

# **BOARD OF MAYOR AND ALDERMEN**

**January 18, 2022 at 7:00 PM**

Mayor Craig called the meeting to order.

Mayor Craig called for the Pledge of Allegiance, this function being led by Alderman Stewart.

A moment of silence was observed.

The Clerk called the roll.

Present: Aldermen Cavanaugh, Stewart, Long, Fajardo, T. Sapienza, Sharonov, Trisciani, Levasseur, Heath, E. Sapienza, Barry, Gamache, George-Kelly

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Mayor Craig advised that this public comment session, not to exceed 30 minutes, is an opportunity for residents of Manchester to address the Board on items of concern affecting the community; that each person will be given only one opportunity to speak and all comments shall be limited to three minutes. Any comments must be directed to the Chair. When your name is called, please step forward to the nearest microphone, clearly state your name and address when recognized and give your comments.

Kate Marquis, 479 Calef Road, stated:

I would like to express my support on Item 24 in your agenda tonight to begin a dialogue with the Manchester VA Medical Center to discuss saving the Manager's Residence on campus that is currently scheduled for demolition. While mid-century modern is not particularly my favorite architectural style, it doesn't have to be to hold significance of our community. It also doesn't have to be demolished to accomplish the VA's renovation and expansion. It appears that removing the building at this time is a convenience. We are fortunate to have a wonderful architectural history and some say mid-century modern is underrepresented in our city. We are also fortunate to have two Frank Lloyd Wright homes and with a new life, such as being a home to a veteran's non-profit, the Manager's Residence could be a solid addition to our city's story and its

architectural heritage and maybe even in 50 years an attraction. However, we won't know if the VA chooses the convenient choice, demolition, over the possibilities. I ask this body to help open the door to dialogue with the VA and its relatively new director, who may not even realize that the convenience of tearing it down removes the community's or even future director's choice to do something productive with the building in the future. There are no guarantees that through discussion it will be saved but there is a 100% chance that Manchester won't have it 50 years from now if we don't try. Thank you for listening.

Michael Duffy, 490 Amherst Street, stated:

I am a former historic Heritage Commission commissioner and am secretary of the NH Preservation Alliance. I would also like to comment about the Manager's Residence at the VA Medical Center. I just want to make a couple of points. There is really nothing wrong with that house. It is really quite a nice example of its type and is not in the way of anything that the VA wants to do. I think that Manchester is on the verge of becoming a mecca as an architectural destination thanks to the community and particularly the Currier these days with their two mid-mod houses and the Chandler House. I would like to thank the Board of Mayor and Aldermen for supporting this effort in the past and would ask that you continue the dialogue. Thank you very much.

Brandon Lemay, 20 West River Drive, stated:

I have come here before this Board to complain a lot but I don't want to do that tonight. I do acknowledge some of the efforts that the city has made around housing but I also want to acknowledge that this progress is really slow and not through the fault of anybody here. It is just a naturally slow process. I still find a lot of our services to the houseless community to be lacking but I also understand that we don't have a lot of control here at the city level. I want to make an offer to this Board tonight. I want to know how I can help this city advocate for its best interests at the state level. Rights in Democracy is putting together a statewide coalition of folks to advocate for the houseless community not just in Manchester but statewide. If there is anybody that would like to reach out to me and sit down, I am sure you all have my contact number. If not, Alderman Long knows my contact number as does Alderman Trisciani. I am here

to offer my help and I want to make sure that everyone, not just Manchester residents, have opportunities for safe and affordable housing. Thank you.

Jessica Margeson, 474 Cartier Street, stated:

I am a tenant organizer with the Granite State Organizing Project and also with Manchester Housing Alliance. We have had a few talks with some developers. I am here to talk about affordable housing. I know we have some great properties coming. We have some great numbers coming down the road but everything great takes a long time as Brandon said. We need more affordable housing in Manchester. It is so severe that we have families right now in a seven to eight week wait list just to get into a hotel after being evicted. They have to go to a shelter and wait seven to eight weeks after being evicted and then they get their spot in a hotel while they are still searching. What they commonly say to me is there is just nothing to find. We are losing the residents that made Manchester great. I am asking developers to contact me at GSOP or Manchester Housing Alliance and let's talk. I know that some people here know some developers and I know there are probably a few sitting behind me in the audience. I am more than willing to sit down and stay at the table to try to figure something out instead of us being over here and the developers being over there clashing while we are fighting for affordable housing. I would like to be able to come to a place where we can sit down and talk and figure out what we can do moving forward to try to be more inclusive with affordable housing in our city. Thank you.

Daniel Peters, 129 Amherst Street, stated:

I am here on behalf of the Manchester Historic Association. I am the archivist there and a professional historian. I am here today to comment on the Manchester VA Manager's Residence as well. I also happen to be a combat veteran. I served eight months in Afghanistan before I was critically wounded in combat. With that said, I cannot tell you if I saw more wars in Afghanistan or at Walter Reed down in D.C. because I was there in 2006 right when the Washington Post came out with the article on how terrible it was. With that said, the VA also recognizes that there is such a thing called white coat syndrome where veterans have a hard time going to hospitals because of this type of thing. I would like to see the VA be more proactive in doing something about this problem and helping veterans who might not necessarily live in Manchester but have to

schedule all of their appointments here for services. I think having residents there on the property would be a good opportunity for the VA to really capitalize on not only preserving an important piece of Manchester's legacy because Manchester also put forth a lot of effort to create that campus for us veterans but also to create an environment where veterans can hang out and not have to worry about being inside of a hospital the entire day. Thank you.

Jim O'Connell, 265 Prospect Street, stated:

I am Vice-Chair of the Manchester Board of School Committee but here tonight speaking on my own behalf to address the candidacy of Jason Bonilla that you will be considering later in the meeting. With your confirmation of his nomination, I will be excited to work with him on the Board of School Committee. I think he will be a wonderful addition and we will have a voice of somebody who is familiar with our schools and familiar with City Year and had direct contact with our students. I think he would bring a lot of understanding to our board. I am excited for him to be on the board and I fully endorse him and think he will be a wonderful addition. I ask you to support his nomination tonight. Thank you.

Matthew Normand, City Clerk, stated I will note for the record that I did handout an email that was submitted for public comment this evening.

Sara Tofanelli, 49 Marguerite Street, stated:

Hopefully the new Board members will pick up where the old ones failed and hear the issues of homelessness. I found Joe Kelly's, who sits over there bored taking pictures last time and sighing as if this is too much for him, comment about how providing housing would attract out-of-staters yet Schonna Green, the Homelessness Initiatives Director is from Florida; a state without winters. How does that help us right now? When she spoke at the last meeting, she seemed to have a long resume of things she did in Florida and that is great for Florida. What about NH? I speak for many when I say that we are asking for her and others to personally come out at least once a week with us to hear and see firsthand what is needed and how rudely and terribly clients are treated. The 1269 warming center won't work with FIT, which punishes those in homeless more. Then you get kicked out in 1 degree temperatures if you don't want to

do bible study come morning. We need publically owned and operated shelters because right now no one does any of that. If we had a day shelter, especially in this weather, it would eliminate a lot of complaints; one where mental health services and job training is offered. I don't think rent should be free but it should be affordable and accessible. Other states pay six months while a client gets himself in order and then bases it on a sliding scale. Even with jobs, a lot don't have rental histories, some are felons and some have evictions. It took me years despite being an honorably discharged Marine Corps veteran due to my mistakes. Many in homelessness work. I know because I personally employ some of them. I think everyone can agree with me - residents, business owners and other outreach workers that we all have one goal even if it is for different reasoning and that is to address the homelessness issue in this city. You have people like myself plus many others trying to work with the city to make it safer, cleaner, less violent and overall better for everyone yet each month we come here and people complain about the violence and everything else that we could help you fix. What is so hard about working together? I know some are very much against helping those in homelessness, like Joe Kelly, but it is cheaper and frees up your everyday resources such as police response time and hospital wait times by housing those in need versus keeping them on the street, especially when it is below freezing. You don't like being called a murderer but I don't like calling my friends dead. If you drive to a crime and a shooting occurs, you are just as guilty as the person who did the shooting. Right now, most of you are the drivers driving by multiple attempts to help those in homelessness resulting in deaths which makes you murderers in my eyes. To the newcomers on this Board, you have a chance to make this right. You have a chance to be the change we need. Please listen before more of us die. This could be your family member or even yourself. Please remember that and try changing the direction that the old Board failed to lead it in.

Glenn Ouellette, 112 Auburn Street, stated:

Happy New Year's to you all. Now that the elections are over and we are in a new term, I am going to repeat what I say every two years. It doesn't matter if you are a Republican, Democrat or Independent. Now that the elections are over, your job as aldermen and mayor is to do what is best for the City of Manchester. That is what we expect. Housing. First of all, I want to say that the building on the campus of the VA

should definitely be saved. We are an old city and we need to preserve some of our buildings. This is one that can be preserved, especially since it is in good condition. It would be a shame if we lost it. Housing. What is it about federal, state and our local housing departments that don't understand when you are working a seasonal job. A seasonal job means it is for a season. I work nine months. Right now, this week, I am working four hours. That doesn't pay the rent. My rent went up 85% this year. Incredible. It doesn't make any sense. It didn't go up by the landlord. It went up by the housing department. It makes no sense. In the past two months and the next three months, I stand to lose my apartment because there is no work. I even had to cancel my doctor's appointment because I can't afford the \$30 co-pay. We need to be careful. We do need affordable housing. It doesn't matter if there are some of you not in favor of that. There are people out there who have worked all their lives in this city. They don't want to be sick. It happens. It is part of life. When they have to choose between medicine, doctors and food to pay their rent...it is cold out there. You certainly don't want any more homeless people. We should always be trying to prevent that. I finally got a grant from Covid. It took me six months. It shouldn't take so long. It shouldn't be so difficult. When I work, I work hard and I try to take care of myself because I was raised that way but it is very difficult when there is no work. Thank you and please consider that affordable housing may be slow but you need it in this city.

Samantha Colby stated:

I am currently homeless in the Manchester area but I am mostly in Manchester. I am here once again to discuss the city's approach to homelessness and I don't understand the disconnect. There are many points made by some city officials that are just untrue or uninformed. I do see a lot of new faces here as well so please take this as a learning experience. Currently I have noticed that New Horizons and 1269 have been filling to capacity. Another issue I would like to address is the rigidity of the policies. Both New Horizons and now 1269 following that trend, are pushing people onto the streets. We cannot rely on bedsheets and headcounts to determine the needs of the homeless population. I have many remaining issues with FIT and many new ones that have arisen. Many safety standards are not met. Outlets under the sinks are still not GFCI compliant. The lift is still broken. Meanwhile, policy can be enforced so rigidly at 1269 that the people there cannot sleep on the floors and they cannot get decent rest

because the fire marshal said it was a risk and violated policy. Where is this kind of enforcement with FIT? The policy still leaves many people on the streets. Improper or selective enforcement, little to no oversight at FIT and excessive oversight at 1269 but only for certain things. It almost seems as though this unrelenting attack on the rights of the homeless is intentional but I am willing to give anyone the benefit of the doubt. Perhaps you do not know firsthand just how hard and cruel things can be. I believe this can realistically cause a disconnect between officials and the homeless community. I implore you to reach out and talk to the people stuck on the streets. Myself and others are even to be there with you. We are experienced and we know these people and we want to expand your perspective of the issues. Nobody knows better about what they go through on the streets than the people on the streets. I thank you for your time. Have a good evening.

Dam Wright stated:

It is good to see a lot of new faces. Welcome everyone and thank you for hearing me out. I wrote something that I was going to read tonight but I am not going to. I am just going to talk a little bit until my time is up. We have been struggling with what is going on out on the streets. It is cold. It is cold and people aren't able to get into the shelter or the warming station. It is really bleak and ugly out there. This is why you are hearing my friends talking about...we could have 3,000 minutes up here to speak but we could never convey to you what is happening out there. We would like some of you to volunteer, as many of you as can, to come out and see the stuff firsthand. See what is going on in the streets and see why we are so upset and why people are up here all the time talking about what we are talking about. Now the last time I was here we heard Schonna Green, the homeless coordinator, and we heard a lot about the housing initiatives and affordable housing. I do agree with her when she was asked by Alderman Levasseur what is the pathway out of this and she said affordable housing for everybody in every class that needs it. I agree with that. That is the ultimate pathway out of this but we are in a triage situation. That is the problem. That is going to be great five years from now to have it but right now there are people freezing and dying who don't have what they need on the streets. You have heard references tonight to the idea of a public shelter system instead of relying on these private companies that have their own interests. They don't care what the city wants and they don't care what the

people who are staying at the shelters need. They care about what they need. We are solving a public problem by leaving it to private agencies and I think we need to start rethinking that. We have seen a lot of things and talked before about some ideas. I kind of get what Schonna is saying where she wants centralized services. She said she feels deep down that we have to bring them out of the woods and bring them into our world but that is not how it works with our people. You have to go out there and come out there with us. You have to go out there to find them. You can't just build a place and hope that they are going to come to you. I don't know what is up with the distribution center that we heard about that was supposed to be coming on 12/28. I haven't heard anything on that but I don't think that the approach is to try to...I think we need to go and find out what they need and I think we need to do better. I think we need to make sure that next winter we are better prepared and that we are not subject to the whims of what private organizations want to do. If we can't regulate the businesses into providing humane conditions, then we need to replace them with public accountable options. Thank you.

Kelly McAndrew, 290 Cartier Street, stated:

I am formerly homeless and now a very strong advocate. You couldn't bother to show up at the memorial so I want to read you a few names. Diane, Jojo, Frankie, Heidi, Mello, Long-Haired Kenny, Johnny 5, Ryan, Andy, Kevin, Shane, Christina, Mikey, Katie, Matt, Cigarette Tom, Twitchey, Tony, and Brian. Those are only some of the ones that affected me personally. Let's talk about Cody. Cody was a son, a brother, a nephew and a friend. Unfortunately, Cody loved others way more than he loved himself. If I needed a hug, he was there. If I needed to laugh, he was there. Now when I need to cry he is not there. Cody battled his inner demons often and won only to have them back every time he came back to Manchester. Why is this? Because although Cody got a check every month, it was not nearly enough to afford a place to live. He was forced to live on the streets due to lack of affordable housing. Let's talk about Chandelle, Harley Quinn, my friend that just died in the RV last month. Merry Christmas. She leaves behind two small boys. They will never get the privilege of knowing what a wonderful girl Chandelle was. Chandelle had an income but it wasn't enough to afford a place in Manchester so she rented the back of an RV which, quite frankly, was a deathtrap. She burned to death. In this city, if we had affordable housing

nobody would have to explain to those two young boys why mommy isn't coming anymore. Let's talk about Sandra. She had two small boys – Marcus and Christopher. Sandra loved those two kids but when Sandra lost her income, she lost her home which led to losing her kids which led to the streets of Manchester. Sandra died two weeks ago. Another victim of these streets you so proudly represent. All of this could be easily prevented if this city, this board, you, Joyce Craig, would open your eyes and realize that what we need is affordable housing, not bike paths and scooters. When I first met you, you acted like you cared and it was a great act. Maybe you should star in your own biography. Joyce Craig, Mayor or Serial Killer because that is all you are to me.

*On motion of **Alderman Cavanaugh**, duly seconded by **Alderman Long**, it was voted to take all comments under advisement and further to receive and file any written documentation presented.*

## **PRESENTATION**

COVID-19 Public Health Update by Anna Thomas, Public Health Director.

Anna Thomas, Public Health Director, stated as I did back in August 2020, I would like to start the Covid update with a little bit of symbolism for what we faced over the last two years and the challenge ahead. When we activated the city's Emergency Operations Center on March 2, 2020, which was the same day that NH announced the very first presumed case of Covid-19, many of us spent countless hours and weeks working together on a continuous response to the needs of this community as it pertains to the pandemic. During that time, I was honored to be given challenge coins from the Manchester Fire Department, the Manchester Police Department and American Medical Response from the various chiefs which I now proudly display in my office. Subsequently, coins also have been given to many members of my staff from the various city departments as we have been working so closely together throughout the pandemic. The first time I was introduced to the concept of challenge coins was when I was in the military and many say that is their origin. There has been a longstanding tradition that when you become a commission officer, the very first enlisted person who salutes you should be bestowed a challenge coin. After receiving coins from the

leadership of the EOC, it dawned on me that the Manchester Health Department did not have a coin to give in return. As a result, we had one made and we have been disseminating them to various community leaders over the time of the pandemic. We have also provided coins to the Manchester school district and the Manchester Historic Association to preserve this point in time in the city's history. While many of you have already received your coins, I would like to provide Aldermen Fajardo, Sharonov, Heath, E. Sapienza, George-Kelly and Trisciani with theirs to thank you for your service and for what is ahead. We start our day today with close to 2,500 active cases of Covid-19 in Manchester with over 25,000 cumulative cases to date. The City of Manchester Health Department has investigated all of those cases. Many of them are in clusters or outbreaks in facilities. Sadly, we mourn and remember the 282 Manchester lives we have lost. Within the Manchester school district, there have been over 2,100 cases this school year among students and staff with 446 active cases currently occurring in all schools. As you may know, the majority of our cases, as nationally, are due to the Omicron variance. The Institute of Health Metrics and Evaluations new infection and death predicted peak for NH is estimated for January 30 and 31. Hospitalizations are predicted to lag with an estimated peak occurring February 18 and 19. Again, these are all estimates. Some have hypothesized that once we hit that peak, there will be a fairly immediate decline as all of those who could have been infected would have already been exposed. What we are learning about this new variant is it is more transmissible than what we saw with Delta, two to four times more transmissible and it is evading existing antibodies. It appears that it is less severe than Delta in all age groups. One study, which has yet to be peer reviewed, suggests that adults with Omicron were half as likely to visit the Emergency Room, be hospitalized or put on a ventilator. The CDC reports that Omicron is 90% less likely to kill those who are infected compared to Delta. Preliminary data also suggests a shift in symptoms. In our hospitalized patients, we are seeing them showing up less often with pneumonia-like symptoms and hyperactive immune systems as seen in previous waves, also sparing damage to the lungs. Instead, patients more often are presenting with congestion and scratchy throats with more symptoms like those of a head cold. There has been some conversation and speculation that another symptom that was very apparent with Delta was the loss of taste and smell and those with Omicron are not reporting that as frequently so it is taking on a different set of symptoms. As a reminder, there are three big measures that

we use to measure the level of community transmission and, therefore, the risk that we all share with this pandemic. That is the rate of new cases over 100,000 population over the last 14 days, the seven-day test positivity rate of both Antigen and PCR tests, and the number of in-patient hospitalizations. At our last meeting, which was 12/21, our 14-day new case rate was 1,397 per 100,000 population. Today, it is 4,317 per 100,000. Keep in mind that to be deemed a substantial rate of transmission, the threshold is anything over 100 per 100,000 so we are more than 43 times that rate of transmission. In addition, the seven-day test positivity rate when we met last time was 13.8%. Today it is 30.6% and we want that number to be less than 5%. Again, when we met last time we had 73 in-patient hospitalizations between our two hospitals. Four weeks later we now have 94 beds filled with the vast majority of those individuals continuing to be the unvaccinated or those not up-to-date on vaccinations. I know one of the questions tonight will be whether or not we should continue the mask resolution for city buildings to protect city workers. My recommendation would be undoubtedly yes and we should continue with a plan to revisit it at the next BMA meeting, which is February 1. Regarding masks, on January 14 the CDC issued new guidance about mask wearing to now emphasize the use of well-fitting N95 or KN95 masks to optimize protection of yourself and others from the highly contagious Omicron variant. No masks or improper use of cloth masks offer the least protection while surgical masks and high filtration masks offer the most protection. With vaccinations, we are still facing difficulty with knowing the true vaccination rate in Manchester as individuals vaccinated through federal programs and our pharmacies are no longer included in our local numbers since the state of emergency was lifted. We continue to offer vaccination and boosters at the Health Department at 1528 Elm Street on Mondays from 9 AM-11 AM and Wednesdays from 2 PM-4 PM. No appointment is necessary. We are also providing mobile clinics in the community at times in partnership with the NH DHHS. For example, we just vaccinated over 1,000 people during our last booster blitz at Memorial High School and in partnership with the Manchester school district we just vaccinated another 325 residents at what we call family vaccination night this past Friday at Beech Street Elementary School. We will be offering another family vaccination night tomorrow at Parkside Middle School. We are also pleased to announced that Manchester is finally getting a fixed vaccination site on January 28. It will be run by ConvenientMD seven days a week from 8 AM until 2 PM and will be located at 1111 South Willow Street.

Testing continues to be available not only through the Manchester schools but in partnership with DHHS at Hunt Memorial Pool at 297 Maple Street seven days a week from 9 AM until 3 PM. The wait time for results varies but the goal is to have them back to residents within 1-2 days. Starting today, a day early, the White House is offering four free rapid Covid tests that will be sent to your home. Visit Covidtests.org. I encourage all residents and all city employees and anyone who has loved ones out there to please sign up. They should arrive within 12 days once you register. Private insurers are also paying individuals back for eight home tests per month for each person on the plan. Testing is going to become more widely available. There is also talk about masks being sent to every resident in the country as well. The greatest take home message I have is we are far from over in all of this. We have to remain vigilant. There is a light at the end of the tunnel. Protecting our health care delivery system is essential and preventing the spread is still our number one priority. I would be happy to answer any questions.

Alderman Sharonov asked do you have the percentage number of those who are hospitalized right now who are unvaccinated versus fully vaccinated.

Ms. Thomas answered it varies as you know day-by-day. The latest data that I have is about 65% are unvaccinated but that can fluctuate depending on the volume and the hospitals. It can be higher or slightly lower. The definition of that is whether they are unvaccinated or not fully vaccinated. Some of the folks who are ending up in the hospital may have had their first dose or two doses and did not receive their booster. They are calling that not being fully vaccinated and they are breakthrough cases as a result.

Alderman Sharonov asked so those who got their initial shot and didn't get a booster would then fall under the 65% of unvaccinated.

Ms. Thomas replied the number that I have from the NH Hospital Association is unvaccinated not the breakthrough cases in that number.

Alderman Sharonov asked so 35% are fully vaccinated.

Ms. Thomas responded or unknown because there is a whole bucket that is not reported. I can give you the breakdown.

Alderman Sharonov asked of those who are hospitalized, how many have the Omicron variant percentage wise.

Ms. Thomas replied what the state and nation are reporting is that almost all of the cases now that are coming in, upwards to 95%. I don't know specific to NH other than they are telling us that basically most of the cases that are coming in now are Omicron.

Alderman Sharonov asked do we have any more information about the symptoms of Omicron compared to the Delta variant.

Ms. Thomas responded as I mentioned, I think it is changing in that it is not like...when we were seeing people with Delta they were coming into the hospital very sick. It isn't that people coming into the hospital now aren't very sick but their symptoms are different. What they are saying is it is more like a common cold. It is a head cold and more congestion and sore throat where with Delta and prior it was flu-like symptoms. People were coming in feverish. The tough thing is you have to remember that there are a lot of people that are Covid positive who have no symptoms at all. That is the other challenge. We are still trying to understand the true prevalence in the population because the only ones we are really seeing are the people who end up being sick or have been associated with a case.

Alderman Sharonov stated I sent you an email ahead of time so you were prepared for this meeting asking you about the Delta variant and specifically how much deadlier it turned out to be compared to the initial variant.

Ms. Thomas answered that one quote I just read from the CDC that said Omicron is 90% less likely to kill those infected compared to Delta. It is not as deadly by any means but certainly much more contagious.

Alderman Sharonov asked and Delta compared to the Alpha variant.

Ms. Thomas replied that I will have to look it up because I didn't come prepared for that.

Alderman Sharonov moved to repeal the mask rule. There was no second.

Alderman Levasseur stated so Alpha is pretty much gone and Delta is on its way out and Omicron is here. I know a lot of people have gotten it but thankfully it has been pretty mild. I saw something today where the Israelis have done a fantastic job following this and studying this and have been a really good Petri dish due to their situation where they are pretty much in one spot. Today a study came out that said the three shots – the two shots, the booster and a fourth booster will not stop Omicron. Did you hear that?

Ms. Thomas responded yes I did hear that.

Alderman Levasseur stated public policy is everybody get a shot and everybody wear a mask. I can see wearing a mask for droplet reasons. I get that. I am a little bit concerned about the vaccination craze and vaccination cards and now we find out that it doesn't stop Omicron and if it did we probably wouldn't have seen such a surge. Is there a light at the end of the tunnel where this is mutating and becoming weaker and weaker? Was Alpha worse than Delta or was Delta worse than Alpha and now we are having a strange Omicron or is this a pattern?

Ms. Thomas answered I think what is happening is, and this is the problem when we allow this thing to continue to spread, is it will just mutate and you will get these new variants and each variant is almost like starting all over again. You are starting with a whole other disease pattern. I think regarding the vaccination piece, the big rule of thumb with vaccination is it may not completely prevent you from picking up Covid-19 but it is preventing you from dying from it or ending up hospitalized. I don't want to discourage vaccination by any means because we know that is what is taking the heat off the health care delivery system and we certainly want to do everything we can at all of the other mitigation levels to prevent you from getting it to begin with. Vaccination is

one measure of many. Not any one of these is 100% as you know, including mask wearing. It is not 100% but it is when we do a combination of these things that we just optimize the most that we can to prevent the spread and to prevent us from giving it to each other.

Alderman Levasseur stated I have been vaccinated and boosted. The vaccination is not going to work against Omicron so...

Ms. Thomas interjected I don't know if we know that yet. I don't know if we can say 100% that it is not going to work against Omicron. I think it is definitely going to keep you out of the hospital. I think that is the goal with this. This literally erupted in November and I think it is too soon to draw conclusions until we get more evidence on how this is playing out. The one thing in some really warped way that is in our favor is that the other part of the U.S. has really experienced this surge and we tend to lag behind the rest of the states so we are able to learn from the rest of the country before it hits us and we have a better idea of what to expect. I think that is why the Governor and others have been really trying to be as forward thinking as they can by reaching out to other states and understanding what they went through so we are prepared for that same wave. I still believe that there is much we don't know but we are learning all of the time as this continues to spread throughout the world. With each one of these waves, we are learning more.

Alderman Levasseur asked do you at least think herd immunity is real. If you are getting such a massive amount of people with Omicron and the chances of getting it again are very low...if you had Delta are the chances of getting it again very low?

Ms. Thomas responded I wouldn't say it is very low because we have had people who had Covid more than once regardless of the variant. I think what it does is protects you and one of the measures we use when we are looking at the isolation and quarantine guidance is that 90-day window or 60-day window. That is what they are guesstimating for a timeframe of being protected once you get Covid. The unknown is how much longer you may be protected from that. I don't think there is good evidence yet that says definitively you have a whole other year to go. Unfortunately, it is the same thing

with vaccination. Who knew that we would be getting vaccinated and for those of us who got Pfizer for example would have to get a booster six months later? That is a lot of information because now I still have the big question of okay what is next. Are we going to need another booster in six more months? I think we are going to have to wait and see how the science evolves and wait for that guidance. That is why I am saying I think we are going to be in this business for quite some time. We have a long way to go.

Mayor Craig stated thank you again Anna for all that you are doing.

Nashua-Manchester Rail Project by Jodie Nazaka, Senior Planner.

Jodie Nazaka, Senior Planner, stated with me tonight is Patrick Herlihy, Director of Aeronautics, Rail and Transit with the NH DOT and Jay Doyle, Vice President of AECOM. Also with the team tonight is Shelly Winters, Administrator of the Bureau of Rail & Transit for the NH DOT and Rachel Burkhardt of WSP. Before I turn the presentation over to the team, I would like to provide the Board with some background information. In August 2021, this group was before the Board seeking endorsement of a downtown commuter rail and station location. Endorsement of the station location allowed NH DOT to move forward with financial planning and design for the Capitol Corridor Commuter Rail Extension. I believe a copy of that previous letter has been included in your packet for this evening. Following the Board's endorsement of the station platform location, the Manchester stakeholders reconvened to review a viable sight for a layover yard. Efficient commuter rail operation requires that trains begin and end the day as close as possible to the end of the line. Downtown Manchester will be the end of the line for the foreseeable future. Stakeholder meetings included representatives from the Mayor's Office, Ward 3 Alderman Patrick Long, previous Alderman At-Large Dan O'Neil, the Highway Department, Manchester Transit Authority, Assessor's Office, Planning & Community Development Department and Southern NH Planning Commission. The Manchester stakeholders met with DOT several times to discuss the possible Pan Am South location and additional layover site options. After extensive discussion and several concerns raised by the stakeholders relating to impacts to abutting property owners, implications to future development, and

compatibility with the city's RAISE grant projects, there was consensus to support the Pan Am South location. The City stakeholders fully support extending passenger rail service into Manchester from Boston while insuring that the needs and the goals of the city are fully considered. Following the presentation from DOT and their consultants, on behalf of the Manchester stakeholders, I suggest that the Board review the six proposed conditions outlined in the letter and endorse the Pan Am South location subject to those conditions. This extension would relieve some of the traffic congestion on our highways and local roads. It would also leverage the economic opportunities for Manchester and the region that will come with providing southern NH with a new seamless connection to Boston and other cities and towns. With that, I will turn it over to NH DOT and their consulting team.

Patrick Herlihy, Director of Aeronautics, Rail and Transit, NH DOT, stated thank you Jodie. I don't think I need to add much more to that. We have a presentation for you tonight on looking at the background of this project and what the preferred alternative for the layover facility is, how we are going to be addressing the City of Manchester's concerns and a look at some of the other sites that we looked at around the city as well as the Greater Manchester area and how we evaluated those sites and how we came up with the Pan Am South location as the preferred alternative. With that, I will turn it over to Jay Doyle who will go through the presentation and then we will be ready for questions and answers.

Jay Doyle, Vice President, AECOM, stated thank you Patrick and thank you to the Board of Mayor and Aldermen for having us and thank you Jodie for that introductory summary which covered the background of the project. We have been working very closely with the city throughout this process for close to a year now and are very grateful for the cooperation and collaboration. With respect to the layover facility, we will start by giving a quick overview of what the layover facility is and what the operational requirements for such a facility are. Just quickly, as many of you know MBTA operates the commuter rail system in Greater Boston and currently they have a line terminates in the City of Lowell. There is an existing rail line that extends north of Lowell all the way into southern NH and up to Concord and beyond. It currently only has service with freight rail and Pan Am Railways operating it. There have been studies over the years,

most recently in 2014, and now since 2021 we have been looking at this again in more detail. It has identified a preferred alternative, which is to extend the MBTA commuter rail service north of Lowell approximately 30 miles into southern NH with a proposed four new stations; one in Nashua, one in Bedford, one at the Manchester Airport and one in downtown Manchester. MBTA and all commuter rail systems need a place for the equipment, the train sets, locomotives and coaches to layover during the night so they can start their inbound service to Boston the next morning from the outer most terminus station which in this case will be Manchester. What are some of the operational requirements for a layover facility? It needs to have the ability and capacity to store trains overnight in the rail yard. It needs to have plug in power next to the tracks to enable the locomotive engines to shut down overnight. It saves fuel and emissions and eliminates noise. It is also a facility that is used for midday storage of trains because typically the frequency of the service is not quite as frequent in the midday as it is in the am and pm peaks. What is the capacity? It needs to be able to store four or five train sets. We are working with the MBTA on the operating plan to further define just how many train sets are needed. How long does the track need to be in the layover yard? About 900-1,000 feet long to accommodate an eight or nine car train. Now MBTA is moving toward a new operating framework called regional rail, which provides for more frequent service and potentially shorter trains so as we get into the more detailed engineering of the layover facility, there may be some flexibility in just how many tracks we need and how long those tracks need to be. What you see here in this image is a small support building that would be part of the layover complex which would provide a place for crews to change and provide other support functions for the layover yard. What are some of the design considerations at the site? Compatibility of surrounding land uses. The Pan Am South site is a partially inactive rail yard and partially an unused abandoned rail yard. We need to have the ability to identify what the potential noise impacts may be in the area and to determine how to mitigate them effectively. We need to be near utilities and have good roadway access and locate a site where the amount of earth work needed would be minimal. The Pan Am South site has all of those attributes. It has good access for utilities, the roadway access is good and as a former rail yard it is already relatively flat and suitable for this type of facility. These pictures you see here are examples of noise walls, berms and other kinds of mitigation that are used typically around such facilities. These next few slides will step

you through a further description and aerial mapping showing the location of the proposed layover facility. Here is an aerial map with some color coding. This purple area you see is the proposed four-and-a-half-acre layover site. You have residences here and here. You have the Manchester Transit Authority maintenance and storage facility here and the Elliot Hospital outpatient facility here and their parking garage under that. This next image shows that same four and a half acre proposed Pan Am South layover yard in a larger context of the surrounding area including the Delta Dental Stadium and the proposed Manchester station, which would be in this area here. The proposed Manchester passenger station would be accessible from Granite Street on the north and from the emerging transit oriented development areas to the south near Valley Street. We have been working with the City of Manchester and are very aware of the city's transit oriented development plan, which encompasses this area you see outlined in the black dashed line. It is a couple of hundred acres of transit oriented development. Master planning was done and it was back in September 2020 when that plan was released. It is a plan that is very long-range and visionary. It is showing here a proposed full build street grid. What we see here is that out of the few hundred acres of the TOD zone, we have four and a half acres here of the former rail yard which we think with further coordination with the city we can work to have this proposed layover yard be compatible with the proposed street grid in this area. There is one street that may need to be adjusted and a future street but otherwise it looks to be very compatible with the existing and proposed land uses in this area of Manchester south of Granite Street. These are some of the concerns that we heard from the city over the many months that we were working closely, primarily last summer and into the fall. Understandably, concerns about potential impacts on the transit oriented development area. I mentioned that the overall layover site is four and a half acres. It is a small portion of the overall TOD district. Most of the facility is within an existing Pan Am railways parcel unused former rail yard area with some limited encroachment on a TOD future street grid which I showed you just a minute ago. We think as we get further into the engineering of the layover facility that we can further reduce any potential impacts on the TOD street grid. As far as connectivity goes, we are working very closely with the alignment of the city's proposed roadway viaduct. It is no longer a pending RAISE grant application so congratulations to the city for being awarded the RAISE grant for the proposed roadway viaduct connecting South Commercial Street with Elm Street.

That will provide a very big improvement in connectivity east-west in the TOD area. The pedestrians and bicycles will be able to connect across the proposed new roadway viaduct as well as Hancock Street, which the proposed layover facility will not interfere with as far as future plans to connect Hancock Street further to the west to the river. The layover facility would be located to the north of that so there would be no conflict there. We did look at a number of alternative sites for the layover facility. One of the key features of a layover facility is it needs to be near the terminus of the railroad. MBTA is interested in this project. One of the most attractive features of this project is that it would provide a layover facility on the Lowell commuter rail line which is currently lacking. There is a lot of movement of empty trains that the MBTA has to do currently to get trains from downtown Boston out to Lowell in the morning for the inbound service. Having a layover facility at the end of the line in Manchester is very attractive from an operational efficiency standpoint for the MBTA. Some of the sites we looked at in addition to Pan Am South is we looked at Pan Am North and that is in the vicinity of where the current station is proposed so that site was no longer suitable. It would have conflicted with the proposed station. We looked at the Bedford U-Haul site which is over five miles to the south. That would involve some additional inefficient movement of the empty equipment. There are also some wetland conflicts and other conflicts with the proposed station at Manchester Airport. We also looked at the site at the city-owned cemetery back land, which is a mile or two south of the proposed station. There were a number of environmental constraints at the Cemetery South site. We put together a scoring matrix when we looked at all of the different potential locations and Pan Am South and Cemetery South were really the two finalists. We put those two through a more detailed evaluation and used the scoring matrix to summarize our results. I won't go through all of the comparative criteria in detail but it is in the handout. We looked at compatibility with land use. We looked at environmental impacts. We looked at operational efficiency and a number of other criteria. Solid means best meets criteria, half-moon equals partially meets criteria and then you have doesn't meet criteria. The Pan Am South site came out scoring the highest across most of the evaluation criteria. As a result, the summary score was Pan Am South had a score of 42 compared to 28 for Cemetery South and that is the direction that the recommendation went in. We looked at this on a previous slide. Here is a closer look at the Cemetery South site. Again, the cemetery is over here and this is the back land

and this is where the site would have gone. There are a number of sensitive environmental features over in this area like a historic ferry crossing and some natural features in terms of forest land that would require much more earth work and clear cutting of wooded areas and it would be a longer trip to bring the equipment to the station in the morning. We looked at the U-Haul site. This is the Bedford interchange and the airport access road to the south of this image. The footprint of the yard would conflict with some residences in this area. There are wetlands in here and a fuel facility here. There were a number of conflicts. Finally, these next slides show that within the existing MBTA system each of the lines has an end-of-the-line layover facility and you can see in each of these existing MBTA commuter rail lines at the end they have a layover facility and this little inset here shows how far away it is from the terminus station. Here on the Green-Bush line, it is at the end of the line. The purpose of this was really to show that there can be a major rail facility next to ongoing successful transit-oriented development. Here you have the MBTA Bradford facility on the Haverhill line. It is 7/10 of a mile from the end of the line station which is about the furthest of any. In Kingston it is right at the end of the line. In Needham it is right at the end of the line and so forth. That is a summary of the process we went through to identify a preferred location for the Nashua-Manchester commuter rail facility and the preferred location as was mentioned earlier is the Pan Am South location. We would be happy to answer any questions.

Alderman Sharonov stated you were before us in August seeking an endorsement for the station and you said the next step would be an endorsement for the layover station. What is the next step after this should you get an endorsement?

Mr. Doyle responded we are in the midst of what is called the project development phase for this project. The project development phase has two major components or actually three major components. One major component is we are doing an environmental assessment under federal NEPA procedures and the federal agency that is overseeing it is the Federal Transit Administration or FTA. We are in the home stretch of completing the environmental assessment and in order to complete that environmental assessment we need to have an identified layover facility location and we need to complete our assessment of the potential impacts and mitigation for facilities

such as this. We are in the midst of doing noise analysis and modeling of the proposed facility at the Pan Am South location. In order to complete that noise analysis, we need to know that this is the location that we are going to be modeling and including in the environmental assessment. That is one step. The other major component of the work is we are advancing the engineering of the proposed project up to what is referred to as 30% design. We are currently at conceptual design. I would call it somewhere between 2-5%. Those are the improvements to the rail, the bridges, the signal systems, the stations and the layover facility. We need to advance the engineering from where we are now, which is concept level at 2-5%, to 30% and in order to do that we need to know where these facilities are located and at least have their locations and general characteristics nailed down. Then the third component is the development of a financial plan for implementation of the project. In order to have a financial plan, we need to know what the project costs are and in order to know what the project costs are, we need to know where the facilities are going and what the right-of-way costs are and the construction costs are, etc.

Alderman T. Sapienza asked do you know how many local jobs this will create.

Mr. Doyle replied I do not have an answer to that question. There would be crews that would be working in the yard. There would be services to the equipment. They wouldn't be doing any heavy maintenance in the layover yard but they would be doing cleaning and fueling. Then of course backing off of that there is the construction phase of the project and the jobs that would be created during that. There would be the jobs associated with the ongoing service, operations and maintenance of the infrastructure and the train sets. There would also be the economic benefit of the service and the additional accessibility and mobility options that a service like this would provide to Manchester and the other stations that I mentioned.

Alderman T. Sapienza stated this looks like it is an extension of the MBTA so they would be running this right.

Mr. Doyle responded that is correct. This would be an extension of the MBTA Lowell commuter rail line into southern NH. It is a 30-mile extension. It is 30 miles from Lowell

to downtown Manchester. It is roughly 9-10 miles in Massachusetts and another 20 or so in southern NH.

Alderman T. Sapienza asked so we are envisioning using their management structure.

Mr. Doyle responded yes. It would be using their equipment, their train sets and crews. That is correct.

Alderman Levasseur stated thank you for the presentation. I very much appreciate it. I guess the biggest question that Manchester has that I didn't see up there as one of the questions is the cost to Manchester residents as far as any burden for development costs or construction costs. There will be no cost to residents in the city correct or is there a cost that we don't know about?

Mr. Doyle answered I mentioned there were three major components of the phase of work that we are in now. The third one that I mentioned is development of a financial plan.

Alderman Levasseur stated I get that but is this not state-run and state financed. I just want you to know and I am not trying to be critical but this is what we get hit with all the time. To know that now is kind of important. I don't know what the rules or the laws are but if one layover spot says no does that mean the project is stopped? I mean you could get Manchester approved and Nashua approved and then one town in Massachusetts says no we don't want to be a layover. Would that stop the whole project or is there just a set of federal rules that say this is a go?

Mr. Doyle replied a layover facility is a critical piece of infrastructure to have the project be viable. We were literally on a call earlier today with the MBTA where they in as many words said that without a layover facility you don't have a project.

Alderman Levasseur stated I think the layover facility has already been approved by this Board so I don't think that is the issue.

Mayor Craig stated no we have not approved the layover facility. That is what we are doing tonight. We only approved the station.

Mr. Doyle stated last summer the station location in Manchester was approved.

Alderman Levasseur asked is that different than what we are talking about now.

Mayor Craig answered yes.

Mr. Doyle stated this slide here shows you the station with a roughly 800' long platform for passengers that would be accessed from Granite Street north and Valley Street south. That is the station. That location was worked out and agreed upon with the city last summer. What I have been describing or trying to describe is this layover facility which is a four and a half acre set of four to five storage tracks for the trains to layover overnight.

Alderman Levasseur stated I am sorry I have to say this but if I build a house I don't just go out and...I have to know how much it is going to cost me. You are asking this Board to vote on a layover facility which is going to be a huge vote and we don't know what the cost is going to be and you are not telling me that this won't cost the Manchester taxpayers anything. My assumption is it wasn't going to be a cost to taxpayers because my understanding was it would be state funded. If it is not, you should tell us now. I think it is important to know if there is a financial obligation to the taxpayers. We should also know what those costs are going to be before we start voting for this stuff. The financial part of it should be the first consideration and the locations you already have, etc. I just find that to be...I guess I am a little disconcerted by the fact that we are voting to put all of these dominoes in place but nobody knows what the costs are going to be and people are going to be really upset a year from now when they go great everything is approved but now you are stuck with this bill.

Mr. Doyle stated right now all we are looking at is the actual location. Once we can nail down the location, we can better define what the costs are and then you can have the discussion about how it gets paid for and whether it is the federal government, which we

are certainly assuming, what the state's role in this is going to be, what the localities role will be and what public/private partnerships can bring to the table. It is all on the table to discuss but we need to know what those costs are first.

Alderman Levasseur stated you must have an example somewhere where the train actually runs through a town and it started and there was a cost associated with the town. This isn't the first train that is ever going to be started or stopped. We have Maine where they have the train going through those towns. There must be some sort of a formula or some kind of a basis for what we think the cost is going to be.

Mr. Doyle responded one thing that I think is important to clarify is when we are talking about the layover facility site, we are not talking about the layover facility cost being tagged to the host community. The layover facility cost is a project-wide cost so regardless of who the host community is, the overall project cost and the financial plan for figuring out how to pay for it is...this is spread across all of the project cost. It is not a host community cost.

Alderman Levasseur stated I have one last question about emissions. I saw the word emissions out there. Are these electric trains or are they gas powered or coal powered and what are the emissions especially in Manchester since we will be the layover station and they will be parking and pulling in and out of here?

Mr. Doyle replied the MBTA currently operates diesel locomotives and a push-pull operation. Locomotives are on the outer end of the train and they push the train toward Boston and pull the train away from Boston to Manchester. Currently, the locomotives are diesel operated. There are increasing EPA tiers for emission standards for diesel locomotives. They are diesel though. MBTA is moving toward a pilot program to look at electrification but it is a long-term proposition and they are looking at different technologies. What we are doing with this project is we will be designing and engineering the track, the overhead bridges and the layover yard not including future electrification. As currently envisioned, this will be a diesel push-pull commuter rail operation just as the MBTA currently operates their lines.

Mr. Herlihy stated as Jay mentioned earlier, as part of the environmental assessment we will look at those emissions.

Alderman Levasseur asked but you don't know them now.

Mr. Herlihy responded no because we have to get a location first before we start looking at the environmental assessment.

Alderman E. Sapienza stated is it true that the MBTA will have massive budget shortfalls - \$200 million in FY24, \$450 million in FY25 and \$500 million in FY26. I keep hearing MBTA over and over again but isn't it true that they have massive budget shortfalls.

Mr. Doyle replied I think that is a question you would have to ask the MBTA.

Alderman E. Sapienza asked you don't know.

Mr. Doyle answered I imagine they have budget shortfalls.

Alderman E. Sapienza stated I kept hearing MBTA over and over again.

Mr. Doyle responded right because they are going to be the operator of this service.

Alderman E. Sapienza stated to me this thing seems so wrong it should have a big X from Family Feud hanging over it but that's just me.

Alderman Long asked so we are voting on the conceptual correct.

Mr. Doyle answered the location.

Alderman Long asked is there an opportunity for this Board to get a final vote once we receive all of the...we don't even know if this layover facility is going to be conducive financially if there is hazardous material and what that might involve. Is there an

opportunity once we know everything that the layover is going to work and everything is a go and we have a financial picture to again vote on this or is this binding for us? It is conceptual so I am not sure how it is binding for us.

Mr. Doyle stated we do need to know a location to include in our environmental assessment that we are in the process of completing.

Alderman Long asked so would this Board have another vote once the final plan is determined.

Mayor Craig stated when you talked about the other three to four components that you need to do after you get the vote on whether or not this location is going to be the layover location, will you come back to our Board with that information.

Mr. Herlihy responded yes we will come back.

Alderman Long asked so if everything goes according to plan, when would there be a station here realistically. What is the timeframe?

Mr. Doyle answered where we are now is where we are scheduled to complete the 30% design approximately a year from now or the end of January 2023. Then...

Mr. Herlihy stated when we go into construction is pretty much going to be up to the federal government.

Alderman Long asked when will we be walking over to take the train to Boston.

Mr. Herlihy stated service will start when we do the construction for the project which is contingent on receiving funding from the federal government due to the competitive nature. Even when you do that, you get in the queue and still don't have an exact timeframe. Once we get the construction dollars I think it is 3-5 years.

Mayor Craig asked what is the range.

Mr. Doyle stated in terms of a range, if we have the 30% design by 2023 optimistically depending on how you deliver the project and whether it is design-build or design-bid-build, you might need roughly two years for final design and then another few years to construct it. More or less 4-6 years from now.

Alderman Fajardo stated on slide 8 you mentioned or referenced the possible impacts to the TOD street grid. I was wondering if you could elaborate on the criteria for compatibility with the surrounding streets.

Mr. Doyle answered one of the criteria would be compatibility with existing and expected future land use around the rail yard. As a former and partially still active rail yard, the footprint of the facility from the standpoint of existing land uses is very compatible. In the future, it would still be compatible with surrounding land uses because on the west of the proposed yard there would be the Pan Am railways mainline freight track, which would continue to carry freight northward to Concord and beyond. Then to the west of the mainline track there is still another several sets of freight yard tracks that Pan Am will be continuing to use. To the east of the facility, at least in the vicinity of here, is the MTA's maintenance and storage facility. Whether it stays there or transforms, that too is a compatible land use. When I talked about making it more compatible, I was talking about working with this street grid here. You can see this north-south roadway. Could it be shifted slightly to the east so there would be a workable configuration between the layover yard and the future street grid? You can see that the yard footprint itself is within the existing footprint of the Pan Am yard. We think there might be some flexibility to shift it a little bit further north potentially just to get it a little further north of Hancock Street. We think once we get the general location identified as shown here and we get into advancing the engineering of it we can squeeze it and push it north a little bit to make things more compatible with the TOD street grid that you see here.

Alderman Fajardo asked so compatibility equals minimal impact.

Mr. Doyle answered yes.

Alderman Sharonov stated to clarify your answer to Alderman Long's question, when you said you would be back before the Board does that mean we will have a final vote on the financial plan and everything else or is it just going to be informational.

Mr. Herlihy responded I think it will be more informational. I am not sure what you would be voting on. If the city is participating in the financial plan, I am assuming that is a discussion that the Mayor is going to have with all of you before any commitment to anything is done. That vote I would assume would happen before we even get to a final document.

Alderman Sharonov asked so today's vote is just for endorsement of the layover location and is that going to be the final vote you need from us.

Mayor Craig stated yes. Is there a motion to approve?

***Alderman Cavanaugh*** moved to endorse the layover yard/facility location at Pan Am South. ***Alderman Stewart*** duly seconded the motion. Mayor Craig called for a vote. The motion carried with Aldermen Sharonov, E. Sapienza and Levasseur duly recorded in opposition.

## **CONSENT AGENDA**

### **Accept and Remand Funds**

3. Donation of \$250 from Fuss & O'Neill for the Bob Powers Pantry at the Welfare Department.
4. Donation of \$500 from SNHU for the Fire Department.
5. Donation of \$5,000 from Nancy L. Feldman in memory of Laurence Feldman for the Senior Center.

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

**6. Sidewalk Petitions**

**Residential 50/50:**

- 149 Arah Street
- 170 Elmhurst Avenue
- 425 Mammoth Road
- 214 Sagamore Street

**Information to be Received and Filed**

7. Communications from Xfinity regarding a programming change.
8. Communication from Michele Bogardus, Deputy Finance Director, regarding the funding position of the Old Retirement System as of June 30, 2021.
9. Communication from Sharon Wickens, Finance Director, regarding the December Meals & Rooms Tax Distribution from the state.

**REPORTS OF COMMITTEES**

**COMMITTEE ON ADMINISTRATION/INFORMATION SYSTEMS**

10. Advising that they have directed City staff (Assessor's Office, Planning Department and Economic Development Director) to review the process of approving tax abatements on a case-by-case basis and report back with recommendations to improve the City's 79-E program.  
*(Unanimous vote with the exception of Alderman Shaw who was absent)*
11. Advising that they have directed City staff (Assessor's Office, Planning Department, Economic Development Director and Finance) to look into creating tax increment financing (TIF) districts to attract more development and report back with recommendations.  
*(Unanimous vote with the exception of Alderman Shaw who was absent)*
12. Advising that they have received and filed the discussion regarding impact fee waivers.  
*(Unanimous vote with the exception of Alderman Shaw who was absent)*
13. Advising that they have received and filed the discussion regarding congregate housing in the city.  
*(Unanimous vote with the exception of Alderman Shaw who was absent)*

## COMMITTEE ON LANDS AND BUILDINGS

14. Recommending that the Letter of Intent from Manchester Moves for an art project and lighting at the Parker Street Tunnel on the Piscataquog Rail Trail to include:
- Forming a partnership with the local art community
  - Working with the City to select a design that is appropriate and feasible for this project
  - Working with the partnering artist to create a budget and perform fundraising
  - Facilitating the installation of the art project in the Parker Street Tunnel
  - Having the City fund and apply an anti-graffiti treatment after the art is complete
  - Transferring the title of ownership and rights of the art work to the City upon completion
  - Returning to the BMA with a formal MOU once partnerships, details and costs are identified
  - Installing lighting in tunnels throughout the city
  - Installing lighting along the trails
- be approved under the direct supervision of the Department of Public Works and Solicitor's Office.  
*(Unanimous vote with the exception of Alderman Shaw who was absent)*
15. Recommending that the request from the property owner of 66 McQuesten Street for a revocable license for a temporary handicap ramp be approved.  
*(Unanimous vote with the exception of Alderman Shaw who was absent)*
16. Recommending that the Letter of Intent from William Socha Development, Inc. to purchase city-owned property on Hackett Hill Road (Tax Map 766, Lots 15 and 15D) be received and filed until the new zoning regulations are adopted.  
*(Unanimous vote with the exception of Alderman Shaw who was absent)*

HAVING READ THE CONSENT AGENDA, ON MOTION OF **ALDERMAN LONG**,  
DULY SECONDED BY **ALDERMAN BARRY**, THE CONSENT AGENDA WAS  
APPROVED.

## REGULAR BUSINESS

17. Communication from June Trisciani advising the Board of her resignation from the Planning Board, effective 12/16/2021.

*On motion of **Alderman Long**, duly seconded by **Alderman Heath**, it was voted to accept the resignation with regret.*

**18.** Nomination(s) to be presented by Mayor Craig, if available.

Mayor Craig stated pursuant to Section 3.14 (b) of the City Charter, please find below the following nominations which will layover to the next meeting of the Board pursuant to Rule 20.

Conservation Commission

Emmanuel Uwizeye as an alternate member, term to expire August 1, 2024

Heritage Commission

Peter Richard as an alternate member, term to expire July 1, 2022

Board of Registrars

Elizabeth Wester to replace Jennifer Farmer as a regular member, term to expire May 1, 2022

Manchester Development Corporation

Maria Mongan to replace Will Craig as a regular member, term to expire March 11, 2025

Highway Commission

Arthur Gatzoulis to replace Patrick Robinson as a regular member, term to expire January 15, 2025

Mayor Craig stated also in your packet I am pleased this evening to nominate Jodie Nazaka for the position of Economic Development Director for the City of Manchester. Ms. Nazaka has served the City of Manchester and the Planning & Community Development Department since 2015 and has proven to be a bright and thoughtful leader who is committed to serving the people of Manchester. I truly believe that the Manchester Economic Development Office will once again set our community up for success under Ms. Nazaka's guidance and I am confident that she is the right person for the job. Her experience is comprehensive encompassing both professional and volunteer work. Before coming to work in the Planning & Community Development Department in 2015, she was a town planner in Milford and an environmental planner at Inter-Science Research Associates. As a senior planner in the Planning & Community Development Department, Ms. Nazaka has led many key programs including rezoning initiatives, permitting and business applications. She also led the city's work to identify a potential commuter rail station in partnership with the NH DOT and managed the update and adoption of the city's 10-year comprehensive Master Plan. Outside of her professional career, Ms. Nazaka has remained active in committee and volunteer work, including acting as the Co-Chair of Placemaking for the Manchester Connects Steering Committee, serving on the Community Engagement Committee for the Manchester

Young Professionals Network, and serving on the Executive Committee for the Plan New Hampshire Design Charrette for Families in Transition. She also is a current member of the Manchester Water Works Youth Education and Public Outreach Program, served on the Executive Committee of the New Hampshire Planning Association and more. I could go on and on about Jodie forever. I am thrilled to nominate her for this position. This nomination will layover for two weeks. I just want to make sure that you all know she will be reaching out to each and every one of you to address any questions that you may have.

***Alderman Levasseur*** moved to suspend the rule for a two-week layover. *This is the best nomination I have seen come through...one of the best because I don't want to denigrate anybody else who has been approved but I had the honor of working with Jodie for four years on the Planning Board. She doesn't need to wait two more weeks. I think we should suspend the rule and confirm her tonight.*

***Alderman E. Sapienza*** duly seconded the motion.

Alderman Long asked with respect to her starting this position, do we need this two-week layover. I think that would be under consideration. I don't know.

Mayor Craig stated it is up to the Board. It is just that the normal procedure for the Board is to have the nomination layover for two weeks but it is your prerogative if you want to waive the rule.

Alderman Long asked so there are no constraints to doing that.

Mayor Craig stated she won't be starting tomorrow or anything. She still has some things to finish up in Planning.

Alderman T. Sapienza asked if she isn't going to start tomorrow why do we have to waive the rule.

Alderman Levasseur answered because I want to.

Alderman Trisciani stated I agree with Alderman T. Sapienza on this one. Jodie has my support 100%. I have worked with her in Planning for years. I think she is the right person for the role but I know there are things in the Planning & Community Development Department that she needs to wrap up to move forward. I am not sure that the suspension of the rule buys us anything.

Alderman Levasseur stated approving her doesn't mean she starts tomorrow. It just means she doesn't have to wait two weeks for us to approve her.

Alderman Trisciani stated with all due respect we have a process that we follow and I think we should respect the process in this case.

***Mayor Craig*** called for a vote on the motion to suspend the rule.

Alderman Levasseur asked so the motion passed.

*Matthew Normand, City Clerk, stated the motion failed. You need a 2/3 vote to suspend the rules.*

Alderman Levasseur stated okay we will wait two weeks.

Mayor Craig stated again, she will make herself available if anyone has any questions.

Mayor Craig stated the last nominations I want to make relate to the Housing Commission. Last year this Board approved an ordinance establishing a Housing Commission. The Housing Commission will be responsible for following up on the many recommendations made by the Affordable Housing Task Force and continue their work by recognizing, promoting, enhancing, encouraging and developing a diverse supply of housing to meet the economic, social, and physical needs of the City of Manchester and its residents. The residents that I am nominating tonight are uniquely qualified to continue this work. They bring a range of perspectives and backgrounds from housing advocacy to development to housing and homeless service providers. With the support of our Director of Homeless Initiatives and staff of the Planning & Community

Development Department, as well as our office, our newly created Housing Commission will meet monthly or as frequently as the commission deems necessary to make recommendations to this Board for policy changes that will support the creation and maintenance of housing so that all residents have a safe and affordable home while maintaining the character of our community. Pursuant to RSA 674:44 (H) please find below the following nominations which will layover to the next meeting of the Board:

Housing Commission

Jean Noel Mugabo as a regular member, term to expire January 1, 2025  
Zachery Palmer as a regular member, term to expire January 1, 2025  
Peter Capano as a regular member, term to expire January 1, 2025  
Jessica Margeson as a regular member, term to expire January 1, 2025  
Christopher Wellington as a regular member, term to expire January 1, 2025  
Joseph Wichert as an alternate member, term to expire January 1, 2025  
Kate Marquis as an alternate member, term to expire January 1, 2025

Alderman Levasseur asked where are these names. We are just hearing this now.

Mayor Craig answered there are no pages on the agenda. It is in my new business packet right after Jodie's information.

**19. Confirmation(s) to be presented by Mayor Craig:**

Trustees of the Trust Funds

Lyn Gelin as a regular member, term to expire January 1, 2025

Planning Board

Molly Lunn Owen moving from an alternate to a regular member, term to expire May 1, 2022

Stefan Philbrook as an alternate member, term to expire May 1, 2024

Conduct Board

Roland Martin as a regular member, term to expire October 1, 2024

Water Commission

Judy Reardon as a regular member, term to expire January 1, 2025

Harold Sullivan as a regular member, term to expire January 1, 2025

OYS Advisory Board

Madhab Gurung as a regular member, term to expire January 1, 2025

*On motion of **Alderman Long**, duly seconded by **Alderman T. Sapienza**, it was voted to confirm the nominations as presented.*

**20. Confirmation of Jason Bonilla to fill the vacant Ward 5 Board of School Committee position, term to expire January 2, 2024.**

**Alderman T. Sapienza** moved to confirm the nomination. **Alderman Trisciani** duly seconded the motion. The motion carried with Alderman Sharonov abstaining.

Alderman Long asked do we need to know why Alderman Sharonov is abstaining.

Alderman Trisciani stated according to our new rules yes.

Alderman Sharonov stated I am abstaining because I still believe we should have a special election instead of appointing someone to essentially a full term without being elected.

Mayor Craig replied so that is a no.

Alderman Long stated that is not in the Charter as a reason for abstention. We voted in a new rule on abstentions as it relates to the Charter.

City Clerk Normand stated the reasons for abstaining are for personal or financial conflict.

Alderman Sharonov stated okay you can switch my vote to a no then.

Alderman E. Sapienza stated I have a question on that. So moving forward if anyone abstains from a vote they are going to have to explain themselves and that explanation is subject to what, a review?

Mayor Craig responded it should be consistent with the definition in the Charter.

Alderman Levasseur stated there is something called the first amendment and that rule would go out the window if anyone actually challenged it. I get the spirit of the rule but I think it is a bit nitpicky.

Mayor Craig stated it is a vote in opposition or an abstention for the reasons we all agreed to.

Alderman Levasseur stated I think he gave a good explanation for abstaining and it was well-grounded. That is his right. I didn't know there was a whole set of rules.

Alderman Sharonov stated switch it back to abstain then please.

21. Confirmation of Marlana Trombley as a member of the Manchester Transit Authority Commission, term to expire May 1, 2024.

*On motion of **Alderman Cavanaugh**, duly seconded by **Alderman Stewart**, it was voted to confirm the nomination.*

22. Communication from Matthew Normand, City Clerk, regarding a special election for the aldermanic vacancy in Ward 9.

*On motion of **Alderman Levasseur**, duly seconded by **Alderman Long**, it was voted to approve the date of the special election.*

Alderman Levasseur asked what is the date.

City Clerk Normand answered it would be March 15.

Alderman Levasseur asked when is the sign-up period.

City Clerk Normand replied it would open tomorrow. My proposal in the attachment is to open the filing period tomorrow and run it through Friday the following week, which I believe is 1/28 at 5 PM. The election would be on March 15 from 6 AM until 7 PM.

23. Communication from Michael Reed, Stebbins Commercial Properties LLC, requesting an extension of the P&S for the Wellington Hill properties until May 31, 2022.

*On motion of **Alderman T. Sapienza**, duly seconded by **Alderman Cavanaugh**, it was voted to approve the request.*

- 24.** Communication from the Heritage Commission requesting the board support the restoration of the Manager's Residence at the Manchester VA Medical Center.

*On motion of **Alderman T. Sapienza**, duly seconded by **Alderman Long**, it was voted to approve the request.*

- 25.** Budget projections to be submitted by Sharon Wickens, Finance Officer, if available.

Sharon Wickens, Finance Officer, stated the expenditure and revenue forecast as of January 18, 2022 based on department head estimates is we are currently projecting a surplus of \$234,000. This operating surplus is comprised of an expenditure surplus of \$1,046,000, a revenue deficit of \$2,611,000 and the use of ARPA aid of \$1,709,000. The revenue deficit is primarily due to interest income, parking revenue, motor vehicle registrations and health insurance. Interest income and parking should rebound a little bit. It just means we will use less ARPA funding. The motor vehicle registrations are still trending down by about \$300,000 a month. You can see that the deficit increased, the projected deficit I should say, to \$707,000 from \$444,000 last month. I am hopeful that when spring comes maybe some of this will stop and we will at least make budget. I really don't think we are going to make up that \$700,000. I think that is truly going to be a loss in the budget. Health insurance is also trending higher than budgeted. With Covid being as bad as it is right now, we may see that people do more telehealth and not office visits and medical procedures are being delayed so we may rebound a little bit but I still think we are going to finish the year over budget in the health insurance line. This surplus that we project of \$234,000 includes \$340,000 from the contingency account. There were 21 retirements through January 14, 2022 compared with 25 retirements at this same time a year ago. Severance paid through January 14 is \$734,910 compared to \$1,107,971 a year ago. Currently the severance reserve account has a balance of \$1,128,975. I have also submitted the overtime report as of January 18 and a summary of the severance paid through January 14 by department. Does anyone have any questions?

**26. Report(s) of the Committee on Community Improvement, if available.**

The Committee on Community Improvement respectfully recommends, after due and careful consideration, that a request from the Manchester Housing and Redevelopment Authority for an extension of the maturity date of their existing \$650,000 HOME loan from 12/1/2033 to 2/27/2037 be approved.

***Alderman Stewart*** moved to accept the report and adopt its recommendation.

***Alderman T. Sapienza*** duly seconded the motion.

Alderman Levasseur asked which organization is this for.

Mayor Craig stated this is MHRA.

***Mayor Craig*** called for a vote. The motion carried with Alderman Sharonov duly recorded in opposition.

**27. Report(s) of the Committee on Bills on Second Reading, if available.**

There were none.

**28. Report(s) of the Committee on Human Resources/Insurance, if available.**

There were none.

**29. Report(s) of the Committee on Lands & Buildings, if available.**

There were none.

**NEW BUSINESS**

Alderman Long stated I want to verify that everybody received the special committee assignments and the aldermanic representatives to boards/commission. My

understanding is that this doesn't need Board approval. I just wanted to make sure you all received the document and if you have any conflicts, please let me know.

Mayor Craig stated on Wednesday, January 26 at 2 PM and Thursday, January 27 at 9 AM here we are going to be having CIP presentations. Any Board members who want to participate are more than welcome. As Anna mentioned, the free Covid-19 rapid tests are available to US residents, one per address. You can sign-up today at [special.usps.com/testkits](https://special.usps.com/testkits). I encourage people to do that.

Alderman E. Sapienza asked what are the dates for the CIP presentations.

Mayor Craig stated January 26 at 2 PM and January 27 at 9 AM. That information is in your packet. Basically, non-profit organizations come in and present their requests for funding. It is televised as well if you can't make the meetings.

**Alderman Long** moved to recess the meeting pursuant to RSA 91-A:2, I(a) for strategy or negotiations with respect to collective bargaining. **Alderman Cavanaugh** duly seconded the motion. Mayor Craig called for a vote. There being none opposed, the motion carried.

Mayor Craig called the meeting back to order.

There being no further business, on motion of **Alderman Barry**, duly seconded by **Alderman Gamache**, 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