

**SPECIAL MEETING
BOARD OF MAYOR AND ALDERMEN
(PUBLIC PARTICIPATION)**

May 07, 2013

7:00 p.m.

Mayor Gatsas called the meeting to order.

Mayor Gatsas called for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Gatsas stated I would ask Alderman Craig to introduce the students from Webster Elementary School, citizens of the month of April.

Alderman Craig stated I'm very proud to announce Ava Demers, Abby Philibotte and Courtney Pedone. They are citizens for the month of April. What Principal Martin did was put everyone's name in a hat and these three young ladies were chosen. I have to mention that there are two other citizens of the month in the audience as well, Courtney's two other sisters.

Mayor Gatsas called for a moment of silence, asking to keep in our prayers and thoughts Sofia Christian who is a student at Central High School and her family.

The Clerk called the roll.

Present: Aldermen Craig, Ludwig, Long, Roy, Osborne, Corriveau, O'Neil, Levasseur, Shea, Greazzo, Gamache, Arnold

Aldermen Katsiantonis and Shaw arrived late

Mayor Gatsas stated Matt, I would like to welcome you back.

City Clerk Matthew Normand stated thank you, Mayor. Happy to be back.

Mayor Gatsas advised that the purpose of the special meeting is to give residents of Manchester the opportunity to address the Board on items of concern affecting the community; that each person will be given only one opportunity to speak and any comments must be directed to the Chair; that any resident wishing to speak come forward to the nearest microphone, clearly state their name and address when recognized, and give their comments.

Mr. Jeff Delangie, 94 Trenton Street, stated:

I would just like to make a brief statement today concerning the tech bond. Basically, consideration of your fourth coming vote on the \$2.8 million tech bond. First, I want to acknowledge that the board's commitment to making Manchester a great place to live and work and I realize the job is not easy and I want to recognize that. In regards to our funding discussion, I would like to quote a Gardner report entitled 2013 IT spending and staffing report, which states that the average annual technology spend for a \$160 million corporation in 2012 was 3.5% or \$5.6 million. That is annual spending. The important message here is not so much the amount that is spent, but the reason why a corporation would allocate such a significant amount of money to technology. The reason is that those dollars pay dividends that add value to their organizations making them more competitive in their markets. As a lifelong fiscal conservative resident of Manchester, for me, this is an easy business decision to make. We live in a society where technology is so pervasive that three year-olds intuitively look to an electronic device for consumption and creation of new knowledge. Making this commitment will pay dividends to our community by attracting families who value educational environment that we create for their children as well as businesses that will value the quality of our graduates. As you prepare your vote on the technology bond I ask that you consider the long term strategic value that this commitment will have for our community.

Ms. Harriet Bingel, 154 Head Street, stated:

I'm here to speak to you this evening in regards to the proposed community gardens on the Dunham lot. I have received this information because I read an article in the *Union Leader* that this was being proposed. I went and spoke to all of the neighbors and the abutters on Varney Street to make sure that they were aware of this wonderful idea. I then received information to attend a grange meeting to find out what their planning, purpose and action truly was. Then I reported back to my neighbors and the consensus is that we are in favor of a community garden, but we find this particular plan of action has been poorly planned. There are safety concerns in our neighborhood that have always existed that we feel this plan would exasperate. We would ask that the grange would go back into the planning stage and reassess their plan of action for this community garden in our neighborhood. Thank you so much for your time.

Ms. Ann Flanagan, 88 Wason Street, stated:

I am also talking about the community garden. I have live on Wason Street since 1979. It is a very small neighborhood. If you are familiar off of Varney Street where the Raco Theodore Park and swimming pool are. There are only a few houses down there, but it is a very busy area, especially in the summer. You have fun in the sun, the swimming pool,

men's softball leagues, daycares coming in, just a lot of activity. Where they are planning on putting this community garden on Dunham Street is the main foot and bicycle path where kids come into the park area. They come down Varney Street, westerly and then they cut down that little path just before GAM Electronics and they walk down Dunham Street where they want to have this garden. You cannot park other than on pavement because of its proximity to the Piscataqua River. It is 20 feet away from it, if that. There are no sidewalks there so if they are parking their cars there the kids will have no alternative except to walk and bike in the middle of the street. Cars come whipping around the corner. There is a lot of activity down there. I think they should have done a pedestrian/bicycle/traffic count or something like that. They are not willing to park in the parking lot behind the pool because they don't want to carry their rakes and stuff. I went to the grange meeting on Sunday and they were talking about that. They want to be able to park their cars near the garden, but it is illegal to park a car in an environmentally protected area on grass or gravel. They would have to park on the pavement and that would... Unless you want to put some sidewalks on both sides of the street, the kids are going to have to walk in the middle of the street. Also, at the meeting and I read it online, but it said that the neighbors are in favor of it. We didn't even know about it and we are not in favor of it. They propose that they are not planning on expanding this, but I have talked to people who say that they are planning on expanding it and it was in that paperwork as well. My two and a half year old grandson has autism. My daughter takes him to the park and talks along Dunham Street. She will have to be very careful because there will be cars parked there with no place to talk except in the middle of the street. He may be prone to wondering a little bit. That is my main concern. I think the safety issue has not been well thought out and their plans to expand have not been transparent. I think that is what they have been planning to do.

Mr. Glenn Ouellette, 112 Auburn Street, stated:

Can we get these passed to the aldermen? I believe I have enough. If not, I will get more copies for those who don't. This month is hunger month. Let's not forget that the Manchester shelter at New Horizons is having a walk-a-thon on the Sunday the 19th at 11:00 a.m. and I hope that some of the aldermen will be there to support them. Feeding a breakfast at Victory Park by a church... It has come to our attention that a permit was applied to the City park. For the past two years they have been using Veterans Park. A lot of people don't like them in Veterans Park because it is too close to the businesses so they requested Victory Park. The letter from the parks department reads that there are no spaces in any parks that are being recommended to feed the hungry on Saturdays and Sundays for the months of June, July and August when there is no school, which means that the kids who get breakfast in school don't get it in the summer. I know that we have

a problem of homelessness that according to the state in February, their latest survey, they went up 6% in New Hampshire and 8% in Manchester. I'm not surprised because we are the biggest city. I also understand that there are people who are being bussed to our city from cities outside of New Hampshire. That is sad. You would think that every city would take care of its own homeless people and not put the burden on one community. I hope that we can solve that problem, but in the meantime we should not punish them. Those are our citizens here in the city. Not allowing the church to feed the hungry on Saturday and Sunday mornings in any City park makes no sense at all. They are being denied this request and they are being told that they may be able to use an alleyway or maybe under the bridge. It is unacceptable. The Manchester Community Church has been feeding the homeless in Manchester every weekend for the last two years. In the winter they use the Salvation Army. They are not able to do that in the summer because there are a lot of kids programs because there is no school. They are requesting to use Veterans Park in June, July and August until school starts. Also, one of the areas they were told they could probably go is behind the shelter, but that park has never been built so it doesn't exist. When it rains it is very muddy. I don't know where the money went. My saddest thing is that we have a Welfare Department, a welfare commissioner who doesn't come to the aldermanic meetings like other department heads do so he can't even hear the complain from the people. We spend \$1 million on welfare in this City and 73% goes for administration and 27% goes to the actual poor. If you give to an organization that is non-profit the federal government recommends that if they spend more than 10% to administer the program you should not give it. What I am saying here tonight is that our Welfare Department is not efficient. It is costing us 73%. I ask that one of you tonight make a motion to allow the Manchester Community Church to use Victory Park on Saturday and Sunday mornings from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 a.m. during the months of June, July and August. They are part of our community. Your Honor, we talk about one community and we all need to be part of that community.

Ms. Kelly Jobel, 4 Golden View Drive, stated:

I'm here tonight in support of the technology bond. I wanted to give you a few examples of how this bond is going to support the students in our elementary schools. In the school that I am in, we have been using technology and we hope to continue using it with this bond helping us move forward to do virtual field trips for our preschool students who can't leave the school and go somewhere to do the things in their environment. We want to use it with our students to collaborate and to help them learn by working with partners and doing presentations and getting them ready for the next century. We want to help them do different things, learn different skills such as doing science projects or doing writing or reading. We also want this to be there for the teachers so that they can get the

educational skills that these students need and be part of the world around us. There are so many things that this technology can do for us and I hope that you guys take a moment tonight to support this bond. Wouldn't it be nice for our students to compete with students anywhere by having the same technology foundation skills as students from other schools would? Please support this bond.

Ms. Ellen Weist, 15 Appleton Street, stated:

Thank you for letting me speak. I have been working with the grange concerning the Manchester community garden. The first step in our plan was to establish the trust of the City. The City includes all of you sitting here and the residents and the groups. It is my understanding that the process was not 100% complete. I agree with the wisdom of Alderman Greazzo. I believe this does need to go back to committee to make sure that we are following the process duly. I have provided you with all of the comments that we did receive via email. Thank you very much for your time.

Ms. Leanne St. Laurent, Londonderry, stated:

I live in Londonderry, but I am an employee of the Manchester School District. I have been in the School District since 1997. I currently work with the technology department supporting educational technology, the district Google apps for education initiative and I also support the school websites. Prior to my current position this year in the district office, I worked under the umbrella of the Greater Manchester Professional Development Center which was closed last June. My initial position in the district, however, was quite different. I was an ESL teacher working with English learners all the way up until 2008. I have worked across all grade level with both self contained new comer programs and in resource rooms with transitionally proficient students. In all cases, I often use technology to make learning more meaningful for the students in my classroom. Technology was never just an add-on, but an integral tool that supported learning across the curriculum. I could tell you how much technology affects me and makes my life more efficient and easy, but it is about the students. I'm going to give you just one of many example from a kindergarten classroom that shows a unit on growth and change, a science standard for kindergarten and first grade. It is supported by ICT technology standards, English language standards and science and social studies standards. Students learn that all living things grow and change. In addition to our text based materials, we researched and visited many age appropriate websites to view additional images and meaningful videos that gave students a visual concept of what they were learning. Students then connected these concepts of growth and change to themselves. Students brought baby and toddler pictures to school. We scanned them on a digital scanner. Then we look pictures using digital cameras of us in kindergarten. The students then inserted these digital images into

a timeline, a digital, computer-based timeline, to show the correct sequence of events, their own growth and change from baby to toddler to kindergartener. Students also, at the same time, developed academic language and vocabulary along side their technology skills as they used the keyboard to input text and labels on their timelines. New common core standards for writing at the kindergarten level state that with guidance and support from adults, you can explore a variety of digital tools to produce and publish writing, including doing it in collaboration with peers. By grade four, students are expected to demonstrate sufficient command of keyboarding skills to type a minimum of one page in one sitting. This is just one example.

Ms. Leah Fox, 237 Varney Street, stated:

This is a lot that overlooks the Dunham lot for the proposed community garden. I learned about the proposed community garden from neighbors who are present here this evening and attended a meeting at the grange at this past Sunday evening. My lot is up on a hill overlooking the Dunham lot where the community garden would be and I can't think of a better use for an empty space that is not used except once or twice a year for additional parking. It is an opportunity for educational programs for youth about health and sustainable environment. It encourages people to have a healthy diet and be responsible for their food growth and intake and healthy living and it encourages people to be stewards of the earth, qualities that I think we all wish that our community could embrace. I just want to say that I am in full support of the community garden providing that the committee addressing any outstanding questions that the neighbors have.

Ms. Chris Martin, Ward 7, stated:

I am the principal at Webster School. In regards to the \$2.8 million technology bond, there are many aspects of that bond that I am intrigued by and I would see being very useful at Webster School. The number one priority for me is the safety feature, the digital telephone system. Our current system for the intercom system and telephone system is marginally okay. It gets the job done, but could we be more efficient and could it be, in an emergency... It is not suited for a severe emergency. There are many more things that we could do with the current technology out there in those areas. We have piloted a bring your own device project at Webster School in grades four and five. Alderman Ludwig's wife is involved in that project. It has been a tremendous project thanks to the charity of our PTO that funded all of the internet access points in each of those classrooms. That is the only reason we are able to do this. I want to expand this to every other grade level at Webster School, but we need that infrastructure and that bond could take care of that for us so the children at Webster don't have to power down when they come to school. I welcome you all to stop by any time to see what it is like in a

classroom where children have paper, books, pencils and crayons and i-pads and tablets and all kinds of things and using all of those resources to build knowledge. It is a tremendously organic and grassroots process. They have the best ideas in the building for how to use these tools. I'm going to have to go to the PTO next year and we will have to continue to do fundraising for us to bring this to another grade level in the building because it is an infrastructure issue. I appreciate your consideration and again, the door is open for you to come visit so that you can take a look at how it is going.

Ms. Michelle Boyd, 55 Log Street, stated:

Right now I am working on a bachelor's degree in business management and the only thing is how can I help? I understand that this community garden has been a problem. Inside our apartment we have herbs growing. We are also trying to get seeds for tomatoes, cucumbers and it is run by solar lighting. Right now, that is about it. We are still working on our degrees. If you need help, I'll be here.

Mr. John Boyd, 55 Log Street, stated:

In listening to people here regarding that technology bond, I urge you to pass it especially regarding the schools and the necessity of upgrading. I feel that without upgrading those necessary systems and if we have an emergency then it is going to be harder to get the right people to respond. If someone gets hurt it might take a little longer for the ambulances to get there. Most of my life I have been dealing with taking care of people so I tend to care too much. That is about all I really have to say. I felt that I would put in my two cents and it might help. Thank you.

Alderman Shaw stated I just want to apologize to the public for not being here. I had a family emergency and I got delayed. I'm sorry. I really wanted to be here to hear the comments, but I'll watch it on TV.

*There being none one else present wishing to speak, on motion of **Alderman O'Neil**, duly seconded by **Alderman Roy**, it was voted to take all comments under advisement and further to receive and file any written documentation presented.*

*There being no further business on motion of **Alderman Long**, duly seconded by **Alderman Roy**, it was voted to adjourn.*

A True Record. Attest.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matthew Normand". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

City Clerk