

**SPECIAL MEETING
BOARD OF MAYOR AND ALDERMEN
(PUBLIC PARTICIPATION)
October 5, 2021 at 7:00 PM**

Mayor Craig called the meeting to order.

The Clerk called the roll.

Present: Aldermen Cavanaugh, Stewart, Long, Roy, T. Sapienza, Sharonov,
O'Neil, Levasseur, Terrio, Shaw, Barry, Gamache

Absent: Alderman Hirschmann

The Mayor advised that the purpose of the special meeting is to give residents of Manchester the opportunity to address the Board on items of concern affecting the community; that each person will be given only one opportunity to speak, all comments shall be limited to three minutes and any comments must be directed to the Chair.

The Mayor requested that any resident wishing to speak come forward to the nearest microphone, clearly state their name and address when recognized, and give their comments.

Jessica Margeson, 108 W. Merrimack Street, stated:

I am here to talk about affordable housing, bed bugs and evictions and how they all actually relate to each other. We currently do not have what you would call an ample supply of affordable housing and I am watching our \$700, \$800 and \$900/month rents get decimated. Yesterday I saw an older gentleman who is 67 years old still working and he was paying \$850/month for his one-bedroom. He is now paying \$1,300/month. He is desperately waiting for public housing to be able to take his eviction but we all know that takes time. The next part is about bed bugs and evictions. I am running an eviction clinic currently three days a week. It has been busy. I am busy on the off days. I am doing everything from evictions to helping people try to put appeals together for Supreme Court related to evictions. I am dealing with people who are dealing with retaliation from their landlords for speaking up about problems that have existed for a long time. Just today, an owner tried to get an apartment dweller to call the Building Department with his phone and tell them that everything was okay and he refused. He

was served with an eviction notice. Then it was taken and I had to go to court with her and ask for it again because that stuff does happen. There are some bad landlords out there unfortunately. I will keep that property address to myself. Bed bugs. We have so many buildings in Manchester that have had bed bug infestations for years. There are plenty of buildings where it has happened for over 10 years. The problem is that these buildings are sitting ducks for the renovation evictions coming in. They are very easy in court to win. Who wouldn't look at them as a hero when they came in and fixed this building that has been a problem for 10 years but then you have a building of six to twenty people or different families that are now homeless. They are not getting their building treated before they move so this problem is also spreading. We had a horrible problem with them before and now it has exponentially grown. It is becoming every landlord's problem. They are not realizing that if they don't treat it before they leave, it is going to come back to them. People move and this is a transient city and neighbors change. It is only a matter of time. It makes the expense grow to other landlords and just multiplies and we are going through a lot of moves right now. I am hoping that there might be ARPA funds to put together a grant like we do for lead remediation or we can find a way to do it so that landlords can treat these buildings and tenants can have some relief. The tenants spend two to three hours a day on just bed bugs besides all the other stuff they have to deal with. Then they deal with facing eviction when they stand up to their landlord and if they stand up now, what if they send them out and they have nowhere to go. We need more affordable housing and we need a bed bug remediation program in Manchester. Thank you.

Katie Labranche, 443 N. Bay Street, stated:

I am a parent and an educator and the Chair of Manchester Proud and I am here to support the adequacy and relief aid being used to support the students in the Manchester school district. Not beginning education during our pandemic has provided challenges for our students in a variety of ways and we are back in school moving forward with some unfinished learning. There are still some specific needs in our schools and I believe the Board of School Committee, with recommendations from Dr. Goldhardt and his team will use these resources to their greatest benefit. I appreciate your thoughtful consideration. Thank you.

Karen Soule, 79 Riverwalk Way, stated:

I am here to speak on behalf of the adequacy money for the Manchester school district. As you all are aware, we received about \$59 million in ESSR funds. For those funds, we have to jump through hoops so those monies are not immediately available to us. We need the funds now. Our students have lost valuable learning time because of remote learning and we need to push them forward. They need the assistance. We need the family liaison and we need the support for the families and we need assistance for our teachers and we need it now. I hope you will support this funding because it is crucial for our kids and their families. I am very concerned about this. Thank you.

*There being no one else present wishing to speak, on motion of **Alderman O'Neil**, duly seconded by **Alderman Roy**, it was voted to take all comments under advisement and further to receive and file any written documentation presented.*

*There being no further business, on motion of **Alderman Cavanaugh**, duly seconded by **Alderman T. Sapienza**, 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