

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

June 2, 1998

7:00 PM

Mayor Wieczorek called the meeting to order.

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

A moment of silent prayer was observed.

The Clerk called the roll.

Present: Aldermen Wihby, Clock, Reiniger, Sysyn, Clancy, Pinard, Shea,
O'Neil, Girard, Rived, Pariseau, Cashin, Thibault, and Hirschmann

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

Harold Lavigne, 49 Hillcroft Road, Manchester, NH stated I came here with a few comments. I attended last Tuesday's boondoggle of a so called Public Hearing and I just don't think that this particular \$5 being taxed on, trying to be taxed onto the vehicle owners should take precedent. I believe that it is about time our individual Aldermen started holding possibly monthly meetings with their constituents who try to keep up with most of what is going on with the City. It seems that lately the City Hall doors to the average taxpayer have been closed. If you call certain departments or any departments to try to get information, they can't give the average taxpayer any type of information. It is only reserved for the Aldermen and the Board of Mayor and Aldermen. I think this is the wrong way of running the City. I think there is too much money being thrown out the window with a lot of this stuff and I think it is about time the Aldermen start holding these monthly meetings amongst their individual wards and then they would have a better idea and see that most of their constituents are pretty well informed of what goes on in the City of Manchester.

Ivy Lavigne, 49 Hillcroft Road, Manchester, NH stated Mr. Mayor and Board of Aldermen, I am a Spanish teacher in the Foreign Language Department at Manchester High School West. I began teaching at West in the Fall of 1985 and am still using the same text. The copyright date of both these Vallet series is 1980. I would also like you to see that these books, after two or three rebind jobs, and you can pass these around, and yes, our students have to use them. Manchester High School West is the only high school which has not been allocated funds to purchase the Glencol series. Both Memorial and Central already have this series. You want consistency of subject matter within the City schools, therefore, I ask the Board how this can be accomplished without the proper resources. Yesterday in the *Union Leader* there was a quote, "\$500,000 cannot be put into the school funds from the room & meals tax fund because this money is set aside for the civic center." This Board would rather have dollars sit stagnant in an alleged fund than to support the needs for the Manchester school system. In closing, Mr. Mayor, your priorities lie within your proposed civic center, while for most citizens and the teachers of Manchester, ours is to give the children the best education. We hope this will become your priority too, Board of Aldermen. Thank you.

Jane Ganem, 35 Norton Avenue, Manchester, NH stated for the past 25 years I have taught French at West High School and for all but two of those years, this has been the textbook. This is a copy of the State standards and if my arms were longer I could show you what difference there is between the State standards and this book and for all of those of you who say that the language has not changed much, please listen to the culture that we must try to supplement or not teach from this book and I will translate this into English for those of you who don't understand French. According to this book, there are not many highways in France. I know better. Also in France 50% of the households do not have a phone. Not only do they have phones, most people have what is called a minutel, a computer that is hooked up to the telephone. One of the cultural readings is about the new sport called windsurfing and it talks about the championships in 1980. There are numerous surveys on what French people do for vacation and what kinds of cars they own and so forth but they are just pitifully out of date. One of the exercises asks the students who are learning the future tense, what will you be doing, what will you do in 1980. They also want the students to comment on their favorite comedian. Is it Woody Allen and describe him and Walter Cronkite for a newscaster. The kids don't know who Walter Cronkite is. My point is that yes language has changed, culture has changed and most of us try not to use the book. We Xerox from a more modern series. There is one Xerox machine for 120 people in that school. It is not an easy task and we are the only school that does not have a new series in any of the languages, German, Latin, French or Spanish so please consider funding books for the Foreign Language Department. Thank you.

Diane Dionne, 118 Bunker Hill Road, Manchester, NH stated I have three children that attend Manchester schools. Since 1994, Manchester student population has steadily increased while its pupil costs have decreased when compared with the average state cost per pupil. The opening of the new McLaughlin Middle School will help alleviate the ever increasing student population. The Mayor's budget does not adequately fund the educational needs of Manchester students. In fact, since 1996 the school's portion of the tax rate has decreased 3.14%. The School Department needs, at a minimum, an additional \$3 million over the Mayor's proposed budget which can be accomplished without an increase in the property tax rate. The City should reallocate money in its rainy day account that is currently set aside for a privately owned civic center to fund the new public McLaughlin Middle School. The choice is simple. Fund public schools with public tax dollars or fund the ever elusive civic center with public tax dollars. Money for children or welfare for rich investors of a private civic center.

Ellen Healy, President of Manchester Education Association, stated I will not repeat the previous message that was stated, however, I would like to educate you with a few simple facts that you will all understand I am sure. In 1994, the student population in Manchester was 15,697 students. In 1995 it rose to 16,088. In 1996, 16,265. In 1997, 16,563. On October 1, 1998, the projected student enrollment for the City of Manchester is 17,000 children which will make this the largest district. On the other hand, in 1994, Manchester spent 4.6% lower per pupil cost than the State average. In 1995, that amount increased and Manchester spent 11.5% lower than the State average. In 1996, Manchester spent 17% lower than the State average of per pupil cost. This is a dollars and cents issue. It is a simple mathematical equation. You all know the student enrollment is increasing. You can tell from figures and I got these yesterday from the State Department of Education. You can get the same figures as I have. The facts are simple ladies and gentlemen. You are not spending the money that is needed to fund education in our schools. Our children deserve better. We are not asking that you raise the tax rate for the citizens of this community. We are asking that you take the money set aside in the rainy day account and rather than fund a private civic center with public tax dollars, we are saying take that public money and spend it with the children of this community whose parents have put the tax dollars into this fund. Thank you.

Thomas Clow, Principal of Parker-Varney School, 223 James Pollock Drive, Manchester, stated I am here tonight to encourage you to put enough money into the School Department budget to insure that the new language arts materials are purchased for all grade levels, K through 6 for the start of the school year in September, 1998. I thought I was being clever bringing along a hand full of books, but I sort of got beaten to the punch on that. However, I will show you anyway because elementary school is really where it all begins and what we have here is a language arts textbook, copyright 1986. Our spelling book, which is copyright 1984, and reading materials with an original copyright date of 1982 and updated in 1985. Now none of these materials are still in print. None of the children who are presently in our elementary

schools had been born yet when these were adopted. Children who were in kindergarten and first grade when we started using these reading materials as new materials have now graduated from high school. We have a literacy crisis. Not only in Manchester, but nationwide. We have a crisis in hand but we have a solution in hand. We have a newly adopted language arts curriculum that matches up with the NH State Frameworks for language arts. We have a new textbook series that has been piloted and approved by the School Board which matches the curriculum and we have teachers who are really eager and excited to get started on this. Now what we need is your support, so please don't let this opportunity slip away.

Elias "Skip" Ashooh, 83 Gilhaven Road, Manchester, NH stated I have been before you a number of times to talk about the civic center and the feasibility study we are doing there but I am here to talk tonight just for a minute about a decision that I believe you are contemplating. This regards the funding of the school budget. I know in part Aldermen have considered taking a look at the rooms & meals tax revenue as a possible source, as a Band-Aid for the school funding problem. I would like you to consider, in the few minutes I have, the risks that you incur by incorporating rooms & meals tax revenue into your operating budget. Years ago, a differently constituted Board of Mayor and Aldermen made a decision not to use rooms & meals tax money in the operating budget but to set it aside and that allowed the City to go forward when other cities in the State couldn't. It allowed them to go forward with community improvement projects. It allowed them to go forward with a number of projects and now the City is considering the civic center but not only the civic center. We are considering a riverwalk. We built a soccer field. There are a number of development projects downtown that for the first time mark a new vision in this City. People in this town are expecting more and more from their City government and they are starting to see improvements in the City. If you take rooms & meals tax money and use it as a Band-Aid in your operating budget, that Band-Aid runs the risk of becoming not a Band-Aid, but an intravenous system and the drip, drip, drip of feeding that rooms & meals tax money into your operating budget will drain the life away from all the other economic development projects that this Board is considering. I would ask you to stay true to a decision that was made years ago to use this money for economic development because without economic development this City will die. Thank you very much.

Patricia DiSabeto, 61 Christy Lane, Manchester, NH stated I am here to discuss the McLaughlin Middle School. Two of my children are affected by the redistricting. Here it is June 2 and I can't believe we are discussing lack of funding for this school. The school has been under construction for over 14 months and now everyone seems to be surprised that Superintendent Tanguay needs money to staff and furnish this building. As a parent, I would hope that you would consider delaying the opening of McLaughlin, not because of budget issues but I feel that time has run out. The School's Administration has 64 business days until the first day of school. Of those 64 days, how many people will be on vacation? Conservatively, maybe 7 days. So we are now looking at 57 business days to open McLaughlin. They have to hire additional administrative staff, hire teachers, special education programs, set-up the curriculum, hire

support staff, tutors and educational assistants, they have to set-up the scheduling. There is also athletic programs, extra curricular programs such as band and chorus, order books and supplies and they have to reconfigure the bus routes, not to mention hiring the bus drivers or bus company. Can we set-up this middle school to be equal to the standards that already exist at the other three junior high schools? If we cannot meet the present standard, we have a moral and legal obligation to the McLaughlin students to delay this opening. Manchester is supposed to be the sixth most desirable City in the U.S. to live. If you promote Manchester this way, the City will continue to grow. With the population growth, you have more children attending the schools. Therefore, you need to spend more money on education. We should be investing in the future of the Manchester City through our children.

Shelly Uscinski, 3 Forest Drive, Merrimack, NH stated I am Chairman of the NH Christian Coalition whose members include many God fearing, Christian families and churches here in the City of Manchester. We are deeply saddened that a homosexual Pride Parade will be held in this beloved City. As stated in the bible, "it was God's plan for sexual relations to be in the form of man/woman union. Man and wife becoming one flesh." Genesis 2:24. "Thou shalt not lie with mankind as with womankind. It is abomination." Leviticus 18:22. NH Christian Coalition Board, its members are God fearing folks who support, uphold and defend our Constitution, do not dispute the right of any group to gather, in this case a parade but what is a sad commentary on these times is that immorality should be glorified in this beautiful City. NH Christian Coalition's response will be to hold a traditional family values rally here in Manchester as an alternative to this parade. The purpose of this rally will be to pray for the City of Manchester and its leaders and to pray that those marching in the Gay Pride Parade will realize that their lifestyle is unnatural and unhealthy. We will also be proclaiming our position that two parent families, consisting of a mother and father, is not only the ideal situation for all children but that it is the biblically correct one, as well.

Barbara Shaw, 45 Randall Street, Manchester, NH stated Honorable Mayor and ladies and gentlemen of the Board, in recent years, you the elected leaders of our City have shown an increased willingness to listen to the City employees and reasonably discuss their budgets and requests. However, in regards to the School budget at this time, I think that you are, that it is necessary for you to review your decision. The children of Manchester deserve your consideration and so do the teachers and administrators. People have worked very hard to develop the middle school process and have worked very hard on the language arts committee for the last two years to develop a program in the language arts curriculum. The Mayor's budget, at this time, does not adequately fund the educational needs of Manchester students. I think the choice is simple. There is more than \$4 million in the rainy day fund which could be used for schools instead of the privately held civic center. Perhaps at a later date we could have a fund-raiser or something for that. The City has already invested more than \$9 million in construction costs. There is a building sitting there. What are we going to do with it? Isn't it

wise to complete the project by opening the school instead of using public property tax dollars to fund a civic center? Thank you very much.

A. Joseph Dion, 512 Coolidge Avenue, Manchester, NH stated I am here to speak on behalf of the registration fee for the City of Manchester. I am here to speak in favor of this fee, both as a, I am not quite a taxpayer yet but I think it is a more fair and equitable way to distribute monies so that we can start repaving our roads. I also speak on behalf of the company that I work for. I am partially responsible for registering 32 vehicles, sometimes a little bit more every year, and we would gladly pay \$5 a car as a business in this City if the money was to go directly towards repaving the roads. Thank you for your time.

Debbie Stratton, 105 McCarthy Street, Manchester, NH stated I am speaking tonight as a teacher at West High School. I would like to represent the Business Department in the City. I just want to give you a little history of where I am coming from. I am a new teacher in Manchester. This is my third year at West High School. I worked 10 years in business and before I started teaching at West, I had the opportunity to teach at a smaller district and also substitute teach in various towns around Manchester. My heart has always been, though, to teach in Manchester. So when I left business and came into education, I am very enthusiastic, I love working with teenagers and I love business subjects. I believe that we teach a practical life skill that everybody needs and I am sorry to say that in entering in the Manchester public school system I am shocked at the technology that we have, especially in the business department. My accounting book is 11 years old and at West High School we are not even teaching accounting using any kind of computer software. That is absolutely ridiculous. I know that Central and Memorial do use it, but they are also faced with the old computers that we have. The computers in our department are more than 10 years old. They are at the point of being irreparable and this is from talking to the technician that visits our school almost on a weekly basis. At West High School we also have a room full of electronic typewriters that have been there for over 20 years and they are at the point where there are times when we have students sitting on the side of the room because they are irreparable. I don't know if you know this, but I felt that it was time to speak about the Business Education budget. I also serve on the School-to-Career Partnership and I am the FBLA Advisor at West so I am very in tuned and working with students and giving them the best updated technology but I am sorry to say that it is just so far behind the times and you really need to know that. On the School-to-Career Partnership, I have been involved with business people who are very interested in working with students and getting them, you know, getting them to learn employable skills and when they hear about the technology we have, it is really a shame so I am asking you to please stop cutting the budget in schools and start giving more so that our students will be able to compete for jobs in the 21st Century. Thank you.

David Boutin, Manchester, NH stated I am here to speak on the issue of the \$5 fee for registration. The way I would like to approach it with you is from my vantage point as a member of the Planning Board, a position I am privileged to hold because of you folks.

Because of my position as the Chairman, I am often contacted to meet with prospective companies that want to move into the City of Manchester and there is usually three or four things they want to know. They want to know about our school system. They want to know if this is a place they can attract people to move. If you have a company like Fidelity that is moving from Texas to New Hampshire, they are going to move some of their top people and they want to know can they move them here. They want to know about the City's infrastructure. Does the City take care of itself, does it have enough pride to take care of its infrastructure, its roads, its sewers, its water and Library and so forth and so on. These are important issues and from my perspective, a \$5 dedicated, a \$5 fee which is going to go into a dedicated fund which means it has to go towards doing what needs to be done and believe me the roads out there are deplorable in every single one of your wards. You can all come up with at least one, two or three streets that are in terrible shape. My Alderman knows about the street that goes down to Webster School from Union Street. We don't even use that street during the winter months because we can't travel over it, it is so terrible. If you simply try to do it in the operating budget, then there is no guarantee that that money is going to go for what it is intended so we have an opportunity and we are moving forward in this City and we have an opportunity in the future to be not number six but number one and it is up to this Board to make that happen and you do that, this fee from my perspective is both a community pride and an economic development issue and I hope that you will support it and implement it and lets get on with the business of improving this City.

Jacquelyn Domaingue, 102 Donahue Drive, Manchester, NH stated I am here tonight to speak to you regarding the new middle school that I opened the newspaper the morning and found may not be open. Interesting because we started planning for this thing three years ago. We budgeted for it strenuously for two years. The operating budget was provided by the School Administration and updated. I know because I sat on the Joint School Building Committee. We, the taxpayers, are going to be paying for it for the next 20 years and now we are not going to open it. This is interesting. We got that funding by bonding. That is if mortgage payers anywhere here in the audience understand that is a mortgage payment plus interest for 20 years but we can't have it. Well, Mr. Cook you certainly got my attention and I am sure you have the attention of the rest of the taxpayers in Manchester. The Superintendent thinks that the Aldermen ought to have the courage to pass the school budget that meets the needs of students at an acceptable level. Charging taxpayers for an \$8.5 million school building that they can't use is not acceptable to any taxpayer that I have ever encountered. Last time around when I checked the School Department they were twisting the arm of the Mall of New Hampshire and the Magical Evening of Giving. I was asking myself as I picked up the newspaper, why can't they find out what their deficit is. One day it was this, the next day it was that. I am confused. You must be. My guess is that you have got the business communities attention too. The Chamber of Commerce made education a top priority. Some of these business people have got to be wondering right about now, schools teach addition and subtraction, why don't they know what their finances are? Where are we going to put those 800 students who were going to fit

into the McLaughlin Middle School, huh because I can tell you having sat on this Board and other Boards in this City, you don't have room for them. If you think you have a financial crisis now, you don't want to see that day. They are putting them in what, closets, behind auditoriums. Come on people. Lets get real here okay. Lets stop dealing with fantasies like the riverwalk and the civic center. The rooms & meals tax is earmarked and designed to aid and fund communities that need help. You have a problem right now. If you want to hold Superintendent Tanguay to the fire because he can't seem to add and subtract in his budget, you be my guest but don't you take it out on those kids. You have got a brand new middle school the taxpayers will continue to pay for regardless of whether or not you open the doors. That is not acceptable. It is not acceptable for you to be irresponsible and sit here and talk about a 5% tax increase and still not be able to open the school doors and \$11 million next year. Why do you have that money coming from the ABC Plan? Because the State of NH says you are already funding your educational budget at or above the State level. What do you say in answer to that to the taxpayers this year? Well the \$11 million is gone because clearly the School Department is here representing their willingness to want it and need it and your unwillingness to figure out how we got here. \$3 million in rooms & meals tax that sits in an account and the taxpayers don't get the benefit of that. \$5 in an auto registration fee that continues to come out of our pocket and that money isn't at the taxpayers either, plus a 5% tax increase in the best economic times you have had in 10 years and what did we do to get here? We added two members to the Board of Aldermen. We added two members to the Board of School Committee and we gave the Mayor a \$28,000 raise. Wow! You are all adults. Find a solution. Stop pointing fingers. There are children every year graduating from your system. They need you, tonight. Be there for them. Thank you.

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

There being no further business to come before this Special Meeting, on motion of Alderman Wihby, duly seconded by Alderman Reiniger, it was voted to adjourn.

A True Record. Attest.

City Clerk