

BOARD OF MAYOR AND ALDERMEN

May 5, 2026 at 7:00 PM

Mayor Ruais called the meeting to order.

Mayor Ruais called for the Pledge of Allegiance; this function being led by Alderman Kaw-uh.

A moment of silence was observed.

The Clerk called the roll.

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

Absent: Alderman Trisciani

Mayor Ruais: With the board's indulgence, I have two quick recognitions that I would like to make this evening. Deputy Director Owen Friend-Gray, please come on down. I have a resolution this evening recognizing our fantastic public works officials that we have here in the city of Manchester. Whereas public works professionals focus on infrastructure, facilities and services that are of vital importance to sustainable and resilient communities and to public health, high quality of life, and the well-being of the people of Manchester. And whereas these infrastructure, facilities and services could not be provided without the dedicated efforts of public works professionals who are engineers, managers, and employees at all levels of government and the private sector who are responsible for rebuilding, improving, and protecting our nation's transportation, water supply, water treatment and solid waste systems, public buildings, and other structures and facilities essential for our citizens. And whereas it is in the public interest for the citizens and civic leaders in Manchester to gain knowledge of and maintain an ongoing interest and understanding of the importance of public works and public works programs in their respective communities. And whereas the year 2026 marks the 66th annual National Public Works Week, sponsored by the American Public Works Association. Now therefore, I, Mayor Jay Ruais, on behalf of the City of Manchester, do hereby designate the week of May 17th to the 23rd of 2026 as National Public Works Week. We urge all

citizens to join with representatives of the American Public Works Association and government agencies and activities, events and ceremonies designed to pay tribute to our public works professionals, engineers, managers and employees, and to recognize the substantial contributions they make to protecting our health, safety and advancing the quality of life for all. Thank you for the work you do. And now this one is truly an honor as well. Caroline, why don't you come on up? Whereas Caroline G. Martell, a resident of Manchester, New Hampshire, has demonstrated exceptional dedication to leadership, service and personal growth through her extensive involvement in Scouting America. And whereas she has earned the prestigious rank of Eagle Scout, becoming the first female resident of Manchester to achieve this distinction and has further been recognized as one of the 2025 New Hampshire Eagle Scouts of the year. And whereas Caroline has held numerous leadership roles across multiple scouting programs, including Senior Patrol Leader and Vice President of Program, consistently mentoring younger scouts and strengthening her units. And whereas, her commitment to service is exemplified through her Eagle Scout project, in which she planned and led the creation of a remembrance and reflection park at the County Pauper's Cemetery, restoring dignity to those buried in unmarked graves and providing a meaningful space for the community. And whereas, through her achievements, including earning over 130 merit badges, leading high adventure initiatives, and promoting conservation and outdoor ethics, Caroline Martell has made a lasting and positive impact on the Manchester community and serves as a model of excellence and citizenship. Now therefore, I, Mayor Jay Ruais, on behalf of the City of Manchester, do hereby recognize Caroline G. Martell for her outstanding accomplishments and contributions and commend her for her leadership, service and dedication to the values of scouting. Congratulations.

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.

Rob Chebook, Ward 4: I'm not really here to speak for or against anything. I'm here as a citizen of Manchester that has lived here for over 30 years, and I've watched my taxes go from \$1,300 a year to almost \$6,000 a year, and I'm not sure what it's going to be with this next evaluation. I know things get more expensive over time, but is this city really being a good and honest ward of taxpayer money? It would probably be good to put a face to that money, because saying taxpayers is extremely detached and impersonal. It's all of you, me, the people in this audience, our spouses, parents, grandparents, and kids with all the bonding. It's our grandchildren at this point, too. I want to quickly touch on a few points, and I know there are plenty more. Now the skate park; is it needed? No. Would it be nice to have? Yes. Does it have to be today? No. When an alderman asked about trying to raise private funds to pay for this, like many other communities have done, she was answered with snarky comebacks, which I really hope those aldermen apologize for because I didn't hear one publicly in this chamber. We had a skate park on the east side that was demolished because of its condition. The park was there for 13 years before it was deemed unsafe and the city tossed around the idea of finding a private investor to take it over. After 18 years, it was demolished. How long are we bonding this project for? Will it still be in a usable condition at the end of this bond? Has anyone figured out how much money per year for maintenance, upkeep and repairs? On the schools, there's really just so much to go through. One-time Covid fund money used to hire administrators that are now added to the budget. Consistent decline in enrollment with consistent rise in costs. Most schools are at or below 80% capacity and we're building additions. Doesn't make sense. How many offices does the school department have there in West High School? They have a sign at the old arts college on Chestnut and a sign at the library. Are there more? What's the cost of these? Is the administration bloated? Why is it always that the schools have to cut sports, different programs, and fire teachers and never get rid of administration? Hanover Street is one of the nicest streets in Manchester already. Why does it need improvement? I know it's grant money. I'm not saying don't spend it. I mean, it's already approved. We also have to kick in \$400,000. Wouldn't that money be better spent on creating another street downtown like Hanover Street? Instead of having one really nice street downtown, we should be looking at slowly making all the streets in the area like Hanover Street. Key word is slowly. Buses to Livingston. An alderman came up with what I thought was a great idea, getting inner-city kids to Livingston for free. I was also extremely impressed that he was looking for donations and setup a GoFundMe. In

my opinion, I think this is the only thing I've heard in this chamber that really shouldn't need private funding. A city of this size should have buses across every major road into every major stop in the city. I've never used the buses, so I don't know the routes. For us to give school kids free bus rides, I don't think it's going to break the bank. And they already give the MTA \$2 million a year. So, in closing, just think about your parents, your grandparents, your kids, and your grandkids, when doing budgeting because it's our money you're spending, not just taxpayer money.

Melodye Smith, Pearl Street: I'm here tonight to speak about the budget. So, no one in the city can afford the ridiculous request of the school district. And yes, I care about the kids. I know that's the first question that comes up. I'm honestly wondering if we all do. Throwing more money into this district at this point with these abysmal results in the district is like pouring gas on a fire. And sure, it'll burn hotter and brighter for a few minutes, but then it just goes and continues to burn. We need a strong plan. We need new leadership to turn the school district around. The test scores, the kids' attendance, are discouraging and the bullying epidemic continues. There is a lack of discipline and accountability. The administration is overfunded and bloated, and there are many unnecessary programs that taxpayers should not be required to pay for. The Beech Street School project was forced down our throats at a ridiculous cost, and now contamination is found at that site. I'm kind of wondering who checked on that before this boondoggle happened. So, you are voting to raise taxes. The people that you claim to care for are being taxed out of their homes. Parents renting their homes cannot afford the taxes, having to pay more and more for rent. The kids lose their safety and their security of a home. The quote affordable housing being built is great, but single head of households cannot afford those type of rents and this is what I see going on in the city right now. And this is only me. And it could be a skewed vision, but this is what I'm seeing. I'm seeing that we are overtaxing and we are overspending. And we are doing this and we are trying to get low-income poor people and the elderly out of this city. So, we are catering to the few and not to the many, as we saw on the Hanover Street blunder. We are forcing the elderly to have to sell their homes and they can't afford to pay the taxes. It's good for the housing market. So, then we can have the young professionals that are being enticed to come so they can come and move in. They will pay more rent. They will have higher mortgages, higher taxes, and they can go along with the ridiculous requests of a failing

school district. Because if you throw enough money at the problem, you won't have to be responsible for it. It's time to listen to what the people want, not the smug little group of selfish friends that we owe favors to. Stop listening to the people who don't even live here and want to spend more and more of the city's money. Enough is enough. Please do the right thing. Vote on a budget that is affordable. And just remember, we have to be frugal in our home budgets. We need to be frugal in the city, too.

Rich Girard, 283 Orange Street: For the past several weeks, you have been accused of creating the looming school budget shortfall by depriving the schools of all they're allegedly due under the tax cap. This narrative completely ignores how much school spending has increased since the tax cap was adopted. The first budget under the tax cap was fiscal 2012. The first override in fiscal 2015 was justified to increase school spending. In fiscal 2016, the cap wasn't overridden, but all new tax revenue from both the city and school sides of the budget was used to increase school spending, essentially doubling the school spending increase. In fiscal years 2017, 2018, 2019 and 2020, the cap was again overridden. Again, mostly for schools, including a \$6.6 million spike above the cap just for schools in fiscal 2020. Fiscal 2023 saw yet another tax cap override. With tax cap overrides in six out of eleven years, school spending jumped from \$150 million to \$187 million between fiscal years 2012 and 2023, an increase of \$37 million, or 25%. Note well that this does not include approximately \$60 million given to the schools in fiscal years 2022 and 2023 from Covid relief funds. In fiscal 2024, the board allowed the schools to cheat the cap by claiming \$3 million from emergency reserves as one time revenue, turning the \$1.4 million tax cap required spending cut into a \$1.6 million increase. The board then gave the schools a nearly \$36 million windfall in unexpected state aid, jacking its budget to \$227 million from the originally appropriated \$191 million, which didn't count another \$30 million in Covid money. In fiscal 2025 after receiving \$228 million, another \$6.5 million in state aid fell from the sky and was given to the schools, pushing their budget to over \$234 million, which used another \$9 million in one-time funds as revenue to again avoid a tax cap required cut. The current fiscal year saw a \$12 million increase in state aid, and another \$9 million emergency reserve funds used as revenue to turn another cap required spending cut into a \$3.5 million increase. Since the last tax cap override, school spending has increased by \$51 million, over 27%. In total, spending has increased \$88 million, or 59%, since the tax cap went into effect, not including the \$90

million in Covid funds they spent. Over that same time, the district lost 3,824 students, or 25%. Folks, I have no doubt the schools need more money to conduct business as usual. The problem is that business as usual has led to skyrocketing costs, plummeting enrollment, and disastrous proficiency scores. The most recent of which show that 72% of our students are not proficient in reading, 82% are not proficient in math, and 86% are not proficient in science. Isn't it time to stop reflexively feeding the beast, demand answers, and hold the schools accountable for their spending choices and results? Will you continue to allow them to blame an alleged lack of funding for these choices and failures? Clearly, soaring spending hasn't helped the children. How could spending even more be for them?

Troy Micklon, 29 Ode Way: Three topics. I'll go fast on these. I want to thank the DPW for paving all the potholes on Central Street. Coming here today was so much better. I don't know if you guys have gone down in the last couple weeks, it is so much better. Second item. I know we've heard these numbers before, but I feel like they need to be said again. In 2015, the number of students was almost 15,000. English scores 23%. Efficiency in math 20%. Science 18%. In 2025, the number of students is shy of 12,000, with English proficiency at 28%, math at 18%, and science 14%. We need to change how things are done in our schools. We need to look for optimizations, modernizations, and more efficiencies rather than just throwing money at the problems. I have a kid in the school district here. I know what it's like. The schools are failing, and we need to maybe look at changing up the way that things are done there. For example, go back to when we had students of different abilities grouped separately. Instead of putting them all in the same classroom where those more advanced kids are being held back because they have to wait for the rest of their peers to catch up with them. And finally, moving on to my third item, last year, New Hampshire passed HB 467 regarding social districts. I haven't seen much from Manchester on that topic at all. Laconia just last week announced that they're going to start implementing it on May 21st, Thursdays through Saturdays starting from 12 p.m. to 8 p.m.. I think this is an opportunity for us to look at doing an experiment here in Manchester and bring that type of thing to the downtown. I think it would be amazing.

Glenn Ouellette, Ward 3: First of all, whatever you do with the budget, public education is not about having people play sports or music at their parents expense and not allowing

those who can't afford it not to take part. Public education is supposed to help every single student in our city, whether they can afford it or not. The days of not educating our kids have been gone for generations. We should not come back to that. Please do not allow payment to play sports or other extracurricular activities. That would be a disaster for our city. The roads, we had a hard winter and when we have hard winters, we have a lot more potholes. I realize that, and I too am happy that Central has been paved. It was ridiculous. Knowing you got to get back apart because once it's done, you're going to redo it anyway. But it was a solution that needed to be done. Sometimes we have to spend a little to do the right thing, and other times we can save a little, sometimes even a lot, for not doing the right thing. We have come to an age where it's so expensive and the incomes are not really going up that much to meet that system. So, we need to be more careful with how we spend our money. If the housing becomes unaffordable, then we lose our people. And that is not what we want here in the city. We have a great city, I have a lot of faith in this city. I've been here almost 41 years and I love it, and I want to continue seeing it grow and prosper for everyone. I believe in a city of one. That means please do not close the west side branch of the library. We are a city of one, and take the money that is provided by us because we in New Hampshire also pay federal taxes. So, if you get a federal grant to repair that building and they'll pay 75% of the cost, do it. It's as simple as that. We need to be frugal with our money. And remember, for a city or any local community, if you can't take care of our backyards, how are we going to expect our state and our federal government to be cared for?

Austin Bouchard, Ward 2: Tonight, I want to speak about the proposed police budget. But before I say anything else, I want to say a name into this record: Nickenley Turenne. Because budgets are not merely financial documents, they are moral documents. They reflect what a city is willing to prioritize, what it is willing to tolerate, and what it is willing to ask the public to accept. Mr. Turenne was shot and killed by the Manchester Police Department on December 6th of last year. We are now in May. The state investigation remains incomplete. The body camera footage still has not been released, and according to reporting by Manchester Ink Link, the officers involved were returned not to limited duty, not to administrative assignment, but to their regular patrol jobs within days and weeks of that shooting. That return to duty was not a decision made by the state. It was a decision made by the department itself after an internal administrative review. And that is deeply

troubling. I want to be clear; I am not here tonight to prejudge the final outcome of this investigation because I do not have all the facts and neither does the public. And that is precisely the problem. When a man is dead, when months have passed, when body camera footage has not been released, and when officers involved have already been returned to regular patrol, the absence of transparency is not a neutral thing. It deepens public concern and when a government withholds, delays, and surrounds a matter of this gravity with silence, it calls itself into question. It invites scrutiny. It creates doubt where transparency and honesty could have created confidence in such moments. It is not public skepticism that indicts the institution. It is the institution's own opacity, and the longer this is allowed to sit unresolved, the more it invites a stain to take hold not only on the department but on the conscience of the city itself. That is why this budget question matters. As recently reported, the mayor said filling sworn vacancies in the Manchester Police Department is a priority and that the department stood at 27 vacancies at last check. But the department's own staffing history tells us that fully funding 27 vacancies is not grounded in recent reality. In 2021, 35 officers were hired, 22 left. In 2022, 20 were hired, 21 left. In 2023, 24 were hired, 26 left. In 2024, 29 were hired, 27 left. In 2025, 16 were hired and 18 left. Over five years, that is 124 hires, 114 departures, and a net gain of ten officers ten. So, when this board is asked to fully fund 27 vacancies, it is fair to ask whether that reflects a serious staffing plan or merely a hope that runs against the department's own trend. And in a year when this budget is constrained and difficult choices are being made across city government, that matters even more because an unrealistic budget ask is not neutral. Money committed to vacancies that history tells us are unlikely to be filled is money that cannot be directed to other real and immediate needs in this city. So, these issues are not separate. They are inseparable. We cannot allow business as usual to move forward in this budget process as though this were a peripheral matter. It is not peripheral. A man is dead. The public still does not know the full facts. The department has chosen to return those officers involved to regular patrol, and now the city is being asked to fully fund 27 vacancies, despite years of staffing results that do not support that ask.

Ken Tasse, Ward 6: First, I'd like to thank you for your work on this committee. It is a sacrifice. We all know that. And we appreciate it; I appreciate it. I'm here tonight as the chairman of the Manchester Republican Committee. I'm someone who cares deeply

about the future of the City of Manchester and about the kids who attend our schools. More than speaking specifically about any particular policy, I know that the budget is in debate right now, but I want to speak more to priorities and to principles. To the six Republicans on the board, you were elected to represent a set of ideas like fiscal responsibility, accountability, and respect for the taxpayer. This matters more now than ever. You are obliged to uphold the principles that were represented to the volunteers and your constituents who helped you get elected. Just a few years ago, the school board approved roughly \$290 million for school construction for the long-term building plan and construction plan that included \$26 million for temporary classrooms. And this doesn't happen by accident. Those are policy decisions. We're hearing calls from the school board to exceed the tax cap because there isn't enough for the kids. But taxpayers deserve more. We can't spend at historic levels and then turn around and say that the only solution is to take more tax money from the people of the city and to the broader public. This is why balance matters when one party dominates decision making, especially on something as significant as education. No one wins. There's no debate. There's no discussion. And if there should be a No Kings rally, it should be about the one party rule on the Board of School Committee; 14 Democrats on the Board of School Committee. To the Republicans on this board, particularly those who may feel pressured to go along to get along, this is your moment. Leadership isn't about blending in. It's about standing up when it counts. We ask you, and we expect you, to not override the tax cap or the revenue cap. If you want to buck the system that is monopolized by 14 Democrats on the school board and the majority Democrats on the Board of Mayor and Aldermen, go to manchestergop.com and click on volunteer.

Curt Payne, 85 Laurel Street: I'm the guy that rides his bike around town and picks up everybody's trash that they throw on the ground. I want to say one thing. First of all, the rail trail, that's the best money that Manchester has ever spent. I love it to pieces. As far as the businesses, outside the businesses that profit off of the streets, can we take a little bit of pride in what we have, the land that we walk on for free? We profit off of the streets and care nothing about how they look to our patrons. I just wish that any business in Manchester would take more pride in their space, that's all. I just would like some help, any help getting that accomplished. I'll keep coming back.

Nicole Trombly, Ward 2: I've been a Manchester resident since 2014. I graduated from West High School quite a long time ago. This is very spur of the moment. I just saw that you guys were having a meeting, and I decided to come down to show my support for Manchester schools. I am a second-year teacher at Hillside. It is my second career. I was in marketing for a very long time. I decided that I wanted to do something that made a difference. I teach at Hillside. I teach art, and coming from the corporate world, it is astounding what these teachers do on a day-to-day basis. The students that are at Hillside, it's kind of amazing. You have the north end kids who look like they have everything. They have houses and food and security. And then you have the inner-city kids that don't know where they're staying for the night. I don't have numbers, but there are quite a few of them that don't even know where they're sleeping. They have food insecurity. So how do they even care about parts of speech or multiplication? I'm not sure. Those basic needs aren't even getting met. I thank you all for your service. Manchester, I think is a great city. We have a lot to offer. And these kids, some of their interaction of being supported only happens at school. They get a lot of services there. There are a lot of kids. Hillside has well over a thousand kids. There are kids in the modulars. I teach fifth grade class. I have a whole bunch of kids that don't speak English. Spanish is their primary language. So, in some of the numbers that you've heard please keep in mind that some of those kids may not speak English, that they're getting tested on things they don't really understand. And then IEPs and individualized education plans. There are tons of those. So, we talk about efficiencies. I majored in economics as well as art when I went to UNH. I'm a New Hampshire kid. I fully believe that Manchester can do amazing things and we have to make tough decisions. I'm a landowner, I pay taxes; I don't want mine going up to \$12,000 a year. At the same time, my daughter and her friend were here, she went to Smyth Road, she went to Hillside. She's now at Central. She's in AP classes. She's a smart kid, but she had a supportive house where she knew that her parents cared for her and she had food and she had support and some of these kids don't have it. I urge you to think about the decisions that you make in the budget with education. These are the kids that might stay in Manchester and might be the next generation of Manchester residents. And what kind of people do we want those people to be? Do we want them to be conscientious citizens? Do we want them to care about their community? There's no easy answer. I just want to urge you that despite that there might be inefficiencies, the

schools are an amazing place. They're full of amazing teachers and children. So, thank you very much for your time and thank you very much for your service.

Mayor Ruais asked if there was anyone else present 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 further receive and file any written documentation presented.*

CONSENT AGENDA

Accept BMA Minutes

2. Minutes from the April 14 Special BMA meeting, and April 21 Finance and BMA meetings.

Approve Under Supervision of the Department of Highways

3. Pole Petitions:
 - Bedel Street: 11-1788 (1)
 - Rimmon Street: 12-1023 (1)
 - Biron Street: 12-1024 (1)
 - Second Street: 12-1025 (1)
 - Douglas Street: 12-1026 (1)

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

4. Sidewalk Petition (Residential):
 - 7 Riddle Street
 - 11 - 15 Harold Street
 - 145 Knowlton Street
 - 984 Page Street
5. Green Streets Canopy Program:
 - 9 Cass Street (2) Right-of-Way
 - 55 Bernice Avenue (2) Private Property
 - 95 Jewett Street (1) Right-of-Way
 - 242 Oak Street (2) Private Property
 - 454 Island Pond Road (1) Private Property

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

COMMITTEE ON ACCOUNTS, ENROLLMENT AND REVENUE ADMINISTRATION

6. Advising that the update on the Revolving Loan Fund has been accepted.
(Unanimous vote)

7. Advising that the Finance Department reports:
 - Accounts receivable over 90 days
 - Aging report
 - Outstanding receivableshave been accepted.
(Unanimous vote)

8. Advising that the Monthly Financial Report (unaudited) for the first nine months of fiscal year 2026 has been accepted.
(Unanimous vote)

COMMITTEE ON ADMINISTRATION/INFORMATION SYSTEMS

9. Recommending that the bylaws of the Arts Commission as presented be approved.
(Unanimous vote)

10. Recommending that Ordinance Amendment:

“Amending the Code of Ordinances of the City of Manchester by amending §32.029 Funding and Resource Management pertaining to the Art Commission by increasing spending authorization without board approval to \$1,000 per project.”

ought to pass as amended and be referred to the Committee on Bills on Second Reading for technical review.
(Unanimous vote)

COMMITTEE ON LANDS AND BUILDINGS

11. Recommending that the request from Stark Brewing to amend its agreement for outdoor dining in a portion of Arms Lot from April 15 through October 15, 2026, at a cost of \$1,260, be approved, in coordination with the Parking Division, for the following days/times:
 - Monday – Friday from 6PM to 11PM
 - Saturday from 11AM to 11PM
 - Sunday from 11AM to 9PM
 - Friday, July 3 from 11AM to 11PM*(Unanimous vote)*

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

JOINT SCHOOL BUILDINGS COMMITTEE

- 12.** Advising that the Manchester School District Priority I status and financial report for March 2026 submitted by LeftField has been accepted.
(Unanimous vote with the exception of Aldermen Fajardo and Thomas, who were absent)

Alderman Sapienza requested agenda item number 12 be removed from the consent agenda.

Alderman Sapienza: We have an estimate of how far along the phase one building project is for the schools, and that's terrific. For the four middle schools, the latest information comes out to approximately 27%. Does anybody have a figure as far as how much money has been spent so far? Anybody on the joint committee or perhaps Sharon? The report was about 500 pages. I didn't find it in there. If somebody has a total number of the money spent so far in that project, that would be great.

Sharon Wickens, Finance Officer: I contacted Karen DeFrancis, the business financial officer over at the school district, and they've spent \$71.6 million so far.

Alderman Sapienza: \$71.6 million is the grand total spent so far?

S. Wickens: Yes.

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

REGULAR BUSINESS

- 13.** Nominations:
Fire Commission:
Mark Mulcahy to succeed himself as a regular member, term to expire May 1, 2029
Keri Papalardo to fill a vacancy as a regular member, term to expire May 1, 2028
Steve Connors to succeed Robert Corbeil as a regular member, term to expire May 1, 2029
(Note: Pursuant to Rule 23 of the Board of Mayor and Aldermen, these nominations will layover to the next meeting of the Board.)

- 14.** Confirmation:
Manchester Transit Authority
Elyza Agosta to succeed herself as a regular member, term to expire May 1, 2031

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

- 15.** Communication from Victoria Prestejohn, Human Resources Director, advising the Board of her resignation effective May 15, 2026.

*On motion of **Alderman O'Neil**, duly seconded by **Alderman Burkush**, it was voted to accept with regret.*

Mayor Ruais: I know she could not be here tonight, but I want to thank Victoria for her service to the City of Manchester, and certainly wish her the best of luck moving forward in her next position.

- 16.** Communication from Owen Friend-Gray, Deputy Public Works Director, requesting the establishment of a tax increment financing (TIF) district for the purpose of financing the construction of infrastructure related to the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) grant.

***Alderman Barry** moved to table the item. **Alderman Burkush** duly seconded the motion.*

Mayor Ruais: DPW has asked for this to be tabled. They needed some additional information. We'll bring it up on the 19th, assuming that it's ready to go.

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

17. Communication from Mayor Ruais providing an update on the Aged and Infirm Shelter and accompanying Engagement Center.

Mayor Ruais: This is my communication on the aged and infirm shelter. It has been two months since this opened on March 1st, so I wanted to provide some broad updates. Happy to answer any questions that any folks have. I know that we had a number of conversations about this in February, so I wanted to provide an update. Now that we're two months in, here are a couple of the highlights from this. One important thing I think that we had put out a couple weeks ago was on the co-location of the mental health center on that first floor. The idea being that we can start that one stop shop to eliminate the barriers that individuals have; it makes it better than having the outreach folks that we have in the city trying to go to either encampments or come to the downtown, but having it housed in one place facilitates that process. Director Westover is now permanently stationed down at the shelter, so he's no longer stationed in my office. He is down at 200 Elm Street, which has been helping with that collaboration and communication with the community partners that are going in there on a daily basis. We're continuing to apply for the state level opioid abatement funding. Again, as I had outlined in the February document, we were going to go after some of those state funds to ensure that we're not paying for this with city dollars. The lift is going in the back that Chief Cashin had talked about, to facilitate movement so they don't have to go from outside, around, and down the back, but they're able to have that lift down for those that are in wheelchairs. We had a number of legitimate concerns regarding the location and whether or not this was going to cause any safety issues or if it was going to bring drugs or poor behavior to that area. I asked Chief Cashin to pull together a list of either arrests or overdoses that have occurred at that location. None. Not a single overdose, not a single arrest has occurred in that location. The ambulances that folks have seen, there are ambulances for medical calls. As we had talked about, there is no respite care or certainly not enough respite care that is in the area to take care of those individuals who are infirmed. So, when somebody might get released from a hospital and they don't have a place to stay, they immediately go to our streets. Having that waypoint where they can go to this location means that they're not making medical calls from the streets or in the woods around your wards, that these medical emergencies can be addressed at the location. I think the whole purpose of that is to say that the intent behind this, to care for those most vulnerable, is being met

here with the emergency calls that are taking place to ensure that that is not occurring on our streets. Happy to answer any questions that you all might have. Happy to provide additional information and further updates if you guys want to monthly or quarterly.

Alderman Kaw-uh: I haven't had a chance to really dig into this, but I had heard that or was made aware that the curfew at the shelter interfered with someone's employment or their ability to earn money, and I was wondering if that could be looked into. I know that there are different rules that have been adopted and that were asked for by this board, but I want to make sure that if someone is able and willing to work and they're trying to, that they're not held back by a curfew. I would just love to learn more about that.

Mayor Ruais: If it's the wish of the board, happy to have Jake and Melanie come back to talk through the rules that are there at the location. I can certainly look into the curfew for you.

Alderman Terrio: I thought this shelter was for the aged and infirmed. I'd be surprised if any of them could work, because I thought that the people who could work were going to go elsewhere, and this was going to be for people who use wheelchairs and are on oxygen.

Mayor Ruais: On the infirm side, yes. There are still some individuals that are over the age of 65 who are still working. Those that maybe they're on Medicaid and Medicare, but they still have the ability to work 20 hours a week or something to that effect, they're still able to work.

Alderman Terrio: You had mentioned there were no overdoses and no arrests. How many calls for medical services have there been and how many calls for police assistance?

Mayor Ruais: 20 medical calls. No police calls that I'm aware of at this time. I asked if there have been any arrests on site. There have not been any arrests.

Alderman Terrio: Not arrests.

Mayor Ruais: I know the Community Policing Division and Squad One with Chief Cashin make regular patrols down in that area. But in terms of getting calls to the location, I'm not aware of any.

Peter Marr, Police Chief: I'm not aware of any. I also didn't delve into it and look into it. So, I don't want to give you any bad information.

Mayor Ruais: I do know that prior, as we were working to transition from February to March, as we were getting ready to open, we had multiple meetings with Chief Cashin and the entire first responder apparatus. And the point that we made clear was we get one chance to make a first impression. We have to ensure that we're doing patrols down there for Squad One, for the Community Policing Division, to ensure that we set the tone immediately, that this is not a place where any kind of poor behavior is going to be tolerated.

Alderman O'Neil: If someone has signed previously, it could have been two years ago, a no trespass form, they don't have to resign it again once they've signed it, it stays in the system?

P. Marr: Are you talking about a business owner or a property owner? Yes, they're generally good for one year, so they should be re-upping them every year.

Alderman O'Neil: Do you know is Community Policing following up at all?

P. Marr: Yes, we do.

Alderman O'Neil: I saw it worked successfully over the weekend, but just made me think about a couple places.

P. Marr: We try to have them re-up that every single year.

Alderman Kantor: Just checking in on registered sex offenders. How many are at the shelter?

P. Marr: I don't know that answer off the top of my head. I can certainly provide it to you and shoot you an email. I didn't know I was getting asked about the shelter.

Alderman Kantor: Sorry, chief. It's been a concern of mine because I'm concerned about the safety of everyone's well-being there. If it's 65, what I'm looking at is there's a 60-year-old and a 62-year-old sex offender. I don't know if my information is correct. So just wondering, are you supposed to be 65? Last time I checked, Jake said that they don't check IDs, so how do we verify that they're 65? I'm just trying to understand. And have you had any complaints from the business owners in that area?

Mayor Ruais: We did the meeting that you were there for in the fall. I gave my cell phone to all of the individuals that were in that meeting. We had a subsequent follow up meeting, Chief Cashin and myself, with the ones that are in that immediate area. And I said, call me with any issues, anything that you might have. I've gotten a couple text messages about an individual on this day or an individual on that day, but there's been no great numbers of people consolidating in an area that I've been made aware of. There have been one offs here or there of somebody who's been transient on the way through or sleeping behind a building or something like that.

Alderman Kantor: I was just wondering because you said 65.

Mayor Ruais: When individuals go into the shelter, they're immediately connected to the coordinated entry system through the continuum of care. So, their information, their age, their demographics, all of that goes into the coordinated entry system. So that's a way in which you can check who is there. Regarding demographics, like age, things of that nature, to the extent that I'm able to through HIPAA, I'm more than happy to provide all the information that I had. I think in previous iterations of these presentations, I think the board has been given certain demographics. I would just want to make sure that I'm not tripping over anything, but happy to provide whatever data we're allowed to.

Alderman Kantor: I was just wondering if we're sticking with 65 or are we going with 60?

Mayor Ruais: My understanding is it's 65. If there are individuals who are 60 and have some physical condition or something like that, that will qualify on the injured side, or they have some kind of medical condition, then then they would fall under that category.

Alderman Kantor: So, it's not aged and.

Mayor Ruais: It's aged and infirm. They don't have to meet both qualifications.

Alderman Dexter: I just wanted to let you know, and to kind of follow up to Alderman Terrio, I've given my number to several of the businesses in the area when this was all happening back in February and March. I have followed up and I have not had any complaints. They just said they noticed the uptick in traffic, but they have not had any specific complaints.

Mayor Ruais: One thing I would obviously say is that I didn't send this letter out to say mission accomplished. Clearly, I'm well aware that we have a lot more work to do on this issue, but I thought it was important to update the board a couple months in about where we are and where we currently stand.

Alderman Fajardo: Thank you for the update. You had asked about a frequency of updates. I would be curious to know where my colleagues are at, but I would think that it would be nice to have this kind of high-level update on a regular basis. I feel like it should be more frequent than quarterly. I'm not sure if anyone else has an opinion on this, but is monthly something we could work on?

Mayor Ruais: I'm fine with whatever the wishes of the board are. It's just a matter of us reaching out to them and saying, can you please compile the data, pull the info. So, if the wish is you want to start on monthly and then if you guys tell me it's too much, and we don't even need to necessarily talk about it every time, it could just be something that is in there for informational purposes. And if folks have questions like aldermen did tonight, we can get answers for that.

Alderman Fajardo: I think that would be a great place to start.

Mayor Ruais: I will start with monthly and then we can take it from there and at the board's discretion, we can lengthen or shorten it.

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

The Committee on Community Improvement respectfully recommends, after due and careful consideration, that the Amending Resolution and Budget Authorizations providing for the transfer and expenditure of funds in the amount of \$15,000 for CIP 212122 ARPA – Healthy Food Access Strategic Plan & Implementation be approved and referred to the Committee on Finance.

*On motion of **Alderman Burkush**, duly seconded by **Alderman O'Neil**, the report of the committee was accepted and its recommendation adopted.*

Alderman Bonilla: I would like to say, this is awesome. Thank you. Honestly, thank you to Elaine and the Health Department. We have finally fully funded the bus pilot route. So, I want to just give a round of applause to our Health Department. I also wanted to say thank you to the board, thank you for supporting this project and supporting transporting our kids from the center city to the north side to access not just the pool, parks, providing access to our seniors at the senior center, as well as the Hannaford Plaza. It's a temporary solution, especially relating to the pool, but overall, it's going to give our communities access. So, this is exciting. It's an exciting milestone in the city. And let's just keep going. So, more details to come on the ribbon cutting on June 22nd. We'll be working, myself and Elaine and all the members of the age friendly action plan. I also wanted to give a shout out to the members of the age friendly action plan. I know Alderman Kaw-uh is in it as well as Alderwoman Trisciani. So again, it has been a great, amazing effort. But more details to come on the ribbon cutting on the first day of this bus pilot route, June 22nd. So, it'll be an amazing day. I know our mayor will be present, too. Gracias, everybody.

Mayor Ruais: A double thanks again to Director Thomas and Elaine for coming forward with this solution and working with Alderman Bonilla and the board. Thank you very much for that.

19. Bond Resolutions:

“Authorizing General Airport Revenue Refunding Bonds in the amount of Seventeen Million Five Hundred Thousand Dollars (\$17,500,000) for Refunding Certain Outstanding Municipal Revenue Bonds of the City issued on Behalf of Manchester Airport.”

“Authorizing Bonds, Notes or Lease Purchases in the amount of Two Hundred Forty-Eight Million Four Hundred Seventy-Five Thousand Dollars (\$248,475,000) for 2026 CIP #C270071826 Various Capital Improvement Projects (EPD) to pay for various Capital Improvement Projects by the Environmental Protection Division, and for the payment of all other incidental costs related thereto. Projects include but are not limited to: design and construction of combined sewer overflow mitigation projects, upgrades to the wastewater treatment plant, projects to address aging and failing environmental infrastructure and projects necessary for compliance with the Clean Water Act.”

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

*On motion of **Alderman Barry**, duly seconded by **Alderman Burkush**, it was voted that the Bond Resolutions ought to pass and be Enrolled.*

20. Budget Resolutions:

"Resolution 'Approving the Community Improvement Program for Fiscal Year 2027, Raising and Appropriating Monies Therefore, and Authorizing Implementation of Said Program."

“Appropriating to the Parking Fund the sum of \$5,142,275 from parking revenues for the Fiscal Year 2027.”

"Appropriating the sum of \$33,804,234 from Sewer User Rental Charges to the Environmental Protection Division for the Fiscal Year 2027.”

“Appropriating to the Manchester Airport Authority the sum of \$49,366,765 from Special Airport Revenue Funds for the Fiscal Year 2027.”

“Appropriating to the Manchester Transit Authority the sum of \$1,999,838 for the Fiscal Year 2027.”

“Appropriating to the Manchester School District the sum of \$234,981,749 for the Fiscal Year 2027.”

“Appropriating all Incremental Meals and Rooms Tax Revenue Received by the City in the Fiscal Year 2027 and held in the Civic Center Fund, for the payment of

the City's Obligations in Said Fiscal Year under the Financing Agreement.”

“Appropriating to the Manchester School Food and Nutrition Services Program the sum of \$6,300,000 from School Food and Nutrition Services Revenues for the Fiscal Year 2027.”

“Raising Monies and Making Appropriations of \$195,337,885 for the Fiscal Year 2027.”

“Appropriating to the Central Business Service District the sum of \$700,000 from Central Business Service District Funds for the Fiscal Year 2027.”

“Continuation of the Central Business Service District.”

“Authorizing the Finance Officer to Make Certain Budgetary Closings for the Fiscal Year 2026.”

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

***Alderman O’Neil** moved to table the Budget Resolutions. **Alderman Terrio** duly seconded the motion.*

Alderman Sapienza: I'd like to have some discussion on a couple of things.

Mayor Ruais: I'm happy to have a conversation about the budget, but we're not supposed to discuss after a table.

Alderman Sapienza: Well, we skipped over going from 19 to 20. I had asked what item are we on now.

Alderman Kaw-uh: If we're in new business, I figure a discussion could happen.

Matthew Normand, City Clerk: You could withdraw the motion to table.

Mayor Ruais: I don't have a problem having a discussion. I don't have a problem discussing the budget.

Alderman Sapienza moved that the Resolution “Appropriating to the Manchester School District the sum of \$234,981,749 for the Fiscal Year 2027” ought to pass and be Enrolled. Alderman Kantor duly seconded the motion.

Mayor Ruais: He withdrew his motion to table to have a discussion.

Alderman Terrio: But we already voted.

M. Normand: They withdrew the motion to table. They're fine to discuss now; you're in the discussion mode. I think the intent was that Alderman O'Neil was withdrawing his motion to table. Is that correct?

Alderman O'Neil: Correct, as a courtesy to Alderman Sapienza.

Alderman O'Neil withdrew his motion to table.

Mayor Ruais called for a vote on Alderman Sapienza's motion. Alderman Barry requested a roll call vote. Aldermen Barry, Vincent, Thomas, Kaw-uh, Goonan, Dexter, Fajardo, Bonilla, O'Neil, Terrio, and Burkush voted nay. Aldermen Kantor and Sapienza voted yea. The motion failed.

*On motion of **Alderman Barry**, duly seconded by **Alderman O'Neil**, it was voted to table the Budget Resolutions.*

Alderman Sapienza: I actually wasn't quite done.

Mayor Ruais: Well, we had a motion to table. I'm happy to have a conversation about the budget under new business if you'd like.

NEW BUSINESS

Alderman Kaw-uh: This is more of just a question about process. So, we have tabled those budget resolutions. If Alderman Sapienza did want to discuss that or make some

sort of motion, would it be in order for him to try to remove it from the table and then we would have to vote on whether to remove it from the table?

Mayor Ruais: Yes. It could happen at any time when the board is ready to vote on the budget or someone wants to make a motion to consider the budget, we would have to remove it from the table and go from there.

Alderman Bonilla: I also wanted to thank, this is in regards to the bus pilot route, I wanted to acknowledge all the individualized donors as well throughout the city. We got the \$15,000 from the ARPA funding as well as we individually raised and residents contributed \$7,800 to this route. So, thank you to all of those individual donors in the city. I also wanted to acknowledge a great business owner as well in the downtown that helped me, Nick Carnes, with the GoFundMe. So again, thank you to our city for making this a possibility.

Alderman Kantor: As the board knows, the public discussion on Hartnett Lot since 2022 has been that this lot will be private and our residents can no longer rely on that location for public parking options. I had a great conversation with Jeff Belanger and we sent it over to you guys to see. At the next board meeting, I intend to request this board amend the Hanover Street Reconstruction Project to at least accommodate parking on one side of the street. My concern is we made this decision before we knew that the Hartnett Lot wasn't going to be available for public parking. And because of all the great buildings that are going up with dwelling units that aren't going to have parking, my big concern is not enough parking in the center city of Manchester. And so, I am hoping that we can bring this up at the next board meeting.

Mayor Ruais: I don't have a problem with the discussion. I know that there's a lot of information in here. I think it probably makes sense to follow the committee process and have it go to Public Safety if the board's will is to continue further discussion.

Alderman Dexter: I just want to clarify something. These are just referred to as new buildings going up. Many of them are not new buildings going up, but are buildings that are already up and being partially or fully occupied on this list.

Mayor Ruais: Is there a will of the board on this idea?

Alderman Sapienza: Sure. It's a good idea to discuss it at the next meeting. Terrific.

Mayor Ruais: This would probably fall on Alderman Vincent's committee, if you want to speak to it.

Alderman Vincent: If this goes to the committee, then we would have to bring DPW and those guys into this to talk about it, because I know there were safety reasons and why it couldn't do parking and all that stuff. It's a little more in depth than just a conversation and a vote. I think it needs to be done through the process for clarity and to give it its just due, I believe.

***Alderman Kantor** moved to refer the discussion to the Committee on Public Safety, Health and Traffic. **Alderman Vincent** duly seconded the motion. Alderman Kaw-uh requested a roll call vote. Aldermen Kaw-uh, Goonan, Dexter, Fajardo, Bonilla, Burkush, and Barry voted nay. Aldermen Kantor, Terrio, Sapienza, Vincent, and Thomas voted yea. Alderman O'Neil abstained. The motion failed.*

Alderman Sapienza: I have a question about the tax cap number. This particular year, it's 3%. Are we using all four elements of the property taxes? Is it 3% of the revenue raised last year to include municipal, municipal school, state school and county? Or is it simply 3% of the revenue raised last year from municipal, municipal school?

S. Wickens: We use all of the taxes that the city raises.

Mayor Ruais: All means all, in the charter.

S. Wickens: Correct.

Alderman Sapienza: So, the tax cap basically says it's based on the amount of revenue raised in the previous year. We are a collection agency for the County of Hillsborough.

Beyond that it has really has to do with us. Same with state school. The only revenue for the city is the municipal and the municipal school. So that 3% should be applied to last year's revenue raised for municipal and municipal school, not state school and county included.

Mayor Ruais: In the conversations with the Finance Director, and the read on the charter is that all taxes means all taxes, as I understand it.

S. Wickens: The interpretation is all taxes raised. The county doesn't send out a bill for the taxes. The city raises the money to pay all its bills, to pay all its expenses. It's another expense. That is the interpretation of the prior finance director, the prior city solicitor, and I share in that interpretation.

Alderman Sapienza: We'll move on from it. I don't agree with it. I think it should be revenue raised for the City of Manchester, but we'll move on from it. I'd also like to ask the board what is the plan going forward. Because several weeks ago we heard the mayor's, what we'll call, tax cap budget. I thought it made sense. We heard from the public. I think we need to move forward. Are we looking at revenue from the revaluation? Estimated anticipated revenue from the revaluation? I would hope not.

Mayor Ruais: I know there's a group of aldermen that are working on the budget right now. I've had some conversations with them. I'm not going to put a date stamp on it, but I know they're working hard to bring forward a budget and bring in consultation from other aldermen to determine priorities and pass a budget.

Alderman Sapienza: That's terrific. Does anybody care to step forward and say whether or not we're going to use anticipated estimated revenue from the upcoming revaluation, which, by the way, isn't going to be even completed until maybe mid-July? Even then, it's not actually going to be completed.

Alderman Burkush: You already asked me the question and I responded to you in writing saying that we, the group of aldermen that I'm working with, were going to do it based on the revaluation. I answered you that question. I put it in writing.

Alderman Sapienza: Outstanding. I like to have it out there for all the people to know. I just don't like the idea of anticipated estimated revenue from a revaluation that's not even going to be completed until mid-July. I don't think a revaluation should even necessarily be looked at as a source of revenue, because there's an equalization factor, which means taxes don't even necessarily go up with the increase in value. But you know, more information put out there to the public, the sooner the better.

Alderman Thomas: I just wanted to give a quick update about Hope for New Hampshire. We had given funding for their Hope Connection program, and I wanted to give an update to that. So, they had made 1,124 case management interactions. They have referred 35 to detox, 57 have treatment beds, 53 people were housed, 21 actually went into housing, 32 went into sober living, 46 people secured shelter beds, and there were 110 outreach activities engaging 1,167 people. So, this clearly shows they're really doing some good work over there.

Mayor Ruais: Thank you for that. And in my letter, it was fantastic to see that they've been doing some really good work down at 200 Elm as well. They by far have made the most amount of connections than any of the other group that's in there.

Alderman O'Neil: Alderman Thomas, are you comfortable when we get requests, we get a lot of requests for funding and we really don't know how effective those groups would be. Because you work in the profession, are you comfortable? You'll know, because we get a lot of requests when we have no idea what they're really doing and with the limited funds we're involved with, we have got to get them to the right places. You're comfortable that you could make recommendations?

Alderman Thomas: Very comfortable.

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

A True Record. Attest.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matthew Normand". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

City Clerk

Meeting Start Time: 7:00PM
Meeting End Time: 8:06PM
Minutes Prepared By: Michael Intranuovo