

BOARD OF MAYOR AND ALDERMEN

December 3, 2024 at 7:00 PM

Mayor Ruais called the meeting to order.

Mayor Ruais called for the Pledge of Allegiance, this function being led by Alderman Goonan.

Mayor Ruais called for a moment of silence.

The Clerk called the roll.

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

Absent: Alderman Vincent

Mayor Ruais stated I have one public recognition that I would like to make tonight that I have been dying to make and am thrilled that we finally have the opportunity to. As I am sure all of you know following in the newspaper and on WMUR and on social media, on September 26 a 10-member swift water rescue team from the Manchester Fire Department was deployed to North Carolina as an EMAC state resource deployment. I would love to call the team members forward and then I have a summary of their list of accomplishments on that trip. I would like to call you up first and recognize each of you individually. Battalion Chief Jon Fosher, Training Coordinator Kevin Grebinar, Captain Adam Iverson, Lt. Tom Defina, and firefighters Jim Langley, Craig Robichaud, Adam Langlois, Tyler Gaudette, Robert McKechnie, and Jason Coulter. A couple of pages is not going to do this justice but I would like to read a quick summary that was presented to me and then I had the honor of partaking in a debrief with the Governor at the Central Fire Station. It was really a remarkable presentation on all that these individuals accomplished. Upon arriving in Boone, North Carolina on September 27, the team was immediately put to work conducting a successful water rescue of an individual who was trapped in a large building by rapidly rising water. Immediately following this rescue, the team responded to an additional family trapped in their home, which was severely compromised from a flooded river and surrounded by a large debris pile. Using rope rescue systems, the team was able to successfully rescue three individuals from that

home. The next day, the team was tasked with a rescue mission at a home surrounded by a mudslide where two individuals and a dog were trapped. The team made access to the home and set-up two separate rope rescue systems to successfully rescue both individuals and their dog. Over the next seven days, the team continued to operate in the area of Watauga and Avery counties conducting several search missions. MFD also had two members deploy as part of FEMA Massachusetts Task Force I – Lt. Adam Brackett, a water rescue specialist went to western North Carolina and was one of 16 who were part of an MRP, Mission Ready Package. The MRP conducted a combination of boat and land-based searches. He was deployed for 22 days. Lt. Tom Defina was deployed on Wednesday, October 9 to Charlotte, NC to work as a boat operator for the team in place. The team performed secondary searches up and down the French Broad River via boat stretching from Asheville to the Tennessee border. He was deployed for 10 days. All members of the Manchester Fire Department who were deployed represented their department, the City of Manchester and the State of NH with true professionalism and dedication and their actions were literally nothing short of heroic. Thank you so much gentlemen for continuing to put Manchester in an incredible light. Your exceptionalism, professionalism and bravery are a deep complement to the City of Manchester that you serve. Thank you so much.

PUBLIC COMMENT

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

Suzanne Chretien, 248 Donald Street, stated:

First, I want to say that public schools are the foundation of this country and we need to make our public schools the best that they can be. The school board here and you as the Board of Mayor and Aldermen also have a responsibility to do that along with the

state. I believe you and some others sitting around you in this chamber have lost sight of what is important to people who live here now or who may be moving here in the future. You deny showing support to the people who live in the center city, especially the children because that is what this is about as Mr. Levasseur said at the last meeting. We cannot hide behind the fact that taxes may go up and simply give this as a reason to ignore what is extremely important for children and their families who will be attending the new school. You are leaving them in limbo and this is very disrespectful to their needs. A new school and more green space is vital to progress needed in this area. It will give them a neighborhood that will allow more relationships to build. I do not understand how you can let down citizens in this way. The longer you delay, the higher the cost. Does that make any sense to you? The school board has worked diligently and intelligently with the school district for at least two years and you have just pulled the rug out from under them. I see some aldermen as the no people who no matter who it will help will pull the plug on something that is vital to the children and families who live there. You are voted in to help people. That is your first responsibility. I know you will hear from many on the increase in taxes. Other cities surrounding us are too but they are investing in schools as a priority and I am not sure Manchester is. Cities like Nashua and Concord have shown their success in making their schools one of the most important areas they focus on. Again, I must repeat that this is about the children. They deserve the best and what the school board has worked on so hard must move forward. Thank you.

Steve Thiel, 105 Riverwalk Way, stated:

I hope you all had a safe and happy Thanksgiving. I am here to advocate for the continuation of the Manchester school district's Priority I facilities project including most notably the Beech Street School project. I have been working in Manchester since November 2015. I purchased my home last June. My wife and I married this past summer and not a week goes by that we don't talk about our future and particularly building a young family here in Manchester. In order to do that, we want to live in a place that consistently prioritizes public education, follows through on prior commitments and invests in community hubs like a new Beech Street School. Beech Street's amazing students, faculty and staff were integral in the city receiving a \$2.5 million community schools grant, which will bring valuable services to center city

families. They deserve our support and I am hoping this Board will do the economically and educationally right thing in allowing this project to move forward.

Richard Irving, Ward 2, stated:

I still oppose the Beech Street School Priority I project that would cost the taxpayers \$306 million. The people involved in it did not take no for an answer. That kind of money should be better spent on more important projects like affordable housing, safer streets, homelessness, anti-drug and anti-weapons programs, better education for school students and more police officers for our city. Thank you.

Rebecca Smith, Spruce Street, stated:

I have a few comments and I will try to keep them brief. On the topic of education, I was quite impressed by the previous presentation about a program that is successfully coaching young men in middle school and high school that has been using Library facilities. I know that they appealed for additional funding and would like offices perhaps in the schools. I have a question on whether schools need to be community hubs when we already have facilities available in our libraries. Honestly, you can get books easily, second-hand hard copy books, online copies of public works so the library's initial value added to our community of being a place for books is perhaps decreasing in current days but it can still be a vital third place and offer an alternative to all of these services being offered in schools, which is perhaps not necessary to an adequate education and also opens up more opportunities to students that are exploring other education options or don't feel comfortable attending their local school. That is just a comment. I am in favor of being a little bit more critical of funding requests from schools and are we using our other community resources properly. These are not related. Secondly, I was just in the new Tuscan Village development and saw that they had a German village set-up for December and I thought oh man, that is so cool. Why can't we have that in Manchester? So again, I would ask the aldermen to please look into the rules around peddling as they apply to temporary businesses such as food trucks or outdoor markets. I think we could have a more thriving outdoor space in NH and that would also bring a different energy to these spaces that very often our homeless population will fill if we leave them empty. Finally, with snow season upon us, I know there is a lot of concern about safe streets and pedestrian safety and I was

wondering if there was an opportunity to get some very cheap driveway markers and mark off those spaces in the city where parking is prohibited because it is coming up to a corner. Just mark those up and don't plow that part and let it become a temporary extension of the sidewalk and try that out over the winter and see if it makes a difference. Thank you.

Nate Dwyer, 211 Valley West Way, stated:

I am here to speak against the funding for buying the new school, especially on Beech Street. \$306 million is simply not well spent on updated facilities, especially given that facilities don't seem to be the problem with Manchester schools given that Manchester school's math proficiency seems to be somewhere around, when I last looked, 15-19% of their students are proficient. That seems to be a complete failing and nicer facilities will not allow students to better learn math. I have a fair bit of experience in teaching math. I work in an educational company. I have also tutored a number of children in mathematics when I lived in Huntsville. None of that depended on how nice the facilities were. Quite frankly, the idea that you are abandoning children because you are not spending money building a new school that won't teach them better because the school does not teach, the teachers teach, is frankly absurd to me. I don't believe that buying a new building will actually help the students learn. What should be done is instead look at other educational opportunities, which both families in NH and the NH state government have done with the Educational Freedom Accounts. That is all I have to say. Thank you.

Karen Soule, 79 Riverwalk Way, stated:

Honorable Mayor and Board of Aldermen, I am here this evening to speak about the current conditions of the Beech Street School and once again reiterate that we are seeking approval of the Amoskeag deed revision and the land agreement to swap parcels with Sheridan-Emmet Park being school space and Beech Street to be green space. Every school in our city should be inviting, stimulating and comfortable as there is a strong correlation between conditions in school buildings and academic performance and attendance. Due to the fact that this building was built in 1974 as an open concept school, the walls have been closed in to make classrooms. Of the 28 regular classrooms, 13 do not have windows. The art, music and STEM classrooms

also do not have windows which means there is no natural light which also impacts ventilation and air quality. In addition, all of the offices in the basements do not have phones, internet or intercoms. The small cafeteria is very loud during lunches due to the poor acoustics. It is so loud that students who need a quiet space and request it, have to go to the office to eat which to me is unconscionable. The roof membrane needs to be replaced and the building envelope thermal also needs to be reviewed and replaced. The windows are not energy efficient. The plumbing boiler is reaching the end of its lifetime and should be considered for replacement. The new building will be energy efficient. Our students deserve a school that has plenty of lighting and an acoustic environment that is conducive to learning with classrooms and other learning spaces that provide optimal opportunities for our students to grow and learn as well as community spaces for our Beech Street School. Now quickly to green spaces and playgrounds, the community should know that over the last month, three calls were made about issues at Sheridan Park. The first one was an intoxicated gentleman. The second was a person under the influence and the third was a person setting up a camp on the site. If Beech Street wants to use this site for their field day, they have to have DPW come and clean-up all the paraphernalia and needles. The new field space planned for the development to replace Sheridan Park will be 40,000 square feet larger than what is available today at \$1.4 million. During construction, the current playground will be used. The only time it will not be available is when the current building is being demolished. The immediate area behind Stanton Park will have new permanent play structures and equipment for students to use as recommended. Our students deserve the optimal educational opportunities which include the physical structure of our buildings as research has shown that it truly makes a difference. As Margaret Mead stated, "We are now at a point where we must educate children and what no one knew yesterday can prepare our schools for what no one knows yet." Thank you for your time.

Jessica Spillers, 73 Jobin Drive, stated:

I am a school board representative and here to express my dismay at November 19's decision to delay the Beech Street School project. Reasons to delay were wide and varied and now there is a lot of misinformation being spread online. The first I would like to address is that this is not a \$1 billion project. The new Beech Street School and

Phase I totals \$306 million. The new Beech Street School makes up about 1/3 of that coming in at about \$82 million. Phase II has not been voted on. There will be time to discuss that project and its cost later but right now we need to focus on Phase I. Phase I is fully funded. The district has budgeted well and set aside \$17 million to ensure that this does not affect taxes. The BMA approved the funding and the cost at the end of last year and I would ask you to honor your commitment. I would also ask this Board to honor their promise to MST in March 2023 to find a way to fund the building project. Our students are losing out and so is the city. Alderman Levasseur brought up an interesting idea that perhaps the city could help if the housing units were deemed affordable. I would be happy to work with you in exploring this idea further if you would like to reach out to me and are interested in doing so. Proficiency scores were also cited as an area of concern. Proficiency though is affected by a multiple of factors and a huge one we all seem to be forgetting about are the years lost to Covid. Two full years were affected and it can't be stressed enough that student progress was hindered. You have in front of you two charts with Manchester and the state's proficiency scores for English Language Arts and Math. There is a lot of valuable information contained in these charts. If you follow the first line highlighted diagonally, you will see that the kids who were in third grade at the start of the pandemic were 19% proficient in English Language Arts. Following that cohort until today, our 6th grade students who tested in 2020, are now at 28% proficiency. When you compare that same group to the state results, they are trending in almost the exact same way. In fact, when you look at cohorts of students, that diagonal view, we are trending along the lines of the rest of the state, our scores are just lower. When we view one of the charts horizontally, meaning 3rd grade in 2021 compared to 3rd grade in 2024, we see a significant gain of 10% in ELA proficiency. This view gives us a better view of how instruction is working and clearly the changes the district has made to align curriculum and professional development has had an impact. Most grades are at or doing better than pre-pandemic levels. We have made gains. It is difficult to look at because the numbers feel low. I understand. The district has been diligent though and I am proud of our teachers and students for making such great gains and recovering from the effects of the pandemic so quickly. We have been and will continue to be transparent in the work that we do. I hope the people on this Board can see through the rumors and misinformation being spread and reconsider their vote from November 19. It only takes

one person brave enough to say that they changed their mind and recall their vote.
Thank you.

Sue Hannan, 13 Sundown Drive, Derry, NH stated:

I am President of the Manchester Education Association. The last time I was here, you made it plain that Manchester students are not worth investing in. Making a change in the location of the school you already approved with money you already approved is all that is being asked. It is a land swap that will keep green space and allow the school to be built in the right place. This does not add anything new to taxes. This part of Phase I, which is already in motion and the money is already encumbered...the district has saved money for this very cause and is waiting for a bond to be issued. This school is part of Phase I and as Ms. Spillers just said is around \$81 million of the already approved \$306 million. It was approved more than a year ago. We are beyond the tax increase argument. The Sheridan-Emmett Park community garden will be accessible during construction. The playground and basketball courts will be temporarily housed at Stanton Park until construction is complete. The new park that will be built will be much larger than what is there now and will have better courts and equipment. The baseball fields, Hunt Memorial Pool, the Shaheen-Basquil splash pad and park will not be touched and will remain open for community use. You as a Board have been included in all of this planning and each step taken. You have seen the presentations from SMMA. You asked for special presentations even though there were many that you could have attended with the public or watched on Channel 22 or you can look at the entire section of the Manchester school district website dedicated to it, yet the district still provided you with your own special presentation. There were many community members involved in this process. Since you derailed this highly specialized plan, it is this decision that is costing the taxpayers, not the plan. Your decision is costing money and having to wait these two weeks is costing money. You are costing more money to the current citizens in stalling this plan and you will drive away people who live, work and play in Manchester. As I said at the last meeting, our schools are aging. Our youngest school is at mid-life while the average age of our schools is over 70. These schools were not built to support the infrastructure we need to educate students in the 21st century. We have schools that have classrooms with no windows, Beech being one of them. It sounds like a science experiment waiting to happen. Beech has had issues

with other things like mice and mold. Students feel and act differently in a new environment. They realize the investment that has been put into them and they thrive. We can no longer say the school I went to was good enough. It isn't good enough now. Thank you.

Jason Bonilla, 463 Central Street, stated:

I represent the amazing part of the city that is being impacted by this project. Thank you to all that have come tonight to show support for the brand-new Beech Street School, not a half or a section but a brand-new building. It has been an honor representing this resilient part of the Queen City for the past three years. We had meetings with you all and have given you the facts and insured that there is full transparency in this process. I would like to thank the Superintendent, the rest of the school board and our engineers for the work that they did. All of this is about Phase I, not Phase II but Phase I. We need you to support building a brand-new Beech Street School and building top-notch green space for our part of the city. If it is not clear to you all, I have demonstrated time and time again my commitment to this entire city and especially Ward 5. We do a lot with little in the part of the city that I represent. P.S. We also have plenty of green space in our city. We just need support in maintaining them all. Thank you all for listening.

Arthur Adamakos, 300 River Road, stated:

I am not here as a hired gun for the school district. I just want everyone to know that but I do wear two hats that I think are important to this discussion. First, I am a taxpayer in the City of Manchester and I have been proud to have lived in this city for the last 35 years. I don't want to see my tax dollars being spent on wasteful items. The second thing is I am speaking to you as a retired adjunct professor from Southern NH University. I taught a variety of subjects in the graduate program but the one that is most important to this discussion is educational management of schools, which ultimately is the course on facilities and finance. I know a lot about facilities and a lot about finance but the facilities portion is what I choose to talk to you today about. We stressed something in the course and I am retired now and not teaching anymore but we stressed something in the course which was does the facility meet the goals of the school district, the instructional goals of the staff and the learning goals of the students.

Just keep that in mind. In the 70's, we built three schools. We build Beech, Highland and Parker-Varney; all three open concept schools. It was a bad idea from the beginning. We stole the idea from the British because after World War II, they didn't have schools and they didn't know where they were so they brought them together, figured out what the kids knew and moved them aside. Well, we took that idea and it was the in-thing to do in the 70's. Well, they are all gone now and we put walls up and it is working at Highland and Parker Varney. It is not working at Beech. Beech has a configuration that is more a labyrinth than anything else. Probably one thing we shouldn't have done is put the walls up because it made it, I think, worse instead of better. The library is too small and the cafeteria is too small and the gym is too small to support the goals of that school and the number of kids that they have at that school. To throw any money at it is wasting taxpayer dollars. If we do an addition to that structure, we have to go east. Well, that takes out the gym and the kitchen which feeds the other nine elementary schools and it takes out the cafeteria. Where are those kids going to be eating or going to gym or how are we going to cook the food? We can't under that structure. We have to go east to do that. We are still stuck with that labyrinth inner core of 13 classrooms that have no windows. It is not an optimal educational environment. If we are going to throw any money at that structure, the best thing we can do is start from scratch and build it right this time no matter where it is whether across the street or someone else in that neighborhood. Those kids in the inner city deserve a better building than what they have now. Thank you.

Melody Smith, 389 Pearl Street, stated:

I just want to say that I have been attending these meetings and at the last school board meeting I was absolutely appalled at some of the things that were said. That being said, I still disagree with the Beech Street School as a taxpayer. I know that everybody is saying it is not going to affect us but what I can say is this. There are a lot of families out there that live in this city that are barely making it. If you start increasing their taxes, they are going to lose their homes. These kids that we are concerned about with their new building at this time are going to become homeless. They are not going to have a home to go to because we are going to tax their parents out of their homes. Please think about that. I love our kids and I want the best for our kids but we need to be careful now and we need to be a little bit frugal. We need to tighten our belts. That is not

going to hurt our kids right now. It is going to teach them that this is what we have to do to survive in this economy right now because it is tough for everybody. Aldermen, I just want to say thank you for your vote at the last meeting. I appreciated that. We can work together but we can't afford this right now. Thank you.

Christine Siebert, 96 Eve Street, stated:

I am a state representative and represent the people of Ward 1 here in Manchester. When me and my colleagues voted for money such as this, we had projects such as the Beech Street School in mind. For well over 10 years, our school buildings across the state have been hard pressed to receive any state funding for any needs associated with our public-school infrastructure projects. I want to reiterate to you and to everyone tuning in right now that this is at no cost to the taxpayer. It, in fact, saves the taxpayer money. It is unfair to ask our citizens to pay for the continuing costs due to a constant cycle of repairs as well as the general inefficiency of our aging infrastructure. The further hold up of this project will cost the taxpayers as well which I am obligated to inform my fellow citizens of. Our business community and the permanent jobs they provide rely on us to provide these basic infrastructure improvements to sustain their workforce and many others have patrons coming through the doors. Just a reminder that this in turn brings in more tax dollars and keeps the local economy just that, local. If we do not take advantage of this rare opportunity, you might as well tell those businesses to go elsewhere due to the fact that we are refusing perfectly viable funds which have been promised to you by us at the state level. My constituents, along with so many others in this city are following this issue closely and are relying on you to do the right thing in supporting our local school district. In closing, I would like to add a personal note. By not supporting our public schools, you are not a supporter of the average everyday hardworking citizen. Many rely on the convenience and community that a nearby school offers. I grew up in a household where both of my parents worked full-time just like a majority of parents here in Manchester. We moved when I was younger so that I could attend a public school that was updated and held to higher standards for the students. I would like to think that we would all hate to see people and businesses flee this great city instead of flock to it. I ask that you revisit this issue and support the Beech Street School project. Thank you.

Erin Kerwin, 291 Ray Street, stated:

I am here tonight to express my deep frustration and disappointment with this Board's decision at the last meeting to pause the Phase I improvement for the Manchester schools. This plan is already underway. Children are currently learning in modular units and every month of delay prolongs the time that they will be stuck in these sub optimal conditions. As a taxpayer, I am also alarmed by the financial cost. Each month of delay adds approximately \$250,000 to the project's expenses. I recently rewatched the joint meeting between the BMA and the school committee held on March 3. The plans for Phase I were presented in a clear, well thought out manner by both the school committee and the construction company. The meeting was transparent and thorough providing ample opportunity for questions and discussion. Many of you were in attendance and had a chance to raise any concerns. These plans have been in the works for over a year with numerous open and transparent meetings. The mayor who serves on both boards, is deeply familiar with these details. The Phase I construction is already in motion and further delays will only waste taxpayer money. Arguments about future high school plans or green spaces feel like a distraction. Phase II has not been fully discussed and there will be time for those debates. Convoluting Phase II to talk about high schools with Phase I is a dishonest and uninformed argument. Right now, Phase I needs to proceed without unnecessary delays. By stalling this project despite your prior participation and discussions and the mayor's direct involvement, you are playing politics at the expense of our students in our city. Please allow the construction to move forward and void future unnecessary costs. Thank you.

Liz O'Neil, 639 Hevey Street, stated:

I am on the school board representing Ward 11 and I am here to express my support for the continuation of Phase I. As a public-school educator, I can confidently say that the quality of a school building makes a positive influence on student learning. I have had the benefit of teaching in a brand-new building in my career. Students were engaged and active in class. I also have the proud honor of being a Central High School graduate. I am here as an educator and public servant because of my experience at CHS. The teachers worked and still work tirelessly to support students and yet I remember rooms with inconsistent heat and crumbling ceiling tiles among other concerning problems and I graduated well over a decade ago. The students of

Manchester, present and future, deserve updated and safe buildings. Others have already spoken about the financial elements of this project and I am here to urge all of you to bring back and approve the Amoskeag deed revision and the land agreement to swap parcels with the city. I come here tonight to speak to you as a young person who hopes to raise a family in Manchester. This is an opportunity for our city officials to invest in our public schools and provide the city's children with safe spaces for learning I imagine there are others in my position. We are waiting and watching the city with the hope that progress is made to support the betterment of our children's academic experiences. An investment in public schools has a direct positive economic impact in the city. Thank you.

Michael O'Neil, 47 Gantry Street, stated:

I moved to the City of Manchester in 1986. I have had a career in educational leadership, a school leader in Manchester and also in Nashua. I am just retired from service at the state as a director for the past 11 years. I urge this Board to bring back and to approve the deed revision and continue this project forward. This strategic plan as you know and has been stated by numerous folks tonight, was already approved and the Board of School Committee did their due diligence to gather considerable feedback from the community. This was approved and bonded a year ago. If members of this Board voted for that plan and the subsequent steps and the members here inherently trust the BOSC to provide their due diligence, which is their job in recommending the strategic plan and subsequent steps to this Board and that this plan will improve competency and testing scores, this is not the time to delay this project. It has already bene several times that the bond will not increase property taxes. I will simply close by saying that for the past 35 years I have served on the parish staff at St. Augustine/St. Anne Parish. If you know Beech Street School, then you know that church and the rich diversity that is in our center city and makes our city greater I see every Sunday with t hose residents who come and worship with me in that church. Folks, the center city and residents who live there and depend on this school for a lot more than good old reading, writing and arithmetic in the 21st century need this project to move forward. Thank you for your time.

Aimee Kereage, Concord Street, stated:

I am the Director of Community Partnerships and Engagements with Manchester Proud. On behalf of Manchester Proud, I want to express our strong support for the advancement of the Beech Street School plan. We are disappointed by the recent decision by the BMA to delay this project with the refusal to support a negotiated agreement with Amoskeag Industries to transfer the land across the street from Beech Street School for the construction of a new school. We understand that there are questions to be addressed but given the transparency of this project with information that has been available to the public, combined with the clear and urgent need for this space given the recent closure of Wilson Street School, we urge the Board to move forward with this project; one that has been carefully planned and vetted. The decision to delay the project means more time spent in temporary modular classrooms for students, which is far from ideal. This is a project that would take two years but delays such as this only threaten to add to the timeline. Students will be in the modulators for longer. It is critical to remember that the city's business community has expressed its strong support for this new school recognizing that it plays a key role in creating a workforce pipeline for future generations. As new industries like ARMI bring high level science and technology jobs to Manchester, we must ensure our students are prepared. This is not just an educational project. It is a forward-thinking investment in our city's workforce and economic development. The Beech Street School plan is about much more than just constructing a new building. It represents an investment in our students, our community and our city's success. This school is not only a place for learning. It will help ensure that Manchester is a place that attracts new families and retains current residents by offering a strong public educational system. This plan aligns directly with our vision for a prosperous vibrant Manchester. By preparing our students with 21st century learning spaces and ensuring smaller class sizes, we are setting them up for success; success that will benefit our entire community and economy. Manchester Proud firmly believes that the future of our city is tied directly to the quality of our public schools. The success of these schools is the shared responsibility of everyone in our community. We all have a stake in insuring that our schools are not only places where students can learn, but also environments that help foster economic and social growth for Manchester as a whole. We urge the Board of Mayor and Aldermen to revisit this

decision and move forward with the Beech Street School project. This is a vital investment in our children's future and the future of Manchester. Thank you.

Barry Brensinger, Whitford Street, stated:

I am a long time Manchester resident, founder of a business here and raiser of a family here and proud to be in Manchester. I am here to voice my support and urge yours for the long-term overdue remaking of Manchester's public-school facilities. As we all know, Manchester has a proud history. Thanks to our forefathers who invested in their futures and ours, there are many things to be proud of in our city today but let's be honest with ourselves. Our public-school facilities are not among them. Many of our schools are antiquated, marginally serving beyond their useful life expectancy. They are expensive to operate and maintain, but most importantly, they fail to provide the types and character of spaces and technologies most conducive to 21st century learning for our children. Our schools can and should serve as places of learning, community gathering, recreation, services, and symbols of our collective commitment to our children and our future while also ensuring that the pride I spoke of that has always inspired and sustained our community continues well into our future. Thank you.

Maxine Mosley, 76 Sherburne Street, stated:

I do not come today with prepared remarks. I am going to speak to you really just from my heart. I have worked in the school district for over 40 years and almost every single year of my career, I listened to the Board, not you but people who have been on this Board, talk about what a great job Manchester educators were doing with less. I don't think our children should be subjected to that mantra. I am going to tell you a little story that you haven't heard tonight. Henry J. McLaughlin Jr. Middle School opened 27 years ago after several years of planning. In the initial build, the building had a back wing, which it does have today. Prior to construction, the members on the Board at that time determined that it was too much money and they weren't going to build that wing and we could just stuff more kids into classrooms and service them and we did. A year later, it was decided that was not a good decision and we were putting in a new wing at hundreds of thousands of dollars more than we would have paid 14 months prior. I see us going down the same street where promises have been made by both boards to the citizens of this city and to the children of this city. This Board has slowed down the

process and quite frankly I am confused. As elected officials, your job is to not only balance the money but keep the promises that this Board makes to the citizens of this city. I ask you to please reopen this conversation, reconsider this issue and do not waste any more money. This is an agreement to move through Phase I. Let's get the job done and take care of our children. They deserve a whole lot more than what we have given them for the 40+ years I have been involved in education here. We have subjected them to books over the years with no covers that were out-of-date. We have subjected them to a lack of supplies. We subjected their families to that. We subjected them to facilities that if you actually walked through the buildings in the past, you would be shocked to see the conditions that our children are a part of. The only reason some of our buildings have become a little closer to snuff was Covid money, not because the city or state provided it. The state is providing us money so let's use it and keep our promises. Thank you very much.

KR Epstein, 540 Chestnut Street, stated:

I am a young professional living and working Manchester in Ward 3 here to speak about my support for the Beech Street School. As a community member who plans to stay active and engaged in this city for decades to come, I want our public-school students to have every opportunity to succeed and that starts with a good daily experience in their classrooms. As a reminder, Henry Wilson School was closed to make way for this plan due to the building being unsafe for students and staff. Those students were moved into modular split between McDonough and Beech Street schools. Those students and their families were told they would be displaced temporarily while the new school was built. If this plan does not go through, these students will be placed in limbo without a home school. That is unacceptable. I want to be clear. I am not seeking funding approval for Beech Street School because that was already granted at the BMA meeting last fall. I am advocating for the new Beech Street School project to proceed considering it is designed to be student and learning centered; a priority all of us should support. Thank you.

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

I came here tonight as many people did to express my extreme disappointment in the vote this Board took at your last meeting to halt the construction of a new Beech Street

Elementary School. These construction plans have been in the works for a long time and they are much needed. I have heard aldermen say that instead of investing in brick and mortar the school district should invest in updated curriculum, new books and paying our teachers better so that we in turn can do a better job of attracting and retaining good teachers. Those do sound like nice things and I agree we should invest in them but did you know we are already doing that. We are working on that. This summer, new pay contracts when into effect for Manchester teachers, paraprofessionals and administrative staff thanks to updated bargaining agreements. Within the past couple of years or so, the BOSC adopted new policies to insure that new curriculum was reviewed on an annual cyclical basis and this includes updating and acquiring new learning resources like physical books and online educational programs. The school board and school district are actively working on the items you are concerned about, which all of the aldermen here would know if you did your jobs as elected officials and actually paid attention to your community. This information isn't a secret. The school board meets regularly and in public. There are even joint meetings that have brought aldermen and school board members together. You all were there for that. The information is out there for those who genuinely want to learn and participate. Instead, some aldermen only seem to care about books or curriculum or teacher pay when they are more interested in finding an excuse to block something else. I believe that Manchester students deserve the best we can provide and a new Beech Street Elementary School has been part of the larger facilities update plan for a while now and the center city deserves to see it completed. Mayor Ruais I was glad to see you attending the ribbon cutting ceremony for a beautiful new mural in Ward 5 which celebrates the culture and the contributions of the residents who live in that part of our great city but I have to say it was also pretty sad to see you there in the center city for a photo op ribbon cutting and then cut and run when the same community needed your support for their students and families on this issue. I thought that you were better than that and I know you talk better than that. At the end of the day, as the saying goes actions speak louder than words and you did vote to stop the rebuild of the Beech Street Elementary School last month. As the tie-breaker in that vote, you in particular own the outcome. Tonight, I ask that you make that right. Even if no alderman changes their vote, you still have a chance to fix this. I urge you to change your vote so that you

can support the students of our community, their parents, their families and their teachers by allowing the rebuild of Beech Street Elementary to proceed. Thank you.

Kristen Bannister, 1301 Chestnut Street, stated:

Like many others here tonight, I am frustrated that the last vote by this Board of Aldermen has stalled the Beech Street School project. I truly believe that everyone here tonight has Manchester's best interest at heart. I just think we all don't see eye to eye on how to do that. It does seem like, however, there is a consensus that there is a need for the Beech Street School and that the construction should move forward. It was already approved by this Board and the funding has been secured. What we need at this point is a consensus on where to build. The current proposal was formulated with professional, community and city leader input. Questions were invited and information was shared transparently. That vetting process was the time to express concerns. If we cannot pass this vote, Manchester will pay additional fees for the delay and children will not have the new school they have been promised. I encourage those of you that have the voting power to view the big picture and realize that some element of compromise has to be in place to move forward. Please reconsider your vote to approve the proposed land parcel swap and deed revision. Thank you.

Travis Harker, 1550 Union Street, stated:

I am a family doctor and speaking today in support of the deed revision that is necessary for the Beech Street School proposal to move forward. I can appreciate the need to be sure that the Board is careful with taxpayer dollars. While this has been thoroughly discussed and supported, I can understand that some of the BMA would need just a little more time to make this decision. I hope that in the past two weeks those of you who voted no and pressed pause on this would do what you said you would do which is to study the issue a little further. I know that if you study it a little further you will learn what I learned. I did my own research and I learned some of the things that I am pretty sure you learned as well. I am hopeful that knowing what you know now, you will support the children of Beech Street School and Wilson by voting to support the land swap necessary to give the students what the city promised and what they approved last year. I learned that this is fully vetted and there has been broad support in Manchester for this. I learned that it is fully funded. I learned that delays in

making this decision is costing the city \$250,000 each month. That is money we can't waste. I learned that the athletic facilities for these children will be an upgrade and provide them with an even better opportunity for excellence in extra-curricular activities. I learned that green spaces in the center city will be maintained. I know that you care about the children of Manchester; I do. Please show them how much you care by voting to support the Amoskeag deed revision and the land agreement to swap parcels with the city so Beech Street School can have a brighter future. Thank you.

Daniel Mowery, 112 Holt Avenue, stated:

As most of you know, I am very active in my community. This whole Beech Street School thing, yes, we probably do need a school but I think we need to sit back and reinvestigate this whole thing because things are going to get better as of January we hope. Right now, in our city, our parish alone gave out more food baskets because people can't afford it. We have to look at the price of everything. Everything has gone up in the last four years. We hope it gets better. Before you even think about voting yes tonight to proceed, go to your constituents like in Ward 6 I am going to invite the mayor and aldermen and our newly elected state senator and school board member for a town hall. It is time to ask questions. A lot of people do not want to come here to the meetings. They would rather come to a town hall. So, each one of you, get together with your constituents and have a town hall. Don't sit here and just wait. Get out there and do something and listen to your constituents before you spend our money. Thank you and Merry Christmas to you all.

Debbie Howe, 390 Ray Street, stated:

I have two children, an 18-year-old and a 13-year-old who have been educated in Manchester schools. I was disappointed to hear that the aldermen voted against granting the land on which to build a new Beech Street School. I am here tonight to show my support for updating our school district's aging facilities and I ask for you to reconsider your vote. As you all know, it is beyond time that our city invests in our school facilities. The average life expectancy of any school building is 50 years. The average age of Manchester school buildings is approaching 75 years and the school district's newest building was built 26 years ago. There is much deferred maintenance to be done to keep our existing buildings functioning safely for all students, which is

costly. A newer building means a long-term reduction of expenses and costs such as energy and maintenance. We can't keep fixing and maintaining outdated facilities. It is time to build new schools. For all these reasons, moving forward with building a new Beech Street School is so important. Wilson School was closed at the end of the school year last year due to it being unsafe for students and staff. It's students now attend McDonough and Beech Street schools in modular classrooms and these families were told that their relocation would be temporary with the plan approved for a new school to be built. The district and the city owe it to these families to make good on their promise and build the new Beech Street School as was approved in the plan. Investing in our schools not only benefits the students but the community as a whole as it increases property values and makes families want to move to the district as opposed to moving out of Manchester to cities with newer and perceived better schools. An attractive, updated school is a source of pride and generates goodwill for public education and its city. The approved plan for the new Beech Street School also includes preservation of the types of green spaces, like a new park, that enhance quality of life and become a new magnet for residents to come to Manchester, put down roots and help our community grow. Although I appreciate your dedication to the students and families of the Manchester school district, I am deeply frustrated by this pause in forward movement of the facilities plan which benefits our students, families and cities as a whole. I ask you to reconsider your vote so that a plan to build a new Beech Street School can move forward. Thank you for your time.

Trinidad Tellez, 1550 Union Street, stated:

I am a 22-year resident of Ward 1. I am here tonight to ask you to approve the Amoskeag deed revision and the land agreement to swap parcels with the city approving the build for a new Beech Street School in Ward 5. Others have spoken about the increased costs caused by the unnecessary delay, the long transparent and collaborative process, the funding that has already been secured, the importance of good quality schools on our property values and the importance of investing in green spaces in the center city. I am here today because I am an educator, business owner, mother, long-stand parishioner of St. Anne/St. Augustin's Church in Ward 5, and also a state representative for Hillsborough District 40, Manchester Wards 1, 3, 10, 11 and 12. I am also the proud product of public schools and a graduate of Dartmouth Medical

School. I am here to remind everyone that like me, the children of Beech Street School deserve an opportunity to maximize their potential and grow up to be whatever they aspire to be – engineers, nurses, lawyers, artists, firefighters, scientists and elected officials. Public education is the bedrock of insuring NH's future economic prosperity. Investing in all our children benefits everyone and fuels the economic engine of this city and this state. It is time to do what is best for the center city because it is the right thing to do and because it will benefit all of us. Please vote yes to move the project forward. Thank you.

David Todisco, 390 Orange Street, stated:

I come here today to share a lot of the same sentiments that I heard by most of the people in this room today. This is a plan that I understand is sound and we have the money for and moving it forward without delay is crucial and saves us money. All I have to say is that continuing along with this plan, starting with the Beech Street School, is representing a Manchester that I would like to continue living in, working in and raising a family in. Thank you very much.

Jim Harvell, 18 Raspberry Lane, stated:

I would like to address this from a leadership standpoint. You have heard a lot of imminently qualified people in the field of education and even in the field of facilities talk about this. I am looking to this group as leaders. In what direction are you going to take the city? That is what I am interested in. These are huge decisions with millions of dollars at stake and they deserve due diligence. That due diligence has been done. The money is there and the land is there and the architecture and engineering work is there. All we need is for our leaders to take it the last five years. We spent a year prepping for this. You are our team and you guys have taken the ball down to the five-yard line and glory is in sight. We are ready to take it in and win this thing. For some reason, half the team walked off the field. I have to believe that that side of the team that walked off the field has had a nagging feeling inside since then. You had the opportunity to do some good. You had the opportunity to lift a neighborhood and by lifting the neighborhood lifting the city. That is what we look for our leaders to do. I am asking you to be leaders. I am asking anybody who voted against it who had that twinge of a question of did I do the right thing, did I take an opportunity to do some good

and deny the Beech Street community and by extension the city to get onto a virtuous cycle of becoming better. I ask that if you voted against it that you reconsider and that you exercise your leadership and get us across that goal line. Thank you.

Catharine Flynn, 15 Trenton Street, stated:

I have lived in Manchester for 25 years and I have two children in Manchester schools. I have been following actively impressed and excited about the Phase I school facilities plan. An investment in our schools is an investment in our communities and our future. I am extremely frustrated to hear that there has been yet another pause in the Phase I plans that were reviewed and approved, specifically around the building of a new school on Beech Street; a site that will eventually house the students from Wilson School who are currently in limbo because of this pause. So much planning has gone into Phase I and pauses and indecision have their own costs in a project this size. While I understand that it is easy to sit in a meeting and vote no, I hope you understand and explain to the residents the reasons and the costs financially and to the students and parents that are affected by this pause. The planning phase of this project occurred last year. At that time, there was ample opportunity for public comment. I went to several meetings. I was extremely impressed by both the school board and the architect and planner for the project. They were very open to public comment and suggestions. Both parties had done their homework, had thought through the issues and had responded to feedback they received. I don't remember seeing the mayor or my alderman at any of those meetings and I wonder why you didn't give your comments at that time. The plans are in motion. Students are in portable classrooms. Schools have closed. Money has been spent. The act of pausing seems uninformed and nothing more than politics. I don't believe you have the city's, schools' or students' best interest in mind. Pausing is not moving the city forward. I will always vote in favor of moving schools and the city forward, even after my kids are grown and no longer use the schools. I support the rebuild of Beech Street Elementary School and I strongly encourage you to reconsider your vote.

Brittany Ping, 199 Putnam Street, stated:

Before I get into my speech, I want to actually list a study that I am going to cite because you are going to get something different out of it than I am. You might not see

it with the same lens I do but it is called "What Works and For Whom: Effectiveness & Efficiency of School Capital Investments Across the U.S." by Biasi, Et al. I would like to thank this Board for voting two weeks ago against the demolition of the current Beech Street School. At that time, my tax bill showed up. It is a good reminder that we are asking you to be the checks and balances that you have been elected to be for this city. Are you being a good steward of our tax dollars? Has anyone at any time mentioned that in the Phase I plan it was meant to be the highest and best use of our adequacy aid for our school district really thinking about the best and most efficient way to support our learners? I found that study from Biasi, Et al. It was from January 2024 so no offense to anybody on the last Board because this study wasn't published yet. It was published in the National Bureau of Economic Research where it was concluded, after reviewing 17,000 bond approvals and that is how much districts approve these types of things like the one that was approved by the last Board...a lot of you weren't here. This study spanned 10,000 school districts which is inclusive of 71% of all enrolled students in the United States of America. This is a huge study. This showed that increased school capital spending raises both test scores and housing prices. Well, that is a big thing. Whereas spending on the basis of infrastructure upgrades, so capital like we are talking about with demolition and renovation versus infrastructure upgrades like new roofs, new heating systems or removal of pollutants. So, this is huge. That raises test scores but not housing prices. 71% of all enrolled students or 17,000 bonds. Conversely, spending money on athletic facilities or construction of new classroom spaces alone raise housing prices but not test scores. Please read that study. You are going to see it through a different lens than I do but please read it. To say that Phase I and Phase II are not connected is not a sincere argument. We know that we bought the modular and we didn't rent them because they are part of Phase II. Phase I and Phase II are cohesively interlinked. Phase II sneak peeks have been given, I am also paying attention, at the school committee meetings. They show options to renovate all remaining elementary schools or rebuilding an additional two to three. So, we are going to do this about Ward 11 and we are going to do this about...well we are doing this about Ward 5 with a potential to close one or two more at about \$500 million. We are told that 12/9 is the final presentation and that is not an unreasonable ask. Your constituents are asking for transparency. Please read that study. The National Bureau

of Economic Research 2024. You are going to get something different but housing prices will increase. That is what will happen. Thank you.

Victoria Sullivan, S. Beech Street, stated:

First and foremost, I want to thank the aldermen who heard the taxpayers who came out two weeks ago. I got so many messages from people saying I can't believe we were heard. People show up when they are heard and you need to...like Mr. Mowery said, town halls. I haven't seen many town halls in this city. Thank you to Mayor Ruais who showed up for one in Ward 9 and there have been a couple recently but this is new and you guys need to get out and actually speak to your constituents. I wrote a speech that is out the window because there has been so much emotional manipulation in this room tonight that I am going to go in a whole new direction. I hear a lot of people thinking about what they think is best for people and I don't think anyone has actually talked to the people on the ground that live in this city that have resoundingly said that they are more interested in what is happening inside those buildings than the buildings themselves. There was a report that was put out that actually went through all of our buildings that scored sustainability, tech readiness, and building condition and Beech Street actually scored much higher than several of the buildings in our district. I watched the school board meeting after the last aldermanic meeting and I was shocked. First of all, I want to make it very clear that we used transparency. Some of us put on our Facebook pages and on social media what was happening and that this vote was taken off the table sort of in the dark of the night. People showed up on their own. We didn't make phone calls. It was sort of insinuated that if they had known there would be opposition, they would have rallied people. We didn't rally people. Taxpayers showed up because they were concerned. Mr. Baines, Bob Baines who is on the school board and was a former mayor, former teacher and former principal I believe, spoke about the portables and in a very honest moment where he even said maybe I shouldn't be saying this, he stated that he was very disappointed in the new portables which are exactly like the portables from the 1970s he taught in, didn't live up to the hype and were not state-of-the-art. We are going to have the same buyer's remorse with Beech Street School. Nothing that is going to happen inside that school is going to change and that is where we have to see the change. I can't reiterate this enough. If you put a bunch of kids in a park with nothing else but a great teacher, you are going to have kids that learn. You

can put them in the shiniest building in the world and if you don't have good instructors inside, it doesn't matter. I can tell you that teachers are not hurt in this district because they tell me. They reach out to a lot of us behind the scenes and say I can't show up at the meetings because of the repercussions I will face but they can tell you how to make Beech Street a great school. You are not talking to them and you are not listening to them and neither is the school board. They are listening to Manchester Proud which is basically a shadow school board that is dictating what is going to happen in this city. When it comes to talking about the shiny buildings and us not valuing children, that is horrible. I took my kids out of public schools because they found schools that were better suited for them. One went to Trinity and one went to Holy Family. Those buildings are much older than many of Manchester's public schools and they got a great education. Don't tell me I don't care about my kids because I put them in an older building. I just want you to please, again, keep listening to the taxpayers and reach out to your constituents and keep this as a no vote. Thank you.

Erika Barberi stated:

I am a Senior at Central High School and a second-year student member of the school board. I am also a Beech Street alumnus who graduated in 2018. I am here to not represent Central tonight but I am here for all of the students of Ward 4 and 5 because your choices are actively affecting the students by going against the new school Phase I plan that was already decided on. My first question is, why are we allocating our time and energy towards a project that has already been decided on? Now you are taking away time from Phase II that is already ready for discussion. My next question is how is going back on Phase I beneficial when students have already been moved and put into small and overcrowded schools that are not built to hold an addition 100-200 kids including the temporary infrastructures placed outside? You are spending more money and time by prolonging Phase I by using these temporary facilities and they are going to be used and maintained for longer than their served purpose.

Fatuna Muhidin stated:

Like Erika said, we are Central students and this is my second year as a student board member. My question first is children and parents have already been let known about Phase I and how it is a temporary situation and by continuing to prolong this temporary

situation you are spending more money. Like people have mentioned tonight, it is \$250,000 every month that you prolong it. So, if you prolong it for another four months, that is \$1 million that our taxpayers are paying while the money that is being used for Phase I to build the Beech Street School is already there. It is already allocated and it is ready to be used. The temporary facilities are not proper for student education. Like people said, Beech Street has now windows. Many classrooms don't have windows. How do you think students are supposed to learn when they can't even see sunlight? That is ridiculous. Also, classrooms are being overcrowded because they were already overcrowded but once Wilson School was closed down, students were distributed between McDonough and Beech. That was the end of last school year and now this whole school year students have been in those crowded classrooms and teachers have already mentioned that overcrowding classrooms is not fundamental to learning. Also, with the temporary facilities outside, you have students separated from their peers and that is going to affect their communication skills down the line, especially because they are in elementary school. That is when they are learning those skills. You are subjugating them to not having communication between their friends and peers. Also, we moved 5th grade to middle school because of the overcrowding and we wanted to integrate them into middle schools but they are also outside in these temporary situations. Southside Middle School has had those temporary buildings for over two years now. So, you have 5th grade integrated with middle school yet they are not really integrated because they are still isolated and they are outside. One snowstorm and those facilities are not going to be able to be used. Are you going to tell parents that their 5th graders cannot go to school because those temporary facilities are out-of-date and cannot be used? Also, I wanted to mention how you talk about wanting to bring better curriculum and more books into schools but if those facilities cannot house those books because they have so many children, how do you expect to put in that new curriculum or buy those new books? It doesn't make any sense. Also, we keep talking about Beech Street School and the facility but we are not talking about the children. There are children being put into classrooms that are overcrowded. We have to talk about the actual kids learning and their development. You talk about test scores and all of those things but if the classroom cannot facilitate the testing than what are we doing? All of this is for our future and you are denying these children their education and resources and opportunities to compete with other schools. Tonight, all we are trying to

do in getting better facilities for children is improve test scores and graduation rates and grade level proficiency. That can't be done if we are not giving them the proper resources so they can be successful. They need the resources and the opportunities and they need you guys to vote to give them that. Thank you.

Gavin Telfer, 98 Sagamore Street, stated:

I have been living here in Manchester for the last 10 years with my wife. We have one kid in the Manchester school district and one who will be next year. I am speaking in support of the plan to continue with the Beech Street School. I am asking the Board of Mayor and Aldermen to please reconsider the vote to delay the process. It feels like the school board has been thoughtful and thorough. It is a good plan. It is not a perfect plan but no plan is. It shows a commitment first and foremost to education in this city. I think many of us in this city see investment in education as a commitment to the city's future. I know for my wife and I it is something we consider all the time in terms of what shape the schools are in, where the investment is happening and this is a really good step in putting our money where our mouth is and putting our resources into investing in our child's future. I think the interesting thing that I have heard is it doesn't matter what the facilities look but it matters what happens in the classroom. I think the unique position we are in is we can do both. We can continue having lots of great teachers like we have, hire some great ones and put them in a new facility that is a great facility and continue with the plan. Without delay, I urge you all to move forward with this project. Thank you.

Gilberto Ruiz, 215 Blevens Drive, stated:

Thank you for the opportunity to speak here this evening. I am here to express my support of the Beech Street School project for the same reasons that have been articulated so well throughout the night but especially by the last three speakers. I don't have much to add to the words that have been said so I will express my disappointed with Mayor Ruais's tie-breaking no vote that delayed forward progress on the project. Ostensibly, the reason for the no vote was that further discussion was needed, however, as reported in Manchester Ink Link, months of discussion has taken place that included joint meetings with the aldermen to allow them to gain more information about the project. Moreover, according to the Manchester Board of School Committee Vice-

Chair Jim O'Connell's statement, Mayor Ruais's no vote contradicts previous statements and promises made by the mayor. Much time has already been spent discussing the project and the continued delays are costing more funds. The project has support from the local business community. I wonder why vote against it now? It seems to me that the children of our city are worth the investment of this particular project and it is hard not to get the impression that the no vote represents an instance where the mayor has put politics ahead of its people, specifically the children. I respectfully ask that you, Mayor Ruais, and the board members who voted against the project, reconsider the vote. Thank you.

Kathy Staub, 374 Laurel Street, stated:

Currently I am the state representative for Ward 5. Normally I don't share personal stories but I am going to share one tonight. The house where I live is about five blocks from the house where I grew up on Manchester Street. I attended Lincoln School which was one of the schools that Beech Street was built to replace 50+ years ago. In the 1960's and 70's, the neighborhood was not much different than it is today. It was mostly working class. Our parents were the children or immigrants or some of them were immigrants themselves. We lived in bilingual households. Our grandparents, if they were alive, spoke French or Greek or Polish. My grandfather spoke Lithuanian. Our parents were children of the depression. Many of them like my parents never graduated from high school. They worked in the mills and shoe shops. At the time, the mills ran three shifts so my parents worked different shifts so one of them could be home with me when I was young. There were a lot of families in my neighborhood who were living right on the edge. Given all of that, how did I end up with a master's degree and a comfortable middle-class life and I am not the only one. What happened to the rest of my classmates? Well, they became accountants and carpenters. One is a nutritionist. Several of them became teachers and one of them was a principal in Massachusetts. Some went to work for the city. We have had pretty good lives. Some of them became aldermen. We were successful because we grew up in a society that believed we could do better than our parents and that our success and the success of our city and the entire country for that matter depended on our success. My community, this community, the City of Manchester, believed in me and invested in me and that is why I succeeded. Some people say that my success makes me an elitist now but I will

never forget where I came from because I still live there. This new Beech Street School, a community school, will provide the support the children in the neighborhood need to realize their dreams and become teachers and nurses and city workers of the future; our future, Manchester's future. The decision to close Wilson School...I live in an old house and I love old buildings but it was a good one. That building was no longer appropriate for 21st century education. To make the decision now when you have scattered that whole community to the four winds is just inappropriate and not appropriate for the kids in my neighborhood and that is why I am here to advocate for them. Right now, the next generation of carpenters and teachers and firefighters and maybe aldermen are watching you and waiting to see if maybe Manchester is still a city that believes in the dreams of working-class kids and are willing to invest in them. Thank you.

Steven Kesselring, 652 Hackett Hill Road, stated:

I am a new elected represent in Ward 12 and I want to first take a different approach tonight and commend Mayor Ruais for taking the time to think about this situation and what is going on with the funding because as a newly elected state representative, you get a lot of calls and emails and different things so I can't even imagine how many Mayor Ruais gets. I also want to commend the aldermen who voted to stop it temporarily. I want to tell you that from this I have had more conversations with people about education than I ever thought I would in my life. Because you guys stopped it, it has created something that you probably didn't even see coming. Obviously, you probably get the negative side of it but for me it is the positive because my postman wanted to talk to me about education. I have had calls from 10 or 12 constituents that want to talk about education now. It has created a conversation. With that, I wanted to know more because obviously as being newly elected I wanted to be on top of that. I requested from the Manchester school board some of the top legislative things that they would want to see in Manchester. Obviously, you can guess that it is funding and advocating for funding for NH schools. It is funding for retirement, targeted programs, pre-K...there is a ton of funding listed in here. If you went through this list and looked at everything that they want to fund, I couldn't put a number on it but if we are taking this \$80 million and putting it towards something...I can tell you that there are at least 10 things on this list that are more needs but this is the thing I want to tell you that kind of

stuck out to me. It says “advocate for additional funding to address potential shortfalls due to reductions in student populations in Manchester schools.” It is listed as number four on their list. You are losing kids in the school and they want all of these extra programs but they are losing kids and the funding is getting cut anyway. Again, I thank everybody for what they do regardless of how they voted. You have a tough job and I am sure you are going to get a lot of calls after this. Thank you and have a good night.

Chris Potter, 470 Silver Street, stated:

I am a Manchester taxpayer and Ward 7 school board member. I would like to humbly ask you to reconsider your vote on the Beech Street School project. You know we were successful getting students out of Wilson and they are now in modular and other folks have covered that. Beech is not the oldest school that we have in this district. It is not even in the top half of the oldest but it is completely unsuitable for modern education. We have 13 classrooms without light, and as folks have said, we have kids in the modular now. We need to do something. We need to take action. We can't just leave it as it is. At the school board we saw the need for improved schools due to the overcrowding. We brought this situation to SMMA. They studied it as experts and gave us this proposal. It is not a renovation. Compared to a renovation it has lower operational costs, lasts longer and has a bigger academic impact while costing only slightly more. Those are the reasons they brought us this proposal and if you don't give credit to our experts...I go around the city talking to voters and there are a decent number who don't have kids in the school and are ambivalent or even hostile to school funding. It is a decent sized constituency in this city and it deserves respect. This proposal does respect them. This school is not exorbitant. It is necessary and it is not frills. We are paying with state adequacy aid, not local tax dollars and the district is in excellent financial health. We have \$25 million in our expendable trusts and we have clean audits. The two big benefits that I see from doing this project are first, there is research that shows ventilation, light, acoustics and temperature improve academic performance. This is in conjunction with the improvements to instruction, behavior and academics that we are making at the same time. Second, Beech is going to be a community school. It already is a community school but now we have the opportunity to custom design it to provide students with some of the non-academic supports that they need to be able to access their education once class begins. My ask to you is this.

Don't hold this up any longer. Shape the planning if you want but don't stop it. One quick note is Keating Tuft had to go back to work. We have taken so long here but he is in support. I just ask you to support the entirety of what you have heard here today from the community and reconsider your vote. We need to get this going. Thank you.

*On motion of **Alderman T. Sapienza**, duly seconded by **Alderman O'Neil**, it was voted to take all comments under advisement and further to receive and file any written documentation presented.*

Alderman O'Neil stated I would like to take Item 34 out of order.

34. Confirmation of Peter A. Marr as the Chief of Police.

*On motion of **Alderman Levasseur**, duly seconded by **Alderman Long**, it was voted to confirm the nomination of Peter A. Marr as the new Chief of Police.*

Mayor Ruais stated just to make it public for everybody here and everybody that is watching back at home, we are going to do a formal swearing in ceremony along with several promotions that are going to be made in the Manchester Police Department at a time in the very near future. I would like to congratulate Chief Marr on his new position.

PRESENTATIONS

2. Roadway Resurfacing Presentation by the Department of Public Works.

Owen Friend-Gray, Deputy Public Works Director, stated I am joined tonight by Caleb Dobbins, our Chief Highway Engineer. We are going to be going through some background information on our roadway resurfacing program and give everybody here some outlook on what we are seeing, trends in the industry, and how we are going to be addressing Manchester's needs going forward.

Caleb Dobbins, Chief Highway Engineer, stated I would like to thank the Mayor and Board of Aldermen for this opportunity. As explained, we are going to quickly go over roadway resurfacing within the City of Manchester, some of the trends that we are

seeing and other items. Most folks understand that ultimately this is the way you kind of want all of the roads in your city or municipality to look like. No cracks, sidewalks, good striping, drainage working the way it is supposed to be, and nice curb lines. That is the ultimate hope that you have. At the same time, fair is okay. This is a roadway that has had some preventative maintenance done to it with the crack sealing that you see on the left-side of the roadway. The roadway for the most part is true and doesn't have a lot of potholes or things along those lines. This is again somewhere in the middle. Then unfortunately within the city we have a number of roads that look similar to this. This is in poor condition. This is probably the type of road that your constituents reach out to you most on asking when will they be paved and addressed. That is a quick summary of the three conditions that you see throughout the city. This is a summary of the roadway conditions by ward, as well as the city as a whole. This is showing that we have approximately 413 centerline miles within the city and that is a lane in each direction. If you look at it as lane miles you are looking at about 800 or so. This is the distribution of the condition of those roadways by ward. The aldermen were all afforded a map of their specific wards in terms of what condition the streets are in. You were all provided that prior to this meeting and in addition, each alderman should have gotten a packet that includes all of the wards within the city so you can have a better feeling for how you connect to some of your adjacent wards. Again, as we said the hope would be that you would have all green but the reality of the situation is that is not always going to be the case. We hire a company to go out and look at our pavement conditions. We do this every three years. They will drive every single roadway in the City of Manchester. Information is collected in 10-foot increments. They look at things such as ride quality, pavement cracking, pavement rutting, general distress of the roads, and each section of roadway is then rated on a scale of 0 to 100. One hundred basically has to be right behind the paver. That information, which is a vast amount of data, then has to be looked at, analyzed and ground truth to make sure it makes sense. From there, we take that information and develop what we see as the most sensible pavement plan. There are a lot of things that go into the pavement plan. It is not just simply looking at that pavement condition index. It is looking at what the volume of the roadway is. Let's say a cul-de-sac that is not in very good shape may not get paved before a road that has a very high volume of traffic that is in better shape just simply because of the volume of traffic. How do those roadways connect to each other? How do they access services?

When is the best time to go and do some things? Sometimes it is not waiting until it complete falls apart. The last is funding. Funding absolutely has an impact on when things get done but the order in which they get done is based on all of the items that you see prior to that. Funding will allow you to do more, which is what we need to be able to do in the city but it is not going to affect the order of the things that should be done because again we look at things like traffic volume, road connectivity and things along those lines. I talked about doing the right thing at the right time. So, the city looks at a vast number of different treatments within our own program; anything from a crack sealing to a micro-surfacing. Crack sealing was what you saw in one of those pictures. Micro-surfacing is basically a very thin layer, about 1/8", of a liquid we put on the surfaces to basically seal the roadway. Then we start getting into the actual paving, milling and the overlays. A lot of the city's area needs to actually be ground off before we can repave it because a vast amount of the city is curbed. Therefore, if you just continue to overlay and not have to actually deal with the curb reveal then you end up losing all of that. I don't have time to go into all of that but I can assure you that that causes an issue. When roads get to that poor condition that was shown, that is when you are getting into either a deeper overlay or a full depth what we call reclamation where you are basically grinding the entire road up and mixing it with the gravels that are underneath it and repaving the entire roadway. The idea is you want to keep your good roads good because the cost...you can see the reason why that graph has a sudden drop right between years 10 and 15. That is what you want to try to avoid. You want to try to keep them in that 10-year cycle but unfortunately when they go past year 15 there is not a lot you can do that doesn't cost a fair amount of money. This is what we have used. Our consultant is able to look at the way roads deteriorate depending on what kind of roads they are and the current condition. They are able to forecast what the road conditions are going to be. With that, we put in what the costs of the various treatments would be on certain roads and this map shows with the investment where the City of Manchester's roads will be. The number that you are seeing is that PCI which is strictly the ride quality or the roadway quality based on expenditures. Right now, just as background, we were only funded last year \$5.3 million. There is a backlog of projects we need to get done. We got less than half of the sections of roadway done last year that we had hoped to be able to do. What was provided to the Board was the different roadways that have resurfacing as well as what we call that micro-surfacing

which is a preservation. You will see it is a mix of those. This map has approximately 75+/- miles of resurfacing and about 25 miles of the micro-surfacing. You are looking at being able to address approximately 20% of the roadways in Manchester over the course of the next five years based on the funding that is being proposed here. The bottom line is because of inflation and folks are talking a lot about inflation but unfortunately for roadways inflation has been far greater than the inflation you see at the supermarket. The three-year inflation just for paving has been 33%. So about 11% a year for the last three years. The amount of money that has been provided to the department since about 2019 have unfortunately stayed pretty steady when the increase of costs has continually climbed and we haven't been able to address the sections of roadway as needed. With that, we would be happy to answer any questions. If you have questions specific to your wards, I ask that we try to set something up specific to talk to you about it outside of this meeting.

Alderman O'Neil stated Caleb you said the reevaluation is done approximately every three years and that vehicle off the top of your head...I have seen it once working in the city when we started the program. Can you just talk a little bit about what it measures? This isn't somebody looking at the road.

Mr. Dobbins replied absolutely not. It has a whole host of cameras, sensors and things along those lines. It is looking at the pavement cracking and the rutting so it is actually doing a laser analysis of the pavement going in front of it. It is looking at the ride quality so it has all of the sensors relative to bumps and things along those lines. It is looking at a multitude of different factors. Actually, just on a quick side note one of the other things they are able to do is pick up assets. So, they were able to come back and tell us quickly how many streetlights we had and how many manhole covers we had. It is doing a lot of stuff all at once as it drives down the road.

Alderman O'Neil asked does it include sidewalks.

Mr. Dobbins answered no. Sidewalks was a separate study done in 2020/2021 and that one was literally a walking evaluation of every sidewalk in the city.

Alderman O'Neil asked do you know what the thickest amount of asphalt that was found was.

Mr. Friend-Gray answered I want to say the biggest one I have seen since I have been here was off of Wellington. I think we had cores of 14"-16" of asphalt in certain places.

Alderman O'Neil stated great job guys. I think you are using this as a great tool and our streets are better for it. You could use a little more funding and that is something we need to consider. Thank you both for your efforts.

Mr. Dobbins stated if you look at the sidewalk in front of the Library, you will see the road is flush with the top of the sidewalk.

Alderman Long asked for clarification, there was a slide showing a poor road and it looked like it was in Ward 3. Is that the same road condition that Ward 1 road would be in? So, are the poor roads equal roads?

Mr. Dobbins replied that was Ward 1 and I only used it because Ward 1 is the first ward. You should have a map of all the wards.

Alderman Long stated I know the aldermen used to get money and we would decide what roads to do and we changed that and there was a five-year plan. Do you know what percentage of the roads are below poor?

Mr. Dobbins answered about 1/3 of the roads are rated poor.

Alderman Long asked how many are below that.

Mr. Friend-Gray asked how many are in a failed condition.

Alderman Long replied yes.

Mr. Dobbins stated this was a fairly simplistic view of what we call the stoplight, red, green and yellow. The actual report comes out and gives us seven different variations or levels. We can certainly get you that information.

Alderman Terrio stated I have driven across the country a few times and I have noticed in other states it looks like they don't use asphalt but almost like concrete. Is there another material we could use that would be more durable and cheaper?

Mr. Friend-Gray responded there are different forms of asphalt that can be used or different treatment types mixed with asphalt. The micro-surfacing that we spoke of is a mix of asphalt and cement and a few other stone dust agents to actually create that surface. There are a few alternatives we use. Cement is more expensive and has a longer life span typically, which is why it is used in most places but it does not do well with the freeze/thaw cycle. The different treatment opportunities and options that we have used are pretty much the cheapest available to us.

Alderman Terrio stated when I go through your maps, some wards are much worse than others.

Mr. Friend-Gray stated it might look that way visually but when we actually look at the numbers, all of the wards come out to be within that yellow zone. They all average out to that yellow zone. The city average right now is 63. I can't recall the largest variation in the wards but I don't think anybody was below 50 and nobody was above 70.

Mr. Dobbins stated there are some slight variations but again I am assuming looking at the resurfacing program it is probably going to reflect that relative to the roads going forward in the next five years. Again, it is also hard to simply look...that red/yellow/green is simply the PCI. You have to look at heavy volume roads. There are going to be some roads that are slated to be done where you say this isn't a red road and while correct it is a yellow road that carries 10,000 cars a day so you want to try to keep those because they decline rapidly.

Alderman Terrio asked as part of that, going forward are you going to focus more on certain wards than others.

Mr. Friend-Gray replied no. The concept that you see on the ward maps is something we specifically asked our consultant and the information gatherers to split it out by after the fact. All of this is done without wards being taken into consideration. We just look at it that way afterwards because it is easier for us in the city to digest because it is what we are used to.

Alderman Levasseur stated I see you have \$12 million/year for the next five years. What are we at currently?

Mr. Dobbins answered last year we got \$5.3 million. That was a \$3 million and then using \$2.3 million between degradation and the MTF funds.

Alderman Levasseur asked so the plan that you are proposing right now in order to get us better and I am not sure what percentage of better you are going to be giving us but at \$12 million, how many more miles of road are we looking at and are you expecting this Board to come up with that this year and bond it. What are your thoughts?

Mr. Dobbins responded going forward the idea of this presentation was to give you a highlight of some of the requests that you are going to see when we put in our community improvement request. To give you a feeling, we were funded \$5 million in 2019 as well. That has pretty much been flat funded over the course of the last seven years with inflation going up in this specific area anywhere between 70-90%.

Alderman Levasseur stated right I thought it was \$5 million a year and we know that costs have doubled so you are getting a lot less for \$5 million. At \$12 million is that bringing us in line with 2020 numbers or is it giving us more?

Mr. Dobbins replied what it allows us to do is address some of the gap that was created over the last 5-6 years where we were slowing getting underfunded every year. Right

now, around \$9 or \$10 million would keep us at a steady state but that \$12 million allows us to gain some of that ground back that was lost over the last few years.

Alderman Levasseur stated when I say gain, what are we going to gain. How many miles did you do in this current budget? Do you do it by miles?

Mr. Dobbins answered the current plan shows taking about 70-75 miles of roadway...again addressing about 100 miles. So, we would end up addressing about 20% of the roadways in Manchester over the course of the next five years.

Alderman Levasseur asked at \$12 million.

Mr. Dobbins responded cored.

Alderman Burkush stated how has inability to hire help affected this roadway program.

Mr. Friend-Gray asked internally or externally. Do you mean contractors?

Alderman Burkush answered no your guys.

Mr. Friend-Gray stated right now we are still struggling to hire in certain positions, specifically our truck drivers and our operators seem to be where we are pretty thin. That has made our paving efforts reduced slightly. However, what we have come to realize over the last few years of this program is that we get a better bang for our buck so to speak by using our own internal staff to do more short-term Band-Aid type fixes for low relative dollars to the taxpayer compared to the larger projects that we are going to outside contractors for. I would say overall we are still able to spend all of the money that is being given to us quite easily. That is not a concern.

Alderman Fajardo stated I would definitely like to see that seven-layer version of Ward 4 if you have it. I am looking at the plan for Route 28 southbound. It is marked off for 2026, Beech Street, starting in Ward 2 all the way down through Ward 7. We both know that is an area of focus for future visioning and whatnot so I am wondering if that

repavement plan takes into consideration any of the visioning work that has been underway for a bit.

Mr. Dobbins answered everything that has been given to you is a tentative plan of what we would like to get done in five years and we tried to prioritize it by the different years. A lot of the earlier things were things that were pushed back because of the lack of funding. In reality, when we actually put these plans together, we have to look at utilities and things like that to make sure they all get cleared. These sections could move within the five-year plan but this is the big picture of what we are trying to get done. I would highly suspect that things slated for 2026 may end up getting some stuff in 2027. A perfect example of that was Commercial Street that was done not this last season but the season before. It was a number of years out but there were a bunch of delays in other sections because of utilities. That section that desperately needed the work and had no issues with utilities, was moved forward.

Alderman Fajardo asked do we have access to utility planning. I don't know how far out they go.

Mr. Friend-Gray responded yes. We meet at least once a month with all of the major utilities that do work in the city and we also have conversations more frequently than that. We give them our plans out at least three years or sometimes five depending on how large of a project it is they are looking at. There is a lot of coordination between all of us.

Alderman Fajardo stated anecdotally I feel like I see a lot of streets where the utilities get addressed and the pavement is fresh and then there is a block of poor pavement. What is the logic on trying to resurface a longer stretch like through one neighborhood for example versus checkboards?

Mr. Friend-Gray replied we definitely do try to have continuity within the neighborhoods. We look for what we call orphan streets which typically would be those one block segments that somehow got skipped or didn't end up in the plan. We do try to avoid that but sometimes there is a good reason it is skipped. Sometimes there is a major

utility repair that needs to happen or the road is in a bad enough condition that we need to do all around it and once we get to that one, we will do what we can. It is certainly something we consider and try to look at but sometimes there are things out of our control.

Alderman Fajardo stated compliments to your team. I love the app. I hit you guys with 1,000 potholes it seems like every year and you guys are fast and thorough and I appreciate that.

Mayor Ruais stated one clarification I will add to that is when I filled a pothole with them in March, they were already at 800. They do an incredible job.

Mr. Friend-Gray stated we do a few more than 1,000 a year but I appreciate it.

Alderman Barry stated thank you guys for the presentation. It would be nice if we could get the maps out in the media so people can know how it works. I think a lot of residents would like to see something like this. My last thing is if GMI or Continental or whoever we use as a subcontractor still has any asphalt left over from Ward 9 can they go over to Ward 10?

3. Presentation from the Manchester Employee's Contributory Retirement System regarding proposed changes to be introduced during the 2025 New Hampshire Legislative Session.

Richard Molan, Chairman, Board of Trustees of MECRS stated with me tonight is the Executive Director, Melanie Murray and our legal counsel, John Rich from the McLane firm. As promised at the previous committee meeting, I have asked the two employee members of the board who are voted on by city employees to be here – Mike Carpenter and Matt Ciechon. If anybody wants to ask a question of them, they are here. We come before you tonight to seek your support in making a number of changes to the retirement system which has to go to the state legislature for enactment. I am sure Melanie would be happy to go through those with you but let me just say that after a number of conversations with our actuaries and our consultants, we have had many meetings talking about any changes that should happen to the system. What we are

looking at is long-term stability of this retirement system. We don't have a current problem and I want to stress that but we want to stay on the schedule that we have operated under for almost 15 years now of how to defray the UAL, unapproved liability, of the fund as well as maintain the current costs. One of the issues that we face regularly is that the number of employees participating in the system decreases and we need to make sure we can meet the normal retirement costs as well as defraying the UAL. Those numbers increased by 75 in just the last few years. With fewer people contributing to the system, obviously you can run into some severe problems if you don't rectify that. I know that in your packet you received an outline of the changes we wanted to make. I will now let Melanie go through those.

Melanie Murray, Executive Director, MECRS, stated as outlined in your packet, for all members we are recommending an increase to the pension contribution from the employees of .5%. They currently contribute 5% and that would bring them up to 5.5%. That includes their pension contribution as well as a contribution to the health subsidy amount. That would be for all members. For members hired on or after July 1, 2026, we would propose that the retirement age increase to 62 from age 60. We would also propose an early retirement reduction of 7/12 of 1% per month from the 1/6 of 1% which we have currently. We also propose five-year final average earnings versus the current three-year final average earnings and a 10-year vesting requirement instead of the current 5-year. In addition, we have also added an addendum which includes additional language regarding the health subsidy. We are looking to have the ability to, once the subsidy fund is fully 100% funded, review the amount that the employee pays into that fund and reduce the employee contribution rate. In addition, we are looking to add language to allow them to expand that subsidy to be applicable for dental as well as their health insurance.

Alderman E. Sapienza asked so I want to make sure I understand this. Do the two folks up there with you represent the labor side?

Ms. Murray answered the two gentlemen with us are both employee representatives. Is that what you are asking?

Alderman E. Sapienza stated okay. Has there been any opposition to this from the employee side?

Ms. Murray replied not that I have heard. We did invite the unions in to speak with us and we tried to include them as we proposed this legislation along the way. We did have a few of them that were able to meet with us and we took their comments into consideration and changed our proposal a little bit based on their input but they didn't find that our proposal was unreasonable.

Alderman E. Sapienza stated I am a little apprehensive because on the one hand we have a labor shortage. In 2011 the state reformed the retirement system and now we have a labor shortage with state employees as well and those enrolled in the state pension system. I don't see how this helps the labor shortage if we are going to be reducing retirement benefits. We have a study coming out that I believe we paid \$750,000 for to give us input on recruitment and retention. I think I can safely say the idea isn't to give employees less but that is essentially what this would be doing. Am I right?

Mr. Molan responded no. They would still receive the same benefit they receive today.

Alderman E. Sapienza replied right but they would be paying more in the system.

Mr. Molan answered yes, they would be paying .5% more. That is true. It is unfortunate that this all comes to your attention at a time when you are trying to deal with this issue but you have to understand that the fewer employees we have, the less money goes into the retirement system and long-term we want to make sure that the existing system benefits are there for the people who get hired now. We want to make sure that system is funded properly. We have to meet a fiduciary responsibility as members of the Board of Trustees. That is why we have had these conversations with our consultants.

Alderman E. Sapienza stated you are seeking long-term stability so why is it that currently we don't have long-term stability.

Mr. Molan replied because the participant numbers are decreasing.

Alderman E. Sapienza asked so it is solely because of the decreasing number of employees.

Mr. Molan answered that is correct.

Alderman E. Sapienza asked doesn't that also mean at the same time that there would be fewer employees receiving retirement on the other end. If you have fewer employees coming in, that means you will have fewer employees who in the future will be receiving a retirement check. Am I right?

Mr. Molan responded that is correct.

Alderman T. Sapienza stated I saw you at the committee meeting and I asked you some questions. You mentioned that you reached out to some unions so I reached out to a couple of union presidents this past week. They said they never heard from you and those were two big unions.

Mr. Molan replied that is not true.

Alderman T. Sapienza stated well that is what I was told.

Mr. Molan stated they were all invited to a meeting to have this explained. Some of them chose not to come.

Alderman T. Sapienza responded right so they are not on board. The point would be that if they chose not to go to the meeting they are not on board with your changes.

Mr. Molan stated well we don't know that.

Alderman T. Sapienza replied well I know that because I talked to two of them. I can tell you that two big unions are not in favor of this. That is number one. Number two, I tried

to point out in the committee meeting that this was shifting the burden from the city to the employee. You didn't want to agree with that but it is a fact in your paperwork here. You didn't want to say that and I understand that. Really, there are two groups of stakeholders here. There are the employees who will eventually become retirees and then there is the city. Is that true? Two groups of stakeholders?

Mr. Molan answered yes.

Alderman T. Sapienza stated given your goal of preserving the financial viability of the plan, which is a worthy goal no doubt, in this plan that you are presenting, one group is going to pay more and the other group is going to pay less. Is that true?

Mr. Molan responded no, not for 16 years.

Alderman T. Sapienza asked why does it say in the packet, resulting a projected savings of 1.62% of payroll over the next 19 years. That is the city savings, right?

Mr. Molan answered yes.

Alderman T. Sapienza stated so I guess my question for you is if the goal is to protect the financial viability of the plan, why are we increasing one group's contribution and decreasing the other. It would seem to be we should increase both groups equally.

Mr. Molan stated well if we don't get these kinds of changes, your side is going to go way up.

Alderman T. Sapienza replied I don't have a side. I am on both sides. I have to take care of the employees and I have to take care of the city.

Mr. Molan stated you are responsible for paying the UAL and the employees are not.

Alderman T. Sapienza stated my basic question is if you are trying to address the financial viability of the plan and we need to put more money into it, why didn't both

groups contribute more. Why is one group contributing more so the other group can contribute less? That doesn't make any sense to me at all on a fundamental basis.

Mr. Molan responded well they both pay for normal costs but the city has the responsibility for paying off the debt.

Alderman T. Sapienza replied correct so you are shifting that from the city to the employees.

Mr. Molan answered no. It goes to our normal costs.

Alderman T. Sapienza asked then why are you asking for the extra .5%.

Mr. Molan responded because we need that contribution to pay actual benefits.

Alderman T. Sapienza stated my point stands. You are shifting the cost from the city to the employee.

Mr. Molan stated all I can tell you is that we have a fiduciary responsibility to make sure this plan stays stable and is properly funded.

Alderman T. Sapienza stated and my fundamental problem with your plan is you are asking one group to contribute to that financial responsibility so the other group doesn't have to and I find that patently unfair. You are going to complicate collective bargaining because you are going to change this through legislation and then we are going to go to collective bargaining and they are going to say you took .5% from me last fall and I want it back. Of course they are going to say that. Any union leader is going to say that and any employee would say that. If an employee is asking for a raise, he is going to say well I just lost .5% so now I need another .5% to make up for it. A small business owner knows that. Everybody knows that.

Alderman O'Neil stated Dick please don't take this comment wrong because it doesn't reflect on any of you but the two best jobs in the world are retirement actuaries and

health care advisors because neither of them are on the hook for a single thing. We had health care advisors in here and they told us to raise the rates some crazy percent but they are not on the hook for anything. That doesn't reflect on you folks. I understand that we need more employees to contribute but we are having a hard time that is not unique to Manchester in recruiting. I am not sure they are getting as far as the retirement system, which is a pretty good retirement system. We are just dealing with their base pay to try to recruit them. Is this a negotiable item?

Mr. Molan answered no.

Alderman O'Neil stated I know you have worked representing labor for a long time, especially for the firefighters. So, we can do this without having it negotiated?

Mr. Molan replied that is correct.a

Alderman O'Neil asked are the changes proposed for people...some of these changes are like what age you can retire and all of that but are those for people already in the system.

Mr. Molan answered no. Those would take effect only for employees hired after July 1, 2026.

Alderman O'Neil stated as we know there is a lawsuit pending in the state over this exact thing that happened to Group 2.

Mr. Molan stated that is totally different.

Alderman O'Neil responded well it was a change in the system to employees that were already in it and I can tell you it has affected our ability to attract and retain employees.

Mr. Molan stated it didn't change anything for people who were already vested in the system. It made changes to people who had not yet hit the vesting period.

Alderman O'Neil stated but they were already employed.

Mr. Molan answered yes.

Alderman O'Neil stated I think that is where Alderman E. Sapienza was going. That has really affected our ability to attract and retain police officers and in some cases firefighters. That, I believe, is a fact.

Mr. Molan stated I wouldn't disagree with you.

Alderman O'Neil asked so anybody already working for the city up to the date of this passage will have no change other than the potential increase of .5%.

Mr. Molan replied correct and that was the recommendation of the unions who did take advantage of coming and talking to us.

Alderman O'Neil asked does the retirement age change also.

Ms. Murray answered that would be for new employees. The only change for current employees would be the change in the contribution rate. All the other changes are for new hires after July 1, 2026.

Mr. Molan stated the average age of full retirees is 62.

Alderman Levasseur stated I have been on this Board for a long time and I have had a lot of questions concerning pensions. I apologize that I don't have a very good handle on how the system we currently have works. I would like to ask you if the contribution is based on the salary of the employees.

Ms. Murray answered yes.

Alderman Levasseur asked so if we are paying much higher salaries but have fewer employees, the contribution would still go up correct because it is based on a percentage of their salary.

Ms. Murray responded yes.

Alderman Levasseur asked and what is that percentage. Is it 6%?

Ms. Murray replied it is currently 5% and we are proposing it go to 5.5%.

Alderman Levasseur asked so 5% of \$100,000 salary of \$5,000 is going toward a pension fund.

Ms. Murray answered yes. Part of it is going towards the pension and part of it is going to the health subsidy.

Alderman Levasseur asked does it matter if you are a police officer or fireman or a non-affiliated employee. Are there different funds that money gets put into or is it all one?

Mr. Molan responded fire and police are in the state system and that is totally different.

Alderman Levasseur asked so they wouldn't be affected by any changes.

Mr. Molan replied correct.

Alderman Levasseur asked so the only changes we are discussing would affect non-affiliated employees or...

Mr. Molan interjected no. Some of the employees are affiliated.

Alderman Levasseur asked so just police and fire are not included.

Mr. Molan answered correct. Some of them are affiliated with a union but this wouldn't affect teachers or police or fire.

Alderman Levasseur asked so when we are talking about this right now, we are hiring another 12 firemen and we have a lot more police officers than we had five or six years ago but that is completely different. On the other side of the fence, we are not really getting a lot more employees but their salaries are going up and you are saying that still is not connecting as far as what the match would be?

Mr. Molan replied well salaries are going up but also their retirement pension would be going up.

Alderman Levasseur stated okay so the end result is they are going to keep going up. What is the current debt to the city right now?

Mr. Molan answered \$275 million.

Alderman Levasseur asked has the life expectancy of an employee changed dramatically since the inception of this. Say we have an employee who is now going on 20 years and they will retire at 62 in 12 years. If they are 62 is the life expectancy for their pension configured into all of this also?

Mr. Molan responded yes. The actuaries use mortality tables that project how long a person will be collecting.

Alderman Levasseur asked do you know if that has gone up a lot in the last 5, 10 or 20 years.

Mr. Molan answered in the last 20 years yes.

Alderman Levasseur stated so we are actually looking at paying more for a longer period of time.

Mr. Molan stated correct.

Alderman Levasseur asked do you know what the average payment per year is.

Mr. Molan asked do you mean the average benefit.

Alderman Levasseur responded when somebody retires, do we know what that amount is that we owe on an annual basis. How many retirees do we have that aren't police or fire? Do we know the number?

Ms. Murray stated we have about 1,200.

Alderman Levasseur asked do you know what that cost is for those 1,200.

Ms. Murray answered it is about \$24 million a year.

Alderman Levasseur asked how is that money paid. Does it come out of a fund?

Mr. Molan stated it comes out of the retirement fund.

Alderman Levasseur asked is that chaired nationally or statewide or just us.

Mr. Molan replied it is just Manchester.

Alderman Levasseur asked and that fund is keeping up.

Mr. Molan responded it is.

Alderman Levasseur stated okay so we aren't having to add money into it annually. That .5% you think will cover us for how long? Five years? Do you know what that accrues to for an annual payment?

Ms. Murray asked from the employee side.

Alderman Levasseur answered yes.

Ms. Murray stated we don't have that information.

Alderman Levasseur stated well I am glad you guys showed up because I have always had questions about how this all works so it is making a lot more sense.

Mr. Molan stated well we are always available to answer any questions.

Ms. Murray stated actually I do have that amount. It is \$2.4 million annually.

Alderman Levasseur stated thank you. I really appreciate this information.

Alderman T. Sapienza stated when you came to the committee meeting, you mentioned you had union support and we asked you to bring some union leadership here to show us you have their support. That is what I asked for.

Mr. Molan responded I asked and they didn't want to be here. That is why we brought the employee members.

Alderman T. Sapienza stated I can imagine they wouldn't want to come here and publically say where the union members are going to hear them that they support this. I am quite sure union leadership wouldn't want the union members to know that. I just want to point out that I did call two union presidents of this city that I know personally and asked if they heard from you guys and they said no. The idea that you have union support...

Mr. Molan interjected I can guess who they were.

Alderman O'Neil asked can I have Lisa Drabik come up. I have some questions. To put this in perspective, how many employees are in Group 2 ballpark?

Lisa Drabik, HR Director, responded probably 500.

Alderman O'Neil asked how many unionized as well as non-affiliated are in the city retirement system.

Ms. Drabik answered we have a total of about 1,200 employees so about 700 are in the contributory system I would say. That is just a ballpark.

Alderman O'Neil asked do you know what percentage are affiliated versus non-affiliated.

Ms. Drabik stated well in our total employee population, about 25% are non-affiliated and 75% are affiliated but I can't break it down for you.

Mr. Molan stated the last numbers we have are we currently have 1,119 employees who are contributing to the system.

Alderman O'Neil asked and that is affiliated and non-affiliated.

Mr. Molan answered yes.

Alderman Fajardo stated I am reading from the committee packet in front of me and forgive me because I don't have a deep knowledge of pension structure but it says "the reduction of in future benefit entitlements will improve the funded ratio of the system and accelerate the accrued liability amortization period by less than one year resulting a projected savings of 1.62% of payroll over the next 19 years." Can you help me interpret those numbers because as I read it, it feels like that is not a lot? Is this really helping the city address its accrued liability?

Ms. Murray responded because it is for all the new employees, not current employees, it is really not helping the accrued liability very much. It is more going towards the normal cost and future benefits. This is going to decrease what the future benefits are going to cost. It is not going to help as much with what the city is already on the hook for if you

will for the accrued liability because those employee's benefits aren't changing. It is not really going to reduce that.

Alderman Fajardo asked so the 1.62% of savings on the city side over 19 years, that covers the future required accrued liability gap but then the .5% increase on the employee side would cover the payouts in the current retirement system. I am not sure if I understand that correctly.

Ms. Murray answered the .5% will mean the employees will pay an extra .5% of their salary and that will reduce the employer normal cost.

Alderman Fajardo asked it will reduce what.

Ms. Murray responded it will reduce the employer normal cost but it won't affect the accrued liability cost.

Alderman Fajardo stated I feel like I wish I understood this better because I could probably ask more informed and intelligent questions. I guess overall I am feeling a similar set of concerns. I know that we have that gap and I agree with Alderman T. Sapienza that I can't gauge from the percentages and time span that I am reading here what portion is being absorbed by the city and what portion is being absorbed by the employee.

Ms. Murray asked do you mean the rates.

Alderman Fajardo answered I guess but this is to make the retirement system solvent over a longer period of time correct.

Ms. Murray replied well it is to make it more affordable for the city essentially.

Alderman T. Sapienza stated that is exactly right.

Alderman Fajardo stated right so we can afford it for a longer period of time.

Mr. Molan stated right because the current rate employer contribution is 32.98%. The normal cost of that is 8%.

Alderman Fajardo asked can you clarify that for me. So, 32% is what the city contributes?

Mr. Molan answered the city pays currently on every employee 32.98% of their pay.

Alderman Fajardo replied and you said a more typical would be 8%.

Mr. Molan responded out of that 32.98%, 8%+ is for actually paying benefits.

Alderman Fajardo stated one comment that I did want to make is I feel like extending the vesting period to 10 years feels not great for employees. I know that you noted it will help with attrition. Is that a fact or a hunch? Does extending a vesting period...

Mr. Molan interjected if you are in the system, you are going to stay in the system so that you can collect. Ten years in the public sector right now is pretty much the industry standard.

Alderman Fajardo stated I know in the private sector where I earn my money that five years is standard. That is my point of reference.

Alderman Long stated I was in the private sector also and I made 100% of my contribution. You have a fiduciary responsibility for this but do the employees have any fiscal responsibility?

Mr. Molan answered no.

Alderman Long stated with respect to the 5%, what you are saying is fiducially this will position you better going down the road.

Mr. Molan replied correct.

Alderman Long asked why wouldn't the unions come here and say we are not in favor of this. Is there a reason they wouldn't show up?

Mr. Molan responded I have no idea. We were told by the head of the AFSCME group that she was just going to watch it on TV.

Alderman E. Sapienza stated we have two employee representatives here correct. Can we hear from them? Just to be clear, these are non-affiliated employee reps?

Mr. Molan replied no they are both affiliated.

Matt Ciechon stated I work for Central Fleet and I am with AFSCME. I am an ex-Vice-President as well. When we offered the meeting to all of the unions, we only had a handful that showed up. Nobody showed up to oppose it. The unions that did show up...granted none of the unions are going to like changes but by the end of the meeting they understood why these changes needed to happen. They wanted to keep this moving in a positive direction.

Alderman E. Sapienza asked and do you have anything to add.

Mike Carpenter stated I agree with everything Matt said. I work for EPD as a Wastewater Treatment Plant Operator.

Alderman E. Sapienza asked and you are not opposed to this proposal.

Mr. Carpenter answered no. At this time, I am not opposed. I think that this is the best move that we have at the current time given the current circumstances.

Alderman O'Neil stated Matt, Central Fleet is a fairly new department and previously you were at Public Works so I am guessing a lot of them would know that there is a

relationship there even though you are now at Central Fleet. Have you heard any opposition from DPW?

Mr. Ciechon responded I have not. When I initially ran for the Retirement Board, the change was going to be to a 7% contribution on just new employees. When I spoke to many of the members of DPW, they all thought that was excessive. I ran to try to squash that. We came up with the compromise of 5.5% for everybody.

Alderman O'Neil asked and the .5% is the change right because everybody is already paying 5%.

Mr. Ciechon answered correct. I did run against another opponent and was elected after speaking to everyone about that at DPW.

Alderman T. Sapienza stated you guys are agreeing to put in an extra .5%. Don't you think the city should also increase their contribution a little bit to match your increased contribution?

Mr. Ciechon responded I think the concern is more to be able to keep the plan viable and going in a positive direction. We can see it moving in a direction that we don't like and by the end of the meeting we had with the unions, they understood that there was change needed in order to keep moving in a positive direction. Sometimes you have to look at the bigger picture and understand that we don't like this but we get it.

Alderman T. Sapienza stated my question is, you are putting extra money in for all the reasons you just explained which makes perfect sense. Why doesn't it occur to you to say if I am putting in more money the city should also put in more money? Like maybe instead of you putting in .5%, you could put in .25% and they could put in .25%. You are putting in .5% and they are putting in nothing. That would strike me as not that good a deal.

Mr. Ciechon replied I understand what you are saying. Union and city always want to try to make a compromise where maybe you don't like it completely and I don't like it

completely but the city right now, according to the contribution rate, is already contributing more than it should be. In order to keep the program moving forward and staying funded, sometimes it is more important for the employees to understand we need to pony up a little bit more. Also, when you have two tiers of benefits that are different in the city, you create jealousy and animosity in what is the same department. Granted we aren't going to make changes to the plan for the current employees and only going to change the contribution rate for current employees so you are still going to have two tiers. You are going to have new employees who are going to get less than the older employees who have been here. We are trying to bring that into alignment as well so the gap isn't as large between the two different tiers of employees that are hired. I was the Vice President when we negotiated that new employees pay 20% to health insurance. Afterwards, myself and the President hated that decision. We sold our new employees out and I don't want to make the same mistake.

Alderman T. Sapienza stated well it looks like that is exactly what you are doing. Anybody hired after...

Mr. Ciechon interjected you are changing some of it yes. You are still creating another tier but instead of like when I ran for the Retirement Board instead of the new employees paying 7% or 2% more than what current employees pay, now you have a .5% increase amongst all employees; everybody's share.

Alderman T. Sapienza stated that is admirable but again it leaves a question as to why are the employees the only ones paying the increase and not the city.

Mayor Ruais stated the city is contributing 32% you said.

Mr. Molan stated the city is contributing 32.98%.

Alderman Long asked how long have you two been on the board.

Mr. Ciechon answered I have been on it for four years.

Mr. Carpenter stated this is my first term.

Alderman Long asked and you were elected by whom.

Mr. Ciechon responded by the employees of the city.

Alderman Long asked do we know what percentage of employees actually voted.

Mr. Ciechon stated I can remember that for my actual election I had 99 employees vote for me.

Mayor Ruais stated my understanding when we met this summer was that this was a good compromise to increase the viability of the system. What are the consequences of doing nothing? There are fewer employees coming in so the consequences of doing nothing would be what?

Mr. Molan replied eventually the city's contribution rate will increase...

Mayor Ruais interjected or you would have to slash benefits.

Mr. Molan answered yes or cut back severely. The other part of this is that when we proposed this legislation last time, it was defeated in the Senate based on two things. One was the 2% increase and the other was that we didn't request a referendum. In this legislation, we do provide for a referendum which has always been the course in Manchester.

Mayor Ruais asked so you need approval from us tonight to go to the legislature with this.

Mr. Molan replied we don't need your approval. We seek your approval because in the legislature, the second question that is going to get asked is what does the BMA think and without your support, there is no point in running a fool's errand.

Mayor Ruais asked so a consensus that we are supportive of this. Do we have a consensus that this is something we are in favor of them bringing to the legislature?

A majority of aldermen raised their hand.

Mr. Molan stated thank you all for your time.

CONSENT AGENDA

Information to be Received and Filed

4. Communication from the Office of the City Solicitor, providing an update regarding lawsuits filed against the City.

REFERRALS TO COMMITTEES

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

5. Bond Resolution:

"Authorizing Bonds, Notes or Lease Purchases in the amount of Three Hundred Five Thousand Dollars (\$305,000) for the 2025 CIP 712625 Lead Service Line Replacement Project."

Resolutions:

"Amending the FY2025 Community Improvement Program, authorizing and appropriating funds in the amount of Twenty-Five Thousand Dollars (\$25,000) for the FY2025 CIP 411225 FY24 Hazmat Team Grant."

"Amending the FY2025 Community Improvement Program, authorizing and appropriating funds in the amount of Eleven Thousand Eight Hundred Sixty-Seven Dollars (\$11,867) for the FY2025 CIP 411325 SWAT Search and Rescue Equipment."

"Amending the FY2025 Community Improvement Program, authorizing and appropriating funds in the amount of Two Hundred Thousand Nine Hundred Thirty Dollars (\$200,930) for the FY2025 CIP 411425 Justice Assistance Grant."

"Amending the FY2025 Community Improvement Program, authorizing and appropriating funds in the amount of Forty-Five Thousand Dollars (\$45,000) for the FY2025 CIP 411525 Intelligence Liaison Officer Program."

"Amending the FY2025 Community Improvement Program, authorizing and appropriating funds in the amount of Ninety-Three Thousand Dollars (\$93,000) for the FY2025 CIP 411625 STOP Violence Against Women."

"Amending the FY2025 Community Improvement Program, authorizing and appropriating funds in the amount of Five Hundred Thirty-One Thousand Three Hundred Thirty-Two Dollars and Ninety-Nine Cents (\$531,332.99) for the FY2025 CIP 411725 EOC Upgrade - Impact Fees."

"Amending the FY2020, FY2021, FY2022, FY2023 and FY2025 Community Improvement Program, authorizing, appropriating and transferring funds in the amount of Ninety-Four Thousand Four Hundred Forty Dollars and Fifty-Two Cents (\$94,440.52) for the FY2025 CIP 510025 Parks Deferred Maintenance."

"Amending the FY2022 and FY2024 Community Improvement Program, authorizing, appropriating and transferring funds in the amount of Eight Thousand Four Hundred Eighty-One Dollars and Two Cents (\$8481.02) for the FY2024 CIP 510324 - Parks Deferred Maintenance."

"Amending the FY2022 and FY2025 Community Improvement Program, authorizing, appropriating and transferring funds in the amount of One Hundred Forty-Four Thousand Seven Hundred Eighty-Four Dollars (\$144,784) for the FY2022 CIP 510422 Livingston Pool Repair."

"Amending the FY2023 and FY2025 Community Improvement Program, authorizing, appropriating and transferring funds in the amount of One Hundred Thirty-Four Thousand Eight Hundred Twenty-Five Dollars (\$134,825) for the FY2023 CIP 711623 Downtown Sidewalk Repairs."

"Amending the FY2025 Community Improvement Program, authorizing and appropriating funds in the amount of Three Hundred Five Thousand Dollars (\$305,000) for the FY2025 CIP 712625 Lead Service Line Replacement Project."

"Amending the FY2022, FY2024, and FY2025 Community Improvement Program, authorizing, appropriating and transferring funds decreasing funds in the amount of One Million Seven Hundred Thousand Seventy-Nine Thousand Two Hundred Twenty Dollars and Thirteen Cents (\$1,779,220.13) for reallocation to various FY2022, FY2024 and FY2025 CIP Projects."

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

COMMITTEE ON ACCOUNTS, ENROLLMENT AND REVENUE ADMINISTRATION

6. Advising that the update on the Revolving Loan Fund has been accepted.
(Unanimous vote with the exception of Aldermen Terrio and O'Neil, who were absent)
7. Advising that the Finance Department reports:
 - Accounts receivable over 90 days
 - Aging report
 - Outstanding receivables

have been accepted.

(Unanimous vote with the exception of Aldermen Terrio and O'Neil, who were absent)

8. Advising that the City's Monthly Financial Report (unaudited) for the first four months of FY25 has been accepted.
(Unanimous vote with the exception of Aldermen Terrio and O'Neil, who were absent)
9. Recommending that the request from the Chair of the Manchester Arts Commission for the release of funds in the amount of \$4,205 to support the "Food Stories – We Are What We Eat" public exhibition be approved.
(Unanimous vote with the exception of Aldermen Terrio and O'Neil, who were absent)

COMMITTEE ON ADMINISTRATION/INFORMATION SYSTEMS

10. Recommending that Ordinance Amendment:

"Amending §92.25 Annual Fees of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Manchester to increase the annual fee for all existing Gamewell (wire) Master Fire Alarm Boxes."

ought to pass and be referred to the Committee on Bills on Second Reading for technical review.

(Unanimous vote with the exception of Alderman Thomas who was absent)

COMMITTEE ON BILLS ON SECOND READING

11. 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 Accounts, Enrollment & Revenue Administration.

(Unanimous vote with the exception of Alderman Fajardo who was absent)

COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT

12. Recommending that the Amending Resolution and Budget Authorization providing for the acceptance and expenditure of funds in the amount of \$11,867 for CIP 411325 SWAT Search & Rescue Equipment be approved.
(Unanimous vote)

13. Recommending that the Amending Resolution and Budget Authorization providing for the acceptance and expenditure of funds in the amount of \$200,930 for CIP 411425 Justice Assistance Grant be approved.
(Unanimous vote)
14. Recommending that the Amending Resolution and Budget Authorization providing for the acceptance and expenditure of funds in the amount of \$45,000 for CIP 411525 Intelligence Liaison Officer Program be approved.
(Unanimous vote)
15. Recommending that the Amending Resolution and Budget Authorization providing for the acceptance and expenditure of funds in the amount of \$93,000 for CIP 411625 STOP Violence Against Women be approved.
(Unanimous vote)
16. Recommending that the Amending Resolution and Budget Authorization providing for the transfer and expenditure of funds in the amount of \$94,440.52 for CIP 510025 Parks Deferred Maintenance be approved.
(Unanimous vote)
17. Recommending that the Amending Resolution and Budget Authorization providing for the transfer and expenditure of funds in the amount of \$8,481.02 for CIP 510324 Parks Deferred Maintenance be approved.
(Unanimous vote)
18. Recommending that the Amending Resolution and Budget Authorization providing for the transfer and expenditure of funds in the amount of \$144,784 for CIP 510422 Livingston Pool Repair be approved.
(Unanimous vote)
19. Recommending that the Amending Resolution and Budget Authorization providing for the transfer and expenditure of funds in the amount of \$134,825 for CIP 711623 Downtown Sidewalk Repair be approved.
(Unanimous vote)
20. Recommending that the Amending Resolution, Bond Resolution and Budget Authorizations providing for the acceptance and expenditure of funds in the amount of \$305,000 for CIP 712625 Lead Service Line Replacement Project be approved.
(Unanimous vote)
21. Recommending that the Central Fleet Services Director be authorized to issue request for proposals and enter into contracts to purchase two Fire Department engines.
(Unanimous vote)
22. Recommending that the request to extend CIP 710324 Central Fleet Deferred Maintenance to December 30, 2024, be approved.
(Unanimous vote)

23. Recommending that the request for \$170,000 be approved for the Police Women's Locker Room Expansion Project contingent upon the availability of funds.
(Unanimous vote)

COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RESOURCES/INSURANCE

24. Recommending that the request from the Human Resources Director for approval of the proposed revisions to the Family and Medical Leave (FMLA) Policy be approved.
(Unanimous vote)
25. Recommending that the request from the Finance Director for the following complement changes:
- Add one (1) Senior Applications Developer/Analyst (grade 21) position; and
 - De-fund one (1) existing Information Support Specialist (grade 19) position
- be approved.
(Unanimous vote)
26. Recommending that the request from the Welfare Director for the following complement changes:
- Add one (1) full-time Administrative Services Manager (grade 16) position; and
 - Change one (1) full-time Accounting Technician (grade 14) position to part-time status
- be approved.
(Unanimous vote)
27. Recommending that the request from the City Solicitor for the addition of one (1) full-time Victim Assistance Coordinator (grade 15) position to the department's complement be approved.
(Unanimous vote)

COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY, HEALTH AND TRAFFIC

28. Advising that the following traffic regulation:

HANDICAP PARKING ONLY

On Clay Street, north side, from a point 270 feet west of Cypress Street to a point 30 feet further west

Alderman Terrio

has been received and filed.

(Unanimous vote)

29. Recommending that the following traffic regulation:

SCHOOL ZONE

On Elm Street, between Carpenter Street and Bennington Street (for Webster School)

Alderman Morgan

be approved.

(Unanimous vote)

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON ENERGY CONTRACTS & OTHER ACTIVITIES

30. Recommending that the Public Works Director be authorized to enter into Group Net Metering Credit Purchase Agreements with the terms and conditions being subject to final review and approval of the City Solicitor's Office with input and support from Competitive Energy Services.

(Unanimous vote)

JOINT SCHOOL BUILDINGS COMMITTEE

31. Advising that the Manchester School District Priority I status and financial report for October 2024 submitted by LeftField has been accepted.

(Unanimous vote)

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

REGULAR BUSINESS

32. Nominations:

Conservation Commission

Lauren Zielinski to move from an alternate to a regular member, term to expire August 1, 2026

Bill Gabler to fill a vacancy as an alternate member, term to expire August 1, 2026

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

33. Confirmation:

Planning Board

Margarete Baldwin to fill a vacancy as an Ex-Officio member

*On motion of **Alderman O'Neil**, duly seconded by **Alderman Terrio**, it was voted to confirm the nomination.*

- 35.** Communication from Jon Hopkins, Central Fleet Services Director, advising the Board of his retirement effective January 31, 2025.

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

Alderman Levasseur stated Jon did a great job.

Mayor Ruais stated yes thank you for your services. We will do a proper farewell on your last today. I can assure you of that.

- 36.** Communication from Lisa McCarthy, Assistant City Clerk, advising the Board of Mayor and Aldermen of its 2025 meeting schedule, and recommending that only one meeting be held in November, on the 18th, due to a conflict with Election Day.

*On motion of **Alderman Levasseur**, duly seconded by **Alderman Terrio**, it was voted to suspend the rules and approve the recommended 2025 BMA meeting schedule.*

- 37.** Report(s) of the Committee on Community Improvement, if available.

The Committee on Community Improvement respectfully recommends, after due and careful consideration, that the Amending Resolution and Budget Authorization providing for the acceptance and expenditure of funds in the amount of \$30,000 for CIP 411925, Domestic Violence Prosecutor, be approved.

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

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

Mayor Ruais called the meeting back to order.

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

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

"Authorizing Bonds, Notes or Lease Purchases in the amount of Three Hundred Five Thousand Dollars (\$305,000) for the 2025 CIP 712625 Lead Service Line Replacement Project."

ought to pass and layover.

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

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

"Amending the FY2025 Community Improvement Program, authorizing and appropriating funds in the amount of Twenty-Five Thousand Dollars (\$25,000) for the FY2025 CIP 411225 FY24 Hazmat Team Grant."

"Amending the FY2025 Community Improvement Program, authorizing and appropriating funds in the amount of Eleven Thousand Eight Hundred Sixty-Seven Dollars (\$11,867) for the FY2025 CIP 411325 SWAT Search and Rescue Equipment."

"Amending the FY2025 Community Improvement Program, authorizing and appropriating funds in the amount of Two Hundred Thousand Nine Hundred Thirty Dollars (\$200,930) for the FY2025 CIP 411425 Justice Assistance Grant."

"Amending the FY2025 Community Improvement Program, authorizing and appropriating funds in the amount of Forty-Five Thousand Dollars (\$45,000) for the FY2025 CIP 411525 Intelligence Liaison Officer Program."

"Amending the FY2025 Community Improvement Program, authorizing and appropriating funds in the amount of Ninety-Three Thousand Dollars (\$93,000) for the FY2025 CIP 411625 STOP Violence Against Women."

"Amending the FY2025 Community Improvement Program, authorizing and appropriating funds in the amount of Five Hundred Thirty-One Thousand Three Hundred Thirty-Two Dollars and Ninety-Nine Cents (\$531,332.99) for the FY2025 CIP 411725 EOC Upgrade - Impact Fees."

"Amending the FY2020, FY2021, FY2022, FY2023 and FY2025 Community Improvement Program, authorizing, appropriating and transferring funds in the amount of Ninety-Four Thousand Four Hundred Forty Dollars and Fifty-Two Cents (\$94,440.52) for the FY2025 CIP 510025 Parks Deferred Maintenance."

“Amending the FY2022 and FY2024 Community Improvement Program, authorizing, appropriating and transferring funds in the amount of Eight Thousand Four Hundred Eighty-One Dollars and Two Cents (\$8481.02) for the FY2024 CIP 510324 - Parks Deferred Maintenance.”

“Amending the FY2022 and FY2025 Community Improvement Program, authorizing, appropriating and transferring funds in the amount of One Hundred Forty-Four Thousand Seven Hundred Eighty-Four Dollars (\$144,784) for the FY2022 CIP 510422 Livingston Pool Repair.”

“Amending the FY2023 and FY2025 Community Improvement Program, authorizing, appropriating and transferring funds in the amount of One Hundred Thirty-Four Thousand Eight Hundred Twenty-Five Dollars (\$134,825) for the FY2023 CIP 711623 Downtown Sidewalk Repairs.”

“Amending the FY2025 Community Improvement Program, authorizing and appropriating funds in the amount of Three Hundred Five Thousand Dollars (\$305,000) for the FY2025 CIP 712625 Lead Service Line Replacement Project.”

"Amending the FY2022, FY2024, and FY2025 Community Improvement Program, authorizing, appropriating and transferring funds decreasing funds in the amount of One Million Seven Hundred Thousand Seventy-Nine Thousand Two Hundred Twenty Dollars and Thirteen Cents (\$1,779,220.13) for reallocation to various FY2022, FY2024 and FY2025 CIP Projects."

ought to pass and be Enrolled.

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

41. Report(s) of the Committee on Lands and Buildings, if available.

The Committee on Lands and Buildings respectfully recommends, after due and careful consideration, that the request from 1279 South Willow, LLC for a revocable license agreement allowing for the construction of a pylon sign and a sculpture art installation within the South Willow Street right-of-way be approved.

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

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

There were none.

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

There were none.

- 44.** Resolutions:

“Amending the FY2025 Community Improvement Program, authorizing and appropriating funds in the amount of Twenty-Five Thousand Dollars (\$25,000) for the FY2025 CIP 411225 FY24 Hazmat Team Grant.”

“Amending the FY2025 Community Improvement Program, authorizing and appropriating funds in the amount of Eleven Thousand Eight Hundred Sixty-Seven Dollars (\$11,867) for the FY2025 CIP 411325 SWAT Search and Rescue Equipment.”

“Amending the FY2025 Community Improvement Program, authorizing and appropriating funds in the amount of Two Hundred Thousand Nine Hundred Thirty Dollars (\$200,930) for the FY2025 CIP 411425 Justice Assistance Grant.”

“Amending the FY2025 Community Improvement Program, authorizing and appropriating funds in the amount of Forty-Five Thousand Dollars (\$45,000) for the FY2025 CIP 411525 Intelligence Liaison Officer Program.”

“Amending the FY2025 Community Improvement Program, authorizing and appropriating funds in the amount of Ninety-Three Thousand Dollars (\$93,000) for the FY2025 CIP 411625 STOP Violence Against Women.”

“Amending the FY2025 Community Improvement Program, authorizing and appropriating funds in the amount of Five Hundred Thirty-One Thousand Three Hundred Thirty-Two Dollars and Ninety-Nine Cents (\$531,332.99) for the FY2025 CIP 411725 EOC Upgrade - Impact Fees.”

“Amending the FY2020, FY2021, FY2022, FY2023 and FY2025 Community Improvement Program, authorizing, appropriating and transferring funds in the amount of Ninety-Four Thousand Four Hundred Forty Dollars and Fifty-Two Cents (\$94,440.52) for the FY2025 CIP 510025 Parks Deferred Maintenance.”

“Amending the FY2022 and FY2024 Community Improvement Program, authorizing, appropriating and transferring funds in the amount of Eight Thousand Four Hundred Eighty-One Dollars and Two Cents (\$8481.02) for the FY2024 CIP 510324 - Parks Deferred Maintenance.”

“Amending the FY2022 and FY2025 Community Improvement Program, authorizing, appropriating and transferring funds in the amount of One Hundred Forty-Four Thousand Seven Hundred Eighty-Four Dollars (\$144,784) for the FY2022 CIP 510422 Livingston Pool Repair.”

“Amending the FY2023 and FY2025 Community Improvement Program, authorizing, appropriating and transferring funds in the amount of One Hundred Thirty-Four Thousand Eight Hundred Twenty-Five Dollars (\$134,825) for the FY2023 CIP 711623 Downtown Sidewalk Repairs.”

“Amending the FY2025 Community Improvement Program, authorizing and appropriating funds in the amount of Three Hundred Five Thousand Dollars (\$305,000) for the FY2025 CIP 712625 Lead Service Line Replacement Project.”

"Amending the FY2022, FY2024, and FY2025 Community Improvement Program, authorizing, appropriating and transferring funds decreasing funds in the amount of One Million Seven Hundred Thousand Seventy-Nine Thousand Two Hundred Twenty Dollars and Thirteen Cents (\$1,779,220.13) for reallocation to various FY2022, FY2024 and FY2025 CIP Projects."

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

*On motion of **Alderman Long**, duly seconded by **Alderman Terrio**, it was voted that the Resolutions be Enrolled.*

NEW BUSINESS

Alderman Levasseur stated I have something from Chief Cashin. He wants to apply for a grant. Did everyone receive the letter?

***Alderman Levasseur** moved to authorize the Fire Department to go out for an AFG grant. **Alderman Long** duly seconded the motion. Mayor Ruais called for a vote. There being none opposed, the motion carried.*

Alderman Barry stated obviously we had quite a few people come in here and speak in favor of Beech Street School. Can Matt let us know what the proper procedure is to reconsider in the future?

Matthew Normand, City Clerk, stated I will read the rule. It states “a motion for reconsideration of a vote shall be open for debate, but such motion shall not be considered unless made by a member voting with the majority, or unless notice be given at that meeting at which the vote is passed, in which case, the motion shall be

made at the next regular meeting after and only one motion for reconsideration of any vote shall be permitted.” In other words, if you voted as a member of the majority, you could raise that tonight. If you were in the minority, no notice was given at the last meeting so you could not ask for reconsideration.

TABLED ITEMS

- 45.** 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.

- 46.** Report from the Committee on Lands & Buildings 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)
(Note: Tabled on November 19, 2024.)

This item remained on the table.

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

A True Record. Attest.



City Clerk