

**SPECIAL MEETING
BOARD OF MAYOR AND ALDERMEN
(PUBLIC HEARING – CDBG-CV FUNDING)
August 4, 2026 at 6:00 PM**

Mayor Ruais called the meeting to order.

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

A moment of silence was observed.

The Clerk called the roll.

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

Absent: Alderman Thomas

1. Mayor Ruais advised that the purpose of the public hearing is to update the public on, and take comment on, a \$500,000 CDBG-CV from the NH Community Development Finance Authority for emergency shelter operations operated by the City of Manchester and Families In Transition; that anyone wishing to speak must first step to the nearest microphone when recognized and give his/her name and address in a clear, loud voice for the record; that each person will be given only one opportunity to speak for up to three minutes; and any questions must be directed to the Chair.

Mayor Ruais requested that the Community Development Block Grant consultant make a presentation.

Mayor Ruais: I received a few questions on this this morning, so I just wanted to clear up any confusion if there is any, but this was a grant that the City of Manchester applied for and received last year. So, October 21st we came to the Board of Mayor and Aldermen requesting an opportunity to apply for this grant. We were given this grant. It paid for our part of our winter warming operations throughout the winter time. As a requirement of this grant, we had to do three public hearings last October. This is another requirement of the grant tonight to do a public update on the grant. I'm not up here tonight asking for an

additional \$500,000. There's no new grant request. There are no new opportunities for additional funding. I just wanted to set everybody's mind at ease that this is not an additional request. This is just an update on something that we've already received. For background purposes, this grant was split half and half between us and Families in Transition to provide for winter warming opportunities. We paid for a consultant to oversee that, as was a requirement of the grant, but I just wanted to make sure that everybody was aware I'm not asking for any additional new money. This is not a new grant request. This is something that we did darn near a year ago and are now about to do our fourth public hearing on it. So, there's nothing new here. It was for winter warming and we expended it for winter warming eight months ago because we have a requirement as is stated here, to do this fourth public hearing on this. It's something that we've been doing for over a year, so I was surprised there were questions on it.

Donna Lane, CDBG Consultant: I have to read this to you, and I apologize. It's just part of the requirement, and there are handouts available in the back by the sign in sheets. I'm just going to read a couple paragraphs quickly. Community Development Block Grant funds are available to municipalities through the New Hampshire Community Development Finance Authority. Up to \$500,000 annually is available for economic development projects, up to \$750,000 for public facility projects, up to \$750,000 for housing projects, and up to \$500,000 for emergency activities. Up to \$25,000 is available per planning study grant. I say that, but it's just a requirement that I say that, but that is for what's called small cities, and it's not actually available to Manchester. That's for the rest of the communities in New Hampshire, except for the big five. There was this one special exception to that rule. Up to \$1 million was available through Covid CDBG-CV funding opportunity for public service providers serving unhoused individuals or low- and moderate-income households or persons impacted by Covid 19. All projects must directly benefit a majority of low- and moderate-income persons, so there was some money available for CDBG-CV that was being administered through the New Hampshire Community Development Finance Authority in Concord, but not all of the funds were spent. There was that million dollars that was left over, so they opened another round that you were talking about last October. So that million dollars was available. You guys applied for part of that; \$500,000 was the max you could ask for. You applied for it at that

time. You had those public hearings at that time. And so now, that has already occurred. So, this public hearing will update the public on and take comment on a \$500,000 CDBG-CV for emergency shelter operations. Shelters supported by the City of Manchester got half of the CDBG funding and Families in Transition got the other half of the CDBG funding. Shelters supported by the City of Manchester include 39 Beech Street Shelter and Engagement Center and the Aged and Infirm Shelter, located at 200 Elm Street. Shelters operated by Families in Transition include the Adult Emergency Shelter, located at 199 Manchester Street, and the family shelter located at 177 Lake Avenue. The CDBG funding was used to reimburse the city and FIT for various operating costs, including staffing, food supplies, and maintenance for the shelters. Annually, the city serves approximately 349 people at the shelters and FIT serves over 800 people. I just want to clarify one thing, that the funding was for operations between December 1st and June 30th, December 1st of 2025 and June 30th, 2026. And so, it's all occurred already. So, these were reimbursements to the two agencies to groups to reimburse them for those costs, and it has not all been expended at this point. It's in reimbursement and the last request for funding has been submitted, but we haven't received all of the funds yet. And that is primarily FITs funds that are still coming in. The city got theirs quite a while ago. There's just another \$12,000 going to the city.

Mayor Ruais called for those wishing to speak.

Austin Bouchard, Ward 2: No serious person should dismiss the complexity of homelessness or pretend that a municipal government can solve within its borders a condition that has burdened humanity for generations. Nor do I object to the city recovering federal funds for legitimate costs already incurred. But this hearing represents an opportunity to ask what this grant reveals, and about the direction the city's government is choosing. I believe you know, there's an opportunity here to understand better the direction and alternatives the city considered and why the city government continues to concentrate its resources at the point of emergency rather than the point of prevention. A few years ago, here in Manchester, a member of my family was assaulted by somebody experiencing a severe mental health crisis. I had to physically intervene to stop the assault and manage the individual until police arrived. It took two calls to 911

and approximately 30 minutes before help came. That should have been addressed before it became a crisis and instead of an act of violence and a police matter; it was deeply traumatic for my family and further evidence that these policies and choices reached far beyond any grant ledger. They consumed police capacity, emergency resources, and city services that this reimbursement does not measure. This was not my first encounter with these issues. I spent many years of my early 20s working on the front lines in the nonprofit service, helping people experiencing homelessness, confronting drug overdoses and serving particularly in juvenile diversion. It is disheartening, all these years later, to see the government continuing to direct its greatest energy and funding toward the aftermath after the crisis was formed, after the damage has been done. We financed the consequences of collapse more readily than the intervention that might have prevented it. Shelter may be necessary, but maintaining emergency is not the same as resolving one, and building and expanding municipal apparatus around that emergency does not prevent the next person from entering it. When limited dollars are available, prevention and meaningful early intervention must take precedence. Manchester also must reckon honestly with the limits of this capacity. Our residents are facing rising taxes, while essential city services and the broader community absorbs burdens this grant does not measure as the city adds facilities, offices, personnel, and services. Manchester's government is creating a permanent municipal institution. It is assuming an increasingly regional responsibility without regional funding, and allowing other communities to transfer their obligations onto the people of Manchester without meaningful accountability. This cannot become an endlessly expanding commitment merely because another temporary grant becomes available. The public deserves to know whom we are serving, what lasting outcomes we are producing, what the entire system costs, how it will be sustained when temporary funding expires, and where Manchester's responsibility ultimately ends. If this is the course the board has chosen, then this board must answer a fundamental question: at what point has one city carried enough? Compassion requires us to help people in genuine need, but wisdom requires us to act before suffering becomes an emergency, and stewardship requires government to prevent what it can, not institutionalize what it has failed to prevent.

Mayor Ruais called for anyone else who was present that wished to speak.

There were none.

*All wishing to speak having been heard, the testimony presented was taken under advisement and on motion of **Alderman Barry**, 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: 6:00PM
Meeting End Time: 6:09PM
Minutes Prepared By: Michael Intranuovo*