

SPECIAL MEETING
BOARD OF MAYOR AND ALDERMEN
October 30, 2024 Immediately Following Public Hearing

Mayor Ruais called the meeting to order.

The Clerk called the roll.

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

Absent: Aldermen Morgan, Terrio, Vincent, Thomas

CONSENT AGENDA

RATIFY & CONFIRM PHONE POLL

1. Rescind BMA vote to refer the Manchester School District's Supplemental Appropriation request to a public hearing on November 19, 2024 at 6:30 PM and hold the public hearing on October 30, 2024 at 5:00 PM.

Alderman E. Sapienza asked what are we ratifying.

Matthew Normand, City Clerk, replied the phone poll that was conducted on October 17.

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

REGULAR BUSINESS

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

Mayor Ruais called the meeting back to order.

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

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

“Authorizing the utilization of excess revenues from the Manchester School District Fiscal Year 2025 budget revenue estimates for a supplemental

appropriation of \$6,517,315 to the Manchester School District pursuant to Section 6.05 (a) of the City Charter in Fiscal Year 2025.”

ought to pass and be Enrolled.

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

Alderman O’Neil duly seconded the motion.

Alderman E. Sapienza stated I would like to see the \$6.5 million be returned to the taxpayers.

Mayor Ruais stated we have a motion before us right now that this ought to pass.

Alderman Long asked could the Superintendent come up to answer questions. My understanding, and I called to find out with the state today, is that adequacy education money cannot be put in the city’s coffers but has to go directly to the school district. Is that your understanding?

Karen DeFrancis, MSD Chief Financial Officer, answered we will have to record the total amount, the \$96 million plus, on our MS-24 report which is what sets the tax rate. So yes, it is not like the cash can go to the city. It will come to the school district. If the Aldermen did not appropriate it, then we would not be permitted to spend it.

Alderman Long replied correct. The city couldn’t take that \$6.5 million and put it in their coffers to reduce the taxes. Is that correct?

Ms. DeFrancis stated if the city did not appropriate the money to us then we would not be able to spend it and therefore it could reduce the taxes. It is not going to go into the city’s cash.

Alderman Long stated so we do have to appropriate it to you. It is required to be appropriated to the school.

Ms. DeFrancis stated yes so we can to spend it.

Alderman Long stated what we are deciding is whether or not you could appropriate it. I have no issue with the raises that the teachers got. It was well deserved.

Alderman T. Sapienza stated as far as the prior Board pushing it through, I voted to approve things. I for one am proud of my votes. If you want to call it pushing it through, have a nice day.

Alderman E. Sapienza stated thank you for the presentation and the information. For the sake of clarity, the task before this Board tonight is to decide whether we want to greenlight the school side to spend this money as they best see fit or not. I understand that the money can't come over to the city side, you explained that at the last meeting and I appreciate that but the money can go to the taxpayers keeping it on the school side to be used to lower the tax rate. Is that correct?

Ms. DeFrancis responded on the school side, correct.

Alderman E. Sapienza reiterated on the school side. That is our decision. We are not mandated here tonight. We do not have to vote to allow the school side to spend this money as they best see fit, correct?

Ms. DeFrancis replied yes if you vote not to allow us to spend it. We are requesting that you do vote to allow us to spend it. If you did not, then we would not be able to spend it.

Alderman E. Sapienza right and it would stay on the school side and it would be used to lower the tax rate.

Ms. DeFrancis stated it would show up on our revenues, correct.

Alderman E. Sapienza stated great. I want to be crystal clear on that. Everybody is allowed their opinion and their vote and all that. I want to be crystal clear to lay the objective framework here.

Alderman Barry asked do you have use for the money.

Jennifer Chmiel, Superintendent, answered we do.

Alderman E. Sapienza stated I think the taxpayers deserve a break. They are suffering under this inflation along with everybody else. They deserve a break.

Alderman Long asked if this money was to be appropriated to you not to be spent, would that reduce the tax rate on the school side. The money has to be appropriated but if the Board voted not to have you spend it, would that automatically reduce the tax rate for the schools?

Ms. DeFrancis replied we would not be able to spend it. Therefore, when we report on the MS-24 we would have higher revenues but we wouldn't be able to spend them. It would go to the tax rate.

Alderman Kantor stated I agree we should be helping out the taxpayers. I am not for this. I wanted to know about the \$150 million that was spent for ARPA funds. Where did that money go?

Superintendent Chmiel asked are you talking about our ESSER funding?

Alderman Kantor answered yes.

Superintendent Chmiel stated that has been reported out on a monthly basis at our Finance and Facility meetings. That was distributed across multiple functions from staffing to any of the contracted service providers we had to increase to some of our

transportation increases. That went to offset expenses that we saw due to COVID and the HVAC.

Alderman Kantor stated but you are going to tear down Beech Street and that HVAC system.

Superintendent Chmiel stated they will harvest pieces of the HVAC out that they can transfer over to a new Beech Street school. Keep in mind, anything that we did for HVAC at the time was because of the COVID virus and trying to reduce airborne issues that we saw and the recommendations that we had coming in from federal and state mandates.

Alderman Kantor replied we know those mandates weren't proper.

Alderman Levasseur asked when do you have to report to the DRA. November 1 or November 15? That's the reason we had the meeting today because of DRA reporting. If you didn't get approval, you have to submit your report. I don't know if you submit it directly to the DRA or to the city.

Ms. DeFrancis stated we submit it to the Department of Revenue.

Alderman Levasseur asked is that by the first of November or later.

Ms. DeFrancis answered I don't know if it is due by the first of November. We usually get it in within that first week so the tax rate can be set.

Alderman Levasseur stated ok. So that's the reason why we had the meeting today. This has to be voted on today, correct?

Superintendent Chmiel stated the urging was so the tax rate could be set. That is why we are having this meeting before the next regularly scheduled meeting.

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

5. Resolution:

“Authorizing the utilization of excess revenues from the Manchester School District Fiscal Year 2025 budget revenue estimates for a supplemental appropriation of \$6,517,315 to the Manchester School District pursuant to Section 6.05 (a) of the City Charter in Fiscal Year 2025.”

*On motion of **Alderman Long**, duly seconded by **Alderman Barry**, it was voted that the Resolution be Enrolled with Aldermen Kantor, Levasseur, and E. Sapienza being duly recorded in opposition.*

*This being a special meeting of the Board, no further business can be presented and on motion of **Alderman Long**, duly seconded by **Alderman O'Neil**, it was voted to adjourn.*

A True Record. Attest.

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

City Clerk