

COMMITTEE ON BILLS ON SECOND READING

December 3, 2025 at 6:30 PM

Chairman Kantor called the meeting to order.

The Clerk called the roll.

Present: Aldermen Kantor, Levasseur, Morgan, Barry, Fajardo

Messrs.: A. Thomas, P. Alexakos

1. Ordinance Amendment:

"Amending Section 91.87 Syringe Service Program Operations of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Manchester to add language regarding one-to-one needle exchange."

Alderman Levasseur moved that the Ordinance Amendment ought to pass and be referred to the Committee on Accounts, Enrollment and Revenue Administration.

Alderman Fajardo: I just had a couple of questions about the updated language. It notes that healthcare providers are allowed to have the opportunity to suspend the 1 to 1 requirement. I didn't know what the context would be where a needle exchange may or may not be doing that. I also was wondering how is that documented or tracked when an exception is made?

Anna Thomas, Health Director: One of the two needle exchange programs that we know of that are operating currently, and we've been told there might be a third standing up soon, is an AIDS service organization where they explicitly only serve those who are HIV positive or living with AIDS. It's a closed referral system. You have to be a Dartmouth health patient with a provider, and then you go through this care coordination service and they can provide clean needles. So that shows us a direct linkage to a health care provider.

Alderman Fajardo: And you're able to see that?

A. Thomas: We're able to see that. The other exchange that's a little more community based, you have an array of people who work that might be practitioners, but not by standard. It could just be volunteers' employees of the nonprofit. That's a little tougher to connect.

Alderman Fajardo: How will you meaningfully assess the effects of this change of going from many to 1 to 1?

A. Thomas: The best data that we have is what the organizations themselves are reporting.

Alderman Fajardo: And that's on an honor system?

A. Thomas: It is and we certainly will do inspections, but just like anything, you show up and you spot check. Everyone's going to be on their best behavior. I don't have a sense

that they wouldn't comply with this. They've been good partners with us even reviewing this ordinance and being in support of it. I think the question will be what other data points can we gather? This is why we talked about creating a dashboard like how DPW collects needles, and other departments collect needles. Can we roll that all up and then monitor that over time to see if we see a decrease as a unified front in the numbers of needles that are being picked up?

Alderman Fajardo: That's where I was kind of going with this in my mind, because I saw the handouts that included the number of needles picked up by the street team and DPW in that sort of 18- or 24-month time period. We have no sense of where those are coming from in regards to a specific exchange or somebody coming into the community with their own supply. How are we supposed to actually enforce it? How are we supposed to understand its effects? If we have, according to the math that I just did on the actual back of an envelope, there are over 24,000 needles surplus distributed than taken in in the two year services. What is the goal to get that down to zero again? Do we have benchmarks? This will be successful if we hit this in this many months, etc. How will we monitor and track any of it?

Phil Alexakos, Deputy Health Director: One, the goal I guess, would be that we have a net collection. For every needle that is recorded as being dispensed, we should have one needle accounted for in terms of being collected. That could vary. I'm hoping that it would be even more, because we do know that the needle exchange program actually goes to different facilities and acts as their collection station so that they don't have to pay for disposal. So, a shelter or other non-profit, they can go and pick those up. So, we hope to see a net loss in terms of numbers of needles dispensed versus collected. The other data points that we're going to look at, obviously we talked before about infectious disease rates. That's another sort of important benchmark to track. And then I know a question came up last time about enforcement. So, the piece of the ordinance that you have where there's the amendment proposed for medical providers and health outbreaks. There are other parts of the ordinance that get into the details about what we what we require as part of that ordinance. And so, we do have the ability to write summonses for non-compliance. So, if we find that there's not one for one exchange happening, we have the ability to write a summons. So, I did want to make sure that I had that on the record, because I know that came up before.

Alderman Fajardo: Did the previous committee review and support the additional language?

P. Alexakos: The language about the healthcare provider?

Alderman Fajardo: No. You're saying there's other enforcement mechanisms, language written in other places?

P. Alexakos: Yes that was existing language from when the ordinance was first enacted.

Alderman Fajardo: I would like the opportunity to look at that.

P. Alexakos: It's existing language, the enforcement provisions.

Alderman Fajardo: The new paragraph being added.

P. Alexakos: Under section D?

Alderman Fajardo: Yes. It just seems arbitrary if I'm being candid, if there's no infrastructure around it to understand its impact.

A. Thomas: I think the tough thing is, and we spoke about this last month, there's an array of approaches across the country in this. Some go straight for the one for one, some did sort of a needs based then went for one for one and then some pulled back from the one for one and go back to the needs based. So, we don't have a perfect solution for you. This obviously has been a chronic problem in the city, so we can certainly try this approach and it is up to you if you are not satisfied with the results, if we have to take something further. I believe there's legislation being introduced at the state level that will allow for more local control of these programs, which I've said before was omitted in the state legislation. And I think that would be helpful for all of you to at least have in your toolbox as well.

Alderman Fajardo: Will there be data coming in? We get the really rich data from AMR and on opioids and overdoses and deaths. Will there be data that we can cross-reference relative to what we're seeing for infection rates?

A. Thomas: Yes, we're monitoring that on a daily basis and DHHS is as well. So, if they see a spike in any of our numbers of any infectious disease, we're first alerted and then we start to delve into sort of the contact tracing, just like we would with anything to understand what's happening, what's connected, where's this heading so we can get ahead of it.

Alderman Fajardo: My main concern is are we going to see more dirty needles on the street?

Alderman Kantor: I would think not. I mean, if it's a 1 to 1.

Alderman Fajardo: I guess this is going to be a we'll find out.

A. Thomas: I will tell you just one more thing to consider. We can do what we can to regulate this locally, which I think we should always do anyway. The issue is you may have people going to other needle exchanges in other parts of the state, and they'll be able to get fistfuls and then come to Manchester. And needles are pretty accessible. You can order them on Amazon by the caseload. So, this is the dilemma that we have that we're trying to at least regulate what we can with the needle exchange portion, but it doesn't necessarily mean that we're going to completely eliminate needle accessibility because that's still out there regardless. We're going to see; I think it's a test.

Alderman Fajardo: Do you have a plan or a sense of a plan timeline wise? We are going to evaluate it in six months or we're going to evaluate in 12 months, and if we see X, we may consider rolling back. Or if we see Y, we may consider something else.

A. Thomas: I think we should be bringing that data back to you anyway, even at minimum, maybe on a quarterly basis, just so you all can see what we're seeing. We are monitoring this data.

Alderman Fajardo: Will it emerge that quickly?

A. Thomas: I believe so. What we try to share with the committee was sort of the pre and post data that DPW was collecting for needle pickup, from the ordinance. So, the two time periods that we gathered was before the ordinance, after the ordinance, and we saw a reduction just by the enactment of the ordinance of about a thousand needles that DPW didn't have to pick up in the second half, which was encouraging, but we obviously recognized that that's not enough. It was progress. So, I think that served a purpose, but I think we'd like to see what else can be done.

Alderman Fajardo: I definitely would be interested in a quarterly update.

A. Thomas: That's easily done.

P. Alexakos: They're required to report to us and to the state quarterly in terms of their activities. So that frequency makes sense.

Alderman Levasseur: I just want to know, is this ordinance only for non-profits that engage in needle exchange? It's not anybody? Somebody could go on the internet and buy 10,000 and then start giving them out. Can they? That's not allowed, right?

P. Alexakos: It would not be allowed.

Alderman Levasseur: That's not allowed?

P. Alexakos: Correct.

Alderman Levasseur: What about the health department? Can you get them at the health department?

A. Thomas: We get needles for immunization, but not to disseminate to the public.

Alderman Levasseur: No one goes in there and says I need a needle or an exchange?

A. Thomas: No. Please don't send people to the Health Department.

Alderman Levasseur: How many businesses or nonprofits does this affect?

A. Thomas: Two or three at this point.

Alderman Levasseur: Have you met with them? Have you sat down and said, we'd really like you to try to do this the correct way?

A. Thomas: We have talked about the possibility of this going to a one for one at some point. We have not spoken to them in this past month.

Alderman Levasseur: Do they have to do a one for one anywhere else in the state?

A. Thomas: Nashua did go to a one for one a couple years ago. But they do have programs that are not doing a one for one. I don't believe they have it in city ordinance. They just chose to do that.

Alderman Levasseur: Are those nonprofits abiding by it?

A. Thomas: I believe so. If we had to ask this of them, I think they want to do what they can.

Alderman Levasseur: If someone shows up with no needles at all, are they given anything?

A. Thomas: It's a good question. I mean, I don't know.

P. Alexakos: Under the current system, I think they give them out without respect to one to one. The new system, it would have to be a one to one, and we would do unannounced visits like we do for food service establishments to see how they're operating.

Alderman Levasseur: Well, the whole idea of this one for one exchange is that hopefully the homeless or whoever are making these exchanges, I have seen exchanges and it's not vagrants. It's not only vagrants. It's people driving up in nice cars that are clean cut that just need a needle exchange. And they come in and they make their exchanges or they get what they get. So, it's just not every single person who's living behind the baseball fields that are going there and getting those exchanges. The plan is that they'll save them. Maybe the needle exchange company can give them a safety bag or something where they can put their needles in and save them. I don't know if these needle exchanges are once a week or twice a week.

A. Thomas: A couple times a week.

Alderman Levasseur: Well, the hope is that we'll see less needles on the ground and in the ballparks, etc. And so, I'm very positive that I think a lot of these people who need the needles will be bringing them back, but it would be nice if you just did like the first time it starts, you know, for like a month, you could just go and see if anybody's bringing them back or maybe after they know, maybe the month after, we'll see if the numbers are coming back where they're bringing them back, and then you'll see whether it's fruitless or not.

A. Thomas: Right.

Alderman Fajardo: I just wanted to ask a clarifying question. In the current arrangement, it's not a plus ten?

P. Alexakos: There isn't a set number. That's a number that we've heard is typical, but there is no set number. The idea now is to put some guardrails on that to make it more standard.

Alderman Levasseur: When is the date this is going to start?

P. Alexakos: I would defer to the clerk as to when this would be ordained based on the current timeline.

Matthew Normand, City Clerk: I think there's a request to report it out this evening by the chair of this committee. So, it would report in and it would go to Committee on Accounts next to be enrolled on December 16. If it follows the normal process, that wouldn't appear on an agenda until the second meeting in January. The board could suspend its rules and ordain anywhere along the path here.

Chairman Kantor called for a second. **Alderman Barry** duly seconded the motion. The motion carried, with **Alderman Fajardo** being duly recorded in opposition.

M. Normand: And I understand you want to report this out this evening?

Alderman Kantor: Yes.

TABLED ITEMS

*On motion of **Alderman Barry**, duly seconded by **Alderman Levasseur**, it was voted to remove both items from the table.*

2. Ordinance Amendment:

"Amending Section 91.631 Eligibility Requirements for Municipal Curbside Collection by authorizing Public Works to revoke eligibility for cause."

M. Normand: I would note that there's an updated amendment here that's attached to the agenda. I think the conversation from the board when this was last discussed was that it was vague on what would prompt revocation of trash pickup, and they've identified that in item C here.

Alderman Levasseur: What committee would this go to?

M. Normand: Well, this would report to the board. And then the next step would be to go to Accounts to be enrolled, and then back to the full board in January.

Alderman Fajardo: Paragraph C, this is just in response to the feedback?

Alderman Barry: Can we table it?

M. Normand: You can't table it. You've got to dispose of it one way or the other. You could receive and file it and the department could bring it back for the next board. Or you could approve it and let it continue on its path.

*On motion of **Alderman Levasseur**, duly seconded by **Alderman Barry**, it was voted to receive and file.*

3. Ordinance Amendment:

“An Ordinance amending the Zoning Ordinance, Chapter 155 of the Manchester Code of Ordinances, to increase from three (3) to four (4) the number of units permitted per lot for new construction without an increase in required lot area in zoning districts that permit multi-family uses; to reduce parking requirements for multifamily uses in the R-3, C-1, and RDV Zoning Districts; to reduce landscaping requirements and parking setbacks; and to remove the requirement that accessory dwelling units receive a conditional use permit, among other amendments.”

*On motion of **Alderman Levasseur**, duly seconded by **Alderman Fajardo**, it was voted to receive and file.*

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

A True Record. Attest.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matthew Normand".

Clerk of Committee

Meeting Start Time: 6:30PM

Meeting End Time: 6:50PM

Minutes Prepared By: Michael Intranuovo