

BOARD OF MAYOR AND ALDERMEN

November 18, 2025 at 7:00 PM

The Mayor called the meeting to order.

The Mayor called for the Pledge of Allegiance, this function being led by Alderman T. Sapienza.

A moment of silence was observed.

The Clerk called the roll.

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

Absent: Aldermen Fajardo, Burkush

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: The Planning Director's statement that the department and the mayor did more than required to present the zoning document warrants scrutiny. While it's true that every household received a mailed invitation to participate in the online survey, it is also true that the PIN provided each household was not required to participate. The Director of the UNH Survey Center told me the city specifically did not want any barriers on who could answer. Having conducted more than a few online surveys, I can tell you that means anybody from anywhere could answer as many times as they wanted, and there was no way to know how many times someone took it or where

they lived. The results confirm that with a whopping 97% saying they lived in the city, but only half saying they regularly visit city businesses, and fewer than a third saying they worked or accessed city services here. Those numbers just don't add up. As to the neighborhood meetings, they were infiltrated by so-called housing advocates who not only placed flyers like these at entrances, but also ensured that their members steered the small group conversations toward their desired outcomes in each ward. I experienced this personally in ward two, where neighbor push back on the interlopers elicited confessions from several who admitted they neither lived nor worked in the city. I heard similar stories from those who attended several other ward meetings. Also, the ward sign in sheets didn't ask for addresses. The survey center director said the city didn't want any location identifiers. Why would that be? At the meetings, no survey terms were defined. In ward two, increasing neighborhood walkability was the one runaway favorite. Given the poor condition of many sidewalks, there's little doubt as to why that one was popular. Had the neighbors understood that increasing walkability really meant adding a variety of business uses to their neighborhood so as to lessen the need to drive, not fixing the sidewalks, the outcome would have been very different. It's neither simple nor easy to identify the changes this overhaul makes. That's not a surprise, since the department took a zoning ordinance from somewhere in Tennessee and tried to make it fit Manchester. Different zones, different definitions, uses, document structure and layout, twice the number of pages, maps of the entire city rather than sections that can be easily compared, etc., make assessment very difficult. However, this rewrite appears to push the density of some business uses of the current R-3 zone into the R-2 or new RM-1 zone, and the density and uses of the current downtown zones into the R-3 or the new RM-2, which while generally reducing the amount of land and parking for any and all residential and some business uses, further increasing density, adding obstacles to vehicle traffic, and burdening already insufficient on street parking. All this, and nobody's asked perhaps the most important question: which communities have gone down this road and seen affordability, crime or quality of life improve? There really aren't any and some nearby notable examples include Lawrence, Lowell, Worcester and Springfield. It's foolhardy to expect Manchester will be any different if it does the same thing. In closing, please allow me to share three short quotes from the Real Clear Investigation articles I asked the clerk to send to you. I'm pleading you'll read them because they underscore why what's before you in the zoning ordinance will backfire. Perhaps counterintuitively, higher density

development does not lower prices among 53 major U.S. metros. Those with more single-family housing and larger lot sizes have substantially better housing affordability. The effects of density focused policies on people and regions are profound. The next is in advocating high density housing policies. Planners set themselves against the overwhelming preferences of the public for less density and more spacious housing, and finally trying to force people to live in dense urban areas against their wishes, contributes to the continued outflow of people to the suburbs. We can improve our housing climate without doing the things that have been proven to ruin neighborhoods and cause people to leave. Let's not implement what's failed other cities like ours and many more across the country. I apologize, I thought the zoning hearing was tonight.

Troy Micklon, 29 Ode Way: Though it was tabled at the CIP earlier, I want to express my concerns with moving forward on the bonding for the proposed skate park at Wolfe Park. This isn't about whether Manchester should have a skate park. I actually support that goal. My concern is with how it's being funded and the long-term debt burden that it creates. The skate park construction cost is roughly about \$2.5 million, but with bonding fees and interest, it's going to be much, much more. Our finance director previously stated that she had concerns about our rising debt levels and a challenging financial outlook. It is also important to remember that this skate park is just one phase of a much broader Wolfe Park redevelopment. That full plan includes a softball field reconstruction, pickleball courts, walking paths, drainage upgrades, lighting, parking expansions, and playground improvements. Those preliminary estimates are already exceeding \$5 million. Yet there remains no clear funding plan for the entire project. What concerns me further is that other communities across New Hampshire have taken a very different approach, one that significantly reduces taxpayer burdens. Concord is funding its \$1.8 million skate park with \$500,000 Land and Water Conservation Fund grant combined with \$500,000 community fund raising campaign. Bedford has raised more than \$200,000 in donations and is pursuing up to \$800,000 in state funding. Milford built its skate park with zero tax dollars, completely funded by donations. Keene, Hopkinton and Nashua have used layers of grants, private fundraising, and nonprofit partnerships, rather than relying solely on municipal bonding. This raises a very reasonable question: why hasn't Manchester pursued similar funding opportunities? Manchester employs a full-time grant writer. Yet, to my knowledge, the city did not apply for the most significant federal funding resource

available, the Land and Water Conservation Fund grant, which closed on June 27th, 2025. Other cities have applied. Other cities received their funding, but Manchester did not even submit the required intent to apply form. Additionally, the city could pursue support from the skate park project, which is part of the Tony Hawk Foundation, which offers grants up to \$25,000 for cities for their public skate parks. Many communities have used this program successfully, and there's been no indication that Manchester has explored this option either. Given the scale of this project, the financial warnings already presented to this board and the lack of pursuit of available grant funding, I believe the city should reevaluate before committing residents to a multi-million-dollar bond for just one portion of a much larger unfunded plan. Manchester residents deserve a responsible, transparent and comprehensive approach before approving additional debt. The city should present a full cost breakdown, a complete funding strategy for the whole entire Wolfe Park plan, and a clear explanation as to why major grant opportunities were not pursued earlier.

Robert Rivera, 26 School Street: As the board is well aware, crime remains the major contention among Manchester residents. We continue to experience an alarming rate of criminal activity throughout the city and that is simply unacceptable. Excessive speeding and reckless driving are clear examples, issues that not only endanger our community but need to be addressed. In the last ten years, traffic deaths have increased by 42%. As of October 2025, there have been approximately a 7% increase in fatal crashes in Manchester. What measures are currently being taken to address these crimes? We continue to witness frequent displays of extreme speeding on both Boynton Street and other roads, ultimately resulting in accidents, serious injuries or fatalities. Recently, at 187 Boynton Street, there was a rollover accident with individuals severely injured due to speeding. September 10th, 2025, 408 Mast Road, a driver displaying high speeds crashed into Bud's Auto Repair Shop and died. This is pretty upsetting as there is a former police officer serving as alderman and representative that has worked directly with the MPD for over 30 years, yet we still are experiencing concerning levels of crime. This is very concerning. And why isn't public safety a priority? Personally, I don't believe the MPD's speeding surveys are working. Just earlier this year, Manchester was awarded \$2 million of a grant that was contributed to the city's transportation and traffic research and development. Excuse me if I am wrong, but I believe that the outcome was just bike lanes.

\$2 million for research seems a little excessive. I understand that the Board of Mayor and Aldermen do not necessarily control Manchester's police enforcement. However, I am sure you have significant influence on their productivity and effectiveness as you control the funding contributed to their institution. Common-sense cost-effective solutions like speed bumps, traffic cameras and police speed checks and speed points are not possible? We have to do better for our city and our community. I'm a taxpaying American and a contributor to our cities, to our society. I also have two children in the Manchester school system and a pregnant wife. We have to do better. And we all deserve to be safe. I mean, no offense, but it's time for us to turn things around for Manchester.

Lucy Lange, 490 Dunbarton Road: I am here on behalf of the friends of the Manchester Animal Shelter, which is the only animal shelter servicing the Greater Manchester area. And the reason you will see it on the consent agenda tonight is asking for a building permit. The building permit is because the building that we currently are in was built in 1996 and has not been updated since 1996, while the population has ballooned 20% since then. We are still in the exact same facility with the same resources. So, I am asking for you to approve the consent budget tonight. The other thing is we're not asking for money for this. We are asking just for the permit for the building. But I want to share something that I think I shared earlier this year, which is the total expense of animals from 2024 to take care of 910 animals that came through our door associated to the Manchester Animal Control, that's 910 animals that were either brought in directly from animal control or referred from animal control to come to the shelter, which require care. The care averages \$1,300 per animal, and I'm going to share a little story as quickly as I can about an animal named Kylo that came into us on a court ordered housing that we have to take care of an animal while they are involved with a court case. Kylo stayed with us from January until June and cost us \$26,000 to keep this King Corso alive. The reason they came to us is because the owner had abandoned the apartment that they were living in in Manchester, and left this 125lb. King Corso in a crate for over a week, until the neighbors got ahold of the landlord and said, someone needs to do something. There's an animal in distress. There was no food. This animal in this crate was then brought to us and we were told there was nothing we could do except keep this animal alive until the court case was resolved. The amount of money that it cost us to keep alive was not reimbursed. The highest penalty the person that was going to get was \$5,000. Yet we

had to keep this animal alive for six months. So, I share that with you a little bit, because I appreciate the two of you guys on the committee that have come to see the shelter, and the Mayor. Please come and visit the shelter. We take care of a lot of animals. We haven't grown. We need some help. So, you will hear more from us soon.

*On motion of **Alderman Terrio**, duly seconded by **Alderman E. Sapienza**, it was voted to take all comments under advisement and further to receive and file any written documentation.*

PRESENTATIONS

2. Presentation of the 2024 Annual Comprehensive Financial Report.

Jen Heon, Finance Department: Good evening, honorable mayor and board. This is Scott McIntire and Megan Wipf from CBIZ. They were our fiscal year 2024 auditors, and they're going to be presenting our annual report.

Scott McIntire, CBIZ: Our team included Megan and several other team members. Just brought a small crew with us here tonight. Our objective is to give you a quick walkthrough of our audit of your financial statements, your annual comprehensive financial reports, in excess of 150 pages. I am not going to be walking through that in detail. I'm going to reference a few pages as we go here, so you can have some key takeaways as far as the 3 or 4 of the key numbers that are in there. But before I talk about your annual comprehensive financial report, there's two other reports that are part of our deliverable package. One is our governance letter. Our professional standards auditing standards require that we report to those charged with governance. So, it's kind of commonly been referred to as a governance letter. In there we talk about things like we found the books and records to be in good working order. We get cooperation from the city staff and officials that we may have spoken with. We do have to tell you when we do in that letter that we assisted the city in preparing this, this financial statement that's technically called a non-audit service in our standards, require us to tell you that. So, all that information is in your governance letter. Now we come to your annual comprehensive financial report. It's probably in excess of 180 pages. There's a wealth of information in there. I look at it this way. There are basically two sets of financial statements in there. I've learned a long time ago when I say that, I've got to make sure I follow that up with there's not two sets

of books, there's one sets of books, and you look at things on an accrual basis and in a modified accrual basis. First, the accrual basis financial statements, they're the long term prospective financial statements. The key things people want to know about in there are your net pension liability and your net OPEB liability. It's a wealth of disclosures in there. In the case of the pension liability, that dropped about \$10 million from the prior fiscal year to June 30th, 2024. But you do still have a \$239 million pension liability. To add some context to that, a little bit more than half of it is your proportional share of the New Hampshire system, and that has a funding schedule. That is scheduled at this point in time, it can change, but to be fully funded by 2039. So, keep doing what you're doing for another 15 years and that liability gets much closer to zero. On the OPEB side, OPEB is an acronym. It really it gets into retiree health care. June 30, 2024, your liability was about \$38 million, down from \$44 million the year before. The footnotes have a wealth of disclosures in there about the discount rates and all the related assumptions that go into those two large estimates that are in your financial statements. Part of our procedures involved reviewing those estimates and reviewing those assumptions. And we think that the assumptions are clear and consistent with most governments here in the United States. The second part of the financial statements are what I refer to as your short-term perspective, what most readers want to look at when they look at Manchester or any other local governments financial statements is your general fund and they focus on the unassigned fund balance general fund. I say this a lot, so it's going to sound like a broken record. You look at your general fund balance sheet. You look at the third number up from the bottom. And as of June 30th, 2024, your unassigned fund balance. Sorry, I have some couple of quick notes in here. I know it went down \$1 million. Please forgive me. It had an account balance of \$13.2 million. Went down slightly over the prior year, but fund balance in total did go up by about \$1 million. Essentially, some money came out of unassigned fund balance and moved up in terms of a classification of fund balance to a committed fund balance, where basically your reserve accounts are considered committed, they're committed for particular purposes. So overall, fiscal year 2024 for the general fund was a good operating results for the fiscal year. Again, fund balance in total went up. Unassigned came down a little bit. That's because more money was put into the reserve accounts. So, you did have another major fund. That is a little bit unusual, but you have a major grant fund. It's major because of the ARPA money that Manchester received, and that those dollars are received. It's unlike most every other federal grant

that's out there where you get the money upfront, and then as you spend it, you recognize it as revenue. And because of that reason, it's classified as a major fund. So, your budget versus actual results towards the back of your report, revenues were favorable by \$3.5 million and expenditures were favorable, meaning underspent by about \$1.7 million. Both of those numbers are very comparable to the prior fiscal year, and it shows good, strong budgetary results of operation. The third part of our deliverables was what we refer to as a single audit report, really two reports in there. One deals with internal controls and the other deals with uniform guidance over the expenditures of federal awards. In the internal control report, we did make a couple of recommendations in there, particularly this year. We took a deeper dive into the IT systems that are used, not necessarily the systems but the internal controls surrounding them. So, we've made some recommendations to tighten up some of the internal controls surrounding the information technology in terms of the uniform guidance or the administration of federal grants. We have a few recommendations in there as well. Many of them deal with some reporting of the federal money that's been spent, as well as, I'll call it, the preparation of your SEFA. Your SEFA is an acronym for your Schedule of Expenditures of Federal Awards. That's it. Put together every year and based on your expenditures and where the money is spent, we, the auditors, make a risk assessment as far as which programs we need to test. There were a couple of things when we get into testing, we found that there were a few of the grants that weren't present on the SEFA. So, there were some adjustments to bring dollars in that weren't previously reported on your 2024 SEFA into them. And as a result of that, we were able to test the proper programs. And so that really would be on terms of our uniform guidance report; tightening up the preparation of your schedule of expenditures of federal awards would be one of the key takeaways. Now, that's a super quick walkthrough of our financial statements. I did not want to get into turning too many pages this evening. Again, the key takeaways aren't really in the numbers, that we found the books and records to be in good working order. Key accounts were reconciled on a regular and timely basis. I tried to talk with you very quickly about pension and OPEB and fund balance. And with that, I'll turn it back to the mayor and try to answer any questions that you may have.

Alderman Terrio: So just to summarize, this fiscal year was very similar to last fiscal year.

S. McIntire: Yes.

Alderman Terrio: And there's nothing that stuck out. You did make some recommendations to it, but there's nothing concerning you. Nothing that's glaring.

S. McIntire: No. Many of the things in terms of the the suggestions we made relative to it, we've made them in a lot of places over the last year or so. And some of the other recommendations that I talked about in terms of the preparation of the SEFA and some of the reporting of money that get essentially uploaded to the portal as it's referred to at Treasury. Those are not uncommon situations.

Alderman E. Sapienza: You mentioned the pension deficit. And you were talking about the state pension. Not not the city pension, correct?

S. McIntire: Yes.

Alderman E. Sapienza: And you said that it has a deficit that should be cleared up in about twelve years. Something like that, approximately.

S. McIntire: I think it's closer to 14 or 15.

Alderman E. Sapienza: But how so? How exactly does the city even run a pension deficit like that? Because it pays a certain amount each pay period to the state retirement system. How do we even have a deficit to begin with?

S. McIntire: There are two sides to pension. And I'm going to try to make this concise.

Alderman E. Sapienza: There are more than two sides, actually. But go ahead.

S. McIntire: There's the accounting side and the funding side. And they talk to each other, but they're very different. Let's talk about just the funding piece for a minute, because I think that's probably where you're going, sir. And the New Hampshire Retirement System, like most systems, has over time built up an unfunded liability where contributions were

not sufficient to pay benefits. So right now, the current funding schedule is doing two things. Your contributions that you pay on an annual basis is addressing two things. One is called the normal cost that addresses the current employees that exist here. The other piece is what is referred to as the unfunded liability, the past service cost, those that have already retired that are still drawing benefits, but that they, when they were working for Manchester or any other local government in the state, the contributions were not at a level that would bring the plan to be self-sufficient.

Alderman E. Sapienza: I understand that, but isn't that on the state side? That's not a deficit that the City of Manchester has incurred. The City of Manchester has paid their portion all along.

S. McIntire: Now, I think I understand your question better. And my answer to that is yes, you have paid, Manchester has paid. I'll call it the ADC, the Actuarially Determined Contribution. What you're asked to pay to the New Hampshire Retirement System, Manchester has paid. But collectively the system has not collected enough dollars that it has on reserve to pay expected future benefits.

Alderman E. Sapienza: So the State of New Hampshire has said to the City of Manchester, listen, we're running a shortfall here. You now have to give us more.

S. McIntire: And that more is over the next 14 years to bring that unfunded liability down to zero.

Alderman E. Sapienza: It's a mandate from the State of New Hampshire.

S. McIntire: Essentially, it is legislatively, and that could change. I have no control over that.

Alderman E. Sapienza: It's the State of New Hampshire downshifting the cost to this municipality saying, we're running a deficit here, you're going to have to give us more, through no fault of your own. Correct?

S. McIntire: I can't say that. It's the state downshifting it.

Alderman E. Sapienza: We won't use that term, but it's a mandate from the state. They're mandating that this municipality and probably several others have to give more because they have a shortfall here. Is that right? Leaving opinions out of it, that's factually what's going on here.

Alderman Levasseur: But the state doesn't tell us how much to pay. So, if we're paying better than other towns and districts they're going to get better. Like you said before, when the pay was coming in 20 years ago from the employee, and then the raises went up or whatever or came along and the pay structures changed, are they elastic up there with us or is it straight? Is it non-elastic? In other words, when we're paying our employees, do we pay a certain amount every year based on what our salaries are?

S. McIntire: It is based on a percentage of pay.

Alderman Levasseur: That doesn't generally stay. But you still have all the lower tiers from the older years and they haven't caught up. I remember something about you guys telling us that we have a deficit, or we owe more in our pensions. Does Manchester have a pension?

S. McIntire: When I talked about the net pension liability I, I want to maybe address both of these questions. The City of Manchester has paid what it's been required to pay by New Hampshire law and the percentage of payroll of the current employees you're paying that on a regular basis, but nonetheless, in this same scenario it holds true for the New Hampshire Retirement System, as it does for the one here in Manchester, is there is a past service cost where many years ago, the contribution rates that went into the plan were not sufficient to keep it fully funded, where it might have been 50% funded for many years. And now Manchester, just like every other local government in the state, is paying for that part of what you're paying into on those percentage of payroll go backwards.

Alderman Levasseur: And if the system was accurate, we should be just paying our own pensions and not the state. Then we would be responsible for our own payments and our

own employees, whereas other towns and districts would be doing the same. Why is it shoved up to there and then there's a deficit?

S. McIntire: I can say one more thing about Manchester's net pension liability as it particularly relates to the New Hampshire system. It is your proportional share of the overall system's liability. It's what is known as a cost sharing multiple employer plan. And so, when the actuary looks at it, he looks at it as here's the public safety officials compensation for Manchester versus Hollis versus Bedford versus Plymouth, and proportionally based essentially on contributions. You take the overall unfunded liability and you parse that out to the locals. But it's based on underlying payroll because the payroll isn't uniform throughout the State of New Hampshire.

Alderman Levasseur: That's what I'm questioning, on an equity basis, are some other towns or is Manchester paying more than other places, or is everybody paying the exact same percentage? In other words, does Auburn, which I'm sure has a very low amount of people compared to Manchester, pay a much smaller rate?

S. McIntire: To my knowledge, everyone is paying the same percentage. The contributions are based statutorily, they're based on the same percentage.

Mayor Ruais: So, you said our proportional share. It's our percentage.

S. McIntire: Yes.

Alderman E. Sapienza: I just have one more thing briefly on this. I just want to briefly mention without getting off track here, when you say that years ago, the contributions from the employees in the city itself, it doesn't cover the current expense. That's true, but there are a lot of different elements here. There's return on investment. And that's things that the employees had really nothing to do with. That was for the decision makers. I don't want to go off on a tangent here, but I just did want to mention that it's not as simple as saying the contributions from 50 years ago aren't covering the expense now. Well, of course they aren't because of inflation, but the money could have been handled better.

3. Presentation from the Health Department regarding its efforts to support healthy aging in the City of Manchester.

Elaine Michaud, Deputy Public Health Director: I am very excited to talk to you this evening about some of the activities and the efforts that we've been making over at the Health Department with our team and our programs to support healthy aging in Manchester. For some of you, as you may remember, back in 2023, in April, to be exact, the Health Department was asked to take over the Senior Services Department at that time. And so, we took a number of steps over a period of about six months to blend the departments, ensure the proper staffing at the senior center, review the finances, evaluations, policies, all of those things. And out of that came four sort of prongs of what we hope to accomplish and keep going as part of healthy ageing in Manchester. As you all may know, the William B Cashin Senior Activity Center has been around; it just celebrated its 20th anniversary last fall. The goal was to keep that program and all the programs going at the senior center without disruption to the members and all the different activities, and to support the staff in that endeavor. We also created a brand-new position called Healthy Aging Specialist, because one thing that was missing from the Senior Services Department was supporting seniors in their homes and ensuring that they were connected to resources and any needs that they had would be met so that they could live in their homes as safely as possible for as long as possible. And then we hope to use the department's resources and the services that we already have at the department to leverage with the senior service opportunities in the city to build a better living environment for the older adults here. We were asked to spearhead the age friendly action plan, which in 2022, the city had committed to become age friendly. And we'll talk a little bit more about that in a moment. But in 2023, we were asked to continue those efforts by working on a strategic plan and ultimately implementing those plan elements. So, where we are today. Through the efforts of some pretty committed staff, I think the numbers show how much improvement has been made over time and all the outreach that has been taking place. And so, if you can look at the numbers, we are now looking at over 330 more active members in the center enrolled in the last three years, which is a 40% increase since 2022. And part of that comes from the eligibility, elevating the visibility of the senior center through a variety of efforts. Not only did the senior center staff go out into the community for different events, which is something the department does all the

time with our programs, but they joined forces and talked a lot about what the services and the activities are at the senior center. In 2024, we had the benefit of a grant which allowed us to do a direct mailing to about 16,000 city residents over the age of 55, and we targeted those ZIP codes, which are underrepresented at the senior center, to try to attract more individuals. And then ultimately, another aspect is that we improved a lot of the programming and expanded some of the programming. But the most significant thing is not only do we have more members, they're coming to the center more often. So literally, we have almost 200 members coming daily to the senior center for all sorts of activities. It is open from 8:30 to 4:30 Monday through Friday. If you're a Manchester resident, it is free. If you are a non-Manchester resident, it is a \$30 annual fee, or \$50 for two people out of a household. It's a pretty great deal for all the services that you have access to. The programming that was able to increase over time allowed for this year, having 36 more different programs on an annual basis than it did three years ago in 2022. As you can see from some of the breakdown, a lot of the activities focus on fitness and exercise information sharing, which is groups getting together, whether it be care support groups, whether it be coffee with the mayor, coffee with Manchester Police Department, engaging individuals to support each other. The other aspect, of course, is our social aspects and our recreational aspects, and that becomes very important. Ultimately what we do see now is we have more than 100% or basically double the number of participants coming in every day to the senior center and participating in activities. So, in the past, where you saw an individual come in, sign in for one event and then leave, now we have people coming in and participating in 3 or 4 events a day. And so that's why you're seeing the number of 44,000, that means how many times a person or people are registering for events. The other aspect of this was the healthy aging specialist, which is the home outreach. When it was created, the idea was to help people in their home. And so, there was a parameter that was set up, which at the beginning, as a pilot, we thought using the 65 and older age frame would be an appropriate cutoff. We have one person doing this. Her name is Karen Sutkus. I think most of you know Karen. She came to the position with a lot of experience with the idea that building off of some of her experience, but also developing further skills and efforts in supporting people in their homes, and the idea being that she is a connection from the residents to resources to agencies to services, to allow them to stay in their home. The other thing is that she actually is a certified home safety assessor, which means that she can go into the home and identify risks for the

resident, and then recommend steps that can be taken to ensure that that person is safe. For the last couple of years, what we've seen are the referral sources, and the reason for those referrals are what you see on the screen. Anybody can refer someone to Karen. And I would point out to you in the packet that you were given that you not only have her information, but also an information sheet that explains some of the roles and responsibilities that she does. But what we see are primarily referrals from first responders, hospitals, medical providers, because those are the individuals seeing and running into older adults in crisis who are in need. And so that is her highest source of resource of referral. Beyond that, not only our community partners, but state and local agencies reach out to her and also neighbors and friends and just concerned members who recognize that someone might need a hand. Some of these referrals last for a couple of days, a few phone calls, maybe some connections, others last for a few months and some even longer. But the referral reasons might be somebody needing to be connected to a medical provider. Something very straightforward and basic. Others look at basic needs of food insecurity. Transportation. Housing is a challenge. But you can have also, on the other end of the spectrum, where an individual is very unsafe and living in unsanitary conditions, and other agencies need to become involved. And on occasion, the Bureau of Adult Services needs to be contacted and a report needs to be made. And Karen goes through all those things, supporting the residents along the way. This was a pilot program and Karen is very busy. These are her numbers. We started in August of 2023. It came off the ground at that point. And as you can see now, this year, she'll be serving approximately 124 individuals. She gets ten, on average, ten referrals a month, and again from all range of sources. Because of the timeline and the needs for some of these people, she actively manages 40 to 50 clients at one time. So, it's a lot. She's very busy. But she's able to accomplish all of that not only by phone, but going into the home on multiple occasions. And I think for your interest as well, we show you the numbers by ward, just to impress upon you that there's no one that is immune from this need. And all wards are being served under the program. Some of the other things that we've been doing beyond those specific projects over the last year, as I mentioned, it was the 20th anniversary for the Cashin Senior Center at their location at 151 Douglas. That was a large event. The mayor was there and some other elected officials. There were a number of sponsors and supporters of the center over the years. There were literally 50 vendors, resource tables for older adults to come in. It was very well attended. It was very enjoyed.

I think there was a lot of history that was reviewed and discussed about the center. People had a nice time. The other gathering that we worked on with the mayor's office was the return of the mayor's senior luncheon. As you may remember, that was an annual event. The last time was 2019, and then Covid suspended those events, and this year was the return of that event. The department collaborated with the mayor's office, the senior center, and the senior service commissioners were very involved in this program. And we took a slightly different approach this year where in the past we've had other agencies and other businesses support the event, but we opted to focus on a sort of a pet project related to older adults in the city to encourage sponsorship and support by local businesses. And one thing that we've been hearing about working with all these older adults throughout the city is transportation has been a challenge. And so, we basically adopted the senior transportation project, and the goal was to improve access for older adults to low income or to low cost or no cost transportation options. And by using that as a proposal, we were able to identify and receive support from 24 local businesses. And across the total sponsorships, we raised over \$30,000 for that senior transportation project in a matter of a few months, which is great. And it's recognizing the commitment of our community to our older adults within the city. By doing that through the Mayor's Senior luncheon, we were able to announce a few things at the event. And on top of that, the sponsorship by other organizations allowed us to provide reduced ticket costs for attendees. And there were some organizations that actually sponsored tickets completely so that we could actually offer 90 attendees free tickets so that they could attend, which they might not have otherwise been able to do so. Again, it was a great event and everybody had a nice time. Where we stand with the senior transportation project, we've done quite a bit. The event was in May. We kicked off in June with the transportation project. I worked with the MTA and Southern New Hampshire Planning Commission. What we ended up doing was a survey, in essence, of our older adults to find out why they were not participating and using the transportation, and the glaring response pretty consistently was that they didn't have enough information about the bus system and how to use it, and where to get it, and how much it costs, and how they could use it. And could they bring their groceries? Could they bring their walker? And so, we worked with MTA in Southern New Hampshire, planning to create education sessions for our older residents to ensure that they understood how easy it is to access MTA and the extensive opportunities you can have to use the bus to get to places you need to go. And so between

August and September, we had seven sessions at the Manchester Housing Authority, at Barney Street Apartments, the YMCA, the Manchester Library and all of those were focused specifically to the residents. And again, in your packet, you will see some of the things that we created specifically for those events, which lists not only information they might need to use the MTA system, but all the other transportation programs that are available in the city. And I would recommend that you take a look at these, and we are happy to share these electronically if you would like to pass these on. But I think it's very important that there are a lot of these transportation opportunities that people don't know exist. And whether it's Future In Sight, which is for individuals who have vision issues, whether it's the caregivers who will take individuals who have challenges and mobility issues to medical appointments and grocery shopping, and whether it's the Meals on Wheels of Hillsborough County who will not only deliver food to people's homes, but actually take people grocery shopping and to other medical appointments. So, I think a lot of that is not quite regularly known. And so, we are still getting the word out on that. The last thing that we did as part of the project most recently, was after reaching out to the residents directly, we reached out to organizations that serve older adults because we knew we would never be able to reach all older adults in the city. We figured we'd have a go between. And so, on October 24th, the Health Department hosted another education session dedicated specifically to community partners, and we had over 70 individuals participate, representing 31 different communities and community partners in the city. Everybody got the same materials that you received. We continue to connect about opportunities, and it has made a significant difference in providing education for all the different populations and whether it's the medical providers and their patients, whether it's other agencies and just the service agencies with clients coming in for needs. It's made a big difference. So, we were very happy to do that. There will be a second phase of the transportation project, and that's going to be looking at some of the physical aspects of our bus stops where there might be more frequented stops by our older adults or individuals with mobility issues. We're going to be looking at possibly installing benches and shelters, which will allow for safer and a more comfortable experience as you're waiting for the bus. And so, stay tuned on that because we are working on that. The last thing I wanted to chat with you about is the age friendly action plan. Just as a quick recap and refresher, the age friendly community is a World Health Organization concept, which was also adopted by the AARP here in the United States. And the concept is an age

friendly community is one that promotes creating an environment that supports healthy aging. And part of that looks at eight domains of livability as they're listed on the slide. And it carries everything from obviously physical structures and buildings to green spaces, but also to social engagement, civic engagement and access to health care and transportation. So, one of the things we know is that there are over 650 communities in the country that are age friendly, and Manchester now is one of them. There are 18 communities in New Hampshire that have committed to this. And so, the idea is, once you commit to one of these programs and becoming an age friendly community, the object is to create a plan and to look inward, to determine where there might be some opportunities to make your community much more age friendly. And so that's where we sit. So, a little earlier this year to give you a snapshot, this is data provided by New Hampshire Healthy Aging Data Report about Manchester's older adults as compared to the state. And you will see that we do have a significant population of individuals over the age of 65. That number reflects 14%, a little more than 14% of the total city population of 115,000. And of those individuals over the age of 65, another 14% of them are over the age of 85. We know that the numbers are projected to increase fairly dramatically over the next 5 to 10 years. And so we are hoping that as we take steps, those will address some of the needs that are going to continue to grow over time. You'll see, as we compare to the state, we have more individuals living in Manchester over the age of 65 who are unmarried. Presently we have more people living alone, which is always a risk and a challenge. We have more people over the age of 65 living in poverty. And more percentage of those people, all of that was information that we looked at in addition to some other things as we created the age friendly plan. So, this is how we developed it. We collaborated with the mayor's office with about 20 community partners. We worked with a consultant to identify information from the city. We did resident surveys. We actually did focus groups. We sat down with some older adults and found out what they were thinking, what they were experiencing, and what their recommendations were. And then we sat down with our advisory committee, which is made up of 28 individual agencies and organizations, and we made recommendations based under those different eight domains of livability. And the report that you have and you all have a bound copy of the report, breaks those down 3 to 4 recommendations under each domain. Some of them are rather short term and very achievable with limited funding needed, others a little more long-term commitment. And so, with the release of that, we are now looking forward to

the implementation phase. And the timing of this presentation is appropriate because our committee is reconvening tomorrow morning at 9 a.m., and part of the task of in that meeting will be to identify priorities among these recommendations, looking at potential financial need and looking at the key stakeholders who can assist in the implementation of some of these things. And so, as you can see from the timeline, we are going to take this step by step. But over the first six months, try to establish everything within 18 months to have accomplished a few of the goals, the more short-term goals. And then by 36 months out, we'll be taking another step back and reevaluating and looking at what we need from the plan standpoint. Throughout all of that, we'll keep people informed and we'll be reporting back. So, these are many of the things that we've been working on. And so, as we move forward, we will continue to increase the exposure of the Cashin senior center with a goal of having more individuals from underrepresented areas. Right now, a volunteer development program is going on at the Cashin Center to increase the number of volunteers from outside of the center to come in to enhance the intergenerational experience for everyone. And then we are working with the healthy aging specialist Karen, who continues to work very hard but also looking at possibly having a second location, given its popularity.

Alderman O'Neil: Fabulous presentation. Very informative. I have a little concern since the focus is on the age of 65, as some of us are 65 now. And also, that we have Alderman Cashin looking over our shoulder regularly. Karen is absolutely an asset. I worked with her in one situation in the past year where she worked with primarily Officer Duquette from the police department on some elderly that were being harassed late at night. And it went on for a while, but Karen is the one who actually broke down the barriers. Manchester Police stepped up big time, but they were hesitant. We don't want to be bothering the police in that and Karen was able to. They were both in their mid to late 80s, Karen was able to knock down the block they had put up and working with the police department, things got resolved. So, she is fabulous. So, is she here so I can embarrass her?

E. Michaud: I don't believe she did come this evening. No, but I believe she's watching from home.

Alderman O'Neil: She is fabulous. A couple quick questions. How many staff are at the center currently?

E. Michaud: So, there are three staff members, plus an additional health department staff member who oversees and is there basically four days a week. So, there are four bodies working.

Alderman O'Neil: Is Karen one of those?

E. Michaud: Karen is based out of the Health Department at the Rines Center, but she's in contact with the senior center all the time.

Alderman O'Neil: She's really a fifth, almost an extension of it.

E. Michaud: She's an extension in the sense that she will get referrals and people will call the senior center looking for help, and they'll refer them to her. She doesn't work at the center in the sense of participating in the activities and the programs. The staffing is doing yeoman's work over there because of the increase in the activity in the volume. But as I mentioned, we are relying and leaning heavily on volunteers. And the volunteers are very good. They're trained and we're hoping to expand on that.

Alderman O'Neil: And you had mentioned the work with the MTA. Is the MTA collecting data about where those stops are that might need improvements?

E. Michaud: So, we've had conversations with MTA, and they have some limitations on the ability of the data that they can collect. I don't want to speak out of turn or misrepresent, but my understanding is they can track routes and stops, but it may not necessarily identify the individuals using those routes with any specificity.

Alderman O'Neil: So how are we relying on where there needs to be some improvement? Or enhancements like you mentioned, benches and whatnot. Is that based on the users themselves?

E. Michaud: It can be. It can be somewhat on the user reports. However, they can track the volume. So we will know where the routes are being most used. And the question is, is it the college students heading over to Saint Anselm's, or is it some other location? So, there will have to be more of an analysis that way.

Alderman Long: We obviously did the right thing in 2023 by turning it over to the Health Department. This is fantastic. Of course, New Hampshire is second or third per capita for elders. So, we need this work. I know, going out, I noticed that home services in ward three was the largest. And I'm wondering, I know going out on Meals on Wheels, I'm able to talk to some of the elders to let them know about the Cashin Center. Transportation is an issue, so we try to work on that. Do you know if every home service, if the elders are on their own, or are they living with relatives?

E. Michaud: For the home visits, typically they're not necessarily living alone. So, they may have an adult child. They may have a spouse; they may have an older adult with them.

Alderman Long: And other than Meals on Wheels, is there any support from the county or county contribution?

E. Michaud: For the Meals on Wheels?

Alderman Long: Not for Meals on Wheels, but for elders that stay at home.

E. Michaud: So, there are quite a different number of agencies that provide support. So, you do have Hillsborough County Meals on Wheels. Again, they're focusing on the food insecurity piece of things. Catholic Charities of New Hampshire also have a significant number of resources. They have programs called caregivers which give people rides to places. They literally make phone calls on a regular basis just to check in and have a social conversation with someone. So, there are a number of organizations out there doing those types of things. We at the department have our team, our community health workers who are backups to the Meals on Wheels program. So, if somebody shows up from Meals on Wheels and no one answers the door when they're supposed to, those

phone calls used to go to the police department. And now our community health workers take over those calls because it's not necessarily a security issue. It's more of a wellness check. And so, in those connections, our community health workers are also sort of doing an evaluation of the individual in the home and connecting those people to resources as well.

Alderman Barry: Elaine, this is 55 and older, right?

E. Michaud: The Cashin Center is 55 and older.

Alderman Barry: I think that's important for people to know. I've been very fortunate to have visited the Cashin Center quite often. I'm on the board with the Cashin Center. I think we need a shout out to them because of all the work that they do, raising money and giving opportunities to the seniors throughout the year. I think it's really important. I know Mark, Emily and Heather have been there, and they're doing a fantastic job. Thank you. Thank you, Anna. Thanks to everyone, Karen from the Health Department. Amy, who also is on board. I just think it's so important that our city comes together and works with our neighbors and people, not only in the city of Manchester, but people that come from outside of Manchester to come in and see what we have to offer. So, I think it's really important and keep up the good work.

Alderman Kantor: Thank you for everything that you do. Just a quick question. The World Health Organization, why partner with them when I feel like Manchester would know best on how to take care of its seniors?

E. Michaud: So, the World Health Organization is the initial organization that developed the concept of age friendly communities. It's an international concept. So, AARP is the US point for the World Health Organization. They did it through information, data collection, analysis about what it is that makes a community more age friendly. And so, as a matter of just practicality, they sort of broke it down into categories, which are those eight domains. The AARP took on that responsibility to be that point. And so actually, if you go to the AARP website, they have a whole section on livability, and that talks a lot about what programs and services and resources a community can put in place to make

their community more age friendly. In fact, one of the benefits of the City of Manchester committing to becoming age friendly is because by doing that, AARP allows us to get access to all those additional resources so we can talk to a community that's similar to Manchester, maybe four states away, and learn about what they have done to take over and overcome challenges that are similar to ours so you don't reinvent the wheel. You learn from other people's efforts and trials. And so, it really is more of a local based assessment. And that's what the plan is. We looked internally here to Manchester, reevaluate what we had and made the recommendations.

Alderman Terrio: So, Manchester is about 115,000 people. From your slide, you said about 16% is elderly, 65 and up.

E. Michaud: About 14.4% is over 65 and older.

Alderman Terrio: Just under 10% is living in poverty, correct?

E. Michaud: Correct.

Alderman Terrio: I don't want to put you on the spot, but do you know how many senior housing units we have in the city?

E. Michaud: I do not know the answer off the top of my head.

Alderman Terrio: That is fine. I wanted Hallsville to go to senior housing, but we just couldn't work between financing and all that. So, we have an opportunity with the Wilson Street School coming back to the city, it's my hope that is turned into senior housing, because I think we desperately need it with the 16%, 14% of the population that's elderly, almost 10% of them are living in poverty. So, I just kind of want to put it on the radar that we have an opportunity with Wilson Street coming back to us, and I hope that we turn it into senior housing.

Mayor Ruais: I could not agree with you more. Every month that I go to the senior center, for coffee, housing is one of the first and only things that they talk about. And Wilson is a tremendous opportunity; I agree with you.

Alderman Levasseur: What are the requirements to be a member of the center?

E. Michaud: There are no requirements. There is no residency eligibility. You can be a member as long as you fill out an application. And we do need a form of ID so that we can then communicate with you. But short of that there's no financial barriers or other requirements or eligibility, no medical. The center is an activity center, so anyone can come. We do not provide nursing or personal care support, but if someone comes in and has a personal care attendant, we are more than happy, even if that that attendant is younger than 55, they can come along and they are welcome to participate in the activities.

Alderman Levasseur: No vaccinations?

E. Michaud: No, sir.

Alderman Kantor: I was just going to ask that question. I guess my thing is, will you completely comply with the World Health Organization? When, if they have any kind of standards, will that cover everything here?

E. Michaud: So, the World Health Organization isn't controlling anything that we're doing. The World Health Organization's creation of the age friendly community is what we're looking at. However, we're applying those standards that AARP adopted and that we, at our discretion, are choosing to follow or to structure our plan around.

Alderman Kantor: So people won't have to have vaccines if they don't want them and they can still be members?

E. Michaud: Yes. The World Health Organization has no control over the Cashin Center.

Mayor Ruais: Well, having watched you guys work on this for the last 5 or 6 months, it's been an incredible process with the entire community, a lot of different nonprofit organizations. I just want to thank you and Director Thomas as well for all of your work. It's been a real impressive show to watch.

4. Presentation from the Fire Department on the City of Manchester's updated Emergency Operations Plan.

Ryan Cashin, Fire Chief: This evening we are discussing the city's updated emergency operations plan. With me here tonight are Chief Guay, he's our Deputy Emergency Management Coordinator, and Dan Stowers, who serves as the department's Emergency Management Coordinator. I can't express enough how proud I am of this team for their unwavering commitment to this update and the daily work that they do. I wouldn't be here without them. The 2025 Emergency Operations Plan reflects significant changes in the structure of city government, integrates new equipment and capabilities, incorporates valuable lessons learned from local incidents, as well as after action reports and improvement plans. The update includes alignment with current State of New Hampshire Emergency Operations Plan, updated roles, responsibilities, and capabilities of city departments, enhanced coordination through emergency support functions, a more streamlined process for the Emergency Operations Center, and we will be asking the board to vote on this plan once our presentation is complete. I'm now going to turn it over to Dan. He's going to do a quick presentation. We'll take questions after.

Dan Stowers, Emergency Management Coordinator: And as was stated earlier, I'm not going to read all 116 pages. But I do want to go over some highlights and let you know where we are at with the 2025 rewrite of the plan. I came on board a little over a year ago. This was the number one priority Chief Cashin assigned to me, to get our plan up to date. So, we took a little bit different approach. This is what a lot of jurisdictions in the nation are doing. Instead of writing a 700-page plan and try to cover every possible thing, what we focused on was our base plan, and then we build off of that. And that's really what I want to focus on. Chief Cashin said our new emergency operations plan is consistent with CPG 101. That's the comprehensive planning guide that's nationally accepted. It's also consistent with the State of New Hampshire's EOP and the National Response Plan. In

my years of experience doing this, you want to align your plans before, so that it helps you after the disaster. The base plan that we have for you tonight identifies the roles and responsibilities for the city in all phases of emergency management. It's a living document that can be easily updated based on lessons learned. Doesn't necessarily have to be a lesson learned here in Manchester. We could see experiences of another similar community, how they responded, what they could have done better. I've been doing this for about 20 years, and I'm a firm believer in R&D. Instead of research and development, our plan that focuses the base plan is that red one in the middle. That's our emergency operations plan. It basically tells the who and what of emergency response and then emergency recovery. What we're now focusing on is the supporting documents around it, looking at the top left, looking at maps, threat hazard analysis to build on our 2024 hazard mitigation plan. And then you look on the top right. That's our emergency support function annexes. That's going to tell the how and when and those particular functions are carried out on the bottom left. We're going to focus on our incident specific annexes. Some of them I'll highlight. Those are natural hazards, technological hazards, human caused hazards, and then special events we've all seen in the media. The big push to get New Hampshire back on as first in the nation. We realize that's going to increase our political visits coming up, especially starting with the midterm. And in the bottom right, these are our support annexes. Many of these currently exist, and they're fine. We just want to make sure they align and there's no conflicts with the base plan. So that's our SOPs. And so, our job aids tasks checklists and action sheets. The base plan outlines at a very high level the who, what and when. It also talks about the functions. And then over the course of the next 12 to 18 months we want to drill down into those specific areas. These will be developed through cooperative planning meetings to provide more specific, in-depth plans to support emergency management, response and recovery activities. So, these are 18 emergency support functions that will line up. And they do line up with the state and the federal government. Our EOP covers all phases of emergency management. It details particular threats, hazards and emergency management processes. It's part of a cycle where we look at this is a continual process, whether it's prevention and mitigation to preparedness, to response and then recovery. And for every event, we're in one phase of those cycles. The EOP is not just one plan to fall back on, but a collection of documents that can be modified based on lessons learned. The EOP, some of the annexes that we'll be working on include winter weather, extreme temperatures, flooding, droughts,

tornadoes, our technological hazards, our hazardous materials, transportation incidents, whether that's rail, aviation or even on the river, infectious disease outbreaks, power emergencies, structural collapse, dam failures, urban conflagration, and then nuclear power plant evacuation. As you know, we are a host city currently for Seabrook. And we do have that plan in place, which was exercised on April 30th. And I'm proud to say that Manchester Fire and City of Manchester received the highest evaluation FEMA's ever given for an evacuation exercise. Then the human caused incidents that we're going to be looking at working closely with our city partners, our active shooters or violent incidents, terrorism, bomb threats, chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear explosive events. Then the VIP political events, civil unrest and cyber-attacks, which is, as we all know, an emerging threat that grows every day. And of course, we have the special events, the permitting, the processing and the planning for those and how we incorporate the emergency operations plan in the EOC into those events and then the support annexes. These are just how we're going to actually carry it out. Here's where we get down to the brass tacks. Where are we going to establish command posts? How are we going to communicate with both internally in the city and externally to our customers? How we're going to conduct those operations, whether it's traffic control or training for those events. These will all be covered in the EOP annexes. For each, we will develop effective plans and procedures that describe how each ESF in the city should work in all phases of disasters. That includes the training, the preparation. And then we will develop a Homeland Security template compliant emergency exercise plan for all these plans, and we'll pick and choose which ones, which plans we're going to focus on and which types of exercise we want to do with to which level.

Alderman Long: I didn't see any potential water contamination.

R. Cashin: And so, a water contamination would probably fall under our hazmat response because that was typically something that would be contaminated in the water. If it was another contaminant, we'd treat it in the same fashion, as that would be considered a hazmat response.

Alderman Vincent: Thank you for the brief, gentlemen. This is a massive undertaking that you guys did, and it's long overdue. I've seen it. I looked at it, I understand it, and this is

probably one of the most on point documents I've seen in a long time when it comes to stuff like this. So well done on that, gentlemen.

Alderman Vincent moved to approve the Emergency Operations Plan. Alderman Long duly seconded the motion.

Alderman O'Neil: As we know, some changes are going on. When will there be a presentation on budgetary items that are going to be presented to the board to consider for investments?

R. Cashin: As far as parts of the plan, we hadn't planned a presentation to ask for any dollars for any parts of this plan yet. There are specific parts that do ask for dollars. A lot of the money that we have put into the program has been done through grants. And we are continuing to apply for grants. We will be getting into that application period very soon.

Alderman O'Neil: But we can't stop at grants, though. We have to expand. We have to broaden our ability to do events on a different scale.

R. Cashin: I can most definitely prepare a document for you, and we can talk about it.

Alderman E. Sapienza: So, if we vote this in tonight, we are not committing ourselves to the financial cost. Briefly in a nutshell, what exactly has changed? How is this different than what we've been doing the last ten years?

R. Cashin: It hasn't drastically changed from the last plan. A plan is supposed to be updated every five years. So, we're a little bit behind. Some of that was due to Covid and getting on board and getting it done. We have made some changes to update it. So, a lot of things do change in ten years and a lot of things don't.

Alderman Kantor: First of all, thank you for all you guys do. I really appreciate it. Big concern is parking and snow issues. Fire trucks, first responders, getting down narrow roads. I know that it's been a problem for the past couple decades because I'm dealing with it still at Karatzas Ave. What do we do? I mean, I know that there's also a problem

over in Ward 12. I'm trying to help my constituents, and I really can't do anything. I am asking for no parking signs, towing. I'm kind of at a loss for words. I just got out of committee earlier this evening, and it's like the complete runaround. And my other big concern is the new zoning, and the more density in our city and the narrow streets and more cars. And it's going to make a huge impact. And you guys already impacted by everything that goes on in the city. I guess I'm a little confused on why we're not taking care of the parking issues with the snow removal and all of that, and it's an ongoing problem. And I know all the aldermen have been hearing this for a long time. And every life is important. And if you can't get down a road. What do we do? Is this part of it or is this just an updated version? I don't know what to say to my constituents that can't get to work. And they are first responders as well. So, you know, when people are jacked up on the narrow ways and they're blocking the snow removal and we do live in New England, I am looking for some advice. What do I do? How do I help my constituents?

R. Cashin: I appreciate that concern, alderman. You know, there is a parking ban in the city, and how that's enforced is how that's enforced. Not necessarily part of this plan. But you know what I can say when it comes to the Fire Department in response is that in the entire time of the Fire Department, we have never not responded to a single call or made it to a single house due to snow or any other obstruction in a roadway. We will get through.

Alderman Kantor: I like that response. Thank you for the moment, but we still need to fix the other issues.

Alderman Levasseur: I think that's a really good point. I really commiserate with you guys because, the West Side, I don't know how you get your trucks down there.

R. Cashin: Really good drivers.

Alderman Levasseur: Is it a challenge with what you have now, is it something that's inside your thought processes or is it just not a big deal? You've just been doing it for so long.

R. Cashin: It's part of our driver training program. Everyone gets a driver training program. They go out in the spring, summer, winter, doesn't matter. So, they are prepared for the elements. It's part of the job. It's going to snow. We're going to respond and we're going to get there.

Alderman Levasseur: You always respond. I'm just amazed how you guys are able to get to some of these places. Have you ever had an issue where there's just been cars that have just been in the way?

R. Cashin: We get around them and we make do. I'm truly blessed. The members of the Fire Department are top notch. They are well trained and they are motivated and they will get to where they have to go.

Alderman Levasseur: So does the odd/even parking starting December 1st help, especially during the winter months?

R. Cashin: Absolutely, it does help. I'm not going to say it doesn't get tight.

Alderman Levasseur: If it wasn't the on and off parking in December would be way worse with snow banks and everything.

R. Cashin: Possibly. It's always been odd, even in my entire career. But I would imagine if there were two cars, it's going to get smaller, but at the end of the day, we are going to get through.

Alderman Levasseur: Laurel Street.

R. Cashin: I've been to fires on Laurel Street.

Alderman O'Neil: I just wanted to share. I didn't want to sound like Mr. Negative. I was just talking with somebody recently about the Phish concerts and how that plan was perfect but we have to be able to take the Phish concert, other places of the city. And so,

the biggest thing I want to make sure the resources are there so that we don't become restricted on what else we can do.

R. Cashin: I appreciate that, and we can definitely have a discussion. The credit goes to, that was a big planning event that involved multiple city departments, police, fire, DPW, Manchester Economic Development, plenty of others. That was a multi-faceted planning approach to that. And everyone that participated did a phenomenal job.

Alderman O'Neil: Chief was that the first major event of this kind of reworking and then coming on board?

R. Cashin: No, I would say Taco Tour really was kind of the first one we truly focused on as that has. That is the biggest event that we have; throughout the course of the event will bring in 10,000 people.

Alderman O'Neil: Phish was over multiple days.

R. Cashin: Yeah, the fact that it was over a couple days was a little bit different. But every time we plan one of these events, we learn, we adapt, we adjust our plans. We have more information for the next one.

Alderman O'Neil: Is it safe to say that heat exhaustion was the probably number one medical issue there?

D. Stowers: For Phish, we were very lucky. The temperatures stayed down until that Sunday afternoon. And then what we found out interestingly, was, 9,000 people a night, it was the same people almost every night. So, by Sunday, they were pretty much tired out. But the heat was not a big problem until that Sunday. That's when it started impacting things.

Mayor Ruais called for a vote. *The motion carried unanimously.*

CONSENT AGENDA

Accept BMA Minutes

5. Minutes of the October 7 BMA and Finance meetings, and the October 21 Special BMA Public Hearings (3), BMA, and Finance meetings.

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

6. 50/50 Sidewalk Petitions (Residential)
143 Patterson Street
200 Walnut Street
233 Currier Street
994 Somerville Street

Information to be Received and Filed

7. Communication from the Office of the City Solicitor, providing an update regarding lawsuits filed against the City.
8. Communication from Faye Morrison, Parking Manager, submitting information regarding the installation of multi-space parking meters.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

COMMITTEE ON LANDS AND BUILDINGS

9. Recommending that the request from the Friends of the Manchester Animal Shelter for authorization to advance with one of its two plans to renovate the animal shelter on Dunbarton Road be approved
(Unanimous vote with the exception of Aldermen Thomas and Long, who were absent)

COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY, HEALTH AND TRAFFIC

10. Recommending that the following traffic regulations be approved:
ONE-WAY
On Central Street, eastbound from Elm Street to Chestnut Street
Alderman Long
NO PARKING ANYTIME
On Manchester Street, north side, from a point 149 feet east of Elm Street to a point 180 feet east of Elm Street
Alderman Long
On Milford Street, north side, from Tilton Street to Riddle Street
Alderman Barry
NO PARKING 9PM-7AM
On Amherst Street, both sides, from Union Street to Beech Street
Alderman Fajardo

CROSSWALK

On Lake Avenue, east and west of Belmont Street

On Belmont Avenue, north and south of Lake Avenue

Alderman Sapienza

METERS - 2 HOURS

On Hanover Street, south side, from a point 58 feet west of Union Street to a point 354 feet west

Alderman Long

STOP SIGN

On Rosedale Avenue at Plainfield Street, SWC

Alderman Burkush

RESCIND METERS-2 HOURS

On Hanover Street, south side, from a point 58 feet west of Union Street to Pine Street (ORD 10615)

Alderman Long

RESCIND NO PARKING 6:00AM-10:00AM

On Manchester Street, north side, from a point 149 feet east of Elm Street to a point 180 feet east of Elm Street

(ORD 10607)

Alderman Long

RESCIND CROSSWALK

On Webster Street, east of Pickering Street (ORD 2385)

Alderman Goonan

RESCIND ONE-WAY

On Central Street, westbound from Chestnut Street to Elm Street (ORD 10827)

Alderman Long

(Unanimous vote)

11. Recommending that the proposed Ordinance Amendment regarding the Use of Traffic Medians by Pedestrians be received and filed.
(Unanimous vote with the exception of Alderman Kantor who was opposed)

JOINT SCHOOL BUILDINGS COMMITTEE

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

*On motion of **Alderman O'Neil**, duly seconded by **Alderman E. Sapienza**, it was voted to approve the consent agenda.*

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON ALCOHOL, OTHER DRUGS, AND YOUTH SERVICES

13. Recommending that 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."

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

(Unanimous vote)

Alderman Kantor requested that Agenda Item 13 be removed from the consent agenda.

Mayor Ruais: So, my understanding, when it was in committee the last time, was that there was some technical corrections that Alderman Thomas wanted to make pertaining to health care, and that we can work those out at Bills on Second Reading.

M. Normand: That's correct. I think there was a conversation with Director Thomas and Alderman Thomas about some potential changes that needed to still be made. And so that was going to get picked up in Bills on Second Reading. I don't know if that's been resolved.

Alderman Levasseur: What are the changes?

M. Normand: I don't know what the changes are, Alderman.

Mayor Ruais: It would go to committee and then it would come up in the last meeting in December. Or we can move it up from committee on December 2 if we had to, after you guys make those technical edits.

Alderman Kantor: I have a couple questions about it because it's a 1 to 1 exchange. The Health Department's here, so I want to ask them some questions. Just a couple questions, because I'm all for the 1 to 1 exchange, but I noticed some new wording in here. I noticed that you were given the right to suspend it if there's an outbreak. And I just wanted to understand a little bit more and would the public be notified of this outbreak?

Anna Thomas, Health Director: Yes. This has actually been exercised in the past. Fortunately, because we have such a strong infectious disease prevention program in the city, we do not have elevated numbers on a regular basis. When there is, especially on a statewide level, because unfortunately, some of this being tied to IV drug use becomes a statewide issue because this is such a transient population. And as you know, the majority of people who come into the city and overdose are not from Manchester, for example. So, the state will actually deem it as a public health emergency, depending on the rate of disease. So, if it's elevated beyond what would be expected, then they can declare it a public health emergency. And we had that happen a few years back with Hep A, and the entire state was mobilized because it was such a transient population, even though Manchester certainly over-represents those numbers. So that is something that we wouldn't deem ourselves independently. We would consult with DHHS, but we would bring that to you as well. But I don't see that as a frequent event. I think it's just embedding this language in here gives us the latitude to be a little bit flexible in the event there is a public health emergency. But right now, we're not operating under that.

Alderman Kantor: I guess my concern is if they have transmissible diseases. What about the needles that need to be disposed of properly? Why are we giving them more needles?

A. Thomas: We're not giving them needles. But as you know, the syringe service programs are. And that is why you all have designed these ordinances so we can have some parameters that they need to work within. So, one of those parameters that's in the ordinance is that they need to dispose of these needles properly and safely. So that is something. And actually, Deputy Alexakos has done these inspections. He's actually done on-site inspections in these programs, just to make sure that all of those things are accounted for. And years ago, that was not happening. So, they've come a long way, the two programs that we have operating currently in the City of Manchester have gone to great lengths for that proper disposal.

Alderman Kantor: I'm not for any needle exchange, but I know that this is better than what we had. But my concern is those needles that are infected. Now, if there is an outbreak, then those needles aren't going to be accounted for.

A. Thomas: It is up to the syringe service programs to do their job to make sure that people are bringing them back. I think that's why we're saying if we start to limit the numbers that are going out, it helps us control what's out in the streets. And, you know, there's communities that have done this and have had, quite frankly, varying experiences. One of the communities we spoke with, they said after they went to a one for one that actually improved what was seen on the streets, other communities have tried the one for one and then they pull back. So, I think we're at a point now, and it's one of the reasons why Alderwoman Thomas, when she presented this in committee, we compiled all of the data that we possibly could about which programs are picking up needles. Just so you had a total viewpoint on what is being dispersed, what's being collected. And I will tell you, of the two syringe service programs is specifically only serving those who are HIV positive or living with AIDS. So, it's a finite number. The other program, which is larger, they do collect needles in locations like 39 Beech, for example. They don't do needle exchange there, but they will come by and pick up needles there free of charge. So, it's one of the reasons why in the data reports, there's some quarters where they actually report that they've collected more needles than they've dispersed, and that accounts for some of the community collection that they've done. Now they started that after the ordinance was passed. So, I think that's all positive. That's kind of what we wanted to see. So, I think it's progress.

Alderman Kantor: For what it's worth, transparency and accountability.

Alderman O'Neil: You and I spoke, it could have been at the committee hearing, We talked about city agencies tracking so that the city knows what the city's doing, whether it be the Health Department, whether it be the Fire Department, or Public Works through their various divisions. And there really is no easy way to track, correct?

A. Thomas: Well, DPW actually has been really thorough about the numbers of needles they're collecting, and that's one of the reasons why we actually kind of reevaluated the ordinance the way it's written. And so, in committee there, there's sort of a before and after ordinance set of graphs of collected needles by DPW only. So, in one time slot before the ordinance was passed, there was something like over 4,000 needles being collected by their department. After the ordinance was passed, it was reduced over the same time

period. Post ordinance, down to about 3,000. So, it looks like there was about a thousand needles that were not being picked up by DPW, which again is a positive step. Now is it the end all be all? No. But at least it was improvement and we felt good about it. And I think this is just sort of the next step that this community is ready to take.

Alderman O'Neil: Right. Is there any software out there that the city agencies could use to track how many and where?

A. Thomas: We actually found one community that we were looking at that they kind of put out a dashboard. And we were wondering if we could do that with some of our local data. But there are several data points. So DPW reports their data. Certainly, the needle exchange programs report their data. And then of course, economic development and the needles they collect downtown. That's another data point. And then in addition to that, we always forget that our first responders are out there picking up the needles. So that is another data point if we start asking them to track that. And I don't know what the volume is, but I know that they are sort of the backup call to DPW when there's a needle that needs to be collected.

Alderman O'Neil: So, it'd be interesting because a lot of this happens at night or on weekends where there's no DPW folks, so the Fire Department ends up carrying the ball. Does that information get collected? So we know where some of the less trouble spots are or more trouble spots are.

A. Thomas: At least for DPW. Again, they they do a great job. They put the address that they've picked up and how many needles were collected at that location and on the date. So that's why we kind of map that out.

Ken Loui, Assistant Police Chief: That's certainly something that the Police Department would be willing to explore with the Health Department. But like every other department, we have resource constraints. We'd have to see how involved that data collection effort would be before we could commit to providing resources.

Alderman O'Neil: Yeah, I'm thinking it's not a lot of work by an individual. If they happen to be involved with collecting it, no matter what the department is, but it'd be good information to have how many and where.

K. Loui: It's the data entry portion that we're concerned about.

A. Thomas: And AMR also picks them up for us too from time to time.

Alderman O'Neil: We have the private outfit doing the downtown stuff that picks it up. So, it's just something where it would be good if we could work on it collectively. I don't know why I'm stuck on that, but I am.

A. Thomas: But it's good to inform the public, too, especially if we're seeing improvements in those numbers. Ultimately, that's what we want to see. We want to see a reduction in what's out there and what people are reporting.

Alderman O'Neil: And sometimes it can be we've made other changes at a location that will affect unwanted behavior at certain places. And the Police Department has worked with Public Works on that. I'm usually not a data guy, but in this case, I am.

A. Thomas: Well, we have lots of data we can give you.

Alderman Levasseur: We've seen overdoses go down. We've seen deaths drop significantly over the last year. Do we see any reduction in the amount of needles being found? Has there been any studies or any correlations or anything that you can point to as far as what you're getting or not getting? I guess Queen City Needle Exchange said they picked up 2.3 million statewide. The way they wrote it in there, it seemed like it was Manchester only since 2019.

A. Thomas: They have about ten locations statewide. But I think what they do, and at least what we get on the reports and Alderman Thomas has these as well, it's about 140 they disseminate in a quarter that they report specifically for Manchester at Queen City Exchange.

Alderman Levasseur: Are they seeing a drop in those numbers for distribution? Have we seen a drop in that?

A. Thomas: I have actually graphs, I can send them to you, that I try to track.

Alderman Levasseur: I would just like to have that question answered, because I'd like to see if it's correlating with our overdoses. And hopefully they are. On the other part of this, I think I read, I'm not sure if I read it thoroughly enough, but what is going to be enforcement on this, because this is a lot more of a big change, right? So, what are we doing for enforcement?

Phil Alexakos, Deputy Health Director: So when the board adopted the ordinance to put some guardrails around what the state was suggesting that the syringe service providers do as part of their process, by codifying that in the ordinance, we do have the ability to write a summons. If a syringe service provider that's registered with us is operating outside of the ordinance, as well as if a rogue syringe service provider were to come in and not have gone through our registration process. So, in conferring with the city solicitor, we do have the ability to write a summons if they do not conform to the ordinance.

Alderman Levasseur: Can you do an inventory check on a truck that comes in? You can do an inventory; there's 2,000 needles on the van. They're there for four hours. You come back and do another inventory to see how many they gave out, and if they actually received anything back. Do you have that ability to do that?

P. Alexakos: Sure. We do actually provide testing at some of their operations in terms of infectious disease prevention activities. So, we do have the ability to look at their logs as well as their inventory. Counting exactly how many needles are in a container is a bit of an estimate, I would say, but we certainly could have a good sense of what their inventory is. And we can also ask for records relative to their purchasing. So that's all part of that registration. We do a pretty thorough review of everything that the ordinance requires, and certainly have the ability to ask for that information.

Alderman Levasseur: I received two emails from I think Waypoint or Way Home, maybe. They were very against this needle exchange program. Have you heard from them and others? And how many others that are not happy with this change? Has it been anything that's been overwhelming, or is it just more like they're just putting their point across?

A. Thomas: Across the country there are people who believe in these programs and there's people who don't. And I think you're just going to see that tension no matter what. We haven't gotten any formal complaints from any of the nonprofits. But I would just say, generally speaking, I think the residents are fatigued with just overall overdoses, drug use and needles. I mean, we hear it all the time. We literally talk about it just about every Aldermanic meeting. So, I think we're just trying to be proactive within the bounds of the law to say, well, maybe we try this and maybe that will limit the amount that's going out in the streets. And let's see if that makes a difference.

Alderman Levasseur: So, the Health Department is 100% behind a one for one exchange?

A. Thomas: I'm going to be honest with you. What public health departments would preach and we should be preaching is, as long as it's done as an evidence-based practice, you do it as a needs based and not necessarily a limiting number based. And that's why you've seen communities flex back and forth. But I've also sat here and listened just about every month, and everybody complaining about the numbers of needles that are on the streets. And I think this community should have a right to make a decision about what's best for its community. And it's one of the reasons why it was omitted in the state law. That we were not given local control to decide that in the first place. And I wish that was amended in, in state law. And it's been a challenge for us because now we have to introduce our own ordinances to set parameters. But we have been guided by the solicitor's office that we cannot ban them altogether in the city, but we certainly can kind of set some ground rules for engagement. So that's the goal.

Alderman Levasseur: What would have to occur for you to bounce back the other way? Are you going to be looking for specific instances of increases in diseases?

A. Thomas: Right. And again, because the State Department is the lead on all infectious disease outbreaks, we are partners with them. And in fact, we are often a sole source contract to help them in these investigations. So, it's really going to be with their guidance and consultation. And then we bring that to you. We don't want to overreact, either. But we also we need to be responsible in the event that that is actually happening.

Alderman Levasseur: And how good are they at their data.

A. Thomas: Outstanding. We get daily reports as soon as they see anything that could be a slight uptick, especially if it's correlated to something like IV drug use which is tracked in that data.

Alderman Levasseur: And what are those specific things that could happen? What are the increases in what types of diseases or occurrences you would see or anticipate?

A. Thomas: Specifically, to IV drug use or just in general?

Alderman Levasseur: I'm just wondering what you're going to be looking at. I don't know what in particular. It'd be more infectious than it would be overdoses because the overdoses are going to occur whether they have one needle or whatever. But if it's exchanging needles because they only have one amongst a group of four, that would change what you would see in infectious diseases, I would imagine.

A. Thomas: And that's part of our contact tracing when we see an uptick on some cases. And that's something the state will get involved with us on. And so, if we see a couple HIV positive cases that come out that are IV drug using individuals, and then we do the contact tracing to see if they're connected, and then we're also trying to assess if there are other people at risk, we do that all the time. We actually do that on a daily basis with all infectious diseases. You'd be amazed at how much infectious disease actually happens in a city this size. So, it is just part of our normal practice. And we would do that investigation and again work with the state. So, if anything does seem to then indicate that this is being spread by the use of needles, then we would definitely want to work with our partners to

say maybe it's time to do something differently, but we would bring that information to you first.

Alderman Levasseur: Does the fact that there would be less needles on the ground infer that they would be more dangerous, because there's the possibility that one person is sharing it with many more?

A. Thomas: Absolutely a possibility.

Alderman Levasseur: So, it's even more important that people be more vigilant not to touch needles when there is a lower exchange rate than there was previously.

A. Thomas: Well, they should be vigilant no matter what, right?

Alderman Levasseur: But do you think they would have to be even more careful now? I mean, not that they're not being careful before, but this could be an issue.

A. Thomas: If I can add one thing that I did bring up that I thought was an excellent point was this has been the first month in now ten years of this epidemic that we've had the lowest number of overdoses. That is a huge milestone for the City of Manchester, and lots of people have been working hard at trying to drive those numbers down, including our department. But also specifically, I want to shout out to the Police Department, because when we're seeing people who are in the throes of addiction, and especially if they're IV drug using and overdosing, time is of the essence. So, one of the programs we implemented, and it's with the partnership of the Police Department, is the crew. And they're following up on anyone that we've been report that's come into the first responder system within 24 to 48 hours, ideally of their overdose. And the idea is that you're going out there to then follow up with these individuals and almost do a wellness check, but also try to connect those individuals to resources as soon as you possibly can. And then we have the ROAR team that's doing all of the enhanced outreach, especially if we're seeing numbers going up. And that's all mapped out by the Police Department in real time, every three hours that data is being updated. So, we are on this as fast as we possibly can. And it's really been a hypervigilant response from the city to really drive those numbers down.

And I think that should be commended by a whole bunch of partners that are working together. And the fact that we're at this place, we're not done. But we've had a huge step forward with those numbers.

Alderman Levasseur: Chief, have you seen a lower supply amount in the city, or is there anything that is pointing in that direction that the supply is getting lower since the borders have been closed down and they are blowing people up in the Gulf of America or something?

K. Loui: I don't have that data right in front of me. I'd hate to speculate right now. I would say that it seems steady. It seems steady, but don't quote me on that. I can get you specific numbers from Captain Murphy, who's head of our Special Enforcement Division. So, I will get you those numbers but I don't have them in front of me.

Alderman Levasseur: Reason why I ask is, is the correlation is if there's lower supply, they'll be probably lower overdoses? But if the supply is the same and the overdoses are going down, it's an interesting paradox that I'm wondering what's going on.

K. Loui: That's likely because there is a phenomenon where sometimes if supply is constrained, then then people's tolerance isn't where it should be because they're not getting the steady supply of drugs when they finally re-up. Your body is not used to it. So then now all of a sudden, it results in an overdose.

Alderman Kantor: I have heard that if someone overdoses and they don't get to the hospital or something, then those numbers aren't being counted. It's hard to find out what the real numbers are because some people are suffering at home. We are still giving out Narcan like candy. You don't have to be a medical person. And they actually send it home with you when you've had a newborn baby, which is insane to me, even if you're not a drug user. So, it's kind of confusing. Do you know what I'm saying? I appreciate what everyone is doing.

A. Thomas: The data that we report out on and that we all see is from AMR. And it's whatever they're collecting for data. We try to then marry that up with Police and Fire

data. So that's part of the dashboard. But that is only accounting for people that are being responded to by a first responder. So, you're absolutely right. There is community reversal happening where people are using Narcan and they never call 911. They never become a number in the first responder system. So, the numbers that you'll see AMR reporting is an underrepresentation of what's happening with overdoses. But it does capture a significant number. But we always have to take into account there will be additional overdoses that won't be captured in those numbers.

Alderman Kantor: Another thing is just having understanding and complete transparency from city to state. There's a lot of confusion. I have an email here from from Senator Victoria Sullivan to Jenny O'Higgins from Senior Policy Analysis. She says that the state does not require syringe services programs. So, I think that's where it's just really hard to understand what people are allowed to do. I have been talking about this needle thing for a long, long time. Been very, very upset by it because I just feel like it just feeds the beast and it doesn't really help people. I am grateful for Alderman Thomas bringing this forward, the 1 to 1. And I know we did it before. You must have seen this email. Have you seen it?

A. Thomas: I have. Jenny O'Higgins is a colleague of ours. She is not a lawyer. Great partner on other fronts. So, we have always consulted with the city solicitor on this, because if we could have banned this years ago, we definitely would have. And that's why we can't and I don't want to speak on behalf of the city solicitor, but we can't preempt state law. So even though they're saying that they authorize and they're using that language, it doesn't mean that we can ban. So, there's a big leap on that. And it's partially because the state law does not allow local communities to do that. And in other states that have the exact same legislation that we have, there's a line in there that allows for local control. When this was introduced in the State of New Hampshire, that was omitted. And we were told actually by some of the legislators who pushed this through. Manchester doesn't want this because Chief Goonan and I, Alderman Goonan and I go way back fighting on needle exchange programs as well. And we try to speak to the governor's task force on this. But even when we went back on this, essentially, they were saying, Manchester doesn't want this, we're going to do it anyway. And this is what happens when we don't afford local control in state law. I don't want to speak on behalf of the city solicitor,

but we've always consulted with our legal counsel to be clear about what we can and can't do within the bounds of the law. And we've always understood it, that we can't preempt the state law, but we can set our own parameters and how they practice in the city. That is our understanding.

Alderman Kantor: Can you do me a favor and send me an email with that line so I can understand it?

A. Thomas: Yes.

Mayor Ruais: I think following that meeting, I had asked the solicitor for clarification. So, if you could share. My understanding was that we are not required as a city to do them. And that's how I read that email, was that we're not required to engage in a needle exchange, but we do not have the authority to tell them that they can't operate here.

Peter Chiesa, Deputy City Solicitor: That's correct. And the email you referenced, Alderman, has been since retracted. She sent a follow up email, basically taking back what she said. Cities, towns, nobody has the authority to ban SSPs. The statute is pretty clear, RSA 318. The state authorized them to basically go anywhere in the state and operate. The reason we put in this ordinance is to get some control and some idea and as you say, transparency over what these SSPs are actually doing in the city, and have them coordinate with the Department of Health to make sure that we have a program and know what's going on.

Alderman Kantor: They are promoting drug use. That's what they're promoting. I saw all their fliers. Part of one of their things they do.

P. Chiesa: It's a state law and we have to comply with it.

Alderman Thomas: I do know that Senator Sullivan still has a bill in there, so she still has to put that bill in there. So, it is right what they're saying, that we can't ban them. But she's trying to put the bill in that we can.

Mayor Ruais: My understanding is that there were more changes that need to be made to this. So, if there's a motion to move this to Bills on Second Reading, then we can work on it.

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

REGULAR BUSINESS

14. Communication from Grace Lachance advising the Board of her resignation from the Arts Commission.

*On motion of **Alderman O'Neil**, duly seconded by **Alderman T. Sapienza**, it was voted to accept the resignation with regret.*

15. Communication from Jean Fortier, Information Systems Director, advising the Board of his retirement effective January 1, 2026.

*On motion of **Alderman Long**, duly seconded by **Alderman Goonan**, it was voted to accept the resignation with regret.*

Mayor Ruais: I'll just take a moment to thank you for your service to the City of Manchester. I've had an incredible opportunity to work with you over the last two years. I've always deeply appreciated your thoughts, advice, and suggestions on how we can do things better. Great work this year with the AI chatbot and getting that up and running. I think that's been a huge help for a lot of those individuals within our city. And I also want to thank you for your service to our country, serving in the Air Force. Thank you so much for your service to the city, the state and our country.

- 16. Nominations:**
Manchester Housing and Redevelopment Authority
Mike Lopez to succeed himself as a regular member, term to expire December 31, 2030
Arts Commission
Shannon Sullivan to succeed herself as a regular member, term to expire December 1, 2028
Michael Truong to succeed himself as a regular member, term to expire December 1, 2028
Suzanne Riel to fill a vacancy as an alternate member, term to expire December 1, 2028
- 17. Budget projections to be submitted by Sharon Wickens, Finance Officer, if available.**

Sharon Wickens, Finance Officer: Based on estimates provided by department heads, the projected general fund operating surplus for fiscal year 2026 is \$274,000. This surplus consists of an expenditure surplus of \$221,000, and a revenue surplus of \$53,000. Some departments are showing slight expenditure surpluses due to employee turnover, while revenue surpluses stem from meals and rooms and ambulance dispatch fees. The forecasted surplus includes a \$100,000 allocation from the contingency account as of November 14th, 2025, there have been 14 retirements compared to 13 during the same period last year. Severance payments through the state totaled \$547,293, down from \$681,198 a year ago. Following the posting of all related entries to severance, the reserve account is projected to hold a balance of \$2,312,997. I've also attached a departmental summary of severance paid through November 14th, and the departmental overtime report as of November 7th.

Alderman Levasseur: I just want to say great job by our finance director after that audit presentation today, they said the city is being run well and the balance was reconciled. Lots of good things and no icebergs ahead. So great job.

S. Wickens: It looks really well in the tax rate. You will see that it came to your email. It would have gone down \$0.06 from what you had approved as the BMA. But the county tax just raised it too much. We couldn't cover it all.

18. Report(s) of this evening's committees, if available.

The Committee on Community Improvement respectfully recommends, after due and careful consideration, that the Amending Resolution and Budget Authorizations providing for the transfer and expenditure of funds in the amount of \$100,000 for CIP 611124 Brook Street Shelter Operations be approved and referred to the Committee on Finance.

*On motion of **Alderman Long**, duly seconded by **Alderman Morgan**, the report of the Committee was accepted and its recommendation adopted.*

The Committee on Community Improvement respectfully recommends, after due and careful consideration, that the Amending Resolution and Budget Authorizations providing for the transfer and expenditure of funds in the amount of \$140,000 for CIP C160060826 Hope for NH Recovery Wilson St Emergency Recovery Housing be approved and referred to the Committee on Finance.

*On motion of **Alderman Thomas**, duly seconded by **Alderman Long**, the report of the Committee was accepted and its recommendation adopted.*

The Committee on Community Improvement respectfully recommends, after due and careful consideration, that the Amending Resolution and Budget Authorization providing for the acceptance and expenditure of funds in the amount of \$30,000 for CIP C070040126 Domestic Violence Prosecutor be approved and referred to the Committee on Finance.

*On motion of **Alderman Long**, duly seconded by **Alderman Morgan**, the report of the Committee was accepted and its recommendation adopted.*

NEW BUSINESS

Alderman E. Sapienza: Just a quick response to public input. Rich Girard, I think he had a lot of good information on being opposed to the zoning. I just want to urge all my colleagues to proceed with caution on this. I just don't buy it. I don't think it's going to

lower the the cost of housing by a single penny. I think it's problematic. I don't think it's in the best interest of this city. So, I just hope that everybody proceeds with caution on that. Thank you.

Alderman Long: I don't know if you noticed, but downtown has some artists doing storefronts. Mosaic Art raised \$6,450 to cover those supplies and stipends. There were other businesses that went to the Arts Commission to see if they wanted to do their windows and see if there was an available grant for that. So unanimously, the Art Commission approved \$2,500 for the art fund and anything over \$500, the Board of Aldermen need to approve. So, I would move that we approve the \$2,500 in grant funding for the downtown holiday window paintings.

Mayor Ruais: For situational awareness, these are funds that were given to the Manchester Arts Commission under a previous board. That money is there for them to spend. They have to come to the board for anything over \$500. So, these are not new dollars.

*On motion of **Alderman Long**, duly seconded by **Alderman Barry**, it was voted to allow the Manchester Arts Commission to expend \$2,500 of its funds for the downtown holiday window paintings.*

TABLED ITEMS

19. 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.)
20. 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.)

These items remained on the table.

*There being no further business, on motion of **Alderman Vincent**, 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". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

City Clerk

*Meeting Start Time: 7:00PM
Meeting End Time: 8:59PM
Minutes Prepared By: Michael Intranuovo*