it would revert back to the Mayor's budget.

City Clerk Normand stated just to further complicate this complicated situation, I would say that you have all of these other resolutions that need to be resolved by June 11 by Charter. If you do nothing and wait until the end of the month to come back and meet, those are all going to be approved because those are not being vetoed. That would be your parking fund, sewer user rental fees, etc. As long as everybody is comfortable with those being approved, they will be approved as of June 11. That is everything else that isn't being vetoed that is in front of you right now.

Mayor Ruais asked what are those.

City Clerk Normand answered the sum of \$5,068,749 to the Parking Fund, \$25,255,603 to EPD from Sewer User Rental Charges, the Airport Authority resolution of \$40,558,119, the MTA at \$1,657,544, the school district which is not part of the veto at \$227,982,610, the Incremental Meals and Rooms Tax revenue, the School Food & Nutrition at \$5,819,971, the CBSD at \$258,000 and then the CIP which is your final resolution. The only one we are voting on is the second to the last resolution which is "Raising Monies and Making Appropriations of \$185,401,207 for FY25." That is the Mayor's general fund balance and that is what I understand he would be vetoing if it passes.

Mayor Ruais stated I think the three things that would be included with my general fund budget would be the school district and CIP. The balance would pass.

Alderman Fajardo asked Matt can you clarify why the school district wouldn't be included tonight.

City Clerk Normand answered the Mayor just clarified that it is included in the motion that he is asking the Board to make.

Mayor Ruais stated the big three would be my budget, the school district and CIP. The balance we would agree will pass on June 11. The big three we can sit down and negotiate.

City Clerk Normand stated or you could just take a vote tonight to pass the other budget resolutions and you would be done with them.

Alderman Barry stated just to clarify, I know we got criticized by the public and by someone on our Board in reference to waiting to send a budget out on Friday, there was a good reason for that. One, it takes a lot to go into this budget. As a courtesy, we met with the Mayor and his staff. We also waited to see if any of the numbers changed. We want to do everything we can to protect the taxpayers so we waited to see if any of the numbers had changed. We checked with Sharon periodically and she checked with departments to see if any of their numbers changed. I have been on this Board for 11

years and every year it comes down to this. This isn't something new. We wait until the very end to see if there are any changes that will benefit the taxpayers.

Alderman E. Sapienza stated I just want to reply to the foot dragging comment. It sure would be nice to know the future of Central and West and which one is going down. It is pertinent. Foot dragging? How long has that been going on? Let's have the information.

Alderman Long stated that is not the budget.

Alderman E. Sapienza responded it is the budget. It is part of it.

Alderman Long replied it's not.

Alderman E. Sapienza asked so schools have nothing to do with it.

Mayor Ruais called for a motion to combine the school district budget resolution, the general fund budget resolution and the CIP budget resolution.

Alderman Long stated no it is just the opposite. We are voting on everything else but those three, correct?

Mayor Ruais responded no. We need to vote on those three so I can veto it and we can go back to the drawing board. The balance of the budget resolutions will pass on June 11. We can negotiate the three items I outlined in the next three weeks.

Alderman T. Sapienza asked we can pass those other items now right.

Mayor Ruais replied we can do it one of two ways. We can pass them all now or we let them sit on the table and they will be approved on June 11.

Alderman Long asked why can't we vote on passing some of these other ones. Why don't we pick out the ones that we can pass? The only ones it looks like we can't are CIP...

Mayor Ruais interjected we can.

Alderman Long stated we can but I don't think.

Alderman T. Sapienza stated let's see if we have the votes.

Mayor Ruais stated it is going to be mine and won't include the additional projects you added like the \$700,000 bond for McGregor Street that we no longer need and the \$200,000 for the 50/50 program, etc. It is much cleaner if we just include all three and I veto and we go back to the drawing board.

Alderman Long stated I am not agreeing to include the school district. That is the issue I have.

Alderman T. Sapienza stated me too.

Mayor Ruais asked so you want to pass the \$227,982,610 now.

Alderman Long moved that the budget resolution "Appropriating to the Manchester School District the sum of \$227,982,610 for the Fiscal Year 2025" pass and be Enrolled.
Alderman Burkush duly seconded the motion.

Alderman Long stated it is important for the school district to get this as quickly as they can. They are looking for teachers and the teacher pool dwindles every week that we wait. This need to be approved so they can start working on adjusting their budget and going out to get qualified people.

Alderman Kantor stated there is a problem with the school tax cap. It really should be \$216,223,000 due to loss of state adequacy aid and loss of FY24 one-time revenue

from the trust. So, the \$227,982,610 should actually be \$216,223,000. I argue against that number.

Alderman Morgan stated just so I understand, if we are voting for this \$227 million for the school district, that will go into whatever new budget we produce. That will be the bottom line.

Mayor Ruais responded yes. That is the number that was in my budget in March.

Alderman Morgan asked and if we vote that tonight, that is going to be the starting point for every future budget regardless.

Mayor Ruais answered yes that is my understanding.

Alderman Long stated whatever budget we come up with, we won't have to worry about the schools.

Mayor Ruais stated that is the number that was in my budget.

Alderman Levasseur stated the issue on whether the \$227 million is legit or not is a question that I have had. My understanding is that the \$227 million rolled in the surplus that they anticipate to have this year. This is my 15th budget and we never allow surplus to be rolled into the actual budget number. What happens is they give us a budget number and tell us they don't know what the surplus number is so they don't tell us until after June 30 and then this Board votes to let them retain that surplus. They have already anticipated \$8 million in surplus and rolled it into the \$227 million number. I don't believe, but am not sure, if that is legit. It is definitely a new precedent because old precedent is we don't allow them to roll it in. Because they have rolled in their surplus number, they also created a higher base for next year. So, their base would be \$216 and then if they get their surplus, they don't get to roll that into their next base so they are starting with a higher base next year. That is how it has been explained to me and I believe it is accurate but if it is not, somebody can tell me whether it is accurate or not. If you have rolled your surplus into your base number and increased your base

number without approval of this Board allowing you to have that...if you vote for this \$227 million, you are basically saying we are allowing you to have your surplus but without doing it the proper way.

Mayor Ruais called Superintendent Gillis forward.

Alderman Levasseur asked so did they roll their surplus into the \$227 million number.

Karen DeFrancis, Business Administrator, stated the \$227 million budget that the Mayor presented includes one-time funds of \$7.8 million from our fund balance and \$1.2 million from expendable trusts. Basically, those revenues are supporting the shortfall in the adequacy aid so we are still within our tax cap with the \$227 million, as well as within the \$232 million that we submitted to the aldermen.

Alderman Terrio stated I think what he was asking was, should you have put it in on the back end. Are you artificially inflating your budget next year for the tax cap should that be added on the back end? Not the \$227 million but the numbers you just gave us, should those be deducted when you present the budget and then you can say we also need this amount to be added to our budget after the fact? Is this how you have done it before?

Ms. DeFrancis answered typically what we do is we put it into an expendable trust. Last year we used \$3 million from our expendable trust to fund some of the revenues that were lost.

Jen Gillis, Superintendent, stated what we did this year was flip it. We gave all of the information before the end of the year so that we aren't coming back later. We are trying to be more and more transparent when it comes to our budget build.

Alderman Levasseur asked so what is your surplus then.

Ms. DeFrancis replied we actually just finished our Finance agenda and it will be presented next week. We are looking at, and again this could change because we still have purchase orders that could be closed between now and the end of the year...

Alderman Levasseur interjected you say this every single year.

Ms. DeFrancis responded because we could get invoices that come in.

Alderman Levasseur stated I know but you should still have a good estimate.

Ms. DeFrancis stated I believe we have a good estimate. This is what we have been presenting to our board. In our expenditures, we are looking at just over \$8,010,000. We do have to, however, transfer money into our food service account and that estimate right now is \$474,000. That would reduce the \$8 million. On the revenue side, we are looking at a surplus of \$860,000. In total, those three items come to \$8.4 million. That is our estimate as of tonight.

Alderman Levasseur asked so that \$8.4 million is on top of the budget you presented of \$227 million.

Ms. DeFrancis answered no. When we presented the budget, we anticipated an \$8 million surplus. Within our budget presentation, we utilized \$7.8 million of that to fund the shortfall in our adequacy aid. So, because we knew we were coming in with a surplus, we wanted to use that surplus to help fund the loss in revenues from FY25.

Alderman Levasseur asked if you used your surplus to fill in other holes, you don't have a surplus. Again, you are playing some sort of shell game with us.

Ms. DeFrancis replied absolutely not.

Alderman Levasseur stated we don't know what the real number is. You shouldn't have taken that money. You should have given us a real budget and then when you got your

surplus vote from us, you would have been able to fill your holes. You filled your holes in advance.

Ms. DeFrancis responded I don't agree with that. I think we are being transparent.

Alderman Levasseur stated well then you would have an extra \$8 million above the money that you told us.

Ms. DeFrancis stated we told you that it was \$8 million and that we were going to utilize \$7.8 million...

Alderman Levasseur interjected you told who that.

Ms. DeFrancis answered in our budget presentation and in the documents I assume everyone here on the Board has.

Alderman Levasseur asked you made a presentation to this Board.

Superintendent Gillis stated to the BOSC and we forwarded all of that information to this Board. You have everything we have.

Alderman Levasseur asked so that is a clean \$227 million and no money will be left on July 1. It is going to be \$227 million and that is it.

Ms. DeFrancis answered the \$227 million is next year's budget.

Alderman Levasseur stated right and on July 1 it is \$227 million and there won't be any extra surplus money.

Ms. DeFrancis responded right now we are anticipating the surplus to be the numbers that I just read off which is about \$8.4 million. Could that change and be a higher number? Yes, but we can't utilize that in next year's budget. If it is approved at \$227

million, we can't spend more than the \$227 million even if we had an additional surplus of \$20 million. We are not authorized to spend it without an appropriation to spend it.

Mayor Ruais stated so the \$227 million that we are voting on right now, you can't go above that.

Ms. DeFrancis replied correct unless we come back to this Board for an additional appropriation.

Alderman Levasseur stated you have come back to this Board every single year I have been on it with a surplus and we had to vote on it. Is that going to happen again this year?

Ms. DeFrancis answered typically what we do is at the end of the year we will ask the BMA, if we have a surplus, if we can put it into our expendable trust funds and that has been approved by this Board. This year, we are putting it into a fund balance and bringing it forward to next year's budget.

Alderman Levasseur asked so you already did that without asking this Board.

Ms. DeFrancis replied that is the budget process. That is what we are asking for now.

Alderman Levasseur stated so if we vote for the \$227 million, we are actually voting for the surplus to be included in that and you are not coming back again.

Ms. DeFrancis responded correct.

Alderman Levasseur stated I hope people under the machination of this.

Alderman E. Sapienza stated you mentioned that you are doing this to make up for the loss in adequacy aid correct.

Ms. DeFrancis replied yes.

Alderman E. Sapienza asked can you explain what you mean by that. Are you talking about the money from the state?

Ms. DeFrancis answered yes.

Alderman E. Sapienza stated a few months ago we were hearing about how we were going to be getting more from the state.

Ms. DeFrancis stated this year we came in front of the Board and asked for the additional appropriation of \$35 million and we brought a spending plan for that \$35 million. Remember that the adequacy is based on our enrollment, as well as our free and reduced numbers. When the state gave us our estimate for FY25, the extraordinary needs grant, which is based on the property values in Manchester, as well as our free and reduced numbers, since the property values in Manchester went up our aid went down by \$7.5 million.

Alderman E. Sapienza replied okay. A few months ago we were hearing about the expected increase in adequacy aid from the State of NH.

Mayor Ruais stated that bill failed.

Superintendent Gillis stated Bill 1583 failed.

Alderman E. Sapienza stated when we were told a few months ago that we were expecting an increase in adequacy aid from the state, that wasn't accurate. It was a prediction?

Alderman Long stated I can explain that since I am a state rep. In the House, it was a bi-partisan vote to pass this bill. In talking with Representative Heath and people on the Finance Committee, it wasn't going to be a problem and we were anticipating the money. It got to the Senate after they were told that they were looking at a \$600-\$700 million gap for the Sununu Youth Center so they are not appropriating any money. That

is why these bills failed. There is nothing coming. This wasn't an effort to pull the wool over your eyes.

Alderman E. Sapienza stated thanks for that, I just remember sitting over there a few months back with the prior Board and hearing...I said Well we don't know that we are going to get this increased aid from the state. I don't want to pound that into the ground. Thanks.

Alderman O'Neil stated I just want to support the comment that Alderman Long made earlier. The sooner we get the school district budget approved, the sooner they can make commitments to teacher positions and other positions. We are unfortunately in a very competitive world for educators. I think if we can pass this tonight, it would be in the best interest of the school district.

Alderman Levasseur asked what other trust funds have money in them and how much.

Ms. DeFrancis answered we have six trust funds. Our healthcare trust has...do you want the exact number or rounded?

Alderman Levasseur replied you can round it off.

Ms. DeFrancis stated \$7,256,000. Special education is \$4,944,000, Repair & Maintenance is \$446,000, Capital Project is \$5,000, Athletics is \$165,000 and Teaching & Learning is \$15,461,000. The total is \$28,279,000.

Alderman Terrio asked can the Teaching & Learning fund be used for hiring teachers.

Superintendent Gillis answered no. That would be used for any of the curriculum that we are looking to bring into the district. Over the last couple of years, we have gone to a curriculum cycle. Next on deck we have the curriculum and materials for music, art, PE, health, world language, elementary library, high school math and algebra. A year out from that we then have English language arts to address as well. So, we know have a cycle to refresh our materials.

Alderman T. Sapienza asked isn't it true that all of those trust funds are dedicated funds and you can't use them in your budget for your operating expenses.

Superintendent Gillis stated they would be one-time expenses.

Jim O'Connell, Vice-Chair, Board of School Committee, stated if I could add briefly, the recommendation of our auditors is that we be at 15% of our budget. That would be \$30 million in trust funds if our budget was \$200 million. The idea that we are under \$30 million means that we are something under the ideal. We have gotten high credit for having done a good job in building these trust funds. When the former well-known Vice-Chair was here, Mr. Beaudry, he railed in this city about the fact that we didn't have trust funds. We have students come to our city all the time who have huge expenses associated with them and they need services. Sometimes those services can be \$1 million or \$500,000 that the district has to find. We cannot go over budget. If we don't have these trust funds available, then we have to remove teachers from classrooms or programs. There is nothing unusual. We should just understand as bodies here that this is regular order and how a district should be run. This is good fiscal management and that is what I am sure your financial director would say and it is what our long-time financial director is saying and it is what the Superintendent of Schools in the City of Manchester is saying. This should be seen as regular order.

Alderman Barry stated I know we are going to vote for the motion on the table. I have another motion for CIP.

Mayor Ruais replied I think we should do them separately. Are there any additional questions on the school district budget?

Alderman Levasseur asked Mr. O'Connell, if these funds are dedicated, how come you get to use them in the general budget as one-time revenue. How do you machinate that?

Ms. DeFrancis responded in the current year we are in, \$3 million was used from the health trust to support the health insurance costs. It was used for its specific purpose. We have to use the trusts for what they were designated for.

Alderman Levasseur asked so you had to put it into the budget right. You had to make an entry in the budget itself?

Ms. DeFrancis answered we utilized \$3 million as a revenue this year to support the health insurance line item of \$20 million.

Alderman Levasseur asked how do you use the other \$28 million if you can't put it into the budget if they are one-time funds.

Superintendent Gillis replied we would go back and bring through the curriculum adoption process to the BOSC and then that would come up for use of that trust fund. It is aligned to the intent of that trust fund.

Alderman Levasseur asked can the funds be used for just general funds in your budget.

Superintendent Gillis responded no. We would need to use them for the purpose they are assigned to be used.

Alderman Levasseur asked can they be used for a deficit in a budget.

Superintendent Gillis answered no not for a deficit but if we were looking to modify what our health insurance impact was going to be, we have done it in the past and those monies come back for it.

Ms. DeFrancis stated if we had a shortfall in our health insurance line...like if we budgeted \$20 million and health insurance came in at \$21 million, we could utilize the expendable trust to avoid a deficit.

Alderman Levasseur asked out of the health line.

Ms. DeFrancis answered yes or if it was a special education situation, we could use money out of the special education trust fund.

Mayor Ruais stated when I did my budget with the \$227 million number and the conversations we had subsequent to that, I felt that was the compromise. It reduced it by \$4.2 million, which was too much for some people to reduce it and too much spending for others. I felt that was a sweet spot and that is why it was in my budget. I thought it was something folks could agree upon. Are we ready to call the roll or are there additional questions? We are voting on my original school district budget, the \$227 million.

Mayor Ruais called for a vote. Alderman Long requested a roll call vote. Aldermen Long, Fajardo, T. Sapienza, O'Neil, Terrio, Burkush, Barry, Thomas, Morgan, and Goonan voted yea. Aldermen Kantor, Levasseur, E. Sapienza, and Vincent voted nay.

Alderman Barry moved to appropriate \$300,200 which is in what I will refer to as Alderman Long's budget for CIP. It includes FUSES, Shot Spotter, Health parking, Welfare and Fun in the Sun.

City Clerk Normand stated these are cash CIP projects which are part of the general fund resolution.

Mayor Ruais stated that is my budget correct.

City Clerk Normand replied yes but these are not in your budget.

Alderman Long stated I don't know why we wouldn't do the whole CIP. We kept what you had in your budget but we added a few to the bonding.

Mayor Ruais stated I think it is probably cleaner if we do the school district first in terms of coming to an agreement that we can get 10 votes on.

City Clerk Normand stated you only need eight votes for CIP and the general fund. The Cash CIP and the projects that Alderman Barry just mentioned would amend Mayor Ruais's budget to include the projects in CIP Cash.

Mayor Ruais asked would you mind reading those out again.

Alderman Terrio asked so you aren't just doing the changes, you want to do the whole CIP resolution.

City Clerk Normand there are two separate resolutions that you are talking about. Cash CIP are projects that are in the general fund. Then you have five projects to add and two being removed in the regular CIP resolution. You should take one at a time.

Alderman Long asked the cash projects were sent to the BMA correct.

City Clerk Normand answered they were. Everything was sent on Friday.

Alderman Terrio asked what is the total amount.

Mayor Ruais stated these were just the small changes they made to my original budget resolutions.

Alderman Barry replied right.

City Clerk Normand stated you would be amending the Mayor's budget to incorporate those changes.

Alderman Long duly seconded the motion. Mayor Ruais called for a vote. Alderman Long requested a roll call vote. Aldermen Long, Fajardo, T. Sapienza, Terrio, Burkush, Barry, Thomas, Goonan and Morgan voted yea. Aldermen Kantor, Levasseur, E. Sapienza, and Vincent voted nay. The motion carried.

Mayor Ruais stated we can now vote on the CIP budget resolution.

Alderman Burkush moved to approve the balance of the CIP resolution. **Alderman Long** duly seconded the motion.

Alderman O'Neil asked and this is the CIP budget that they proposed.

City Clerk Normand answered correct.

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

Alderman O'Neil moved the remainder of the budget resolutions minus the general fund.

Alderman E. Sapienza stated point of order. What are we doing?

Mayor Ruais answered we are passing the remainder of the budget resolutions.

Alderman E. Sapienza stated so we are piece meal the entire budget.

Mayor Ruais stated we will be voting on approving everything except for the \$185 million.

Alderman E. Sapienza stated I thought we were going to meet next week.

Mayor Ruais stated this is a motion that has come forward.

Alderman E. Sapienza stated I thought we were meeting next week or the week after that.

Mayor Ruais responded the big one we will be meeting on because we can't get to a resolution tonight is the \$185 million.

Alderman O'Neil moved to approve the parking fund, sewer user rental charges, airport authority, transit authority, meals and rooms tax, school food and nutrition and the Central Business Service District. **Alderman Long** duly seconded the motion.

Alderman T. Sapienza stated I think it is important to get this done tonight. We have had four months to get a budget together.

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

Mayor Ruais stated the only thing remaining is the \$185 million which is my initial budget.

City Clerk Normand responded right with the CIP Cash projects added to it.

Alderman Long stated what else is needed is the regular CIP correct.

City Clerk Normand responded you just voted on that.

Alderman Long asked so we passed all of CIP.

City Clerk Normand answered correct.

Mayor Ruais stated the only thing outstanding is the general appropriation of \$185 million. Now we are back to the conversation where we don't have the 10 votes to make the changes we need so the tax rate would be over 4% which I don't think any of us agree with. What I am asking is for the Board to pass this so I can veto it and it will give us the rest of the month.

Alderman Long asked for clarity, the compensation study money is off the table now and in the rainy-day fund. We can't take a motion to use that? Is that off the table because we voted on it and reconsidered it and it failed twice?

City Clerk Normand replied the first one of your motions was to move the \$403,000 from the compensation study. That failed and was reconsidered and failed again. That cannot be reconsidered.

Alderman Terrio asked can we suspend our rules to get that money back.

City Clerk Normand responded you need 10 votes to suspend the rules.

Alderman Levasseur stated I have a parliamentary inquiry. Since we are now working with the Mayor's budget and not the budget that was proposed, does that open those two numbers back up?

City Clerk Normand replied I don't understand your question.

Mayor Ruais stated we voted to kill Alderman Long's budget but now that we are considering my budget...

City Clerk Normand interjected I don't know about the \$403,000 but this Board can suspend its rules. It doesn't matter. It needs 10 votes regardless.

Alderman Long stated we voted on a budget today to increase the tax rate.

Mayor Ruais responded we didn't vote on a budget. It is getting late and I don't think anyone wants to support a 4% tax increase.

Alderman Long stated I agree and we need some leadership to get a budget passed. We need somebody to take the initiative to get a budget passed. That is essential to the taxpayers. We couldn't get it done today.

Mayor Ruais stated I am asking the Board to approve my budget and I will veto it and then we will come back.

Alderman Long moved to approve the Mayor's budget resolution "Raising Monies and Making Appropriations of \$185,401,207 for the Fiscal Year 2025." ***Alderman O'Neil*** duly seconded the motion.

Alderman Levasseur stated point of clarification. If it gets 10 votes, you cannot veto it.

Mayor Ruais stated the motion is to approve my budget from March 28. We need nine votes and then I will veto it and then we can reconvene to negotiate a compromise.

Alderman Barry asked what is the alternative. What is the best scenario and what is the worst scenario? I don't know if Sharon can answer that. The Mayor's budget is 3.86%. Can we do better than that with the remaining part of the budget?

Ms. Wickens answered you voted in the cash CIP so that goes down a little but won't do a lot but would bring the Mayor's budget down to 3.80%. That includes adjusting the CIP cash from the \$463,000 to the \$300,200. You just approved that.

Alderman Barry asked is there any way we could get it lower.

Ms. Wickens responded I believe we could adjust the surplus even if you did 1/3, 1/3 and 1/3. The Mayor's budget can't do that. I think it has to be 1/3, 1/3, 1/3. There is more surplus now. Instead of \$86,000 it is \$344,000.

City Clerk Normand stated any surplus is going to follow the ordinance right.

Ms. Wickens answered correct. Let's throw that in for now. Now we are at 3.70%. That is the Mayor's budget with those little changes. Even if we didn't put it in this budget, it will fall to the rate anyway; the surplus.

Mayor Ruais stated we were at 3.59% and I prefer it not go higher than the budget that was presented tonight.

Alderman Barry stated I hope we can get it back to 3.59%.

Mayor Ruais stated we have a motion and a second to support my budget from March 28. If we get nine votes or fewer, I will veto it.

Alderman Terrio asked so if you get ten votes or higher, you can't veto it.

Alderman Long stated he can still veto with 10 votes. We would just vote no to override the veto, correct?

City Clerk Normand answered correct.

Alderman Long stated if he gets 14 votes yes, he vetoes it and we make sure we don't override it.

Mayor Ruais called for a vote. Alderman Levasseur requested a roll call vote. Aldermen Levasseur, Terrio, E. Sapienza, Vincent, Fajardo, T. Sapienza, and Kantor voted nay. Aldermen Burkush, Barry, Thomas, Morgan, Goonan, Long, and O'Neil voted yea. The motion was tied.

Mayor Ruais asked if I vote to kill this, is that the same as a veto.

City Clerk Normand answered no.

Alderman Levasseur moved to reconsider. Alderman Terrio duly seconded the motion. Mayor Ruais called for a vote. There being none opposed, the motion carried.

City Clerk Normand stated the vote is now to approve the Mayor's March budget. Aldermen Levasseur, E. Sapienza, Vincent, Morgan, Fajardo, T. Sapienza, and Kantor

voted nay. Aldermen Terrio, Burkush, Barry, Thomas, Goonan, Long and O'Neil voted yea. The motion was tied.

City Clerk Normand stated I guess the Mayor wants to break the tie and vote yes and then veto it.

Mayor Ruais called for a recess.

Mayor Ruais called the meeting back to order.

City Clerk Normand stated my understanding is that some aldermen want to vote to suspend Rule 12 that only allows you to reconsider a motion once. The motion would be to suspend Rule 12 and it requires 10 votes.

Alderman Levasseur moved to suspend Rule 12. Alderman Terrio duly seconded the motion.

Mayor Ruais stated if this passes, we can then reconsider the motion to approve my budget of March 28 so I can veto it.

City Clerk Normand stated you have already tried to reconsider that vote and it failed. Your rules prevent you from reconsidering it again. The suspension of that rule would allow you to reconsider it again.

Alderman Levasseur asked can the Mayor just veto a tie vote.

City Clerk Normand answered he has to break the tie. He could vote yes and then veto it I suppose.

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

City Clerk Normand stated you now need a motion to reconsider the prior vote to approve the Mayor's budget from March.

Mayor Ruais asked so this is to reconsider.

City Clerk Normand answered yes to reconsider the tied vote to approve your budget.
This vote would be to approve your budget.

Mayor Ruais asked so this is the vote that needs nine and then I can subsequently veto it.

City Clerk Normand replied correct.

Alderman Long moved to approve the Mayor's March 28 budget. ***Alderman O'Neil*** duly seconded the motion. *Alderman Long requested a roll call vote. Aldermen Long, O'Neil, Levasseur, Terrio, Burkush, Barry, Vincent, Thomas, Morgan, and Goonan voted yea. Aldermen Fajardo, T. Sapienza, and Kantor voted nay. Alderman E. Sapienza abstained. The motion carried. Mayor Ruais vetoed the motion.*

Mayor Ruais asked and we now have until when to approve a budget.

City Clerk Normand answered June 30.

Alderman T. Sapienza moved to override the veto. ***Alderman Fajardo*** duly seconded the motion. *Mayor Ruais called for a vote. Alderman Long requested a roll call vote. Aldermen Long, Kantor, Levasseur, Terrio, Burkush, Barry, Vincent, Thomas, Morgan and Goonan voted nay. Aldermen Fajardo, T. Sapienza, and O'Neil voted yea. Alderman E. Sapienza abstained. The motion failed.*

Alderman E. Sapienza asked when are we meeting again.

Mayor Ruais stated I will reconvene with members of the Board and we will continue negotiations so that we can come up with a solution that a majority of the Board can agree on.

Alderman E. Sapienza asked so we don't have a date yet.

Mayor Ruais stated I will work with the Board to identify a date that works for all parties.

Alderman Long moved to transfer \$403,748.02 from CIP 810924...

Alderman Terrio moved to adjourn. ***Alderman Levasseur*** duly seconded the motion. Mayor Ruais called for a vote. Alderman Long requested a roll call vote. Aldermen Long, Fajardo, T. Sapienza, O'Neil, Burkush, Barry, and Goonan voted nay. Aldermen Kantor, Levasseur, Terrio, E. Sapienza, Vincent, Thomas, and Morgan voted yea. The motion was tied. Mayor Ruais broke the tie and voted in the affirmative. The motion carried.

A True Record. Attest.

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

City Clerk