

BOARD OF MAYOR AND ALDERMEN

March 17, 2026 at 7:00 PM

The Mayor called the meeting to order.

The Clerk called the roll.

Present: Aldermen Kaw-uh, Goonan, Dexter, Fajardo, Bonilla, Kantor, Trisciani,
O'Neil, Terrio, Sapienza, Burkush, Barry, Vincent, Thomas

Mayor Ruais: With the board's indulgence, I have a couple recognitions I'd like to make this evening. Would Todd Fleming please come forward? This is Todd's last meeting here in the City of Manchester. Todd has served the city for more than 25 years, most recently in the opportunity that I had to work with you most closely, as the Grants Administration Manager in the Department of Planning and Community Development, where he managed critical federal funding programs that support housing, public services and economic development in our community. Over the course of his career, though, it spans much more broadly. Todd administered millions of dollars in federal funding, including programs such as CDBG, ARPA, and the Lead Hazard Reduction Grant. These programs have helped thousands of low-income residents find housing, strengthen neighborhood services, and supports hundreds of Manchester businesses. Beyond the funding itself, Todd has built strong partnerships with non-profits, housing providers, and community organizations throughout the city of Manchester, helping ensure that these resources reach the people who needed them most. His work has had a lasting impact on our city and on the lives of many residents who have benefited from these programs, and we thank Todd for his decades of dedicated service to the City of Manchester. And we still have another week before my budget, Todd, so I'll see you tomorrow morning in my office at 9 a.m. Mr. Bilodeau, please come forward. Unfortunately, this is Mr. Bilodeau's last meeting as well with the city of Manchester. Richard has served as the Director of Central Fleet Services, where he played a critical role in ensuring the reliability and efficiency of the city's vehicles and equipment that support departments across the city of Manchester, including police, fire and public works. Over his 12-year tenure with the city, Richard worked to modernize the Fleet Department, including developing a training program that improved diagnostic capabilities for technicians and helped save the city thousands of dollars by reducing unnecessary parts replacement. It's been an honor to work with you

with the budget over the last three years, and I can attest to what I'm saying this evening. And under your leadership, the Central Fleet team maintained the vehicles and equipment that our frontline employees depend on every day to serve residents. His focus on training, efficiency and professionalism strengthened the department and ensured that city operations could run smoothly. Richard's commitment to the City of Manchester and its residents has left a lasting impact, and we thank you for your years of service and dedication to the Queen City. I have one last one this evening with Jeff and Kristen. Please come forward. I waited until March for the zoning rewrite to officially become law in the city of Manchester. But as we'll all recall, we passed a historic zoning rewrite in the city last year, the culmination of years of hard work and community input. With its passage, we've taken one of the most important steps we can take to ensure our city's future, modernizing our land use code, reducing barriers and creating new opportunities for housing, economic growth and investment. What makes this accomplishment stand out even more is how it was done. This effort was shaped by one of the most extensive public engagement processes the city has ever undertaken, with thousands of residents helping guide the final result. That kind of work requires strong leadership and a stronger team. Jeff, your vision and your steady guidance throughout this entire process has helped bring this process across the finish line. And your expertise, Kristen, and attention to detail were critical every step of the way. I also want to make sure that I recognize the entire Planning and Community Development Department for the work that you all put into this. This is only the third comprehensive zoning rewrite in Manchester's history, and your work will shape the city for decades to come. On behalf of the City of Manchester, thank you for your leadership and for your dedication. It's my honor to present you with a framed copy of the ordinance.

PUBLIC COMMENT

1. The Mayor 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. 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.

Stan Garrity, Manchester: I've come to talk about the Dunlap building. There's been a lot of history done on it, but no history on Dunlap. Who was Dunlap? Thomas Dunlap was born on a farm in Goffstown in 1822. He became a teacher and then a peddler, which at that time was a pretty good job and made money. After he came to Manchester and learned the art of silversmith making and repairing clocks and watches, he worked with other partners in downtown Manchester until he broke off on his own and built the Dunlap Building. Dunlap was well known and well respected and a well-respected person in the city. He was of the temperance movement. No alcohol, no swearing. He vowed never to have alcohol offered in his building. We've changed that. He married Helen Kingsley, daughter of Benjamin Kingsley and Eliza Pearson. Benjamin was one of the first aldermen in the city. He was a staunch Republican and outspoken on anti-slavery. His house was on Union Street and was suspected to be part of the Underground Railroad. His obituary proved that Helen's brother was a white officer in the black regiments of the Civil War. So, it's safe to say that Dunlap and Kingsley were abolitionists. They were all buried in Valley Cemetery. It was said in his obituary that the Dunlap building was one of the finest buildings in the city at the time. Today, it still stands as one of the best-looking buildings downtown. The Dunlap clock, which is on the corner of Amherst and Elm, shows up in a picture from 1896 on the 50th anniversary of Manchester. So, it's been there a long, long time and it should be still working. The lot that the Dunlap building sits on is one of the original lots of the city that was laid out by the Amoskeag Manufacturing Corporation in October of 1838. It's because of these reasons that the Heritage Commission hopes that an agreement can be made with the owner to never paint over the brickwork of the building in accordance with a motion that was passed in December of 2025 by the Board of Mayor and Aldermen to stop painting historic buildings.

Troy Micklon, 29 Ode Way: Tonight, I want to talk about the proposed changes to Hanover Street between Elm and Chestnut. First, I believe there's been some confusion regarding the different proposed plans online. I've seen some posts suggesting that all the trees on this block may be removed. However, in the Plan New Hampshire report, it was suggested that trees should be replaced with ones better suited for urban conditions, not necessarily removed entirely. So, if you could get some definitive clarification on whether the trees are going to be removed or replaced tonight, I think that would be helpful for everyone. The second point I want to make is regarding the proposal that removes on street parking.

Again, in the Plan New Hampshire report, there was caution against fully doing this. They suggested transforming these into flex spaces where parking could still exist but be repurposed during the summer evenings and on weekends. The plan before you tonight, as I understand it, removes all on street parking in this area except for the short-term loading and unloading zones. I personally believe that removing all of these parking spaces is a mistake. This area includes a number of restaurants, small businesses, and venues like the Palace Theatre and they're bringing a lot of people to this area. Those visitors rely on having easy and convenient access, including on-street parking. Without it, people will either have to pay more in nearby garages or walk further. And for some, that might just be enough where they choose not to come to downtown at all. It's also worth considering that for individuals with mobility challenges, having parking close to their destination is an important part of accessibility. There is also a financial element for everyone to consider. This section of Hanover Street has approximately 25 parking spaces that generate revenue for our city. Even using conservative assumptions, with about 70% to 80% utilization and a typical downtown turnover rate of 4 to 8 vehicles per day, that represents a loss of roughly \$50,000 to \$80,000 per year. There would also be sunk costs associated with removing the parking meters that we just replaced a couple of months ago. At the end of the day, I want to be clear I am fully in support of fixing our sidewalks, improving our infrastructure, and ensuring ADA accessibility. But I strongly urge the board to consider a solution that will allow us to improve accessibility while preserving some of the parking spaces in this area, because once they are gone, they're not going to come back.

Richard Irving, Ward 2: Eliminating all parking on the bottom of Elm Street won't be beneficial for the Palace Theatre, and anyone who needs to park their vehicles. Also, tearing down trees is bad for those who visit Elm Street and bad for the environment. Besides, decorated trees on that street are great for both citizens and visitors alike. And finally, please consider keeping the trees and parking spaces on Elm Street.

Suzanne Chretien, Ward 10: I'm here to talk about schools and the state. I'm sure that most of you are aware of Bill 1831 at the State House that I sponsored to remove the cap on targeted aid to Manchester. It was tabled and essentially killed for this biennium. This means that the 27-28 school year targeted aid will be cut by more than \$10 million, only

to this district. In my speech, which I was not able to debate, I was going to speak of the real issues that will affect the sustainability of Manchester School District and watching what is happening now, I just need to warn you of what is to come. Honestly, the legislature, as it is right now, is not a friend of Manchester and the city, in my opinion, is being punished by the majority in the House because they have decided to provide targeted aid to schools with 5,000 students or less. Guess who that leaves out? We are the neediest district in the state, but are already underfunded by the state. Even the courts have agreed that New Hampshire has underfunded school districts by at least \$3,000 per pupil. Manchester School District has a \$4,000 gap in its per pupil funding compared to the state average. And we know that many of our students are close to or in poverty. We know that we serve children with special education needs of all kinds, and we know that the district's emergency funds are depleting. We also know that schools are dealing with a \$15 million shortfall, with the largest numbers of students in the state. This board must conclude that the educational improvements must continue to, or at least be maintained as they currently are, as we cannot lose young and energetic teachers. We cannot lose the humanities, music and art or education in the trades, and you must decide what the city's priorities are. A realtor reached out to me to let me know that she lost a home buyer because in researching the dilemma facing the funding of our schools, they changed their minds and would not buy a home here. I know you have to think of so many other issues that affect the whole city, and also the property taxes, which no one wants to see go up. We must realize that some of the State Education Trust Fund is being spent on schools that are not public, and that is not what most people think is happening to their property taxes. 90% of the children who attend public schools deserve the best possible chance to become educated, contributing citizens. You must consider the long-term implications of these funding decisions of this educational landscape. Finally, I want to thank the school board members, the Superintendent, and Alderman Jason Bonilla, for attending the hearing on House Bill 1831.

Glenn Ouellette, 112 Auburn Street: I'm going on 26 years of being at Auburn Street. And I just don't get that someone is moving forward because you've been there too long and you've been a good tenant. But tonight, I want to thank Bill Barry and the mayor for allowing me to sing. And Dan O'Neill, I had to include Bob Baines, because you both have done so much for this city, and that's something we ought to be proud of. Continue doing

what you're doing. Homelessness. I know I'm still stuck on homelessness, but we have to do something about making it less homeless. For example, the new law in Concord that passed and was effective on January 10th is not friendly to our city or seniors or those that are disabled. If you get a 3% increase from Social Security and 1.5% goes for Medicare, it leaves you with 1.5% of a raise. The cost of living was more than 1.5%. If the landlord raises the rent, in my case, 48.9%, you're out the door and \$845 increase in one year in an affordable housing unit paid for by HUD is ridiculous. It wasn't meant to be that way. We are allowing people who should not be homeless, who are not the problems of our city to become homeless. They tend to lose their jobs because they don't have a place to shower and change clothes and stuff like that. And then you have seniors that are medically disabled, and they have a hard time outside of a unit to take care of their needs. The last thing I want to say is that when will this city tell Concord, the State House and all the elected officials, that if you're going to send your people here that need help, because we are a city that actually carries all the services, you have to support the city and stop punishing the city for what you are doing. There must be a way for us to tell these communities that you cannot send them here without paying for part of that cost, at least for one year. Our Constitution in New Hampshire states that every community must take care of their own. That's not happening here in New Hampshire.

Rick Blais, Ward 3: I want to talk tonight about the school issues and the challenges. This is nothing new. This has been going on for decades. But I think the reality is, at this point in time, if you go back and look at the numbers, I mean, these increases have been astronomical and the performance continues on being poor. I wanted to go over some quick notes. I did email all of you notes so you should have them. I'm going to really go through them really quick. But they are all important. That's why I put them on there. You know, one of the big things, we all know what we're facing; that \$15 million shortfall in request of money. That's the key thing. It's a request. And the other thing I'm worried about is listening to the last meeting at bonding everything, you know, we have all this debt. We're floating out there 20-year bonds for this, 20 years for that. I hope we don't start using this for operational stuff every day. You know, it's one thing if you're bonding a bridge or something of value that's going to help the city. But just for covering spending gaps, I think it's wrong. So hopefully you don't look at that as an option. Stop budget scare tactics. I mean, I hear all the time with regards to layoffs, and I just heard earlier about

the first thing they always talk about is cutting teachers. And to me, that makes no sense. We have such a huge bureaucracy that had grown over the years within the school administration. We should be looking there for cuts. You know, they talked about some letter my son got when he was running for ward three. Dexter's a good guy, but basically, he was talking here about laying off 20 teachers and eight district office people. Why wasn't that the opposite? The teachers are the front line of what happens in our kids' education, and we're cutting them versus office staff. It makes no sense. But again, it's important to get people fired up and talk about all these cuts to the kids. And I say, well, your kids haven't been getting a good enough education for over 20 years. We have to hold standards; we have to set standards. Let's not let kids get out of third grade and go to fourth grade without being able to read. Modern technology; when it comes to cuts, administration should be looking at that. That's probably 20% to 30% of the budget of the administration. All the items in the budget have been clumped together. So, it's really getting hard to separate what it's costing for transportation, what it's costing to run the administration, what's it costing to run the actual schools. I think that should be drawn out. The other thing is special interest. That's how I came across this letter here. And the teachers and the unions have a special interest group PAC that raises money for them and fights for their beliefs. No, there's no special interest PAC fighting for the students of the city. And that's part of the reason I'm here tonight. You know, I was a product of Central High School. Basically, I feel so bad for the kids graduating today. I really encourage you to take a look at the issue. The issue is leadership. You're all going to see this thing and they're using their numbers that they're getting better. Give me a break. They're using 2002 numbers as we come out of Covid. I hope you got better student results the year after Covid. And it's a lot of misleading information. We have to sit down and we have to be fiscally responsible, everybody sitting in this room right now, because we can't have everything. But we do need to demand better accountability in the school system.

Gerry Dupont, 409 Elm Street: My husband Ron and I own approximately \$50 million worth of real estate on Hanover Street. The addresses include 17 to 72 Hanover on the north side and everything on the south side from Elm Street up to the Crown Restaurant. It's been a 20-year time frame to accumulate these properties. Our Hanover Street properties pay approximately \$1 million in taxes every year to the city of Manchester, and

my husband and I, through Red Oak, pay approximately \$5 million to the city each year. We are Nashua, New Hampshire natives and have been working in this city for 42 years, improving our properties on Hanover Street. We rent 190 apartments. That means 190 families live, work and play in that area. They want safe sidewalks that are in good repair and they don't have problems with parking. We have many commercial spaces on the street that are 100% rented. One of those commercial spaces is called Fish Toes. Lara and her husband, Earl, have been real champions for the success of the businesses on Hanover Street. They have never voiced to us that parking is an issue for their business or others on the street. They help to bring vibrancy to Hanover Street and have many visitors to their store. Our apartments and these commercial spaces bring many people to downtown. They all find places to park and then enjoy the area. To say that Red Oak has done an exceptional job making improvements with our own money, by the way, is an understatement. We have beautified the street with the large Greetings from Manchester mural. It has visitors all times of the day and evening. And by the way, the sidewalk in front of it is a mess. We have many plans to continue to improve this street, but we need your help. We have a proposal in front of you and we are in favor of it, and we ask you to please support it and vote in favor of it.

Ron Dupont, 409 Elm Street: As I always say when I come before you, and it's not often, thank you for all your help and support and everything that you do for the city of Manchester. I truly believe you have the best of Manchester in your heart. The city has hired a very experienced land planning firm to design the concept before you tonight. They listened to a lot of various people in the past year and received a lot of input through charrettes and meetings. At least six, I believe. Hanover Street has approximately 250,000 people entering the Palace, and that's old info as of a few years ago. And Hanover Street has over 450,000 people walking on that street. It is our responsibility to provide them with a safe, clean and walkable environment. Manchester is in desperate need of improving the sidewalks. If I think about Nashua, Concord, Derry, Portsmouth, Manchester has these sidewalks that need the most improvement without any question, with the assemblage of properties that we have put together on Hanover Street, which, by the way, in an urban area is a very difficult thing to do. And we've done that in a period of 20 years. Red Oak has made and wants to continue making investments, and we need to improve the walkability and the design that was put together. Now we have an

opportunity. Now I have an opportunity. Manchester has seen growth of over 1,000 apartments in the past couple of years, with more to come. These residents have moved here because I assume it's a pretty happening place. Certainly, they want the infrastructure around them to be safe. They want it to be clean and they want it to be vibrant. I signed a contract just a couple months ago for \$55,000 with PCA. PCA is the architectural and land planning company. It's a large Boston firm, over 300 employees. To reimagine Hanover Street, this is the same company that has been responsible for the land planning and a lot of the architecture in Tuscan Village and Salem, which I think most people would agree is a pretty cool place. The vision that I think they will give us will include murals, fun architectural improvements to the parking garage, sculptures, a lot of color and vibrancy. All with the thought process of making Hanover Street more alive and safer. Bringing people together. We want people with money in their pockets to visit and be entertained on Hanover Street, with the Palace being the anchor. There's no reason, with good urban land planning and some investment that it cannot be done. I ask you to vote for the plan that was put together. They are a very experienced land planning firm based in Manchester.

Jim Morrill, 409 Elm Street: I'm the vice president of property management for Red Oak. So, I am in the city a lot. I've been with Red Oak for about ten years now. You know, as someone who is in the city daily, I'm on Hanover Street daily, downtown on Elm daily. You know, working with residents working with commercial tenants, trying to make sure that everything is safe, clean. I'm down there, I care. I'm in favor of the current proposal that you have in front of you for the redesign and the development that's going to be done on Hanover Street, between Chestnut and Elm. I see nothing but positives. How come when you introduce kind of these larger outdoor areas where you have a little bit more walkability, you have a little bit more interaction with some more storefronts, more restaurant space, it gets more people down the street, gets more people to interact with each other with money in their pockets out, and being able to enjoy that street and hopefully come down. My thing is I want people to come down. I want people to be happy. I want people to linger. Which linger to me is you stop at some of the storefronts they have; we have a number of dance studios. They have displays outside, you have clothing stores, they have displays outside. So, it's not really just all about the restaurants, it's about those storefronts as well. And again, more walking traffic down to those storefronts.

The downtown area has its challenges. I see it, I hear it every day as well. I'm down there. I deal with a lot of those challenges myself as I'm walking Manchester Street, over and up towards the ATM area behind the parking garage. I deal with a lot of homeless, trash and sidewalk conditions. I'm not going to rehash everything. I see it as a positive change, right? It is a completely positive change where you give the opportunity as a city to address a number of problems. Along those problems, you get more people and it helps to shine more light. I love the trees. I love the well-lit trees down there. Shine more light on that street. Light makes people feel safe. Light brings people with money, right? And light brings prosperity for the people that work and have storefronts down there and depend upon that for their living. So, I ask you to vote in favor of the proposed plan that's in front of you. And again, I see it as a positive.

Connor Beote, 409 Elm Street: I have various rental properties. I'm also a single-family home builder in the area. I built many in Manchester. I've spent many years in cities, Boston included. Hanover Street has a chance to be one of the best streets around. It's a selling feature for many of my home buyers, to come be close to Hanover Street, use the shops and restaurants there, but it needs some improvements, mainly the sidewalks. So why not take advantage of the grant in place? They need to fix the sidewalks anyway, so let's use the federal money to do that. If it were to move forward, you have a strong invested owner that just talked before me that is willing to spend even more money to continually improve Hanover Street and make it the best street in the state. I'm in favor of the proposed plan in front of you. Please vote for it.

Anthony Poore, 160 Walnut Hill Ave: I'm the president and CEO of the New Hampshire Center for Justice and Equity and the proud father of two Manchester Central High School graduates. I'm here tonight to express my deep concerns regarding the FY 26-27 proposed school budgets and the implications of the City of Manchester's approach to adequately funding our children's education. I've had the opportunity to review the three budgets presented by the Board of School Committee; tax cap, baseline, and fully funded. Let me begin by stating fiscal austerity and the use of tax caps as a means of cutting spending to reduce debt have never worked and has rarely proven to be a good economic strategy. In fact, it's often proven to be counterproductive to both growth and innovation. Secondly, the proposed tax cap budget represents a reduction of \$16 million from what's

required to provide adequate resources to the district. I believe such reductions will inevitably lead to larger classroom sizes, reductions in critical staffing positions, teaching and administrative limits on extracurricular opportunities, and a general lack of investment in an era of our city's experience where deep investments are necessary if we are to create a city where everyone can belong and thrive. Manchester, like many areas, is struggling to make ends meet while working to manage a myriad of socio-economic challenges, all while spending somewhere between \$4000 and \$4500 less per pupil than the New Hampshire average of \$22,252. We have 12,000 students. One out of four of those students require special ed or an IEP. 53% of the students come from economically challenged families. We have issues, increases in special education needs amongst our student body, and the negative impacts of concentrated poverty are issues all of New Hampshire is facing, not just the Manchester school district. We simply can't afford further cuts to our budgets. And to be clear, the proposed tax cap budget is a deep and enduring cut to our school budget period. The days of fiscal austerity must end today if Manchester is going to grow and thrive. We are in the midst of a perfect storm. Declines in support from the State of New Hampshire and the Department of Education impact of school vouchers on public education resources, and the impact of open enrollments on our school budgets. And we know what drives young families to our communities. You've heard some of that today. Perceptions of public safety. Access to affordable housing and childcare opportunities. You can appreciate that, Mr. Mayor, and quality high performing school systems. I'll close by encouraging the Board of Aldermen to look beyond today and into tomorrow when with the appropriate investment. We have a thriving school system where every child belongs and has the potential to reach their God given potential. This should be what we all want for our beloved Queen City. Lord knows I do.

David Ludwig, 320 Lindstrom Lane: I wanted to remind Mr. Mayor, that when we first met, you indicated you wanted to see property taxes hold or even be reduced. But I have to tell you, mine's gone up and up and up and up. I know it sounds like a complaint, but let's get back to Hanover Street. I hope my information is somewhat accurate. I hear that there's one proposal before you tonight. There was a first proposal repairing sidewalks. All for it. I love Hanover Street. We're big supporters of the Palace Theatre. We're down there at least twice a week. We totally agree. Removing all the parking, I personally think it's a big mistake. I think that when you seasonally allow the restaurants to close part of

the street, that's great. It builds community. I think that it's very worthwhile. I'm all for obviously improvements in the city. I own my business here in Manchester for 45 years, so I owe a lot to this city and I'd like to see it go forward in a positive way, but also in a fiscally responsible way. If the proposal tonight is the third proposal, which would eliminate all the parking and build out all the sidewalks, it sounds wonderful, but you have to deal with the parking issue first. I've heard there's no issue with parking. Boy, I wish I knew where those people parked, because I have a heck of a time finding a parking space a lot of times. It's just part of growth. But I don't see where we should reduce it. I think it's very important, especially with the Palace Theater and some of the other businesses on Hanover Street, that we make sure we take into consideration the handicapped, the elderly, a lot of drop offs. If you're going to go to a restaurant, a lot of times you need that space. You can't have people just constantly stopping in the middle of the street to let people out. It creates chaos, creates a lot of issues. I've heard some information about the grants that would be available. That's wonderful. I also heard hopefully it's true that the city still has to foot 20% of whatever they get in grants. So, if they get grants up to \$2 million, the 20% the city has to put out is \$400,000. Is that \$400,000 being spent fiscally responsible? I think that what we need is a lot of common sense these days. It's in short supply. I think that we just need to return to common sense. I hope that you continue to make Manchester a wonderful city. I'm obviously opposed to the third proposal.

Mackenzie Verdiner, 181 Wilson Street: I am a graduate from West High School in 2024, and I am here to defend our schools and ask of you the BMA, to please support our students. The superintendent released three potential budget proposals and the cuts that might be placed respective to each budget. I'm here to talk about pay to play. Please find a way to fund our schools so our students can have access to sports. When I was in high school, I had the honor to wrestle for West. That experience made me physically and mentally stronger. I became disciplined and resilient, and I deeply value the friendships that I made on that team. Anyone who knows me knows that wrestling is a fundamental part of my character. If I had to pay to play, I never would have even tried to wrestle. I never would have reached my potential as an athlete, a student, or a person. According to a study from the Prevention Research Center at Washington University, upwards of 60% of adolescent physical activity comes from school sports, with an average daily screen time of seven hours. Sports are more important now than ever, but I don't need to

convince you that sports are important; as parents and as students once yourselves, I'm sure you know that sports are important. What I need to do is convince you that our students are worth funding. When you fund and prioritize students, we thrive. Per pupil spending is directly related to graduation rates and test scores. Educated students equal educated adults and educated adults equal high paying jobs in a booming Manchester economy. As a young person, I worry about the future of our schools. I stayed here after graduation to work and if I don't see an investment in education in Manchester, I and many of my peers will not invest in this city. We will leave Manchester and possibly New Hampshire altogether. Please find a way to fund our schools, to fund our future. Show us that you care. Find a way to fill this funding gap.

Ava Nguyen, 777 Grove Street: I'm a member of Young Organizers United, and I'm going to talk about the budget for schools, specifically class sizes among the Manchester schools, and expanding the budget to prevent laying off teachers. Laying off teachers will further affect class sizes by making the classes bigger. This means that there will be more students under one teacher's supervision. According to the National Council of Teachers of English, research shows that students in smaller classes perform better when compared to peers in larger classes. Students in smaller classes perform better on assessments and overall academic performance because they received the individualized attention they deserve, and there are higher engagement rates within the classrooms. Teachers should not be laid off because they are underpaid enough, and students need the support from several teachers. The student body needs the funding to keep teachers at our schools. Please consider voting for a higher budget for our schools so students have an efficient learning experience and get the support they need.

Gustav Kalambay, 39 Plummer Street: I'm a part of Manchester Memorial High School, and I wanted to talk about budget cuts specifically. The supplies and books, students are lacking supplies and books, specifically books that are functional, that aren't falling apart and that aren't 10 or 20 years old. I've heard from many teachers, from many staff, that they need new supplies. They need new things that they are lacking, and there's not enough for all the students. There's not enough for students and obviously with less supplies, it makes the teachers' jobs harder. It doesn't help the students learn, and it kind of slows them down. That means students are falling behind; students decide to skip

school. Students don't want to be there. I just came here to ask if you can bring up the budget for a vote.

Zoie Ouellette, 248 Prospect Street: I'm here to talk about the cleanliness of the schools and why students deserve more funding. So, the last week of the school year prior to this one, there was a Dunkin Donuts truck that came to our school and it provided everyone with free drinks. And it was such a nice way to end the school year. But on the first day of school this year, I looked inside of one of the trash cans and I saw those same exact cups from the school year before, meaning that nobody throughout the entire summer had changed the trash can. I looked around and the school had grime in the corners and it was just unclean. And it made no sense because it had the entire summer to be cleaned. Many times, people from Young Organizers United have come up to talk about the disrepair of the bathrooms at school and behind the scenes. We've met with school board members, with the mayor, about the school bathrooms. But over the past year, we've seen little to no change. The water filters are still red fairly consistently. The facilities are unusable, menstrual products are not provided, and toilet paper rolls are continuing to be empty. I have talked to people across towns of this state, and each one of them has looked down upon Manchester and Manchester schools and their students and it gives Manchester as a whole a terrible look that it does not deserve. I believe that the city is truly an amazing place to live, and I wouldn't choose anywhere else to call home. So, funding our schools to the extent that they deserve, kind of shows everyone what we all already believe. In no way, shape, or form am I trying to point fingers at anyone, and I respect all the work that everyone does here to make a safe school environment for everyone. But there's no excuse for the constant garbage, grime and filth issues that persist across schools in the city. Efforts need to be made to either hire a new cleaning company or make sure the one we have is doing their job correctly. I understand that people are working hard on this issue currently, but a raise in the school's budget would most likely speed this process up and give students the cleanliness they deserve.

Serena Mackay, Manchester: I am a junior at Founders Academy. I speak before you today as a primary leader with the Young Organizers United. My peers have spoken in front of you to express all our grievances. These are not just grievances within the student body. These are real issues that affect our students, our families, teachers and staff alike.

First, the dysfunctional and unhygienic bathrooms and the lack of menstrual products for female students. The ability of students to learn and socialize is deeply interwoven with the question of whether or not their basic and most critical needs are being met in these infrastructures. This overlaps with our district's hot lunch program. If we cut school funding, there's a possibility that the quality of these lunches will degrade. Second, this constant lack of budget is forcing our teachers, who barely make a living wage amidst increasingly rising costs, to use money out of their own pockets for supplies. To ensure that these students, students of whom many are first generation and low income, to ensure that they are still receiving quality public education. This is a responsibility that teachers should not have to uphold themselves. As a first-generation immigrant from the Philippines, I knew I came to this country in search of better opportunities, and I have received that. I am sure that my peers here today share these same sentiments. Our capacity here today to speak in policy spaces that impact our future is a testament to how necessary it is that we must come as a community, as compassionate human beings, to ensure that we are supporting our kids. If we truly believe that the youth are the leaders of our future, let us invest in their education. Let's set aside our differences and unite under a common cause to ensure that. The very hope of this nation knows that deep within their hearts that the adults around them care about this inviolable human right. Please consider increasing our school budget today.

Chrissy Simonds, Manchester: I'm here today not just as a community member, but as someone who deeply believes in the future of our children, our schools and our city. I'm here to ask you to fully fund our school budget. This isn't just about numbers on a spreadsheet. This is about teachers who show up every single day, often going above and beyond despite being underpaid and overextended. It's about students who deserve support, understanding, and real opportunity, not just the bare minimum. When we underfund our schools, we're not just cutting budgets. We're cutting futures. We risk losing great educators. We risk larger class sizes, and we risk students falling through the cracks. You see, I was one of those students. I attended Central High School back in the 1980s at a time when ADHD was not supported, was not understood, or even mentioned or talked about. And the support systems we have today simply didn't exist. There was confusion and for me, there was embarrassment. I struggled to understand what other students seemed to grasp so easily. And eventually I dropped out. Not because I didn't

care. Not because I didn't want to learn, but because I didn't have the support I needed. It wasn't until my 30s that I earned my GED. I was tired of being a hypocrite to my two children pushing education because I know the importance of education. It's not just about getting or having a career, it's about your self-esteem. It was only after being diagnosed with ADHD and receiving the right support that I was finally able to succeed. That changed my life. But I still think about what could have been different if someone had been able to reach me sooner. And I think about the teachers who did try. My third-grade teacher, Mr. Dolman, at Wilson Street School, recently passed away. He stayed after school with me every day to help me with math. He didn't give up on me even when my parents did. And my peers, teachers like Mr. Dolman, don't just teach. They change lives. But we cannot continue to ask teachers to give that level of care, time and dedication while expecting them to live paycheck to paycheck. They deserve more and our students certainly deserve more. Our children only get one chance at their education. So tonight, I'm asking you to do more than just balance a budget. I'm asking you to invest in people and teachers who are giving everything they have, and students who are depending on us to get it right. Please fully fund our schools for our children so they don't fall through the cracks like I did, because the cost of educating, of underfunding education, isn't measured in dollars. It's measured in lives that never reach their full potential. I'm standing here today as proof of both what can happen when we fall short, and what's possible when we finally get it right.

Peter Ramsey, Manchester: As a witness to this, the last six speakers have been fabulous. The young people from the schools were so impressive. So, thanks for giving me the chance to listen to that. I have been at the Palace Theatre for over 28 years and simply love what I do and where I live. The Palace has become one of America's great historical theatres, not because of me, but because of the city of Manchester, our patrons, our staff, our board of directors, and volunteers. It is truly one of the finest historical theatres in America. And we are incredibly busy. I have given you an activity sheet. I hope you take a look at it. The activity is astounding. Some 130,000 patrons a year come to the Palace. In the last ten days, we were busy every single night. I have given you a letter from our leadership explaining the current proposal in front of you tonight. And I've given you photos of a typical bus drop off. Last week we had 15 buses bringing 800 kids from around New Hampshire to the Palace Theatre. This happens 50 days a year. Please, for

the record, understand no parking on Hanover Street is not good for the Palace's business. At the end of the day, it is a non-profit business. Our budget now is around \$7 million. We earn about \$6 million. My job is to make sure that we have the million dollars a year in fundraising from \$5 to \$1 million to pay the bills. The current proposal has no ADA handicapped parking plan. That is a crime. My mother was handicapped, and I'm proud that for a typical Palace show, we have 5 to 10 handicapped accessible people come in the front doors. Also, I just don't understand the concept of cutting down 20 healthy trees. Hanover Street has become one of the prettiest streets in New Hampshire. So, thank you everybody. I would love to have this go back to committee and have a compromise so that we can have a great plan going forward rather than a rushed plan.

Jim O'Connell, 265 Prospect Street: You'll be happy to know I'm not before you tonight to talk about the budget in schools as much as I would like to. I would remind people, not you, because you all know, that there will be an opportunity tomorrow night when the two boards, the Board of Mayor and Alderman, Board of School Committee, will meet together on Thursday night.

Mayor Ruais: Next Wednesday.

J. O'Connell: It's Saint Patrick's Day; I'm a little confused. So, we will be meeting. It's not the purpose for which I came forward tonight because we'll all be meeting and I'd encourage people to watch that and I'm looking forward to those discussions. I came before you tonight because it's Saint Patrick's Day. And first of all, this is an example of PPP in my mind - pretty poor planning - that we somehow ended up with an Aldermanic meeting on Saint Patrick's Day. I appreciate those of you who made the effort with the green. But as an Irish guy in Manchester, an Irish-American and proud of both my traditions, today, I just want to deal with the issue of the Saint Patrick's Day parade and the fact that we don't have one. And it's with great regret that I learned of this. I'd like to say a couple of words and my apologies to Matt Normand with his attempt to write the minutes of this afterwards. So, I'm going to give you three sentences in Gaelic here. [Spoke in Gaelic] So basically, I was just wishing people a happy Saint Patrick's Day. But all jokes aside, when I first came to Manchester 34 years ago I think it was the first year I was here that the Saint Patrick's Day parade was reinitiated after many years of it being

in abeyance. Every time I've been in Manchester for those last 30 some years, I've been part of or marched proudly in the parade with my brothers in the Ancient Order of Hibernians. And it's a huge issue that we've lost this parade in the city this year. There are people who come. I have friends who come from all over New England, not just all over the state of New Hampshire, but we have groups come from Chicopee and they come from Springfield. They come up from Boston. And families have traditions of gathering here in our bars and restaurants and families coming, Irish dancers and pipe bands. And it's just a spectacle. And it's such a great loss, not just the economic loss, because some of these people come and stay in our hotels, but the loss to our bars and restaurants. But the social and cultural issue here, this is one of the few occasions, and we're lucky we have some and we need to protect them. Everybody can be Irish for a day on Saint Patrick's Day. And this is a big deal. I just wanted to say that I was hurt by the fact that we're not having a parade. I think it's a terrible thing. I regret that. This board needs to find a way of making this happen because ultimately, I think it's the responsibility of the city. I understand there were circumstances, but the parade could have been run for another year while a year was taken to solve whatever problems needed to be solved. But abandoning this tradition is a sad day in the city of Manchester. And let me just say the people, the unsung heroes here, the parade committee, I know Alderman O'Neil's part of that committee and others who do work for ten months a year to bring that before us. I appreciate that work.

John Cronin, 722 Chestnut Street: I'm a resident of the city here, speaking on behalf of the Palace Board of Trustees and Mr. Robert Singer and his restaurant, Bravo and Bravo Cafe. I know there's been some discussion this evening about the Hanover Street project. I won't repeat some of those details, but I just want to go on record that the Palace Board of Trustees and Mr. Singer and Bravo are opposed to this plan, so-called, that's been circulated. I think there is a win-win opportunity here with some more thought and some more discussion. But the plan that I've seen and the plan that's been referred to, which was prepared by a great engineering firm, I agree with Mr. DuPont on that, in my view, does not rise to the level of a plan. It's a concept. There are no dimensions, there's no specifications, there's no details. If you brought it to your planning board and you're fortunate to have a member that knows a lot about that, they wouldn't even take it up for consideration because it's so lacking. When you look at it and look at the radius that's

being created on Hanover and Chestnut in both directions, there's really no need for it. There's no traffic study detail that you'd require of a private citizen. I spent a lot of time at the Palace Theatre. My kids went there. Great programs. And I sat in those spaces, waiting. If there's no spaces, people are going to wait. They're not going to let their young kids walk around the corner, go over to the parking garage. They're going to wait. What's going to happen? You're going to get traffic. You're going to get people getting out of cars. You're going to have accidents. You're going to have queuing. Not too much depth between the front door of the Palace and Bravo to the intersection of Chestnut and Hanover. It's nothing worse than having a blocked intersection. The space is there. There's not too many to begin with, but they function. Not for long term parking, but for drop offs, for pickups, for idling, for handicap. And I don't think that's been taken into consideration. From what I understand, and I'm late to the party here getting involved just a few weeks ago, there was a meeting at the DPW. This has been in the works for a couple of years. The concept was only drafted in November and disclosed to the stakeholders, the people who it's going to impact, just three weeks ago. There was some discussion back and forth of how this might be a win-win, but the feedback was really that there wasn't a lot of reception to negotiation or having an alternative engineer propose an alternative plan. I think the Palace is willing to do that and maybe make some type of compromise. I recognize reasonable minds can differ. I have great respect for the Dupont family. They've done a lot of great things for the city. I think the benefits to them are different, right? They have the benefit of the garage for their tenants. Without those parking spaces for Bravo and the Palace, it creates a problem and they believe it will be a detriment to their businesses. Finally, I don't know if you folks get the application before you vote. I chased around to get it today and thanks to Tim Clougherty, he sent it to me. This plan and this proposal is inconsistent with your application. I think it puts the city at risk if you approve it this evening. If you haven't had a chance to read it, you should before you vote on it. There's no discussion in there about removal of parking spaces and all federal grants look at safety, handicap access and pedestrian accessibility as a priority.

Avery Cyr, 30 Hanover Street: I support any proposal that would improve our sidewalks in the city. I've been told time and time again by people in the downtown area that they want the sidewalks and potholes to be filled. So, I support any initiative that's for that. But I came here to oppose the cuts to the school district and in action on various problems

our students face. Over 53% of students qualify for free or reduced school lunches, and so far, very little has been done to get more students enrolled in this program. That's money that could be used to help cover a potential budget shortfall of over \$6 million of about \$16 million. It's because of shortfalls like this I've gone up to Concord to testify for House Bill 1531 that would make it easier for municipalities like Manchester to tax casinos. I believe if we could do something like that, that would be more money that we could use towards the school district. We could use not just that, but this is one of many options that we could use to fund our school district, so that we could bring the class sizes down to 17 students per teacher, which is a ratio that, as other people have testified to, would improve student outcomes by over 50%, because just smaller class sizes in general are better for students. And as a Central High School graduate, I've also had to experience what it's like being in large class sizes. I can attest that I really think we need to do more initiatives to properly fund our school district. We need to encourage the state to give us enough money to fund our school district to close that shortfall. We need to encourage the federal government to provide more money for free school lunches. So again, I think that we just need to keep finding other ways to properly fund our school district.

Nick Carnes, 300 Bedford Street: I own and operate businesses at 18 Lake Ave, unit one, unit three, unit five at 215 Canal Street, 8 Hanover Street, 889 Elm Street, which is on the corner of Elm and Hanover. I also serve as the founder of the Downtown Manchester Collaborative, which is a small business group with over 137 members. I am here to speak about the Hanover Street Sidewalk project, but specifically the process behind it. This was not a rushed plan. Over the past nine months, DPW has worked on this project through five public meetings, more than half of which were held in the Palace Theatre, in which any question or concern could have and was addressed, including trees being replaced and lights being upgraded over the street. I'd like to recognize Caleb and Tim for their hard work. They engaged directly with more than 50 small businesses and countless residents. They answered questions and made a genuine effort to incorporate feedback into a workable plan. After that nine-month long process, the project moved through the Committee on Safety and came to this board a few weeks ago. And that's where this process seems to have broken down. Since then, this project has been tabled, redesigned twice, and now faces the possibility of being voted down due to the objections

of a few parties. At the same time, I shared with all of you the results of a survey of downtown small business owners. That survey showed a 97% support of this project from the people who invest, operate and pay their taxes in the city every day. That does not include the hundreds of residents who participated in shaping this plan through the public process. So, I do have to ask, how can the objections of a few parties outweigh months of public engagement and overwhelming community support? Do the voices of taxpayers and small business owners in this city carry weight in this process, or are some voices given more consideration than others? Because if this project is voted down tonight, it won't just be about a sidewalk. It will signal that even when the community shows up, participates, and overwhelmingly supports a project, it still may not be enough. And that raises a serious question about whether this process reflects the will of this community or the influence of a select few.

Pete Winslow, 1176 Hall Street: I am a member of the Planning Board and incoming chair of the Downtown Business Collaborative. I'm here tonight to voice my full support for the current proposed pedestrian improvement plan on Hanover Street. I have followed this project and attended every public meeting beginning with the charrettes in April of 2025. We just tonight celebrated the implementation of a zoning rewrite as a result of comprehensive public input. The improvement project on Hanover followed a very similar process, resulting in a plan that reflects exactly what the public asked for. The current trees on Hanover Street won't respect new sidewalks. Their roots will continue to disturb the sidewalks, resulting in costly future repairs. Brand new trees planted in deep rooted boxes prepare our city for the future. Flex spots don't give us the wider sidewalks necessary to handle the pedestrian foot traffic that we'll see on Hanover Street after a Palace Theatre show, or after an event where the street is shut down for people to come enjoy. Our city-wide streets encourage reckless driving, which we continue to see on a daily basis. Eliminating parking on Hanover Street will result in less traffic traveling down Hanover Street searching for a parking spot. Fortunately, we are not actually losing any handicapped parking on Hanover Street as there is not currently one single spot specifically dedicated to handicapped parking. There is also no official drop off zones or idle zones, both of which are represented in the new proposed plan. My request to you is to approve the plan as currently proposed. The public has voiced their support for this plan. The Downtown Business Collaborative voted 97% in favor of this project as

proposed. This is the future that the overwhelming majority of Manchester residents and business owners want for Hanover Street. Our city is changing for the better. We have had thousands of apartment units built in the last few years and many more on the way. It is time that we prioritize the pedestrian experience downtown. This plan gives us exactly that.

Amy Chhom, 71 W. Merrimack Street: I'm not only a downtown business owner. I'm also a resident of Ward three, living in Ward three as well as owning property. I also am an appointed chair of a board here in Manchester that's dedicated to improving our downtown and our economic vitality throughout the city. But I'm here tonight as a constituent. One of the things that I keep hearing, I'm not going to belabor all the points that they just talked about, but change has always been hard. For all of you that have been here in this city for years, the beautiful Market Basket on Elm Street had a controversy over the fact we were going to reduce the amount of parking. How could we do that? That's going to affect our South Elm Street. When we improve the Veterans Park facade and took out some trees, how could we do that? That's going to ruin our city. Look at that, now people are convening there. They're walking there. The safest place to walk right now, in my opinion, on a sidewalk, is 460 Elm Street on South Elm, as opposed to anywhere in downtown. In the early 2000s, we invested millions of dollars in replacing our sidewalks. That's when we put in the little brick strips and took out the brick that was put in the 1970s. And look at 20 years later, we're replacing it because we didn't do it properly. And so, I'm asking you to consider the fact that this project is going to make an investment, and it needs to be done right. It needs to be done well, so that in 25, 30 years from now, we're not having this conversation again. So please consider voting for this regardless of all of the different controversies. I think there are very good valid points from both sides, but an improvement to these sidewalks and the rest of our downtown city needs to happen so we can compete with some of our other cities, like Littleton, New Hampshire, that has 6,000 residents. We have 115,000. As one of the most desirable downtown retail centers in the country, Portsmouth has a smaller population, and people go there to shop because they feel safe walking and not worrying about tripping. There are places for people to convene. Portland is even smaller than us and has the same benefits, but we continue to say, no, we're not going to change. We're just going to keep it all the same because it works now. But imagine what it could be like in 20 years when we make the right

improvements and invest the right amount of money and do it the right way. So, consider voting to approve this.

William Nunnally, Manchester: I'm a social studies teacher at the middle school at Parkside here in Manchester. I'm speaking to you tonight in advance of your meeting next week to discuss the school budget. A most important subject, Aristotle himself noted that education of the young must be the first priority of legislators. I teach civics, and I teach my students the importance of taking part in their community and speaking up for what they believe to be right. And at least some of my former students are deeply involved in civics. As a teacher, I wanted to ask that you consider the experience of students within a classroom when you were considering the school budget for next year. A budget that significantly reduces the resources and manpower of this district will have a direct and negative impact on the students of this city. Class sizes and many Manchester schools are already larger than those recommended by contemporary research in the field of education. Larger class sizes have a negative impact on student academic performance, student behaviors, and student attendance. Teachers in Manchester, as I said, are already dealing with these large class sizes. In my experience, the larger a class becomes, the less likely students are to participate in discussion or debate as they have less direct rapport with the teacher and with the other students in class. When a student needs assistance from a teacher, whether it is one of the 20 or so students every day who need a pencil, a student who needs directions repeated to them at their desk, or a student who needs to hear that they are on the right track with their answer, I have to respond to all of these students as quickly as possible so that they don't lose learning time or become disengaged. Often when a student doesn't receive the assistance quickly, they'll put their head down, they'll stare at their book or begin to distract other students and make poor behavioral choices because they are not engaged. The larger the class, the more students need assistance, the longer the wait for each student as I assist other students. The more students become disengaged, the more they fall behind academically. And many of my students are already behind academically. I have eighth grade students who are learning how to take notes for the very first time. Two thirds of whom struggle and require assistance to identify important information in a text. I have students who cannot do research to determine three important events during the presidency of Thomas Jefferson, and instead write simply that he was the third president.

These students need more teacher support and require more personalized instruction time, not less. Students in larger classes have less of an opportunity to build a relationship with their teacher, and as already noted less of an opportunity to excel academically due to the decreased amount of personalized assistance from the teacher. Both of these factors make it more likely that student attendance will deteriorate. In addition, larger class sizes make it more difficult for teachers to manage classroom behaviors, making it easier for students to, for example, make hurtful comments to other students. I could continue and provide you with further concrete examples if time allowed. I invite all of you to visit Manchester schools and talk to teachers about the great challenges facing their classrooms, and the great lengths and great adaptations that these teachers go to and turn to in an effort to help their students succeed, I ask you to consider the needs of the students in Manchester schools when you make your decisions regarding the school budget. I ask you to put yourself in the place of these young people and to remember that Manchester, as it exists today, was made possible by the wise decisions of those in the past, and that the flourishing of the Manchester of the future hinges on the decisions that you all make in the present.

Deb Roux, Ward 12: I realize that in the excitement of Saint Patrick's Day, we forgot the pledge. So, I'd like to say the pledge right now.

Mayor Ruais: We did it in our first meeting. The first meeting that we did at 6:15 is when we started with the pledge and the moment of silence.

D. Roux: But then don't you usually do it when you start this meeting as well?

Mayor Ruais: We did it in our first meeting.

D. Roux: I will pass on that then. I'm here again to ask what Manchester is doing for the 250th. Are you going to do something for the 250th celebration of our country in Manchester? Are you planning something?

Mayor Ruais: The intent behind public comment is not to be interactive. We will have fireworks this year as we have done every year.

D. Roux: I mean like a parade. And speaking about the founding of our country and the principles our country was founded on, and giving thanks to all of our Founding Fathers who give us all the privilege to be here and do what we want. What we're doing right now, why you guys are in your elected positions, why we're able to come and talk to you. We don't know what our country was founded on anymore. And the basic principles, like I've been talking about the Declaration. I went on visit ManchesterNH.com and there was an event on June 30th mentioned already and an event on July 10th, but nothing about the 4th of July and what we're going to do to celebrate our beautiful country. We need to do something in Manchester before we end up without a parade again, like we have on Saint Patrick's Day. I've asked you guys since October and not one of you have gotten back to me, and you're my alderman, Alderman Thomas, and you haven't told me. I'm just very frustrated. We don't know, like I mentioned with the Declaration of Independence, our rights are founded on the basis of a creator and that we have inalienable rights and a lot of our issues here has been because our rights have been impeded on, because we've forgotten what makes this country so great. And when we know our rights, then we can come forth and speak appropriately about how they're being infringed upon. I just want to read a couple of quotes regarding what inalienable rights actually means. Because that's what your job is to do here is to protect our inalienable rights, to seek God's guidance. So, John Dickinson said kings or parliaments could not give the rights essential to happiness. We claim them from a higher source, from the king of kings and lord of all the earth. They are not annexed to us by parchments and seals. They are created in us by the decrees of providence, which established the laws of our nature. They are born with us, exist with us, and cannot be taken away from us by any human power without taking our lives. John Adams said inalienable rights are the antecedent or preceding to all earthly government rights that cannot be restrained by human laws. Rights derived from the great legislature of the universe. And last year, I donated this book to Alderman Kantor, and it is in your library. I highly recommend each one of you take it out and read it. I donated it for free to her to help everybody get back to our basic understanding of what makes America the greatest country in the world. I really implore all of you to think hard about what you're going to do for the 250th.

Cali Rojas, Ward 3: I wasn't planning on talking about this hot topic of the budget, but I do just want to mention it is not a budget cut. We are consecutively year after year, gaslit that it's a budget cut; it is not a budget cut. And I've said this before, and I'll say it again, if we're going to take anything away, let's not take away the teachers. I agree. Don't take away the teachers. Don't take away the sports. Why is our superintendent getting paid more than you and more than the governor? Why does she have three assistant superintendents probably getting paid more than you as well? Yet numbers don't lie. The budget was less ten years ago with less students. And we had higher proficiencies. So, numbers don't lie. We don't need more of a budget. We need common sense, as mentioned tonight, that it is lacking. What I did come here tonight to speak about is being born and raised in Manchester, I think that it is ridiculous that you are thinking and considering removing the sidewalks or expanding the sidewalks and removing access for driving ability to Hanover Street. Time and time again tonight I've heard how the street is so important and such a reflection of the city; I agree. The lights on the trees are beautiful. Why do we need to cut them down? I know that attracts so many people there. Why would we cut down these trees? It makes zero sense. If we're so worried about foot traffic and bringing positivity to our city, then why not consider taking that money and shutting down Elm Street? Let's have Elm Street shut down. Let's expand all the sidewalks so we can have all of Elm Street and the businesses flourishing. I think that's a great idea. I think it's so absurd to not even consider accessibility. People with walkers, wheelchairs, and people without access to any medical equipment. Do you expect to drop them off and have them somehow make their way there in the weather that we're having right now? Snow removal, that's another issue to consider. We're already struggling with that. As you can see, this winter we have struggled with plowing and with sidewalk plows as we lack sidewalk plows. We realistically have four nice weather months. So, although it might increase money during those months, what about the effects on the winter months for these businesses? How are people going to get there? It makes zero sense. What about accessibility for police if there's no through road? Are we going to call 911? Somebody was stabbed, and we'll get a text message saying, sorry, no police available. Hopefully you survive until we can get somebody out to you. We'll pull up on a bike. We already have certain events and instances where businesses can choose to close off and barricade for summer months. Why not keep that? It's working. Since we want to gentrify Manchester, New Hampshire, and make it a little mini-Boston, Boston takes Sundays and

shuts down certain streets for businesses in the summer. I think that's a great idea. We can increase that and consider certain time frames, certain days, whatever. Why don't we consider removing the one street that lights up the city with beauty? Removing all those trees is devastating, as I already mentioned. Honestly, there are worse sidewalks throughout the city that I've noticed that don't receive the same attention. We are throwing all this money at just one street. Living in ward three, when two blocks away there's human feces, there's dog poop, there's trash, there's needles, there's homelessness, there's drug people with drug abuse. It's just crazy. It will create much more traffic by shutting down access to Hanover Street. Only one entryway to that parking garage will open the floodgates for congested traffic. You can't say it won't. The Palace Theater has been here for over 110 years and relies heavily on the on the street parking. How will this benefit their business? Like the bars and restaurants, they can't have their shows in the middle of the street. If we're so concerned, I think that we really should take some time before we consider making an opinion tonight and deciding on this. Let's take it back to the drawing board and really consider what the citizens are saying. Since you guys all serve us and really think of the impact that this is going to have, not only on one street, but on the whole city.

Jessica Spillers, 73 Jobin Drive: I want to address two things. The 79-E request for the Dunlap building and then also the schools. I'd like to urge this board not to approve the 79-E request in its current form for a few reasons. The first being that this building is, I don't recall if it's already an approved TIF district or one that's proposed, but approving a 79-E within a TIF district essentially negates the purpose of the TIF. Tax break for a large building would also be a loss to city revenue streams. Secondly, they've already begun construction and this process is something that should have been completed prior to that. Approving it now creates a precedent that others may attempt to take advantage of later. I don't think we want to do that as a city. And lastly, no affordable housing is going to be provided by this project, something our city desperately needs. 30% of Manchester's median income is around \$1,700, something the people requesting this acknowledged in their request which they have denied to provide. 79-E requests should be reserved for those projects that will bring something of substance to the city. In its current form, this project only adds more overpriced one-bedroom apartments that will drive us deeper into the housing crisis. Use your power as a board to demand more for our city, and ask that

this request be refashioned to include affordable housing units before approval. And when it comes to schools, you all know where I stand. I'm a strong supporter of public education. Recently, House Bill 1831 was tabled at the State House. This bill would have undone the damages by the state budget that takes away \$10 million in targeted aid from Manchester. Many of you ran on platforms supporting public education. I'm here to hold you to task. I ask that you have the courage to ensure baseline funding for our school district.

Robert Singer, 430 Kearney Circle: I built a business in 2025 on Hanover Street, Cafe at Bravo and Bravo. I spent approximately \$5 million. I knew nothing about any meetings that were taking place. I was never invited. The first time I found out of anything of substance was 3 or 4 weeks ago. I went to DPW. I told them I was never invited. I knew nothing about it. They were somewhat shocked. They didn't understand how that took place. I've spoken to several aldermen in the last couple of weeks, told them the exact same thing. One of them, a couple of them apologized for that. And then last night I heard that one of the aldermen said that my landlord knew about it. Well, my landlord never said a word to me. So, for me to invest \$5 million and lose my parking is something I'm definitely opposed to. I recently had the honor of being named citizen of the year. I spend most of my waking days up at this stage of my life on wanting to do good things for the city of Manchester. I feel like it's being steamrolled, and I don't think it's reasonable for me to invest that kind of money and lose my parking. I'm totally against it. I think we should go back to the drawing board and see what we can come up with that's satisfactory to everybody.

Shona Sulzback, 250 Village Circle Way: I am a resident in Ward 12 and also a proud Manchester educator. I'm not originally from New Hampshire, but I've chosen Manchester to be my home. Every day I have the privilege of working with our most vulnerable population and their families. The decisions that are made here about the budget will directly impact our students, many of whom do not get to or are not able to yet directly advocate for themselves. Anything less than a fully funded budget would fall short of our legal and moral obligation to provide students with free and adequate education. Time and time again, I have seen students struggle in school because they are not receiving adequate interventions. In my current classroom, this looks like furniture being thrown,

materials being destroyed, screaming, banging, leaving school grounds and other acts of physical aggression. This also looks like deep withdrawal and rising feelings of anxiety. They all needed special education and mental health supports. Once those supports were in place, the behaviors dropped dramatically. They are finally feeling success and are able to be productive members of our classroom community. A reduced budget would mean larger class sizes and reduced capacity to meet all of our students' needs. A reduced budget will impose a ceiling on what our students will be able to achieve and what they will be able to achieve. As an educator, I firmly believe all of our students can reach their full potential with the right supports and can push Manchester forward as adult community members in the future.

Ken Tassey, Ward 6: There are two things I would like to address tonight. One, I had not intended to, but I was moved by some of the comments that were made tonight by some of the students that were in the room. Even though my views may differ regarding budgets, I appreciate their activism. I was a young activist at their age fighting and laying down and linking arms with friends for causes that were important to me. So, I like that. What I would compel the student demographic to do in addition to reaching out to this board to increase budget is to ask for a meeting with the Superintendent of Schools and the school district administration, and ask them how they're spending the money that could be going to pencils and paper and supplies and such. \$290 million for the phase one of the long-term facilities plan. If you can just imagine \$50 million of that being used to bring in experts from countries or from places where mathematics are at the top of the scale, Singapore or wherever, just imagine if we had that kind of expertise coming in here as consultants. It wouldn't take \$50 million to do that. The second thing I wanted to bring up was the Hanover Street project. It's not a \$30 million project. I would imagine that some people think it would not require an artist's rendering with videography being done, etcetera to show the people of Manchester what it's going to look like when it's done, like less than a \$2 million project. But with AI for probably \$500, you could have done a better presentation to present to the city what that project is going to look like completed. The issue that I have with that project is that there from where I live, Ward six and all the traffic coming off of exit eight and exit six from I-93, there are two thoroughfares into the city, that's Bridge Street and Hanover Street. The way that the traffic moves right now, it is congested from about Maple Street all the way down to Elm Street at certain times of the

day. This is not Burlington, Vermont, where you have Church Street, where you have a dead end on each side of the street, on a three-block area where you can put nice brick sidewalks and play music and all that stuff. We're talking about a two-block area on Hanover Street. I ask the board here to bring this back for further discussion and come out with a more comprehensive plan that shows how traffic is going to flow down Hanover Street to Elm Street, where it meets the mayor's office. And I know you'll have a beautiful view whenever that's done, Your Honor.

Melodye Smith, Pearl Street: I'm here just to make a couple of comments about the Hanover Street project. I understand that it's time, people want to move on and things change, and I certainly understand that. But what I am saying is that personally, I've brought friends, family from out of state and we've wound our way down through Hanover Street and the people that I've brought absolutely loved it and they thought it was quaint, it was charming and it was basically perfect. Cutting down the trees. I have a hard time with that. I mean, it's a beautiful spot. I understand that if you want to close it off, maybe, for some hours during the summer for expanded tables at restaurants, great idea. But that's not a full year-round thing that should happen. The other comment that I just want to make about the schools and the budget and everything like that. Everybody comes in and they talk about the shortfall and the money and things like that. I understand that our kids are so incredibly important and I agree with that, but I also want you all to understand that there are people like me and I'm past my working prime now and I'm in retirement and you keep increasing our taxes. I understand that happens, but you know what? You keep doing that and I'm going to be one of the homeless people that have lost their place to live because you raised the taxes so much that I can't afford it. Unfortunately, I live on a budget. I wanted people to think about that. If our school district taught math and did the things that schools are supposed to do, we could afford it. But we're taking on pre-K, we're taking on mental health, we're taking on everything else. And it's not fair to all the taxpayers to have to afford to pay for that. So, I'm just asking, please think about these things. I care about our kids too, with all of my heart and I want the best for them. But I want you to understand that you're taxing people out of their homes, and the kids are going to pay the prices because they're not going to have homes, because mom and dad can't afford the rent. They can't afford the mortgages. The money tree is not full like it used to be, and the leaves are few and far between now. So please, please think about

it and listen to it. I know the majority of you have your minds made up and what you hear doesn't make a bit of a difference to any of you, but just please hear me. There are a lot of us out here that matter, that don't think like you do, but please just listen.

David Casadihno, W. Merrimack Street: I live about a block away on West Merrimack Street. I'm also an owner at Bars and Brews across the street where we've run that business here and I think been an important part of downtown for the last eight years since we've opened. I'm here to speak in favor of the proposed changes to Hanover Street. Really just to be another voice. For the reasons mentioned, I think I should be considered an important stakeholder in these changes. I want to reiterate what others have said that these are changes that are moving our city in the direction that younger citizens of our city want. They're going to make it a more vibrant, livable city. A rising tide lifts all boats. We had some important people speaking out against it. But as Nick and Pete have said, the vast majority of small business owners, this is something we consider an important step in continuing to improve the quality of life in our city and for both small businesses and just our residents here. I just wanted to be here to speak out in favor of those proposed changes.

Mayor Ruais: Is there anybody here this evening that did not get a chance to sign up but wishes to speak?

Cindy Stewart, 255 Sagamore Street: I'm a member of the Manchester Board of School Committee. I really didn't intend to speak. I came to listen. As a public servant, it is my duty to listen to all sides with respect and an open heart and an open head. As someone who cares very deeply, and that doesn't make me unique, you all care very deeply, what I have noticed is that the issues that our city is facing, especially with the school district budget, we have challenges that are imposed upon us from the macro level and the micro level, and we can't solve them all. But this is town meeting season. And I have been paying attention to our towns and cities across the state at this time. And it is so disheartening that almost without fail, almost every city and town has failed their budget with a few exceptions. My former hometown of Keene passed their school district budget, so yay for that. It is possible, but we have an opportunity as the leaders of Manchester, and we can probably, we will be carving out time next week to discuss this between the

two boards, and I do very much look forward to that. But what I know in my heart is I have dedicated my life, my professional career to the nonprofit sector. And what I've learned and what has been proven over and over again, is that a budget is truly a moral document. It reflects your values, it reflects your vision, it reflects really what's important, what matters. And it shouldn't be short term. It should be a living document. And I just really encourage all of us, I encourage you as we prepare to discuss this coming week to really, really take to heart what that means. We don't have a town meeting in our government structure, but each of you and each of the members of the Board of School Committee has been elected to represent the community. And I implore you, really listen and look at the school district budget with moral clarity. Thanks. Happy Saint Patrick's Day. What a great opportunity to celebrate Manchester's diversity.

Mayor Ruais asked if there were any others wishing to speak.

There were none.

*On motion of **Alderman Terrio**, duly seconded by **Alderman O'Neil**, it was voted to take all comments under advisement and to receive and file any written documentation presented.*

PRESENTATION

2. Presentation from the Department of Public Works regarding a proposed RAISE TIF District.

Owen Friend-Gray, Deputy Public Works Director: I am here tonight to give a presentation for the public hearing portion of the RAISE TIF project. So just a quick reminder for folks who weren't here, this is a US Department of Transportation grant. It used to be called Build and Tiger. In 2021, there was \$1.5 billion that was given out with a max award of \$25 million. And these awards were competitive based on surface transportation infrastructure that had significant local or regional impacts. And in 2021, Manchester received the RAISE grant in the maximum amount of \$25 million for the purpose of improving safety, creating connectivity and mitigating congestion in the southern millyard area. Primarily, the needs that this project is looking to address are east west modality

for vehicles, bikes and pedestrians, as well as opening up the area and the southern mill yard for revitalization potentials through numerous public meetings and multiple years of applications. We came up with a proposal for a new roadway bridge and bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. As previously mentioned, a \$25 million grant award which was the maximum amount and originally required a \$5 million match and any costs for the project over this \$30 million total would need to be borne by the city. So, project components, there are four primary components. Biggest component is the grade separated crossing of the railroad tracks. So, this is a bridge over the railroad corridor, the now CSX owned railroad corridor that would provide an additional outlet from South Commercial Street to Elm Street, as that currently only has one outlet at the South Commercial-Bridge intersection. In addition to the bridge, this also is proposing pedestrian improvements at the previously mentioned intersection, a peanut roundabout at the Queen City, Cilley, South Willow intersection as well as two multi-use trails that do some of the final connections from the South Manchester Rail Trail network up through the south mill yard and connects to the Riverwalk, which then connects out to Goffstown. So here are some of those images of the project components I was speaking of. The upper left and lower right show the grade separated crossing over the railroad track. Bottom left is the peanut roundabout I spoke of for safety improvements and traffic congestion mitigation efforts at the Cilley South Willow Queen City Ave intersection. And then the top right corner, that thin pink line is one section of the multi-use trail that would be built through one of the final segments of the rail trail corridor that connects the recently built South Manchester rail trail extension that just got up to Queen City Ave. So unfortunately, this project started at roughly \$30 million in 2019, which we had to use as part of the 2021 grant when we were awarded. Unfortunately, now the 2025 final design projection is just over \$50 million, so this substantial increase in costs, half of it can be attributed to CSX buying the railroad corridor for Pan Am. Pan Am did not require nearly the clear span that CSX does, so our bridge tripled in length, greatly increasing the cost. There's also been roughly a 30% inflation since then. And then there were some public input designs and site conditions that account for the last 20% of these cost increases. So, what are we proposing to do about this cost differential, this \$20 million? What we're proposing is a TIF district, the same concept as what was recently approved for the Pearl Street lot. However, this area would be more for the southern millyard, as you can see in the image, it encompasses from the peanut roundabout in the southeast corner up to the

South Commercial Granite Street intersection in the northwest corner, encompasses all of the project areas. The idea with this TIF district is that the city puts the money into this, or gets a bond that puts the money into this project initially. And then the increased tax revenue pays for the cost of the bond. So, there are no tax impacts or implications to the public. So, this TIF area composes 832 parcels and has an assessed value of roughly \$653 million. This is a graph showing the TIF and how the financials work. Critical component, that blue line is the increase in revenue that is generated from this TIF district. Improvements with the orange line being the paydown of the debt service. You'll notice that the financial analysis run by RKG, a specialist in this area and a consultant we used, shows that the TIF could yield a \$20.8 million bond and support it with all projects being incorporated by 2030. So, the timeline. Right now, the federal government requires that all RAISE funds must be obligated by September of 2027, which means we have to have a signed construction contract. That means that the additional funding that we need to have working backwards from that September 2027 date, where we would need to bid this project out in the winter of 26-27. So about nine months from now means we need to have all of these funds in hand to bid this project out by fall of this year. So, we are about six months away, roughly half a year from when we need this funding in hand. So, question being, what happens if we don't go for this funding and we don't get the additional \$20 million? Well, that means that we lose the grant. So that's \$25 million of federal money that we no longer get. And we also have to pay back all of the reimbursements that we have received from the federal government so far. We have put in, roughly to get this designed by property and get this ready to go out the door, we have put in approximately \$6 million worth of investment by the city. \$5 million of it that we would have to pay back to the federal government. So, if this doesn't get funded, it's roughly a \$6 million loss. We're about \$5.9 million right now. So, in an effort to keep this short and sweet, that's what I have for you all. And I'm happy to answer any questions you may have.

Alderman Terrio: Can we scale this back? Maybe do the peanut, but not the pedestrian or the bridge? Have you considered that?

O. Friend-Gray: We have. And in talking with Federal Highway and the US Department of Transportation, if we scaled back the project, then the grant would be scaled back

accordingly. So, there wouldn't really be a substantial savings. We've already cost engineered this pretty tightly to get it as clean as we can.

Alderman Terrio: I know you are our bond watchdog. Are you concerned about this new bonding? I know we're kind of maxing out on bonding. So how does this affect our bonding?

Sharon Wickens, Finance Director: Well, I mean, it's a TIF bond, so it's not the same as general operation bonding for roads, things like that. The TIF district should pay for this and that's how we'll present it. So, it's not part of the budget bonding that the mayor does where he earmarks so much for parks and so much for roads. This is kind of a separate project, but it would be issued as a general obligation bond.

Alderman Terrio: Just to clarify, just to cut to the chase, this doesn't hurt us in the bond agency's eyes.

S. Wickens: I don't believe so. Because a TIF bond uses the excess value in a specific district that you would earmark to enhance the district. This is what people do. What they frown upon is when we're buying vehicles and all that under the city's operation that they think our debt is elevated. But this is a specific purpose. It's different in their eyes.

Mayor Ruais: So just in a bumper sticker, we as a city want to bond about \$17 to \$18 million a year. But this is totally separate and unique from the \$17 to \$18 million that will be in the bonding budget for this year.

Alderman Terrio: So it's free money.

Mayor Ruais: But to your point about the tax impact though, can you speak to that one more time? We're not raising taxes by \$20 million to pay for this.

O. Friend-Gray: No.

Mayor Ruais: Can you just reiterate that point? We are not raising taxes by \$20 million to pay for this.

O. Friend-Gray: This has no effect on taxes.

Alderman O'Neil: Owen, I don't know if you have this right in front of you, and I'm trying to do the math in my head, but it's been a long night. Half of the increase, \$10 million. Is CSX required greater span on the bridge? Do you have a list? Or can you get us a list if you don't have it right off the top of your head? Public input and design, that has a significant number assigned to it.

O. Friend-Gray: It does. That was about 15% of the increase. The primary biggest driver was the different concepts and designs that went along with the pedestrian bridge at the Granite South Commercial interchange, which we are still evaluating for potential engineering efficiencies that we can find to try to shave a little more off the budget. But we're finalizing that now, but that's the primary driver of that increase in cost was a larger, more substantial grade separated crossing than originally anticipated.

Alderman O'Neil: Based on the schedule you had for bidding, I know at one time you thought you were going out on this and you had great interest from the contracting community. I know the number has gone up. State work has gone down so maybe we're even going to get more interest.

O. Friend-Gray: There's not a lot of local contracting companies that can bite off a \$50 million job.

Alderman O'Neil: We put it out as one contract?

O. Friend-Gray: We're actually evaluating whether we do 1 or 4 currently as to what we think is going to get us the best pricing. We're leaning towards potentially four separate contracts at this point in time, but we haven't actually made that final determination. Our engineering team, Fuss and O'Neill is going through that evaluation now.

Alderman O'Neil: Traditionally hasn't it been one contract is going to be less mobility? If we put all four contracts, you're paying for mobility costs.

O. Friend-Gray: That's what we're trying to figure out. We're just trying to see if that would outweigh the potential savings with singular mobilizations and occupations of a large contractor in the city.

Alderman O'Neil: I was pleased to see at RKG who I think did the TIF for the Pearl Street lot.

O. Friend-Gray: They did indeed.

Alderman Kaw-uh: So, two quick questions. So, one is just to confirm that the rail related changes that was tripling the size or the length of the bridge. So, three times as long as it originally was proposed to be correct? Given that and I know nothing about the cost of this stuff, I'm not a civil engineer, just a software engineer. Would it be any cheaper to do a tunnel that's less than three times as long? Or is that still just really expensive because it's underground?

O. Friend-Gray: It's actually more expensive.

Alderman Dexter: The public input design changes, after all the public input caused this project to raise prices as well as constrain your timelines and put you in a position where we have to spend that money.

O. Friend-Gray: I would say that there was an increase in costs associated with trying to incorporate all of the really good public input that we received. However, I wouldn't say that that was an effect on the timeline. The timeline effect came more so from these substantial increases in costs that we experienced. And our efforts to design and redesign this project to try to optimize our financial impact with a much-increased budget. That's really probably the biggest driver on timeline.

Alderman O'Neil: What's the next step?

O. Friend-Gray: So, the next step in this process, this is the public hearing. And then at least 15 days in the future, which would be the first meeting in April, would be the time that the board could vote or would vote one way or the other on accepting or rejecting the TIF.

Alderman Terrio: Your honor, I'm getting a little bit concerned. We have a TIF in the north part of the city. Now we have another proposed TIF. Correct me if I'm wrong, but we have some budget things coming up. We have a police contract. We have the school funding issue. DPW is asking for a lot of money to pave our roads. When we approve a TIF, all that extra money that we would like to get now has to go towards the building of that, right? So that money's no longer available to the city budget, correct?

Mayor Ruais: That's correct. It's the incremental financing from the improvement of that area will go towards paying off the bond. That's what the board has to weigh.

Alderman Terrio: We have a TIF, now we're adding. And it seems like it's a good portion of the city is not going to be available for extra revenue.

Mayor Ruais: So that's the decision that the board will have to make. I think the budget implication that we're concerned with regarding this project is the \$6 million that we would have to return to the feds.

O. Friend-Gray: That's a big one. I would also say that while in the short term, the tax increase in this area would not directly impact the budget, after the bond is paid off then that much increased tax base in this area now, because of the increased development and infrastructure and openness of these is going to hit the budget.

Alderman Terrio: That's a 20 or 25 year bond, right?

O. Friend-Gray: It is. But frequently these bonds get paid off in shorter terms.

Mayor Ruais: One of the discussion points that Director Belanger had, and I don't want to speak for him, but regarding the affordable housing on the Pearl Street lot. That's what

this board has to weigh, is the public good of doing a TIF when we're going to get additional affordable housing or additional parking spaces, as is the case with the garage? I think the public good that was discussed by the Department of Public Works here, but certainly the revenue side is obviously an important item as well. I think the other thing that Director Belanger mentioned about the TIF district and you just touched upon this as well, but oftentimes these bonds are paid off more quickly. So, it wouldn't necessarily be 20 years. It could be a shorter duration as well. But that's what we have to weigh. Your point is well taken.

Alderman O'Neil: Owen, just touch on what the mayor just said about paying back the \$6 million. That's \$6 million that's already been spent on design.

O. Friend-Gray: Yes, and \$5 million of that was reimbursement from the federal government. So, we would have to pay the federal government back the \$5 million. And then the million, roughly, that we've put in ourselves would just go to sitting on the shelf.

Alderman O'Neil: If we chose not to move forward, we're still on the hook for the \$6 million.

O. Friend-Gray: Yes.

Tim Clougherty, Director of Public Works: To make another point relative to the valuation in the area and the taxes that are raised, one of the ideas behind a TIF is that it's going to make that area more attractive for development. So, the board really has to weigh the benefit of that attraction for development by building the bridge, improving that congested intersection against not doing so.

O. Friend-Gray: I would also like to point out that in the analysis from RKG, they can only take projects that are already on the slate and existing parcels as they are today as part of that calculation. So, if nothing changed from what we basically already know, that's the 20 year bond for \$21 million as improvement happens in this area, because it's opened up, because access is better, because there's improvement then those increased rates are typically where you see the bonds getting paid down faster. So, it's a fairly conservative estimate from RKG.

Mayor Ruais: I know that we had a committee report that was elevated last night out of Public Safety. We've had a lot of discussion on it this evening from public comment on Hanover Street. I think with the DPW folks up here right now, if it's alright with the Board, if you guys want to move forward with a presentation on the Hanover Street project that we heard about this evening, it will give the opportunity for Board members to ask questions, and then we'll move on from there.

The Committee on Public Safety, Health & Traffic respectfully recommends, after due and careful consideration, that the following changes to the parking regulations on Hanover Street be approved:

CROSSWALK

On Hanover Street, east of the private way (old Nutfield Ln)

NO PARKING ANYTIME

On Hanover Street, south side, from Nutfield Ln to Chestnut Street

On Hanover Street, north side, from Elm Street to a point 260 feet east

On Hanover Street, north side, from a point 340 feet east of Elm Street to a point 110 feet east

On Hanover Street, north side, from a point 500 feet east of Elm Street to Chestnut St

NO PARKING – LOADING ZONE

On Hanover Street, north side, from a point 260 feet east of Elm Street to a point 80 feet further east

On Hanover Street, north side, from a point 450 feet east of Elm Street to a point 50 feet east

RESCIND METERS- 2 HOURS

On Hanover Street, north side, from a point 50 feet west of Chestnut Street to a point 60 feet westerly

(ORD 7787)

On Hanover Street, north side, from Nutfield Ln to a point 158 feet west of Chestnut Street
(ORD 7784)

On Hanover Street, south side, from Nutfield Ln to Chestnut Street (ORD 7780)

RESCIND NO PARKING- LOADING ZONE

On Hanover Street, north side, from a point 110 feet west of Chestnut Street to a point 48 feet westerly

(ORD 7692)

RESCIND NO PARKING- LOADING ZONE 8AM-8PM MON-SAT

On Hanover Street, north side, from Chestnut Street to a point 50 feet west (ORD 8485)

T. Clougherty: We've obviously heard a lot of commentary on Hanover Street. So, I wanted to talk about some of the components of the grant. I'll start by highlighting some of the goals the grant intends to accomplish: addressing sidewalk condition, improving safety, accessibility and connectivity, providing a welcoming environment. In addition, providing economic and community impact, improving the general quality of life for downtown residents and visitors recognizing that Manchester is becoming more pedestrian centric. We recognize that businesses want to continue to use and expand their outdoor options. It's also to allow for pedestrian infrastructure to be properly maintained. I want to talk about the public engagement process a little bit. Public engagement process is prescribed by federal requirements and administered by the New Hampshire Department of Transportation. It's an iterative process whereby presentations are made, input is gathered, minutes are recorded, alternatives are presented. Feedback is gathered until a final preferred alternative is reached. And there's actually a point in the process where you say, okay, this is our preferred alternative that we like and everybody has consensus on. The following slide highlights the meetings that took place in order to reach this consensus. Starting on April 19th and 20th, there was a charrette held at the Palace Theatre that was very well attended. I think there were about 50 attendees over those two days. Subsequent to that, what's referred to, I don't like this term, as the local concerns meeting, regardless of how good the project is, that's what DOT tells you you have to call this meeting. So, it's called local concerns meeting. Another public meeting held June 24th, that was held at the Rex Theater on Amherst Street. And then following those we digest the input we got. We develop preliminary plans and alternatives. And then we conduct what was referred to as the preferred alternatives meeting. That preferred alternative meeting was held on November 5th at the Rines Center on Elm Street. I think it's important to note, those first three or four meetings for meetings, in April, June and November, we mailed to all property owners within a four-block area over 600 mailings inviting people. I know Jodie with Economic Development also helped us get the word out for the design charrette, which I did mention was very well attended in April. So, following the preferred alternatives meeting, there was a suggestion that some people may have concerns about parking and there may be tenants that live in that area that may

not have the opportunity to attend. So, we reached out directly to Hanover Street businesses as well as a listing of potential tenants that we solicited. We sent emails and we held another meeting on December 16th at the Chamber of Commerce. Two people attended that meeting. So, in order to make sure that we had all our bases covered, we worked with Jodie and we met with the local Downtown Business Collaborative on February 2nd at the Queen City Center and presented all the alternatives or presented the preferred alternative. And it was met with resounding welcome and acceptance. This is just a map of the outreach area. I mentioned the four-block radius that we did in the over 600 mailings we did for the charrette as well as the other two meetings in June and November. This is a slide of the current condition. And we've talked about the benefits previously but just to highlight them again, it creates a unique layout for the Hanover Street block addresses. The key issues that I identified at the beginning of the presentation: sidewalk condition, traffic calming, motorist attention, pedestrian safety. You know, we've heard a lot about pedestrian safety, whether it's safe or not. Our traffic analysis tells us that over the past six years and change, there have been 78 accidents in this one block. And I know there's been some misinformation that that's X-mile radius or whatever, but that's on this block. Five of those accidents were pedestrian related and there was one fatality. We talked about and you've heard from other business members about the components of this for downtown revitalization and what it will add to the overall experience downtown, providing businesses opportunities outside of their physical storefront. And there was a lot of talk about proximity of existing, parking opportunities in the neighborhood. The alternatives and suggestions that we talked about in the charrette, there was a lot of talk on Manchester Street, Amherst Street, the Victory Garage area. There are a lot of suggestions that were made that have been implemented. Hours were changed relative to the Victory Garage and the accessibility there, the lighting in that area, murals. So, we're continuing to take information and input and move forward, independent of this grant, with some of the feedback that we received through that comprehensive process that I talked about. Another area that I want to clear up is relative to trees. We hear the sidewalks are in bad shape and we want to keep the trees mature. Trees and sidewalks don't coexist, as simple as that. Walk down Elm Street, walk down Manchester Street, I can show you pictures of tree grates, heaved concrete panels. Once trees get to a certain point, they become a maintenance nightmare for keeping the sidewalk safe. This proposal expands the sidewalks. It does take the trees out, but we replace the trees. We

replace the trees with trees that we've worked with our Parks group on, with trees that have roots that grow down and they have infrastructure, there are boxes under the ground that promote the roots to grow down rather than growing out and heaving the sidewalks. I want to make sure that's very clear. We're also going to be including aesthetic lighting. A lot of times when you have either decorative lighting or the aesthetic lighting. Decorative fixtures like the Amoskeag fixtures that we have going down Elm Street, once trees become more mature, they provide less light just because of the shade from trees, the leaves. So, we will be replicating that in our proposal. So, at this point, we're very confident that the process has been followed appropriately. And we'd like to begin the process of facilitating the, the approvals to move forward. We're here today because we started the process with the parking modifications. We heard a lot of feedback, as you heard previously, objecting to what we thought was a very well vetted and preferred alternative. That's what you see on the screen right now. And in February after it was brought to the board, we did hear objection. So, in order to allay some of those concerns we took that into consideration. In an effort to appease the concerns we did develop an additional alternative, and we've placed an additional dedicated drop off area in front of the Palace Theatre. This is listed as the current alternative. So, you've got the originally proposed or preferred alternative. This is what was presented at the November meeting. At the conclusion of the November meeting it was asked, are there any major objections to this? No one spoke up. Then we did hear objection a couple of months later. So, if there's any suggestion that this is a plan that's only been around for weeks, that is not the case. This has been around since November. This was presented at that meeting, and we've since made some modifications to that based on the concerns that we've heard. And this is what we're proposing as the current alternative. With that, I'd be happy to entertain any questions.

Alderman O'Neil: I have some points, and then I was going to read some statement I've written down. Tim, was there ever any thought to present the preferred alternatives to the BMA?

T. Clougherty: We can certainly present them to the BMA, but that's not part of the process.

Alderman O'Neil: But it is kind of the process in Manchester.

T. Clougherty: It's being presented right now.

Alderman O'Neil: But I think we wouldn't be here if this was presented back in November or December. First time I saw any drawing was the meeting over at Public Works, the end of January, maybe. First time I saw a drawing. And all it was, was a concept. This thing started out to fix the sidewalks. I mean, two of the restaurants that you're bumping out the sidewalk, they're not even interested in bumping out the sidewalk. Crown has their courtyard and Bravo has said to me they're not looking for sidewalk seating, but yet we're still bumping the sidewalk out. This thing with accidents bothers me because the 78 accidents, I don't know where that comes from. I got from the leadership of the Police Department, 2023 to current, 14 accidents. That's a pretty big difference. And that's from the command staff at the Police Department. 14 accidents. I don't know where this 78 number comes from.

T. Clougherty: Well, it comes from our traffic engineer and I'm confident in that data.

Alderman O'Neil: How can she have that data and the Police Department has 14 accidents? I don't get it.

T. Clougherty: Time frame, state police, different jurisdictions. I don't know, you'd have to ask the Chief.

Alderman O'Neil: I have a statement I'd like to read. You know, regarding this project, I kind of title it: Have We Lost Our Way? This started out as a sidewalk improvement project, and it's become the plan before us today. Growing up here, I think of the history of Hanover Street: stores and restaurants I went to in my high school years and post high school. And what Hanover Street was really known for was the Strand Theater, which is a triple X theater. The Palace Theater saved Hanover Street. There's no question in my mind. Ron DuPont called it the anchor to Hanover Street. I guess the Palace Theatre does deserve special status. 135,000 patrons per year, 35 plus full time employees. They have a great 15-person board of directors, 300 volunteers. So yeah, they do deserve

some special status in this. I am thankful to Ron and Jerry DuPont for their commitment to Manchester and specifically Hanover Street. The big advantage they have is they own that parking garage and that's a big plus for them. I think about Bob Singer that was here earlier and everything that he and his family have done in this in this city: the Jordan Singer Youth Enrichment Center at the Boys and Girls Club; just helped the mayor with buying a building, the old Blessed Sacrament School, which Bob Singer put up money for. The Singer family has been great for the city of Manchester. So, do they deserve special status? Yeah, I'm grateful to everything the Singer family has done, including Bob, and he mentioned a \$5 million investment he just made. I have not talked to the owner of the Crown and Chophouse, but I am told he is not in favor of this. Somehow a fix the sidewalk project became removal of all parking spaces, did not provide any ADA parking. I am blown away on that. I know you said it's replaced trees, but the original plan as I understood it, was to remove the trees. Haven't seen anything about lighting. There was talk about speeding and accidents. I really do think that's false information. The Palace request has been consistent since the time I became aware of this. Curb cut for drop off in front of the Palace Theatre for patrons from passenger vehicles, and secondly, spaces for safe bus drop off for the students that go to the Palace. I think, as Mr. Ramsey testified earlier, they just had 15 there last week. That doesn't include the 4,000 kids that went there in December. Bob Singer was very clear tonight about no loss of parking spaces. Mr. Ludwig that spoke earlier talked about how we should use common sense. Mr. DuPont again referenced the Palace Theatre as the anchor. Attorney Cronin raised this thing of application versus concept, that concerns me. Alderman Thomas has been talking for a month or more about handicap issues and ADA. I saw a plan yesterday that I think the Palace board of directors did that made sense to me, but somehow it was rejected, and I think it would have brought this whole thing to rest, but it was rejected. So, I just go back to, have we lost our way about what's important in the city?

Alderman Terrio: Tim, is there a deadline that we have to approve this by to get the money or the grant?

T. Clougherty: There's an obligation deadline, the federal obligation deadline on November 2027. And in order to meet that deadline, that means we have to have it under

contract and have all the funds obligated. In order to meet that we need approval as soon as possible.

Alderman Terrio: So by November, so in the next eight months. But we'd have to do it in the next few months I assume.

T. Clougherty: We'd have to do it in the next month or so. We're anticipating the state of New Hampshire to give us approval to move forward with our engineering study in order to meet that

Alderman Terrio: I can't see from this picture, but the two cutouts, how big are those two cutouts that are there? I'm trying to figure out if they fit a bus.

O. Friend-Gray: 50 to 70, I believe. 75.

Alderman Terrio: One looks smaller.

O. Friend-Gray: Yes, it is. I think it's roughly 50.

Alderman Terrio: So maybe 50 and 75.

O. Friend-Gray: Something along those lines I do believe.

Alderman Terrio: I don't see any numbers. I can't tell.

O. Friend-Gray: There aren't call outs specific, I don't believe.

Alderman Terrio: My last question is, I know this is a traffic calming grant. Or this is like a safe street grant. Does that prohibit parking? If you accept, does the grant say you can't have any parking?

T. Clougherty: It doesn't say you can't have any parking. But safety is a very high part of how they grade these applications. You know, I did just get confirmation that the number

of 78 accidents came from the Manchester Police Department, that's since November of 2018. So I just want to clarify that.

Alderman O'Neil: The number I got from the command staff is 23. I mean, you could probably go back 20 years and come up with different numbers.

O. Friend-Gray: I would also like to add that the number you have doesn't include the intersections at either end.

Alderman Terrio: So we could have ADA handicap parking, that wouldn't violate the grant.

T. Clougherty: We'd want to talk with the state to see how that would be accommodated. What we're looking to do is to make both of those drop off areas accessible, fully accessible. We have to work with the grading in order to make that happen. But that would be our desire to make those fully accessible.

Alderman Terrio: It's just a little bit hard because, let's say you're in a wheelchair. So, I drop you off and then I have to go somewhere else and come back and get the person in the wheelchair?

T. Clougherty: All of that is a challenge. The way that the guidelines exist now for any metered spacing within a block radius, it's one space per 25 has to be deemed accessible and there aren't guidelines as to exactly where they have to be. So, we're looking at the challenges that we have throughout downtown because we are not compliant in those areas. So anywhere that we're doing improvements like you see in these areas, we will be looking at that; accessibility will be at the forefront of our thoughts.

Mayor Ruais: Mr. Winslow made a comment earlier. Can you just confirm is there or is there not handicapped parking currently available on Hanover?

T. Clougherty: There is not.

Alderman Thomas: I had originally jumped on this for the accessibility part, obviously. I met with Alderman Dexter on Hanover Street last week to actually really vision it. You know, I heard a lot of the public come out tonight and, say, there's this parking garage, there's this one. It's very hard to roll up that big hill at Victory Parking. If you're in a wheelchair, you can't go on the Chestnut side where cars would just be going in on that one way, because you have to go into the street to get to the cutout. And now when there's snow and everything like that, I can't even get around anywhere. I did suggest that if you're going to take the parking out in the first block of Hanover prior to the crosswalk before the Citizens bank, why are you not taking out all the other spots towards Elm Street and making them all handicap only? We have no parking. We have less handicap parking in all of the city. I had also suggested, my son goes to the Palace four times a week. He's in all the shows. I know what the congestion is like. The buses, I sit in that line where the buses come. There are so many parents that have to keep going around and around. I feel as though on the side of the Palace in the first block before you get to the cutout, there should be unloading and loading only for the whole stretch of it until you get to that cutout, because a bus or two could fit there. Parents picking up can fit there. It would be kind of like a rolling basis, or people dropping off their loved one that has a walker or wheelchair. It's just so hard to get around in that area, especially for older people and people in wheelchairs. I don't really think that people are understanding that piece of it. I live that all the time. Especially with the snow, it's so hard. So, I've asked over and over to see what you can do about the accessibility there, because I feel as though a lot of this is going to cause way more congestion.

T. Clougherty: I appreciate your input there. There may be some alternatives. We'll certainly look into what we can do.

Alderman Barry: Tim, like what you just said there may be alternatives. I would actually like to like to know what those alternatives may be. Alderman O'Neil brought up a good point, this gentleman from West Brook Street, who's an engineer, and I believe he's on the board of directors at the Palace, or at least he coordinates with them, sent out a plan and it was pretty much rejected that same day, or if not the day after by the city. Do you know why it was rejected? Why that wouldn't fit? He had proposed that we keep parking

on one side, maybe not even up to where Bravo is, but just below. You're not going to gain a lot of parking, but at least you'll have some left.

T. Clougherty: I'm not familiar with the plan that you're talking about.

Alderman Barry: It was sent to the city and it was said it wouldn't work.

T. Clougherty: You saw the process that we went through from the charrette, all of those, that April meeting, the June meeting, the November meeting, the December meeting. You know, I do think that it would be offensive to all those people that participated in the process to basically dismiss the opinions that they gave us when we arrived at that preferred alternative at that November meeting and just start picking apart one and two bits of the plan that someone that didn't participate in the process now thinks is the best way to go.

Alderman Barry: I don't know what you actually mean by that, but I know where I stood once I found out about this and once I started getting phone calls. I initially said that the concerns I had was the drop off in front of the Palace and also parking. And the drop off was taken care of, which I was very happy with. The parking, I'll give you my opinion, not everyone will agree with it. It's a hit and miss. Just because someone's parking on Hanover Street doesn't mean they're going to the Palace. Doesn't mean they are going to go into any of the restaurants in the industry. They just got lucky, found a spot. And that's the way it is. That's the way parking is in Manchester. The revenue was brought up. I think that's a great argument. You know, we're going to lose revenue. You know, one of the things that was brought up prior to our meeting tonight was businesses wanted to lock off some parking and there was a question whether the city could afford to allow that to happen. And after it was worked out, we decided that it was okay. So, we're losing that revenue.

T. Clougherty: It's certainly something that you should consider as a board.

Alderman Barry: I get that. Does it need improvement? 100% it needs improvement. I think we're all agreeable to that. In the past, Hanover Street has been blocked off from

Chestnut down to at least Londonderry Lane so that people can enjoy the restaurants, especially in the summer months. I've actually worked details there, so I know how it worked and it worked out well. I think it's a great spot. Do I think it's going to have a huge impact on empty parking or it's going to have a huge impact on the abilities of the restaurants in that area to make or lose money? I don't think it's going to have an impact, I really don't. I just think that we do have alternative places to park and you have to find them. I know someone that went to the inauguration at the Palace. They had to park on Merrimack and Elm to get to the Palace. That's the way it goes. You're not always going to find a spot just in front of the restaurant or business that you're going to. So, it's tough for me. I hear Bob Singer and I get it. I get where he's coming from. If he wasn't advised of this as a huge stakeholder in that area, shame on the landlord. I don't know who the landlord is, but he should have been invited. And you're right, are we going to make everyone happy? No, we're never going to.

T. Clougherty: I appreciate your commentary. Relative to parking, we're balancing parking with safety. All of those things are considered and I appreciate your input.

Alderman Dexter: Just to address the last part that was just brought up, the project that the alderman is talking about that the Palace brought forward was one of the lower end of the drawings. It was 4 or 5 or 6 in that project, according to my conversations with Caleb Dobbins. When we talked at that and looked at that, he told me that that wouldn't pass the state muster to get the grant. That's why that was not considered as a plan. So, when that plan, when that picture in that drawing was brought forward, Caleb Dobbins said that that wasn't going to meet the state requirements to do that.

Alderman Trisciani: As someone that did attend the public meetings and did read about them and see them online, I respect the fact that yes, people spoke during those meetings, people gave their input and these designs and what came out of that was based on people's input. I can also say the parking with the garage, and I understand Alderman Thomas's point, Tim knows that I have a three-page email sent to him about the time I tried to park in that garage with my mother in her wheelchair and have to wheel her to the Rex. So, I'm with you on that one. But I do appreciate that part of the Victory Garage improvements around lighting and security have made a difference for me in parking,

because where I would not park in the garage alone before, I now am more comfortable doing that. Something that does concern me as alderman at large, representing the entire realm of the city from ward one down to ward twelve and the center city and everything in between, is to answer the question, have we lost our way, I think the answer is yes, because the day we start giving special status to someone because of the amount of money they have and the louder voice they have is when we have a problem in our city. I live in ward one. I have a decent life. That doesn't make my voice any stronger or any more important than someone that lives in center city in ward five and is scraping to get by every day. So, I want to make sure that when we're looking at this as aldermen, we need to reset our understanding and know that we represent the people of Manchester, not the ones with the most money, not the ones with the loudest voices. I can tell you, we have young business owners and young professionals in our city who are trying to make a difference. I grew up in this city as well. I can relive the glory days all you want, but I want to live for the future. I want to build the city that's going to bring our young people to this city, and that's going to support them in their business endeavors and the investments that they're making. They might not be making a \$5 million investment, but guess what? They're young. Someday they will be. I appreciate everything that these larger business owners have given to the city and I will never look a gift horse in the mouth. But I don't believe that that gives you status or a stronger voice than other people sitting in this room tonight.

Alderman Kaw-uh: I want to say first and foremost, I think everyone on this board has talked to people with different views on the matter. And one of the core things is that we are all coming from a place where we want what we think is best for Manchester. And so, we're not really trying to go after anyone in particular. But I do want to say that I think there's no excuse for anyone on this board to go after anyone in DPW, for example, about not seeing the plans until January, because, as many have said tonight, this has been a public process. It has been going on for almost a year. And if anybody wanted to pay attention to what happens in the city, they would have learned about this from the various social media posts, the various news articles, other things that were going on. I remember hearing about it and reading about it and being excited about learning what this opportunity was. Regardless of what the final design was at the time, there was ample opportunity for people to hear about it. And thank you also for making this presentation

now. I wanted to mention that I have visited Hanover Street, as many of us have a lot of times. I have been to Cafe at Bravo, Bravo Restaurant, Palace Theatre, Moka Pot, all sorts of establishments there. Every time I have visited Hanover Street, I have parked somewhere else because there are only about 25 or so spots on Hanover Street today at best, if people are parked optimally, and usually those are full. If we want to think about all the establishments on Hanover Street impacted by this, some of whom are concerned about the impact on their businesses or on their organization, how many people visit their establishments every day? There are thousands of people who go to the Palace every week. There are hundreds of people who go to the different restaurants. There are 25 parking spaces, and I think it's important to take that into account. A lot of people visit these establishments after parking elsewhere, or they live downtown already and are walking to the places here. So, I wanted to highlight that. I think it's important that whenever we have a public process that we follow through with that process, listen to all of the stakeholders, of course, but we need to avoid giving special treatment to any individual, any group, and make sure that we are treating everyone with that dignity and respect.

Alderman Kantor: I have a few things to say. First of all, we're a four-season city. We are highly affected by the snow and I appreciate DPW and I always praise you guys all the time about this, but we've had an issue with the snow removal and the sidewalks for a long time. The kids can't even get to school in a timely fashion. So, I don't know how you're going to upkeep these sidewalks. I want to second Alderman Thomas on the traffic jam that it's going to create, as I know, because I've lived here my whole entire life as well. I've attended Palace Theatre for decades upon decades. My daughter went through the programs. That has been a huge impact for so many children. And if we're not thinking about the safety of our children and the parents, and who wants to park near the shelter where they're not even asking for ID and there are sexual predators? Nobody wants to be parking farther away than we have to, especially since there are so many drug dens in Manchester and there is still unacceptable homelessness that's going on. And I think we all deal with it, the feces and everything. Parking is essential; as a business owner, I know that. Where do the employees park? Where do the customers park? And as a single woman, I don't want to be parking really far away. I've heard from the parking meter gentleman that he's gotten lots of complaints that there are a lot of women that don't want

to go to their cars late at night that work at some of these bars and etc. I know that it's been an issue. My thing also is the parking garage, that's lovely that it doesn't affect Red Oak because they have a parking garage, and it is a money maker. So, I can understand he has a big stake in Hanover Street, but to not tell your tenant that there's not going to be parking when they've invested \$5 million, and another thing, not only did he invest \$5 million, I grew up here, and the Singers have been the most extraordinary all-American family, giving back jobs effortlessly, just giving people jobs, giving back to our community, faith, family and community first. He did not want to come here and speak. I asked him to. I asked him because he's a brilliant businessman. This is not good for all the businesses. No one wants to walk beyond Hanover Street Chophouse. It is sketchy and it's disgusting, and I'm embarrassed by it that we actually allow all the drug use in Manchester. Just one block over, there's FIT. How unacceptable, and the fact that we keep funding the insanity of the insanity. So, I want to say thank you to the Singer family for their gifts beyond belief, how they keep giving. I asked him to come here. He didn't want to. He's a humble, humble man. And I said, I need you to speak as a business owner, that it will affect your business. He invested \$5 million into someone else's property that is a big stakeholder on Hanover Street. That is unethical and I'm disgusted. I'm embarrassed that this is carrying on. And you know what? I don't really think that these are really fair because the Palace Theatre is the heartbeat of Manchester. It's been giving back to all of our children, our elderly. It brings us joy. The fact that it's negatively going to impact the Palace Theatre, shame on us. Shame on us for not protecting something that has been giving back to our community for decades, over 100 years. How embarrassing. We should be standing up and thanking the Palace Theatre for going above and beyond. Because you know what? Through Covid, they were still open and that gave our children sanity and a voice. When it comes down to Covid, I'll agree on one thing with Covid, the biggest scam of our lives, is at least we brought it outside. So, I would suggest if people want to have extra space for their restaurants, block off the sidewalks during the summer months, not the winter months. Take this grant money and put it on another street that deserves as much love as Hanover Street. Hanover Street is not broken. We don't need to fix it. We need to manicure the actual sidewalks. I appreciate you, but I'm very disappointed that this is even on the table, and it should go back to committee for real debate. And where's the 20% going to come from after? Who's going

to pay that? Oh, it's on the taxpayers. So once again we are not respecting our elders. We're going to tax them out of their homes. It just makes no sense. Pick another street.

Alderman Dexter: I want to address a couple of things that have been talked about and I've been working with DPW throughout this process over the last several months since I was put into my seat. Let's start with bus safety. I view Hanover Street as three travel lanes, currently two parking lanes, one on each side with a travel lane down the middle. Right now, the buses pull up. They roll off to the side. They may or may not put out their stop signs. I don't know what's happened in the past and I don't know what the process is, but what I can tell you is that by widening the sidewalks, narrowing the street, going to a one lane road, that bus will then take up the street and you can line one bus, two bus, ten buses, the whole street with buses to load and unload into the Palace, and do it in an efficient manner so that the students can get in and out. Right now, I was told it takes about 45 minutes to load the buses after a show. I think they can get it down to 10 or 15. With that said, does it tie up Hanover Street. For ten minutes, yes; it's much better than the 45 minutes that it takes right now. We won't have cars zipping by those buses. I can tell you that people don't pay attention to those stop signs when they're out. So, if they are out, that doesn't seem to mean anything to some people out there and they'll zip by it. So why not make it safer for those students by giving them a one lane road to get on and off a bus? Do it in an efficient manner and make a change in the way that we do things. We've talked about cutting down the trees. That has never been part of the plan in the sense of getting rid of the trees, to cut down the trees that were improperly planted and causing issues in our sidewalks that you may or may not be able to see is something that needs to change. We need to install the right tree so that we're not back here in 25 years to redo this again. Losing parking in ward three is not my preference. When I look at the loss of parking, I look at it that we're not losing parking. We're shifting it to a garage that is underutilized. The more pedestrian traffic we have in that garage, the better off we are. We can shift how we think about Hanover Street in that entire neighborhood. I'm never going to argue with Alderman Thomas about handicapped disabled access. She educated me a lot on this, and we talked a lot about this project in these two loading zones. We talked about those being tip downs or seamless entries into the sidewalk from the start to the finish of those loading zones. That was a huge breakthrough. I think that we had a great conversation on that. And that's something that I recommend that we

absolutely put into this project. I could go on and on. I want to leave you with this. I run and I walk all over ward three and all over Manchester. I don't look at the ward lines. I go all over the city and I do it in my running sneakers, in a t shirt and shorts and I feel safe. I know other people may not feel safe, but here I go. I go out there and I'm out there and I go for it. Because that's what we do in Manchester, in the heart of our city. The heartbeat of our city is not one building, not one organization, but it's all of our citizens. Our citizens are our heartbeat and they are why we are here. They are why we were elected. I'm here to represent them, and I'm here to represent ward three. The people of ward three, other than one small group of people associated to 1 or 2 businesses, have told me that they want this to happen.

Mayor Ruais: We've had a presentation; we've had the conversation and discussion. If it's okay with the board, I think we should move up agenda item 30 so that we don't have to address it at the end of the meeting, and while it's fresh in everybody's mind. If the clerk would please read the report.

*On motion of **Alderman Kaw-uh**, duly seconded by **Alderman Dexter**, it was voted to waive the reading of the committee report.*

***Alderman Dexter** moved to accept the committee report and adopt its recommendation, with the stipulation that these regulations not be put into effect until construction is about to commence. **Alderman Kaw-uh** duly seconded the motion. Alderman Kaw-uh requested a roll call vote. Aldermen Kaw-uh, Goonan, Dexter, Fajardo, Bonilla, Trisciani, Burkush, and Vincent voted yea. Alderman Kantor, O'Neil, Terrio, Sapienza, Barry, and Thomas voted nay. The motion carried.*

Alderman O'Neil: As a member of the voting minority, I intend to make a motion for reconsideration on the Hanover Street vote at the next regular meeting of the Board of Aldermen on April 7th.

CONSENT AGENDA

Accept BMA Minutes

3. Minutes from the March 3 BMA meeting.

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

4. Sidewalk Petition (Residential):

- 22 Woodcrest Court

REFERRALS TO COMMITTEES

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

5. Resolutions:

“Amending the FY2022 Community Improvement Program, authorizing, appropriating and transferring funds in the amount of Forty Thousand Dollars (\$40,000) for the FY2022 CIP 212122 ARPA - Healthy Food Access Strategic Plan & Implementation”

“Amending the FY2022, FY2024 and FY2025 Community Improvement Program, authorizing, appropriating and transferring funds in the amount of Seventy-Five Thousand Dollars (\$75,000) for the FY2024 CIP 611224 MHRA Landlord Incentive Program”

“Amending the FY2013 Community Improvement Program, authorizing and appropriating funds in the amount of Six Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$600,000) for the FY2013 CIP 711613 Odd Fellows Hall Operational Expense Project”

“Amending the FY2024 and FY2025 Community Improvement Program, authorizing, appropriating and transferring funds in the amount of Twenty-Two Thousand Three Hundred Sixty-Seven Dollars (\$22,367) for the FY2024 CIP 810324 ARPA - Coordinator”

“Amending the FY2022 and FY2024 Community Improvement Program, authorizing, appropriating and transferring funds in the amount of Twenty Thousand Dollars (\$20,000) for the FY2024 CIP 810724 Part Time Planner.”

“Amending the FY2022 and FY2025 Community Improvement Program, authorizing, appropriating and transferring funds in the amount of Four Thousand Eight Hundred Sixty-Two Dollars (\$4,862) for the FY2025 CIP 811025 Independent City Auditor”

“Amending the FY2026 Community Improvement Program, authorizing and appropriating funds in the amount of Two Hundred Fifty-Five Thousand Dollars (\$255,000) for the FY2026 CIP C160061026 CDFA CDBG-CV Operational Support for City Shelters”

“Amending the FY2026 Community Improvement Program, authorizing and appropriating funds in the amount of Two Hundred Forty-Five Thousand Dollars (\$245,000) for the FY2026 CIP C160061126 CDFA CDBG-CV Operational Support for FIT Shelters”

“Amending the FY2023 and FY2025 Community Improvement Program, authorizing, appropriating and transferring funds in the amount of Sixty-Five Thousand Dollars (\$65,000) for the FY2025 CIP C300040325 Opioid Abatement - CRU 2nd Shift.”

“Amending the FY2026 Community Improvement Program, authorizing and appropriating funds in the amount of Twenty-Seven Thousand Dollars (\$27,000) for the FY2026 CIP C330040426 Women’s Locker Room Expansion”

“Amending the FY2026 Community Improvement Program, authorizing and appropriating funds in the amount of Twelve Thousand Eight Hundred Thirty-One Dollars (\$12,831) for the FY2026 CIP C330041826 MPD Mobile Surveillance Platform Center”

“Amending the FY2026 Community Improvement Program, authorizing and appropriating funds in the amount of One Million Six Hundred Forty-Two Thousand Three Hundred Twenty-Five Dollars (\$1,642,325) for the FY2026 CIP C410022026 Homeless Healthcare”

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT

6. Recommending that the 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 Auditorbe approved.
(*Unanimous vote*)
7. Recommending that the 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 be approved.
(*Unanimous vote*)

8. Recommending that the 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 be approved.
(*Unanimous vote*)
9. Recommending that the 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 be approved.
(*Unanimous vote*)
10. Recommending that the 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 be approved.
(*Unanimous vote*)
11. Recommending that the 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 be approved.
(*Unanimous vote*)
12. Recommending that the 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 be approved.
(*Unanimous vote*)
13. Recommending that the Amending Resolution and Budget Authorization providing for the acceptance and expenditure of funds in the amount of \$1,642,325 for CIP C410022026 Homeless Healthcare be approved.
(*Unanimous vote*)
14. Recommending that the quarterly report regarding the expenditure of the City's ARPA funds through December 31, 2025, be approved.
(*Unanimous vote*)
15. Recommending that the request from the Fire Chief for an extension of CIP 412524 PC Construction Fire Alarm Receiver Site Installations be approved.
(*Unanimous vote*)

COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RESOURCES/INSURANCE

17. Recommending that the request from the Water Works Director for the following changes to the department's complement:
 - Add two (2) Equipment Operator V positions, grade 112;
 - Remove two (2) Equipment Operator IV positions, grade 109be approved.
(*Unanimous vote*)

COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY, HEALTH AND TRAFFIC

18. Recommending that the following traffic regulations be approved:
30 MINUTE PARKING – 9AM to 6PM Monday-saturday
On Chestnut Street, east side, from Appleton Street to a point 65 feet north
Alderman Kaw-uh
15 MINUTE PARKING
On Bridge Street, north side, from a point 100 feet east of N Church Street to a point 20 feet further east
Alderman Dexter
(Unanimous vote)
19. Recommending that the request from Dartmouth Health for updates to various road signs for its clinic at 100 Hitchcock Way be approved.
(Unanimous vote)
20. Recommending that the proposal regarding vehicles that remain on public streets after snow events be received and filed.
(Unanimous vote)

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

16. Recommending that the discussion regarding the Livingston Basketball Court Project be referred to the Committee on Lands and Buildings.
(Unanimous vote)

Alderman Vincent requested that agenda item 16 be removed from the consent agenda.

Alderman Vincent: There's been a lot of research done on this topic with the parks, with the basketball court. It's never been one court. It's always been two courts. I think it's just a misunderstanding of the verbiage. I looked at the notes and I just don't see it. So, I'd like to make a motion to receive and file this.

Alderman O'Neil: The budget authorization says one court. So that's legally what it says. I don't know how we're at two courts, but we'll move on.

Alderman Terrio: You want to kill the basketball courts?

Alderman Vincent: No, negative. I don't want it to go to Lands and Buildings. It's passed already. We're digging up the past.

*On motion of **Alderman Vincent**, duly seconded by **Alderman Trisciani**, it was voted to receive and file, with **Alderman O'Neil** being duly recorded in opposition.*

REGULAR BUSINESS

21. Nominations:

Board of Recount

Don Goduti to succeed himself as a regular member, term to expire
November 30, 2027

Brian McCoy to succeed himself as a regular member, term to expire
November 30, 2027

Highway Commission

Amber Nicole Cannan to succeed herself as a regular member, term to expire
January 15, 2029

Board of Registrars

William Houghton to succeed himself as a regular member, term to expire
May 1, 2029

Manchester Development Corporation

Andrew Leach to succeed himself as a regular member, term to expire
March 11, 2029

Kyle Baker to succeed himself as a regular member, term to expire
March 11, 2029

Joshua Wright to succeed himself as a regular member, term to expire
March 11, 2029

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

Mayor Ruais: I have a quick note on this. Under confirmations, I have Dave Wihby. I spoke with him; he's not available until the summertime. I will have another mayoral nomination in the summertime. So, what I would like to do this evening is I would like to nominate Brad Cook to serve on the Manchester Public Television Service and I will then nominate subsequently Dave Wihby in the summer when I have another one. I appreciate working with Chairman Barry on this to talk to the parties that are impacted by this. Both were okay with it. I spoke with Jason as well at MPTV and he was good with it, too. That nomination will lay over until the next meeting. So, there's no action required by the board, but I just wanted to make note of it for our records.

22. Confirmations:

Board of Adjustment

Matthew Robert Carnevale, Jr. to move from an alternate to a regular member succeeding Greg Powers, term to expire March 1, 2029

Nick Taylor to move from an alternate to a regular member, term to expire March 1, 2029

Planning Board

Christopher Morrow to fill a vacancy as an alternate member, term to expire May 1, 2028

Retirement Board

John Clayton to succeed Richard Bunker as a regular member, term to expire January 1, 2029

*On motion of **Alderman O'Neil**, duly seconded by **Alderman Trisciani**, it was voted to confirm the nominations as presented.*

23. Aldermanic Confirmations:

Manchester Public Television Service

Cristina Goodwin to succeed Brad Cook as a regular member, term to expire July 1, 2028

Sarah Ambrogi to fill a vacancy as a regular member, term to expire July 1, 2027

*On motion of **Alderman Barry**, duly seconded by **Alderman Terrio**, it was voted to confirm the nominations as presented.*

24. Communication from Richard Bilodeau, Central Fleet Services Director, advising the Board of his retirement effective March 31, 2026.

*On motion of **Alderman Kaw-uh**, duly seconded by **Alderman Fajardo**, it was voted to accept with regret.*

Mayor Ruais: I would also like to state my intent this evening to nominate Chris Goodnow at the next meeting as the next Director of Central Fleet Services. So, we'll have an opportunity over the next couple of weeks. I'll nominate him at the next meeting, but we'll have an opportunity now over the next month or so to have conversations with Chris to take this over, take the reins over from here. So, congratulations.

25. Application for a Community Revitalization Tax Relief Incentive, RSA 79-E, for 959 Elm Street.

***Alderman O'Neil** moved to approve the application. **Alderman Terrio** duly seconded the motion.*

Alderman Kaw-uh: I have some serious concerns with this particular application, one of which is the pro forma. So as most of the board probably knows, the pro forma is how the applicant tries to justify the need for this application in the first place. Normally this happens before financing has been acquired for the project because this particular 79-E tax relief is a critical component of how most projects that go through this project can actually make it pencil out. They need the 79-E to make it work. In this particular case, the construction has already begun, financing has already been obtained, and now they are here. Granted, there has been a little bit of a messy process, but they managed to get here without having to get the 79-E solidified. Now, I do think that it's important that we have a 79-E program. It's a critical way for us to help incentivize development and make sure that things can happen, but it's not necessarily meant to be just a thank you for coming here to develop, here's an extra tax break. There has to be a real solid reason for it. Going back to the pro forma, my concern with it is that they are assuming, when we talk about the revenue versus the expenses, the rents that are charged are a significant portion of the revenue. And in this case, it looks to me at least in my assessment, that the rents are lower than they ought to be per a market rate development that is right on Elm Street and would be a new build. So, there is a way to play around with the numbers in a pro forma. If you reduce the revenue, you make it look like the relief is more essential; if you increase the revenue, such as charging the actual market rate rents, you make the 79-E seem a little less necessary. So that's my piece on it. I would not personally be supporting this 79-E application, though I do support 79-E in general.

Alderman Trisciani: Yes, I agree with Alderman Kaw-uh's sentiments. I will also be voting against this for two main reasons. One of them is the application that was put forth in 2024 was not completed, and the covenant was not filed with the County Registry of Deeds. And after the 12-month period, that did expire. My other challenge with this is acknowledgement number five on the application that was signed by the folks requesting the 79-E for this property, outlines and improvements, including demolition, are to begin only after city action on the application and the recording of the covenant with the Hillsborough County Registry of Deeds. This condition is part of the applicant's signed submission. And with that, that acknowledgement that was signed and agreed to was also broken. So therefore, I will not be voting for this.

Alderman Bonilla: Do you mind if we bring up Garth as well to provide any clarity with any concerns? The way I heard it at the special meeting, was that in 2024 the Board of Mayor and Aldermen approved the application, the covenant was lost by the city, and now we're here. So, for me, just to put it in a simplistic way, we said, yes, it was our fault, we lost it. And to me, it was like the perception was that the city lost it, or someone lost the covenant. And the way it looks to me is that, the way it would operate in business is you can't go back on the deal you made. So, we had said yes to all previously. Is that what I heard, in 2024?

Mayor Ruais: Because this was prior, do we want to have Jodie speak to this? You guys weren't involved in the first 79-E process, correct?

Garth Corriveau, Devine Millimet Attorneys at Law: That is correct, yes.

Jodie Nazaka, Economic Development Director: The first applicant that submitted this got their approval. And then basically I think it was stated in the public hearing presentation, communication stopped. I think they realized that the numbers weren't going to pencil out for them and they weren't going to move forward with a purchase and sale agreement with the property owner. So, they had no interest in solidifying this deal and working with the property owner to record this covenant if they were ultimately not going to buy this building. So, they just moved on. Hands were washed. They had no investment, as far as I know, other than maybe doing some permitting with the Planning and Community Development Office. So, they had no interest in recording the covenant. They went through the process of getting the covenant, but again, they weren't moving forward with the project. So, it was of no interest to them to record it. And the property owner at the time was the original property owner from 1999, I think is when he bought the building. He renovated it for benefit strategies. He had no interest in continuing to own the building, so he had not submitted the application for a 79-E. And then as far as I know, the new applicant purchased the building in February or March of 2025. And that's when new ownership changed.

Alderman Bonilla: I appreciate you providing that clarity. So, the building, the 79-E application, was approved in the building. But it was different owners, right?

J. Nazaka: Correct. I think Alderman Sapienza correctly stated it earlier. It was approved. Essentially nothing was recorded, nothing was solidified. Look at it as if there was a subdivision plan that was created but never recorded. And someone's coming back with a new application. This is a completely new request.

Alderman Bonilla: So honestly, the way I see it, is it was approved for the building. I recognize that the TIF is going in, we can amend it as Alderwoman Fajardo had mentioned, it's not that we're intentionally telling other businesses not to qualify for 79-E. Moving forward, it's at the board's discretion. I like the wording that, again, Alderwoman Fajardo had mentioned. The building was approved. Again, I keep going back to that. So, I'm a big proponent of affordable housing. I know that I had mentioned that to you. So, when I saw zero, again, the Board of Mayor and Aldermen in 2024 approved it for this building. So, I don't know, I'm not that type of person that does business like that. So, if it was said yes to the building, then we have got to go with it, in my opinion. So again, thank you for providing that clarity.

Alderman Fajardo: As I alluded to in the public hearing earlier, I would like to make a motion after we take a vote on the application itself. I'll just add that I think this process with your client's specific application has actually taught us a lot. I think that's a good thing. As you have said, Director Nazaka, 79-E, TIF, there's all these sorts of tools in our toolbox as a governing body. The city's evolving; our needs are evolving. So, it's important for us to really understand how and when to apply them. I think it is important that we take it on a case-by-case basis. I understand your logic certainly, but for me, I feel like it's not the same case. It's not the same project, even if it is the same building. I'm not planning to support it, but I would like to, for what it's worth, express gratitude because I feel like it's surfaced a handful of things that I otherwise didn't have a strong handle on, and so I hope we can sort that out.

Alderman Kaw-uh: I just want to follow up on some of what has been said and emphasize that this is a completely different project. This is a different owner. It is a different unit

count for what's being proposed. There are different lawyers involved in the mix. It may be the same physical building, but it is not the same entity or entities that the prior board said yes to. And we are also new aldermen as well. We are going into what is probably going to be a very painful budget cycle and the last thing that I want to do is put myself on record supporting a \$100,000 a year tax break, possibly that much, for a market rate development right in the downtown. I can't put myself in that position, \$100,000 or whatever the amount is, say \$50,000. It could go to something that is critical in the community and this project is already moving forward without it. So, with much respect to the team that is putting this together, in my view, I do not support it, but thank you.

Mayor Ruais called for a vote.

Alderman Trisciani requested a roll call vote. Aldermen Trisciani, Burkush, Vincent, Kaw-uh, Goonan, Dexter, and Fajardo voted nay. Alderman O'Neil, Terrio, Sapienza, Barry, Thomas, Bonilla, Kantor voted yea. Mayor Ruais voted nay. The motion to approve the request failed.

Mayor Ruais: The motion before us is to approve the request. I share the concerns expressed by members on the board, and I cannot approve it, or I cannot support it, at this time.

Alderman Fajardo: Is this an appropriate time to make a motion regarding the ordinance?

Matthew Normand, City Clerk: That report is coming in at the next meeting on April 7th that has that ordinance. The board can either send that back to Bills on Second Reading or it's actually probably just striking one line if the entire board wants to deal with it here.

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

S. Wickens: Based on estimates provided by department heads, the projected general fund operating surplus for 2026 is \$482,000. This surplus consists of an expenditure surplus of \$396,000 and a revenue surplus of \$86,000. Several departments are reporting expenditure surpluses resulting from employee turnover and associated hiring delays.

Public Works is projecting a \$400,000 revenue shortfall due to reduced chargeback services for the school district. This decrease is offset by an equivalent reduction in overall expenses. However, the department has experienced a particularly challenging winter, resulting in overages in overtime, salt and fuel expenditures. After accounting for all factors, Public Works is reporting a net expenditure overage of \$300,000. Comcast's franchise fees continue to decline, and the City Clerk's Office projects an overall revenue shortfall of \$250,000. The tax collector reports an estimated \$625,000 increase in auto registrations, with fleet registrations continuing to positively impact revenue. Additionally, the forecasted surplus includes \$110,000 allocated from the contingency account. As of March 13th, there have been 33 retirements compared to 23 during the same period last year. Severance payments through this date total \$1,289,886, which is up from \$1,154,910 a year ago. Following the posting of all related entries, the Severance Reserve Account is projected to hold a balance of \$1,434,416. I've also attached a departmental schedule of severances paid through March 13th and a departmental overtime report as of March 13th.

Alderman Fajardo: I just was wondering if you could explain the shortfall on the Public Works side tied to the reduced chargeback from the district. What does that mean?

S. Wickens: Normally the Public Works Department will incur expenses. And when they incur those expenses, they bill the school district if it's school district related. So normally if their revenues are down, their expenditures will be down too. They don't have the expenditures to bill them. With the bad winter they've had, we should be down \$400,000. But they're \$700,000 over on winter operations. So overall it's a \$300,000 hit to expenditures.

27. A motion is in order to recess the meeting to allow the Committee on Finance to meet.

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

28. The Mayor called the meeting back to order.

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

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

“Amending the FY2022 Community Improvement Program, authorizing, appropriating and transferring funds in the amount of Forty Thousand Dollars (\$40,000) for the FY2022 CIP 212122 ARPA - Healthy Food Access Strategic Plan & Implementation”

“Amending the FY2022, FY2024 and FY2025 Community Improvement Program, authorizing, appropriating and transferring funds in the amount of Seventy-Five Thousand Dollars (\$75,000) for the FY2024 CIP 611224 MHRA Landlord Incentive Program”

“Amending the FY2013 Community Improvement Program, authorizing and appropriating funds in the amount of Six Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$600,000) for the FY2013 CIP 711613 Odd Fellows Hall Operational Expense Project”

“Amending the FY2024 and FY2025 Community Improvement Program, authorizing, appropriating and transferring funds in the amount of Twenty-Two Thousand Three Hundred Sixty-Seven Dollars (\$22,367) for the FY2024 CIP 810324 ARPA - Coordinator”

“Amending the FY2022 and FY2024 Community Improvement Program, authorizing, appropriating and transferring funds in the amount of Twenty Thousand Dollars (\$20,000) for the FY2024 CIP 810724 Part Time Planner.”

“Amending the FY2022 and FY2025 Community Improvement Program, authorizing, appropriating and transferring funds in the amount of Four Thousand Eight Hundred Sixty-Two Dollars (\$4,862) for the FY2025 CIP 811025 Independent City Auditor”

“Amending the FY2026 Community Improvement Program, authorizing and appropriating funds in the amount of Two Hundred Fifty-Five Thousand Dollars (\$255,000) for the FY2026 CIP C160061026 CDFA CDBG-CV Operational Support for City Shelters”

“Amending the FY2026 Community Improvement Program, authorizing and appropriating funds in the amount of Two Hundred Forty-Five Thousand Dollars (\$245,000) for the FY2026 CIP C160061126 CDFA CDBG-CV Operational Support for FIT Shelters”

“Amending the FY2023 and FY2025 Community Improvement Program, authorizing, appropriating and transferring funds in the amount of Sixty-Five Thousand Dollars (\$65,000) for the FY2025 CIP C300040325 Opioid Abatement - CRU 2nd Shift.”

“Amending the FY2026 Community Improvement Program, authorizing and appropriating funds in the amount of Twenty-Seven Thousand Dollars (\$27,000) for the FY2026 CIP C300040426 Safe Haven Baby Box Installation”

“Amending the FY2026 Community Improvement Program, authorizing and appropriating funds in the amount of Twenty-Seven Thousand Dollars (\$27,000) for the FY2026 CIP C330040426 Women’s Locker Room Expansion”

“Amending the FY2026 Community Improvement Program, authorizing and appropriating funds in the amount of Twelve Thousand Eight Hundred Thirty-One Dollars (\$12,831) for the FY2026 CIP C330041826 MPD Mobile Surveillance Platform Center”

“Amending the FY2026 Community Improvement Program, authorizing and appropriating funds in the amount of One Million Six Hundred Forty-Two Thousand Three Hundred Twenty-Five Dollars (\$1,642,325) for the FY2026 CIP C410022026 Homeless Healthcare”

ought to pass and be Enrolled.

*On motion of **Alderman Kaw-uh**, duly seconded by **Alderman Goonan**, it was voted to waive the reading by titles only.*

*On motion of **Alderman O’Neil**, duly seconded by **Alderman Bonilla**, it was voted to accept the report and adopt its recommendations.*

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

The Committee on Public Safety, Health & Traffic respectfully recommends, after due and careful consideration, that the request from the Planning and Community Development Director to re-delegate authority to the department to issue permits for attachments to buildings, including signs, that extend into the public right-of-way no more than 10 feet and are a total of 150 square feet or less in area per side be approved.

***Alderman Vincent** moved to accept the committee’s report and adopt its recommendations. **Alderman Barry** duly seconded the motion.*

Alderman O'Neil: Didn't we have a request from a new restaurant on Granite Street about something like this? I can't think of the name of the place, the old Elks Club. Would this allow you to grant it and not have to come before the board?

Jeff Belanger, Director of Planning & Community Development: I'm not recalling that one. There was one in front of a committee earlier today about Central Street. And there was one about Elm Street a little while ago. Was it a canopy? Was it a sign?

Alderman Trisciani: I don't believe it was signage.

Alderman Dexter: It was a canopy over the sidewalk.

J. Belanger: So this would apply to canopies, balconies.

Alderman O'Neil: In the future it wouldn't have to go to committee, your department could issue the permit.

J. Belanger: Under a certain size or a certain extent into the right way, correct.

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

31. Resolutions:

"Amending the FY2022 Community Improvement Program, authorizing, appropriating and transferring funds in the amount of Forty Thousand Dollars (\$40,000) for the FY2022 CIP 212122 ARPA - Healthy Food Access Strategic Plan & Implementation"

"Amending the FY2022, FY2024 and FY2025 Community Improvement Program, authorizing, appropriating and transferring funds in the amount of Seventy-Five Thousand Dollars (\$75,000) for the FY2024 CIP 611224 MHRA Landlord Incentive Program"

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"Amending the FY2024 and FY2025 Community Improvement Program, authorizing, appropriating and transferring funds in the amount of Twenty-Two

Thousand Three Hundred Sixty-Seven Dollars (\$22,367) for the FY2024 CIP 810324 ARPA - Coordinator”

“Amending the FY2022 and FY2024 Community Improvement Program, authorizing, appropriating and transferring funds in the amount of Twenty Thousand Dollars (\$20,000) for the FY2024 CIP 810724 Part Time Planner.”

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*On motion of **Alderman Kaw-uh**, duly seconded by **Alderman Dexter**, it was voted to waive the reading by titles only.*

*On motion of **Alderman O'Neil**, duly seconded by **Alderman Sapienza**, it was voted that the Resolutions ought to pass and be Enrolled.*

32. Ordinance:

“Amending Section 33.026 (Equipment Operator III, IV, and V) of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Manchester.”

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

*On motion of **Alderman O'Neil**, duly seconded by **Alderman Burkush**, it was voted that the Ordinance ought to pass and be Ordained.*

NEW BUSINESS

Alderman Sapienza: First, let me say I attempted to bring up this subject, I wanted to have it on the agenda, but I got rejected. So, I'll bring it up under new business. I'd like to make a motion to amend the December 5th, 2023, bond resolution authorizing up to \$290 million for the school's facility project, \$227.4 million. The \$227.4 million plus the \$62.6 million cash that's already been spent, equals the original \$290 million. I'd like to make that motion.

There was no second.

Mayor Ruais: Could the Solicitor weigh in?

Peter Chiesa, Deputy Solicitor: I don't believe that a bond resolution that is already passed can now be amended.

Mayor Ruais: My understanding when we had this discussion at the beginning of 2024, I believe it was the first meeting, was that bonds that have been issued within five years cannot be reconsidered. If I remember that correctly from our discussion.

P. Chiesa: I believe that's what happened. It was one of the first meetings of the prior administration.

Mayor Ruais: The very first meeting. I think the legwork that we had done, we can't rescind a bond within five years of approval.

Alderman Sapienza: Very well. We can't do that. So let me just say that I think this board would be remiss if it's not raising a red flag of concern that December 5th, 2023, a bond was authorized for \$290 million for phase one. That was the idea. They were going to do phase one of the building project with the \$290 million bond authorization. As of March 5th, \$62.4 million liquid cash has been spent in addition to X amount of the bond funding. So, this is something we need to keep an eye on. I mean, what's to prevent them from spending the \$290 million bonded plus another \$150 million cash? I mean, it's coming out of two pockets.

S. Wickens: I issue the bonds. There's not a chance it's going in for more than what they need.

Alderman Sapienza: Not a chance?

S. Wickens: Not a chance.

Alderman Sapienza: So then why did they spend \$62.6 million?

S. Wickens: When they go to bond, if all was to go to plan, they'd be bonding \$231,000,000, not \$290 million because they've paid down. They've used this cash. So, what happened is, when the bond was approved they had the \$20 million, but they knew they weren't going to go out until probably November, because you're not going to go out. You have to spend the proceeds within three years. So, they had the \$20 million set aside for that. At the time Mayor Craig said, well, put it towards the project and you don't have to borrow \$306 million, you'll borrow \$290 million or whatever it came out to, plus cost of issuance. And that's what they did. The following year, it was every intent to issue that bond in November. They had this money set aside because our financial advisor had said, look, your payment is going to be \$17.7, that is what his estimate was. They had it set aside from the building aid all ready to go, but the cash flows didn't support issuing the entire bond at that time. Now their budget has been passed. They have \$17.7 million

to put towards a bond payment that doesn't exist because we're going to do a bond anticipation note instead for only \$28 million. That's only for one year. They paid down the bond again. Now the next November comes, we're in the same situation. I know it sounds probably crazy to this board that we issued a bond anticipation note, but it's actually crazier that we've never done it. I mean, that's a very normal financing mechanism. They do it all the time. Municipalities do this all the time. We just haven't. And it's odd to me that we've never used that. But we did in this case.

Alderman Sapienza: And that's great. And that would be great, except for the fact that we all know we're facing a sizable deficit heading into this fiscal year. Right? We all know that, right?

S. Wickens: And so, the school district and myself will be meeting with both our financial advisor and bond counsel on Thursday. Because when we issue these bonds in November, they will pay off this bank anticipation note that we currently have outstanding for \$78 million, and then they're only going to have one interest payment in the fiscal year. So, the principal payment is kind of just hanging there. Would they pay down the bond again? Or to your point, we're kind of strapped for cash. Let's see if we can maybe restructure the debt. So maybe we can use some of that now. But I won't have that answer until we've kind of talked through this a little bit. I don't want to do anything that makes the rating agencies nervous. We're going to be issuing between now and November, over half \$1 billion worth of debt. This is not any time to be cute about anything. We have got to make sure that we've got this all down.

Alderman Sapienza: By sheer coincidence, we had a committee meeting on the airport earlier this evening, and they're facing some tough times, too. And what they did was they stretched their bond payments out over time, which is the exact opposite of what's going on here.

S. Wickens: Well, we issued bank anticipation notes instead of issuing the whole bond now. And those were each only one year.

Alderman Sapienza: It can get complex, but it can also be simplified. The bank anticipation notes, I'm not even talking about that. I'm talking about the \$62.4 in liquid cash that they spent. Isn't that different?

S. Wickens: But the money that was coming in, that's what we're telling the rating agencies. They receive \$35 million more as more building aid. And they said we will set aside at the best guess at that time was that to do this phase one project would be about \$20 million annually. We're going to set that aside so that it won't screw around with the tax rate. We'll take it right off the top and we'll set it aside. And that's what they've done faithfully. And that's what I can say faithfully, because I don't want to say to the rating agencies, we used it this year. We have a \$16 million hole next year. What are you going to do? I mean, it takes some thought to make sure that we really handle this appropriately. Like I said, we have a lot of debt being issued between now and November. The CSO bond is \$250 million right there.

Alderman Sapienza: I'll sum it up with this. The \$62.6 million, liquid cash, that to me is a significant amount of money. In fact, it's about a quarter of the overall budget. Would you agree that is a lot of money?

S. Wickens: They were taking that and setting it aside every year.

Alderman Sapienza: \$20 million payments.

S. Wickens: Every year.

Alderman Sapienza: Right.

S. Wickens: And every year when they set that aside, we had thought we would issue it in November, but the updated cash flows that we received, it wasn't prudent to do that. That was on the advice of both our financial advisor and bond counsel. Now, both of them have expressed they would come in here and talk this through if any alderman wants to talk about it. They would absolutely talk through their thought process.

Alderman Fajardo: Are they attending the joint meeting?

Mayor Ruais: The reason why it was not included on this agenda is because, as I said in the email on March 6th, we're having a joint Board of School Committee meeting and a joint Board of Mayor and Aldermen meeting next Wednesday, where we're going to discuss the budget, where the opportunity to have this conversation would be then. So, I knew it was going to come up then. So, I just figured we would just have the conversation once. But that's when we're going to have that conversation next week. We can invite bond counsel.

S. Wickens: I can see if they can make it.

Mayor Ruais: And then just trying to anticipate another question that you might have, I checked with the school district today, they have not spent a single dollar of that money on any overhead. So, it's all been going to that bond anticipation note. And the concern that they expressed is if they were to stop, they have the authority to spend the money, so if they were to stop doing that, they've already entered into contracts because they've already done a lot of the renovation. So, if they were to stop that, they would be in breach of contract, in which case the city would be sued. So, I recognize the budget shortfall. If it's a question of whether or not we should have done phase one, I mean, that's two boards ago and I don't disagree with that assessment. But we're here.

Alderman Sapienza: Understood. I just urge this board to be cautious moving forward, realizing that the money's coming out of two different pockets, the \$290 million bond and liquid cash. It's two streams.

S. Wickens: It's the same \$290 million. It's just that those would have been debt payments in those years if we had issued the bonds.

Mayor Ruais: So actually, I just have one thing for a new business. I'm going to send out a follow up email tomorrow morning just for everyone's edification. But just to remind everybody tonight that we'll have a joint BMA meeting next Wednesday at Memorial to discuss the school district budget, and then the following evening on Thursday will be my

budget address as well. So just so everybody knows, I'll send a follow up email on that tomorrow.

Alderman Trisciani: Leaving us on a positive note, when we talk about the future of Manchester, I think we'd be remiss if we did not publicly recognize our Economic Development Director, Jodie Nazaka who was named as one of the 20 outstanding women by WZID. I think the quote sums it up best where Jodie tirelessly works to make Manchester a better place to live, work and play. She envisions the future of the Queen City and then builds the partnerships necessary to make it a reality. So, we are fortunate to have her as part of our city and love all the work you're doing and keep it up. And thank you.

Alderman Bonilla: So, to prep us to warm us up, because I know that we're all going to come together as a collective body in this city for Thursday, because we're going to be in the ring together at Memorial, spring into summer hosted by Manchester Proud, will be hosting their event called Spring into Summer at Beech Street School this Saturday, March 21st. So, for the aldermen that are here, my fellow colleagues on the BMA, if you have an opportunity from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m., pull up to Beech Street School, see our kids in action, see our community partners in action. Also, maybe take another look to see the impact of phase one and the continuation of the new Beech Street School project. So, you'll be able to see where our investments are going in the city, but also an opportunity to also have some amazing conversations with our educators, our families, and get to see also the challenges that our families are facing in the city from your point of view. So please, if you have time, go say hi to them again from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. they provide pizza, so it'll be great. Please pull up, y'all. If you do have an opportunity, I'd love to see y'all there. Myself and Chairman Barry will be volunteering there. So, we will check y'all in. We're excited to see y'all there.

Alderman Fajardo: I just wanted to say thank you to Stan Garrity, Committeeman Stan Garrity, for sharing the information about the history of the Dunlap building owner, Thomas Dunlap. I just really appreciate how he always brings sort of texture and color to the history of our city doing this research just because he loves it. I think we're all better for it for him having brought it to our attention.

Alderman Dexter: One quick announcement. Congratulations to Chief Marr and the men and women of the Manchester Police Department on achieving their Cleary Act certification. It just shows the commitment that Manchester has for public safety.

Mayor Ruais: Great work gentlemen. I know they were both down there last week in Arizona. Thank you both for attending.

Alderman Kantor: I think this is important because we're wrapping up the winter. One of our residents, Troy Micklon from ward nine, brought up that our city ordinance 150.061 is in contradiction to New Hampshire RSA 131:113 and case law. This was regarding snow removal being the responsibility of cities rather than property owners. I know he provided handouts, which I have one, but I'm not sure if everyone got a chance to look at it. Even though our snow season has ended, the board never discussed this item and I was wondering if we could send it to committee to discuss so we can be ahead of the game for next year. I just believe that we should align with the state and so there's no confusion, especially with sidewalks, and whose responsibility it is.

M. Normand: Your honor that was received and filed this evening on your consent agenda. It already went to committee.

Alderman Terrio: She's talking about something else.

Alderman Kantor: Well, then maybe I just want to bring it back up.

Alderman Kaw-uh: You're referring to sidewalks, right? This is different from the vehicles.

Mayor Ruais: So, it is different. Okay.

*On motion of **Alderman Kantor**, duly seconded by **Alderman Terrio**, it was voted to refer the item to the Committee on Public Safety, Health & Traffic.*

*There being no further business, on motion of **Alderman Trisciani**, duly seconded by **Alderman Terrio**, 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: 10:39PM
Minutes Prepared By: Michael Intranuovo*