

**SPECIAL MEETING
BOARD OF MAYOR AND ALDERMEN
(PUBLIC PARTICIPATION)
October 19, 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, Terrio, E. Sapienza, Shaw, Barry, Gamache

Absent: Aldermen Hirschmann and Levasseur

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.

Glenn R.J. Ouellette, 112 Auburn Street, stated:

I am glad to be back home. I spent three weeks with my kids in Africa. It was a good experience. Housing. Here is a perfect example of how we don't take care of our own people. A young man who is 29 had a stroke. He was working full-time and had his own vehicle and a good apartment. Life was great. All of the sudden, he had a stroke and it is going to take him years to get back on his feet but nobody wants to help him. He is outside in the cold. That is crazy. A citizen of Manchester who is going to be homeless because nothing is happening to bring down that temperature to lower the number of... Your Honor I keep saying that not every homeless person is on drugs or alcohol. Not everybody is lazy. You need to do a better job. I am going to let him speak for himself because he can do that so I will go to another topic and that is for those of you out there who are voters, don't forget to go vote because it is very important. It doesn't matter who you vote for. It is important that you vote. I am not going to tell people how to vote but they need to go out and vote. We need to do a

better job as citizens to do our duty and vote. If you complain and you don't vote, why are you complaining? This is our chance as citizens to change our city. Vote for who you want. Another thing is I am looking for the debates. I believe there are some coming. I will end with this. What we have here in America we should not take for granted. Sierra Leone was a war zone area because they just came out of an 11-year war and you should see the destruction that was caused in that country. It is incredible. When you get to Ghana, it is a very developed nation like ours. It is so friendly. We need to make sure that as Americans we don't take things for granted. Too often, as Americans we take things for granted. We don't realize that there are people around the world that are suffering needlessly because people don't take care of people. I ask the city to make sure that we take care of our own people; at least our own people. That is important to make a better community. Thank you.

Travis Janvirin, 214 Conant Street, stated:

As Glenn mentioned, I am a stroke survivor. I had a stroke at age 29 back in June and I was released from rehabilitation in September. I have an apartment here in Manchester that I cannot access because it is not handicap accessible. It is a third floor apartment. I have done everything I can to get help, including going to City Welfare who said just call the Fire Department and have them bring you upstairs and bring you downstairs when you have appointments. The problem with that is there is no emergency egress so if that building catches fire, I have no way of getting out. With that being said, I am doing everything I can to get housing. I have gone through every channel that I can and I am getting nowhere. It is getting too cold. I am not going to be able to survive the winter in a wheelchair outside. There is just no way I can do that. I am doing everything in my power to get help. I am asking everybody in the city and no one is helping. I don't feel that it is right that someone that has lived in this city and doing things for this city cannot get help when they desperately need it. I don't use drugs and I don't drink. I work. I want to go back to work. I miss working but I have a long road to recovery and I can't do that without having the proper housing. I ask you guys to look into the housing and see what can be done for people in my situation to expedite the process so we can get the help we need when we need it and not when it is too late and we don't need it. That is all I have to say. Thank you.

Will Stoddard, 182 Notre Dame Avenue, stated:

I am looking at a subordination on a property that I own in Manchester currently at 182 Notre Dame Avenue. The biggest reason for the subordination...and I passed out a letter that you should all have with the proposal so you can look at the comparison of the loan figures on there. When I went through the lead safe program to make the house safe for tenants and children, I went under order and applied for that program because I didn't just want to fix one unit but the whole building. Now our family is growing and we are really trying to move back to the area. The last two years have been pretty stressful for I think everybody. I was laid off at the end of 2020 and I am just trying to get back on my feet. If you look at the loan comparison, really when I went into the loan program in November 2019 it was a 70% loan-to-value amount. Now even with the refinance amount and increasing the loan amount, it is only a 63% loan-to-value. Really the risk to the city is incredibly minimal and there is only one year left on the lien. All I am asking is a subordination for that refinance amount to consolidate debt and receive some cash so we can move our family into a bigger place that accommodates us. My wife is pregnant with twins now so we are going from three of us to five of us and that is what that money is set aside for and also to find housing and pay for upcoming medical costs associated with our children being born.

Maria Melas Stoddard, 182 Notre Dame Avenue, stated:

I just want to reiterate that we want to be able to move from the seacoast where we live now. My family lives here and his family lives down south so it is really just my family that can help out with our growing family. We are hoping to be able to live in Manchester. My family lives in Manchester and Hooksett. This will help us to be able to relocate. My family also owns two restaurants in the area and as many other restaurants they need a lot of help right now so we are able to provide that, me eventually on an emergency or part-time basis so they don't have to reduce hours or close or anything. I think I can be a really big help to both of my sisters who need it. There is minimal risk involved with this. We are not planning on selling the house at all in the near future. We are actually refinancing the home which means we are paying closing costs and things like that. We are not in any way looking to move or sell the

place. It will be in our names for a long time so that risk of us selling it does not exist at this time. We are refinancing it and that is kind of the opposite. I think that is it.

Vanessa Blais, 51 Ash Street, stated:

I am a member of the Manchester Housing Alliance and I had the privilege of being part of the Governor's Housing Stability Council work group that developed our state housing plan. I am here today to ask you all to vote to receive the approximately \$2.5 million of HUD funding. As a taxpayer, I paid into this funding and I feel that this money should be returned to the community to help alleviate a problem that we all agree is probably the biggest challenge that we have in our city right now and that is affordable housing. The Mayor's Housing Task Force, in their report, stated that the 2020-2024 HUD consolidated plan for the City of Manchester identified the lack of affordable housing as the number one barrier for those experiencing homelessness and increasing the number of affordable housing units as the number one priority for city funding. Receiving these funds also aligns with the Governor's housing stability plan objective that states that increasing production of publicly financed affordable housing is one of the goals. I think that people who put time into development these plans put a lot of effort into studying this issue and to create roadmaps for success in achieving housing stability. I think it is important that we adhere to their suggestions. I would like to thank you for all of the efforts that you have all put into working to solve this issue and I am hoping that you continue to do that by accepting this funding. Thank you.

Brandon Lemay, 20 W. River Drive, stated:

It is not going to surprise you that I am talking about housing tonight. I am the housing justice organizer for Rights & Democracy and the organizer for the Manchester Housing Alliance. I am here tonight at the behest of the residents of 199 Manchester Street or as we know it New Horizons Shelter. I know that FIT is a private organization and these grievances have been sent to them but this Board funds FIT quite a bit so I think you should be aware of what we are getting from them. Over the past few weeks, shelter residents, workers, former and current community activists like myself have met to discuss the deteriorating conditions under the management of Families in Transition. I would like to quickly list their grievances here. Residents are requesting more blankets

and towels. There aren't enough for the current residents. After being told that there wasn't enough of a budget for extra pillows too, they put up a gate that can easily be unlocked from the street that serves no functional purpose. Residents demand that the bedbug infestation currently ongoing in the shelter be remediated. The facilities in the men's shower room have been damaged for quite some time. There is only one shower for all the men that are living there. The only lift that is available for people with disabilities has been broken since September and there aren't going to be any repairs starting until the 20th of this month. A man with one leg literally had to crawl up a bedbug infested stairwell for days just to get to the upper level. A woman in a wheelchair has been placed on a broken cot in the dining area since she cannot access the dorm upstairs. The constant noise in the dining area has caused her to lose a lot of sleep. Also, there is a resident that requires her insulin to be refrigerated and they cannot provide that accommodation so somebody who lives next door has agreed to give up part of their refrigerator so that she can cool her insulin per doctor's orders. The shelter is now using too many overdoses as an excuse to suspend residents who are far more likely to die after being cast out into the streets alone than in a facility with some basic monitoring and available Narcan. I know I only have a few minutes but some workers have also requested better training to deal with those who currently have substance use disorder and also better medical training for those who are employed by FIT. There are many more grievances but I won't go on. I am a lifelong resident of this city. I indirectly pay property taxes to the city and state that administers millions of dollars to FIT. To all of those other taxpayers and people who care about basic human dignity, I call for you to investigate the finances of FIT and demand better outcomes for the amount we are paying them. I also want more accountability. I know that we have some leverage here even though it is not a public entity. Some of the conditions are horrible. I wouldn't put my mother in that shelter overnight ever and I don't think any of you would either. Thank you.

Jessica Margeson, 108 W. Merrimack Street, stated:

Every week I come back and speak about affordable housing and I try to make it a little bit different to explain a different part of it because it is like an onion and there are many layers to it. As I spoke about last time, the apartments that were rented for \$750 to

\$1,000 have almost been wiped out through rent increases and constructual evictions in our town. Those of us that are paid at 30% AMI to 50% AMI are commonly workforce housing are those that are most at risk, especially at 30% and below. The housing for them is almost gone. There are many people right now that are sitting there waiting out the time of their evictions that I am helping and they have nowhere to go yet. I am lining up people in hotels. I have an older woman who is 67 years old. She cries every week to me. This is her first time ever having to look for an apartment. She has an income of around \$1,200 and can't find anyone that can rent to her in any surrounding town or Manchester. She has gone as far as Nashua and Concord. There are many people in this situation. I ask that we think outside the box and do whatever it takes. We have a lot of great programs but the problem with that is they all take time. There are a lot of great programs in the works that will take a year or two. There are programs to make some affordable housing by fixing up some buildings with good bones to them but I don't have paperwork yet to get the handout or get that going yet. Bedbug buildings. There are so many tenants that have such an infestation problem and have had one for years. With the lack of pushing from the Building Department for them to totally eradicate the roaches or push to keep the bedbugs at bay...we have one landlord that uses what he calls non-chemical treatments and is treating one tenant with vacuuming and mopping the floor and just spraying a little bit. It is just horrible. The Building Department has been involved for a couple of months already but there is no pushing because they don't have any way to push. They can only ask. We need a bedbug program in this town bad so if we can get that going that would help create more affordable housing by signing up for the grant program and would help these tenants also because when they get stuck having to move, nobody wants to rent to them. They also feel that way and it is hard for them to find a place and when they do, a lot of times they lose all of their belongings because they are not being treated well enough to be able to move with those belongings safely. That is why it is horrible. The vast amount of evictions happening now will affect those seeking affordable housing programs for the next five years. That is another cause for increasing for ourselves by them having to go through this right now without affordable housing to even go into. The more evictions you create...you are not going to get into a program to actually afford your housing. I also spoke before about another tenant and there are many people like that.

There are many landlords I meet that refuse reasonable accommodations but the lack of housing for them to be able to go to...those are the ones they speak about that are about 30% below AMI; those that are most at risk like the elderly, disabled and those on fixed incomes and without resources to do anything else. Thank you.

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

Mayor Craig stated with the Board's indulgence, we can go to new business now. It didn't make the agenda but the FY22 budget projections presented by Sharon Wickens were handed out and we can go through those now.

Sharon Wickens, Finance Officer, stated before you is the FY22 general fund expenditure and revenue forecast as of 10/19/21 based on department head estimates. The current projected general fund operating surplus for FY22 is \$471,500. The operating surplus is comprised of an expenditure surplus of \$1,225,000, a revenue deficit of \$2,361,500 and the use of \$1,608,000 in American Rescue Plan revenue replacement funds. The revenue deficit is primarily due to interest income, parking revenue and motor vehicle registrations. If interest rates should increase, this will improve projected interest income revenue and decrease the amount needed from the ARPA funds. Parking revenue remains flat when compared to this same timeframe in FY21. The downshift in parking demand due to the Covid-19 pandemic still appears to be lingering into FY22. Any gain in parking revenue made this fiscal year will also decrease the need for ARPA funds. Motor vehicle registrations are significantly down for the first quarter due to an auto chip shortage that is affecting the auto manufacturing industry worldwide. This revenue line will be of concern as we move through the fiscal year. This forecasted surplus also includes \$420,000 from the contingency account. There were 14 retirements through October 15 compared to 15 retirements at this same time a year ago. Severance paid through October 15 amounts to \$547,964 compared to \$611,440 a year ago. This severance reserve account is anticipated to have a balance of \$1,315,922 after all related entries have been posted. I have also attached

the departmental overtime report as of October 15 and a summary by department of severance paid.

Mayor Craig stated in the packet you have before you, please note that Halloween festivities at City Hall and for downtown trick-or-treat are Friday, 10/29 from 3 PM until 5 PM and city-wide trick-or-treat is Sunday, 10/31 from 6 PM until 8 PM. The municipal election is Tuesday, 11/2 from 6 AM until 7 PM. We will have one Board meeting in November and that will be on 11/16.

Alderman Terrio stated I sent everybody an email about rats. I wanted to put it on everybody's radar. I have received multiple complaints about rats in the neighborhoods and when I look at where they are, they are all near construction; mostly water, sewer and street construction. Here is my concern. We have entered into a consent agreement with EPA and over the next 20 years we are going to be doing a lot of sewer work. I think that when we are doing the sewer work it is going to be driving a lot of rats into the neighborhoods all over the city. That is just something to think about. I did some research and a lot of cities have a program to kill rats or get rid of them. In the future I think Manchester is going to need to look at this because when we do the 20 years of sewer work we are going to be getting a lot of complaints about rats. I have been getting them for the last several months. Thank you.

Alderman O'Neil stated we have been doing sewer work since the Clean Water Act in the 70's. What is bringing them all of the sudden?

Alderman Terrio answered I don't know. I talked to the Building Department and had them look at some things. They didn't see any problems. I talked to the Animal Control Officer at the Police Department and he didn't see any problems. I contacted the Health Department and they just gave me a list of things – water, food and places to live but when I looked at the people who are complaining, it is all near construction. Maybe we are doing more sewer and water work. I don't know. Maybe the population has increased. I think going forward we should look into it. A lot of cities have an eradication program.

Alderman O'Neil asked have you talked to Public Works, their EPD Division.

Alderman Terrio answered no. I just talked to Building, Police and Health.

Alderman Long stated I am wondering if EPD...is there somebody here that can tell us if there has been an issue that they have noticed.

Tim Clougherty, Deputy Public Works Director, stated we haven't received any complaints. This is the first I have heard of it. We can certainly look into it to see if that has been a cause of pest infestation in other cities. I personally don't understand why that would cause rats to multiply or be attracted to a certain area. We are not providing any food or anything like that when we are doing an excavation.

Alderman Terrio responded you are disturbing where they live so they are looking for someplace else to go.

Mr. Clougherty replied we are typically digging within the right-of-way in the street. You are talking about areas where we are repairing sewer services or something like that?

Alderman Terrio answered yes.

Mayor Craig stated I think the appropriate thing to do is to work with EPD and you said you would look into it.

Mr. Clougherty responded yes we will do that.

*There being no further business, on motion of **Alderman O'Neil**, duly seconded by **Alderman Cavanaugh**, 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