

**SPECIAL MEETING
BOARD OF MAYOR AND ALDERMEN
(FY97 Budget)**

June 11, 1996

7:00 PM

In the absence of Mayor Wieczorek, Chairman Wihby called the meeting to order.

Chairman Wihby called for the Pledge of Allegiance, this function being led by Ald. Cashin.

A moment of silent prayer was observed.

The Clerk called the roll. There were twelve Aldermen present.

Present: Ald. Wihby, Elise, Reiniger, Sysyn, Clancy, Soucy,
Shea, Domaingue, Pariseau, Cashin, Robert, Hirschmann

Mayor Wieczorek arrived near the end of the meeting.

Chairman Wihby stated that the first purpose of the meeting is a public hearing upon the proposed Community Improvement Program of the City of Manchester including activities for the 1997 to 2001 period; that the second purpose of the meeting is to conduct a public hearing on the proposed municipal budget as required under the provision of RSA 44-10 and in satisfaction of the requirements of Section 121B of the State and Local Fiscal Assistance Act of 1972 as amended, which calls for appropriations for the so-called operating budget expenditures and Manchester Transit Authority municipal fund subsidy to be financed through revenues of the General fund; operating expenses of the Environmental Protection Division to be funded through Sewer User Rental Charges; operating expenses of the Manchester Airport Authority to be funded through Airport Revenue Funds; operating expenses of the Recreation Division to be funded through Recreation User Charges; and operating budget expenditures of the Central Business Service District to be funded through the Central Business Service District Fund and requested the Clerk to present the proposed Resolutions.

The Clerk presented the proposed Resolutions:

"Amending a Resolution 'Appropriating to the Manchester Airport Authority the sum of \$11,273,377 from Special Airport Revenue Funds for Fiscal Year 1997' to \$11,415,964."

"Amending a Resolution 'Appropriating to the Central Business Service District the sum of \$270,000 from Central Business Service District Funds for Fiscal Year 1997' to \$282,500."

"Amending a Resolution 'Appropriating the sum of \$2,299,094 from Recreation User Charges to the Recreation Division for Fiscal Year 1997' to \$2,323,188."

"Amending a Resolution 'Appropriating the sum of \$9,437,201 from Sewer User Rental Charges to the Environmental Protection Division for Fiscal Year 1997' to \$9,308,724."

"Appropriating to the Manchester Transit Authority the sum of \$900,000 for the Fiscal Year 1997."

"Amending an Amended Resolution 'Raising Monies and Making Appropriations for the Fiscal Year 1997' so as to appropriate \$145,525,583."

"Amending an Amended Resolution 'Approving the Community Improvement Program for 1997, Raising and Appropriating Monies Therefor, and Authorizing Implementation of Said Program.'"

Chairman Wihby stated I'd like to present a budget message for the Mayor as follows:

Members of the Honorable Board and Citizens of Manchester:

Please accept my apologies for not being here to begin this meeting. I am with my family at the graduation of my step-daughter this evening. My staff is present to record your comments and I will be here as soon as I can.

The budget struggles the City faces this year are unique. For the first time since I was elected Mayor, a small increase in the value of the tax base has been projected. There is also some relief in the overlay account, which is used to pay abatements. That is the good news. The bad news is that the City lost some significant non-property tax revenues, primarily caused by the closure of the landfill. With this closure also comes a significant increase in solid waste operating costs.

Specifically, when the new fiscal year begins, the City will lose \$600,000 in landfill revenue and face \$3,118,685 in new expenses which includes: \$380,640 for recycling; \$402,000 for yard waste collection; \$548,250 in transfer expenses; and \$1,462,000 in disposal costs. Therefore, the net operational cost resulting from the landfill closure is nearly \$4 million. Because these are operating costs, there was no way to plan for them. It is strictly pay as you go. There are no capital set asides, here.

The budget proposal before you tonight contains cuts which will affect the City's ability to provide basic services. We have made many changes in recent years through competitive bidding, consolidation, privatization, and innovations such as the Recreation Enterprise. We have also cut department requests drastically. In fact, overall spending has risen by an average of less than 2 percent for each of the last seven budgets.

The proposal before you tonight anticipates a tax rate of \$30.78, an increase of 3.88 percent or \$1.15 per thousand over the current rate. It assumes a tax base of \$3.25 billion and an overlay account of \$1.9 million. If these tax base and overlay figures had been available for my budget proposal to the Board, the projected tax rate would have been \$30.72, an increase of 3.68 percent or \$1.09 per thousand.

The Aldermen have worked hard on this budget and I hope you will give it fair minded consideration. We have very difficult decisions to make. We must continue to work together for the benefit of our City.

I hope to join you later this evening. Thank you for your time. We do appreciate your input.

Chairman Wihby stated I'd like to ask Bob MacKenzie, Director of Planning to make a presentation.

Mr. MacKenzie stated thank you Mr. Chairman, and good evening Honorable Board members and residents of Manchester. I'd like to briefly give you an overview of the City's Community Improvement Program. Basically, the City's CIP (Community Improvement Program) incorporates capital - construction projects of the City, state and federal grant programs, and special projects, all designed comprehensively to address the improvement needs of the City in a coordinated manner. This year, the Community Improvement Program totals just over \$60 million, it is a substantial program. Funding for the CIP comes from five major categories. The first is federal, state, and other grants that are dedicated towards specific projects in the City and that totals just over \$27 million in this year's program. The second category is special funding from the Department of Housing and Urban Development and that totals \$3,160,000 and I would note that tonight's public hearing is part of a comprehensive public hearing comment process for HUD, there are two reports open for comment from the public tonight as well as for the next thirty days and that is the Comprehensive Housing Affordability Strategy and a Consolidated Action Plan, these are both reports required by the Department of Housing and Urban Development. The third major source of funding for the CIP is city cash and this year the city cash portion is just over \$1 million. The fourth major category is bonds - that's general obligation bonding - this year that total \$9,480,000. Then, the final major category of funding sources is enterprise fees and that totals over \$19 million. In total of the program of just of \$60 million, only 17 percent are directly from local property tax resources with the balance from other sources. And, this year's program generally, is designed to have no additional tax increase from last year's CIP Program onto the operating budget. I'd like to go over some of the major projects proposed this year in the CIP Program. The Manchester Airport is probably one of the City's most powerful economic development tools. We've completed the terminal but there's still a lot of work to be done. The Airport Authority working with the Steering Committee is completing a Master Plan for that airport and they're also anticipating federal funds for several major projects that include reconstruction of Runway 6-24 which will include safety areas at the end of the runways, improvements to the taxiways and also, hopefully, continuation of the successful soundproofing program that has gone on in the houses around the airport. Another major project area is additional school capacity. It is proposed in this program to construct a new Middle School on the east side of the City. This was proposed after looking at a number of alternatives and is designed to relieve all of the school attendance areas on the east side by combining sixth grade with seventh and eighth grade currently in the junior highs. This will reduce the overcrowding condition in the elementary schools while at the same time positioning the City for future growth at the middle school level. Another major project area is improvements to the high schools and this is to address some of the accreditation issues that have arisen. Starting this summer, the City will be planning on working on West High science labs, a major project; improvements of heating and ventilation at both West and Central High Schools; and either during the school year or the following summer locker rooms at Central High School. The next major category of projects is central area revitalization. The City is looking to apply for Section 108 application from the Department of Housing and Urban Development to work on Elm Street and even though it includes reconstruction of the street it's also important because

it's going to provide additional parking for the Downtown merchants. The City's also proposing a business improvement program for the central area of the City and another program that has already started the Enterprise Community Program which the City applied for has already started up a couple of projects and will soon be starting a Small Business Incubator Program in the Millyard designed to create new jobs and will also be looking later on this year to develop a neighborhood resource center in the center area of the City. Another major project area is City Hall and Annex renovations. There have been no major improvements to City Hall in the last hundred years. It is currently very crowded, gives a poor public image, and is not an efficient operation. The City would propose in refurbishing both City Hall and Annex and also through other private efforts is hoping to raise additional public funds to do certain restoration activities. The next category of projects that the CIP will address is public safety tools. Next year, if approved as part of the budget, we would hope to do a new computer system for the Police Department which then could be tied in with the computer systems of other departments in the City. Also, we'd be looking at a first floor renovation and expansion of the Police Department to increase the work space and efficiency of the operations in the department and we're also looking to provide a Fire Department Self-contained Breathing Apparatus which are currently shared between firemen. And the final category is what we call infrastructure, that's the basic roads, streets, bridges, and utilities of the City. There are a number of infrastructure improvements proposed for the City including some of the major projects - the beginning of the Cohas Brook Interceptor Program which will provide sewers to the southeastern portion of the City such as Crystal Lake that currently do not have any as well as Treatment Plant improvements. Also, I'd note that the Aldermen as part of reviewing the Mayor's proposed CIP have also proposed to double the amount of monies for the Street Resurfacing Program in the City from last year's program. That is a quick overview of the CIP Program and I will be available for comments or questions later at my office if you have any or tonight if you have any. Thank you.

Chairman Wihby asked if there were any questions from the Aldermen to Bob. There were none.

Chairman Wihby stated that the meeting shall now be open to public comment. That each person when recognized shall come to the nearest microphone, state their name and address in a clear loud voice for the record. That each person shall be given one opportunity to speak and comments shall be limited to three minutes to allow all participants the opportunity to speak. That once all present have been allowed to speak, should there be a topic not discussed, those wishing to speak a second time shall be provided the opportunity to do so.

Chairman Wihby called Theresa Madison.

Theresa Madison, 415 East High Street, Manchester, NH, stated:

I'm a Captain of the Manchester Central High School Girls Track Team and I'm here tonight on behalf of the whole team to ask that the Board give consideration to the CIP's proposal to build a metric running track and field facility at Livingston Park. It is a much needed addition to the City's Athletic Program and we all appreciate your consideration. Thank you.

Chairman Wihby called Richard McCann.

Richard McCann, 16 Huntington Avenue, Manchester, NH, stated:

I'm the Vice-Chair of the Concerned Taxpayers. We feel, at this time, that the departments have been asked to cut back as much as possible and that there is going to be a significant tax increase. We would like you to consider not implementing the 17 percent increase of half of the 17 percent increase for the department heads at this time. We feel that it isn't necessary and that 17 percent is quite extravagant especially given the times that we are in right now. Thank you.

Chairman Wihby called Shirley Frank.

Shirley Frank, 65 Victoria Street, Manchester, NH, stated:

I'm Chairperson for The Concerned Taxpayers. After listening to Mr. MacKenzie talk about renovations to the City Hall and the Annex building, I recommend that you people look into the sale of the New Hampshire Fire building on North Elm Street as a future City Hall for Manchester. There's plenty of room there for all departments that this City has plus plenty of parking. It would centralize the cost and make governing more accessible for the taxpayers instead of running to various buildings for various departments. Thank you.

Chairman Wihby called Frank O'Dowd.

Frank O'Dowd, 40 Dwight Avenue, Manchester, NH, stated:

Good evening, I'm speaking here tonight in two capacities. One is as a resident of the City which I have been in all of my 40 years, the other as President-elect of the Weston School Parent/Teachers Association. I'll keep this brief and to the point. In reference to this proposed City budget, I wish to express my personal, as well as the Weston PTA's proposition to the \$2.6 million reduction in the School budget request. The under budgeting of the City School Department will likely have a direct impact on our school and the education of our children with at least the following results. Severe overcrowding at Weston School's classrooms, in particular, the fifth and third grades where classroom sizes could exceed 35 students. A hiring freeze for a full-time Assistant Principal position at the school which may result in a loss of accreditation for the school. A lack of textbooks and necessary school supplies, lack of an extra school bus resulting in overcrowding on other buses. In addition, I've been approached by many Weston parents who have expressed their serious concerns over the possible elimination of the elementary school Strings Program because their children are active participants or were planning to enroll in that very worthwhile program. Members of the Board of Mayor and Aldermen, I respectfully request that when you vote on this budget that you vote to appropriate the money necessary to maintain our current School system and fully fund the Board of School Committee's proposed budget. Like you, the men and women who serve on that Board are also our duly elected representatives and after careful consideration and debate they have proposed a budget which is reasonable, tight, but necessary to adequately fund the City's public school system. Thank you.

Chairman Wihby called Jodi DeSantis.

Jodi DeSantis, 1419 Wellington Road, Manchester, NH, stated:

Tonight, I'm here not only as a very concerned parent of children in the Manchester City School system, but as a representative and active member of the Weston Elementary as well as the Hillside Junior High School Parent/Teacher Associations. I'd like to emphasize the fact that the schools in this City are not only under the control of the School Board, but also under the control of the Board of Mayor and Aldermen. Things have dramatically changed since we were in the School system as children we had the advantage of a good education. Because of the management of the City departments over the years, our children are faced with the extreme risk of a compromising education. Is it fair to them to be educated in classrooms of 35 students to one teacher? Is it fair to them to be in schools where there is a lack of discipline or management because there is no administration to handle that duty? This is currently a problem due to the promotions of our Vice-Principals to fill vacancies of retiring Principals. Is it fair to them to face the lack of curriculum necessary for their future studies because of the unavailability of textbooks and materials? Many people here feel that this is fine, what was good for us they might add, but even in our time we didn't face these injustices. The 1996-1997 school year will bring problems such as our City schools being below State standards and lacking certification. Our schools are overcrowded partially due to the lack of planning on the City's part for housing developments and additional school buildings. Every year we face the same problems with the City budget. No one wants their taxes to increase, but there is also a lack of understanding to the reason why we are here fighting for an increase. Please support the Board of School Committee's proposed budget. These people work very hard under difficult situations to make sure that our children are ready to face the City problems that you hand down to them. Thank you.

Chairman Wihby called Patricia Bourque.

Patricia Bourque, 138 Fleming Street, Manchester, NH, stated:

Although I have many concerns about the City in which I live and work, tonight I would like to speak about the Manchester School system. I have three children, two of whom attend Weston School. I would like very much to see our Vice-Principal vacancy filled for the 1996-1997 school year. The projected student population for Weston in September is 750 students. I would also like to see at least another fifth grade teacher for our school. At current school population there will be at least 35 students in each of our three fifth grade classrooms. I feel both of these needs are crucial to Weston's continued success. My concerns cover a much broader range, as well. Classrooms in the City so overcrowded they just are conducive to a good learning or teaching environment. The threat of losing our Strings Program in the Music Department and the deplorable conditions at the Chandler School are to mention but a few. I have friends and neighbors moving to such communities as Bedford, Bow, and Amherst. Why are they moving - the school system. They know they can go to a better school somewhere else. It makes me sad because I'm starting to feel the same way. I want my children to go to the best schools also and I want them to be in Manchester. I believe the residents of this City are sick and tired of this squabbling over monies that our children and educators so desperately need and so richly deserve. Instead, I think the Board of Mayor and Aldermen should spend more time working harder on increasing the tax base. I ask the Board here tonight to represent their constituents and appropriate the money that is needed to reinstate the pride that the City residents once had in their public school system. Thank you.

Chairman Wihby called Andy Cohen.

Andy Cohen, 363 Myrtle Street, Manchester, NH, stated:

Fellow citizens. I went to last night's School Board meeting and am very upset with what has happened to the School Board budget. When \$2.5 million is cut from the educational account our children are being abandoned by the City. It has been recommended that the Reading Coordinator position be eliminated. What's more important than knowing how to read, does this make sense? There has been a recommendation to eliminate the Safe and Drug Free Coordinator. So much has been done in the City to help the children in need. The Prevention Works Coalition is group working hard to put programs together to help families in need. Are we going to abandon these children. Does it make sense? The elimination of the Strings Program from grades 1 through 8 - Manchester's Music Program is one of the best in the country where many young musicians have developed into productive citizens. Do you realize that 85 percent of the students in the Music Program are on the Honor Roll. Are we going to stop promoting academic excellence that makes sense? Eliminating three elementary teaching positions where there will be classrooms with over 35 students. Does it make sense? I can go on and on. You people spend so much time on trying to cut budgets, why don't you put some of that time into economic development so the tax base will grow. Please reconsider.

Chairman Wihby called Ellery Hawthorn.

Ellery Hawthorn, 4 Betty Lane, Manchester, NH, stated:

I have two children in the School system, one at Central and one at Hillside. Both are involved in the Music Program. Both have benefited greatly from that program. A lot has been said tonight about the budget, the School system, and I won't repeat all of that. Nobody has said here tonight that the School budget represents at least seventy percent of the total City budget, eighty I'm hearing. That's no enough. We need more, I guess from what everybody's saying. I think that the School Board should make sure that they've done their homework. I've been in this City since 1984 and I'm not convinced that the School Board has done their homework since 1984. I'm not in favor of paying more taxes than I'm already paying, even though I have two kids in the system. They're getting \$52 million. Nobody's going to convince me that they have done their homework, at that level to determine if all of the course structures are properly set up. I've attended too many of those meetings. The second thing that I heard, I heard some information about CIP which was interesting but I did not hear a whole lot about growth, economic growth, tax base growth, and let's face it our problems all stem from our economic problems in the City of Manchester. We're in the largest City and we've got to grow the City, we've got to attract new businesses, and we've got to stimulate the tax base. Otherwise, we'll be here every year doing the same thing. Thank you.

Chairman Wihby called Walter Terry.

Walter Terry, 153 Charlotte Street, Manchester, NH, stated:

I have been told that the City had \$700,000 set aside for CenterPlex and they've taken \$200,000 from that to repair roads leaving a balance of \$500,000. This money should be put into the City budget to help diverse the tax burden on the homeowners. Thank you very much.

Chairman Wihby called Linda Garrish.

Linda Garrish, 7 Irwin Drive, Manchester, NH, stated:

For the sixth year in a row, I stand before you appalled and angry once again. But, believe me, not discouraged yet. It's apparent that your leadership continues to show disdain for the welfare and education of our public school children. Your messages clearly say our children are not important enough to invest in, not valued enough to sacrifice for. It's time to recognize that the education of our youth should be our number one priority and that education is the key to their future, but also to Manchester's future and economic growth. When is enough, enough. I say, now. How much longer must we listen to the same old rhetoric "wasteful spending, high salaries" we can't afford it. Well, besides the fact that we can't afford not to invest in education, we have not seen the kind of action in Manchester which broadens and develops our economic base and develops a positive vision for the future. You know, my parents sacrificed for my education and I do the same for my son. This community has no choice but to make a sacrifice for its youth. We can no longer be critical about behaviors and educational outcomes if we are not willing to put our money where our mouth is. What are the consequences of making a poor investment in stocks? They drop and you lose big time. Not investing in our children's education has the same result. A less prepared and productive work force, a weaker tax base, increased truancy and crime, both sides of Elm Street will be empty instead of one and finally a ghost town of one who just celebrated 150 years. So, cut the School budget, but make sure you put more cops on the street, build more jails and bulk up health and welfare because you will be contributing to the urban decay of Manchester. As I finish the job I've had for the past four years at the Manchester School of Technology, I reflect on the privilege I've had in getting an inside view into Manchester's public education system. I've observed the frustration and demoralization of teachers and other City workers as they fight for their positions, their programs, and their supplies. Well, all the while persisting in a professional manner attempting to reach and teach each and every student. Teachers, administrators, and support staff trying to challenge students to learn and grow, stay in school and become prepared for further education, training, and the work world of tomorrow. This despite the daily onslaught of negative messages that devour teachers and students alike and place greater societal demands on our children and this, despite the overwhelming baggage that so many children bring to school which gets in the way of their learning - alcohol including the best and the brightest, drugs, violence, dysfunctional families, sex, pregnancy, and parenting, illness on top of academic and attendance failures. Our children on the other hand with teachers supporting them have risen to stand against these odds showing exceptional talents in art, music, inventions, sports, competition and community service. Well, I'm here to ask you to all stand with me and Citizens for a Better Manchester for our children and say enough is enough. All the programs, the initiatives, the curriculum improvements, and especially the teachers that would have to be cut to accommodate a \$2.4 million reduction are too important. Children and their futures are too important to be lost. If we want Manchester to move forward and our children to succeed, then we'd better make education our number one priority. Thank you.

Chairman Wihby called Kathy Philbert.

Kathy Philbert, 176 Laurel Street, Manchester, NH, stated:

I stand before you tonight, once again to say Manchester employees deserve a raise. We deserve to be treated fairly and equitably. I'm not a City employee, I am proudly married to one. We try to raise our children in the inner-city for which I worked as a volunteer very hard and very long. Our cost of living has increased about 18 percent since we last saw an increase in our paycheck. Our children attend schools, down in DC for their college education. I have two actually in high school this year. Our schools are in deplorable condition. I stand before you, I would swear on a stack of Bibles that Central

High School is a dirty, filthy mess. We blew it with privatization there. Unfortunately, I don't think it's going to change. I stand before you saying that the City employees are continuing to do an outstanding job for the citizens of this community. Not only picking up garbage that isn't even put in barrels, but educating our children when they have 35 children in a classroom, in a writing class. We hear in this country that our children can't write, well, by golly at Central High School they continue to write and those teachers come home with five inches worth of writing material to correct every night and by golly there's plenty of evidence that they do the correcting. Our children are our future. Economic development will not go anywhere unless we are willing to show people that may come into our City with businesses that we care enough about our City to educate our children, educate them fairly. We talk about more cops on the streets, needing for lockups, YDC being overcrowded, but by golly the Strings Program along with the rest of the arts in this City introduce our children to the finer things in life. For many of these children it is the only time that they will listen to wonderful music or be exposed to a wonderful piece of art and they are amazed that they like it and "ma will you take me back to that Pops Concert, I really think it was great" where three years ago you couldn't get that child to listen to a Pops Concert. Are we willing to sacrifice that in order to have to put more people out on the street. We're so willing to fund our sports system which is important, but Strings is a class that's graded, it deserves the same funding. I believe sports is a hundred percent, by golly arts should be too without hesitation. We need to care about our kids. We can build so many new houses and redevelop so many new houses in the inner-city, but nobody's going to want to move into the inner-city if our school system isn't up to par. Small businesses are going to Amherst, they're going to Bedford, they're going to Bow not only because their family's education is more highly thought of but also because that education is going to provide well-trained employees for their business. We can't continue to ignore that that's a crucial part of any development in any City. But, our people need to be shown that they are deserving of a raise. If we can give a department head a \$7,100 raise July 1st, then how can we say to that guy that's picking up my garbage that he's not worth two-and-a-half percent. You can't continue to procrastinate to settle these labor negotiations because they is never any retro pay. Thank you.

Chairman Wihby called Norma Greer Champagne.

Norma Greer Champagne, 1015 Somerville Street, Manchester, NH, stated:

A few things I would like to discuss this evening with you and one is the part-time employees of the City of Manchester. They're getting all these, the medical area and in the private sector there is not one company that would pay part-time employees Blue Cross/Blue Shield and I think that currently the way it is now, I would say that the ones that are working under the plan now, fine, but any new employees working for the City of Manchester, Aldermen, School Board or anyone else they should pay their own Blue Cross/Blue Shield and not have the taxpayer paying it for them, that's one thing. Second, we have 27 department heads in the City of Manchester. The City of Manchester, I think the population is less than a hundred thousand now and I cannot see a City of this size having 27 department heads. To me that's just like every little department he wants to have his own little domain and all and then you have all of these assistants to the assistants. I think we should start eliminating a lot of these departments, consolidating and start doing some real homework in these kinds of situations. Also, there is another area that really bugs me is the MTA. The buses, one day I was driving down, I was riding down the street, the bus last week about 4:15 in the afternoon, the bus is empty going down Valley Street, we are paying a driver plus expenses, maintenance, and everything for people not riding on these buses. I think we should let people ride free then if they're going to be empty you might as well make them look full and also in one area of the MTA there is a lot of waste. There is one department I think you could save

a hundred thousand dollars. You have a Superintendent of Maintenance, you the secretary, you have a shop foreman, you have nine employees under that department. You're talking \$60,000 for salary and benefits, secretary salary roughly \$40,000 plus other benefits. I cannot see us wasting a lot of money. I know in the private sector, I know somebody that retired from a company he was in management, he had 23 people working under him, he didn't have all of these secretaries, assistants, and everything else and they were maintaining 23 people, not nine people. Also, I'd like to talk about your discussing the parking on Elm Street diagonally. I think the City of Manchester, Elm Street is not wide enough for that and I don't think that's going to bring any importance of people coming Downtown for shopping. We have to get some businesses, we've got to get some real interest before we start worrying about...I can see what will happen with the accidents and everything else. So, there's a lot of areas that I think you should be looking at and I hope you take some of these under consideration and thank you.

Chairman Wihby called Robert Barry.

Robert Barry, 51 W. Elmwood Avenue, Manchester, NH, stated:

In going over the proposed budget I have a few comments. The first has to do with the resolution increasing outlays to the Airport (\$142,587), the Central Business Service District whatever that is (\$12,500), and to the Recreation Division (\$24,094) for a total of \$179,181 which is somewhat alleviated by the reduction of \$128,477 from the Environmental Protection Division but then a whopping \$900,000 is going to the Manchester Transit Authority for total increase to due resolutions of \$991,000. Why are they even being considered? For the Transit Authority figures which I got this morning 545,000 riders rode the Transit Authority. The Transit has a total budget of \$1,800,000. Each cost rider \$3.30, each rider. Revenue generated by the Transit Authority was \$521,000 out of a \$1,800,000 figure. What happened to that half-a-million dollars, they didn't give it back to the City, did they add it to their \$1,800,000 budget. Revenue generated at \$521,000, the Manchester Transit Authority was subsidized to the tune of \$1,279,000. Each rider put the Authority in the hole by \$2.35, each rider in the hole. Is this the way to run a business? Manchester's share of that figure is \$1.18 for each rider. We have to pay for people riding the bus, a \$1.18. If any City function could be totally eliminated, it is this one and if not eliminated at least cut back to perhaps 2 1/2 hours in the morning and 2 1/2 hours in the afternoon to get the kids to school and the people to work and then let them go shopping on their own some other way. In conclusion, during every budget hearing that I have attended a call has been made for centralized purchasing and centralized automotive repair facilities with all departments carpooling. Why have these concerns never been addressed in the last several meetings that I have every been to? Thank you very much.

Chairman Wihby called Lloyd Basinow.

Lloyd Basinow, 503 Amherst Street, Manchester, NH, stated:

Tonight, as we have done so many past years we celebrate this time the 150th anniversary, the Sesquicentennial of bad budget planning by the Board of Mayor and Aldermen. Specifically, the Board at least is fair, it shortchanges the School Department, it shortchanges the City workers, and then it shortchanges the taxpayers of the City with bad planning. Now, I'm going to be very specific. Tonight, the figure came out of \$4 million for refuse disposal. It's going to cost us millions of dollars to send Manchester's refuse to Rochester, New York and I suggest that it could be done millions of dollars cheaper by putting up an environmentally safe incinerator in this City. We could do it on 20-year municipal bonds, the effect on the tax rate would probably be less than 25 cents and when you consider

that the outlying areas surrounding Manchester, Goffstown, Bedford, Hooksett, Auburn, Londonderry. There all going to face the same problems we do. Eventually, they're going to have to dispose of their refuse and what better way than to bring that into a central incinerator and help reduce our overall costs. This City is known for bad planning. You wait until it's too late and then you grab at the only thing that you can see no matter what it costs. Now, the Board of Mayor and Aldermen has before it and I believe its the Bills on Second Reading a proposal that we presented, that I presented. The figures are available for an environmentally safe incinerator and I suggest that you look into that as an alternate way of reducing the burden on the taxpayer of this City instead of coming in with budgets that only increase the tax rate. Thank you.

Chairman Wihby called Tony Epaphras.

Tony Epaphras, 169 Lafayette Street, Manchester, NH, stated:

This is the first time I'm facing this audience. I came to this country 12 years ago. I have been living in Manchester for seven years and every year I follow the news, I watch what is happening in the City and I never saw an Alderman take a pledge that they would raise taxes and run for office, I don't know if you did. Just before your election, if you went to the people, to us saying we're going to raise your taxes, I don't know if you'd be elected and sit there. So, this is very poor planning in the City and you cannot raise taxes and burden the taxpayers. The more taxes you raise you'll be finding more expenses and the more expenses you'll be facing more taxes, this is a vicious cycle. You have to discipline yourself and if you're going to raise the property taxes and I don't know if I can live with my income and I didn't get a raise for the last two years and I see how our City School budget is, I don't know it's a huge budget and education is very poor, we don't have discipline and the children coming out of school don't know how to read and write and this is how we are managing our system, you are responsible, you are elected to be responsible for the City and manage the budget, I think this is the best time I would request you to consider that your pledge not to raise taxes to any of the citizens in this City. Thank you.

Chairman Wihby called Richard Charpentier.

Richard Charpentier, 395 No. Bend Drive, Manchester, NH, stated:

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen of the Board. You really have a tough job before you. I haven't heard anybody tonight say they're willing to pay more in taxes. Certainly, in the private sector we cut back occasionally but every once in a while we have to look to the revenue and maybe it's time for Manchester to look to the revenue, maybe we should pay a little more in taxes. However, that's not the purpose for my coming this evening. I come before you as a volunteer member of the Manchester Development Corporation. Most of you will recognize us as the successor to GMDC or those people who own the land at the corner of Elm and Bridge Streets that's vacant. We're concerned about that economic development that some of your speakers have mentioned this evening. It's very important to Manchester that we increase the tax base. It's my understanding from numbers at the Tax Collector's Office that our residential base continues to increase in proportion to the total which means a decline in the commercial and industrial base. It's most important that we increase the commercial and industrial base. To do that, we must have economic development. You have set aside funds for that purpose and I imagine they were originally going to be used for CenterPlex, however, they should be retained for that purpose; that is economic development and not put to some other use. It's my understanding that funds will continue to come into the City and that you have the option of putting those into this fund. We at

the Manchester Development Corporation have voted unanimously to recommend to your Board that you continue to do that. It is most important to the economic development of Manchester. We have to stop somewhere, we have to start somewhere to stop this downward spiral. It sounds this evening like it's doom and gloom and disaster for the City, I don't think so. Thank you.

Chairman Wihby called Linda Johnson and Sue Gelinis.

Linda Johnson, North Elm Street, Manchester, NH, stated:

I'm here to speak on behalf of your next three speakers which are Linda Johnson, 2929 No. Elm Street, Ward 1, Sue Gelinis, 266 No. Acres Road, also Ward 1, and Cindy Miglinori, 65 Highcrest Road. We are here collectively as concerned citizens of Manchester, as taxpayers and parents of school age children who are very concerned about what the present budget will do to education. Individually as a citizen and a business owner I am very concerned about what your budget will do to the state of education and to the overall economic prosperity and future quality of life of our City. Someone in this City must have a vision for our future and not be shortsighted. We are looking to you to have that vision. As a former Chairperson of Manchester 2000, I am very aware of many of the details of education and of the efforts to maintain standards of academic excellence and standards of necessity to developing future productive citizens in this City. The present budget will not make that possible. Just a couple of years ago you had the catastrophe of having many teachers pink slipped which raised to the attention of the public and to you that there really was a crisis. The crisis by the \$2.4 million budget cut from what is proposed by the School Board is no less a crisis than two years ago. I would like to submit to you a petition that was organized by Sue Gelinis and Cindy Miglinori just a few days ago in which they obtained approximately 500 signatures of Manchester taxpayers. They wrote the petition to incorporate those parental concerns that were vocalized to them regarding the state of education. Although we as parents have many specialized concerns about our own school age children in the school of Webster such as no Assistant Principal, the cutting of the Strings Program what I'd like to do is read to you that petition that was signed by so many of the citizens of your City as follows:

A Petition to Prioritize Educational Spending

We the undersigned residents and voters of the City of Manchester, hereby petition the Mayor and Board of Aldermen to give educational spending the first priority in the allocation of funds from the present tax revenues for the City of Manchester.

Based on the proposed budget provided by the Mayor, equality education will not be a possibility. An adequate education will not even be attainable. Our educational system which is so important will be substandard. We understand that in any budget there are variable cost items. However, we feel that many of these variable items are essential. Some of the parental concerns vocalized range from:

- excessive classroom size;
- textbooks which are antiquated and in unusable condition;
- excessive cost associated with Special Education.
A more cost effective and productive way to facilitate the administration of IEP's is essential;
- lack of adequate and accessible technology for daily classroom use;
- lack of sufficient functioning equipment used as classroom tools;
- need to continue all music programs (i.e., the Strings Program) and art programs district wide; and
- need to continue all staff supporters (i.e., the Library staff).

In summary, we strongly request reconsideration of the cuts which are proposed in the Mayor's budget.

Manchester represents a diverse population. We must provide an educational system which will optimize the chances for success for all students. We hope that it would be the mutual goal of all taxpayers in Manchester to provide the educational opportunities for our young people to compete and survive in today's society. In a situation where budget concerns are so prevalent, we strongly request greater attention to the careful management of the funds available and the active pursuit of additional resources such as grants and business partnerships.

All departments of this City's government must pursue any opportunity to fund the necessary elements to ensure quality education. At the very least adequate education is essential. The taxpaying population of Manchester can not be expected to grow positively without a strong school system. Quality education is essential in maintaining and expanding the taxpayer base.

Ms. Johnson continued by stating that was our petition. You have had before you many concerned citizens who are raising this issue of education before you as well as other issues such as economic prosperity, increasing the tax base, and planning. The last sentence of the petition says it all - quality education is essential in maintaining and expanding our tax base. Thank you. We'd like to submit that petition to you with the signatures, thank you.

Chairman Wihby called Christine Martin.

Christine Martin, 346 So. Mammoth Road, Manchester, NH, stated:

I feel a little bit like a broken record, a CD that skips, a laser disk that has a blemish because I'm not going to tell you anything this evening that I have not told you in past budget hearings. I'm an educator, I'm proud to teach at Hillside Junior High School here in Manchester and I'm extremely displeased, angered, frustrated, saddened by the proposed cuts to the School Department budget. My job is not on the line for those of you who are asking yourselves that question. I will remain with the same salary next year, however, I may teach in a school that will not get ceiling tiles replaced that have been not there for many years, I may still have to look at the toilet in the faculty bathroom that leaks after being flushed thirty, forty times during the day, I may still have to keep the emergency roll of toilet paper in my desk draw just in case it doesn't get taken care of by the cleaning crew and all these things are still going to exist and I'm not going to see some improvement and I'm just talking about some basic needs never mind the Strings Program in the City of Manchester. I have to say this and I'm an advocate of marching bands and concert bands and I conduct the Hillside Chorus as I told you, but I think if the Strings groups marched down the street or played at football games during halftime that that would not be the area in which cuts would be sought. I really feel that way and I hate to say that. I've had the occasion to direct the Strings Ensemble at Hillside on a couple of rehearsals in order to help out my colleague in some conflicts in schedules, I've not asked for compensation for that by the way and that was done during my prep time, I don't expect a pat on the back, I just want you to know that teachers do that for each other all the time and to look in the faces of those 30 young people and see 30 young people who could be 30 productive individuals in our school community or perhaps 5 or 6 of those young people who may be delinquents if they did not have that extra interest at school that would keep them going. I had the pleasure of escorting 130 of Hillside's students and family members to the Boston Pops this past May. What an extraordinary experience. Among those children, children involved in our Strings Program, I wouldn't have had the opportunity to do that had they not been there. What you have to understand is that this cut is going to have long-term ramifications and as other people have said this evening it sends a message to our students that you are not valuable enough to us for us to do that. Now, I know that's not the message we want to send but you have to think of it from a 10 to 14 year old standpoint. If I give a kid that has a textbook that has a broken binding or pages missing you should see the look on that kids face, I mean that kid thinks well, I don't want that, I want the shiny one with the

nice cover because they're into appearances and they want, they see their value and things that are valuable. I have to tell you again, I respect you individuals though I have disagreed with some of your decisions in the past vehemently. But, I know that you are devoted to the City and your hearts are in the right place and that you're trying to do what is best for your constituents. Your constituents of the future are the children that sit in my classroom every day and they can't tell you that they need more than they're getting and again I would ask that you seriously consider the proposed cuts in front of you and I hope to see the Hillside String Orchestra alive in the fall and I hope to see my colleagues back in the classroom and I hope to see the alternative education programs we've been asking for at Hillside for so many years, and I'm hoping that this year, that next year at this time I can be thinking about futuristic curriculum needs and not will we have the money we need to run our schools. Thank you.

Chairman Wihby called Victoria Piller.

Victoria Piller, 627 Weston Road, Manchester, NH, stated:

We've lived here in Manchester for just about one year and the reason we came to the Manchester School District was for the Strings Program. I called around, we moved to this State, we moved to this City and that was the deciding factor to live in Manchester and to have our children go here and I'm begging you to support the School Board and give them the money they need to continue with this program because we need, our children need music in their lives, they need art in their lives, it's something that they can do for their entire life, they can enjoy it, they can participate in it. The children that are in the program, as we've heard, are honor students, they are children that work hard, they are dedicated to their art, they practice outside on their own, and they would just like you to support their work and to tell them and to show them that it is important. Thank you.

Chairman Wihby called Mary Sliney.

Mary Sliney, 20 Merrimack Street, stated:

I want to thank the Board of Mayor and Aldermen for this opportunity to speak. I came here somewhat hesitantly because I am not a resident, but I have been working in the City of Manchester for several decades for concern for the lower income residents. I Chair the Low-income Housing Network of Greater Manchester and I also facilitate a group of service agencies who are working on the continuum of care to move folks from being homeless into being productive citizens and successful in their own housing. Actually, I'm here to speak on behalf of one individual whom I worked with this year who was homeless. He has been a long-term resident of the City of Manchester, he was a productive individual working for over 8 years for a local industry and a health problem caused him to go into the hospital for surgery, he was no longer receiving income, he lost his housing, he became homeless. When an individual like him is unable to pay his rent it affects the ability of the property owner to being paying the taxes on the multi-unit buildings that they may own. This individual needed help to access affordable housing. I want to speak in support of the effort of the Community Improvement Program in the City of Manchester. Through use of federal dollars the Emergency Shelter funds, Community Development Block Grant funds, and HOME funds to keep Manchester concerned and focused about housing, housing standards, and housing affordability. The housing affordability for this individual who resides on the corner of Beech and Manchester Streets now because he was able to find an apartment with assistance is very critical. He's now able to pay his rent, he's functioning independently, and there are over 7,000 residents in the City of Manchester who need assistance to make sure that they have affordable housing. When economic development becomes more and more significant in Manchester

and we give support to that effort there is often a tendency for rents to go up as vacancy rates go down and there are individuals who are not able to pay the going rent. The continued use of the federal dollars focusing on housing affordability is going to be key for those individuals and also key to make sure the workforce in the City of Manchester can pay their rent as you maintain an effort in economic development. Thank you.

Chairman Wihby called Andrew Jackson.

Andrew Jackson, 199 Westwood Drive, Manchester, NH, stated:

Before I start I'd like to make a comment on the PA system, the way these are positioned the people in the center cannot hear that well, I hope you can hear as well up there. A lot has been said tonight and I'm going to pick only three particular irritating points. When a high percentage of our school budget is allocated to salaries. Higher than private industry, particularly when you look at the number of hours that they put in and their high benefits which also are a constant bone of contention. When City employees collect higher retirement than when they were working - that kind of speaks for itself. When off-duty policemen fill in as guards for off-duty jobs that pay goes to determine their retirement fund which we pay for their working off-duty - that's a little bit much. I don't have any problem with the policemen, but I think that's carrying it a little bit too far. I could go on and on but I think I've come to the conclusion that one of the biggest problems and there's a lot of them is our absolute and total inability to be able to negotiate, the City that is, with the unions. They constantly cave in and this is what we're lining up with. Now, I don't know whether this is our negotiating people or whether it's the politicians, possibly a combination of both but I know this has come up before and even to the point of having the negotiations open to the public and although I know the unions would not like it, the politicians equally don't seem to want it because I think, somehow they don't want us to know what's going on until we get hit with it. Two possible courses of action - to find better personnel in the negotiating area, even if we have to pay more it'll come back to us. If not that, start privatization. I know a lot of unions and bureaucrats complain - huh, we can't do that, we can do a much better job, we can operate much more efficiently - fine, beautiful. If they can do it, they should do it. Put it up for bid and if they can bid low enough then they should have it. At least maybe it'll get rid of a tier or two or the inadequate or useless management that they've got. I think we all have to realize that the private sector is downsizing, they have their problems but I think in the long run we all make out much better if they get a little bit tight and I see absolutely no reason why the City shouldn't follow that. One of the things that I'd like to see which I didn't cover was the fact that I would hope that some of our City employees would pay a portion, a bigger portion of their health insurance which is a big problem. I thank you.

Chairman Wihby called Rick Serodio.

Rich Serodio, 5 Camelot Drive, Bedford, NH, stated:

Mr. Chairman, Board of Aldermen, thank you for this opportunity. I'm one of the Directors of the Friends of Manchester Athletics. In four years we have approximately 400 members throughout the City. Here this evening on behalf of the membership to ask that full-funding of the requested athletic budget for fiscal year 1997 be granted. Let me underscore that in 1996 approximately 1,450 high school kids played sports, 350 junior high school kids, 132 teams and if you follow the sports pages Manchester's doing real well and I think the envy of a lot of surrounding towns and cities. Kids of the future of this City, the human capital infrastructure and a lot of discussion this evening we're talking

about people, not mortar and bricks, not that that's not important. Just let me underscore, I'm not from here. I've lived here for 22 years, I love this City. I'm from the New Bedford/Fall River area and I'll tell you first hand about cities that do not invest in kids, in infrastructure, they move out. Of the kids that play sports in this City 70 percent gain honor and high honors, they go on to college, graduate school, they become professionals, they look back to their City. Are they going to become taxpayers in the future. So, I believe we have to keep the infrastructure alive of sports in this City. So, again, on behalf of the Friends of Manchester Athletics we ask that full funding of the requested athletic budget be granted for fiscal year 1997. Thank you very much.

Chairman Wihby called Gerry Vachon.

Gerry Vachon, 221 Riverbank Road, Manchester, NH, stated:

I come before you this evening to discuss the School budget as one of the main issues because it is the biggest part of the City budget. Right now, I don't have any kids in school, but I'm willing to pay more taxes so kids get a better break in this City. I don't care how you cut it, gas went up 11 cents, everybody complained but we still bought the gas. Taxes and debt are two sure things we know of. I think if you talk to the City of Manchester, not your constituents but your fellow citizens like human beings and say hey, we've got to bite the bullet, we've got to raise taxes so we can get more benefits I think we're going to be understanding about it. When you start shuffling one buck to another from one department to another that's another thing. We not only have 12 elected officials as Aldermen, we also have on the School Board so I don't know why we have the School Board because you seem to know more than they do and they spent 12 months figuring out the system and you tell them they can't have \$2 million. I don't understand that. They need the money, they know it, it's not a department head asking so he can increase all of his little things in his office. This is a School Board that has been elected, they should know what the School needs. I don't know why you're trying to cut their throats and make them look bad just so you can probably look good or be reelected, but it's not working. We have to bite the bullet and raise taxes and I'm willing to pay and I'm a homeowner and I'll pay the taxes and I don't have any kids in school and I'll still pay the taxes. I see in some of the budgets that you have contingencies of \$100,000/\$175,000, this is only on the first two or three pages. How many other departments have this contingency, I know it's for emergency use, but they all seem to spend it by the end of the year. How about let's cutting that wasteful spending out of there. There's a lot of things we can do. Mr. Basinow mentioned that the incinerator - I can't understand why we're not on that road. We're going to profit by it. We're going to spend \$4 million this year and annually about \$2 million to haul it out of the City when we can, at least put that money towards building one and having our own resources and not depending on anybody. Manchester's always worked that way. I've said this at the last meeting at Central High School that we always worked at taking care of our own and I don't understand why we're always looking elsewhere, it's like at one meeting they keep saying it's, well, this town does it this way and it goes good and this town...let us solve our own problems. With the School budget, I think the Board ought to reconsider about that \$2 million. I think if you talk to the people, it's the only ones that really don't have children and they actually work out-of-town and never into Manchester they realize what a great City this really is. And another thing, I'm sorry the Mayor's not here but the other night, on Monday night if anybody watched on CMUR, he made a statement about the City employees that it's not only giving the City employees especially the Highway Department a raise, but also that the City pays 90 percent of the insurance and I guess the insurance is going to increase by 21 percent. But, one thing he neglected to mention and I just found this out this week and I want everybody to hear this is the fact that the insurance department is telling me and if I'm wrong in front of everybody, gives the City a

kickback on the insurance that they don't spend - yes or no. If they get a kickback and you're getting it back then the Highway Department has done something for this City and don't forget they're in our presence seven days a week, we're watching them and they're the ones giving us the service, I can't see why you're cutting their throats for seven years. Thank you very much for listening to me.

Chairman Wihby called John Lubelczyk.

John Lubelczyk, 17 Boisvert Street, Manchester, NH, stated:

It's a shame to lose a creative mind in science and research. First and foremost a priority should be established, first and foremost education should be considered first. There has to be a beginning and the elementary, the kindergarten should be the beginning. A structured education, junior high school, high school, and college more money needed should be appropriated so that students who qualify can still stay in reach of a total education. We all know the importance of a degree for a future, being a drop out is a drain. Budget can be handled by other means. It costs too much for the loss of talent, ideas, and equal quality brains that benefit the country. The GI Bill of Rights has proved that after the Second World War education opened up all supplies required and whatever it takes for a full organization of schools shall be appropriated regardless of costs.

Chairman Wihby called Jon Gross.

Jon Gross, 429 Medford Street, Manchester, NH, stated:

I'm also a business owner at 814 Elm Street. In fact, I would have addressed you tonight in a shirt and tie instead of the maybe more appropriate Mickey Mouse shirt but I couldn't find a parking space outside my office building tonight so I could run in and get my dry cleaning. If you could, support the Elm Street parking plan. It may not be perfect, it may not be ideal, maybe you'll disagree with it, but one thing is for certain there is a problem Downtown with parking, it's been there for a long time, there's been a lot of studies, let's grab onto one and make some kind of a change. Second of all, we've heard cut, cut, cut, privatization, privatization, that's been the rallying cry for the last six years, this administration. In fact, in the opening remarks we were told that we've kept seven budgets with less than 2 percent increase, yet we're still in trouble; that didn't solve our problems. The tax base isn't growing, how come. Could it be that we have a lack of vision, could it be that leadership is missing. Not just in the personification this evening, but maybe everyday. Now, I may not agree with the leadership when it grabbed onto CenterPlex as a major issue, but it's inability to pass shows that it's ineffective. It's not only ineffective in this case but in many cases. So, if vision can't be provided could you at least give us guidelines. For example, there was a time when 20 students in kindergarten was considered acceptable, then 25, then 30, then 35. Would the most conservative of you stand up and say 50, 40, pick a number because when we hit it, when we hit it I want to be able to say that's enough, isn't it. Basically, what you've heard from both sides tonight the Concerned Taxpayers, the liberals that support the schools, the people that have children in the City is that we have to approach tax base revenues, that's the secret, that's the answer. Manchester Development Corporation has to help alleviate the vacancies Downtown. Well maybe, maybe we should take some money and do some innovative ideas. How about tax abatements for property owners Downtown that allow people to rent office space at reduced rates. Where, instead of getting the special abatement because you're building is vacant and you're not bringing in revenues because you do get an abatement based upon the fact that you don't have enough revenues coming in. Let's reverse that for a short period of time, let's make the incentive to fill up Downtown with businesses, let's make these owners...it's funny, the tax base is going down, where,

where is it going down...the Mall is expanding, South Willow Street is expanding. Are we so rich that we can afford to let a company like a Marriott not build on South Willow Street, I don't understand, I just don't understand. You know, the leadership and I've watched the leadership basically just shrugs and says we don't have the money, we don't have the money; that's not positive PR, that doesn't bring people into the City. You know, if we could even dream of a CenterPlex, we could certainly afford a Middle School. In closing, as there are a lot of things I want to say, but the light's flashing, we invested two years ago and a science center for a couple of million dollars and we are two years into that science center and I just want you to know that I, for one, am going to be watching that. It was a five-year plan, I'm expecting a bona fide world class science museum down there within five years, as promised. In closing, there is one thing I want to say. On Memorial Day at Green Acres we had a wonderful band, we had a new music teacher, she was tremendous and I think what surprised me the most besides the fact that they were elementary school students and we can watch them on Channel 40 and I think you'll agree with me. I think what really amazed me was between 300 and 400 parents showed up and that was at 9:30 and again at 1:30, so people in the City do care about the schools, they do care about their children. Support the Middle School, support revitalization of Downtown, support somebody whose willing to come forth with true leadership ideas and some innovative changes to bring the City forward, the real vision, not a shrug of the shoulders and an absence of leadership. Thank you.

Chairman Wihby called Bob Dastin.

Bob Dastin, 2600 Elm Street, Manchester, NH, stated:

First of all, lawyer's can't say anything in three minutes, so I may get the hook here pretty quick, but I rise for two reasons. Number one is to publicly thank you, the Board of Mayor and Aldermen, for the support you've given me as the Chair of the CenterPlex Committee and on behalf of the CenterPlex Committee thank you for your vision, for your support, but for your vision and your foresight perhaps we would not have undertaken this project. I'd like to also publicly thank a whole host of citizens out in the community for the support they've given to the CenterPlex Committee not only with their money, but with their time. There wasn't a person who denied any reasonable request that we made for space, for a computer, for a copy machine, for anything we wanted in this community. So, I commend you for your public support and urge you to continue to support the CenterPlex. As an illustration of people willing to do things in this community, Tim Reiniger, the Mayor, and I had breakfast this morning with the Demers family, the Demers family runs a Garden Center down on South Mammoth Road. About ten days ago, I was down there and we got to talking about Elm Street and so forth. We talked about the undeveloped piece of land at Bridge and Elm. We kind of mutually concluded that it would be nice if somebody could do something to improve that lot and the Demers family, much to their credit has kind of taken this on to raise some money to encourage people who own like businesses to express some civic pride and to do something about that and I suggest to you that in the next several weeks you may see things happening there and much to their credit and the credit of other people in this community. People like Walter Stiles who cares enough about the City Hall to spend the weekends selling license plates and Dick Charpentier a busy guy in this community, a Certified Public Account taking time to serve on the Manchester Development Corporation. This is a good community, folks. There are a lot of people out there who care and who take pride in the community. The second reason I rise is to talk to you about temptation and before you think that Dastin has turned into some kind of a religious freak let me tell you the temptation that I'm talking about. It's temptation of an economic kind. The City is about to receive its third incremental distribution of the Rooms and Meals Tax, I urge you, I implore you take the money, lay it up in a fund for economic development. The potholes, I can assure you will take care

of themselves. If we don't invest in this community, if you don't do this then nobody else is going to do it and all of the problems that we heretofore heard about tonight, how do we fund the schools and all of the problems most of which required public support is only going to happen if we build the economic base, the economic tax base of this community. While CenterPlex is not an economic panacea, it like a host of other things like the Airport and U.S. FIRST and Intown Manchester and the expansion of UNH in the Millyard are all very positive things that are taking place in this community. So, I urge you to take the increment in the Rooms and Meals, lay it up into a fund and invest it. It took, as you recall, five or six years for the Airport to develop and it may take five or six years for a civic center to happen. I don't think the civic center is dead, I don't think you think that it's dead and I don't think that there are many people in the community who think that it's dead. So, thank you for allowing me to appear, I urge you to take that distribution of Meals and Rooms and do the right thing with it. Thank you.

Chairman Wihby called Cathy Cook.

Cathy Cook, 150 Heather Street, Manchester, NH, stated;

I'm one of the many people who served on the 150th Birthday Committee this year and our goal as the Committee was to try to make this City start to make itself feel better about itself and I found that to begin with you sort of hint at a little bit of a problem that when people talk about their City, they talk about what's wrong with it. We don't talk about what's right with it. We tried to throw a big birthday party this weekend that would be a wholesome, fun community event and I think we did and I feel real good about it. We're giving, we hope, if it all works out a gazebo to the City which we hope will be a thing of beauty because a healthy City is always going on producing things of beauty and we're running "I See A City" bus tours and I invite every one of you to come to the Currier and take it and I promise you, we will show you Manchester as you've never seen it before and you'll feel better about Manchester. Everyone whose come off the tour has been enthused. We can offer you that too. But, as we've worked so hard at this and we really believe that there is so much positive in this City. I just came from a third grade elementary school program on Washington, DC. The little kids learned more about patriotism and their country than you'd think they could learn at the third grade. Super things are happening in our schools. I have two kids at Central High School. If you looked at the paper you'd think horrible things are happening there. There are more great things happening in that school than you can count. It goes on to all sorts of other levels. The young business people coming into this community, the energy, and the commitment they have are terrific. We have everything in this place to go forward and be successful as a community. We have to come up with a vision and we have to come up with a plan. I wanted to speak tonight out of my concern for our educational system. Bob just addressed economic issues which are critically important. We will not draw good businesses, we will lose our brightest and our best if we do not maintain a good quality school system. We have to have a school system where we fund our teachers, we maintain our staff, we maintain our basic programs, we fund basic supplies. I don't believe that there is anyone on the School Committee on anyone on the Aldermanic Board also who wants to eliminate our Strings Program. I think we all want to keep basic programs in the schools. If it means increasing our taxes and I don't mean by a lot, but by a reasonable amount to maintain the same good quality programs and schools that our parents offered us, we have a responsibility to do that. It's an investment in our future, it's not a waste of money. We can be so conservative and so cautious out of good intent that we shoot ourselves in the foot. We need to invest cautiously and carefully with vision in our schools and as Bob was saying our economic future. Please think carefully as you make your final decisions and please also help the 150th Birthday and the rest of the citizens of this City to feel great about this City. We have so much going for us, we have to work

together. It can't be you against us or them against us, it's got to be all of us together committing to a positive view of what we can achieve. If we can change our attitude, there's no limit. Thank you.

Chairman Wihby called Lionel LeBlanc.

Lionel LeBlanc, 203 Belmont Street, Manchester, NH, stated:

I'm here speaking at this hearing because Manchester's overtaxed. Zero tax increase in a must if you don't want to erode further your tax base. Every time we have a tax increase many homeowner's can't pay them. The revenue received by the ones that can pay does not upset the revenue loss by those unable to pay. Put me on record against a tax increase, it's not affordable. Every time new appropriations are made by your group and the City, it's the property owners that have to subsidize it. In other words, we pay for it. Pension contribution is one of my pet peeves. This year the Aldermen propose contributing \$5,115,623 to the City Pension Fund and the State Pension Fund. Before you take any money away from us find out how much they have in their pension fund. It's possible that they have an excess. They should have a buffer, no question about that, but you have an excess whereby they can go out and invest it in stock and we subsidize their investment so it should be looked further. After all, this is public information. We have a right to know. There's something else. I cannot see why we should pay dental insurance or life insurance. It's the beholder, they're the ones who should pay the premiums. Nobody pays my dental insurance, nobody pays my life insurance, so we shouldn't pay anybody else's insurance. The two perks total is \$900,000, you add another \$100,000 to that and that's \$1.00 more per thousand on our taxes. If what I suggested is eliminated or curtailed it would result in a take cut and not a tax increase. This would invigorate our economy and make Manchester a better community to live. Thank you.

Chairman Wihby called Ellen Healy.

Ellen Healy, RFD #38, Sybil Lane, Litchfield, NH, stated:

I'm the President of the Manchester Education Association and I'm also a parent of a senior at Central High School and an English teacher at Central High School. I'm here this evening to ask that you fully fund the School Department budget as presented to you by Superintendent Len Bernard. Our children are the future of this City. They deserve to be in a classroom with 24 of their peers. They also deserve to sit in clean classrooms which I can assure you is not the situation right now. Our children also deserve to have textbooks that don't have ripped pages and that have decent covers. Come into my classroom at Central High School anytime, Room 425 and I'll show you what I mean. Our children don't deserve to be read to at the high school level. When textbooks are missing this is what we have to do. We share, we read aloud. Our children deserve more. They need updated maps and I realize this may be difficult because of the daily world changes that occur. The funding for the School Department is a bare bones budget. I have discussed the budget with Superintendent Bernard, he has not inflated the budget at all which has been past practice in previous years. So, I would please ask you to consider funding the budget. You have an awesome responsibility ahead of you and wish you well in your deliberations and please consider the children who will be voting in the future. Thank you.

Chairman Wihby called for any other person wishing to speak.

Chairman Wihby called Robert Baines.

Robert Baines, 70 Rosemont Avenue, Manchester, NH, stated:

I am the Principal of Manchester High School West. Having been elected to the Charter Commission and grappling with trying to reinvent City government to try and make it more effective, we keep coming across the human element that government cannot succeed unless you have people of vision working in the long-term interest of the City. In the short-term interest when you look at investing in the City, it's very easy to say no taxes, no increase, let's give up on the City. There are an increasing number of people that want you to give up on the City and I believe that some of you are sitting before us this evening. This is a very frustrating situation for those of us as parents that are trying to bring up students in this City. I'm a product of the public schools, my kids go to the public schools, I believe in the public schools, I believe in the City of Manchester. You cannot operate a school system on one year you fund it properly, the next year you fund it down here, the next year you fund it properly, the next time you fund it down here. That is what you're doing with these cuts that you've made in this budget; that is irresponsible, it does not represent the vision that we need in this City. I would like to know which person up there is going to stand up and say yes, we're going to have to argue for a more substantial increase than people perhaps are prepared to pay right now and you're going to argue on this basis; that this City is going to succeed or fail based upon our economic future. Many of you were prepared to argue for CenterPlex which I supported. How many of you are ready to argue and go out in the streets and argue with your neighbors and it might cost you the next election, it might cost some of you the ability to become Mayor of the City, but you may end up being a hero to the children of this City because you stood up and what counted at a time when you were needed the most. You cannot do what you're prepared to do. You cannot do it because if you do it, you are basically giving a clear message that Manchester is a dying City and this City should not be in this position. Every year, sometimes every other year as we speak and all the work we're doing on the Charter Commission, all the work that people are doing to make Manchester a better place to live will live or die based upon what you do to the school children and the schools of this City. The public schools are the last place that exists on the face of the earth where we take everybody in, we welcome everyone into our schools, people of different colors, people of different nationalities, different ability levels, different socio-economic backgrounds and they mix together and they strive and they go out and succeed. Tonight, I just came from a banquet at NYNEX where three Manchester high school students, a West student, a Memorial student, and a Central student were recognized for being scholars of the month almost out of almost 80 high schools in the State of New Hampshire. Tad Yanagi was chosen Scholar of the Year, a product of Manchester High School West. We have a lot to be proud of, please show some faith in what we're doing, show some faith in the Superintendent whose tried to present and work with you in a realistic, calm, reassuring way. You owe it to us, you owe it to the children, you owe it to people like Bob Baines who have made a commitment to the City and let's stop playing these games with the Manchester public schools because that's exactly what we're doing. Thank you.

Mayor Wieczorek arrived at the public hearing.

Mayor Wieczorek asked if there was anyone else wishing to speak.

Mayor Wieczorek called Janet Stiles.

Janet Stiles, 226 Sagamore Street, Manchester, NH, stated:

I've sat through here listening to everybody come up and speak. It seems to me as though this City is on the brink of being something great. We have had a great past. As if any of you know the history of this

City is. We were one of the leaders in the world for cotton manufacturing and we shipped it all over the world, we were well-known. We can now capitalize on that. People are looking for places to go and this City would be wonderful to show them what was here and what industrial revolution was. The only thing is that I've noticed is where is the sense of community here, right now. We do have a future, not only in our historic past, but we have a future with a vision of CenterPlex and U.S. FIRST and competition and the science museum and the science honor society. I really do believe that if we put our heads together and listening to the teachers and the speakers for the teachers come up here, I believe we have brains in this City to put our caps on and sit down together and plan a future utilizing what vision we have here, what past we have here. I think we need to form a whole group of people who can help us get through this, it seems like a stone wall, but I think if we start working together and have a sense of community, we can do it, it's not impossible and I commend you all for putting up with some of us all feel as though we should be saying but I think we need to sort of break down the walls and start thinking together and putting on our caps because our future is out there. It's right within our City limits, I think we can do it. Thank you.

Mayor Wieczorek thanks everyone and stated that all wishing to speak having been heard, a motion is in order to refer the resolutions to the Committee on Finance for further consideration, with reports to be made to the Board of Mayor and Aldermen at a later date. On motion of Ald. Wihby, duly seconded by Ald. Clancy, it was so voted.

There being no further business to come before the Public Hearing, on motion of Ald. Sysyn, duly seconded by Ald. Pariseau, it was voted to adjourn.

A True Record. Attest.

City Clerk