

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

March 4, 1997

7:00 PM

Mayor Wieczorek called the meeting to order.

Mayor Wieczorek called for the Pledge of Allegiance, this function being led by Alderman Hirschmann.

A moment of silent prayer was observed.

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

Present: Aldermen Wihby, Elise, Reiniger, Sysyn, Clancy, Shea, Domaingue, Pariseau, Cashin and Hirschmann

Absent: Aldermen Soucy and Robert

Mayor Wieczorek advised that the purpose of the special meeting was 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 shall be limited to two minutes to allow all participants the opportunity to speak and any comments must be directed to the chair.

Mayor Wieczorek requested that any resident wishing to speak should come forward to the nearest microphone, clearly state their name and address when recognized, and give their comments.

Lloyd Basinow, 503 Amherst Street, Manchester, NH (Re: Civic Center), stated:

Good evening, your Honor and members of the Board of Aldermen. The Elm Street Citizens Revitalization Committee has established three prerequisites before endorsement of City Center. The first, the location must be of direct benefit to the central business district of Elm Street proper - Prospect to Granite Streets. Two, there must be a minimum investment by the taxpayers with full and complete disclosure of all costs, tax increases and construction contracts with an open bidding process. Three, if public funds are involved, there must be a referendum question on this year's ballot before the commitment of any more money beyond the \$180,000 already authorized. Last year, we offered this Board a very viable alternative plan called "Ultraplex" which would have cost the taxpayers very little and would have guaranteed a great return to the community. Our plan included up to four levels of underground parking

accommodate 2,000 cars, at street level a giant mall with over 70 shops and at the top level a civic/convention hall facing 350 feet along Elm Street. This project would have run from Elm Street to Ultraplex Avenue which we now call Canal Street. There was even a provision for a connecting hotel to service the civic center. The City already owns 95% of the vacant land at Bridge and Elm Street. Except for the underground garage, most of the financing would have been through private investment bonds backed by the full faith and credit of the municipal government as already authorized by the State Legislature. Even our own residents would have been able to purchase tax-exempt, special purpose Elm Street Revitalization Bonds. But, the best part would be that the income from the mall alone would have been more than enough to cover all of the debt service on the entire project and even produce a reasonable additional profit for the investors and there would have been no tax rate increase for our property owners. In other words, our proposed citizen center would have been entirely self-sustaining. The question raised is, was the rejection of our proposal prompted by a combination of political intrigue, special interest connections and insider pressure couple with the desire to once again bag and tag the taxpayers of this City. If this be the case - beware - for taxpayer retribution is not so far away. I'll conclude by saying you may have the dixie bell at *The Union Leader*, Richard Lessner bamboozled into thinking that there will be no tax increase for the CenterPlex, but everyone else are not so gullible as the newly-arrived carpetbagger from the south. Mr. Lessner thought the taxes in Manchester were too high, so he took up residence in Hooksett. Beware of what Mr. Lessner has to say in *The Union Leader*. Thank you.

Steve Vaillancourt, 161 Faith Lane, Manchester, NH (Re: Civic Center), stated:

I'm a State Representative from Ward 8. I have extended comments I've offered to you in writing. Proponents of a Manchester civic center remind me of that old cartoon in which Bullwinkle says, "Hey Rock, watch me pull a rabbit out of my hat!" Well, try as he might, Bullwinkle was never able to pull a rabbit out of his hat, it just wasn't in there and we will never be able to pull a civic center funded without taxpayer money out of our hat, it just isn't in there. I find two arguments, especially disturbing and can only hope that they do not represent a deliberate attempt to deceive the citizens of Manchester. The first is this notion that no property taxpayer money will be involved since State Rooms & Meals Tax money will be used. Well, that money was intended to be used to relieve property taxes. Civic center proponents can hide behind any semantical ploy they so choose, but facts are facts: if it's \$20 or \$40 per taxpayer being set aside to fund the civic center, that's \$20 or \$40 more the average homeowner will be paying in property taxes. Then there's a question I've been researching for the past four days that of the reliability of the projected Rooms & Meals Tax revenues. State projections for the next two years are some 13% less than those projections in the spreadsheet given to the Mayor and Board of Aldermen. For example, the spreadsheet projects Manchester will receive \$1,255,148 in 1997, the State projection from the Department of Treasury is \$1,098,581, a difference of over \$156,566. The figures are similar for 1998 and I have given them to you. If these projections are off by that much for only the first two years, imagine what they'll be in the out years. And, I hasten to add that this could be far worse because the Legislature must decide this year whether or not the Rooms & Meals Tax will remain at 8%. It could be returned down

to 7%. As a fiscal conservative, I will vote to return it to 7%. Then there's the idea that Manchester can become a prime league for minor league sports, a prime center. I think geography argues against that, we've heard of Greenville, South Carolina, but that is some 144 miles from Atlanta and 248 miles from Raleigh. Manchester is less than an hour from Boston. I suggest that people here want major league sports and are not ready to support the minor leagues. If they were, I think we would support one of the best college basketball teams in the country, New Hampshire College. I urge us to stop trying to pull one out of the hat and to concentrate our efforts on what really will be driving the economy of our area that will be the blue chip Manchester Airport and the surrounding industries. Thank you.

Linda Garrish, 7 Irwin Drive, Manchester, NH (Re: Clean Schools), stated:

As promised a month ago and I'm a little late, I am here with a report on the school cleanliness check that was done on February 3rd. I have copies for the entire Board, but I will beg you indulgence if it goes slightly over two minutes because I think it is important to read you the summary that I wrote over it. The good news first. Nearly all the schools reported that the WFF day porters were doing a satisfactory to good job. A couple of schools indicated that cleaning levels were better than before privatization as noted to me verbally and that they were satisfied with the way their schools looked as seen reflected in high percentages particularly in schools checked only by principals. In several schools checkers reported that overall schools looked okay. A few schools noted that recently things were better. Many schools felt that things were better this year than the last two. Principals reported that 12 schools showed average percentages of summer cleaning of over 75% and many reported general satisfaction with that level of cleaning. Since schools were checked primarily after school ended, after a school day an additional category was included for unnecessary litter so that we could separate the effects of a school day's use and pinpoint schools or areas where students needed to be more conscientious. We are happy to report that in nearly all schools litter was not a significant problem. Unfortunately, the checkers did not consistently use the same method for percentiles in that area so we are unable to report average percentages. However, the schools will receive a copy of this report and the checklist and the school-by-school list to make any appropriate improvement. The bad news on the other hand is our schools are not 98% clean. On the first day of a school week, after a weekend, 15 schools reported overall cleanliness percentages of less than 75% and of those six were below 50%. Ten schools had average percentages of summer cleaning reported by principals of less than 75% with six of them under 50%. In the daily/weekly category of cleaning done by parents at 18 schools scored under 75% clean. Of those, seven came in less than 50%. Principals reported never having seen the contract requirements. Most parents were not aware of the fines that could be imposed on the cleaning company when a certain contract requirements not met or security was breached. Although, many schools complimented day porters, many also felt that evening cleaners were not only inadequately trained, but also not doing a good job. Some parents and principals commented that evening custodians were found to be poorly supervised, taking frequent breaks and sometimes found with guests and animals in the building or smoking in inappropriate places. Although some parents and principals initially felt that their schools looked okay many were

disappointed to find that on closer inspection cleaning was incomplete, insufficient or not done. Most reported the edges of floors all over the schools and especially corners, areas beneath tables and shelves or movable equipment and stairways and landings were very dirty. Dust balls and cobwebs were reported in many cases, window sills and frames, in particular, were very dirty and dusty. As well as in many cases the furniture and the shelves in the classrooms. Stages were also noted to be poorly cleaned. All school checkers noted that in no area where disinfecting or sanitizing should be done was there the usual odor even as many parents noted on the evenings or weekends during events. Soap was consistently diluted down at sinks and waste disposal containers, in most instances, did not look washed inside or out, particularly in the bathrooms. At one school, evening custodians were seen on several occasions to use the same brush they use to wash toilet bowls, shake it over the floor and proceed to wash the sinks with it. In some schools, toilet tissue and paper towel holders were empty and often dirty looking cleaning film was noted on the bathroom walls and stalls. In several schools with gyms and frequent events parents noted that they frequently clean up. Replacement of light bulbs continues to be a problem as well as maintenance jobs that were once done regularly by City custodians. Snow and ice removal though minimal this year is inconsistent as well as lawn and grounds care. Two high schools reported sewer backups twice in one school where it did not appear that proper sanitization or health checks had been done nor the areas blocked off from public use. In nearly all of the schools vents and registers for ventilation and heating were noted to be dirty and caked with dust balls and these and other areas, parents, principals and teachers have many health concerns. Several schools noted security problems with doors found unlocked in the evenings, on weekends, and on early morning and windows left unsecured or opened. One school reported that a copier had been used for several thousand copies and was found out of paper and various solutions. Others noted excessive phone use and several noted the loss of breakage of various pieces of equipment. Many principals and parents expressed concern over the frequent turnover of evening custodians. This concerned them in several ways. Principals were concerned that all entry keys may not have been turned in by custodians who had been fired or quit.

Mayor Wiczorek asked are you almost done.

Ms. Garrish replied, I'm almost done. Some cleaning staff reported the lack of a key. It was also felt that the high turnover made communication and training difficult and took an excessive amount of their time. As well, parents and principals alike felt that this also affected the consistency of cleaning. In the schools that noted a trend toward better cleaning this year, it was felt that it should have taken WFF a company that has had some type of contract with the City for two and a half years this long to improve their quality and that it was quite clear what the contract expected of the company, in most cases. This summary can only present an overview of the performance level of WFF. Although, improvements have slowly occurred in many schools there clearly is sufficient evidence to show that our schools are not as clean and cared for as they should be. Many principals and teachers have said that they have lost faith in continuing to take time to fill out deficiency notices because of poor response. Parents as well,

in many schools are frustrated with a continued need for policing their school's cleanliness. We hope that you will take serious note of the lack of overall cleanliness in our schools and that there continues to be serious and on-going concerns about health and safety as well as cleanliness.

Mayor Wieczorek stated you've been on for eight minutes.

Ms. Garrish continued by stating the summary will be followed in the next few days, your Honor, with a school-by-school breakdown of specific problem areas. Citizens For A Better Manchester along with parents and school staff would appreciate responses at your earliest convenience to these concerns and questions which were posed to this Board on February 4, 1997. Thank you.

Gene Lambert, Ward 10, stated:

I was listening to Linda's report. An awful lot of time and effort was put into this, but she makes it sound like we're a bunch of animals out here. Like Manchester's got just animals in schools. How can so much damage being done to a building, if parents number one are not teaching their kids the right way to grow up, the right way to act, or the teachers in school are not doing their job by watching these kids. How can so much damage be done to a building, I think it's ridiculous. All they want is increase, increase, increase. Last year, I formally made a complaint to the Alderman from Ward 11. At the end of the school year, in June or July, when West closed they gave away all of the furniture in school, the desks, the chairs, they were giving them away. Now, if the school needed money so much why didn't they sell them, why didn't they sell them \$4, \$5. A lot of parents would have bought this for their four or five year old kids. They could have had some type of yard sale. I make a formal complaint to Tom Robert because that was in his Ward and he said he was going to bring it up, he was going to write a letter, and I never heard nothing of it ever since. But, the City needs so much money but yet, who the hell is Bob Baines, Principal at West to be able to say it's okay, give my furniture away. It's not his furniture, it's my furniture, it's your furniture, it's taxpayer's furniture and that's what upsets the hell out of me. You work like hell and what do you get out of it. I think it's ridiculous, but yet you have people that can stay here and make reports and take time and time and time and spend eight hours a day to make a supposedly two-minute report to take their 15 minutes on this damn clock. For what, just to complain and complain and complain. I'm sick of this garbage. Thank you.

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

This being a special meeting of the Board, no further business could be presented, and on motion of Alderman Pariseau, duly seconded by Alderman Clancy, it was voted to adjourn.

A True Record. Attest.

City Clerk