

BOARD OF MAYOR AND ALDERMEN

November 19, 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.

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 our trend, we have a few recognitions this evening. Would Dee Santoso please come forward? I have a Resolution.

City of Manchester. Resolution.

Libraries fuel our imagination, open windows to the world, inspire us to explore and also build stronger communities, and

WHEREAS Librarians are the heart and soul behind every library's success, and

WHEREAS Dee Santoso dedicated 40 years to the Manchester City Library starting as a staff member in 1980 and then earning promotions to Librarian, Head of the Reference Department and Deputy Director, and

WHEREAS during her tenure, Dee earned a Master's Degree in Library Science, and

WHEREAS during her four decades at the Library she developed the skills enabling her to cover all positions offering much appreciated support and mentoring to staffers, and

WHEREAS Library staff could always count on Dee for her wonderful sense of humor, caring, attitude and a file cabinet filled with various snacks, with chocolate being the most popular, and

WHEREAS Dee proved to be a dedicated colleague not only in Manchester but around the state giving of her time to serve numerous roles in the Library Consortium and also as part of the NH Library Trustees Association's Educational Committee,

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Jay Ruais, Mayor of the City of Manchester, on behalf of the citizens of Manchester, do hereby recognize and honor Dee for her dedication, integrity and loyalty to our city's Library and who will forever be remembered as someone who treated every Library visitor with respect.

We wish her all the best in her well-deserved retirement.

Mayor Ruais stated we are going to continue with the Library this evening. Denise van Zanten, would you please come forward.

City of Manchester. A Resolution.

WHEREAS libraries retain a special place in the communities they serve fostering a level of reading and learning, and

WHEREAS Denise leads the Manchester City Library system as its Director and is known for her steadfast and competent leadership, along with her willingness to give of herself and her time without reservation, and

WHEREAS Denise is known as a leader who has captained the ship of the largest public in NH through financial challenges and a pandemic, and

WHEREAS Denise's dedication goes far beyond books and the boundaries of librarianship and includes her diligent oversight of all library buildings, countless repairs and renovation projects over the years, and

WHEREAS Denise is recognized statewide for her leadership serving as President, Vice President and Legislative Liaison of the NH Library Association where she has acted with skill and grace to counter legislation seemingly hostile to libraries as well as intellectual freedom, and

WHEREAS Denise has acted as a mentor to many new library directors throughout the state over the past 20 years, and

WHEREAS Denise has never sought accolades but they have found her as she has been named the 2024 recipient of the Ann Geisel Award of Merit from the NH Library Association, an honor bestowed upon those who prove distinguished services to local, regional and national library communities,

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Jay Ruais, Mayor of Manchester on behalf of the citizens of Manchester do hereby recognize and honor Denise van Zanten for her lifetime of

devotion to librarianship and for her dedication to the betterment of the Manchester City Library and all of those who love to wander in stacks in our enriched programs.

Mayor Ruais called Mr. Peter Janelle forward. Some people truly put a mark on their field and in the process, they make a real difference in the lives of others. That describes Peter Janelle perfectly. Peter has been involved within NH's community mental health system of care for over 40 years. After working as a mental health worker at NH Hospital, he joined the staff at the Mental Health Center of Greater Manchester where he worked until his retirement in 2015. From 1999 until 2015, Peter served as President and CEO. He brought best leadership practices by instituting the Accountable Care Initiative that created the platform to develop a wide array of evidence-based clinical practices for children and adults. He also invested heavily in behavioral health research, education and training. Additionally, Peter worked on various committees within the Manchester Continuum of Care to help create better solutions for people experiencing homelessness in Manchester. He has also served on the boards of Healthcare for the Homeless, NH Charitable Foundation-Manchester, NAMI NH and New Horizons. As a recognized leader, Peter received numerous awards including the 2015 Outstanding Mental Health Administrator Award from NAMI NH, the 2020 Mental Health Center of Greater Manchester Wheelock-Nardi Award and the 2021 Pastoral Counseling Good Samaritan Award. Peter, as Mayor, it is my privilege to add to your honors this evening with a challenge coin. Thank you.

Mayor Ruais called Senator D'Allesandro forward. Sir, thank you for coming this evening.

City of Manchester. A Resolution.

WHEREAS it is right to honor those who have forged a legacy of public service, and

WHEREAS Senator Lou D'Allesandro's remarkable 50-year career is marked by two terms in the NH House, three terms on the Executive Council and an unbroken series of 12 terms in the Senate representing Ward 20 stretching from 1998 until 2024, and

WHEREAS during his quarter century in the upper chamber Lou became known as the Lion of the Senate and the Dean of the Senate for his booming voice and fierce advocacy on the floor during session days, and

WHEREAS Senator D'Allesandro is a proud graduate of the University of NH Class of 1961 where he played football, baseball and lacrosse and was inducted into the UNH Hall of Fame in 2010, and

WHEREAS Lou is remembered as a lifelong educator having taught and coached in high school and college and served as President of Daniel Webster College and Franklin Pierce University, and

WHEREAS Lou is also remembered for making a difference as a board member with organizations like Southern NH Services, the NH England Board of Higher Education and the Council of State Governments,

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Jay Ruais, Mayor of the City of Manchester on behalf of the citizens of Manchester, do hereby recognize and honor Senator Lou D'Allesandro for his lifelong devotion to public service, his commitment to the citizens of Senate District 20, and for leaving a lasting legacy as a teacher and a coach as well as a devoted husband, father, grandfather and great-grandfather. Thank you, sir, for your service to the City of Manchester.

Mayor Ruais stated last but not least, will Chief Aldenberg please come forward. This is the last place he wanted to be getting recognized. A couple of months ago when he told me he was taking this position he said look I really don't want any fanfare or any hullabaloo and I said Well that might not be something you have a choice over and he asked if I was pulling rank and I said on this I am. Actually, tonight is unfortunate for a number of reasons with the loss of Chief Aldenberg going to Easter Seals but I am also losing a lot of leverage because as some of you may know, Chief Aldenberg is Colonel Aldenberg in the National Guard and I am within his chain of command although several rungs below him. I see him up in Concord and he wants to make me do a lot of push-ups but I know that he knows he can't do that because I reside here. This evening it is really an honor to thank Chief Aldenberg for his years of service to the City of Manchester and I wanted to start by saying that every event I have been at with the Chief, whether it is at roll calls or up in Concord with the National Guard or just around the city, one of the first things that Chief Aldenberg always mentions is the importance of family, and particularly for a police officer and a first responder, the importance of having your family by your side and being supportive. I would be remiss if I didn't recognize his wife, Emily, his son Hunter, and daughter Kendall. To all of you, thank you for your support of Chief Aldenberg over the years. None of his successes would be possible if he didn't have the love and support of his family back home. I said this

the other day at the Easter Seals breakfast but for as good as a cop as Chief Aldenberg is and for as good of a soldier as Chief Aldenberg is, he is an even better human being. There have been plenty of times in my office where I thought what would Al do and I do the opposite but I do appreciate your insight. It has been a privilege to serve with him and Easter Seals is darn lucky to have him. Our loss is Easter Seal's gain and Chief, I have a resolution.

City of Manchester. A Resolution.

WHEREAS devoting your career to protecting your city, state and country is the highest form of public service, and

WHEREAS Allen Aldenberg approached his career in law enforcement and with the NH Army National Guard with courage, compassion and consistency, and

WHEREAS Chief Aldenberg led the City of Manchester Police Department, the state's largest municipal police force for four years with honor and distinction, and

WHEREAS prior to his service with MPD Chief Aldenberg served with the Essex County Sheriff's Department in Massachusetts and with the Goffstown Police Department, and

WHEREAS during his 21 years with MPD, Chief Aldenberg distinguished himself as a patrol officer, field training officer, canine officer, and as an investigator within the detective unit, sergeant, patrol supervisor, director of the training unit, lieutenant, and member of the SWAT Team, and

WHEREAS he was awarded the department's life-saving medal in 2011 for preventing a suicidal person from jumping from the ledge of a parking garage and the Meritorious Service Medal in 2016 for negotiating the surrender of an armed man, and

WHEREAS for as good of a soldier as he is and for as good a police officer as he is, Allen Aldenberg is an even better human being and we are all privileged to have had the opportunity to work for him and with him,

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Jay Ruais, Mayor of the City of Manchester, on behalf of the citizens of Manchester, do hereby recognize and thank Chief Allen Aldenberg for his selfless service and sacrifice, for his bravery in the line of duty and for always holding himself and his officers to the highest of standards. May he have the same outstanding level of success in this next chapter in his career.

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

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

Richard D. Irving, Ward 2, stated:

Like many citizens of our city, I oppose the Beech Street School project because it is expensive to taxpayers and unfair to teachers and students. Putting up tin buildings for classes and eliminating the playground at that school for another is unnecessary for all. Our taxes are being raised and the mortgages, housing and apartment rentals have gone up. There is also violence and bullying in our schools and these problems and unnecessary spending must stop. Thank you.

Victoria Sullivan, 1056 S. Beech Street, stated:

I am here tonight to remind you of promises made during your campaign. I have walked these streets, knocked on these doors and talked to citizens and the number one concern they have is their property taxes. They elected a specific board as a mandate for change and delivering the same old things that you have been delivering for decades is not going to fly. We are not going to allow it. People are very upset about this proposal coming forward. There are problems with Beech Street school. You can look at the proficiency scores and understand that. Those issues need to be addressed inside the building. Education happens within the building. Some of our oldest schools in the state, including Central High School which was built in 1814 and is the oldest school in the state, produce a great education. Holy Family Academy, just across the river, was built in 1911 and produces an excellent education. Pinkerton Academy, built in 1845, again an excellent education. Phillips Exeter, 1780. Trinity High was built in 1950. Yes, Trinity just built onto their school. They raised the funds to do it without burdening any taxpayers. They are a private school and they raised the funds to do it. If people feel very passionately about this project, I suggest they do the same. If people feel that this building has to be built and you have to tear down Beech Street and by the way you are going to be taking away a park in an area where these children need a safe

place to play. It is unacceptable. You are not thinking about how this actually impacts these families. If you really feel that passionately though about building a new school, each out to people who helped put you in these seats, the big donors, and ask them to invest in this city and in the schools. If you can't do that and they don't see a value in it then there isn't one. The taxpayers cannot afford another dime. I am telling you that. I just ran a campaign and I just spoke to voters and their number one priority and concern is what is happening with inflation and the fact that they cannot pay their taxes. I am paying more for my property taxes than I am on the principal of my mortgage right now. It is unacceptable. We need to pull back and many of you often see the concerns of the homeless and the housing crisis that we have and apartment rates. Increasing property taxes directly impacts those families. There is no way to increase property taxes and not increase rents. There is no way to increase property taxes and not push the elderly out of their homes. You need to pull back and take a look and understand who you represent, who put you in those seats and live up to the promises that you made because another tax increase is absolutely unacceptable.

Richard Girard, 283 Orange Street, stated:

You are being asked to allow the construction of a new Beech Street School at Sheridan-Emmett Park. While the current school will presumably be raised to create more park land, there will still be a large net loss in open green space. Moreover, the school board has entertained two proposals, both of which you have seen, that show a new high school being built on the current Beech Street site. While you may dismiss this because of the requirements set forth by Amoskeag Industries, consider this. What if the school board comes back and asks to use this site for a new high school because for whatever litany of reasons the district says it is the best option? What if, as they did in this case, they do so after going to Amoskeag to negotiate a deal that clears a way for this Board to say yes? What happens if this Board says no to the request? Well in the first instance, it means that a more than \$80 million school won't be built and that is not a bad thing if it is looked at objectively. First, it is a matter of equity. Beech Street, Parker-Varney and Highland Goffe's Falls all have the same layout which includes them all having windowless classrooms because they all had interior walls built to create their faulty open concept classroom design. Will new elementary schools be built for the windowless kids on the west side and south end? It has been said that Wilson School

is too old to renovate. The irony is that in our millyard, every building of which is many decades older than Wilson School, Dean Kamen's ARMI Bio regeneration operation is in full swing. If those once dilapidated mill buildings can be adopted for this and the many high tech uses that were never contemplated by those who built them, how can it be that Wilson School can't be updated to educate kids? The money saved by not building a new school can be repurposed to renovate Wilson and many of our elementary schools. The 2021 Facilities Study, which was accepted by the school board, identifies the needed upgrades and repairs for Wilson and every other school in the district, and it does so at a fraction of the cost of the current study. The consultant for which is not just being paid to evaluate buildings but is also being paid to design and oversee the construction of the improvements; improvements that could total \$1 billion by the time they are done. Mr. Mayor, during an appearance at my children's school, you told my 12-year-old daughter you didn't support the Beech Street proposal but it was done before you became Mayor so there was nothing you could do about it. Well, there is something you can do about it. You can veto it if it happens to pass. Doing so clears a way for this Board and the school board to have a real discussion about the best way to address our school facility needs. You also told my 14-year-old son that you couldn't honor your promise to cut taxes because Mayor Craig left you with too much debt. Well one way to reduce that debt would be to stop this project. It saves over \$80 million. Given that this Board just hoisted the largest tax increase since the Baines Administration on Manchester's taxpayers, it would do well to stop this unnecessary spend thrift project that in the end will do absolutely nothing to improve student performance. Thank you.

Ryan Drohan, Porter Street, stated:

Are you making the city affordable to live? On October 1, 2023 a 9% increase went into effect from Manchester Water Works and on the 1st of April 2024, a 9% increase went into effect from Manchester Water Works and then again on October 1, 2024 we got a 3% increase from Manchester Water Works for a total of 21% in 13 months. On top of that, a 3.82% increase in property taxes. I ask again, are you making the city affordable? Facts determine otherwise. In regards to Phase II of the Manchester School District Facilities Plan of the city's high schools, an updated plan will be presented either later this month or in early December. During the school committee

meeting, Bob Baines said he heard a rumor from a credible source, a board member, that West High School is closing. The fact that Baines did not confirm that or try to deny or outright say it is not true indicates that everyone can confidently confirm that West High School is going to close in Phase II. I implore the Board to table the Beech Street Phase I project at an estimated cost of \$306 million until Phase II is presented in the next few weeks. We need more information on Phase II costs and basically the formality that West is closing and how the people living on the west side feel about it. The school board seems to have tunnel vision on the shiny object, a new mega high school, and lost focus on student's education and their safety. Just seven days ago in this very room a Manchester school district teacher was giving the Pledge of Allegiance during the Board of School Committee meeting. Between then and now, he has been arrested and is being charged with a very serious and concerning crime.

Don Pike, 244 Seames Drive, stated:

I am against the school projects and the reason being that I believe taxes should go for needs and not wants. This frivolous spending is not a need; it is a want. Thank you.

Steven Kesselring, 652 Hackett Hill Road, stated:

I am going to keep this brief and quick to the point. The proposal of Phase I is \$306 million according to the report that I read yesterday. Again, I didn't know of this whole issue. I heard of it but never paid attention to it but when I dug into it, I found that the debt service on this is almost \$500 million by the time it is done. So, what we are looking at is \$306 million but at the end of the day it is \$500 million when it is paid off in 20 years. Do you think the City of Manchester can actually afford that? That is the question that I ask all of you. If you believe that, vote for it. If you don't, oppose it. At the end of the day, I request that you guys oppose what is going to be spent there with Beech Street School and closing it down.

Brittany Ping, 199 Putnam Street, stated:

I am here to ask you to oppose the proposed demolition of the Beech Street school. The previous administration bulldozed this agenda through in November and December of last year reviewing and approving the nebulous Phase I to renovate four middle schools and renovate 1-2 or rebuild one to be determined elementary school for over

\$300 million. Most of them were on their way out the door having lost the election or not running for re-election. This Board then voted 8-6 in January after elected to pause the demolition because in those few cold weeks the TBD turned into an actual miraculous full plan to demolish the Beech Street school. We echo the concern as your constituents and we are looking for you as a Board to stand firm on the side of transparency as the site of the demolished Beech Street school will be used for an undisclosed, unreviewed, unapproved and as of yet unrevealed to the public mega high school meant to close down West and emaciate Central to a few hundred students in the not so nebulous and unapproved and unreviewed Phase II. Ask anyone. We want money coming into our school district funding education. Spending state aid meant to improve low-income education outcomes on buildings for building's sake is unacceptable. You get to be the checks and balances. You get to protect green spaces and playgrounds for the next decade in this community. Tens of millions of dollars can be saved by renovating existing building or buildings, Beech Street or McDonough which was also proposed in the plan, using the trailers purchased by the city and already at our four middle schools. Once again, we are just bumping out the timeline. We can save that money. Please vote against the removal of the city park, the Beech Street demolition and the looming mega high school and plan to close down West without a full public review. I want to remind you that it came to the ballot multiple times. This check and balance has been approved by your constituents. You are meant to be here doing this. If I have an extra few minutes, our new Chief is an amazing man. Thank you so much. I hope you continue to build the rapport with the citizens and with that man at the helm I cannot tell you how responsive and excellent he has been. Thank you so much. If I have any time left, I ask that the Board do the thing we need to do which is approve the funding of 39 Beech Street through March 2025 with the resolution that we finally get out of the business of running a shelter in this city and make way for non-profits to do the work. Thank you.

Melody Smith, 389 Pearl Street, stated:

I am just asking all of you to please vote against this. We can't afford it. I am a senior on a fixed income and I cannot afford higher taxes. Please listen to your constituents and vote no. Thank you.

Kathleen Paquette, 70 Grand Street, stated:

I am the State Representative Elect for Ward 5. I wish tonight to speak on behalf of the residents of Ward 5, specifically those who live in the area of the Beech Street school. This is regarding the building of the new school and the demolition of Sheridan-Emmett Park. This park is one of the few green spaces available in this densely populated neighborhood where most homes lack yards for children to play in. Sheridan-Emmett Park serves as a vital community hub. This is where elderly residents using the walking track to stay active, local children gather to play basketball and families celebrate birthdays and other milestones. For many in this underserved community, especially those without transportation, this park is their accessible outdoor space. If it is closed for the next 2+ years, where will this neighborhood go? I am deeply concerned by the lack of answers about how this community will be impacted during this construction. Simply put, we cannot afford to leave this neighborhood without a place to play, exercise, and enjoy the outdoors for the next several years. This project involves more than just a plot of land. It ultimately affects this neighborhood's identity and well-being. In addition, the financial burden that this massive project would place Manchester taxpayers in is unsustainable and unfair, especially during a time when many are already struggling to keep up with the rising cost of living and housing in our city. For these reasons and many others, I oppose the Beech Street proposal. Thank you.

Rick Blais, 733 Chestnut Street, stated:

I have a couple of things on my mind. One is definitely the tax increase. We are coming on a year from elections and that was a big thing for the city. As a financial advisor, I see a lot of clients that are getting into these reverse mortgages. Their house is paid off and they worked hard all of their life but you start getting a \$7,000-\$10,000 tax bill, that is outrageous. Any business owner knows you can't take in more income. You have to cut expenses. Maybe it is just a mandatory 5% across the board. Everybody can find 5%. That should be something mandated. I definitely oppose this tax increase and I think the other big thing is the buildings that are being sold were supposed to go to help Manchester's housing issue. We don't have one housing issue, homelessness. We have homelessness, we have Veterans and we also have first time homebuyers; young people coming into this city who want to live in this city and own a stake in this city. They can't afford to buy anything here. These people are going to

Franklin, NH to get a house. That is idiotic. We are going to lose these people to Concord and other places. We should be taking some of that money and using it as seed money to build affordable first-time houses. There are all kinds of programs out there to help them with financing and the city should be the one leading and championing that way. Looking at the third thing, Beech Street school, everybody is going back to the park. I lived on Green Street when I was five-years-old. I remember that park. That was the only green space I was allowed to go into in our neighborhood. Back then the neighborhood wasn't as bad as it is today. It has always been a poor neighborhood but it is a dangerous neighborhood today because of all the drugs and everything that is happening throughout the city. I would encourage you to repurpose that building. Here we are looking for places for Veterans and looking for shelters. Why would you tear down a perfectly good building that could be retrofitted into any multiple use? The building doesn't make the education. Charter schools are blowing public school numbers out of the water in NH. I think giving families choice is an awesome idea. We don't have that but we don't need to be building a new school to give a better education to these kids. Beech Street was state-of-the-art when it was built. I remember playing in that empty lot as a kid. That state-of-the-art was open concept classrooms which made no sense. Hopefully you will reconsider that and fight for the citizens of Manchester who are paying the taxes. Thank you.

Nancy Troupakis, 128 Karatzas Avenue, stated:

I am deeply disappointed of the role you have played as Mayor and your apparent disregard for the financial stability of our city. The disregard to demand accountability is truly disheartening and it is clear that the promises you made, Mayor, during your campaign have not been upheld. I understand that this was not all your doing. The majority of this Board also played a role. Manchester residents are deserving of leadership that considers the long-term financial impact on all of the taxpayers. How can this Board of Aldermen honestly make a decision on a project that has not been properly presented to the community? As an Honorable Board, your role is to represent your constituents and do what is best for the city. Supporting this project without fully understanding the details undermines the responsibility. It is essential that you carefully consider all aspects of long-term financial liabilities and assure that there is transparency and accountability to the people you serve. The school board continues to

disregard this city and undermines public trust and goes against a responsibility to represent and serve the best interests of the people. I have been following this proposal from Day 1. I was convinced that there was no way this current Board would approve of such a project that would create a long lasting financial hardship to the taxpayers; a project proposed with crucial information being withheld. We the residents urge this Board to pause and reassess the impact this project will have on our community before the actions of this rogue school board, along with the majority of this Board's role in allowing this project to have come this far, has serious consequences. Our city deserves better and it is crucial that this Board addresses our concerns with the urgency and accountability they demand. We need leadership that prioritizes the long-term well-being of our community, not short-term promises that will burden the taxpayers. It is crucial that you act with the community's best interest at heart in ensuring responsible leadership moving forward. I want to remind everyone that the first payment due on this repaying of the bond is not for a few years so what is our tax rate going to be then? We can't afford a few million dollars a month for the next 20 years. Where will the school board be and where will you be Mayor? You won't be here. Please reconsider this.

Chastice Cocchiarella, 1484 Candia Road, stated:

I have a background with being treasurer of the Weston Elementary School for five years and when we wanted to spend money, we raised the money. I wanted to spend every dime on the kids but if we didn't have it, we couldn't do it. Therefore, I am not in favor of the Beech Street build out and tear down. I would like to see our money going towards supporting our teachers and our students within the academics and behavioral issues that I see in the school. These teachers do not have enough support. There are so many needs within the school that are not being met. 504 plans and IEPs...we are spending all of these resources to get these IEPs in place but we are not executing them. We don't have the resources and the teachers don't have the time. We don't have everything we need to make sure that the plan these kids have gets executed and implemented. With that being said, we are also looking to do these builds at a time when interest rates are at their highest. Why are we doing this now? Why are we going to borrow money? Why don't we just wait for the interest rates come down? Most business people sell when it is high and wait and start doing things when interest rates

come back down. Obviously spending increases taxes. Everybody has said that. It is not affordable. Working in the mortgage industry as well, it is not affordable for people to buy homes or to pay off debt. There is not enough property and raising taxes does not go with what we are trying to do with affordable housing. It is the opposite. I am a landlord as well and thankfully I have kept my tenant's rent low because I don't think it is right to just increase rent because you can. These are things that we all need to consider here tonight. Thank you for your time.

Sue Hannan, 13 Sundown Drive, Derry stated:

I am the President of the Manchester Education Association. I am going to be that lone outlier voice of support for this project for the school because as an educator, having a structure that works and having buildings that are not leaking and having space for our students, especially in the inner city who really need to be shown that they are worth something is truly important to the educators. That is what makes what we do important and special. We have to think about what is the message that we are all sending to our children here because is it we want to celebrate you and give you the very best or is it you are not worth it? This has been presented multiple times across the city and in school board meetings. It does support teachers and students. It supports those of us who are doing the work on a daily basis. We have so much that we need but to have a state-of-the-art building would be unbelievable. To have outdoor space to teach our children but also a safe outdoor space to teach our children would be amazing. A lot of our schools do not have that currently. Please understand our youngest school right now in the Manchester school district is 25 years old. That is old for a school. That is half-life for a school. Most schools are built to be 50 years old. The need to move the building site is to do the best for Manchester and preserve the land, make a smaller footprint and create some better safety. We have to recognize what we need in the city center. I come from a town where they just built a brand-new high school and yes it was a lot of money but to see the pride the students have in their school and to see the kids when they saw their school and got to walk through it say wow they did this for us we are so lucky...it was unbelievable to see the joy in their eyes and it brought back the joy of teaching for an awful lot of people. Let's talk about doing something for Manchester that will be celebrated for years to come because a school like that will be pretty amazing. I appreciate your time.

Michael Garcia, 554 Cedar Street, stated:

Our public schools are not operating under market forces unlike other institutions that must deliver results to survive. Public schools are insulated from competition. This lack of accountability has led to inefficiency, waste and declining outcomes for all children. The people of America have always valued providing a general education for all children in society. Public schools have historically played a vital role in offering opportunities to America's youth. However, our current education policies have turned into a relentless push for unchecked spending. These choices have long-term consequences. The strain on resources and rising costs will affect the residents of Manchester for decades to come. For too long, the citizens of NH have borne the burden of ever-increasing education budgets. Inflation is squeezing families and the rising costs of education are not reflected in improved outcomes. In fact, education results today are inversely related to the cost per student. More spending has not led to better performance. Meanwhile, alternative options like private schools, charter schools and home schooling consistently achieve far better results. As a home-schooling parent, I have witnessed first-hand how children can thrive in a focused, efficient learning environment without the inefficiencies of a bloated system. Adding to the problem, rising property taxes are making home ownership unattainable for young people and jeopardizing the financial security of established home owners. Those unable to afford these taxes face the heartbreaking possibility of losing their homes to the state. This demolition of property and resources is nothing more than a smoke screen distracting us from the real issue; our schools are failing to meet basic educational outcomes. Until we address this fundamental problem, no amount of spending or taxation will solve the crisis in education. It is time to hold our education system accountable and insure that taxpayer dollars produce real results for our children without placing an unsustainable financial burden on families and all residents of Manchester. Thank you.

Amy Chhom, 71 W. Merrimack Street, stated:

I guess I picked the wrong night to come. I didn't realize this was all negative stuff about our city so I am here to report on some positivity. A year ago, or just around the beginning of the year, we presented on the Manchester Development Corporation. I am the Chair of the MDC and a resident here in the City of Manchester in Ward 3. We

presented our strategic plan to you and we are pleased to announce that our first requests for loans are coming in for some really exciting projects. While we haven't issued loans since the Covid recovery, we are pleased to report that through the strong fiscal responsibility of our Board, we have created the highest net operating income in the last year than we have seen since 2000 without issuing a loan. Therefore, we are pleased to report that we will be transferring the maximum amount allowable under the agreement between the BMA and MDC to the Manchester Economic Development Office to further support their efforts to raise our brand and bring additional visibility to our city in the hopes of bringing things such as the private investment that you are all asking for in order to support our school systems and in order to build our amenities to be at a higher level. I work for a national non-profit in my full-time job in addition to the stuff I do here in the city. I travel all throughout the country and the work that I do requires some of the people I work with to travel to me. They call come to the city and have positive responses to all of the things happening here and how beautiful it is and the amenities we have. We need to remember that we have a national spotlight on us. We are getting national praise and recognition for our cost-of-living and our livability; all of the good things that we who have lived here for too long take for granted. Remember that investing in our city, if it be the educational school system and buildings or sidewalks or water infrastructure, it is to bring all of those people here so they live here, work here, play here and spend their money here. Please, make sound decisions tonight. I am proud to be able to contribute towards the success of this city that I call home. Have a good night.

Lucy Drozd, Ward 4, stated:

I spoke here in July expressing my concerns about my property being significantly over valued for tax purposes. The city's appraisal is about \$100,000 above that of an independent appraiser resulting in much higher property taxes. Since then, I have learned about a property at 124 Queen City Avenue where Eighty-Eight Coffee Company is located. The city wants to acquire that property for a sewer project. In that instance, the city's appraisal was about \$100,000 below that of an independent appraiser. In each case, the city issued an appraisal that was \$100,000 above or below an independent appraiser, of course, in favor of the city. I should not have to come back to speak in front of this Board about the same issue over and over again. When I

spoke in July, I was told that all comments were taken under advisement. However, there was no tangible follow-up or follow-through to date. A letter dated July 2024 was sent to the Assessor's Office by the Ward 4 alderman and the previous Chair of this Board, Alderman Long. It was in response to my letter about two years ago. It is full of inaccuracies and misinterpretations. I will deal with the July letter at another time. The city needs to address this injustice. A \$100,000 discrepancy should trigger an automatic review. Has an independent audit of the city assessor's work ever been done? What quality controls does the city have in place to ensure that the property inspections and subsequent appraisals are carried out consistently and meet industry standards? The mission statement of the Assessing Office specifies that it should perform duties in a courteous and professional manner while insuring fairness and equity. It continues to state that it should also treat every property owner impartially and maintain a staff with the highest level of technical expertise. If the city appraisers cannot do their job in line with their department's mission and professional certifications, then independent appraisers need to perform these tasks. I want the city to do the right thing. Not because they are forced to do so but because they have a duty to do so. This Board is responsible for ensuring that the city departments operate in a fair and ethical manner. Thank you.

Scott Tucker, 65 W. Hillcrest Avenue, stated:

I have been a resident of this city since 1999. My kids were raised in the schools and they graduated here and had a great time and great experiences but things went downhill. I don't vote party line. When I go into a voting booth, I explore the candidates and figure out who meets my opinions and thoughts. I don't vote Republican or Independent or Democrat. I vote for the person that I think is going to do the job that best fits what I want them to do. When I go to the voting booth, I know that the person I am going to put the checkmark next to is human and I expect them to at least make an effort to fulfill the promises that they made to me as a voter and a citizen. I am here to give you a little warning. A few weeks ago, there was an election and there was an overwhelming voice across this nation for change. They expect business as usual to stop in Washington, DC. They want change. Last week I was totally blown away by an incident that happen in Chicago and I am sure there are people who heard about it. They are facing a \$1 billion fiscal deficit. That is a lot of money. So the mayor decided

on his own that he was going to push a \$300 million property tax increase on the citizens. Once that leaked out of the chambers, the city reached out to their council members and said no we are not going to stand for this. Well, the council came back and overrode what the mayor wanted to do and now they have to talk about what to do now that the citizens said they don't want it. That is all I am asking of my elected officials. Listen to the people here in Manchester. What do we want and what do we not want to happen here in the city? A short time ago there was an election in this city and there were promises made by people sitting all around here. I have heard promises broken and everything. This administration in my opinion is going about business as usual and it is time to stop. It is time to start looking at all of that. I have my own personal opinion about the schools. I think the proposal that is out there is rubbish. I think it needs to be tossed. We need to give our kids a good and proper education that is going to prepare them for the future. They don't need a nice building for three years. They need a lifetime. Thank you.

Ken Tasse, Ward 6, stated:

I come before the Board to voice my concern regarding Section 18 of tonight's agenda, an item that from what I understand was pulled from the committee where it belongs by three members of the Board and forced to a vote tonight. I understand that the rule was use but I don't think it was really the equitable thing to do. This proposal that is on the table for a vote tonight, as you have heard about a dozen times tonight, is to demolish the Beech Street Elementary School and construct a new school across the street at the Sheridan-Emmett Park situated between Union and Beech and Auburn and Green Streets. Here are two of my concerns behind why I am respectfully asking members of the Board tonight to vote no. The document that I just presented to each of you has a table and a graph showing data from the NH Department of Education. It is basically a timeline showing the enrollment of students over the course of the past nine years. It has declined in high schools by 21% and in elementary schools by 34% or 1,876 fewer children enrolled than we had in 2016. I will take my hat off to the middle schools because it looks like we have seen an increase over the past year but that doesn't happen by itself. It is not that there is a new school up the street that parents are deciding to send their kids to. It is the performance in our schools and I feel that what has happened in our district, having served on the school board for the previous two

years, is there is an emphasis on things other than academic excellence. The teachers and principals are working very hard for their students but there was a distraction and I won't get into my opinions on that right now but there is certainly more we can do to improve the performance of our schools so we are not sitting at the bottom of the heap across the entire state. My second concern is that I feel it is financially and socially irresponsible to make a decision to move this quickly. Yes, there will be argument that this has been coming before the school board for many years and maybe decades to do construction and renovations. If the showing of people concerned about this is not a good cross section of the people of Manchester, I don't know what is. If you are representing to the people, I ask you to please listen to the people that have spoken tonight and to represent them with your vote. I would also like to mention that the money we approved, the \$306 million, in just doing a quick calculation for fun, you can pay every one of the 1,200 employees in our school district a \$20,000 a year raise for the next 13 years. I am sure they would love it. Thank you.

Paul Galasso stated:

I have been here in the past to speak about the city's homeless. Tonight, I want to call your attention to one very specific matter that I think the homeless would want you to hear. Winter is upon us and we hear all this stuff about storms approaching the northeast so things are going to get bad pretty quickly here towards the end of the week as I understand it. In my work here with the homeless, I have been monitoring the number of people that continue to be unsheltered late at night. I am counting between 20 and 30 people and when I speak with them most of them are not the type that say well, I just don't want to be in a shelter. The vast majority of them are saying they can't get in. I know that there have been some changes. I know that 1269 is going to discontinue its overnight stays as a warming station. I also know that 39 Beech is going to increase its availability of space overnight for the homeless. While I think that is a good thing, the numbers involved in both indicate that there might be a very modest increase in the availability of shelter overnight. When it is all said and done, we are still going to have people out in the cold. My specific ask of this group is to please consider that we will have this 20-30 during the course of the winter and even if Beech is willing to take more, a lot of the folks that are not sheltered reside in the Manchester Street/Merrimack Street area and because they have difficulties making good choices,

even when it comes down to being able to sleep in a place where you can be out of the freezing cold, a lot of them will elect not to even walk to Beech. They will just try to find a place locally and deal with it. My thought to you is is there some way we could provide some kind of transportation maybe a couple of times a night. We could advertise this transportation being available at certain times of the night to drive through the Manchester/Merrimack Street area to see if we can pick folks up to utilize the space that we have. My fear, and I am sure you all share this with me, is that people are going to continue to be hurt by this. These folks are in a desperate enough situation as it is. Winter weather is one of the worst things that can happen to them. We should at least be able to figure out how to get them some short-term relief by giving them a ride to a shelter that does have some availability. Thank you for listening.

Dam Wright, Manchester, stated:

I want to get a lot of quick thank yous out of the way. It was great to see Peter Janelle getting recognized tonight as well as Lou D'Allesandro and Chief Aldenberg. We didn't always agree on everything but I have been very happy to have worked with him and I am glad to see that his replacement is going to be someone who came up under him and that is great. Certainly, Chief Cashin, Irina Owens and Jake King; folks who are putting together the winter warming station plans. They deserve a big credit as well as does this Board and the Mayor for the vote you will be taking tonight to hopefully extend the Beech Street Shelter and allow the overnight warming station to exist and keep that going until the spring. With that out of the way, we still have problems out there. I hope most of you read the article from Pat Grossmith in Manchester Ink Link about business owners on Hanover Street that are struggling. Now that people have been kicked out of the parks, they are showing up around the businesses which was exactly what we knew was going to happen. Here is the thing. What happens after the spring? We are hoping that Beech Street gets funded until the spring and that would be great but we need to be thinking about what happens next and I am going to direct your attention to a place that you wouldn't think I would. Most of the members of this Board are predominantly Republican and we just had a big election and statewide and nationally Republicans basically won everything. You control the city and the state and you can certainly control the nation now. Donald Trump is going back to the White House and I would like you to take a good look at what he said with regards to homelessness and

how we can address these problems because he has gone on record as being a big proponent of having a place for these people to go in terms of an expandable, scale able tent city where services are provided like mental health services and addiction services. This is not coming from me. This is coming from Trump. I know a lot of you voted for Trump. I know our Chairman was a huge supporter of Trump. Are we going to wait around for Trump to show up and do this? Maybe we need to start thinking about doing that ourselves. You have control of the city and state so maybe we need to start making those plans now so that we have a scale able solution, not just for the people who are going to be helped by the Engagement Center and the warming station but for all of the other folks who are stuck out on the street including the 20-30 in this neighborhood and the 70 or so that are out there. That is something to think about. Thank you for your time.

*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.*

CONSENT AGENDA

Accept BMA Minutes

3. Minutes from the 9/3/2024 Special BMA, BMA and Finance meetings and the 10/1/2024 BMA and Finance meetings.

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

4. 50/50 Sidewalk Petitions
Commercial:
149 South Main Street

Residential:
66 Warner Street
123 Riley Avenue
152 Purdue Street
155 Cypress Street
248 Ray Street
165 Coolidge Avenue

Information to be Received and Filed

5. October OYS Report.

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 receivables

have been accepted.
(*Unanimous vote*)

7. Advising that the City's Monthly Financial Report (unaudited) for the first three months of FY25 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 Section 70.57(B) Parking Lot Rates of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Manchester by amending subsection 4(c) Myrna Lot."
ought to pass and be Enrolled.
(*Unanimous vote*)

COMMITTEE ON ADMINISTRATION/INFORMATION SYSTEMS

10. Recommending that Ordinance Amendment:

"Amending Chapter 52: Sewers of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Manchester by adding language to Section 52.029 Grease, Oil, and Sand Interceptors; Section 52.122 Separate Connections; Section 52.125 Size and Slope; and Section 52.133 Stormwater Prohibited."

ought to pass and be referred to the Committee on Bills on Second Reading for technical review.
(*Unanimous vote*)

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

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

COMMITTEE ON LANDS AND BUILDINGS

- 11.** Recommending that the request from Alderman Morgan to name the soccer field at Sheridan-Emmett Park after Thamba Mbungu be approved.
(Unanimous vote with the exception of Alderman Long who abstained)

Alderman Morgan moved to table due to the uncertainty of what is going to happen with the Beech Street school. Alderman Barry duly seconded the motion.

Alderman Barry stated just so you know, this isn't just because of what is happening with the school. There is an ongoing investigation that needs to be handled. I just want to make that clear.

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

REGULAR BUSINESS

- 12.** Communication from Marissa Chase advising the Board of her resignation as a member of the Conservation Commission.

On motion of Alderman Long, duly seconded by Alderman T. Sapienza, it was voted to accept with regret.

- 13.** Nomination:
Planning Board
Margarete Baldwin to fill a vacancy as an ex-officio member.
(Note: Pursuant to Rule 23 of the Board of Mayor and Aldermen, this nomination will layover to the next meeting of the Board.)
- 14.** Nomination of Peter A. Marr as the Chief of Police.
(Note: Pursuant to Rule 20 of the Board of Mayor and Aldermen, this nomination will layover to the next meeting of the Board.)
- 15.** Acceptance of two new public streets - Arthur Avenue and Hummingbird Drive.

On motion of Alderman Long, duly seconded by Alderman O'Neil, it was voted to accept Arthur Avenue and Hummingbird Drive.

16. Amendment to the lease at 39 Beech Street to extend it until March 31, 2025.

Alderman Terrio stated I am going to support this and the next item also but as we discussed previously, it is winter time and I think we have to do this. We can't not fund the shelter in the winter. This will give us a few months to find a non-profit so the city can get out of the business of running the shelter. I think we need to do this and then find someone else to do this.

Mayor Ruais replied as you may recall from my budget address in March, I said that I don't think the city should be in the shelter business and certainly not funding it to the level that we have been. This is a community issue and the community should be involved in this. As I have stated publically and privately and everywhere in between, that is my intent and those have been the ongoing conversations I have had since March when I initially did my budget. We are making progress on that front and I would be happy to come back to the Board when we have a resolution.

Alderman Levasseur stated a promise was made to me personally and to other members of this Board, the Republicans, that you would never use any public funds to pay for the 39 Beech Street Shelter and you would only use ARPA funds. However, you are using \$300,000 out of the Affordable Housing Fund, which is money that this city gained from the \$1.1 million worth of sales of foreclosed property. That is direct taxpayer funding that is going to 39 Beech Street. You made a promise that you would never use taxpayer funding for that and only use ARPA funds. In your ARPA program that we are going to discuss at some point tonight...we put all kinds of money into this building, a ridiculous amount of money into this building and \$306,000 of it is coming from the Affordable Housing Fund. That is not what that money is for. The Beech Street shelter is a four-month shelter. It is temporary housing. The Affordable Housing Fund that we have been piling money into is for long-term affordable housing. It is for people who are going to take a property and make that property affordable by keeping their rents low. We just did a great project up in the airport area for homeless women that we can now house for more than one year. That was the concept for the Affordable Housing Fund money. That doesn't mean that there is not ARPA money available for

the shelter. It is just that this ARPA program you put together of \$1,779,220.13 that you have taken out of all the other departments in the city and are now going to be using for a bunch of other proposals, not that I disagree with them but in particular some of them shouldn't be getting ARPA money. They could go to that shelter. I do like Alderman Morgan's proposal where we do not support the shelter itself and we do not keep the shelter open 24/7 for four months for 40 people, many of whom have been there for almost two years. What I do like is funding the warming shelter. We can keep it open for seven days a week for less than half the cost and provide more shelter for people during the cold months that are approaching now. I think you have a few hundred thousand worth of ARPA funds going towards that also. When you add up the money that is going to go to the shelter and the Engagement Center to make it a warming station and the extra employees that you are putting in there, when you take all of that money and make it something we can use...there is a lot more money we can be giving to Welfare or our own city departments. Using taxpayer money specifically meant for affordable housing for the shelter is wrong. I respectfully disagree with the appropriation of that money for that particular purpose although I do support funding the warming station. I know there has been precedent set to use affordable housing money. I wasn't aware of that. It was probably previously money from the ARPA funding but taxpayer money should not be going towards that and it was a promise that you made also.

Mayor Ruais responded the conversation that I have had is I would not be putting the shelter in the budget next year. That is what I have always said. I don't think there is support on the Board and I wouldn't support putting the overhead costs of the shelter into the budget next year. When I was referring to city dollars, that is what I was referring to. This is not something that the city should be on the hook for in the long term. If you look at what the Affordable Housing Trust Fund has done in the past, it has been done for winter warming and entities like this. Chief Cashin can speak as well to the places that we put people in before. If not for the Engagement Center, where would they go? It is not going to be at 1269 Café and it is not going to be at Pastor Rivera's place this year. The only other place that has been used in the past is the Cashin Senior Center and I don't think anybody wants the unhoused to be in the Cashin Center for winter warming. I spent five months working with city departments to identify the

properties that we were going to put together to sell. That was a huge priority of mine at the beginning of the year and it continues to be a priority of mine. We are going to do it again next year. We went to the county and asked for the \$407,000 to cover this over the winter months and they said no. If there are other dollars that we can use, I would be happy to have that conversation. I just don't see it and that is why it is coming out of the Affordable Housing Trust Fund which is where historically if you look at the list I have, winter warming has been taken out. This was a massive priority of mine. This is something I talked about and wanted to get done. The last place I wanted to take money out of was that account.

Alderman Levasseur stated winter warming is a lot different than the shelter that provides 40 beds for 40 people who are just there. The warming station is a completely different animal. They are housed in the same building and the rent is the same. You don't need to pay for two. You can pay for one. The most prudent thing to do is pay for one which is half the price or maybe a third and put that \$300,000 back into the Affordable Housing Fund where it belongs and still get what you need which is to pay the rent. You have hundreds of thousands of dollars in here for the Engagement Center. You can just recalibrate and rework what you have there now. You are still going to have four months at \$27,000/month to use a warehouse as a warming station. You don't need to have the shelter and all of the staffing costs and everything else that goes with it. You told me and you told this Board that you would not go forward. You talked us into expanding this for five months back in February or March. You told us we wouldn't be dealing with this in November. Now we are dealing with it in November and you are going the most expensive route and you are using taxpayer's money. You can't deny that you are using our money that we raised by foreclosing on properties. You are not using ARPA funds but you have ARPA funds. This is not well thought out. This needs to be reworked and we have time to do it. I think that Alderman Morgan worked hard to try to get that solved so we can keep people out of the cold and rain and snow for these really cold months without this exorbitant price. The price is somewhere around \$900,000 when you add everything up that you are going to be putting into the shelter in the next four months. You are hiring two more staff people...

Mayor Ruais interjected it is \$407,000 for the overhead costs of the shelter from December 1 through the end of March and \$150,000 for the winter warming that will be going through the ECEL and Fire Department when necessary to augment those costs. That is \$577,000. I don't think we should shut down the shelter and move those 40 people into the Engagement Center for four months if that is what you were suggesting. You have to fund all of it together. \$407,000 is the cost for the overall building for that four-month period. \$150,000 is the staffing that would allow us to keep that warming station open for four months. The two go hand-in-hand. Then again with the city dollars what I said was I would not put that in my budget. That is what I said during my budget discussion this year and that is what I said on the radio and that is what I have said before this Board and that is what I am saying again.

Alderman Levasseur stated you can go on and on and on but you told me you would never use taxpayer money for that shelter and you are. That's it.

Mayor Ruais responded I said clearly in my budget address that I wasn't going to put this in my FY26 budget.

Alderman Vincent stated I was part of the committee that said I don't want to support 39 Beech to continue on. I was told there were going to be other entities taking over in November and this would be a moot point so I voted for it at that point. I understand where we are now. It is unfortunate that this is before us in November when it should have been dissected one or two months ago to give us more time to work these other options. I do not support taking the money that we are using to fund this. I just will not support that. We are not in this business. What is going to happen in March? I am going to say it now. We are going to have this same conversation in March. There is nothing that can be said that will make me think otherwise. People are going to say we can't afford it and we are not going to fund it but I am telling you it is going to happen again. This is a perpetual cycle that we seem to be stuck in with 39 Beech and I don't understand why we can't come up with a good plan. This is a move too fast and something we are trying to put together really quickly. I get it. I don't want anybody on the streets. I understand the warming station. There are entities out there that can

support this that we are not utilizing and until we start opening the doors to those options we are just going to be back here again in March.

Mayor Ruais stated I don't want to betray the confidences of the conversations that I have had internally with the non-profits and the state and other entities that I have been talking to but since I made by announcement in my budget address in March, I have been working with several different entities to try to find a way to hand this off. My commitment that I made in March and reiterated again in June during the budget remains the same. The City of Manchester is not going to run a shelter in March of next year.

Alderman Kantor stated we were also promised that it would go from a low barrier shelter to the highest barrier shelter and last I heard, it was still a low barrier shelter which is a concern of mine and has been since May 2023.

Mayor Ruais responded I know we have had this conversation in the past. When federal dollars are accepted, I can't raise the shelter barrier. I agree with you. When I was in early recovery myself, the last place I would want to go if I were unhoused is a place where alcohol and drugs were being consumed outside. I, too, don't like a low barrier shelter but because it is ARPA funding and there are federal funds involved, I can't raise that barrier. That is one of the arguments that I made in my budget for not wanting this to be a city run shelter. We should have the availability to raise that barrier. I don't disagree with you. My hands are just tied and I can't raise that barrier when federal funds are being utilized.

Alderman T. Sapienza stated you are right that this is an ongoing problem. I have been here 10 years and we have been struggling with this problem. Three different mayors have worked very, very hard on it. The idea that all of the sudden we are going to hand it off to a non-profit I quite frankly find silly. The fact of the matter is we are the end of the road for these people. If we don't have a shelter or warming station, we are going to be picking those people up off the streets in the morning frozen to death. That is why I will vote to spend this money. Do I like spending this money? No. Do I like seeing it come out of the Affordable Housing Trust? No. I like it when it is ARPA funds because

then I can say it is not city money. The fact of the matter is we are going to be here next year when winter is coming and people are going to be freezing on the streets if we don't do something. It is very easy to sit here and say let's hand it off to somebody else. Who? Come up with an idea. It is very easy to criticize the mayor. Like I said, I have watched three mayors get criticized for 10 years. The next one is going to be in the same boat. How about offering a solution? That is my two cents. I wish you well mayor. It is a tough job.

Alderman Long stated this was on the table over three months ago. We were waiting for the county who had given us originally over \$500,000.

Mayor Ruais stated yes, they gave us \$500,000 last year to fund the set-up costs.

Alderman Long responded we asked them for the \$407,000 and we were told that it would be determined. Then we found out they had \$387,000 to give. We asked for it and they stalled us until...

Mayor Ruais interjected the deadline that we ran into was we didn't find out until the middle of October that we were not going to get any money from the county. I would have loved to have brought this before the Board at the beginning of November because we started having these conversations as a city back in August about where we were going to put it. I would have loved to have brought this to the Board in October but I did not want to use any money from the Affordable Housing Trust but I could not make a determination on where the funds were going to come from until I knew what we were going to get from the county which turned out to be a goose egg.

Alderman Long stated this was on the table over three months ago and at the last meeting we had no other funding and as Alderman T. Sapienza said it is our responsibility and personally, I am going to house them and give them a warming station.

Alderman Barry stated you are the third mayor that I have worked with and each and every mayor has gone through this. What people need to remember is the reason we

actually have a shelter. Back a year or a year and a half ago, we were getting inundated with people sleeping on our streets. It was used in the campaign against Joyce Craig. The reason we got the shelter was to get people off the street so they wouldn't be sleeping on the sidewalk or in the parks. It has worked to a point. Is it the best thing going? No. There is a lot more work to be done and we know that. If you want to close the shelter be careful because they are going to be right back where they were no matter who the mayor is.

Alderman Long moved to approve the lease at 39 Beech Street through March 31, 2025.

Mayor Ruais stated if there are concerns about other funding in here like the case manager person and we want to eliminate that and move that \$150,000 so we can reduce the need to use Affordable Housing Trust money, I don't have any problem finding a way to compromise and figuring out where we can do a nip and tuck to reduce the stress on the Affordable Housing Trust Fund. This was a big initiative of mine. I said it when I was sworn in. If we want to find ways to alleviate the stress on that, I am find with doing that.

Alderman Barry stated in our committee meeting tonight we took \$100,000 from the Manchester Community College to give \$50,000 to MPAL and \$50,00 for Welfare. Why can't we take that whole \$100,000 and put it towards the shelter?

Mayor Ruais stated let's get these two items done and then we can talk about the ARPA funding.

Alderman Levasseur stated I don't feel comfortable voting to extend a lease that locks us in legally for \$128,000 over four months until the nipping and tucking has been done. There is a lot to nip and tuck from which is the only point I have been trying to make about this. There is a lot of money in that \$1.7 million that you can use so you can put all of that Affordable Housing Trust money back in. I have a different agenda because we added something but I assume it is Item 16 and 17. You are extending the lease but

you are extending the money. You are extending the professional services which I assume are included in the \$407,000?

Mayor Ruais answered yes.

Alderman Levasseur stated so we are voting for \$407,000 in funding for those two items. We are not just saying we are extending the lease. We are extending the lease with the money attached.

Mayor Ruais stated if you want, we can jump over these two items and move to Item 18 and address Items 16 & 17 when that ARPA recommendation comes before the Board.

Alderman Levasseur stated I can just abstain from the vote until we get the nipping and tucking done but I think there is a lot of room for maneuvering here.

Mayor Ruais stated so we can look at Items 16 & 17 later.

Alderman Terrio stated we should just vote on Items 16 & 17 because I think everybody knows how they are going to vote. Item 25 is going to be messy and a longer discussion.

Alderman T. Sapienza asked didn't we already vote on Item 16.

Mayor Ruais answered no. We have a motion before us to extend the lease at Beech Street.

Alderman Barry duly seconded the motion. Mayor Ruais called for a vote. The motion carried with Aldermen Levasseur, Sapienza and Vincent duly recorded in opposition.

17. Amendment to the Professional Services Agreement for 39 Beech Street, extending it until March 31, 2025.

Alderman O'Neil moved to extend the Professional Services Agreement for 39 Beech Street through March 31, 2025. ***Alderman Terrio*** duly seconded the motion. Mayor

Ruais called for a vote. The motion carried with Aldermen Levasseur, E. Sapienza and Vincent duly recorded in opposition.

- 18.** Communication from David Saindon, Project Executive, LeftField, on behalf of the Manchester School District requesting the following:
- 1) Approval to construct a new school on the Sheridan-Emmett Park land, which requires a partial release and quitclaim deed.
 - 2) Approval to abate and demolish the existing Beech Street Elementary School and build a park with amenities on the site in coordination with the Department of Public Works.
- (Note: This item was tabled on 10/15/2024 in the Committee on Lands & Buildings. Upon petition of Aldermen Long, O'Neil and Barry under Rule 16, it has been brought forward to the Board of Mayor and Aldermen for consideration. Also attached is an updated package from LeftField, memos from Amoskeag Industries and the Solicitor's Office, and the original deed.)*
- If the Board so desires, a motion would be in order to:**
- **Approve the Partial Release of Deed by Amoskeag Industries and accept the related letter, dated November 8, 2024, describing the primary purpose and permitted ancillary activities on the new school lot;**
 - **Authorize the change in use for Sheridan-Emmett Park from park use to school use; and**
 - **Accept the scope expectations identified in the letter from LeftField, dated November 8, 2024, to be paid entirely from the existing \$306M bond for the Priority One Budget.**

Jennifer Chmiel, Superintendent, stated I am going to start our update this evening in the hope that when I finish Matt will have the technology squared away. I just want to say thank you first for providing us time this evening to give updates on our Beech request. As a reminder, we have before you this evening a request from Mr. Saindon that includes having the Lands & Buildings Committee accept and recommend approval of the Amoskeag Partial Release of Deed and to authorize the change in use for the Sheridan-Emmett Park from park to school use. As we go through tonight, I have members of LeftField and SSMA who will walk you through these requests in more detail but I want to take a moment to remind all of you of some information regarding our work today. I am sharing these facts with you as we are aware there is some inaccurate information out there at this time. I just want to start with a quick reminder. The facilities project is a goal within our strategic plan. Our strategic plan was developed through countless community input points. The Beech project sits as part of Priority I which was approved and received bond approval close to a year ago. Just a quick reminder that Priority I includes the closure of Wilson, building a new Beech

elementary school and the additions and renovations at all four of our middle schools. Beech in effect counts for about 27% of the total project which was bonded for our Master Facilities Plan Priority I. Construction for this project is planned to last approximately two years. The plans are in place to provide temporary basketball courts during construction and then permanent replacement of the courts following construction. While we are increasing the size of usable green space within our proposal and in fact, we are making an investment in the park at the center of our city. You will see later in the presentation that we will talk in more detail about those numbers and the investment we are looking to make. The language in the deed makes note that the land must be used for either a park or a school. While we are proposing Priority II, otherwise known as the Master Facilities Plan in December at the Board of School Committee, I can report tonight that Priority I does not interface with Priority II. There will not be a high school build on the Beech property. Finally, the \$306 million project does not present a tax increase as the additional adequacy we had previously received from the state covers our bond payments going forward. Seeing that we now have technology in place, I will turn this over to David Saindon from LeftField and for the record is our Owner's Project Manager.

David Saindon, Project Executive, LeftField, stated within the packet that was sent to you on November 8 that I assume was distributed to you on November 14. As Dr. Chmiel indicated, we are here to have the BMA accept and recommend approval of the Amoskeag partial lease and also authorize the change in use of Sheridan-Emmett Park from park use to school use. Obviously, I am here with SMMA, Matt Rice, and we will be happy to take any questions you may have.

Superintendent Chmiel stated you have the presentation in your packet and we have the maps up in front of you.

Mr. Saindon stated the only thing I can clarify is that this image, Figure 3, was modified from what was included in your packet. The only thing we indicated was we provided a key legend. We were informed that there might have been a few individuals who were confused with the keying that was part of the packet so we indicated all eight keys with the key legend.

Alderman E. Sapienza stated I am losing patience with the Board of School Committee and the school district. I have eight plots of land in Ward 8 off of Stanton Street that are ready to be built by the students at MST. I looked into this and what I was told was they don't have the money despite the multi-millions of dollars that have been handed to the school side. They don't have the money to build one single-family home in Ward 8 on those plots of land using student labor. They could build one house and then turn around and use the profits to build a second house. It is not permitting and it is not red tape or anything like that. They don't have the funds to do that despite the multi-millions that have been handed over to the school side. We were told at a joint meeting at Memorial about a year ago that we were going to find out about Phase II in March 2024. It still hasn't happened. I want to know about Phase II and I want the school side to show their hand. I want to know what the whole plan is. I am tired of hearing about Phase I. What is the deal? I have lost patience myself. Thanks.

Superintendent Chmiel asked would you like me to answer about MST even though it is not part of this topic.

Alderman E. Sapienza answered it is though because the idea is despite the multi-millions of dollars that have been handed to the school district already, you don't have the money to build one single-family home using student labor on those plots of land. I was told they are all ready to go but they don't have the money. It goes to trust. I don't trust the school side with the multi-millions these projects entail if they can't build one single-family home that is all ready to go. It does kind of tie in.

Superintendent Chmiel responded the team at the district has been working to secure teachers to round out the complement that we need to support the house build. In addition, we are looking at the funding sources and the requirements of that initial home build to get us restarted with the house build project at MST. That is very much in progress. It had last come before the Board of Mayor and Aldermen a year or a year and a half ago where there were some questions about selling one of those parcels of land. As we came out of Covid, the house build project was not in the most stable of positions and we have been working to get that back on its feet. Our first priority was

looking for the teachers so we are good to go and right now we are looking at that funding. You will be hearing more about that in the coming weeks.

Alderman E. Sapienza replied terrific. Can you tell us about Phase II and the high schools?

Superintendent Chmiel answered we will be talking about Phase II on December 9 with the BOSC and then we talked to the Mayor about bringing an information session forward to the BMA.

Alderman E. Sapienza asked how about tonight. Just lay it out.

Superintendent Chmiel responded we don't have clarity from the BOSC yet so I would be out of step if I did that.

Alderman E. Sapienza replied that is what I mean. I have lost patience. We were told we were going to find out in March. To me, Phase II ties in with Phase I. You can't separate them. Thank you for your time.

Alderman Levasseur stated we have affordable housing money available now, hopefully an extra \$300,000 so I would love to see those houses getting built, maybe with some strings attached where it is affordable housing built by the students. Three weeks or so ago we had a meeting in my Lands & Buildings Committee and I laid out a whole bunch of stuff and asked for one document. You guys did give us the Amoskeag deed which was a requirement that I thought was reasonable but I also asked a simple question at that meeting and there is a rumor floating around that there was going to be a high school built on that property and nobody came up...you didn't just come up and kill the rumor. So now three weeks go by and you are killing the rumor which probably would have saved us so much time, energy and more than anything else angst. The whole north end is really worried about Central being torn down because that has been perpetuated throughout the whole north end for a year. West High. Bill Barry and the aldermen on the west side have been dealing with questions about West High being torn down. When you ask us to go forward with Beech Street and you guys keep laying

this stuff out there and not killing it, you wonder why people are upset and you wonder why people don't know what the hell is going on. You guys are your own worst enemy on this kind of stuff. You could have just killed it three weeks ago and no one came up and said anything but today you did. You guys confuse us.

Alderman Vincent stated thank you for coming tonight. I want to clarify because I had a lot of problems with the layouts we had in the previous revisions. I understand we are temporary building the basketball court on Figure 3 and we are going to rebuild the court once the school is built in Figure 5. Figure 7 is the new park and 8 represents the border of that green space. What are we going to do with all of the leftover space where Beech Street was? What is the intent for that space? Do you understand the space I am referring to? Basically, where the school is. You have Figure 2 and it just says demolition. Once the school is gone, that space with the exception of the square where the court is which I assume is just the blue space or is it that red box? What are we doing with all of that space? There is a lot of space there.

Mr. Saindon responded in speaking with DPW, that is undefined. It could be green space. It is flexible and undefined at this point. It could be a playground.

Alderman Vincent replied there is a reason I asked that because I had a feeling you were going to say that. Undefined to me just tells me that you don't know what you are going to do with that land yet which means we don't know how much money that is going to cost and when we have revisions made...I get it but the original plan was made and then we moved it to this to accommodate the green space which I am grateful for but at one point the plan was to spend X amount of dollars to do this and we have revised it twice. What is to say it is not going to get revised again and how is this affecting the overall cost of what was budgeted? It is a lot of money and I am trying to make sure that the taxpayers that we are milking this cow for are going to understand that we have a solid plan. It is a lot of money. I live on the west side and this is an issue but you want to make sure that if you are going to come to us and tell us this is Figure 3 revised, is it going to get revised again and if so how are we constantly revising it while maintaining the original budget that was set forth for this whole project?

Superintendent Chmiel answered we don't have the ability to absolutely define what that space is going to be; that is your property. What we can come forward with are proposals and the funding to cover it. Right now, what we have is the temporary basketball courts that will go in replaced with permanent basketball courts when construction is settled and then looking to use the space that is all green which would cost within the project about \$1.4 million to get rough graded, seeded, loamed and an irrigation system in place. In fact, what the district is looking to do is put that investment into the center of the city. Certainly, it is a bonus for our students to have green field space to use during the school day but it would be a significant investment in that park area. That is not due to be redesigned but it is due to be worked through with Mr. Clougherty and we have been in lock step looking at options for that.

Alderman Vincent stated I appreciate you saying that it is our space because I believe the park is our space too. Did the Board of Aldermen have any say with Amoskeag Industries on this? Did we approach them about our space? I get it but I want clarification that I have been asking for. It seems like so much of this could have been alleviated had there been clarity. This is a big reason why I personally have a hard time with this school board. There is just no credibility whatsoever in this movement from Phase I or Plot 1 or whatever we are calling it now versus the original Phase I. Also Phase II or Plot 2 or whatever that is going to be called is going to cost us a lot of money too. I can tell you it is great that we have all of these notions and ideas but 10 years from now we are not going to have any people living in this city to afford these plans. I just wanted a solid plan and accurate information. You have provided that tonight and I appreciate that.

Alderman Fajardo stated a lot of the concerns that we heard talked about taking offline for X number of years a safe space for kids and families to use while the project is in progress. If I am interpreting this correctly, and this is what I want you to clarify, the basketball courts will be moved immediately so those in theory will just be moving and not taken offline.

Superintendent Chmiel replied correct and they will be the same size.

Alderman Fajardo stated so the basketball courts will remain and did I also read that the playground will be on the other side of the street.

Superintendent Chmiel responded that will be replaced but in conversation with Mr. Clougherty, the request was that it go to Stanton Park. He would like to build up that park rather than put it over on the Beech property. We have been working collaboratively with him and he is looking at all of the parks in that general area to determine what should go where.

Alderman Fajardo asked how far away is that from this.

Mr. Saindon responded to the left of Figure 4. It is just off this page.

Alderman Fajardo asked so in theory it is within a block or two.

Superintendent Chmiel answered it is across the street.

Alderman Fajardo stated I will defer to Director Clougherty on the bigger picture plan there for how all this comes together but again I just want to triple check that there will be access to safe spaces for kids and families to utilize while the project is underway.

Superintendent Chmiel replied yes. The team has been looking at ways that we can mitigate any kind of delay. We understand when you are in construction there is going to be some time delay but that is why we looked to pull the courts over and get them to the size that are currently in place right now. The courts that we have on the Beech property are smaller so we are looking at expanding those and making sure we have access to, as quickly as we can, that green space we are proposing.

Alderman Fajardo asked when you say as quickly as we can, can you give us a realistic timeframe for what we could expect. I do think expectations are very important and I do think that has been a challenge. I think giving us something beyond just saying as soon as we can would be helpful.

Mr. Saindon answered assuming successful passage tonight and continuing to move forward, it is anticipated that mobilization and construction will start in the early spring/summer of next year. It would be roughly two years of construction and the student move would occur in the summer 2027 for a September start. Then the revitalization of the existing Beech site could probably take anywhere from six to nine months. There is a little bit of hitting the planting season and being able to have two planting seasons to establish the field.

Alderman Fajardo asked just to clarify, I think I understood that you said the playground will be moved as soon as you can.

Superintendent Chmiel responded to Stanton.

Alderman Fajardo asked how long will that take.

Superintendent Chmiel answered I don't want to speak out of turn for Tim.

Tim Clougherty, Public Works Director, stated we haven't discussed timing on that playground. Mark Gomez and I have discussed playground opportunities in this area. As Dr. Chmiel mentioned, the playground at Stanton Plaza is just left of the drawing that is shown on the screen. We also have a newly constructed playground that is just to the right of what is on the screen. We are trying to figure out exactly what the place for that is. As far as timing, that can happen immediately.

Alderman Fajardo stated to me that is what I am hearing as a major concern.

Mr. Clougherty replied those improvements can happen immediately.

Alderman Fajardo asked so regardless of where it goes within this giant diagram, it won't be a long gap of time for children and families to have access to safe space.

Mr. Clougherty answered correct.

Alderman Burkush stated so the \$306 million bond is not going to affect the tax rate.

Superintendent Chmiel replied correct. When we got the \$35 million addition in adequacy from the state, we broke out a portion of that to cover the building project. That is about \$17 million going forward to cover those bond payments. That is already absorbed within that bond schedule as we go forward. If you have specific questions, I can have Karen pop up and talk more specifically.

Alderman Burkush responded those were some of the concerns I heard tonight. Thank you for the explanation.

Alderman O'Neil stated I want to make sure I am not losing my mind here. There are two basketball courts currently at Beech Street school, correct?

Superintendent Chmiel responded yes; they are just smaller. They are smaller than what is across the street and we are saying we are going to get them to the same size.

Alderman O'Neil stated well not every basketball court in the city is the same size. I am not going to go down that road. There are two basketball courts there that can be utilized. There is also a playground there today, correct?

Superintendent Chmiel replied correct.

Alderman O'Neil stated the only thing missing, and I think I asked this in a previous meeting, are those cone shaped things the kids can shoot into. There is a name for them but I don't know what they are called. That is the only thing that is not at Beech Street and those can be added pretty easily. They are one pedestal and there might be two or three of them. This notion that we are taking away courts and there is no place for the kids to go is absolutely untrue. If the courts and the playground came offline, there is still a playground at Beech Street today and there are two basketball courts at Beech Street today. Correct?

Superintendent Chmiel answered correct.

Alderman O'Neil stated and Director Clougherty said on the other side of Maple Street there is a playground and I think you said on the other side of Union Street there is a playground. This scare tactic that we are taking away basketball courts and playgrounds is absolutely false, I think. There are opportunities for kids in that neighborhood and I grew up not too far from there. I don't want to get caught up in this scare tactic that we are taking away basketball courts and playgrounds. The construction could start tomorrow and the playground and basketball courts exist at Beech Street school. Let's put that to rest. I will say that Alderman E. Sapienza brought up the MST students building homes which they did for years. I am aware that you are short some trades instructors including electricians. Maybe Alderman T. Sapienza and I can...he can teach the kids and then the kids can teach me.

Superintendent Chmiel stated we may have a candidate so hold tight.

Alderman O'Neil asked am I correct that electrical is one of the...

Superintendent Chmiel interjected yes electrical is one. We came out of Covid and we took a bit of a dive with making sure we had instructors for those courses. We are stabilizing right now. We just lost an electrician but have a candidate that we are looking to move forward on Monday to the BOSC.

Alderman Barry stated I agree with Alderman O'Neil. As far as parks go in the City of Manchester, I am all for it. We need places for kids to go and play. I grew up in the same neighborhood. I played at Sheridan-Emmett and where Beech Street school's playground is. I did go there yesterday to see if kids are actually playing there. I did see the school kids going out there to play soccer. The basketball courts are perfect. Hopefully in the future we are going to make them even better. In that area you also have the Pony League park and the Little League park. Those are all the places I went to. I found a park. We did what we could when we were younger. We played outside a lot more than kids do now. My concern is the new school. The kids are going to have an outdoor area to play in, right?

Superintendent Chmiel replied yes. If you look at the top of the picture, the new carve out, that is a space for them. In the front of the building there is also a space and then we would be looking to use field space during the day as well across the street.

Alderman Barry asked where Auburn Street is just above Union.

Mr. Clougherty stated it is the alley north of Green Street and Union. Then you have Auburn Southback.

Alderman Barry stated where Beech Street was, and I know we have already discussed it but there will be a playground there and greenspace for kids to play as well as basketball courts right.

Superintendent Chmiel responded that is what we have been talking to Tim Clougherty about; what does Parks & Recreation envision and how does our project link into that. Right now what we are proposing is the play set that is currently at Sheridan-Emmett would go over to the Stanton Park and we would be looking to push the green space up to where those basketball courts will be going.

Alderman Barry stated I know some people have asked you about Phase II. I have heard rumors but I don't act on rumors. I will tell you what I don't want, I don't want to close West High School and I don't want a high school built where Beech Street school is currently. I really don't. I just don't think it is right. We have to stay strong on the west side. Now the \$306 million, does that include the demolition of Beech Street school as well as renovating the park area?

Superintendent Chmiel answered it does.

Alderman Barry stated I am in favor of this but I know a lot of people aren't. People think that we can refurbish Wilson. Tim, you have been in there. What is your take on it?

Mr. Clougherty replied I haven't been involved relative to the planning for educational standards.

Alderman Barry responded I am talking about the condition of the school.

Mr. Clougherty stated the school is aging and it doesn't meet current educational standards. That is really the impetus of what I believe the district is trying to do; modernize the educational facilities.

Alderman Barry stated I think it is important that we keep those kids in the Wilson and Beech Street district together because a lot of the kids, unfortunately, have to walk to school. Busses will not be available for kids within a short distance. What is it a mile?

Superintendent Chmiel answered 1.4 miles.

Alderman Barry stated that is not going to happen. They are going to either have to get transportation from their parents or they are going to have to walk to school and we want to make sure that it is feasible for them to get to school.

Alderman Kantor stated facts are facts. You are definitely taking away a park from the children, 100%, in an area for everyone to hang out and play. That is a fact. This is not a scare tactic. You can go down there and there are modular in that green area. There is a sliver of area for the kids to play. That is a fact. Do I need to take pictures? How long is this going to take? Anywhere from two to three years? I respectfully disagree with you Aldermen O'Neil and Barry. Kids need to play and we all need to get out and be in the green area. That is what you are taking away from this area. I am 100% against it. Didn't you hear from everyone here that IEPs aren't being taken care of and there are behavioral problems and not enough support for the children? I am thoroughly disappointed with how we spend our money in Manchester and I am voting no 100%.

Superintendent Chmiel stated I just want to connect on the foundation we have been building. Over the years we have pushed in to make sure we had contracts that were at

a level where we could pull in talent at the level we want to see within our schools. We finally pushed in curriculum that is vertically aligned and funded so that now we have curriculum cycles and common, consistent materials in the hands from our little littles all the way through our graduating seniors. We have professional development that is aligned. We have our MTSSB grant work that we have done and work we have done as far as what our expectations are for conduct in our schools. I will say that we will be doing a presentation on Monday that starts to show that our growth is starting to take place. Is it as fast as I would like? No but our graduation rate is starting to go up and some of our student outcomes are going in the right direction. So, we are moving but it took a lot of work to get a foundation built for the district.

Alderman Kantor stated well there are a lot of children that are leaving the district, as well as their parents. They don't feel supported and the teachers don't feel supported. I personally know a lot of teachers that were very disappointed and they left early because of how they are treated.

Alderman Morgan stated I just want to push back on Alderman O'Neil's comments about the comparison of the courts and the fields. First of all, the existing court at Beech Street school is concrete and has the same backboards as when Alderman Barry was playing in elementary school. The hoops are not the same. The court at Sheridan-Emmett was a gift by the Rock On Foundation, NBA star Matt Bonner and Travis York and his non-profit. They invested hundreds of thousands of dollars into that court. That court is a gem. It is like comparing the TD Garden to the Beech Street cafeteria. There is no comparison. Kids are playing on that every day. To say there is already a court there is just not comparable. That is important to know because you are talking about taking something that is a gem right now and just giving them another court. It is not the same. As far as the fields are concerned, there is a track around it and people walk on it all the time. I think it is very important that we give what exactly is there on the other side. I just want to make sure we understand completely that it is not equal right now as far as the basketball courts.

Alderman Long asked as far as the student-built homes, it is not a financial issue but a qualified teacher issue.

Superintendent Chmiel answered it is both. We needed to make sure we had the teaching staff in place and then we are looking to make sure we have the funding plan going forward as well. It was both.

Alderman Long stated I thought this Board addressed that a couple of years ago with respect to the funding.

Superintendent Chmiel responded I don't think it was resolved when it came to the Board the last time. It came back to us to try to resolve it at the district level.

Alderman T. Sapienza stated it was resolved. We were assured that we weren't going to have to sell the lot.

Superintendent Chmiel replied yes that is the expectation. The expectation is we wouldn't sell one and we would figure out the plan going forward. Right now it is finding the staffing and then making sure we have the funding going forward. It is not coming back to the BMA.

Alderman Long stated with respect to the park being our space, it is actually Amoskeag Industries' space. They are not our spaces. Every time we want to move one of them, we need to get their permission. Also, the track...is that considered a track or a walkway?

Mr. Saindon responded it is a walking path around the perimeter.

Alderman Long asked so it is not a track. It doesn't look like a track. So, it is a walkway. I am thinking it is probably a walkway that adults use to watch their kids play.

Mr. Saindon stated I understand that residents do use it to walk around the perimeter for recreational exercise.

Alderman Long stated okay but they can walk around the perimeter if it was grass.

Alderman Terrio stated Dr. Chmiel, I have a grain of advice. I know you are saying that it is not going to affect the tax rate because you are getting \$35 million from the state but I did warn you that the state can either cut back on a program or cut it out altogether. I will point out that I was just reading in the news that on special ed they just cut \$16 million. Again, I know you are an optimist but I am a cynic and pessimistic. Just realize that the state can giveth and the state can taketh away. That is my comment.

Superintendent Chmiel stated we are aware of that and also tracking the special education updates that are coming down from the state. Karen and I just talked about it at the start of this meeting. Going forward, we will be giving an update to the BOSC on why that is happening and what that impact could look like for us. I also want to qualify that I am not necessarily an optimist. I try to be as real as I can. We are looking at all of the data that is coming in from the state and we are tracking those numbers. I hear you.

Alderman Terrio stated I know we have talked and I think Beech Street is fine. I have walked around it and I know we put millions of dollars into it a few years ago. It is one of our newer schools. It is 50 years old but for Manchester that is kind of new. We are spending \$60 or \$70 million to build a new school...

Superintendent Chmiel interjected it is \$82 million.

Alderman Terrio stated okay so we are spending a lot of money and we are going to have the same teachers, the same students, the same curriculum and the same books. I know you say we are moving in the right direction but we have a lot of problems with test scores and a lot of problems with proficiency. With all of this money that we are spending and a new school but with the same teachers, books and curriculum, what effect will it have on proficiency or test scores?

Superintendent Chmiel replied I think it is the whole. It is our ability to provide an educational environment that is more common with what the teaching pedagogy would

look like today. Right now, we have about 13 classrooms in that school without windows. So, we have students in the center city who are going into class during the day and sitting in a classroom that is void of any natural light. We are looking to push in things like STEM lab and right now we are talking about what the gym space looks like. We are looking at what those classroom connections look like so we can have students connecting with each other and we can have cross teaching going on. We are looking at building in learning commons and improving the library and media center that is going into the building.

Mr. Saindon stated the school is also being envisioned as a community resource center. It is a community school and there will be facilities placed in that new building to help support the surrounding community in addition to just students.

Superintendent Chmiel stated in addition, when we look at the students coming back from Wilson and reconnecting to the Beech Street school, you are going to have a lot more students and a lot more staff and we are looking to build a building that can hold those numbers and really drive learning going forward. That said, that is the building. We are also working hard on the instruction that is going on inside the building. We have been pushing for that vertically aligned curriculum and the professional development that goes along with it. For quite some time, we didn't invest in either of those. We had curriculum that was scattered across the city and we had teachers teaching from different forms of materials. Right now, everybody is teaching from the same set and we are doing the professional development that aligns with that material. In addition, we are taking a look at all of our data. We just drilled in this past week looking at how our students are doing and we are recognizing that we need to look at this grade and this content and what are we going to do different going forward. I would say the team in general has approached education for our students totally different in the last few years and we are starting to see that needle move in the right direction.

Alderman Terrio stated that leads me to my last question, which is kind of two parts. This is a newer school. It is my understanding that Beech Street school is similar to two other elementary schools. I am trying to understand why we are rebuilding the Beech Street school because if it is similar to two other elementary schools...I have been to

every school in the district. Bakersville is much older than Beech Street and the Classical Building at Central is ancient and requires a lot of maintenance. It is such an old building that it requires a ton of maintenance. Again, I think the Beech Street school in my mind is fine. I was just there a few weeks ago. Why are we doing Beech Street when Bakersville is so much older and the Classical Building at Central needs a ton of money. I don't want to call it a white elephant but it is such an old building and needs a ton of maintenance and you have so many other schools in the district that are older. Why Beech Street?

Superintendent Chmiel responded Beech Street became the school for the first build because we looked to close Wilson and the state of Wilson at the time was not good. You would go up to the third floor to use the restroom and that restroom would then start to drain throughout the building. There was notable work that needed to be done at Wilson to get that rehabbed to be a school. So, at the BOSC, the decision was made that Wilson was in a state where we needed to move students out of there as quickly as we could. That shifted things from us doing the overall master plan as one to chunking it into two parts, Priority I and Priority II. Priority I was the stemming factor of Wilson needing to close and then we needed to split Wilson into two. We had originally proposed McDonough and the will of the Board was to move more into the center of the city, which is Beech. There were some adjustments through the initial phases of the Priority I work but that all stemmed off the state of Wilson at the time.

Alderman Terrio asked if Beech Street school, which again in my mind isn't that bad, is not acceptable and you need to rebuild it does that mean we need to rebuild Bakersville and rebuild...are we going to spend \$80 million on like eight or nine other schools. Doesn't that mean we have to rebuild almost every single school because they are all old and outdated? Do you see what I am saying? Does that mean we have to rebuild all of our schools really?

Mr. Saindon stated we are not going to be rebuilding all the schools. As we move into the Priority II schools, they are grouped by three schools over the course of a certain number of years. We have looked at each one of them in terms of recommending either a replacement school or addition/renovation. There is a mix of both of those

approaches for the different schools as we move forward. I will say that I think Beech is the only one that actually has a basement space to it so when we think about those 13 windowless classrooms, a good number of them are actually down in the basement. There are other opportunities to renovate some of the other schools that are similar to potentially avoid replacing all of them. We are certainly considering both addition/renovation and new construction as part of the Priority II projects.

Alderman Terrio asked if you are going to renovate schools that are similar to Beech, why not renovate Beech. There are three schools like Beech. If you are going to renovate the other ones, why not renovate Beech?

Mr. Saindon answered Beech is the only one that has a basement associated with it where there is a large proportion of windowless classrooms there. That is challenging. Whatever we would do to renovate that space, there would still be windowless classes or ideally there would be other windowless spaces because we don't want to actually put children down in those spaces again. What that would drive us to is a larger, new construction addition here so you would be building more square footage potentially making the overall project more expensive at Beech than at those other schools. That is the reason Beech is being suggested as a new school.

Superintendent Chmiel replied also the enrollment will go up for Beech so you will have two schools essentially in that one building where the others have just their typical projected enrollment.

Alderman E. Sapienza stated I want to say the idea that the \$306 million project is not going to increase the tax rate very hard to believe. That is simply not accurate and the reason why is you say well the money is coming from the state. Okay let's say we didn't have this \$306 million project. We would still be getting the money from the state and we could use that money for other things such as lowering the tax rate. Beyond that, to piggyback on what Alderman Terrio was saying, we don't know how much money we are going to be getting from the state. I think we are on Claremont 3 now. There is just no telling what the next legislature is going to decide. I think it is very disingenuous to tell the folks well as far as the \$306 million for this project don't worry because it is not

going to increase the tax rate. I just don't think that is accurate. Moving on, I just want to say very briefly about those housing plots that I did my research on this. I am not going to throw any names out there but it is very frustrating to me because I get on the phone and I take the time and I call the authorities and have conversations with them. I didn't just talk to some guy on the street corner. I was told unequivocally there is one thing holding that up and that is funding. It is not that they don't have a teacher for this or that. It is funding, that's it. Also, did you say this is not just a school but a community center as well?

Superintendent Chmiel replied it is a community school.

Alderman E. Sapienza responded I could have sworn you said community center.

Superintendent Chmiel stated community school. Those are two different things. We are looking to open up the school for more community use after hours and the structure that is being put in place would allow us to do that. Right now, if you open a school, you have full access to the whole building. We are looking to flip that back so you have community space at night.

Alderman Levasseur stated it is true that Sheridan-Emmett Park is not Livingston Park and the track is not like the one that was just put up there. That is a gem up there when you talk about gems and yes, the track is not really a track but a cement walkway that goes in a nice oval shape. What is good about it is the kids can ride on that and the parents don't have to be terrified of their children riding on the busy streets, especially Beech Street. I ran track for Memorial and we ran on a cinder track. I was a poor kid who came from the projects. We didn't think anything of it. We saw what other towns had. They had really nice tracks. I don't think it changed anything. It is just that we were able to run on a track and play wherever we wanted to play. I bought my kid a pair of Air Nikes last week and he didn't jump an extra 3' higher like I thought he would. We are spending all of this money on schools and we are missing the ball on what we are supposed to be doing and that is getting our education out of the cellar. I have been doing this for 25 years. I haven't sat on this Board for 25 years but I have been involved in Manchester politics since 1999 when I first got elected. I saw what \$110 million of

renovations to our high schools did. I fought like hell against that. We are still paying that bond and now we are looking at closing at least one or two high schools and we are paying that bond. Bedford left and all of the school districts around us left. We ended up with 650,000 extra square feet of space and we didn't do what we should have done back then. What I was pleading for was to not blow that money. Now all of these things that Alderman O'Neil was talking about like all the red herrings about basketball courts and tracks and parks are important issues, especially when you live in an area like that and you really don't...that is your world when you grow up like I did in the projects. We were fenced in. It was our world and we didn't know any better. We didn't know what Livingston Park was or Stark Park or whatever. We really thought we had a great world and we had a lot of places to play and we had a lot of camaraderie and friends. This area which is 2.7 acres is not a small little park. It is a big park with a lot of space and a lot of people who use them. There were two soccer games going on at the same time and people walking around the track and kids riding their bikes. The basketball court was in full use. Then you have your small kiddie park which was being used also. Whatever you guys want to do, it is costs. It is \$80 million. You are talking about \$17 million in bond payments like it is a house payment. A \$17 million commitment for Phase I. We haven't even learned about Phase II. We were told when I was sitting on this Board last year when this was jammed down our throat that it is going to cost \$1.1 billion. This is going to do more damage to this city when this is done...not now and not tomorrow and not three years from now but seven, eight, nine or ten years from now when all of those bills come home to roost. People in their 50's, 60's and 70's are not going to be able to afford to live here. You guys are putting the city at great financial risk with these plans. There is nothing wrong with renovations. I have renovated probably 15 or 20 buildings in my lifetime in this city. I have seen renovations that I never thought in a million years would turn out like they did. What they did with Ash Street School...you guys gave that away for \$500,000. They put \$500,000 into it and it is one of the most beautiful buildings we have in the city. You look at The Factory building. I was across the street when I owned Theos for 10 years looking at that building while it was falling apart. Now it is one of the gems of this city. You look at the millyard. Every single building in the millyard has been renovated. Almost every building downtown has been renovated. You guys could have done this so much better and so much cheaper and so much more efficiently. You are paying \$18 million for

trailers. In 2003, I don't remember what the cost of the trailers were but I sat on this Board and we spent millions to get rid of the trailers. Now they are back again. The credibility of the school district...you had mana from heaven. \$35 million came from nowhere and you could have used that money to get our classes better and our students going in a better direction. You could have taken those kids out of the basement. You could have done so much work on children and getting us to a reputation where we are in the top 50 school districts, not the bottom third. Instead, you decided to take all of that money and because you can't get them out of that basement you think building them new schools is somehow going to make our image change and make our school district better because you put some buildings together with paint on them. In the meantime, you haven't solved the problem which is the children not getting the education they deserve and you are using the money that was given to you for hard bricks instead of giving them better books, better computers, better teachers, better after school help or whatever. There was so much you could have done and for me, I see this just like I saw it in 2003. It is a boondoggle; it is going to cost us an arm and a leg and it is not going to do what you think it is going to do. It is going to be pretty and nice when it is done. Every building when it gets done is beautiful and great looking but the state of NH and the Governor of NH who is on his way out has asked for a 4% across the board cut at the state level. You are taking too much risk with us, the people who live here and pay the taxes in the city. You are taking a massive risk. That second phase is going to cost probably another \$10 million or \$15 million or \$17 million that you are going to add on to that bond. You are going to hurt this city and it is not going to take long. In another decade, this is all going to come home to roost. Mark my words.

Alderman Kantor asked is Beech Street a community center already.

Superintendent Chmiel answered it is a community school; yes.

Alderman Kantor stated maybe I misunderstood what you said but I thought you said it was going to become one.

Superintendent Chmiel stated no it is currently a community school. The Health Department actually started the community school model a number of years ago and we

put in for a grant and got a national grant of \$2.7 million to rehab and push that community school model. Both Gossler and Beech are community schools.

Alderman Kantor stated it says it is a community center.

Superintendent Chmiel replied I think that is referring to the space in the core that we would have access to at night. So, it is having community access to the school at night. We are playing with words a little bit. We are calling it a center but it is a community school.

Alderman Kantor stated the other thing I wanted to bring up is when I asked on October 8 where the children were going to play, no one had an answer for me on the Joint School Buildings Committee. You said that it is going to cost more. I just find it pretty crazy that now there is something and it is not going to cost more?

Superintendent Chmiel stated the rehab of the green space will cost more. That will be the \$1.4 million that we are looking to invest into that property so it does cost more to the project. To rebuild anything is going to cost money but we have the basketball courts and the playset was built into the scope going forward. What we increased was that green space.

Alderman Kantor asked as for using the park on the other side of the street, it is very dangerous for the children to be going across with any kind of construction going on or the speeding down the streets. I don't advise that either. I am 100% against the project anyway. I am just sharing.

Alderman Fajardo stated I know we keep debating the condition of the current Beech Street school and going back and forth on whether the right answer is to renovate or knock it down. I guess I want to acknowledge the school board for their decision to keep an elementary school in Ward 5. There is a lot of consideration and it is a lot of money but ultimately, I feel like the driving force behind Beech Street becoming the location is really about access. I think about the people and families and kids in Ward 5 and the immediate area. They deserve access to a solid education and yes in the form

of curriculum and the form of space. I also think, broadly speaking, that Ward 5 deserves the investment in the increased green space. Is this going to hurt for two or three years while we are shuffling students around and modular? Yes. I am acknowledging those are growing pains but I think ultimately the investment in our center city housing district is going to bring further investment across the board. It is well deserved and much needed.

Alderman Levasseur stated I did read the deed from Amoskeag that went to our Solicitor's Office. When I had gone through one of the deeds for Amoskeag on another park on another issue a couple of years ago, I read in there that if the city takes away a park it would have to be a one for one trade. I just want it reflected that in the deed written by Amoskeag it does not have that requirement. So, they wrote the deed giving you that property but it is not a one for one trade. They are not demanding it or requiring it. So, you do not have any obligation to do anything with Beech Street school to make it a one for one. I don't know if that was intentional or by mistake or whatever but it should be pointed out and put on the record. My one big question is you are going to go from about 350 students to about 800. Where are you going to park? What I am curious about is I thought the red dotted line would be the extension of the park to make it a 2.7-acre park but it is not. Are you going to be able to still park in that area because I am assuming you are going to double the amount of teachers and staff? So, you are not going to be able to use that park the way the other 2.7 acres is.

Mr. Saindon stated the existing parking area that is just to the north of the coliseum would remain as it is today in terms of parking. It would have some capacity for the new teachers. We are creating some parking spaces on the site specific.

Alderman Levasseur asked so where the school is going to be placed there will be parking.

Mr. Saindon answered correct but not at the same volume and certainly not enough volume to handle the entirety of the parking for the teachers. It would be a combination of utilizing the existing resource as well as the new parking that will be located on-site.

Alderman Levasseur asked is there an opportunity to take that house by eminent domain. Well, we don't want to use that word here but that or buy the house? Think about the amount of land. That looks like a big spot. What is that?

Superintendent Chmiel asked are you talking about the top right.

Alderman Levasseur answered yes.

Superintendent Chmiel stated we did not look at any eminent domain at this point.

Alderman Levasseur asked or a purchase.

Superintendent Chmiel stated no we didn't go there. We looked at the parking we currently have and the additional parking at the new property.

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

Alderman Long stated I wanted to bring up the trade-off. They are still keeping their reversionary rights meaning whatever happens there will revert back to Amoskeag. I also want to bring up the communications we got from Mr. Kamen and the Chamber of Commerce that we have heard before. The business community is in favor of this and believes that it will help them. I don't believe that the business community would invest in a city that they know in five or ten years is going to crash. I don't believe that would be possible. I have more confidence in them building their base in a city that is going to keep its stamina. I needed to bring that up because we hadn't heard about the business community and that is where the business community sits.

Alderman T. Sapienza moved to approve the partial release of deed, authorize the change in use for Sheridan-Emmett park from park use to school use, and accept the

*scope of expectations identified in the letter from LeftField dated November 8, 2024 to be paid entirely from the existing \$306 million bond for the Priority I project. **Alderman O'Neil** duly seconded the motion.*

Alderman Levasseur stated I would like to respond to Alderman Long's point. I didn't say the city is going to crash. I said it is going to be a helluva lot more expensive and I don't know who is going to be able to afford to live here. Probably rich people.

Alderman E. Sapienza stated the business community refurbished a lot of old buildings to and the irony is unmistakable.

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

Mayor Ruais stated I want the opportunity to come back and revisit this with the district and the city and have further conversations because I think there is a great deal of uncertainty based on discussions I have had with members on the Board and what we have heard this evening from people in the audience.

19. Communication from Alderman Morgan requesting that the soccer field at Livingston Park be named after Chris Laberge, a long-time coach at Central High School.
(Note: This item was tabled in the Committee on Lands & Buildings on 10/15/24 pending further research by Parks & Recreation and a memo from Mark Gomez is attached. Upon petition of Mayor Ruais under Rule 16, this is being brought forward to the Board of Mayor and Aldermen for consideration.)

Alderman Morgan stated Chris Laberge is a long time Central Coach and this is to name the field after him and give an identity to the soccer field.

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

Alderman O'Neil stated because the park is already named for Min Valavane and that is on the Beech Street side that maybe the sign can be put on the Hooksett Road side in that parking lot which is more adjacent to the soccer field. We just don't want people confused.

Alderman Morgan stated Mark Gomez said he would put a new sign out there.

Alderman O'Neil asked on the Hooksett Road side.

Alderman Morgan answered correct. Also, it will give more visibility to Min Valavane because it is the Min Valavane baseball field which is important as well.

20. Budget projections to be submitted by Sharon Wickens, Finance Officer, if available.

Sharon Wickens stated you should have before you the FY25 general fund expenditure and revenue forecast as of November 19, 2024 based on department head estimates. The current projected general fund operating deficit is \$71,000. The operating deficit is comprised of an expenditure deficit of \$711,000 and a revenue surplus of \$640,000. The expenditure deficit relates primarily to police overtime. There are currently 22 police officer vacancies. These vacancies lead to the backfilling of manpower in order to meet minimum staffing requirements, as well as comply with current contracts. The result of this action is more overtime hours. The expectation is that this expenditure deficit number will improve before the end of the fiscal year. A number of cost saving measures that will not have an impact to safety are being explored by police. In addition, five certified police officers will begin employment before the end of November and another five are expected to attend the police academy in January. The revenue surplus relates to wedding ceremonies, interest income and motor vehicle registrations. Health insurance claims through the first quarter are performing favorably against budget which is very good going into the winter. The forecasted surplus does include \$200,000 in the contingency account. There were 14 retirements through November 8 compared with 18 retirements a year ago. Severance paid through November 8 amounts to \$720,665 compared to \$709,504 a year ago. The severance account is anticipated to have a balance of \$1,207,688 after all related entries have been posted.

You have also been given a departmental overtime report as of November 8 and a summary by department of severance paid through October 31. I have a couple of comments. As you can see, we are in a better position in November than we were last month by about \$500,000. This is attributed to interest income and I increased that projection by \$100,000. I expect that to be more but as you can imagine I will be cautious between now and the end of the fiscal year. As I can try to guess what the Fed will do with interest rates, I don't have a crystal ball so I am sporadically going to toss money back as surplus to the budget. Brenda is seeing motor vehicle registrations do very, very well, including fleet registrations. She feels very comfortable throwing back \$400,000 now and she expects that it will grow before the end of the fiscal year. One thing that does concern me a little bit and I did talk to the Business Services Officer over at Police quite a few times and she feels confident that the deficit that they are showing is going to go down. However, between last month and this month, it went up. It is only about \$20,000 but I expected it to go the other way, even if it was only \$20,000. I am watching it. We gained about \$500,000 between last month and this month. We will look at where police is next month and we can talk about it further and think about how we might want to tackle it if it is going to get worse although they are telling me it is not. I am just putting that out there. I think it is early to try to do something now. I think we could wait another month or two. We are going in the right direction and I expect revenue surplus to come in but you never know what the winter is going to hold. We are doing great on health care. We are heading into the winter about \$1 million above budget but the worst months are December/January/February and I want to make sure we have enough money to get through it and we are not expecting a deficit there. Those are my comments and I would be happy to answer any questions.

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

There were none.

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

There were none.

23. Report(s) of the Special Committee on Airport Activities, if available.

There were none.

24. Report(s) of the Committee on Bills on Second Reading, if available.

There were none.

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

The Committee on Community Improvement respectfully recommends, after due and careful consideration, that the Fire Department be authorized to accept a NH Hazmat Team Grant in the amount of \$25,000 and that the Amending Resolution and Budget Authorization be referred to the next Committee on Finance meeting.

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

The Committee on Community Improvement respectfully recommends, after due and careful consideration, that the Fire Department be authorized to use \$531,332.99 in impact fees for the renovations at the Emergency Operations Center and that the Amending Resolution and Budget Authorization be referred to the next Committee on Finance meeting.

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

The Committee on Community Improvement respectfully recommends, after due and careful consideration, that the Mayor's ARPA recommendations regarding CIP 610024 Winter Emergency Shelter and 610725 Winter Warming Station, be approved and that the Amending Resolutions and Budget Authorizations be referred to the next Committee on Finance meeting.

Mayor Ruais stated before we take a motion on this, I did some back of the napkin numbers here. Charleen texted me and said to Alderman Barry's point about the \$100,000 from MCC I think we take that which was initially intended for an increase at MPAL and Welfare and put it towards this instead of taking it from the Affordable Housing Trust Fund. I would also say we can eliminate the Case Manager which is \$158,000 so that is \$258,000. Then we can take \$50,000 from the Lead Prevention Program and use CDBG funding for that next year. That is \$308,000. I believe I was taking \$306,000 from the Affordable Housing Trust Fund. If we make those alterations, then we don't need to take the \$306,000 from the Affordable Housing Trust Fund.

Matthew Normand, City Clerk, stated that is actually the next report. This is just for the Winter Warming Station.

Alderman Levasseur stated now that you have taken that money and put it back into where it belongs, I will support keeping it open until March 31.

Mayor Ruais stated if we make those three changes that represents \$308,000 and \$306,000 was what we needed.

Alderman Long asked but that is not what we are voting on right now correct.

Mayor Ruais answered no it isn't. I am sorry that I skipped ahead.

Alderman Morgan asked can we move all three motions at once.

Mayor Ruais asked is everybody comfortable with that. We would be moving on the entirety of the project with these changes that I just outlined.

Alderman Fajardo asked can some of that Affordable Housing Trust money go back into the lead remediation to fund that.

Mayor Ruais answered in my conversations with Planning, and Jeff feel free to chime in but my understanding is that the requirements for what is funding out of the Affordable Housing Trust Fund are very broad and if we were so inclined, we could take the money from there.

Alderman Fajardo stated I am just struggling with taking \$50,000 away from lead remediation.

Mayor Ruais asked am I correct on that Jeff.

Jeff Belanger, Planning & Community Development Director, replied it has never been done but I can look into it. The lead program goes to low income individuals and

improving the safety of where they live. It would seem to fit but I would have to look into it.

Mayor Ruais stated my understanding from Mr. Fleming was that we had two years to finish the requirement that we have on the city side to fund all of that. I am not suggesting that we pull away from our commitment to do this. It is just in terms of this funding tonight, we won't have ARPA funding going to it. If I am not mistaken, we also had this in the budget that was passed this year. We have lead remediation this year. I am not pulling back on that commitment by any means. It is just that we aren't going to do it with ARPA funds.

Alderman Long stated I just wanted to put on everybody's radar that Police are looking for \$170,000 for the female locker rooms which I believe are needed immediately. Is there \$170,000 in this scenario?

Alderman Morgan answered ARPA can't be used.

Alderman Long asked why not.

Mr. Belanger stated it can only be used for capital improvements and only in select circumstances, ventilation in particular is one that we have used before in the past. We spoke with the Police Department to ask them how much ventilation was being done versus everything else and they said it is really a whole scale renovation so it doesn't fit within the requirements from Treasury for ARPA.

Alderman Long asked how come at the county level we are doing all sorts of renovations other than HVAC with ARPA money.

Mr. Belanger answered I can't speak for what the county is doing. HVAC is allowed. Remember that ARPA funding goes back to the pandemic and the recovery from that so increased ventilation helps with that purpose but if you are doing something that is internal to the building and not public facing, we have looked at the Treasury regulations and they would not allow for that.

Alderman Fajardo asked is there any portion of that locker room renovation that would be HVAC.

Mr. Belanger responded my understanding from my staff who spoke with staff at the Police Department is that it is really not a significant percentage. It is a whole scale locker room renovation.

Alderman Fajardo replied sure but I was just thinking if we can fund the HVAC with ARPA funds that brings the overall need down and maybe we can keep moving some numbers around.

Mayor Ruais stated I am certainly committed to working with everybody on this Board to identify the best place to get that \$170,000 whether it is in the budget process next year or whether we can use the grant coordinator...I know they often do infrastructure capital improvements on buildings through grants so maybe that is an avenue we can pursue as well.

Alderman Long stated the longer we wait, the more expensive it is going to get.

Alderman Levasseur moved to approve the Mayor's ARPA recommendations with the changes identified which includes reducing MCC by \$100,000, removing the case manager at \$158,000 and removing \$50,000 from lead remediation money and putting that \$308,000 towards the 39 Beech Street shelter to keep it open through March 31, 2025. ***Alderman Morgan*** duly seconded the motion. Mayor Ruais called for a vote. *There being none opposed, the motion carried.*

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

There were no reports.

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

There were no reports.

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

The Committee on Public Safety, Health & Traffic respectfully recommends, after due and careful consideration, that the city's Hazard Mitigation Plan be approved.

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

29. Bond Resolution:

"Authorizing Bonds, Notes or Lease Purchases in the amount of Three Million Six Hundred Forty Six Thousand Seven Hundred and Eighty Dollars (\$3,646,780) for the 2025 CIP 810725 SNHU Arena Capital Improvements."

If the Board so desires, a motion would be in order that the Bond Resolution ought to pass and be Enrolled.

*On motion of **Alderman O'Neil**, duly seconded by **Alderman Terrio**, it was voted to waive the reading by title only.*

*On motion of **Alderman O'Neil**, duly seconded by **Alderman Terrio**, it was voted that the Bond Resolution ought to pass and be Enrolled.*

30. Ordinance Amendment:

"Amending Section 70.57(B) Parking Lot Rates of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Manchester by amending subsection 4(c) Myrna Lot."

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

*This Ordinance having had its final reading by title only, on motion of **Alderman Long**, duly seconded by **Alderman Burkush**, it was Ordained.*

NEW BUSINESS

Alderman O'Neil stated I have two things and one of them has been brewing around the city for a little while and I made calls to staff but there is a real concern in the community about these 5G booster stations that they are putting up. I talked to two different utilities

who said they have specific safety guidelines in place when they are going up to work on their utility whatever it may be. I think this is serious. I have spoken with Congressman Pappas' office but this is an issue in the city. They are around schools and nobody can get an answer. It looks like it may be the FCC but nobody can get an answer for sure. This is an important health issue in the community right now. Again, I have talked to two linemen from different utilities who say they have very specific guidelines on how they work in the area. I don't know where to send this.

Alderman T. Sapienza stated they stay away from them is what they do.

Alderman O'Neil asked Anna do you have any recommendation on where we can send this.

Anna Thomas, Public Health Officer, stated your point was well taken. It is the FCC that regulates that.

Mayor Ruais stated I would be happy to discuss this internally with department heads. We do have monthly meetings.

Alderman O'Neil stated Congressman Pappas is in the loop on this but I think he is looking for some action.

Mayor Ruais stated I would be more than happy to talk to Anna and the school district and whomever else I have to talk to.

Alderman O'Neil stated I talked to Tim Clougherty also. It is an important issue. The second issue, and I know this isn't going anywhere because I sent a couple of emails but this CMC...the community is reaching out looking for information and there is none. I know they had that one public hearing but people are worried about what health care they are going to have and 70-80 people already know they are going to lose their job. That number is probably going to double by the time it actually takes place. I know there is nothing we can do about it but I had hoped that we could bring them in to at least have a discussion but there doesn't seem to be any interest in that. I heard from a

vendor today who has dealt with CMC for years, a local vendor, who doesn't believe he is going to have business when the new company takes over. This is a major issue both for health care and for economics. I don't know what to do with it. I have sent emails asking the Board to bring CMC or HCA in but there doesn't seem to be an interest. I want to get it out there though because it is a major issue.

Alderman T. Sapienza stated I have also tried to get some information. I have asked you to invite Anthem in also. The one thing we do know is once Hospital Corporation of America takes over, anything that is not profitable at CMC will disappear. That is clear to everyone.

Alderman Fajardo stated I wanted to give a shout out to the Office of Youth Services and the Youth Council. Alderman Barry and Alderwoman Thomas and I assisted the Youth Council about a month ago as they prepped for a large presentation that they delivered to the school district. According to the latest OYS report, it was well received and the students have been invited to join a steering committee within the school district. I wanted to commend those students and thank OYS for their continued great work.

Alderman T. Sapienza stated we should look into moving OYS. They need a place.

Alderman E. Sapienza stated I really like the idea of us discussing things that are not under our direct purview but are happening in the City of Manchester like 5G or CMC for that matter. So, along those lines if we are going to do that, I think it would be great if Mayor you could draw up on city letterhead that we could all sign a request of our Congressional delegation asking them to secure the southern border for the sake of safety and security in the City of Manchester. Also please stop sending us refugees because we have a vacancy rate of less than 1%. Also, we want to encourage all law enforcement to work together for the betterment of the city. I know Hillsborough County has some problems. I looked into that and they don't cooperate with the federal authorities in the apprehension of illegal immigrants with detainers. I really like the idea of us looking at problems that are not in our direct purview. If we could do that and

contact our Congressional delegation and get something written up on city letterhead so we could all sign that would be great. Thanks.

Alderman O'Neil asked can I respond to that because that is a direct shot at me.

Alderman E. Sapienza answered no it isn't. It had nothing to do with you.

Alderman Burkush stated we had a long election and the city staff from the Clerk's Office and all the volunteers at the polls need to be recognized and thanked.

Alderman Terrio stated on a similar note, I know all of the aldermen do this but I get so many calls from constituents and I really lean heavily on some of our staff. I have been at this for a few years now and realized I have never thanked them publically. There are certain people that I call all the time for help with constituent services. Tim Clougherty's staff – Caleb Dobbins and Kristen Clarke and also Sgt. Emmett Makin and Stacy DiSabato. I am always calling her. Last but not least and no relation to Dan O'Neil but we have a tree surgeon and arborist named Dan O'Neil. Dan did not get him the job. He does a great job and is always cutting down trees for me.

Alderman Morgan stated just really quickly I want to echo what Alderman O'Neil said and support him. I have gotten multiple calls from Ward 1 and talked to people about 5 G. It is a real issue and I fully support what he said.

Alderman Levasseur stated I sense this is the Chief's last night and he is not coming to any meetings any more so I want to thank him personally. My wife lost her phone and I had to make an emergency call on a Saturday night and of course the Chief answered the phone and told me how to get through and who to call. Officer Slocum, with the help of my little 12-year-old were able to figure out where the phone was. They were able to track it down and Officer Slocum and Chief Aldenberg were very helpful. My wife was very delighted. She lost it at the mall and we were able to track it down. It took a lot of pressure off of me. I want to thank Officer Slocum for his professionalism, what a good guy, and for bringing it back to my wife who was very happy. I also want to thank the Chief. He has always answered the phone no matter what time of the day or

on the weekend. I try to leave him alone on the weekend but when the wife tells you to call, you have to call. Thank you for very much for your service and Officer Slocum thank you.

Alderman Vincent stated I just want to touch quickly on CMC. I did reach out to Mr. Alex Walker. He is very accessible. I did email him three questions recently and I did get a response. I will tell you the questions and maybe this will help answer some of our questions. I geared them towards your concerns as well. The first question I asked was what do you believe will be the impact on the city's local economy. Do you feel the impact will be immediate or a period of time later after the integration is fully integrated? His answer was immediate impact on local economy with tax revenue and capital investment at CMC over the next several years on projects like the central utility plant, which is a \$40 million+ project. The second question I asked was what will be the impact on community services that CMC has provided and can we expect more? His answer was Healthcare for the Homeless and Dental are not going away and new foundations and Catholic Charities will be working with them to maintain and grow these programs. My final question was what is the impact on cost-saving providers such as BASC and will HCA work with these providers for patient care? I thought that was an important one as well. The answer was no impact will be made. They have been a great partner with us and HCA would love to continue that. He is accessible and I would encourage anybody that has any questions, comments or concerns to reach out to Mr. Alex Walker. He is more than happy to answer questions. If anybody needs his contact information, I can get it to you but it is awalker@cmc-nh.org.

Alderman Terrio stated I just realized that I forgot to thank you former Chief of Staff, Nick Pappas.

Mayor Ruais replied I demanded he come tonight but he no longer reports to me so I couldn't get him. I was able to strong arm Chief Aldenberg to come and I know he wanted to come for AC Marr as well. I assure you that Nick isn't watching tonight but I do deeply appreciate his service to the city. I have done that Chief of Staff job before and it is excruciating. Whatever calls I get during the day, he gets X plus 10. I deeply appreciated his work for me and on your behalf. I know you all had occasion to reach

out to him at times. I would like to take a moment to introduce Daley Frenette who has taken over the Chief of Staff role. I have one other thing before we go into non-public. In the interest of continuing with the thanks for all of our city departments, I emailed this to everybody today and we put it out on the table as well. First, I want to thank you for your support of several initiatives that are in here. The transfer of funds to the Police Department, the work at DPW to do the clean-ups and the work with Anna earlier this year for overdoses. The list goes on and on but as you can see here, we have made some tremendous progress since the beginning of the year on addressing quality of life issues in this city and addressing addiction in this city. I think the numbers for the Beech Street Shelter are pretty clear and how well they have been performing since June when we started requiring them to do this and the downtown street cleaning crew as well with Street Plus. There have been 38,000 lbs. of trash picked up just since July. I think we made some tremendous progress addressing a lot of things that we all hear and I certainly hear at town halls. Thank you to all of the departments involved in that as well.

TABLED ITEMS

- 32.** Report from the Committee on Community Improvement recommending that the Amending Resolution and Budget Authorizations providing for the transfer and expenditure of funds in the amount of \$400,000 for CIP 610625 80 Merrimack Street (Residence at Chestnut Phase II) be approved.
(Unanimous vote)
(Note: Tabled on September 4, 2024.)

This item remained on the table.

*On motion of **Alderman Terrio**, duly seconded by **Alderman Vincent**, it was voted to recess the meeting pursuant to RSA 91-A:2, I(a) for strategy or negotiations with respect to collective bargaining.*

Mayor Ruais called the meeting back to order.

*There being no further business, 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