

BOARD OF MAYOR AND ALDERMEN

March 1, 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 T. Sapienza.

A moment of silence was observed with Mayor Craig asking that everyone keep the Manchester families who have loved ones in the Ukraine in their thoughts and prayers as we also pray for peace.

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.

Vanessa Blais, 51 Ash Street, stated:

Tonight I just want to talk about my concerns for fire safety in the city. I live at 51 Ash Street and I am in Ward 4. As you know recently we have had a lot of fires in Ward 4, one which unfortunately resulted in a fatality and severe injury to one of our firefighters. At the most recent fire this past weekend, I was the first person on the scene and after calling 911 and making sure everyone was out of the building one of the things that I noticed was that there were no smoke detectors going off. It made me reflect on a lot of time that I spend canvassing in my ward. A lot of times when I am around those buildings you can often hear the chirping of the dead batteries of the smoke detectors. My ask from you tonight is that the city look into some kind of initiative to insure that, especially in the most dense parts and oldest parts of the city, the residents are able to

acquire smoke detectors and make sure that they have operating smoke detectors because if their batteries are not working then they are not very useful. I would also like to ask about maybe requirements for landlords to have fire extinguishers in the buildings. I know in my own building we have handed them out to the residents but I know that it is not a requirement and I think that maybe it could have helped in a lot of these cases. Unfortunately, because we have such old housing stock, when we have a fire it is mainly devastating and they usually displace a lot of people and we already don't have enough housing so there is really no place for people who have lost everything to go. I thank you for your time and I appreciate you looking into that. Thank you.

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.

PRESENTATIONS

2. Covid-19 Public Health Update.

Anna Thomas, Public Health Director, stated here we are. I am so happy to share with you that today we are reporting 102 active cases in the City of Manchester. That is down from 423 just two weeks ago. We also have seen a decline in our 14-day new case rate which has been fairly consistent. It is now down to 275.7 per 100,000 population which two weeks ago was 754.8. It is still not below the 100 per 100,000 which we want to see which would be under substantial but it is certainly tracking in the right direction. Our 7-day test positivity, however, is at 3.5% which is minimal which we are very excited about. That is compared to 8.7% just two weeks ago. We are finally seeing that threshold go back to what we were seeing in the summer numbers in August and September. It is very exciting. We still have 17 people between the two hospitals right now in inpatient beds for Covid but that again is down compared to 25 just two weeks ago. The CDC has issued its new masking guidance and as you all voted, we lifted the masking rule we had in place for city buildings. The new guidance basically says that in areas that are experiencing moderate or less activity we can go ahead and not have to mask indoors and it is really up to one's personal discretion at

this point and/or a conversation with your doctor. For anyone who may be immunocompromised or traveled internationally or otherwise these are conversations you should have with your provider at this point. For some people, you still may see masking because they are either choosing to do that or they should do that based on their circumstances. Based on a call with the state today, the other update I wanted to give you is that the fixed testing site that we have at Hunt Pool will close on March 15. They have moved the timeline up. It was supposed to be at the end of the month, however, we are still operating under the assumption that the fixed vaccination site is going to keep operating until the end of the month. We are still waiting guidance for children from 6 months to 4 years old for vaccination as well as any future booster recommendations. The other unknown that we have yet to face will be what will happen come fall and what will be this pattern and if we see a resurgence of Covid in the fall and how we will manage that. Things are looking great. I think it is going to be a phenomenal summer and I can't wait. We are pushing to get back to all of our essential services at the Public Health Department.

3. Annual Report by the Manchester Police Department.

Mayor Craig stated I want to thank Chief Aldenberg and his team for putting this comprehensive information together. I would ask the Board to respectfully hold all questions until the presentation is done.

Allen Aldenberg, Police Chief, stated tonight with me I have Emily Cleary who is our Crime Analyst. She has been with the Police Department since August 2021 and she came to us from the Dover Police Department. I appreciate the opportunity to speak with all of you this evening in order to present the 2021 Annual Report for the Manchester Police Department. I felt that as the Chief of Police I have a responsibility to present you and the citizens of Manchester with this report. It is my intent during this presentation to provide you with a high level overview of the agency. The full report was provided to all of you last Friday and it was released to the public approximately five minutes ago. I also feel that in providing this report we as an agency are being as transparent as possible. It is also an opportunity to highlight the great work that is being done by the men and women of the Manchester Police Department on a daily basis. As

a senior law enforcement executive, I firmly believe that it is incumbent upon me to think strategically as a leader of this agency and when becoming Chief of Police in 2020 I developed three major priority areas – reducing violent crime, recruitment and retention, and officer mental health and wellness. They are not in any particular order. They were all just as important as the others but I list them in that fashion. I will speak more in-depth about them as we move forward. In late 2020, we moved forward with our ComStat360 Program with the assistance of the National Police Foundation. They conducted a community assessment and met with numerous community stakeholders and one of the top public safety issues that came up was violent crime and more specifically gun crime and even more important, the fear of gun crime. In furtherance of this goal, we implemented some evidence-based responses. The ComStat360 model resulted in the agency developing a community-led discussion and strategy development to focus on gun crimes and the associated fear of gun violence. We instituted a gun crime problem-solving team which is comprised of community members and other city departments such as the Health Department, DPW and OYS. One key initiative that has come from this community-based problem-solving team thus far is the creation of a street outreach program in conjunction with My Turn to focus on at-risk youth between the age of 14-24. This effort will work to connect these targeted individuals to resources to hopefully enhance their desistance from crime. As an agency, we recognize that we have to increase our coordination and collaboration with our state and federal law enforcement partners as we work to address gun crime and gun violence. As a result, I initiated weekly gun crime operations and intelligence meetings or forums. These meetings take place every Tuesday at 8 AM and involve representatives from local, county, state and federal law enforcement agencies as well as representatives from the Solicitor's Office, County Attorney, US Attorney, and Probation & Parole at both the state and federal levels. The overall intent of these meetings is to review cases and set priorities, follow-up on past actions, and share relevant intelligence but most importantly to hold people accountable both internally and externally. I feel it is important to highlight that in 2021 as an agency we seized 89 firearms. Much of this can be attributed to the creation of our Anti-Crime Unit which primarily focuses on gun-related crimes. It is also important to mention that the ARPA funds that were provided to the agency have greatly enhanced our ability to dedicate additional resources to these investigations which are often prolonged and very

complex. I just want to highlight that is 89 firearms ladies and gentlemen and it is my hope that those firearms will remain off the street and not be used to hurt or kill one of our citizens or just as important one of my police officers. I am very proud of the fact that we have taken 89 guns off the street in one year. It may not seem like a lot but from where I sit it is very significant. Additionally, the agency is focused on our hotspot areas which are evidence-based locations that aren't arbitrary. These locations, statistics will show, attribute to the majority of violent crime. Additionally, as an agency our focus is on the chronic and prolific offenders of gun violence. Again, this is not arbitrary or increased enforcement. It is targeted efforts to intervene on those driving the gun crime. Just as important and very near and dear to my heart is recruiting and retention. As you all know, the city recognized the need for additional police officers which led to the overall complement being increased to 267 sworn positions. As with many police agencies across the country, we are struggling to hire new officers. Much of this can be attributed to the national narrative around policing, however, over the past three or four years we have seen a significant decrease in the number of applicants. Recognizing that as an issue, we worked closely with Kathy Ferguson in the HR Department to change our testing process. As a result, we have moved our written test to an online platform, which has increased the accessibility of the written exam and more appealing to the younger generation of candidates. It is also advantageous for out-of-state candidates as well as service members who are stationed across the country and across the globe. What we were seeing is we were committed to giving in-person testing times a year usually in the spring and fall. That is just not very conducive to getting the applicant numbers that we desire. That was the reason for the change. We were just trying to think outside the box a little bit. We are constantly working to increase our advertising to assure that we are reaching as many people as possible through social media and other avenues. Since the inception of this new process, we have had 235 candidates apply for the police officer positions. Of those 235, 35 were hired and 29 are still employed by the agency. Our records show that this is the highest number of officers hired in one calendar year going back a significant amount of time. In 2021, to speak about attrition, there were 22 officers who left the agency. Ten of those were normal retirements and 12 were resignations for various reasons. As I sit here this evening, we currently have 17 vacancies and we hope to hire an additional 10-14 officers on May 2. If we are successful in doing so, that will bring our vacancies

down to 3-5 which to me is a significant improvement and significant progress. I appreciate the support of the Board as we continue to move towards hiring more officers. In regards to retention, as an agency we are working hard to create and maintain a culture where our employees feel valued. I personally emphasize every day the concept of engaged leadership with our employees and my supervisors in particular. We are all responsible for creating a greater and meaningful connection with our employees which undoubtedly in my opinion lends to retaining both sworn and unsworn members of the agency. Additionally, we are working hard to create career development opportunities for our patrol officers throughout the department. This program has been very beneficial relative to identifying patrol officers for future specialized assignments and affording the patrol officers exposure to other aspects of the department all designed to enhance their skills and hopefully retain them. Just as important is officer mental health and wellness. The impact of a career in law enforcement is significant and maintaining good mental health and wellness are important to a successful organization no matter what the organization may be. Manchester Police employees experience a significant number of critical incidents and traumatic experiences on a daily basis. As Chief, it is my responsibility to insure that we are taking care of our employees and creating a culture of wellness. To further these goals, in 2021 we created a dedicated Mental Health and Wellness Officer position to oversee all of the work in this area. This includes proactively supporting employees and providing resiliency training to help mitigate future traumatic experiences. We also began to integrate friends and families of the employees into the Manchester Police family. This support network is vital to our employees' health and including them in the MPD culture will help foster long-term wellness. We began hosting family nights for new employees and their friends and families so they could get an introduction to MPD. We also brought back a family cook-out in late summer and we will be hosting an MPD Winter Family Day on March 12 at Camp Carpenter. The Manchester Police Department recognizes the direct positive correlation between prioritizing one's own mental health and wellness and the ability to perform essential job functions. If an officer is not in good physical and mental condition, they cannot assure the public's, their colleagues', or their own safety. Prioritizing mental health and wellness as an agency unequivocally aids all employees to be healthier, happier and safer and better able to perform their law enforcement occupational functions. Lastly, in regards to

mental health and wellness, I felt it was important to mention the extremely valuable work that is done every day by our Critical Incident Stress Management and Peer-to-Peer Support Team. The CISM Team is comprised of 26 volunteer sworn and civilian employees. Each member is trained through the International Critical Incident Stress Foundation to provide fellow employees with individual and group crisis intervention as needed. Members of the MPD CISM Team are also members of the Southern NH Regional Team which provides mental health and support services to first responders all over the state of NH. The CISM Team receives essential critical direction and support from staff at the Forge Health & Veteran & First Responders Organization. I want to add that the Manchester Police Department is leading the way in the state in my opinion relative to officer mental health and wellness and serving as a shining example for many agencies across the state and in the Greater New England region. I think we should all be proud of the work they are doing on behalf of our employees. There are some additional programs I wanted to touch on. The first being CRT or our Mobile Crisis Response Team. Currently our agency has over 100 CRT trained officers. This collaborative team approach with Manchester Mental Health allows us to respond to calls involving people in crisis seven days a week. It is important to note that in 2021, the team responded to 242 calls for service, which resulted in 95% of the individuals being diverted from the hospital. That is a pretty significant number for a lot of reasons. Historically when we would go to these type of calls we did not have the resources that we do know or have had in the past four to five years. Generally, we would end up getting in fights with people that we shouldn't be getting in those types of situations with. We are diverting people to where they need to be diverted to and hopefully they are getting the resources that they need. It has been a pretty significant development over the past few years. Next would be that we are proud to be partnering with the Adverse Childhood Experiences Response Team, also known as ACERT. This program is a multi-disciplinary team that is deployed to certain children who have been exposed to violence and other traumatic events. Unfortunately, many children in our city are experiencing this. Members are trained to connect with families and identify next steps to support the children, hopefully to mitigate any future incidents. This includes referrals to support groups, mental health counseling, early childhood education or child-parent psychotherapy. Manchester Police also began participating in the first ACERT Train the Trainer Program to help scale the program throughout the area. The new ACERT

Trainers will travel to other agencies across the state to help them develop their ACERT programs. Again, this is another example of how Manchester Police is leading the way. The next one is the Community Response Unit. Beginning in June 2021, the Police Department partnered with the Manchester Health Department to do targeted outreach in the community. Through grant funding from the University of Baltimore and in coordination with the high intensity drug trafficking areas, also known as HIDA, the Community Response Unit was formed which allows police and health officials to go out in the community and connect with people who are struggling with substance use disorders. This harm reduction initiative is comprised of two police officers and a community health worker who are tasked with conducting a follow-up on very overdose with the goal to have that follow-up done within 72 hours. Thus far, we have seen a 71% success rate in connecting with these individuals and 60% of those contacted were successfully referred to additional services. Calls for service and crime statistics. This is what people want to hear about so we will do our best to address the issues that we have at hand. As an agency, we recognize the importance of accurately reporting data and, therefore, have invested in greater data quality control by assigning a dedicated Records Specialist to do data quality and hiring our new Crime Analyst, Emily. Additionally, we received a grant to enhance our data reporting and we intend to build a public facing dashboard in an effort to be more transparent relative to crime statistics on a more regular and occurring basis. Whatever frequency we come up with, that is what we hope to do. When we look at calls for service, we break them down by proactive and reactive. A proactive call is generated by an officer, either a motor vehicle stop, a business check, a hotspot patrol, or citizen contact. It can be a variety of things but those are generally where the proactive calls come from. A reactive call is exactly that. Those are calls that come from the public requesting police service. In our analysis of calls for service, we found that our business checks and motor vehicle stops were down compared to 2018. It was more appropriate to compare to 2018 due to the impacts of Covid-19 in 2019 and 2020. This is an area where I think we can improve in regards to our proactive activity and our business checks, hotspot patrols and motor vehicle stops. I recognize that and I have already been communicating with my command staff to try to develop some strategies to improve in that area. Part of the reason motor vehicle stops are down is I am currently down two traffic enforcement officers within my traffic unit. I made the deliberate decision not to fill those positions in favor of maintaining the overall

strength of the Patrol Division which is obviously where the majority of work happens. That is my biggest division and there are many reasons why I want to keep as many community police and patrol officers in the Patrol Division, from the mental health and wellness burnout, not forcing officers overtime...there is a plethora of reasons to maintain the highest number I can in the Patrol Division. Again, I fully recognize that there is room for improvement in some of the proactive areas and improving in those will be a priority for 2022. It is also important to highlight that we saw a significant increase in check condition calls for service. In 2021 we went to 474 more compared to 2020. Additionally, unwanted subject calls for service were up 20%. We went to 2,800 unwanted subject calls in 2021. Addressing these type of calls for service through our partnership with community health workers will be a priority in 2022. We are meeting with the Health Department weekly to develop the framework for this initiative. The first will be to identify and intervene with high resource users; those we receive multiple calls for on a regular basis either regarding a person or an address and connect them with the community health workers. Second will be a framework to divert calls at the time of the call. That will be a process and the Police Community Coordinator that I have hired as part of that program will be tasked specifically with this. I am essentially trying to reduce the number of calls relative to check condition and welfare checks that the actual patrol officer is going to and divert as many of them as I can to the community health worker program that we all know about. We are going to talk a little bit about Part I crimes. Emily why don't you give them a brief synopsis of what a Part I crime entails?

Emily Cleary, Crime Analyst, stated Part I crimes are also known as Group A crimes and those are how the FBI differentiates between the more violent prolific crimes versus the less heard about crimes like embezzlement and counterfeiting. The Part I crimes that they typically report on their index crimes are the homicides, aggravated assaults, rape, and robbery. Of the property crimes we have burglary, larceny or thefts, motor vehicle theft and arson. Those are considered the index crimes by the FBI that can give you a general idea of overall criminal activity.

Chief Aldenberg stated I know people tend to look at crime statistics from year-to-year but it is important to look at crime statistics over a 10-year average. That is the national standard when it comes to measuring crime statistics. We do that so we can measure

the success of the programs and initiatives that we have undertaken. I understand that at the end of the day perception is reality sometimes when it comes to crime but I think as elected officials and as a police leader I have a responsibility to look at it over a greater period of time so we can properly measure success and failures and adjust appropriately. Having said that, the property crime rate increased 10% compared to 2020. However, there is a 60% decrease compared to the 10-year average. Overall, Manchester's total crime rate increased 4% compared to 2020 and decreased 17% compared to the 10-year average. Crime in the city has been showing a slight but steady decline since 2016. Property crimes are up. The increase in theft is mostly driven by theft from motor vehicles and a lot of that we can attribute to a lot of vehicles that we see unlocked. As more of a public service than anything at this point, a lot of the thefts from motor vehicles are driven by unlocked unattended vehicles. The same goes for theft of a motor vehicle. Some of that has been driven by the increased value in cars and car parts or lack of availability of motor vehicles. A lot of it is attributed to vehicles being left running and unattended in somebody's driveway or pulling up to a store and running in. That attributes to a lot of the vehicle thefts that we have had. Again, as a public service announcement, always lock your vehicle and never leave your car running unattended. It seems like common sense but it happens more frequently than you would think. The violent crime is down 11% compared to the 10-year average. I just want to touch on rape. That is a very difficult category to analyze because we know, and data and research has shown, that it is an extremely underreported crime for a variety of reasons. We continue to see declines in robberies which could be partly attributed to a heavy focus by our hotspot patrols. I want to touch on aggravated assaults. Before coming in here Emily told me that number has been adjusted from 479 to 439 for 2021 which puts it at a 2% increase as opposed to 10% compared to the 10-year average. The reason for this is we found through additional training that Emily has attended, as well as her working closely with some other subject matter experts that we were over reporting aggravated assaults. I guess that is better than underreporting. We can't accurately compare 2021 to prior years. Essentially what it comes down to is the State of NH around 2015 made strangulation a felony. Strangulation is usually seen at domestic violence calls for service which by NH standards is an aggravated assault. However, according to the FBI, not all strangulations meet the FBI standard for aggravated assault so essentially if the person is strangled and they don't lose

consciousness, either way we would classify it as an aggravated assault. If the person does not lose consciousness, then the FBI classifies it as a simple assault. That is the reason we over reported and Emily has been working to readjust those numbers to the best of her ability. Violent crime is the big one and the one everybody is concerned about as am I. Your concern is real and your concern is valid. The concerns of your constituents are real and I hear it. My police officers hear it. I am glad to say that we are having success. There are certainly some areas that continue to be challenging, however, violent crime declined by 28% compared to 2020 and was down 10% compared to the three-year average. Gunfire incidents, which is a subset of violent crimes which is defined as when a firearm is discharged during the incident, continue to be the problem. This is what gets the public and the media's attention and all of your attention and rightfully so. In 2021, gunfire incidents were down 4% compared to 2020, however, the number of gunfire incidents, 67, was up 24% compared to the three-year average and that is where the concern is. This is a concerning trend that began in 2020 and persisted into 2021. That is why in 2022, additional efforts to respond to these challenges were made. A community-centered approach will be a major priority at the MPD. I am not running or hiding from this issue, this concern, this public safety matter. We are dedicating as many resources and people to the problem as we can. We contribute some of the increase in gun crime to the availability of firearms to the criminal element, as well as to the overall unrest and instability of society which often causes people to act out and do things they normally would not do. We do know, however, from our analysis that it is a small network of individuals that are responsible for the majority of the shootings and that is who our focus is on every day. When I talked about those weekly gun crime meetings, those people we have identified through our analysis are our focus. Those are the people we are looking at. Yes, some are taken off and added for a variety of reason but that is what our focus is on. It is also important to note that a lot of the shootings you are seeing are retaliatory in nature, which is consistent with group related violence as seen in other major cities across the country. We are not the only one experiencing this but I believe it is magnified when it is a city our size and that is why we will continue to make it a priority. The number of arrests in 2020 you will see remained relatively the same. There was not a significant change. Personally, I see this as a positive. As we continue to work towards bringing crime down, the goal is to do so without increasing arrests. The police do not solely exist to arrest and

incarcerate people. Although making arrests is part of the criminal justice system, we hope to see a further decline in arrests which will hopefully be attributed to our crime prevention methods and strategies. You will see there the breakdown of how arrests are made. 50% were on view and that means the person was taken into custody immediately, 42% were warrants and 7% were criminal summonses to appear. As you can see, for 2022 I maintain my three priorities from 2021 and I have added increasing community engagement as a fourth. It is my intent to accomplish this through our recently added Community Police Coordinator position and our continued collaboration with the Health Department as well as DPW to address environmental issues that attract crimes. The ARPA funds that were allocated to the Police Department will greatly assist in this area. Additionally, we will be working to fully develop our relationship with My Turn to further our reach to the youth in our community. We will continue to increase our dedicated foot patrols in neighborhoods to enable greater community connection and continued emphasis on violent crime investigations will remain a top priority as we strive to reduce violent crime. I am committed to holding more community meetings and conversations with the public, as well as revamping and revitalizing our Community Advisory Board so that we can have meaningful discussions on issues facing the community and develop solutions to deal with these issues. Again, I am fully committed to reaching our full complement of 267 officers. I no longer want to manage or lead a police department that has 17 or 20 vacancies. Doing so is a disservice to my police officers and a disservice to the community and we are never really going to make any legitimate headway if we don't reach our complement. I strive every day and we are working to get there. From my personal goal as the Police Chief, if at the end of the day when I am done I can walk out of here saying I reached full complement which this police department has not been at in many, many years, I would see that as a success. That is not the only way to measure success but it is a major priority of mine because we in particular owe it to the community and owe it to you as elected officials to reach our complement. By reaching full complement, it will ultimately play a critical role in the overall wellness of our employees which also directly correlate to retention. Finally, the overall mental health and wellness of my officers and non-sworn staff remains my number one priority and concern every day. I want to emphasize that this is probably the one thing that keeps me awake at night; the safety and wellness of my officers. Many things keep me awake at night like many of you but

suicide is prevalent in this profession. That is the sad reality. That is why having it as a priority, not only for the Police Department but I think for every leader in this city, is vitally important. Nothing will cripple the Police Department or any first responder agency more than a suicide. That is why we are focused...not just me but also HR through the EAP Program and everything that the city is trying to do. We all need to get on board and be very concerned about the health and wellness of our employees. I will finish with the hope that this presentation and the comprehensive annual report that I provided all of you last week has effectively demonstrated the excellent work being done by the men and women of the Police Department. I am the first to acknowledge that there is always room for improvement and that as an agency we strive for that every day. I would be happy to take any questions.

Alderman Stewart stated thank you both for being here tonight. I have a question and a comment. I will start with the question and preface it by saying I appreciate all of the data collection. I think it is paramount in the line of work that you do to understand and analyze what is going on. I am curious to know to what extent the Police Department collects and analyzes race and ethnic data when it comes to things like arrests, traffic stops, use of force and the like?

Chief Aldenberg answered we didn't include that in this report. That is a whole separate comprehensive discussion, alderman. We have collected that data and are now working to analyze it appropriately. We fully intend on sharing that. I have been in discussions with James McKim from the NAACP and he has offered his help and assistance to the Police Department on how to not so much analyze it but message it out. Again, we will be providing a report on that but I wanted to make sure that it is accurate and that I am being as honest and upfront as I can. You should see that in the near future.

Alderman Stewart stated thank you. I am very much looking forward to seeing that. The comment I wanted to make was with regard to the traffic enforcement officers. I can fully appreciate or maybe I can't, all of the things that go into wanting a 200+ complement particularly for the reasons that you mentioned. I will say, though, that a lot of the calls and complaints that I get as an alderman are regarding speeding and other

traffic issues like people driving talking on their cell phones or blowing through stop signs. Everything else being equal and I know it never is but I, for one, would love to see those positions filled. I think you mentioned the calls for service up there in regard to crashes and accidents and maybe those officers would help bring that down as well if we can be proactive.

Chief Aldenberg stated you will. I have some officers that are currently in their field training program right now which they will finish up around the middle or later part of April. Once I put those nine officers in the Patrol Division, that will free up some wiggle room to fill at least one of those traffic enforcement positions. It has created an internal priority list on which vacancies to fill first and traffic enforcement is right near the top. I do recognize that those are the complaints you get from your seat.

Alderman E. Sapienza stated Chief I want to ask you a couple of questions about recruitment, retention and qualifications. I am guessing in applicants you are looking for prior experience and perhaps military background and college education. Is that true?

Chief Aldenberg responded yes. The minimum requirement believe it or not is a GED.

Alderman E. Sapienza asked if there are people out there with a GED but they don't have any of those backgrounds that I just mentioned, they are certainly welcome to step forward and take the test correct.

Chief Aldenberg answered yes. Just because somebody has a GED that doesn't mean they could not be a...they could be anything.

Alderman E. Sapienza stated right because they would have to go through the field training officer program anyhow and they are going to have to go to the academy.

Chief Aldenberg replied exactly. I would encourage anybody to apply and let us figure out if they are a good fit.

Alderman E. Sapienza asked along with that do you have times when you have an applicant or a group of applicants who have passed all of the standards like the written test, physical test, criminal background check and you are not able to hire them because maybe the state puts restrictions on them. Does that happen?

Chief Aldenberg responded yes. The state has certain statutory restrictions relative to prior drug use. Certain drugs have certain timeframes. For instance, if you have used marijuana within one year of the date of application according to the state that is a disqualifier. However, if I believe strongly in the candidate, I can request a waiver through the Council and ask them to make an exception to the policy and allow me to hire the person.

Alderman E. Sapienza asked lastly, at times do you get frustrated with some of these statutes that prevent you from hiring somebody you feel is qualified.

Chief Aldenberg answered no.

Alderman Trisciani stated I will start with a comment and say thank you for partnering with the Moore Center. You didn't mention that, however, I think it is important that everybody realize that you guys have gone through Train the Trainer with the Moore Center to better deal with autistic individuals and individuals with disabilities and I appreciate you doing that.

Chief Aldenberg replied that starts next week.

Alderman Trisciani stated my question is on the report you mentioned that 22 officers left the department and 12 were resignations. You said this number has typically been between 21-23 officers in the last four years. Is that 21-23 cumulative over the four years or is that every year for the past four years?

Chief Aldenberg replied cumulative.

Alderman Trisciani asked so with the 12 officers that left due to resignations because you know all of the sudden having 22 in a year is a large number, do you have any data on why those officers resigned or are you able to compile anything to understand why they are leaving Manchester?

Chief Aldenberg answered yes. Some of those resignations were 10-15 year officers that kind of did the math if you will on the retirement system and the drastic change that was made to it back in 2012 which greatly impacted the years of service that they would have to do. It was not the agreement that they signed onto so a lot of them did the math financially and said quite frankly it is not worth it. That is part of it. We will normally lose people to federal agencies like FBI, DEA, ATF, etc. We lost two to Homeland Security and one to Secret Service. We lost one to the FBI but he came back. We have lost people to the private sector also. I will be frank with you that for them the national narrative, although we didn't see that much around here, for whatever reason it weighed on them personally and they just didn't want to take the risk to themselves or their family any further. We have also lost officers to smaller police departments in the state, which is something that in my tenure with the police we didn't really see. We didn't really lose people to smaller police departments but again they looked at it financially and quality of life. Being a police officer in this city is a grind. It is a grind and they kind of said well I can go over to Weare PD and make about the same money and not have to deal with 1/3 of what we have to deal with here. They made a move to increase their quality of life. That is what it comes down to.

Alderman George-Kelly stated I just want to say thank you for your continued collaboration with the Manchester Mental Health Center and the work that you are doing to really respond to the issues of mental health and substance use in our community. One of the things that I would really love to know is, I know that you said in your work with the Crisis Response Team that 95% of individuals were diverted from the hospital but could you tell us a little bit about where those individuals went or how they were connected to other resources if they weren't connected to a hospital?

Chief Aldenberg responded what we find is a lot of those calls we got on involving mental health are people in crisis. They are already a client at Manchester Mental

Health. They could have lost connection with the center so the clinician and the peer-to-peer that goes out with the officer on the call...it is just a matter of reconnecting the person with their clinician. That is what we are finding. Now I think it is important to recognize also that when we take the approach that we are taking, I am not tying up a patrol officer route car resource if you will on that call. To dive into that question a little bit deeper, I would probably want to talk to the center on that. My experience having gone on those calls myself is that it is just reconnecting the person with the Mental Health Center or they will set-up an initial appointment for the person right there on the street and divert the call that way. I think the fact that we are not pouring people into ambulances anymore and making the situation worse...the majority of the credit goes to the Greater Manchester Mental Health Center for developing this program.

Mayor Craig stated or making an arrest.

Chief Aldenberg replied yes.

Mayor Craig stated thank you very much. It is great to see that you are using the data to impact your decisions and to hear your candid feedback about everything.

CONSENT AGENDA

Accept and Remand Funds

4. Donation of \$250 from Beasley & Ferber Professional Association for the Senior Services Department.

Information to be Received and Filed

5. Communication from Xfinity regarding a change in services.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

COMMITTEE ON ACCOUNTS, ENROLLMENT AND REVENUE ADMINISTRATION

6. Advising that the update on the Revolving Loan Fund has been accepted.
(Unanimous vote with the exception of Alderman Levasseur who was absent)
7. Advising that the Financial Report for the first seven months of FY22 has been accepted.
(Unanimous vote with the exception of Alderman Levasseur who was absent)

8. Advising that the Finance Department reports:
 - Accounts receivable over 90 days
 - Aging report
 - Outstanding receivableshave been accepted.
(Unanimous vote with the exception of Alderman Levasseur who was absent)
9. Recommending that Ordinance:
“Amending Section 33.046 (Entrance Pay Rates) of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Manchester by changing the approval process for Steps 2-5.”
be Enrolled.
(Unanimous vote with the exception of Alderman Levasseur who was absent)

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

REGULAR BUSINESS

10. Communication from Jonathan Donovan, OYS Director, notifying the Board of his retirement effective March 31, 2022.

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

11. 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 Department of Public Works to extend CIP 711318 Goffs Falls Road Bridge Replacement until 12/31/2022 be approved.

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

The Committee on Community Improvement respectfully recommends, after due and careful consideration, that a request from the Economic Development Director for line item adjustments to CIP 810922 ARPA Economic Development Office be approved.

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

12. Report(s) of the Committee on Public Safety, Health and Traffic, if available.

There were none.

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

There were none.

14. Ordinance:
"Amending Section 33.046 (Entrance Pay Rates) of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Manchester by changing the approval process for Steps 2-5."

*Having had its final reading by title only, **Alderman Long** moved to Ordain. **Alderman T. Sapienza** duly seconded the motion. Mayor Craig called for a vote. The motion carried with Aldermen Sharonov and E. Sapienza duly recorded in opposition.*

Mayor Craig stated I want to bring your attention to my handout. The Codeapalooza is happening on March 7 and 8 at 95 Hanover Street right next door to the Palace Theatre. The times are attached and if you could spread the word that would be great. We really want the public's participation in this process. It is March now so winter parking is on the odd side of the street. Just a reminder that both the Small Business Grant Program and the Community Event and Activation Grant Programs are live and folks should go to www.manchesternh.gov/ARP for more information and to apply for those funds.

Alderman Long stated with respect to that, are the applications being processed now or are we waiting.

Mayor Craig responded as far as I know they are being processed now.

Alderman E. Sapienza stated I want to ask the Fire Chief a few questions. Just a follow-up to what I asked the Police Chief, I also wanted to ask you about recruitment

and retention if I could. What are some of the qualifications that the applicants have to have to apply at the Fire Department minimum?

Andre Parent, Fire Chief, stated in the City of Manchester we require a Firefighter I and Firefighter II to have a CDL-B and the Advanced EMT certification.

Alderman E. Sapienza asked so it is a lot different than police. These are the minimum requirements they have to have to apply?

Chief Parent answered not to apply but within a year they have to get all of those qualifications.

Alderman E. Sapienza asked within a year of getting hired.

Chief Parent replied yes but at this time I am not hiring anybody unless they have those qualifications.

Alderman E. Sapienza asked is that your policy or is it mandated by the state.

Chief Parent answered it is a Fire Department policy.

Alderman E. Sapienza asked do you have a problem with recruitment and retention or do you have the folks you need. Years ago there would be 400 or 500 applicants but I don't think you are seeing that anymore.

Chief Parent replied no we are not seeing that anymore. Right now we have 93 applicants and out of the 93 there are only 4 that have the qualifications to be a Manchester Firefighter.

Alderman E. Sapienza asked have you thought about changing those requirements at all and having more on-the-job training or more on-the-job certification.

Chief Parent answered my training budget doesn't allow for that. Right now I have to hire people who are actually firefighters in other towns.

Alderman E. Sapienza asked so you have to hire people who are firefighters in other towns and you can't hire someone who graduates high school and does a hitch in the Army.

Chief Parent replied I don't have the money in my budget to send them to Concord to go through the Fire Academy.

Alderman T. Sapienza stated you mentioned that they need to be a Firefighter I or Firefighter II and Advanced EMT. How do you get to be a Firefighter I or Firefighter II or Advanced EMT?

Chief Parent responded usually the kids in the surrounding towns join their local Fire Department and pay for their education and then they apply to Manchester.

Alderman T. Sapienza asked so they can't go to college and get that training.

Chief Parent answered there is a college program at Lakes Region Community College. It is an Associate's Degree. Some kids go there and get their Firefighter I, Firefighter II and EMT. It is a two-year course.

*On motion of **Alderman Cavanaugh**, duly seconded by **Alderman Long**, it was voted to recess the meeting pursuant to RSA 91-A:2 I(b) for consultation with legal counsel.*

Mayor Craig called the meeting back to order.

*There being no further business, on motion of **Alderman Long**, duly seconded by **Alderman Sharonov**, 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