BOARD OF MAYOR AND ALDERMEN
April 15, 2025 at 7:00 PM

Mayor Ruais called the meeting to order.

The Clerk called the roll.

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

*On motion of **Alderman Long**, duly seconded by **Alderman Morgan**, it was voted to recess the meeting to allow the Special BMA Meeting to continue.*

Mayor Ruais called the meeting back to order.

Mayor Ruais stated with the Board's indulgence, I would like to have the discussion on Item 18 now.

*On motion of **Alderman Levasseur**, duly seconded by **Alderman E. Sapienza**, it was voted to take up Item 18 first.*

18. Discussion regarding the Manchester School District's FY26 budget request.

Jennifer Chmiel, Superintendent, stated the mayor had asked us to do a condensed presentation this evening on our budget that we presented to the BOSC in February. What we are going to move through will be the opening slides but I want to take a quick moment and just recognize what we saw here this evening and the information that is contained in our opening slides. Our district over the past few years has absolutely been on the move and going in the right direction, from our graduation rates going up to our student attendance going up to behavior going down. We are cutting new pathways for students to succeed in college and career and we are pushing the limits to make sure we are stretching to meet the needs of our students. So while we are going to go quickly through these slides of accomplishments to get to the budget, I would be remiss if I didn't call out all of the students, all of the staff and everyone you saw here today that are representative of that progress.

Karen DeFrancis, School District Finance Officer, stated I am looking at the tax cap calculation. If you look at the 4.27%, that is the number that was given to us by Sharon Wickens that you all are familiar with for the tax cap budget. If you take that 4.27% and apply it to our current year's tax revenue of $120.4 million, that would bring in an additional $5.1 million in tax revenue to the school district. In addition to that, we have additional revenues of $6.4 million that we will discuss on one of the next slides. So in total looking at the $5.1 million in additional tax revenue and $6.4 million in additional non-tax revenue, that would bring our budget up by $11,550,000 which brings our request to $246,050,206. Looking at that $11.5 million on both the increase in revenues, which is on the left side of the screen and then the increase in spending on the right side of the screen, we are just going to highlight some of the different areas on both sides. Looking at our adequacy aid, our enrollment has leveled. We are looking at an additional increase in adequacy aid of $11.7 million. Again, enrollment has leveled but we are seeing a 2% increase in the base and the differentiated aid and that is based on the current formula at the state level. Our interest income. Our treasurer has estimated a reduction due to the estimated interest rates so we are looking at a reduction of $250,000. In our Medicaid revenue, due to the change in the rules, we are looking at a reduction of $250,000. For all of our other revenues, we are recommending a 50% decrease in the use of one-time funds from our expendable trust. In FY25, the year we are in now, we are utilizing $9 million between our surplus from the prior year and our expendable trust. So again $9 million in one-time funds and our recommendation is to reduce that to $4.5 million as we would like to get off of that one-time fund usage. In all of our other revenues, we are seeing a decrease of $262,000. If you look at those first couple of items I just spoke about, that again is the $6.4 million increase in other revenues with the large portion of that being driven by the adequacy aid increase. The bottom portion of the screen is again what I mentioned on the other slide, the 4.27% in tax revenues which brings in an additional $5.1 million to the school district. Looking on the expenditure side, our increase in spending is that same $11.5 million. Our salaries include all of our cost of living adjustments, steps and longevities. We also have included in here our teacher retirements so filling all of those positions and filling our vacant positions. We do have a new category in our salaries this year; a couple of new categories actually. Our bus drivers are now part of the school district so that is no longer under contracted services and also we have a new category of paraprofessionals which are the registered behavior technicians (RBT's). We are no longer funding them under our professional services line which is why we see the professional and technical services line being reduced but our salaries being increased by those amounts. If we were to take out those new categories in our salary line…right now we are seeing a $10.7 million increase in our salaries. That looks high but that is because of those new categories that are now in that line item. If we were to take out those categories, we would be looking at a salary increase of 4.5% which is consistent with our steps and COLA's with our collective bargaining agreements. Looking at our benefits, we have increased our health insurance by 7% which increases the budget by $1.7 million. When we built the budget, our benefits consultant did recommend using 9%, however, we decided to go with 7%. Since the time that we built the budget back in February, our consultant is seeing an increase in the trending of health insurance and is now recommending that we should be seeing a 10.3% increase next year. I just want to caution that as we talk about this reduction on the school side, we are looking at other things that we are going to be considering next year. Right now, the health insurance might be underfunded at this point in our budget. Our retirement rates have decreased by the NH Retirement System so that was some good news. However, we are seeing an increase in that line because obviously our salaries are going up. The same thing with FICA. Professional and technical services. As I mentioned before, we are seeing a reduction there of $2 million and that is because we are now putting some of those costs up in our salary line. We would prefer to have the people in as employees versus contracted services and it does actually cost us less money, even with our benefit packages, to get those people on board. As far as transportation, we are seeing a decrease of $3.7 million. Again, we have transitioned our transportation in-house and out of MTA. In past years, you would have seen that transportation line at $3.7 million. We have now reduced that line item and brought that up into the salaries and benefits, fuel, insurance and all the other costs associated with transportation. For our utilities based on estimates from the Department Public Works we expect to see a decrease in natural gas and also electricity. However, that line item is increasing because we are now putting the bus fuel in there. The bus fuel is $500,000 but again with some reductions in electricity and gas we are seeing an increase in that line item of $400,000. Our city services will have a 3% increase for our Aramark contract for custodians as well as the new square footage for our modular classrooms. Also, a 3% increase for Facilities and Parks & Recreation for the city services that they provide and a 5% increase for the police school resource officers. The total increase for that line is $320,000. Finally, our debt service. We are showing an increase in the current debt that is bonded of $328,000. FY25 and 26 CIP will not have an impact on the FY26 budget. The $17.7 million is included for Phase I in our line items as well. The total spending would be an increase of $11.5 million. I spoke about the revenues but this slide shows all of the individual line items within our revenue budget and it is comparing FY25 to the FY26 budget projections. On the right hand side, if you look at the subtotals, the $761,000 and the $4.5 million for the reduction in the use of one-time funds and then the $11.6 million increase in adequacy, those three numbers add up to that same $6.4 million that we looked at previously. That is an increase in our non-tax revenue and the $5.1 million increase in our tax revenue. This slide shows a comparison of our adequate education aid over the past five years. The current formula as I mentioned is showing a 2% increase in the base adequacy and differentiated aid. The extraordinary needs grant is where we have seen a pretty large increase over the years when they changed the formula a couple of years ago and when we requested the additional $35 million that the BMA did give to us. That is where that increase basically was – the extraordinary needs grant. That current formula has a 2% increase, however, if our property taxes increase above 2%, we might not see that full increase. Again, this is our expenditure side comparing the FY25 budget to the FY26 budget. These are the same line items I spoke about on a previous slide. Again, the $11.5 million in additional spending. Looking at the next slide, this is an expenditure snapshot of all of our funds in the district. If we were to look at the BOSC request in our general fund of $246 million plus our school food and nutrition fund of $6.3 million and our special revenue funds which consist of all of our grants, our Title I, IDEA and all of the grants that we have in the district, we would be a total organization of $275.6 million. Looking at the next slide, this is that same $275.6 million on the revenue side and a pie chart showing the different areas we bring in revenue. State and local taxes represent $125.5 million, which is 45.6% of our budget. On the right hand side our adequate education aid is $108 million, which is 39.3%. I would also point out our expendables trust utilizing $4.5 million which represents 1.6%. This year, again we utilized $9 million and would roughly work out to 3.2%. Again, we are trying to bring down the usage of one-time funds. The next slide looks at the same $275 million on the spending side. Salaries and benefits represent 68.9% of our spending. Our debt services, which includes Phase I of our long-term facilities plan is 10.7% of our spending and transportation is 4.6%, which is $12.5 million. Now that only includes our vendors so that would be our specialized transportation because now our regular transportation that we took over from the MTA is included in the other areas on that pie chart including salaries and benefits. The next slide is the recommendation for the FY26 CIP projects. That is a total request of $6.6 million in the different areas listed above. For future bonding, the estimated cost would be $768,500.

Dr. Chmiel stated these were the items that we brought forward to the Board of School Committee. They were approved and we forwarded them to the BMA. I think we are going to shift now to what we discussed last night in our meeting. We understood that we had a discrepancy between the BOSC tax cap compliant budget that we forwarded to the BMA and the mayor's budget. The team and I went again, line by line, through our budget. I am not using that language lightly. We went through every single line item in our budget to look for efficiencies and opportunities for reductions. I want to preface anything I am going to say next with I don't think that any of the reductions that are on this recommendation list are in the best interest of our district, our students or our staff. With that said, the final recommendations that we came forward with last night include a reduction to our athletics programming of $90,090. That is a halt to the expansion of our middle school athletics programming. That halt would include middle school baseball, softball, wresting and unified athletics. We recommended a reduction in force. We have been able to determine that we have 38 positions through attrition that we could hold. That does impact class sizes, particularly at our elementary schools. In addition, we are looking at a reduction of the district office of eight positions or 7.8% of the district's staff team. We did look at the reduction to transportation and are looking to increase the legally required two mile walk out for students, a charge for high school riders and a reduction in the use of the tap on/tap off system. That system allows families to be able to see…

Alderman O'Neil interjected do we have a copy of what you are talking about.

Dr. Chmiel stated well we didn't know all of this was coming forward today. We got that information last night at our board meeting.

Mayor Ruais stated it is available on their website. They posted it last night.

Dr. Chmiel stated to continue, the tap on/tap off system allows families to take a look at where student buses are within the city to let them know when buses will be arriving. We are looking at a reduction in Facilities. We have asked to open one of our contracts to look at a reduction in the scope or level of staffing needed to clean our buildings to keep them at the level we have been specifying. We also outlined a decrease in supplies of $133,000. This would be proportionately distributed across all of our 21 schools. They would see a reduction, not to include paper or toner for the balance of this school year and all of next year. We looked at a contract service line reduction. Karen spoke about our ability to bring RBT's and paras into the district. We have been able to do that successfully and staff at a higher rate. At this point in time, we are looking at a one-for-one so anytime we bring a general fund staff person in, we would be reducing a contract service person with a total expected estimate of $1.3 million for next year. Again, using additional one-time funds of just over $3.8 million to round out to get us to the $9.55 million.

Alderman T. Sapienza stated so the mayor is proposing a $9.5 million cut. Does he have a list of his reductions?

Mayor Ruais asked do I have a specific list. No. I have been in constant communication with the district with what they would propose. What I have said from the beginning is the budget process is an iterative process. There are multiple steps to it. As you well know having served on the board, I introduce my budget and then it goes to the aldermen and then we work together to find common ground. I have been staying in touch with them about what they would propose and then we come up with the final number and send them that number and they make the ultimate decision on what the cuts would be.

Alderman T. Sapienza asked so when you came up with the $9.5 million, that wasn't based on a list of things you thought could come out of the budget.

Mayor Ruais answered I recognized that changes would have to be made as a result of that. Knowing that it is an iterative process and takes time to put that together, I knew that we would come back here and have these conversations and build something together that works for the city, the taxpayers and the school district.

Alderman T. Sapienza asked will you be putting together a list of cuts that you can support.

Mayor Ruais replied I will be working with the school district to come up with something. After the question and answer portion here, I have had a number of conversations with aldermen and looking at the sheet. We had the school board meeting last night. I have a proposal that I was going to make to the board that increases the funding number. I am jumping ahead but they have a May timeframe where they are going to look to make some initial decisions for next year's school year. They obviously have to do that before September. I had a number in mind that I have talked to some aldermen about that would address some of the cuts that they have discussed.

Alderman T. Sapienza asked so in the end will you have a list of cuts that you support.

Mayor Ruais responded yes I would work with the school district to itemize and bring that forward. Ultimately, we pass the number when we approve the school district budget and then they set the budget.

Alderman T. Sapienza stated well they set a budget and you came up with $9.5 million less so I wonder what you envisioned taking out. I want to know what the mayor wants to take out.

Mayor Ruais replied that is the conversation that we are having tonight. What is the ultimate number going to look like and what are those cuts going to look like?

Alderman Fajardo stated I was just reviewing the list on my phone. I got a copy of it earlier. Has that been approved by the school board yet? I know everything is in flux but how does this put you in a position to be able to plan?

Dr. Chmiel replied last night we had a discussion at the BOSC about potential reductions that we could look at within the district. I will caution that our work looked at not impacting class sizes to the best of our ability. We are seeing an improvement in student outcome results based on a lot of the variables we have put in but one of the strongest ones I would say is the reduction in class size. As we went through last night, it became very clear that the BOSC had concerns about reduction in force which would impact class size, the transportation recommendation and we talked a bit about athletics. Those topics kept coming up in the notes I was taking when board members were asking questions. Where does that put us today? Every year we look to the budget season and understand that you guys have until June to come up with a final budget. I then will bring whatever this board comes back with to the BOSC and we will have to settle on those final recommendations. We are sitting in a little bit of a flux. We are heading into hiring season right now. I think what you are hearing from some of the staff who came out today is that anxiousness about what is going to go and what is going to stay and what will the new school year look like. We are a little bit anxious going into hiring season knowing that things are still a little bit undetermined.

Alderman Fajardo asked so to recap, I am hearing that you are prioritizing class sizes. Is there anything else you would say informed the list you just went through?

Dr. Chmiel answered I would say that all of the recommendations have an impact. I can't say that I recommend any of the reductions that we put forward last night. Any which way you look…you heard our students talk about if there is a change in transportation it is going to impact attendance. We tend to look at the whole child – attendance, behavior and curriculum as those three areas of data. We are starting to see all of those data points go in the right direction so these recommendations are hard to make. Our team looked to minimize impacts in any one area so we started to spread them across the system. You see a large reduction in force at the district office. We knew when we were looking at class sizes, we did different combinations of numbers to see where that number could sit. Our ability to take out about eight positions puts fifteen positions back in classrooms. There was a lot of cutting across the system in general just to try to keep that class size number as low as we could keep it.

Alderman Morgan asked can we just jump forward to your proposal. It has been a long night so far and I would like to hear it if possible.

Mayor Ruais stated I don't want to shortchange anyone who wants to ask questions because this is the opportunity to do that.

Alderman T. Sapienza asked we aren't going to know what the cuts are before we vote on their budget.

Mayor Ruais replied I am not asking for us to vote on a budget tonight. Judging by the conversation that we had last night on the BOSC and the conversations here, I recognize that the reductions would necessitate changes on the school board side. Because they are coming up on that May timeframe where they have to start making decisions, what I wanted to bring to the board tonight was an update on my proposal but I wanted to give them enough lead time to be able to make better informed decisions before we ultimately pass the budget. Theoretically, we could pass it tonight if we wanted to but if we want more time, we can take more time. I wanted to give them something more certain recognizing that our budget process goes until June. I am going to ask for a consensus on an updated number that I think meets some of the concerns that we heard tonight. That will allow them to make better informed decisions as we go through the budget process. Does that make sense?

Alderman T. Sapienza stated again we have a budget that they presented. If you are going to offer less money, you should identify the cuts from that budget that we don't expect to see going forward.

Mayor Ruais responded that is what I was going to say.

Alderman Levasseur stated whatever budget they get they will be voting on those cuts at a later time. We cannot tell them how to spend their money. They can say they are cutting sports and buses and making the class sizes larger, all the same things they have beat us over the head with for the last quarter of a century but they always come back and make those votes and decide how they are going to spend the money. We don't tell them what to do. How much do the feds give us? I saw a federal number of $23 or $25 million. Do they ever increase it or has it been the same for the last few years?

Ms. DeFrancis replied it has stayed fairly consistent in the $20 million range. When we received our ESSER funds, we received $95 million that was spent over three years. If you look at our budget presentations from prior years, it is about that $20 million number. We do sometimes see increases but they are not substantial.

Alderman Levasseur asked is there a federal or state statute or local ordinance that precludes you from using the full number of $275 million as your base for a budget. You are using local and state but not federal. You are using a $234 million number, not $275 million right?

Ms. DeFrancis answered this board has only appropriated the general fund number and school food and nutrition for as long as I have been here. The federal dollars would work similar to school food and nutrition. We have the revenues to support it, so it would not impact the tax rate. This board has never given us an appropriation for the federal spending.

Alderman Levasseur stated you get an appropriation from the state. They give us money back. All other cities and towns across the state pay into that and we are a receiver town.

Ms. DeFrancis responded that is in our general fund. You are talking about the statewide education property tax. That is included in our general fund revenues.

Alderman Levasseur replied correct but not the federal revenue. Is there a state statute that forces us to add that number in from the state and not just use the local number that is $120 million?

Ms. DeFrancis stated the $120 million that we collect in taxes includes the local and state.

Alderman Levasseur asked the $120 million includes the state.

Ms. DeFrancis answered yes it includes the statewide education property tax and also the local taxes.

Alderman Levasseur stated I am looking at something here that says $120 million from the net school district appropriation and total city…I am just looking for the state number. What is the state number? You guys based your number on $234 million so if the city is $120 million where is the other $114 million coming from?

Ms. DeFrancis stated here is the slide. The middle column is fiscal year 2025. If you look towards the bottom of the page, the state taxes which are raised locally and retained locally is $19.5 million and then the local tax is $100.8 million. That is the $120 million we are collecting from the taxpayers in this fiscal year. In the next fiscal year, that state property tax stays about the same at $19.6 million and in our proposal we are asking for an additional $5.1 million in local taxes. In total, it goes from $120.4 million to $125.5 million. That is the $5.1 million we are requesting which represents a 4.27% increase on the tax side. Those numbers are combined to come up with the state and local tax because the taxpayers are paying both pieces of that.

Alderman Levasseur stated you guys came in with a request of $11.5 million.

Ms. DeFrancis answered yes because we have additional revenues of $6.4 million. So the $5.1 million in the tax revenue plus the $6.4 million in our other revenues, which is driven mostly by that adequate education aid going from $96 million to $106 million.

Alderman Levasseur asked is there a reason you don't use the fed number. So your total budget is $275,633,000. That is the budget you have for the school district.

Ms. DeFrancis stated that would be the spending from all of our funds. Again, this board has never appropriated the federal fund piece. If you did appropriate our federal funds, then we would bring in that revenue as well so in the end there won't be an impact on the tax rate.

Alderman Barry stated Dr. Chmiel, you mentioned that this is hiring season. I know we are going to have at least one more budget we are going to present, maybe more. Sometimes we wait until the last minute in June because we have extra revenue coming in that we can use. Is that going to disrupt your hiring?

Dr. Chmiel answered in the past, we have been fortunate to have an approved budget going into hiring season. In the years that we don't, what we tend to do is write anticipated on any posting that we are going to do. We don't take the anticipated language off until we have the full budget approved by the BMA and then back at the BOSC. That language, however, is a little bit of a detractor to applicants looking to join the school district. When you think about the narrative that we have right now with the reduction in the BOSC tax cap compliant budget request combined with anticipated language on a posting, our concern would be that we may see a decrease in applications.

Alderman Barry asked do you already know how many teachers are leaving.

Dr. Chmiel replied we do. I would say right now that number is incredibly dynamic. Those numbers continue to add up as we go through the spring. We pulled all of our vacancies, retirements and resignations to find where we could pull positions out through attrition. We are sitting somewhere around 75-78 right now in that total pool.

Alderman Barry asked and how many people have applied for positions.

Dr. Chmiel asked to our district. I wouldn't have that information by each position right now. That is done first at the building level and then we bring nominations forward to the BOSC. I will say that we have seen a steady improvement in teacher applications once we got our contracts to be a little bit more competitive with surrounding districts and we have been much more successful in hiring paraprofessionals and RBT's. We are seeing the workforce move in the right direction.

Alderman Barry asked are you going to be okay if we go into June.

Dr. Chmiel responded I would say it could have an impact and my projection would be we might see less people applying because there is no certainty of a job sitting there. Keep in mind that we are competing with surrounding districts. Going out early in the season lets us pick from the pool that is sitting there. When we move into June and July, other districts have already completed their hiring season.

Alderman E. Sapienza stated I have more of a comment. I have a lot of confidence in the school folks. I think that they certainly will be able to figure this out. Mayor, I want to say you have every right to submit a number and stick with it. You have every right to delegate your authority. It is not your responsibility to go line by line with the school administration. I am sure they can figure this out. We all know there is a lot of kabuki theatre that goes on with these budgets. It happens every year. Let's not kid ourselves. Even the terminology, $9.5 million cut. We all know it is not really a cut. I just want to emphasize that I have a lot of confidence in the school folks to figure this out and mayor you are well within your rights to submit a figure. I hope you stick to it. I like that you are delegating the authority like that.

Alderman Vincent asked Dr. Chmiel, how many teachers did we lay off last year.

Dr. Chmiel answered none.

Alderman Vincent asked how many the year before.

Dr. Chmiel replied none. In my tenure, we have not had to do a layoff.

Alderman Vincent asked so if the mayor's budget was to come forward as is, there were a lot of good people tonight talking about 38 teachers getting laid off and saying we are pulling these people out of schools. Can you clarify what that means?

Dr. Chmiel responded sure I would love to. What would happen would be movements through attrition. We talked about this last night at the Board of School Committee meeting. Essentially what we do is we look at the options we have available through a vacancy, retirement or resignation and then we start to look at class sizes and start moving staff across the district. I think what you heard tonight is anxiety about what does that mean and what does that look like.

Alderman Vincent stated I know what I heard tonight. I understand that.

Dr. Chmiel stated on our end, it is a bit of a jigsaw puzzle. We have to get the right staff with the right credentials into the right school. That is what we would do.

Alderman Vincent asked so it is not layoffs.

Dr. Chmiel answered we are not looking at layoffs.

Alderman Vincent stated so the good people of this city that stood here tonight and in my opinion were bamboozled to think that this budget was going to have layoffs are incorrect.

Dr. Chmiel stated I have been very clear since…

Alderman Vincent interjected I am not saying it was you. I am just saying there was a misunderstanding.

Dr. Chmiel stated it was important to me to make sure that our staff didn't face the condition of a layoff season. We also reduced more at the district level so that we could protect some of the positions in the schools.

Alderman Vincent stated this plays into the 30 students per class correct.

Dr. Chmiel replied correct.

Alderman Vincent asked what are we at right now for students in a classroom. I know it is a very vague question but if you could try to…

Dr. Chmiel interjected in general, K-4, our goal is sitting around 20. We have some schools that are tipping in at 22. What we do is we move them to schools that have vacancies. We work with the families to keep students in classrooms where we have the lowest numbers. The good news is we are starting to see that being a difficult move as well because we are hitting those 20 marks across a lot of our elementary schools. The good news is that we are moving in the right direction. At our middle and high schools, the goal is 25. We are seeing some of our higher level courses being a little bit higher and we are seeing some of our middle schools tipping over that 25. The goal has been this year more balance so when we have placements coming in, we are working with the principals and the district team to look at where students can be placed so we can keep that class size low.

Alderman Vincent asked how are we doing with paras.

Dr. Chmiel answered pretty amazing. We did a presentation last night and I would be happy to share that with the BMA. We are at 301 I believe. Thirty of them are contract services providers right now. I believe we hired 120 this school year. We have had some pretty tremendous success. We put a hard recruitment push into that pool to make sure we had those resources.

Alderman Vincent asked do you attribute that to working with local colleges and whatnot to try to get some of those because there are programs out there.

Dr. Chmiel responded there are and we have a number of pipelines within the district. I attribute it to the full approach that the team took. It was recruitment and looking at retention and how do we get pipelines for people to come and service in those roles.

Alderman Vincent stated that is good news. If I may, the transit. Can you explain to us what in-house home school model means? There were a lot of good folks saying we are going to make them walk two miles. I understand that but I am trying to understand where that plays in and where charging students to take a bus comes in.

Dr. Chmiel replied legally we have to provide busing at the two-mile mark. Our policy shows it at the 1.4-mile mark. We also are not required to provide busing for high school students. A number of years ago, during the Covid time, the board moved back to not charging high school students and we have held to that 1.4-mile radius. When we talked about the savings that could be had, it seems like a smaller number at $342,000, however, again we are looking for teacher positions to save in the classrooms to keep that class size number down. So the $342,000 is a result of moving from the 1.4 miles to a 2-mile radius, charging at the high school level to ride a bus and reducing the tap on/tap off system. I will also say I undercut that recommendation as I said it last night by saying getting to two miles would be like walking from here to Elliot Hospital and we know it can take 40-50 minutes to walk that length.

Alderman Vincent responded I get it. We are charging them now correct?

Dr. Chmiel answered we are not.

Alderman Vincent asked what are we looking at charging students if this is the proposed plan.

Dr. Chmiel responded we ran a model and were looking at $10. The net would be about $70,000.

Alderman Vincent asked $10 per student.

Dr. Chmiel answered per student per week.

Alderman Vincent asked how do you feel about that.

Dr. Chmiel replied I don't feel good about any of these reductions.

Alderman Vincent asked what would make us even think to go that route.

Dr. Chmiel answered to protect classroom teacher positions. So as we kept looking at models and trying to figure out where that classroom number was going to fall, that is why we paused the athletics expansion. It is a small number at $90,000 but it is another teacher. So as we kept moving teachers into that pool we could get our class sizes to start to fall down.

Alderman Vincent asked the school bus program that we took over, was this a benefit right now. Is this successful right now in your opinion?

Dr. Chmiel responded absolutely. Millions of dollars we have saved.

Alderman Vincent stated the last thing I have is regarding special education. How does this work with this budget? How are we affecting the special education because I know a lot of it is outsourced?

Dr. Chmiel replied not a lot of it is outsourced. We do bring in contract service providers when we can't find a PT, OT, speech therapist or paraprofessional. We have some special ed teachers in some of our specialized programs and school psychologists. Those are the areas we are seeing contract service providers come in. What our goal is right now, understanding that to hire a contract service provider it is two to three times more expensive than a generally funded position our HR and school teams will be working actively to recruit so that we can continue to see that contract service number drop. Keep in mind we did the same approach with the paraprofessionals. It took us a bit of time to really actualize the number we wanted to get to but we stayed consistent with pushing the recruitment.

Alderman Vincent stated I do wish a lot of the people that spoke tonight did go to the school board and speak as well because it was not the mayor that made these cuts or makes the selection of cuts. It is the school board or whoever made them. It is unfortunate that we took the brunt of that blow when we are not the ones dictating what the cuts are. I understand what you are saying but I do think it is important to understand that we can work with you on this but I want people to know that the mayor did not come out and say we are going to cut buses and we are doing to do this. It is a budget and it is a work in progress so people need to understand that. That is all I am saying.

Dr. Chmiel stated we have never categorized it as a cut. What we have said is we had to get from the BOSC tax compliant budget…

Alderman Vincent interjected Dr. Chmiel I understand what you are going to say but the people who were here tonight didn't understand that and I don't think it was portrayed to them correctly. That is all I am saying.

Alderman Barry stated I think what the people who came here tonight understood was that we are the next step and they are reaching out to us to try to bring them closer to their budget number.

Alderman Levasseur stated I love the irony of millions of dollars of savings on buses but you are going to charge high school students $10/week to ride the buses.

Dr. Chmiel replied I will say it again. I don't think any of the reductions I made make any logical sense for our district. We presented a budget to our Board of School Committee that we felt was in the best interest of the district.

Alderman Levasseur stated this has been going on budget after budget but talk about bad messaging from the school district and going after the lowest hanging fruit and charging people to ride a bus and going after sports and making it sound like we are laying off teachers. I was told and I watched the meeting last night that you are paying them early retirement and they have an option to be bought out if they want to go. That is what I saw in the meeting last night. They are not getting fired. Somebody came here and said these people are all being fired. It is just bad messaging. When you have a budget of $234 million, you guys can't make anything managerial or anything administrative or the other sub groups that you have. You go after kids paying $10 for buses and sports. You rally these people up. They come in here and don't even know what they are saying.

Dr. Chmiel responded I disagree with you wholly on that. We went across the system and made reductions across the system. What we tried to do is focus on class sizes.

Alderman Levasseur asked where did you make cuts at the top levels of the administration.

Dr. Chmiel answered 7.8% or eight positions came out of our district team.

Alderman Levasseur asked 7.8% of your budget.

Dr. Chmiel replied 7.8% of our district team was cut.

Alderman Levasseur asked how much of that district team are we talking about.

Dr. Chmiel it was 2.1% at each building.

Alderman Levasseur asked what does 7.8% represent.

Dr. Chmiel responded eight positions.

Alderman Levasseur asked out of…how many teachers did you have in the FY25 budget.

Dr. Chmiel answered we have been hovering around 1,200.

Alderman Levasseur asked and what do you have in this budget.

Dr. Chmiel replied right around 1,200.

Alderman Levasseur asked so the same.

Dr. Chmiel answered correct.

Alderman Levasseur stated and the reason the cost has gone up is there was a 9% increase last year or in the first year of the contract.

Dr. Chmiel asked for the negotiated contracts.

Alderman Levasseur answered yes.

Dr. Chmiel stated across the board all of our contracts had increases to bring them level just like you did on this side with the salary study.

Alderman Levasseur replied we haven't voted for that yet.

Dr. Chmiel stated you have been looking at the salaries. We did the same thing.

Alderman Levasseur stated we are not arguing about our side. I am just making the point, and I don't know why this has to get argumentative. I understand why you have such a massive increase. It is because you had a massive increase in salaries. The number that I just saw, I think it was something like a $10.4 million increase in your line item for salaries. Then a few million more for FICA and retirements because those have gone up. It is a huge money increase. It is not because of…I know fuel went up and the utilities went up but the massive increase was in salaries.

Dr. Chmiel responded correct.

Alderman Levasseur stated right and you have to pay for that.

Dr. Chmiel replied correct.

Alderman Levasseur stated that's all. I don't mean to be mean but when you have kids come in here saying they have to pay $10 for a bus ride and you are cutting sports, it is just bad messaging.

Dr. Chmiel stated we didn't cut sports. We paused on the expansion of sports. What we built out this year with the additional adequacy that we got was the foundation to increase middle school baseball, softball, wrestling and unified PE. That is a build out that we look to pause which would save us one classroom teacher for the coming year.

Alderman Levasseur stated I am not trying to be critical. Look, you have what you have. You got a big increase and you have a big increase in salaries and you have a big increase in retirement. I get it. It is not a big deal. I understand that the teachers got a great contract and from my understanding were very satisfied and happy with their increases. It is not a bad thing. You had the votes and you got the money and you have to pay for it. I am just saying it is a bad look. It makes people not really trust the school district when you are coming in with $10 bus rides. That is all I am saying.

Alderman Long stated first of all, I want to say that the school district is producing leaders. The students that came and spoke, the school district is producing leaders in this city. There is no doubt about that. That was clear tonight. The district cuts…I mean we are talking about low hanging fruit. I understand that you have to do those cuts. Maybe we could come up with some suggestions. If you don't like what they are coming up with, maybe we could come up with some suggestions. Out of the 38 positions you are losing through attrition, how many of those affect class sizes?

Dr. Chmiel replied at the elementary level we would have about six schools that would see the most impact for class sizes going up. Of the teachers, I wouldn't' be able to give you that number just yet because we are still doing the projected movements behind the scenes. Each day as we get new resignations and retirements that come in it changes just a little bit as we keep shuffling the staff. I would have a better sense of what that actual number per teacher would look like in 3-4 weeks.

Alderman Long stated nobody who came here to speak was bamboozled. They are working there. So if I am working somewhere and I see these cuts going on, I am concerned about my job. They didn't get bamboozled at all. They came here and gave their reality. That is their reality.

Alderman O'Neil stated I will say that I went on your website and I cannot find the document with the proposed cuts.

Dr. Chmiel replied Angela posted it last night.

Alderman O'Neil stated well I couldn't find it. I am a little disappointed that we are having a discussion about a document and we don't have it in front of us.

Dr. Chmiel stated it is under the full board agenda.

Alderman O'Neil asked on our agenda.

Dr. Chmiel answered on the school district's web page it is on the full board agenda.

Alderman O'Neil stated it should have been a package for the aldermen.

Dr. Chmiel replied we didn't put a package together coming into today. What we did was in February when we had the BOSC approve the package, that is what came over. In our meeting last night was when we realized we were on the agenda for tonight so my apologies that we didn't do a package for this one. We had everything posted last night.

Alderman O'Neil stated I heard some great things tonight about the graduation rate being up and attendance being up and behavioral issues down. I think Alderman Long hit on something. The future leaders of our city were here tonight. Wow, were those high school kids and even younger powerful. I would love to see the background on extending the busing to two miles. Those buses are going to be out there anyway. I am not expert in busing but I have seen enough of it going on.

Dr. Chmiel responded it would reduce some of our roster loads and it could compress some of our routes. I would be more than happy to share it.

Alderman O'Neil stated it was the students that brought up this issue about it affecting attendance so I hope it is something you can put to rest as soon as possible. I have been thinking about it and I can't see how you get to…what was the savings?

Dr. Chmiel answered $342,000.

Alderman O'Neil stated I can't see you getting there.

Dr. Chmiel stated what that would equate to is when we take $342,000 out of that bucket, I need to find about three to four teachers to pull out and add to the 38. We went through every single bucket that we could find and we kept playing to get the number as low as we could for class sizes. So we would move a couple of teachers this way and move a couple that way and see what the impact was.

Alderman O'Neil stated if somebody can send me the background on how the two miles is going to make a big difference…you are not reducing the number of buses or the number of drivers and fuel is fuel. I just don't see it.

Dr. Chmiel replied I will have the transportation team pull it together.

Alderman O'Neil stated I do want to end on a positive note. Graduation is up and attendance is up and behavioral issues are down. That is a credit to everyone in our school district.

Dr. Chmiel stated yes the school district is moving in the right direction.

Alderman O'Neil stated I think Alderman Long was right on. I saw our future leaders here tonight.

Alderman Kantor stated I was just wondering about the $6.5 million extra last year.

Dr. Chmiel asked are you talking about the additional adequacy aid.

Alderman Kantor answered yes.

Ms. DeFrancis asked what exactly is your question.

Alderman Kantor asked what did you use it for.

Dr. Chmiel stated we brought that before all of you last year. Some of it was one-time spending for the buildout of athletics.

Ms. DeFrancis stated then I think there was an additional $3 million into our professional services line for our student services because special education costs were going up. Then $2 million into specialized transportation.

Alderman Kantor asked were there any positions created.

Ms. DeFrancis answered no. We were looking at building more foundation with the funds last year.

Alderman Kantor stated the other thing is I am definitely with Alderman Levasseur that if you are saving millions of dollars how could you be charging the high school students. That is absolutely insane. It makes no sense to me. The other question is have you looked at your DEI policies and do they align with the current Presidential executive orders?

Dr. Chmiel replied we have gone through all of our policies and right now we are consistent with the language.

Alderman Kantor asked but how about the position and what they are actually doing.

Dr. Chmiel responded we don't have that position right now. We do not have a Chief of DEI.

Alderman Kantor asked there is no one.

Dr. Chmiel answered correct.

Alderman Kantor asked and there are no policies.

Dr. Chmiel replied we have all of our policies which we are continuing to go through to make sure they are consistent with language that has come in. I will give one example. Title IX had a major renovation that needed to go back to the 2017 rules. The team has been working to make sure we have that ready to go.

Alderman Kantor stated my concern is the federal funding impact and what it would do to the schools. That would not be good for us.

Dr. Chmiel stated we are working with our legal team on that as this point in time.

Alderman Kantor stated the other thing is you do have the transgender and gender non-conforming policy. I have it in front of me. Has that changed?

Dr. Chmiel responded that is with our legal team right now.

Alderman Kantor stated another question is how much money have you actually spent on the lawsuit with Jane Doe vs. Manchester School District.

Dr. Chmiel answered I don't have that information with me. That is a piece of information that is not pertinent to what we are doing tonight but we can certainly get that to the Board.

Alderman Kantor stated it is part of your budget right.

Dr. Chmiel replied we would have to suss it out through our legal bills and find that exact amount. We don't have that with us this evening.

Alderman Kantor stated I think it is important how much you are spending on legal fees when it is against parental rights. People need to know.

Mayor Ruais stated our next BMA meeting is May 6. What would be helpful for you as you are going through the hiring process for the next school year? Obviously the earlier the better that you have a number from this Board. Is it something that can wait until May 6 to get greater clarity from the BMA?

Dr. Chmiel answered the risk we run is applicants not signing up and the longer we push that out, the more we roll into hiring season. I would say the more clarity we can have as soon as possible would be what I would advocate.

Mayor Ruais stated to Alderman T. Sapienza's point, one of the things that I have been looking at over the last couple of days was the line by line that they presented to the BOSC last night and addressing some of the concerns that we had this evening. The number that I had in my mind and obviously I am not on the aldermanic side so I don't produce a budget at this point and this is in your hands but the number I had thought about was $1.25 million. That would insure that there would be no reductions at the elementary school level so class sizes wouldn't increase. It would also include the transportation number of $342,000 and allow for the expansion of sports. I think those were three of the things we heard this evening that were the most concerning – class sizes, sports and transportation. As the board moves forward, that would be my suggestion or recommendation.

Alderman Levasseur asked are you saying the May 6 deadline because you want to be able to hire people.

Dr. Chmiel replied correct. The quicker we can get that anticipated language off, we can calm the concerns that there is any type of movements going on through layoffs as people have now been removed through attrition would be better for us.

Alderman Levasseur asked if you are going to be laying people off through attrition, why would you be concerned about hiring.

Dr. Chmiel responded we are not laying people off. My concern is they are hearing the word attrition and attributing that to a layoff. The sooner I can get that to calm down, the better for the district.

Alderman Levasseur stated so you are calming it down tonight by saying that the school district is hiring.

Dr. Chmiel replied we are looking to continue to hire for the coming school year and the sooner we can get the word anticipated off our posting, the better for us.

Alderman Levasseur asked and what number gets you to anticipated.

Dr. Chmiel stated once the budget number is locked in, that is when historically we take the word anticipated off any posting that we put out there. Up until that time, we hold with anticipated if we don't have a budget approved.

Alderman Levasseur asked if you get the mayor's number the word anticipated would be taken off.

Dr. Chmiel answered no it wouldn't be because even with that what it does is essentially brings back the transportation if we did it at the $342,000 and athletics expansion and the balance would bring us around 12 teachers back into the district. We would still have some that we would have to remove through attrition.

Alderman Levasseur asked so what number do you need from us to get you to get rid of that.

Dr. Chmiel replied a budget. I would need the budget.

Alderman Levasseur asked so whatever number we give you.

Dr. Chmiel responded yes and that then locks us into what we are either reducing or removing going forward. We would keep it as anticipated until that point.

Alderman Levasseur stated I just asked you if you got the mayor's budget if you would be able to take that word off. If his budget was to pass, then you would be able to hire more people?

Dr. Chmiel asked with the $9.5 million reduction.

Alderman Levasseur answered yes his budget.

Dr. Chmiel replied correct. If that was passed, we would have to go in and do all of the moves through attrition and then we could continue to go forward.

Alderman Levasseur asked to hire people.

Dr. Chmiel responded correct.

Alderman E. Sapienza stated we hear about deadlines and whatnot right. The mayor submitted a budget the last time we met. That is a valid budget right there. Possibly there is going to be a different budget but quite possibly that is going to be the budget correct?

Mayor Ruais responded theoretically if you all just acted on that and didn't make any changes.

Alderman E. Sapienza stated terrific. So we have hard and fast numbers to go with as we speak. I am hearing terms like deadline. We have your budget.

Alderman T. Sapienza stated it was just mentioned that you have your budget and that is true and that could become the budget. Speaking of kabuki dances, we had a really good one last year at budget time and we almost ended up with the default budget. We may be there again the way I am watching this meeting. There is nothing preventing the mayor or any alderman from putting a budget on the table. Just because you did a budget a few weeks ago doesn't mean you can't do another one.

Mayor Ruais stated as I said it is in the aldermen's hand now and theoretically anyone can come forward with a budget.

Alderman T. Sapienza responded when you say it is in the aldermen's hands, that doesn't mean that your hands are tied. You can certainly put another budget out there.

Mayor Ruais stated that is why I made that recommendation. If we are going to consider additional numbers, the number I talked about based on the sheet from last night was $1.25 million which would insure that the elementary school class sizes don't increase and transportation is taken care of as is athletics. I am not the one that is allowed to bring forth another budget. That has to come from the aldermen. That would be my recommendation though if there were to be changes made.

Alderman T. Sapienza stated I don't think anything is stopping you from bringing another budget forward.

Mayor Ruais replied the charter. I have done mine.

Alderman E. Sapienza asked has anyone got a budget to submit tonight.

Mayor Ruais answered it would have to lay over anyway.

Alderman E. Sapienza stated but does anybody have any figures to put forth. I am good with the mayor's budget.

Mayor Ruais stated the plan going forward is for us, as the Board of Mayor and Aldermen, to continue to work together. We have the information from you all and I appreciate your being receptive to answering questions. We will get the school district document from last night out to all of the aldermen.

Alderman O'Neil stated having been here a little bit, mayors have brought in recommendations after their budget has been presented.

Mayor Ruais stated I totally agree and that is why I said in crunching the numbers, the number I would recommend would be the $1.25 million that I just suggested. Obviously, I want to continue working with everybody here.

Alderman O'Neil asked Dr. Chmiel do you understand that generally things get better for us with time. We get better revenue numbers and if we jump quick and give you a final number, it may not be the budget we could eventually get to. I understand hiring and all of that but I will speak for myself when I say I want to be able to get you the best budget possible.

Dr. Chmiel replied yes I understand. I was answering the question that the mayor was asking me as far as timing.

Alderman O'Neil stated time helps us.

Dr. Chmiel responded I understand.

Alderman Barry asked last year you presented a budget correct mayor.

Mayor Ruais replied correct.

Alderman Barry stated and after you presented it, myself, Alderman Long and Alderman Burkush worked on a budget and you worked with us on it.

Mayor Ruais responded yes.

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.

Rich Girard, 283 Orange Street, stated:
As you know, I served two terms on the school board's Finance Committee and one as its chairman. The first thing I want to say about the school budget is it is not tax cap compliant. I mean taking $4.5 million out of your emergency revenue funds to count it as a revenue so you don't have to reduce spending under the tax cap is a cheat. What is also a cheat is using the statewide property tax to make your calculation on. You don't control that, the state does. It is not a locally raised property tax, which is what you have control over which is what the tax cap applies to. So that is a 20% increase or $1 million more on the tax side because they built that into the number and that is definitely a cheat. Here are some things that you didn't hear from the school district tonight as they gave their presentation and it all comes from the NH Department of Education website. In 2015, Manchester had almost 13,600 students and 926 teachers. Today it has about 11,400 students and 973 teachers. Over the past six years, the student population has plunged nearly 16% and the number of teachers has risen by almost 6%. Meanwhile, the number of non-certified staff has gone from 175 to 223, a more than 27% increase. Over that same period, the budget has gone from approximately $161 million to $235 million, an astonishing increase of $74 million or 46%. Had school spending simply risen at the rate of inflation as enrollment continued to fall, the budget today would be $212 million according to the US Department of Labor's inflation calculator. We are $23 million above the inflation total and per pupil spending has almost doubled from just under $11,900 to over $20,500. This doesn't count the $150 million they received in the last three budgets from federal funds which

you don't have to appropriate because they are a direct distribution to the schools. In last year's original budget, the one that increased funding by $1 million, the school district had enough money to transfer 42 full-time equivalent positions from Covid grant funds to taxpayer funds. All of this spending has lowered teacher/student ratios by the way by just three students or from 14.8 to 11.8. After all of this, the school's proficiency scores have fallen from 33% of the kids being proficient in English and 23% being proficient in Math in 2018 to 29% and 19% respectively in 2024. Time prevents me from getting into detail about last year's supposedly extra $6.5 million increase in state adequacy aid but you should know that total adequacy aid from the state last year actually fell by $500,000. I guess I will wrap it up by saying that cutting programs that don't exist is not a cut. Taking money out of savings is not a revenue. All of that is being done to support artificially high spending. In closing, remember well that there was an actual windfall of state funds after the budget closed two years ago. The district spent $35 million on pay raises and boondoggle building projects that increased the annual debt payments by $18 million or 150% for just five schools. Folks, there will never be enough money. Until you reign them in, they will never look to change how business works over there. You have to starve the beast.

Brittany Ping, 199 Putnam Street, stated:
Thank you for delaying public comment for our nine minutes so I could listen to that presentation. I don't know that I would have stayed. I would have probably chosen to go home like a lot of the other friends that did but that's okay. It was really insightful and I want to thank all of you for your passion and your dedication to learning more about what the school district will do with the funds that you hand over to them because that is how this city is set up and that is how voters…I know I bring this point up to you guys all the time but that is how voters have voted. They have continued when it comes up should the school board have control over making their own budget they say no, no, no. We like our checks and balances. It has routinely failed at the ballot box and that is because it is a unique privilege that you are given as our city aldermen. Whether or not we have the same fiscal beliefs, I know that we all cherish public education. I know some people on this Board don't believe I should be able to talk about public education because my children do not fit into the public education model and I take money from the state that is for my children to educate my children as best fits their needs instead of

overburdening the system. I didn't write anything that I wanted to say. I just knew what was going to come about in the 6 PM session. I want to thank all of you. I know you guys get a little bit of pay and I think it is a joke to call it pay but thank you for taking the time to listen to everybody that did come to speak to you. I want to say kudos to the children who came out and spoke and did an amazing job. I don't like coming here and I am 37 years old. I hate it every time but I feel like it is my duty so I really appreciate that civic engagement and encouragement and I hope that they keep listening and keep fighting. Jay I know we have joked about there being 1,100 of us that really care and only three of us are staying for the 7 PM talk so maybe it is a lot smaller. Thank you so much and please pass the budget that is fiscally responsible. Please don't fall for the $9.5 million cut. It is a $2 million increase. I hope you think about rent that went up 10% with the 3.68% tax cap with HUD but our 80% AMI went up 7.5%. When we are saying Manchester is doing worse and is doing terrible, this city is recovering and bouncing and taxing the crap out of it isn't going to do anything to lead it in the right direction. Using our money wisely as we continue to gain back some of what we lost during Covid is how we are going to best benefitted as a city. Thank you so much for your time.

Glenn RJ Ouellette, 112 Auburn Street, stated:
That was a long wait but I guess it was worth it because that is democracy at work. We don't always have the same opinions but it is good that we can have the discussion. I am going to ask two things that I have been asking for five months. One I have been asking for for five months and still haven't seen changed. For those of you who have been on the Board for more than one term, you know that Auburn Street between Pine and Union, you took that entire road and redid it. You got rid of the trees that were obstructing light coming in at night and you put in some bright lights. Since you did that, crime has gone down tremendously and you are not seeing the rapes and other crimes happening across the street where the park is. Why is it that when you had a shooting between the Salvation Army and where I live in the alley two years ago the light from Chestnut to Pine, the entire block in front of the Salvation Army which I believe is Central Street, were shut off and don't work? Does it take five months to replace those bulbs? The entire block is dark. You got rid of the broken window effect and now it is still there. I see a lot of people at night go through our rubbish and try to open car

doors. We need lights. The other thing I want to ask you is how much will it cost to get an American flag on a building that we own as a city. That is the old bus station. All we see is a city flag. There is no American flag or state flag. Where is our pride? Thank you and have a good night.

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

<u>CONSENT AGENDA</u>

Information to be Received and Filed

2. Communication from the Trustees of the Trust Fund regarding the city's old system retirement plan.

3. March OYS Report.

4. Communication from the U.S. Department of Labor notifying the City that they have chosen to exercise their option to renew the lease of the land at 943 Dunbarton Road, which houses the NH Job Corps Center, for one year effective 4/1/2025.

<u>REFERRALS TO COMMITTEES</u>

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

5. Resolutions:

"Amending the FY2023 and FY2025 Community Improvement Program, authorizing, appropriating and transferring funds in the amount One Hundred Eleven Thousand Nine Hundred Fifteen Dollars ($111,915) for the FY2025 CIP 211325 Overdose Prevention Funding."

"Amending the FY2022 Community Improvement Program, authorizing and appropriating funds in the amount of Four Hundred Eighty Thousand Dollars ($480,000) for the FY 2022 CIP 511322 Recreation Programming."

"Amending the FY2019 and FY2024 Community Improvement Program, authorizing, appropriating and transferring funds in the amount Three Thousand Seven Hundred Dollars ($3,700) for the FY2024 CIP 610424 Dilapidated Buildings."

"Amending the FY2025 Community Improvement Program, authorizing and appropriating funds in the amount One Hundred Thousand Dollars ($100,000) for the FY2025 CIP 610425 351 Chestnut Street InvestNH Demolition Grant."

“Amending the FY2025 Community Improvement Program, authorizing and appropriating funds in the amount of One Million Six Hundred Forty-Two Thousand Three Hundred Twenty Five Dollars ($1,642,325) for the FY2025 CIP C410020025 Homeless Healthcare.”

"Amending the FY2025 Community Improvement Program, authorizing and appropriating funds in the amount of Five Hundred Thousand Dollars ($500,000) for the FY2025 CIP C160060025 State of NH 39 Beech Street Shelter Operations."

Budget Resolutions:

“Appropriating to the Parking Fund the sum of $4,976,749 from parking revenues for the Fiscal Year 2026.”

"Appropriating the sum of $28,168,194 from Sewer User Rental Charges to the Environmental Protection Division for the Fiscal Year 2026.”

“Appropriating to the Manchester Airport Authority the sum of $42,884,197 from Special Airport Revenue Funds for the Fiscal Year 2026.”

“Appropriating to the Manchester Transit Authority the sum of $1,999,838 for the Fiscal Year 2026.”

“Appropriating to the Manchester School District the sum of $236,499,925 for the Fiscal Year 2026.”

“Appropriating all Incremental Meals and Rooms Tax Revenue Received by the City in the Fiscal Year 2026 and held in the Civic Center Fund, for the payment of the City’s Obligations in Said Fiscal Year under the Financing Agreement.”

“Appropriating to the Manchester School Food and Nutrition Services Program the sum of $6,300,000 from School Food and Nutrition Services Revenues for the Fiscal Year 2026.”

“Raising Monies and Making Appropriations of $195,751,642 for the Fiscal Year 2026.”

“Appropriating to the Central Business Service District the sum of $400,000 from Central Business Service District Funds for the Fiscal Year 2026.”

“Resolution ‘Approving the Community Improvement Program for Fiscal Year 2026, Raising and Appropriating Monies Therefore, and Authorizing Implementation of Said Program'.”

“Continuation of the Central Business Service District.”

“Authorizing the Finance Officer to Make Certain Budgetary Closings for the Fiscal Year 2025.”

<u>REPORTS OF COMMITTEES</u>

COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT

6. Recommending that the Amending Resolution and Budget Authorizations providing for the transfer and expenditure of funds in the amount of $111,915 for CIP 211325 Overdose Prevention Funding be approved.
(Unanimous vote with the exception of Alderman Terrio who was absent)

7. Recommending that the Amending Resolution and Budget Authorization providing for the acceptance and expenditure of funds in the amount of $480,000 for CIP 511322 Recreation Programming be approved.
(Unanimous vote with the exception of Alderman Terrio who was absent)

8. Recommending that the Amending Resolution and Budget Authorizations providing for the transfer and expenditure of funds in the amount of $3,700 for CIP 610424 Dilapidated Buildings be approved.
(Unanimous vote with the exception of Alderman Terrio who was absent)

9. Recommending that the Amending Resolution and Budget Authorization providing for the acceptance and expenditure of funds in the amount of $100,000 for CIP 610425 351 Chestnut Street InvestNH Demolition Grant be approved.
(Unanimous vote with the exception of Alderman Terrio who was absent)

10. Recommending that the Amending Resolution and Budget Authorization providing for the acceptance and expenditure of funds in the amount of $1,642325 for CIP C410020025 Homeless Healthcare be approved.
(Unanimous vote with the exception of Alderman Terrio who was absent)

11. Recommending that the request from the Health Director that CIP 210224 Modernization of Food Protection be extended to December 31, 2025 be approved.
(Unanimous vote with the exception of Alderman Terrio who was absent)

12. Recommending that the request from the Fire Chief that the number of license plates allotted to the Fire Department be modified to accommodate an addition to its fleet be approved.
(Unanimous vote with the exception of Alderman Terrio who was absent)

13. Advising that the Planning Department and the Mayor's Office have applied for grant funding from two programs administered by the State of New Hampshire Department of Business and Economic Affairs.
(Unanimous vote with the exception of Alderman Terrio who was absent)

COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RESOURCES/INSURANCE

14. Recommending that the request from the Fire Chief for the following changes to the department's complement:

- Add one (1) Risk Reduction Coordinator position, grade 20, and adopt the position's job classification
- Eliminate one (1) existing NET Team Coordinator position, grade 17

be approved.
(Unanimous vote)

JOINT SCHOOL BUILDINGS COMMITTEE

15. Advising that the Manchester School District Priority I status and financial report for March 2025 submitted by LeftField has been accepted.
(Unanimous vote with the exception of School Committee Member Soule and Alderman O'Neil who were absent)

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

REGULAR BUSINESS

16. Nominations:
Board of Registrars
Elizabeth Wester to succeed herself as a regular member, term to expire May 1, 2028

Manchester Public Television Services Board
Andrew Fromuth to succeed TJ Craig as a regular member, term to expire July 1, 2026

Planning Board
Peter J. Lennon moving from an alternate to a regular member replacing Erin George Kelly, term to expire May 1, 2028
(Note: Pursuant to Rule 23 of the Board of Mayor and Aldermen, these nominations will layover until the next meeting of the Board.)

17. Discussion regarding the selection of USI as the city's insurance broker.
(Note: This was referred to the BMA by the HR Committee on 4/1/25).

***Alderman Morgan** moved to receive and file the selection letter. **Alderman Long** duly seconded the motion. Mayor Ruais called for a vote. There being none opposed, the motion carried.*

***Alderman Morgan** moved to have all three companies who replied to the RFP come before the BMA on May 6 in non-public session to make presentations so that we can discuss and vote on final approval of the broker with a unanimous decision by the Board. Additionally, I move that we give notice to USI, the current broker, that we are not renewing their current contract.*

Mayor Ruais stated I think we should recess to meet with legal counsel. Can we move through the rest of the agenda first and then go into recess?

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

Sharon Wickens, Finance Officer, stated the FY25 general fund expenditure and revenue forecast as of April 15 based on department head estimates is as follows. The current projected general fund operating surplus for FY25 is $1,641,000. The operating surplus is comprised of an expenditure deficit of $539,000 and a revenue surplus of $2,180,000. The expenditure deficit relates primarily to Police and Public Works overtime. The expectation is that both of these numbers will continue to improve before fiscal year end. The revenue surplus is attributed to many line items – interest income, motor vehicle registrations, higher than expected second injury reimbursement from the state, and an increase in permits. The school district has provided the city with a permitting fee schedule for the Priority I project, which shows a projected $867,000 to be issued before the end of the fiscal year. To date, the city has received approximately $60,000 of that. Health insurance costs are performing favorably against the budget through March. Actually, health insurance is doing fabulous. The surplus forecast does include $200,000 in the contingency account. There were 27 retirements through April 14 compared with 27 at this same time a year ago. Severance paid through April 14 amounts to $1,277,436 compared to $982,335 a year ago. The severance reserve account is anticipated to have a balance of $650,917 after all related entries have been posted. I have also attached departmental overtime reports through April 4 and a summary by department of severance paid.

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

Mayor Ruais called the meeting back to order.

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

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

“Amending the FY2023 and FY2025 Community Improvement Program, authorizing, appropriating and transferring funds in the amount One Hundred Eleven Thousand Nine Hundred Fifteen Dollars ($111,915) for the FY2025 CIP 211325 Overdose Prevention Funding.”

“Amending the FY2022 Community Improvement Program, authorizing and appropriating funds in the amount of Four Hundred Eighty Thousand Dollars ($480,000) for the FY 2022 CIP 511322 Recreation Programming.”

“Amending the FY2019 and FY2024 Community Improvement Program, authorizing, appropriating and transferring funds in the amount Three Thousand Seven Hundred Dollars ($3,700) for the FY2024 CIP 610424 Dilapidated Buildings.”

“Amending the FY2025 Community Improvement Program, authorizing and appropriating funds in the amount One Hundred Thousand Dollars ($100,000) for the FY2025 CIP 610425 351 Chestnut Street InvestNH Demolition Grant.”

“Amending the FY2025 Community Improvement Program, authorizing and appropriating funds in the amount of One Million Six Hundred Forty-Two Thousand Three Hundred Twenty Five Dollars ($1,642,325) for the FY2025 CIP C410020025 Homeless Healthcare.”

"Amending the FY2025 Community Improvement Program, authorizing and appropriating funds in the amount of Five Hundred Thousand Dollars ($500,000) for the FY2025 CIP C160060025 State of NH 39 Beech Street Shelter Operations."

“Continuation of the Central Business Service District.”

“Authorizing the Finance Officer to Make Certain Budgetary Closings for the Fiscal Year 2025.”

ought to pass and be Enrolled.

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

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

“Appropriating to the Parking Fund the sum of $4,976,749 from parking revenues for the Fiscal Year 2026.”

"Appropriating the sum of $28,168,194 from Sewer User Rental Charges to the Environmental Protection Division for the Fiscal Year 2026.”

“Appropriating to the Manchester Airport Authority the sum of $42,884,197 from Special Airport Revenue Funds for the Fiscal Year 2026.”

“Appropriating to the Manchester Transit Authority the sum of $1,999,838 for the Fiscal Year 2026.”

“Appropriating to the Manchester School District the sum of $236,499,925 for the Fiscal Year 2026.”

“Appropriating all Incremental Meals and Rooms Tax Revenue Received by the City in the Fiscal Year 2026 and held in the Civic Center Fund, for the payment of the City’s Obligations in Said Fiscal Year under the Financing Agreement.”

“Appropriating to the Manchester School Food and Nutrition Services Program the sum of $6,300,000 from School Food and Nutrition Services Revenues for the Fiscal Year 2026.”

“Raising Monies and Making Appropriations of $195,751,642 for the Fiscal Year 2026.”

“Appropriating to the Central Business Service District the sum of $400,000 from Central Business Service District Funds for the Fiscal Year 2026.”

“Resolution ‘Approving the Community Improvement Program for Fiscal Year 2026, Raising and Appropriating Monies Therefore, and Authorizing Implementation of Said Program'.”

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

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

There were none.

24. Resolutions:

“Amending the FY2023 and FY2025 Community Improvement Program, authorizing, appropriating and transferring funds in the amount One Hundred Eleven Thousand Nine Hundred Fifteen Dollars ($111,915) for the FY2025 CIP 211325 Overdose Prevention Funding.”

“Amending the FY2022 Community Improvement Program, authorizing and appropriating funds in the amount of Four Hundred Eighty Thousand Dollars ($480,000) for the FY 2022 CIP 511322 Recreation Programming.”

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“Continuation of the Central Business Service District.”

“Authorizing the Finance Officer to Make Certain Budgetary Closings for the Fiscal Year 2025.”

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

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

25. Ordinance:

"Amending Section 33.024, 33.025, & 33.026 (Risk Reduction Coordinator) of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Manchester."

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

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

NEW BUSINESS

Alderman O'Neil stated I want to say thanks to the Board of Mayor and Aldermen for their support of the St. Patrick's Day Parade. Despite not great weather, it was a big hit. Special thanks to the City Clerk's Office, Fire Department, MEDO, MTA, Police and the Highway and Parks Division of Public Works. Thank you all.

***Alderman Vincent** stated I believe everybody got the communication from the Police Department. I would like to move to approve their request to change their complement as follows:*

- *Eliminate five (5) vacant full-time police officers, Grade 19*
- *Add three (3) dispatchers, Grade 15*
- *Add one (1) newly created Sex Offender Registry Specialist, Grade 15*
- *Add one (1) newly created Police Licensed Mental Health Counselor, Grade 23*

I would also ask that we approve the new job classifications and ordain the related ordinances this evening.

Mayor Ruais stated just to be clear, this would require 10 votes. I am fully supportive of this. The Police Department brought it to me months ago.

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

***Alderman Kantor** moved to order a charter amendment to incorporate the school district as a department of the city to the ballot and direct the City Clerk and the City Solicitor to draft language for the Board's approval at our next meeting. **Alderman Levasseur** duly seconded the motion.*

Alderman Terrio asked can we do this Emily.

Emily Rice, Solicitor, answered we will try our best.

Alderman Levasseur asked legally we can do it correct. We know that now because I dug like crazy and we found the special exception that was granted to us in 2003 by the state.

Alderman Terrio asked was that recently.

Alderman Levasseur replied I don't know what recently means. I found it a couple of months ago.

Alderman Terrio stated I was also looking into it a few months ago and was under the impression we couldn't do it. That's great. Sounds good.

Mayor Ruais asked is this something that would make sense to have go through Bills on Second Reading so we can get a legal opinion on this in case there is an ambiguity or question pertaining to it.

Matthew Normand, City Clerk, responded normally we would bring that charter amendment to Administration or wherever the Board wants to send it. We can also bring it back to this Board.

Alderman Fajardo stated I was wondering what problem this solution addresses if you don't mind explaining that.

Alderman Kantor replied I believe that the school district should be a department. Their excessive spending. I believe that we wouldn't be in this situation with cuts if we didn't go through with Beech Street and taking away a park. We have discussed several times before the school district becoming the school department.

Alderman Fajardo stated I guess we heard here multiple times and I am of this mindset too that the voters have resoundingly kept the budget responsibility with the BMA so I am not sure what more we need.

Mayor Ruais stated what Brittany was referring to was not allowing the school district to have independent taxing authority.

Alderman Levasseur stated what actually making it a department of the city would accomplish is that the mayor of our city, whoever the mayor is should this pass and I think it will, would be able to have line item control over the school budget. So when they say they are going to cut wherever they are going to cut, the mayor can transfer money and move money around. At this point, the mayor has no authority whatsoever. He is basically just one person on the school board with no authority over the school district whatsoever. It used to be a department of the city. It went to the voters and passed 60%/40% but unfortunately it was reversed because at the time we did not have legislative approval to actually put it on the ballot and have it voted on. If it had failed, probably no one would have cared but the Supreme Court threw it back in our lap. At that time, I think then Alderman Vaillancourt and State Rep Infantine got a special exception to allow us to do it. It has come close to being put on the ballot a couple of times but it has never gotten there. It is a question of whether the City of Manchester thinks that the mayor should have a lot more input on what goes on in the school district.

Alderman Fajardo asked so what would the role of the school board be going forward.

Alderman Levasseur answered it would be the same as it is now. They make all the policies.

Alderman Fajardo asked and those would be elected officials still.

Alderman Levasseur replied it doesn't change the school district at all and it doesn't change the votes or the body or the members. It makes it a department like Highway or Fire and Police. It makes them another department of the city and gives more authority to the mayor. I would like to see a charter change to allow the mayor to have veto power like they do here. I think it would make the mayor more accountable to the taxpayers of the city. I think being just one vote of out of 15 isn't the way it should be. I am not going to ask for the mayor to have veto power right now but I will if this passes. I think it should be both.

Alderman Barry asked doesn't the mayor have the choice of being on the school board. You don't have to be right.

Mayor Ruais answered well I am the chairman of the board.

Alderman Barry stated other mayors have chosen not to be.

Mayor Ruais stated I support the idea of this. I would want clarification that we can do it and I think it should go through the normal process of consideration. To me it is a big change and should be thoughtfully done through committee.

Alderman Levasseur stated it will be debated when we vote for it and it will be a big debate in the next election. The Clerk must have information as he has been around when this has happened.

City Clerk Normand stated I do believe the Board has the authority to put this ballot initiative on the ballot; this charter amendment. If there is any conflict with state law, it will arise when it goes through the state review with the three agencies. It has to be reviewed by them before it goes on a ballot.

Alderman T. Sapienza stated I think we have to be careful what we ask for here because we just went through an exercise where we wanted $9.5 million worth of cuts.

We didn't offer any suggestions of what to cut. The school board offered suggestions of what to cut and we jumped all over them for the cuts they made. How are we going to blame them when all is said and done like we always do if we make them a department? I can't believe what I just saw. I just don't get the end of this movie.

Alderman Long stated my understanding is in the charter there is something prohibiting this. There is something in the charter that says the school district cannot be a department of the city.

Alderman Levasseur responded right but that was changed.

City Clerk Normand asked are you talking about the red government book. That note refers to the lawsuit that occurred. It went to court and a judge overturned the prior actions but after that point, what Alderman Levasseur is referring to is Representative Infantine had submitted a bill that passed that allows this to be put on a ballot in the future.

Alderman Long asked so you are saying put on a ballot. Does it still need legislative approval?

City Clerk Normand answered no.

Alderman Levasseur stated the AG has to approve the language.

Alderman Long stated I don't know why we would do this. That would mean we would have to come up with a budget. The BOSC would not be coming up with a budget, we would. They would send us a budget and we would do the cuts.

Alderman Levasseur replied they still do.

Alderman Long stated but we would be doing the cuts. I didn't get a lot of people that were informed on the school's presentation. That would mean that this Board would have to be informed because it is our decision.

Alderman Levasseur stated just to let you know, there will have to be a public hearing on this. This isn't going to just pass today. It is just a motion to get it on a ballot. There will be a public hearing and people will be able to come out and discuss it.

Mayor Ruais stated right because it is a change to the charter we would have to have a public hearing. We have had this conversation before. I don't mind the idea of it being a department but I would want the entire Board to be aware of what the process is. It is a big massive change and I would want us to be thoughtful about it and go through committee and the regular process. That would be my hope if we were going to do something like this.

City Clerk Normand stated the big thing to keep in mind is the June 3 meeting because that would be the last time it could be sent to a ballot. All of this would have to get done and out of committee promptly and reported out to this Board for a vote for the Board to direct us to move forward with the process much like we did in your committee this evening on the primary change. Once this Board accepts that primary change, then I refer that up to the state for review. When it comes back, there would be a public hearing before it is sent to the ballot.

Mayor Ruais asked when would there be a public hearing.

City Clerk Normand answered I don't have that timeline in front of me. I didn't know this was coming up tonight. I can get that if you want to wait a few minutes.

Mayor Ruais asked when is the next Administration meeting.

City Clerk Normand replied they just met tonight so they don't meet for another month. They would meet on May 20 and it would have to likely report out that night. We could schedule a meeting sooner if we had to.

Alderman Morgan stated I would like a little more time to learn more about this. I am just not comfortable right now making a decision. I think we need to vet it out a little bit and see where we are at. I am just not going to vote for this.

Mayor Ruais asked Alderman Kantor would you accept a friendly amendment to have this go to a committee on May 6.

Alderman Kantor answered we are not under a time crunch so that doesn’t make sense. I think Alderman Morgan really knows what he needs to do.

Alderman Morgan stated I don’t and that is why I am asking. If I did, then I would be fine.

Alderman Kantor stated well we can have a specific timeline where we could make it happen.

Mayor Ruais stated we can take a vote and you can vote no this evening and it can be brought back up again if you need more time to discuss it and think about it. We can still take the roll call vote tonight.

Alderman Kantor asked do you want to send it to committee.

Mayor Ruais answered you have a motion on the floor. You could withdraw your current motion and make a new one to send it to committee.

Alderman Kantor stated I would just rather vote on it.

Alderman Long asked what is the motion.

City Clerk Normand stated I am not sure because I didn’t hear what she said.

Alderman Kantor stated I will repeat it. I would like to move that we order a charter amendment that would reincorporate the school district as a department of the city to the ballot and direct the City Clerk and City Solicitor to draft language for the Board's approval at our next meeting.

Alderman E. Sapienza stated this is nothing new. This has been discussed for I don't know how many years. It is not new.

Alderman Levasseur asked since she is asking for the language to be drafted, we would vote on that but the real vote for it to go to the ballot would be on May 6. Is that correct?

Mayor Ruais asked are you simply requesting that the language be drafted or are you requesting that we pass it this evening and send it to the state.

Alderman Kantor stated I am not the one who is going to draft it.

Alderman Levasseur stated we are just asking them to draft it and then it will be voted on by the full Board on May 6.

Mayor Ruais stated so no vote this evening. They are requesting that the language be drafted for consideration on May 6.

City Clerk Normand stated I have the answer to the timeline question for the public hearing. If we get a vote by this Board by June 3, we would have a public hearing probably on July 1. Then there would be a vote and it would go to the state agencies for review. They have until September 1 to respond back to us.

Alderman Levasseur asked and then it would go on the November ballot.

City Clerk Normand answered yes.

Alderman Levasseur stated so there is still plenty of time.

City Clerk Normand stated this Board would have a final vote in September on whether to actually send it to the ballot.

Mayor Ruais asked for the purposes of her motion, would she have to withdraw it.

City Clerk Normand asked do you want me to bring the language back to this Board or back to a committee.

Alderman Kantor answered bring it back to the Board please.

Alderman Levasseur stated it should be brought back to Administration and that meeting should be scheduled for May 6.

City Clerk Normand stated that would be up to the chairman.

Alderman Long stated no but I don't even know what you are talking about.

City Clerk Normand asked are you willing to hold an Admin meeting on May 6.

Alderman Long answered sure whatever needs to be done.

Mayor Ruais stated so the language will be drafted and it will come to the Admin Committee on May 6 for consideration.

Alderman Long stated if it passes tonight. We still have to vote.

Mayor Ruais stated well she is just asking that language be drafted and considered in your committee. I don't think we need to vote on that. She is not requesting that the ballot language be sent to…

Alderman Levasseur interjected let's put it to a vote.

Alderman Kantor stated yes let's vote. It is getting complicated.

Mayor Ruais stated so you are requesting a vote on having Matt draft language for the Committee on Administration.

Alderman Kantor replied no I want it brought back to the Board.

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

Alderman Fajardo stated I have two points. The first one is regarding Item 16 on our agenda this evening. We skipped past it rather quickly. It is the appointments to…

Mayor Ruais interjected I just went through it quickly because it lays over for two weeks. The conversation that we had before is I am more than happy to continue working with Planning to insure that we have the right number of folks. I would be happy to make any considerations during that layover period that you requested.

Alderman Fajardo responded thank you. My second point would be that I would like to announce the dates for the Urban Pond Clean Up Project. The first one is this coming Saturday at Nutt's Pond at Precourt Park in Ward 9. The one after that would be Saturday, April 26 at Black Brook Blodget Park in Ward 12. Then on May 3 at McQuesten Brook at Wolfe Park in Ward 10. The times for all three dates are 9 AM until 11 AM and it is rain or shine. So get out there and help clean up the ponds. I believe this is the 25th year for the urban pond clean-up project. It is a great opportunity for everybody to get involved. It is actually pretty fun even though it is a little bit gross.

<u>TABLED ITEMS</u>

26. 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.

27. 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.

*On motion of **Alderman Morgan**, duly seconded by **Alderman Levasseur**, it was voted to recess the meeting to meet with legal counsel.*

Mayor Ruais called the meeting back to order.

***Alderman Levasseur** moved to give USI a one-year extension as the city's insurance broker and further to set a policy going forward that the Chairman of the Board will create a Health Insurance Selection Committee that will produce a final report/recommendation regarding the selection of the city's insurance broker to then be voted on by the full Board. **Alderman T. Sapienza** duly seconded the motion. Mayor Ruais called for a vote. The motion carried with Aldermen O'Neil duly recorded in opposition.*

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

A True Record. Attest.

Matthew Normand

City Clerk