

COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT

March 3, 2026 at 5:30 PM

Chairman Burkush called the meeting to order.

The Clerk called the roll.

Present: Aldermen Burkush, Vincent, Barry, Goonan, Terrio

Messrs.: Aldermen Kaw-uh, Dexter, Trisciani, O'Neil, Mayor Ruais, T. Fleming, J. Gagne, J. Belanger, M. Idhow, M. Gomez, O. Friend-Gray

1. Amending Resolutions and Budget Authorizations providing for the transfer and expenditure of funds for the following projects:
 - \$40,000 for CIP 212122 ARPA - Healthy Food Access Strategic Plan & Implementation
 - \$75,000 for CIP 611224 MHRA Landlord Incentive Program
 - \$22,367 for CIP 810324 ARPA - Coordinator
 - \$4,862 for CIP 811025 Independent City Auditor

*On motion of **Alderman Vincent**, duly seconded by **Alderman Goonan**, it was voted to approve.*

2. Amending Resolution and Budget Authorization providing for the acceptance and expenditure of funds in the amount of \$600,000 for CIP 711613 Odd Fellows Hall Operational Expense Project.

Chairman Burkush: My understanding is this is just accounting so that we can accept funds and work on the building with it.

Todd Fleming, Grants Administration Manager: That's correct. It is basically so we can accept rents from the tenants of the building moving forward. And those rents are used for general operating costs of the building.

Alderman Terrio: We're adding \$600,000. It's going to be \$1 million. Is that for one year or for three years?

T. Fleming: It's for multiple years. I don't remember exactly what the completion date is.

Alderman Terrio: Multiple; that answers my question. As I looked at the agenda, it just said operating expenses. It struck me as \$1 million being kind of high, but it didn't really go into detail with what you're doing with the \$1 million.

T. Fleming: It's for utilities, cost of elevator inspections, alarm systems.

Josh Gagne, Chief of Facilities: I filed the request in collaboration with the Finance Department. They're the ones that had pointed out that the \$400,000 was too low given the ratio between expenses and revenue. So, because of accounting requirements, they suggested we raise that limit. They suggested the \$1 million. It's not per year. It's over the lifetime.

Alderman Terrio: Three years, right?

J. Gagne: I think we re-upped it for five years. I think it goes to 2029 or 2030 now. But then we've renewed it several times. It's an ongoing operation.

T. Fleming: This particular project, I believe it was 2013.

Alderman Terrio: Yes. The date on it was 2013.

T. Fleming: So basically, it's been an ongoing project since 2013.

Chairman Burkush: To 2030, according to the documentation.

T. Fleming: So, he extended it to 2030.

Alderman Terrio: So, this is not just operating costs, which stuck out to me. This is fixing things; you're doing more than just operating costs. You're redeveloping or renovating.

T. Fleming: I would think it's minor renovations, not major capital improvements. This is going to come up again on the agenda. I took an average of the expenses for the last three years, and the average is around \$65,000 a year.

Chairman Burkush: It could be also used if we accept or get grants for upgrades to the building. Like you had said, some of the building systems, the roof, those things are getting towards the end of their useful life. Correct?

J. Gagne: Yes.

Chairman Burkush: So the building is part of why Finance wants to do it this way.

J. Gagne: I can't speak to the specific accounting requirements. They just thought that the \$400,000 was too low. And they just wanted that increase to be able to receive increased revenue moving forward.

Alderman Terrio: Sounds like contingency, kind of.

*On motion of **Alderman Goonan**, duly seconded by **Alderman Vincent**, it was voted to approve.*

3. Amending Resolution and Budget Authorizations providing for the transfer and expenditure of funds in the amount of \$20,000 for CIP 810724 Part Time Planner.

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

4. Amending Resolution and Budget Authorization providing for the acceptance and expenditure of funds in the amount of \$255,000 for CIP160061026 CDFA CDBG-CV Operational Support for City Shelters.

Chairman Burkush: I visited the new shelter today. Kudos to the Chief Cashin, Jake King, and everybody else that worked on that project. What a nice shelter that's going to be.

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

5. Amending Resolution and Budget Authorization providing for the acceptance and expenditure of funds in the amount of \$245,000 for CIP C160061126 CDBG-CV Operational Support for FIT Shelters.

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

6. Amending Resolution and Budget Authorization providing for the acceptance and expenditure of funds in the amount of \$27,000 for CIP C300040426 Safe Haven Baby Box Installation.

*On motion of **Alderman Barry**, duly seconded by **Alderman Goonan**, it was voted to approve and to expedite the report to this evening's Board of Mayor and Aldermen meeting.*

7. Amending Resolution and Budget Authorization providing for the acceptance and expenditure of funds in the amount of \$27,000 for CIP C330040426 Women's Locker Room Expansion.

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

8. Amending Resolution and Budget Authorization providing for the acceptance and expenditure of funds in the amount of \$12,931 for CIP C330041826 MPD Mobile Surveillance Platform Center.

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

9. Amending Resolution and Budget Authorization providing for the acceptance and expenditure of funds in the amount of \$1,642,325 for CIP C410022026 Homeless Healthcare.

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

10. Communication from Jeffrey Belanger, Planning and Community Development Director, providing the quarterly report regarding the expenditure of the City's ARPA funds through December 31, 2025.

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

11. Communication from the Planning and Community Development Director regarding a request from the Organization for Refugee and Immigrant Services that its lease at 434 Lake Avenue be reduced from \$2,023.50 to \$1,423.50 per month from January to June 2026.

Alderman Terrio: I was contacted by another tenant in the building. Is that space able to be consolidated? Because the other tenant, I believe, was willing to pay more rent and wanted more room. I think it's possible for a number of different configurations and it's possible maybe for ORIS to occupy only one floor. But I think Mukhtar would be able to speak to whether or not he needs more than one floor, in his opinion. I think the other tenant, from what I understand, would like to expand. I believe they'd pay more rent. You occupy two floors currently, right, Mukhtar?

Mukhtar Idhow, Organization for Refugee and Immigrant Services: Yes, and the third floor is basically three rooms. It's basically on the second floor, which is not the whole second floor, because half of the second floor is used by MCRC. So, we only use the other side of the second floor. So, it's not the whole second floor. So, the current capacity is not possible for us to accommodate because our service demand hasn't changed. We're only utilizing volunteers to serve our community. And so, there's more demand right now than we have ever had before, because a lot of people are coming in for services. So, there's no room for us because even on the third floor, we're not using the whole third floor. The way that building is designed is there's a portion in each floor that a tenant can use, and the other side is open. I think the city can do whatever they want. So, our side, there's only three rooms on the third floor which three of us utilize now and then on the fourth floor, we have three small office spaces and one conference room, which we share as a shared space, so there's not enough space to accommodate. We've evaluated all that before we came before you.

Alderman Terrio: So just to clarify, you're saying that you can't give up the extra space.

M. Idhow: Yes, we don't have extra space.

Alderman Barry: So, we're going to give you \$600 less than we were giving you. Why is that?

M. Idhow: We just got a shortfall; I think because of the change in the federal government. There has been some immediate funding that was cut-off that supported our community, the service demand exists, but the funding has been reduced. So, as we take time to evaluate how we can adjust to this change, we are asking for a short time period of a \$600 reduction. I think, in return, the over 100 individuals in the city of Manchester are getting services from that space. And the dynamic for that building was to create an environment where our community will come and get services as they need. So, we don't

want to shut down the services that we offer now. So, we thought maybe it would be appropriate for us to come before you and seek for relief for a short period of time and not change the services we offer. As we evaluate, if in the time period that we ask if there was a major change in the capacity, we will definitely look at consolidating or maybe changing our program because we don't want this to be permanent. But at the moment I think the demand exists. We do need the space, and it's a little bit tough right now because we had no time to plan for it. It just came unexpectedly.

Alderman Barry: I appreciate all the work that you guys do over there because I was formerly on the board of directors of the Community Resource Center. So, I was able to witness and see the work that you guys do, and I appreciate it. So, continue that.

Chairman Burkush: I've done some research on the current lease and the current expenses. Currently, they are getting basically a less than market value for that building. And the lease is based on covering our expenses, their expenses for heat, electricity, maintenance in the building. So, the problem that I see is if we do reduce this rent, we would have to reduce it as well in fairness to MCRC. So unfortunately, I can't support this at this time.

Alderman Vincent: Jeff, can you put this in layman's terms for us? Why do you support this?

Jeff Belanger, Planning and Community Development Director: This is not something that the Planning Department is supporting or not supporting. This is something we're bringing to you. Mukhtar asked us to bring it to this committee.

Alderman Vincent: Is this common?

J. Belanger: No. I don't know if Todd would disagree, but I don't think it is common.

Alderman Vincent: When was the last time we've done something like this? I do agree that we could be setting a precedent and putting ourselves in a predicament here.

T. Fleming: I think ORIS requested a rent reduction two years ago. So that's the only other time that this happened.

Alderman Vincent: If this doesn't get approved, how does this affect you? What happens?

M. Idhow: We will have to make cuts. We will have to terminate some volunteers who actually came up to serve the community. And in order for them to do that, we have to accommodate them, have space for them to be able to do their work. Because a lot of the data we deal with is confidential. So, we prevent people having access to clients who they are not allowed to have access to. Our ability to provide space to volunteers, to be able to have the confidentiality to deal with their clients, allows us to utilize this. So, if we were not able to get this and somehow it forces us to consolidate, then we will have less volunteers, which means our service delivery will be reduced to a certain degree.

Alderman Terrio: I agree. I understand your position, if they're going to have to cut back on services. I think this should be tabled. I really think what I had mentioned earlier we

should explore; go to the other tenant, see if they'll pay full rent so that'll cover all the utilities. And that way they won't have to cut back.

Chairman Burkush: We reached out to him yesterday and asked him if he would consider consolidation, and he said no.

Alderman Terrio: At this point, if he doesn't get the funding, they're going to cut back. So, they'd have to consolidate regardless. So would you consider that?

M. Idhow: Well, we'd have to see. We are searching for funding. I think this is one other step that we have taken because we believe the city should be pleased about the services that we offer to the community. And a lot of the people that come to the office are Manchester residents. So, if we're serving over 100 individuals in our city that need services, I thought this would be the first place to notify that this is what's happening, and we need only \$600. So, if we are terminating two volunteers, that would have served 20 individuals for \$600, that's a decision that you guys have to make. I'm just coming here to tell you that we definitely need the space, and we don't have the ability to maintain it if we don't get the relief.

Alderman Barry: Does this organization get CIP funding?

Chairman Burkush: Yes.

T. Fleming: Yes, I was going to bring that up. So, they've been getting support through the CIP budget process probably on an annual basis for several years. So last year they received \$9,700. They have a request in for FY27 as well. That's to support operating costs associated with their refugee employment training program.

Alderman Barry: And what other funding do you get? You get funding from us for \$9,700.

M. Idhow: The city gives us \$9,700. We bring \$100,000 from private foundations to help kids in Central and Memorial High School who actually are in our program. We have a youth program. They participate in our program. We have had discussions with the ELL program in Central. The kids, as part of their participation in our program, actually get a credit. So, we match what the city gives us with private fundraising to support more kids. The \$9,700 alone wouldn't be enough even to serve five kids. So, we fundraise to bring more money to the city using the \$9,700 to serve more people. Our goal is to reach as many people as we can, because the need exists in the city. And we have never been funded more than the \$10,000 cap grants. There are other organizations that get more than that. We have never complained about that. We fundraise outside the city to support our community. I also looked at the possibility because we just recently purchased the Food Hub at 150 Spruce Street, to see whether there is additional space to accommodate volunteers. And that's also at max capacity because we process food there to serve the community. We partner with the Health Department, so we're doing a lot in the city. It benefits the Manchester residents, I think to me, as a resident of this city, I felt \$600 to serve 20 more residents could be worth that. The city could take it for a short time, and we're not asking for it to be permanent. If we were able to fundraise more, we will come back and say we don't need it, because I've been a tenant of the city in that building since 2013, and it was only twice that I came before you.

Alderman Barry: It's actually \$7,200. Not \$600, because it's per month.

M. Idhow: Yes, \$600 per month.

T. Fleming: I think it was for six months.

M. Idhow: Yes, for six months.

Alderman Barry: So, \$3,600. I'd be fine with tabling it until we get some more answers to what's going on, because this is just being brought to us. I appreciate everything you guys do. I've seen it. Thank you. It's great for the community.

*On motion of **Alderman Barry**, duly seconded by **Alderman Terrio**, it was voted to table.*

12. Communication from Todd Fleming, Grants Administration Manager, regarding the request from Chestnut MNH Limited Partnership for subordination of a city lien.

*On motion of **Alderman Barry**, duly seconded by **Alderman Vincent**, it was voted to approve and to expedite the report to this evening's Board of Mayor and Aldermen meeting.*

13. Communication from Ryan Cashin, Fire Chief, requesting an extension of CIP 412524 PC Construction Fire Alarm Receiver Site Installations.

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

14. Communication from the Fire Chief for permission to apply for a \$90,000 Congressionally Directed Spending grant.

*On motion of **Alderman Terrio**, duly seconded by **Alderman Goonan**, it was voted to approve and to expedite the report to this evening's Board of Mayor and Aldermen meeting.*

15. Communication from the Fire Chief requesting permission to apply for a \$1,600,000 Congressionally Directed Spending grant.

*On motion of **Alderman Vincent**, duly seconded by **Alderman Goonan**, it was voted to approve and to expedite the report to this evening's Board of Mayor and Aldermen meeting.*

16. Communication from the Fire Chief requesting permission to apply for a \$75,000 Opioid Grant through NH Charitable Trust.

*On motion of **Alderman Terrio**, duly seconded by **Alderman Goonan**, it was voted to approve and to expedite the report to this evening's Board of Mayor and Aldermen meeting.*

17. Communication from Alderman O'Neil regarding the Livingston Basketball Court Project.

Alderman Vincent: Do we need to discuss this? We could just refer this to Lands and Buildings.

Alderman O'Neil: I would like to speak on it.

Alderman Barry: It's funded from this committee.

Alderman O'Neil: I'm very familiar with the park. I've spent the last 7 or 8 years of my life in this park. Spring, summer, and fall. What I thought we approved in the summer or in the spring was to build a basketball court. And then all of a sudden, I hear there's two basketball courts being built. The CIP budget authorization says design and construct a new basketball court; singular. I don't know where the two basketball courts came from. Now we're moving parking that I don't believe seven weeks ago was being addressed. They were just going to eliminate parking. Now they're trying to put it over in a spot near the playground, which in my opinion, makes it unsafe. I'm fine sending it to Lands and Buildings, but I don't know how a project gets approved as one thing, and it's carried out as something else. I don't want to tell you how angry I am about this that a department, or a division of a department, doesn't follow what this board has approved. I take that very, very seriously. It was to build a singular basketball court there. How it morphed into two, and it is now displacing not a favorite parking spot of mine, but many that go there for different activities, I don't know if I can trust Parks going forward with what they present. So, send it to Lands and Buildings, but this is absolutely wrong what went on.

Alderman Goonan: I was under the impression with \$300,000 that it was for two courts. I mean, I'd probably be against it if it wasn't for two courts.

Alderman Barry: Is this going to slow down the operation? I mean, we're still in winter, I guess close to spring, but is this going to slow down the operation whether it be one or two? I didn't know it was one or two courts. I just thought it was a basketball court, as long as the kids were out playing, that's good for me.

Mark Gomez, Chief of Parks, Recreation & Cemetery: We've been operating under the understanding that we were going to build two courts there. So, the design plans that we put together at this point show two courts. As Alderman O'Neil mentioned, building those two courts involves a loss of some parking in the adjacent parking area. We've had some of the same concerns about losing parking in a very popular park. So, we've simultaneously been working towards adding some parking across the way adjacent to the playground. There's a net loss of 4 to 5 parking spaces, depending on how you count it.

*On motion of **Alderman Vincent**, duly seconded by **Alderman Terrio**, it was voted to refer the item to the Committee on Lands and Buildings.*

Matthew Normand, City Clerk: You have one item of new business from the Fire Chief requesting that \$65,000 of the city opioid abatement funds be provided. You have that letter in front of you.

*On motion of **Alderman Vincent**, duly seconded by **Alderman Goonan**, it was voted to approve and to expedite the report to this evening's Board of Mayor and Aldermen meeting.*

Chairman Burkush: Tonight's going to be Todd Fleming's last CIP meeting. He's retiring after 25 years of dedicated service to the city, and we really appreciate the work that you've done. Todd, thank you for your dedication. It's not always easy, but thank you very much.

*There being no further business, on motion of **Alderman Vincent**, duly seconded by **Alderman Goonan**, 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.

Clerk of Committee

Meeting Start Time: 5:30PM
Meeting End Time: 5:57PM
Minutes Prepared By: Michael Intranuovo