

**SPECIAL MEETING
BOARD OF MAYOR AND ALDERMEN**

February 10, 1999

7:00 PM

Mayor Wieczorek called the meeting to order.

Mayor Wieczorek called for the Pledge of Allegiance, this function being led by Steven Vaillancourt.

A moment of silent prayer was observed.

The Clerk called the roll.

Present: Aldermen Sysyn, Clancy, Pinard, O'Neil, Girard, Shea, Rivard, Cashin, Thibault

Absent: Aldermen Wihby, Klock, Reiniger, Pariseau, Hirschmann

Messrs: S. Thomas, F. Rusczek, K. Clougherty

Mayor Wieczorek asked Representative Vaillancourt to introduce the members of the Legislature in attendance.

Mr. Vaillancourt stated Senator Patricia Krueger, Representative Bob Chabot and Jeanne Gagnon from Ward 12, Roland Beaupre from Ward 8, Paul Gagnon from Ward 12, Alice McDonough-Wallace from Ward 5, Jim Craig from Ward 2, Raymond Buckley from Ward 8, Jim MacDonald from Ward 5, John White from Ward 10, Bill McCarthy from Ward 5, Peter Leonard from Ward 3, Linda Garrish from Ward 1, Vivian Desmarais from Ward 7, Dick Ahern from Ward 2, Winn McCarty from Ward 2, Tony Simon from Ward 4, Jim Burkish from Ward 9, Jeff Goley from Ward 1, and Carol Ann Williams from Ward 3. I would also like to, at the outset, thank Don Welch who is helping us out behind the camera for Channel 16.

Mayor Wieczorek advised that the purpose of the special meeting is discussion Manchester's State Legislative Delegation relative to upcoming legislation which may impact the City. Representative Vaillancourt very kindly sent us an agenda that we can go by. The most important subject, of course, that is facing us and ever other community in the State is what is happening with the Claremont situation. If you want to lead off with that, we can get an update on that and if there are any questions, we will have the Aldermen ask questions.

Representative Vaillancourt stated thank you. I will try to be brief and to facilitate that I put together a memorandum that I handed out to you. We had more than 40 bills come in concerning the Claremont solution and they have all made their way through Finance as we speak now. The House met today and we killed another series of bills. Everything is being mowed down so that there are only going to be a few standing by next Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday when the House hopes to finish its work and send it over to the Senate. The House hopes to be done by February 18 so that the Senate can deliberate and we can have a Committee of Conference and have something out by April 1. I do serve on Finance Division 4. We have been meeting for the last eight or nine days in a row trying to weed these down to the ones we consider most worthy and I have put together, and I don't mean to slight any of the sponsors of the other bills, but I put together the four bills that are basically still alive or still considered the most significant as far as having support at this time. They are four rather different bills, but if you will note on the memorandum I have listed them. The Sapareto Bill, HB-108 is a state-wide property tax. Below-Hager, HB-109 is a combination state-wide property and income tax. The Donna Sytek Proposal, the Speaker of the House amended a bill and brought it into HB-117, it also has a state-wide property tax component and uses funds from the general revenue stream as well. The final bill I have made mention of is from Representative Andy Peterson, HB-116. That as well has a state-wide property tax and it does have a consumption tax as part of that. I can explain that in a moment, but if you will notice in the second column it talks about whether these bills are constitutional or not. Two of them clearly are and a couple of them have questions which is not to say that they will not pass constitutional muster. There are just some questions. The third column is the adequacy number as noted by the sponsors of the bill. The fourth column is how much new money these bills would provide for Manchester and then I have tried to arrange, based on the average home of about \$107,000, how much property tax relief these bills would provide. Now of course this is based on the fact that there would be no more spending by you, Mr. Mayor and the Board of Aldermen. This is how much property tax relief would be coming back if you did not choose to send it. I am not making any editorial judgment whether you should choose to spend it or not.

Mayor Wieczorek stated I am glad you left us at least a choice.

Representative Vaillancourt replied in fact I think you would be spending a part of it to get adequacy up to the level that I think is deemed necessary. I have tried not to make editorial judgments or personal judgments in putting this together. I should, I guess, say at the outset that I voted today in Division 4 of Finance and of these plans I voted for two of the plans and I voted against two, but I tried not to have my personal decisions influence what I voted for. I voted for the Sapareto Plan which is the pure state-wide property tax. I also voted for the Peterson Plan, not because I like it but because I think we are at the point now where we have to begin thinking of the second and third alternatives and I personally, I was the only Democrat on the Finance Committee to vote against the Below-Hager Bill which has a 4% income tax. I think that should be our last alternative so I voted for the Peterson Plan which has the consumption tax along with a state-wide property tax as a better alternative to that. We may get to the point where we can't

reach an agreement on any of these and we are going to have to start looking in terms of what is the second best option. I can go through each plan very, very briefly. It gets very complicated if I go to the details and if I start talking about things like weighted students, it is going to get very convoluted so I will just give you the bare bones of each bill. You can see we get nothing for nothing in this world. For every benefit, there is going to be a cost. To me, the Sapareto Bill has the least cost to Manchester because it does not apply any new taxes. All it does is it takes about \$135 million in property taxes from the so called property rich communities and redistributes it to the property poor communities like Manchester. The other words they have used to describe this are donor towns which would be the Waterville Valleys and Portsmouths of this world and of course Manchester, Claremont and Allenstown are called receiver communities. So this would transfer about \$135 million from the donor to the receiver towns. The Below-Hager Bill applies a 4% income tax but it does give generous exemptions. \$10,000 per person, \$4,000 per child so if you are a family of four making \$28,000 you would pay nothing in this income tax. You would pay \$1,000 if you were up to \$53,000 of income and as you can see it would provide a great deal of property tax relief, about \$1,851 per household and \$1,051 per business with a \$107,000 valuation. It also does not have a consumption or sales tax. It doesn't use the cigarette tax or any of those taxes. The Sytek Bill is very complicated. What the Speaker has tried to do, as you will see, is us the least amount, \$711 million, which translates to about \$3,700 per student but again without getting into weightings and things, that is now down to \$3,054 per elementary school student. She would apply a state-wide property tax lower than the Sapareto number. It would be about \$8.50 per \$1,000 with a 25% reduction for homeowners. This would transfer, instead of Sapareto's \$135 million, it would take \$48 million from the property rich communities and transfer it to the property poor communities. Now since it is taking less, you have to find other sources of revenue to fund her proposal. She would use the entire 25 cent per pack increase on cigarettes which we voted on today in Finance overwhelmingly. That would raise about \$50 million. She would also use the entire 75 cent cigarette tax that we currently have, I am sorry \$75 million raised by a 37 cent per pack tax. So she is taking \$125 million out of the general fund and using it to fund education which some people believe is going to leave us with a problem when we start to fund the budget later on this week. She would also use a new utility tax which would raise about \$25 million. Without getting into other things, there are some other specifics that would take a lot of time to explain. She has a four year phase-in for example so the \$48 million I mentioned from the property rich communities would actually only be \$12 million the first year. It would be phased in over three years. There are some other provisions that would be good for Manchester. As you will see at the bottom of the page, she would use a weighting for students who get reduced lunches. The average in the State is 23%. Manchester has about 33% so this would give us an extra half million based on a very complicated formula there. She would also give special grants for communities which have less equalized valuation per student than the state-wide average. That average is about \$300,000. Waterville Valley, by the way, has \$4 billion equalized valuation per weighted student. Manchester's is in the \$200,000 range so when all is said and done and figured there, we could get an extra \$1 or \$2 million when those calculations are made. The other proposal is the Peterson Bill which applies a 1% consumption tax. This is a combination

sales tax which would be applied on everything you buy at the store and it would be also on services such as plumbing and heating, all kinds of services. It would raise about \$350 million which is a lot of money and it would do it at a 1% rate. Some people that oppose this sale, that could be increased in the future which is true but anything could be increased in the future. What this does is it goes at so many goods and services that it can keep the rate low and still raise a sizable amount of money. It also has a state-wide property tax at \$4.74 per \$1,000 which really does not hurt the property rich towns. So there you see the four benefits that you get on the chart and also as I say for every benefit you lose something so right now we are down to, as some people have said, it is time to pick your poison. Do you want a lot of property tax relief? Well you are going to have to pay for it in some other way whether it be an income tax, consumption tax, a reduction from the general fund or a state-wide property tax. Throughout this whole proposal, I have tried to focus on four things. The number one thing, getting a constitutional solution. We cannot go back to the court or let the court say that is no good. Because they have put our feet to the fire, we have got to have a constitutional solution. The second point is I believe we need an adequacy number that is realistic. I don't believe that \$3,300 is realistic. Manchester spends one of the lower amounts in the State per student, I believe it is around \$4,800. I believe adequacy should be in the range of \$4,500. Some wanted \$1 billion, some wanted \$700 million. I think that \$850 million or \$4,500 per student is realistic. The third provision is I think we need legitimate property tax relief and the fourth provision is we should do this with the least amount of disruption to what is called the NH Advantage and Way of Life. To me, the least amount of disruption is not jumping into an income tax and trying to do it with a sales tax. As a last resort, an income tax is a last resort. A state-wide property tax, but this is where the argument falls. I don't want to express my personal opinions. I just wanted to give you the options. One thing that is agreed upon is we are going to have a cigarette tax increase that will most likely be 25 cents to raise \$50 million. The gambling revenue is still in the hopper. There was one proposal defeated today but it is most likely going to come back to the Senate. It would raise about \$120 million. This is the kind of thing that you are either for or against. I happen to be for it. I think a lot of people in Manchester are for it. I know some people are against it, but this would raise about \$120 million which could lower the state-wide property tax or the sales tax or the income tax or whatever. So pick your poison. You have got to have some combination and basically these are the choices out there before us. I hope this is useful. I tried to put it together in a coherent fashion keyed specifically to Manchester.

Mayor Wieczorek stated we also have Senator Krueger here and I told her she could have a couple of minutes to describe her bill which is still alive.

Senator Krueger stated I appreciate this, your Honor, and I certainly appreciate this Representative Vaillancourt. I brought for you to look at, at your convenience an actual copy of the bill and its impact on Manchester and its constitutionality as evidenced by some disclosure by an attorney. Very, very briefly the Krueger-Brown, Brown-Krueger Homestead Act does none of the above. It does give you \$20 million in Manchester. It does not have a broad-based

tax attached to it. In my mind, of course, it is the best of all worlds. It addresses the fact that the State of New Hampshire only contributes 8% to education now and this brings us up to 33%. It certainly, in my mind, creates less havoc from an economic perspective. An economist yesterday was heard on public radio saying why don't we solve the problem with \$250 million and have a constitutional amendment and basically get the courts out next year. This proposal, I won't take anymore time. I appreciate the time you have given me. I hope you will, however, take the time to go through the materials and I think you will find it very interesting. It will be heard in the Senate. It is coming both through the House and the Senate. It will be heard in the Senate this Friday and it will be voted on in the House next Tuesday. I very, very much appreciate your time. I would obviously never sponsor a bill that would do anything but help education and certainly not anything that would ever hurt the City of Manchester. \$20 million is no small change considering the fact that there is no broad-based tax. Thank you very much, your Honor.

Mayor Wieczorek asked are there any questions from the Aldermanic Board.

Alderman Girard stated, Representative Vaillancourt, I have a few questions. This adequacy number has been kicked around. You said that there is a range between \$700 million and \$1 billion. There are per pupil totals. Do any of the plans, Representative, define adequacy as the State's minimum standards, unfunded mandates on the cities and towns or do they all just sort of randomly come up with a way of finding a number at which education magically becomes adequately funded.

Representative Vaillancourt replied we are in somewhat of a mess here. There was a bill filed by the Chairman of the House Finance Committee, Neil Kirk. He was a member of the Adequacy Commission that worked last fall and released its report prior to Christmas. The number the Commission came up with was \$630 million. He filed a bill that listed that as the adequacy number. However, yesterday he withdrew that bill, well he didn't withdraw it he asked that it be voted down and it was unanimous. Everybody voted it down because his idea is it should not be formed in a special bill but should be part of each individual bill as they come in. The Speaker's Bill pegs it at \$711 million which is up about \$80 million from the number that the Adequacy Commission noted. I will point out that the Adequacy Commission contained two Senators who have since changed their minds. Senator Gordon went along with it and now instead of \$630 million he is up to \$800 million. Senator Squires, instead of \$630 million, he is up to \$913 million but each bill now could fly on its own with its own adequacy number in it. We are not going to define it in those terms but there will be an attempt, whatever bill that comes out now will probably be a short-term attempt to fix it. There will probably be another commission looking into how that should be done long-term.

Alderman Girard stated correct me if I am wrong, Representative, Mr. Sapareto's Bill says that adequacy is defined by the State's minimum standards and seeks to fund those minimum

standards whereas the other bills seem to take a cross section of overall spending in the State. Is that an accurate understanding on my part?

Representative Vaillancourt replied well it gets very complicated. Sapareto's Bill, for example, has...I get into weightings and it becomes very difficult but just to explain it quickly, an elementary student is given a weighting of 1.0. A high school student 1.21. Sapareto actually gives an extra .4 weighting for the reduced school lunch program so his bill is very good to cities and towns like Manchester which have more students on the reduced school lunch program. So what you are saying is somewhat accurate, but there are other weightings involved.

Alderman Girard asked on the Below-Hager Bill, the income tax, would this income tax be applied to earned income only or would it be applied to interest and dividends income, or would it be applied to income from investment properties.

Representative Vaillancourt answered it is applied to all income, including interest and dividends. What this bill would do would be to repeal our current interest and dividends tax but it would then be rolled into your overall income stream, capital gains, everything and then of course it would, as I say, have a \$28,000 deduction for a family of four but it would be all income, not just earned income.

Alderman Girard asked is it similar to the federal income tax where you get to write-off the expenses associated say with income properties or is there any allowance there or is it just taxed strictly on the income and doesn't matter what your expenses are.

Representative Vaillancourt answered you are getting into a scenario which is a little more detailed than I am actually familiar with the mechanics of. One of the problems is the Finance Committee, for the past week, obviously controlled by Neil Kirk and the Republican majority, spent every day working on the Sytek Bill rewriting it several times. We really didn't get into the intricacies of all the other bills which is a major problem so I can't answer that.

Alderman Girard stated several of these plans propose hiking the cigarette tax. Do any of these plans take into account in their revenue projections a decrease in cigarette sales or are they using current sales and projecting the greater number.

Representative Vaillancourt replied Department of Revenue Administration Chief Stan Arnold appeared before the committee three weeks ago and projected that at this rate of increase, 25 cent cigarette tax increase, you probably, I can't say definitely, but you probably would not lose a great deal of sales. There obviously comes a point where you lose your advantage. Even with a 25 cent increase, I believe we would still be 12 cents less than Massachusetts. He is projecting that we will still have an advantage and sales will not decline. The last time there was a cigarette increase, the doomsayers in some of the towns along the border, you know the little stores in those towns said we are going to lose revenue. In fact, we did not lose revenue.

Whether we will at this time is a question that begs to be answered, but he is saying we won't lose much. That is probably true. He has been right in the past, but obviously we could. Mayor Wieczorek asked does anyone have any more questions on the Claremont case.

Representative Vaillancourt stated, Mayor, we do have some other representatives that have joined us and Senator Lou D'Allesandro is also in the audience now and he will be presenting a proposal a bit later. Representative Sandy Reeves from Ward 1 is here. Representative George LaPorte from Ward 3 is now with us and Representative Dean Ouellette from Ward 6.

Mayor Wieczorek asked does any Representative or Senator have anything that they would like to add to the Claremont lawsuit.

Senator D'Allesandro stated thank you your Honor and members of the Board. Very quickly, with reference to the Claremont lawsuit on the Senate side the Senate is now debating three pieces of legislation. One sponsored by Dr. Swires, one sponsored by Kelly McErley and myself and another sponsored by Senator Gordon. To define adequacy and to come up with a number that demonstrates the aggregate cost of an adequate education in New Hampshire, we had Ogdenblick and Meyers in for the last two days. They have done the extensive work for the last 10 to 15 years in NH on a formula for redistribution of funds to the communities. That bill is being debated. We heard it yesterday. We heard it today. We will exec on it tomorrow and it will be out on Thursday. The Senate at that point in time defined a) adequacy and b) the cost of adequacy as it relates to the State of NH. That is an ongoing process. That is a Senate bill that is being done and the numbers, as Representative Vaillancourt pointed out, range between \$850 million to \$1 billion. Currently, we spend \$1.4 billion on education in the State of New Hampshire. That is the current spending level. None of these pieces of legislation reach that number at this point, but that is where it stands at this point in time. There is a definition of adequacy that was contained last year in HB1075 where adequacy is defined, adequacy was accepted by the Senate and the House so there are parameters in place that ascertain what an adequate education is at this time. This morning, we had the Superintendent of Schools in Manchester at the Senate Education Committee to talk about the Manchester situation and what goes into the basic cost of an adequate education in the City and remember the City is a little different because the demographic has changed quite dramatically in Manchester. We have English as a Second Language which plays a prevalent role in our education process. We have 1,000 students receiving English as a Second Language instruction in Manchester and if we use, as Representative Vaillancourt pointed out, the weighting system, the number of free meals served in the City of Manchester is quite high. That represents a socio-economic situation that puts us lower on the ladder and as a result of that, the cost of education is increased to some extent. So all of those factors are being looked at as we speak. I am sorry to say that other pieces of legislation have not come forth as quickly as they should in the Senate. We haven't had hearings on many other pieces of legislation and yet there are a number of things hanging out there. One of those is the retirement legislation for the City of Manchester that is being co-sponsored by myself, Senator King and Senator Blaisdell. Very quickly, in 1973 the City of

Manchester was given the right to have its own retirement system. Since 1973, four referendums have been passed by the City of Manchester that have adjusted the retirement plan. It was found by a court decision that these referendum questions aren't legal unless you go back to the State and get permission to have these referendums. The piece of legislation that I am sponsoring will retroactively clarify all of the referendums that have taken place in the City of Manchester. That piece of legislation is still in the drafting stage. We tried to get that on the fast track, but because of complications it hasn't happened. It should be coming out shortly. I have had conversations with the Mayor, with Kevin Clougherty, with the City Solicitor and with members of the Retirement System about this piece of legislation. When it is ready, I will let everyone know and give everyone an ample opportunity to testify. I appreciate the opportunity to talk with you. If you have any questions, I will be more than happy to answer them.

Alderman Girard asked, Senator D'Allesandro, you mentioned that in the House and in the Senate there have been parameters of adequacy defined. I guess my question is, the State of New Hampshire has State minimum standards in education. They are the State's way of telling the cities and towns what they have to have in their schools and it is my opinion anyway that it is those unfunded mandates on the cities and towns that are perhaps a good chunk of the cause of the funding problem here. Why hasn't anybody stepped forward to say the State's already mandated minimum standards are, in fact, to define adequacy. I guess I don't understand why the definition of adequacy is so elusive when the State has already issued minimum standards and imposed them on cities and towns.

Senator D'Allesandro replied the answer to that is the adequacy definition came about as a result of the most recent Supreme Court decision as it related to Claremont II. We have had minimum standards for a long time and those minimum standards have been upgraded. Actually, by having the minimum standards it gave us a much better opportunity to define adequacy and to put us ahead of other states that have gone through the same situation but without the minimum standards. They really didn't have a baseline to start from so the minimum standards gave us an opportunity to have a base. The adequacy definition came about as a result of the Claremont II decision. Those things are in place and moving at this time. The State has never fully funded its obligation. There is no question about that. The Ogdenblick formula that was put in place in the 1980's, had it been fully funded, we wouldn't be here. We would have met the definition and there would have been no problem. It is really the inability of the State to fund the formula that has put us in the position we are in now.

Alderman Girard asked, Senator or Representative Vaillancourt, whoever is best to answer this question, do any of these bills that are pending in either body have a Constitutional amendment that will remove the court from being able to define or be the arbiter of adequacy. The reason why I ask that question is it seems to me that no matter what plan you come up with, whatever funding level and whatever the definition of adequacy, it seems to me that the Supreme Court is still going to be able to step in and say no we don't agree that that level of funding of adequacy

is appropriate and I think at that point they are usurping the role of the legislative and executive branches.

Representative Vaillancourt stated the answer to your question is that there have been several Constitutional amendments proposed and I believe there are some that haven't been totally thrown out by Finance, but we have acted on several Constitutional amendments. However, it would not be part of any one of these bills because a Constitutional amendment has a different procedure. For example, it has to pass both the House and the Senate by a 60% vote so it would have to be a separate vehicle from these bills. There have been and there will be more proposed, but it is not an urgent matter such as meeting this April 1 deadline because we could not vote on a Constitutional amendment until the next election in November 2000. So Finance has decided that is not the thing that we should put on our plate immediately. We have put off looking at those until the pressure of this April 1 deadline is off, but they will get their attention in due course.

Alderman Girard asked, Senator D'Allesandro, you mentioned the English as a Second Language program in the City of Manchester. Part of the reason we have the ESL issue we have in the City is because the State relocates 90% of the immigrants brought into New Hampshire via the International Center. About 90% of those immigrants are relocated by the State and this organization within the City of Manchester. Are there any other funds available in the State of New Hampshire to help offset this impact because clearly it is an impact being caused by powers well beyond the City and we are left holding the bag as usual.

Senator D'Allesandro answered that is a good question. Now in prior times the impact of different immigrants was mitigated to some extent by Federal funds. If you remember after the Vietnam War, we had a situation where immigrants were relocated and we did get funds from the Federal government. Superintendent Tanguay has now materials that he is putting together and is applying for a grant from the Federal government to help mitigate the costs of the immigrants that are coming into this City. So we are working diligently to try to find Federal funds to offset the costs.

Alderman O'Neil replied the State Office, the Governor's Office of Energy and Community Services does have an Immigration Office, does it not and I know there are funds that support that office that are given to various areas of the State to help offset the impact. I forget the gentleman's name, but is there any assistance there perhaps?

Senator D'Allesandro responded I am not aware that assistance is available. The only thing I am aware of is that we had a member of the State Board of Education at one of our School Board meetings. We asked about the economic impact of immigrants and how we could mitigate that to some extent. We asked for help from the State. The Superintendent has found one grant proposal and we are trying to work on that. I think it is incumbent upon us to ask our Congressional delegation because the Federal government, through INS, allows people to come

in and then they relocate in an urban area because the amenities are available in an urban area. That has been the history of this country. Whenever you have a vast inward migration, people gravitate to an urban area where the services are located and where people can feel comfortable in an environment when they are not isolated from people like themselves. So it is a situation that has occurred over and over again. At this point in time, you know that we are speaking 50 different languages at Manchester Central and everywhere else so we are doing everything we can to solicit funds, but our Congressional delegation is really where this begins in light of the fact that people can't come here without the permission of our Federal government so it creates an economic responsibility for this community and that should be taken care of to some extent by Federal funds. We are working on that at the present time, the Superintendent is doing that and certainly we commend him for that. We hope we can do our best to get funds to offset the costs.

Mayor Wieczorek noted the gentleman's name is Mr. McNeil who is with the Governor's Office and we have spoken and we were getting about 90% of the refugees that were here, but in the last group that came they dispersed them a little more so that our percentage has gone down by 20 or 30 points. Some have even gone to Claremont if you can imagine.

Alderman Girard stated but, your Honor, if I may make a brief statement. I don't want those questions to be interpreted in any way as anti-immigrant. My own father is a naturalized American but it seems to me that if the State is going to settle and the reasons that Senator D'Allesandro brought up are entirely valid but if it is going to settle the population within the City of Manchester or anywhere else, it ought to provide some assistance to the cities and towns to take care of the need that that settlement creates. I think the same holds true for the minimum standards in education. If the State comes up with all of these great ideas, they should pay for them.

Mayor Wieczorek replied I think we can even extend that level of government up to the Feds because special education is one of things that is creating the biggest problem here and they have never, never stood behind their agreements that they made. So there is an awful lot that has to be done and we have been in touch with our Congressional delegation and talking about special education and you know they are talking about bringing the percentage up so it is going to be a little bit higher, but part of the problem is the eligibility. So these are some of the problems that they have to really deal with. I mean they have opened it up so that it makes is very, very difficult to try to decline somebody and it gets to be very expensive and now people think that everybody has an individual education plan that would like one. So there is an awful lot of work that has to be done, but even though I see a lot of problems that we have here with education, I think it also presents us with an opportunity to try to deal with some of these things and hopefully that will be the result, that out of all of this will come something that is going to be a lot better.

Alderman Shea stated being the devil's advocate, assuming April 1 comes and nothing happens, what happens.

Representative Vaillancourt replied I did want to talk about the political process and that is a good opportunity to do that. Every revenue bill in the NH Legislature must originate in the House so that is why all of these bills have come to the House and the House Finance Committee. I have tried to give you the bare bones of what these bills contain. I think it is fair to say and I think Lou will agree with me on this, that by the time we are done none of these bills are going to be in the form they are now as the solution. After the House passes a bill next Thursday or passes several bills, they will go over to the Senate. They will come up with their solution then if the two sides aren't exactly in sync which they certainly will not be, there is what is called a Committee of Conference, five Senators and five members of the House who will get together and iron it out. That is where the rubber hits the road, sort to speak. That is where you have to sit down and compromise. You give me this, I will give you this. It is good, old-fashioned horse trading and it is going to be one of the high stakes poker games of all times as Representative Peter Burling likes to say. I would like to think that we are responsible enough to realize that none of us are going to get everything we want and that when this Committee of Conference reaches its decision and it does have to be by unanimous decision of their 10 conferees, it will come back to the House, it will come back to the Senate and we will agree on it then but nobody will get everything they want. Is it definitely going to happen that way? Nobody is guaranteed everything in life, but I see it happening that way.

Senator D'Allesandro stated I think there is an incredible danger if something isn't done at the appropriate time. As you know, we are mandated to let our staff know whether or not they are to be rehired by a certain date. I think it is the 15th of April. We have 1,000 employees in our system so it is an ominous responsibility and I believe something will be done but on the downside, chaos. I mean it could turn into a chaotic situation. There is absolutely no question about that.

Mayor Wiczorek stated we can all conclude after listening tonight to the presentations that have been made regarding a lot of these bills that the City of Manchester is going to be somewhere between all right and excellent and I am not exactly sure where that is going to be.

Representative Vaillancourt replied the higher the adequacy number is, the better off the City of Manchester will make out and there might be a tendency to say well lets keep the adequacy number low and that way it is easier to fund at the State level, but as a so-called receiver community or property poor town, the higher we get up, the closer we get to reality of what it costs to fund per student, the better Manchester will make out. Am I correct there?

Senator D'Allesandro stated I think that is absolutely correct. Under any scenario that is currently before the House and Senate, Manchester is a big winner in every scenario.

Mayor Wieczorek asked are you saying then if we go to Portsmouth we are going to have to wear a mask or something.

Senator D'Allesandro answered I am saying that if you go to Portsmouth, you better watch out.

Representative Vaillancourt stated one of my very good friends on the Finance Committee turned 80 years old yesterday. Portsmouth would be hit very hard by any kind of state-wide property tax. The higher the level, the harder they are hit because money from them is going to come back to us as it should.

Representative Garrish stated I want to add to some information that Representative Vaillancourt provided to you and I think he provided an excellent packet, but as a legislator and also as a member of a coalition of organizations called Citizens for Fair Education Taxation which is made up of legislators, it is made up of numerous organizations. This group has done a lot of work to develop a system of reality checks in order to evaluate the various bills that Steve has outlined for you. It is kind of like when you look at all the bills, it is kind of like comparing apples, oranges, bananas and maybe some melons and it is very difficult to view them if you view each one of them from a different perspective. So what we tried to do is develop a set of reality checks of which you have some of the scoring. There are at least four that have thus far been scored according to these reality checks. I don't think you got provided the outline of what those reality checks really mean and I would be more than glad to provide that for you. The first three are the most essential and I want to make at least one notation on one of the bills scored is that those first three reality checks are the most essential and Constitutional and the Below-Hager, according to Citizens for Fair Education Taxation, did pass muster on the fact, on proportional equal tax rate. The second was does it raise enough revenue and the third does it have enough detail in order to be implemented, particularly not just on the short-term, but on the long-term. The next ones were regarding fairness and that was regarding fairness to the individual taxpayer and fairness to the community as a whole. The last three were reality checks on adequacy. Now some of the bills couldn't be rated totally on adequacy because they really didn't cost out or make a real definition as to how they costed that out, but this system does provide you with an opportunity to look at the, at least front runner bills, and compare them based on one framework. It is a framework that was designed particularly for legislators and is in the process of being shared with all legislators at this point in time but it would certainly make your point of reference easier for you to evaluate them. Also, Citizens for Tax Justice, which is a national organization that has done a lot of stack studies nationally and in New Hampshire is about to release New Hampshire information to provide a picture of tax systems and what part of the income flow, in terms of low income, middle, high and so forth or how property taxes, how income taxes and sales taxes impacted them. I think it is really significant to note that the middle and low income people, of which Manchester has a significant body, are most impacted by sales tax and property taxes so it also helps provide some reality. The last thing I would like to be able to provide for you and I won't go through it now, but the what if. What if by April 1 we don't have a decision? Well I am actually very hopeful and so is Citizens

for Fair Education Taxation, that we will have a fair solution. We have some really good framework on the floor now from which we can come to one plan that will resolve the funding problem and hopefully to the benefit of Manchester. We did do a recent press conference as we have been updating people as to the progress of this coalition, not to endorse one particular plan but to simply provide a framework for reference but we did do what happens if by April 1 we don't have a decision. There are numerous significant impacts that we were all able to come up with that I won't go into now. Senator D'Allesandro listed some of them, but there are numerous. I am very confident that we have the capacity to make that decision. I will make an effort to have that information that I just referenced copied for you.

Mayor Wieczorek replied from what you said it sounded like we are getting the whole basket of fruit.

Representative Vaillancourt stated Mr. Mayor I tried to pick out some pertinent things to copy and give you. If I were to copy everything that I have seen that I think you would be interested in, you would be reading for weeks and weeks. I tried to give you a sample, including the next four pages which are from the NH Center for Public Policy and I think if you like this kind of material I can get it to you, but there is only so much you can take.

Mayor Wieczorek replied that is right, we don't want information overload here. We just want to make sure that the City is going to be protected and taken care of. I want to thank everybody very much on this particular issue. Lets move on to the next one. I know that Senator Krueger has to go and the Senate Pension Bill that we want to talk about, I would like to at least get your input Senator before I have Kevin and Bob Stanton talk about it.

Senator Krueger stated I did introduce this bill, but I feel a necessity to answer the question that was posed by Alderman Girard. First of all, I just wanted you to know that I have personally introduced a Constitutional amendment which will be acted on in the Senate first to remove the course. Not so much to remove the course, but to restore educational funding back to duly elected representatives. You can sleep tonight knowing that that is going to happen, I hope. The next thing I wanted to mention for your benefit was that tomorrow the Senate will act on a resolution that will demand that the Federal government fully fund, this is pie in the sky but it is a hope, will fully fund special education costs and the last thing I wanted to say before I tell you about the bill I introduced relative to your bonds was pretty much if you do read that policy study that Representative Vaillancourt has made reference to you will find very, very quickly that issues that affect quality of education, educational outcomes, cost of education basically are undefinable and it is just about impossible, I believe, to put a price tag on it so that is why you will notice in my proposal there is none because there never will be a cost that will satisfy the courts, never. Now to get on with what I did, Senate Bill 81 I introduced at the request of the Mayor's Office and the Aldermanic Board which would, until the day that we can all look at home rule very happily and not have to go and ask permission of the State to be able float funds, I was able to put forth the legislation to this point and I want to say that Representative s, cost of

education basically are undefinable and it is just about impossible, I believe, to put a price tag on it so that is why you will notice in my proposal there is none because there never will be a cost that will satisfy the courts, never. Now to get on with what I did, Senate Bill 81 I introduced at the request of the Mayor's Office and the Aldermanic Board which would, until the day that we can all look at home rule very happily and not have to go and ask permission of the State to be able float funds, I was able to put forth the legislation to this point and I want to say since Representative Sandra Reeves is here, she is a co-signer and because it was filed not late, it was filed on time, but because there were so many bills coming in late out of Legislative Services, I am proud to say many of the representatives that are in the room right now are excited about the support of this. This act would permit the City of Manchester to issue bonds to finance unfunded liability of the City's employee pension system. The City of Manchester can issue these bonds again to finance unfunded liability of the City's Employee Pension System. I certainly have read the materials that were presented to me very kindly by your Finance Officer and I was totally convinced, after meeting with him and with the Mayor's Office and looking at the numbers and checking the numbers against history that the City of Manchester would, in fact, save a great deal of money if this approach were used. I, of course, am always hopeful that cities and towns will decide to save taxpayers money. This to me was a very sound approach. If you have any questions, I would be glad to answer them but I probably would defer detail questions to Mr. Clougherty.

Mayor Wieczorek asked Kevin Clougherty, the Finance Officer, to talk about the pension bill. We have already had some conversation on it from Senator D'Allesandro and Senator Krueger, but Kevin maybe you can get this set so that everyone will understand what it is and why we are doing it.

Mr. Clougherty stated we have two pension bills that have been introduced in the Senate. To understand what those are aimed at, you really have to appreciate that the City has two pension systems. If you were a City employee prior to about 1974, you were required to be a member of what is called the old pension system. You worked for 20 years and regardless of your age you could retire half pay. The down side of that program was that there is no cost of living adjustment so if somebody retired in 1970 and was earning \$40,000, they retired with a \$20,000 pension and today all they get is \$20,000. Because of the change it stays the same. There is no present value increase and no cost of living increase. Similarly, if you were under that system, there were no survivor or beneficiary benefits for spouses so if somebody worked for 20 years, retired at half pay and died the next day, their spouse or their children would get nothing. As a result of that system, the City introduced a second system which was a contributory retirement system whereby the employees would contribute, along with the City, towards the development of a fund to provide funding for the pension for our employees. That system, since 1974, has undergone several changes by referendum primarily the benefits that go to the individual member that has a cost of living provision, as well as an ability to provide for beneficiaries. The new system, as Senator D'Allesandro said and the bill that Senator D'Allesandro is introducing is of particularly urgency for us. The City's contributory retirement system has been amended

several times over the years and as a result of a recent Supreme Court decision there is some question as to the validity of those referendums so what happens is if we were to be challenged on any of those, we may have to go back and unravel a lot of those benefits to those people that have been granted over the last 20 years. It would have an impact on the City's fiscal position, as well as to the people that have been receiving those benefits and that hope to receive them going into the future so what we are asking in Senator D'Allesandro's bill is that the changes that have been made over the past several years since inception to the new system get ratified by the legislature and can be carried forward. The bill, as I understand it, that is being introduced is simply the wording of the referendum. There is no attempt to change anything or make anything different. It is simply to take those changes that the Board of Mayor and Aldermen and the people of the City have overwhelmingly voted on in these referendums and just ratify that so that they become legitimate going forward. There is no attempt...like any pension system the new one is something that has its pluses and minuses and we could probably do some tinkering and improve it, but at this point in time we are not trying to complicate things, we are just trying to get the amendments that have been introduced ratified going forward and that, simply stated, is what Senator D'Allesandro's bill does. The bill affecting the old system is that unlike the new system where we have been able to build an \$85 million fund to take care of the liability pensions for our people going forward, the way that the City dealt with its old people is with its old appropriation. So even though you had money appropriated on an annual basis to deal with the outstanding retirement and anticipated retirements of that year, you still had to on a Generally Accepted Accounting Principles basis, account for what the potential liabilities are and accrue that on your balance sheet. So it has about a \$25 million impact on our financial statement. Now, across the country in New Jersey and in New York and California and most recently in Massachusetts and the City of Worcester was the most recent town that I am aware of to do this, what they do is go out and borrow, if they had a \$25 million liability, they would have to borrow less than that, they would have to borrow \$20 million because they are going to be investing it over time and the amount of the bonds that they are paying on an annual principal level is less than what you would be paying for the annual appropriation to cover all the benefits directly. The City has seen this happen in other states. It is the product of having the right market. It is not something you want to do when interest rates are high. We see the legislation that Senator Krueger has introduced as legislation that would allow us the ability to consider issuing pension bonds if the market was right and if the math worked out and moved forward on that regard. So Senator Krueger's bill is less urgent. It is more of an enabling type of legislation that the City, once the Board of Aldermen agree that this is something we should again approach the Legislature and have in our quiver so that if we feel it is something we want to do we can move forward with it. So the two differences in my mind are that Senator D'Allesandro's bill has got some urgency to it. It is important that we get this thing ratified and we get the changes that have been made approved. Senator Krueger's bill is something that other cities and towns have done that we would like to have the ability to do, but it is not as urgent as Senator D'Allesandro's bill.

Mayor Wieczorek asked does anyone have any questions.

Alderman Shea asked, Kevin, the \$30 million bonding, would that be used strictly for one purpose or would that be used for a multitude of purposes.

Mr. Clougherty answered the proceeds would go into a trust fund and be invested and they would only be used to pay the pension benefits for the old system. It could not be used for anything else and under IRS requirement it would have to be put in that type of thing.

Mayor Wieczorek stated currently in our financial statement it is just an unfunded liability that has been there for years and years and this is designed to try to clear that up. Anybody have any more questions? If not, we will move onto the next item which is the Home Rule Bill. You have heard a lot of conversation already about Home Rule and how important it would be to the communities. I have been up to Concord now I think on a few occasions testifying for Home Rule because it certainly would be of enormous benefit to the City of Manchester and I think to all communities. As a matter of fact, last year it passed in the House and I believe it passed by a very substantial margin but it died in the Senate. I think it is too bad that it did because it would be a big benefit to everybody. This year, my understanding is that...and the Governor last year would have signed the bill if it passed and she will sign it this year if it passes so it is my hope that it does pass. Currently, for the City of Manchester to do anything we have to go to the State to get permission. The legislators would probably have 1/3 fewer bills if you didn't have to worry about dealing with issues that come up for all of the communities, the cities and towns but every time we want to do something we have to go up there to get their permission. If the Home Rule Bill passed, then it would enable the communities to do anything that it wanted to do that its elected officials wanted to do with the exception of anything that is prohibited by the State so that is really where the basic difference is. I think it is a very important bill. The Municipal Association is certainly very, very supportive of it and we support it very strongly. We think it will be good for everybody and hopefully it will pass this year. You have a bill up there, it is House Bill 468 and it is sponsored by Representative Stone from Rockingham I guess is the lead sponsor and Senator D'Allesandro is on that bill too. Then we have the Constitutional Amendment, CACR6 and that one is sponsored by Representative Brown and Senator Roberge is on that bill. That, of course, would have to wait until the next State election which would be in the year 2000 as Representative Vaillancourt stated on the previous constitutional amendment that if it passes it would then be on the ballot. So this would be on the ballot too. So it would be my hope that all of you that are going to be voting on this bill when it gets there is that you will be supportive of it because I think it is going to free you up considerably. If you only had 700 or 800 bills instead of 1,100 or 1,200 I think it would make it a lot easier for everybody and maybe you would get home a little bit earlier.

Representative Vaillancourt asked I assume that bill will be going to Municipal and County Government.

Mayor Wieczorek answered that is where it is going.

Representative Vaillancourt stated Tony Simon, I believe is our representative from Manchester on Municipal and County Government.

Mayor Wieczorek replied very good, then we do have somebody on that committee. Does anybody have any questions? If not, we will move on to bills from various House committees.

Representative Vaillancourt stated well I just thought I would put this on the agenda if any Representative from any of the 18 or 19 committees had any bill that you thought would be of specific concern to the City of Manchester. I am not sure if all of the bills are before all of your committees yet but does anybody have any bill that would be of particular concern to Manchester?

Representative Leonard stated I put in a bill to recognize two kids from each district in the State that does civic affairs for the towns and cities that works with the teachers, respects the teachers, respects our law enforcement and respects the disabled which I personally would give out a certificate to each one of them from each district and if the bill gets passed, that day which will be Martin Luther King Day, each district will send one kid up to the State House and be recognized in front of the Legislature. It already went to the committee and the people on that committee all like it, including the Republicans on that committee. Some of them said we recognize sports, math and all that and this way lets recognize someone that is doing the community good by helping the disabled and helping the community at the same time by respecting law enforcement.

Representative Simon stated I have a question to the Board of Mayor and Aldermen and to Mr. Clougherty. In Municipal and County we have before us a couple of bills that deal with tax increment financing which has been a very effective redevelopment tool. Concord and Keene have used it particularly. Does the City have any interest in tax increment financing? Is there any proposal to use that vehicle in any of our redevelopment projects?

Mr. Clougherty replied we do have interest in tax increment financing. That statute has been on the books for awhile and my understanding is that the bills that are there are to improve what we have already had as a foundation. The City of Manchester has not done tax increment financing where some others have. The reason why we have not done tax increment financing is because those cities in other states that have gone through a similar situation with their property tax base being in question because of their school funding situations have found that that can be a very disruptive mechanism until that is taken care of. For example, if you were to go out and set-up a tax increment district and promote a particular rate on which you are pledging a particular amount of tax increase and that rate were to change because you are no longer doing property taxes you are doing a combination of taxes or you are doing a state-wide property tax on an equalized number of changes, that has an impact in the market because you have already signed on to a particular number and you have to go back and change all of those documents, all of that

information. You have to go back to your investors, you have to go back to the bond holders and that has been a problem with that mechanism in other states. We like, for the most part, the attention that is being given to tax increment financing. We think that the Legislature should look seriously at those bills because in the future we expect that the Legislature is going to take care of the Claremont funding problem and in another year we will know what our rates are going to be, our property tax rates locally are going to be, and we will be in a position to take advantage of tax increment financing. We are looking at tax increment financing in particular for a couple of projects. Primarily those along the Millyard that involve parking and the riverfront so if you would like to sit down and get a couple of minutes on the particulars of the bill, we would be happy to do that. We have forwarded the particular legislation to our financial advisors and our Bond Council because we want to make sure that at the end of the day these bills are something that we, in the City, can use and we will be happy to share the responses that we get from them on those bills.

Representative Simons asked is that a yes or no on the bills. Do you have a specific position on the bills that are pending?

Mr. Clougherty answered right now, we are generally in favor of them but until we get the responses back from our consultants, we are not prepared to come up and say an unqualified yes. What we would like to be able to do is go up and say yes we support them and have some specific recommendations if necessary to improve them further. So we are in the process of analyzing those bills currently.

Representative Simon stated the train has left the station. They are in the process for this year so if that is something that you are interested in doing this year, it should be done fairly quickly.

Mr. Clougherty replied we understand that and we are, as I said, we are monitoring the process of those bills and we expect to go up and testify and have all of that information available for the committee.

Mayor Wieczorek asked does any other member of the Legislature have anything to say about anything that is in your committee that you think would be impacting on the City of Manchester. Any department head concerns? I know we have some department heads here.

Mr. Rusczek stated one concern that I do have is that as we talk about school funding issues, one of the pots of money that we are looking at is the tobacco settlement money and I sit in the public health seat in Manchester where the statistics show that 1/3 of our youth is smoking. That the trend is going up, particularly for young girls and I am wondering if perhaps a reasonable amount of that money could be set aside to address some of those youth development issues and tobacco prevention issues here at the local level and perhaps to support some other local public health efforts that would help strengthen our community.

Representative Vaillancourt replied we have been talking a lot about that in Finance in the spat week, especially in light of the Sytek proposal. When the amendment that Donna Sytek came in with last week was first put before us. It took all of the \$42 million that New Hampshire was supposed to get from the tobacco settlement and put it into the education funding. Now over the past weekend, there was an amendment to the amendment and it withdrew that \$42 million and put it back in the general fund but the problem right now is that we may not be getting that \$42 million and I believe the reason that Donna and her Chairman of Finance, Neil Kirk, took the money out that she originally planned to put into Claremont was because of the uncertainty of getting this money. There is every intention, if the Sytek plan is passed, to use all of the tobacco money available from the cigarette tax and from the settlement to make up for Claremont related things. There is every intention that the budget is going to be very, very lean and mean and it is going to have to be cut in a lot of areas that we won't be able to do these things. That is one of the problems with the Sytek proposal and again I don't mean to speak in favor of or against it, but that is a problem. There is a lot of new revenue in some of these other proposals, but in the Sytek proposal it is not there.

Representative Buckley stated the reason that the Speaker took the money out is last Thursday I, along with several other legislators from New Hampshire, were part of a meeting at the White House with Secretary Shalalah talking about the tobacco settlement money. It is not a given that the money is going to be coming any time soon. The Federal Government, as the President announced in his State of the Union address, is going to expect that the Federal Government gets its fair share in their opinion and Secretary Shalalah is very strong about that so we really need to take those potential millions off of the table for the current time period because we are a long way from actually receiving a check. Although I think that most people concerned in the tobacco awareness programs that we need to fund those at a greater degree, we can't really look at the tobacco settlement monies to do that this year. Hopefully, if we do have one of these plans passed without all of the additional cigarette tax, I know that as the prime sponsor of the cigarette tax increase, I know that there are suggestions that we use 1% of that for tobacco awareness programs and to help other programs as well. So that is certainly in the mix but we are at least two months away before we make a decision on that.

Representative Vaillancourt stated the two proposals that do not touch the cigarette tax money are the Saperato proposal and the Below-Hager proposal. They would leave all of the cigarette tax money in the general fund for use and I might also mention that the Peterson proposal while I am on that briefly for that consumption tax, it taxes drugs as well and Peterson has talked to me and said that if you take the drugs out of the taxation formula that he has put in, that his state-wide property tax would probably have to go up twenty to forty cents. But that is another health concern I'm sure.

Senator D'Allesandro stated in reference to the tobacco settlement money, there is opposition in the Senate to using that for anything but health concerns and I think that opposition will prevail.

Mayor Wieczorek asked does any other department head have any concerns that they would like to express to the Legislators.

Alderman Girard stated can I ask Mr. Rusczek a question. Immigration in the City has an impact on you also. Your department is responsible for doing all the TB testing, among other things. Does the State of NH or does the International Center provide you with any funding to handle those tests or is that all falling on the property tax payer in Manchester?

Mr. Rusczek replied the majority of the costs do fall upon local property tax payers. We do get some CDC money funneled through the Department of Health and Human Services that picks up part of the cost related to TB control activities. There is a new person up at the State Office under the Governor's Office to replace Ed McNeil. We have had some dialogue with that individual in the past couple of months and we are hopeful that a solution will be found to fund not just the public health activities, but some of the other health care needs in the community that don't relate to City costs. For example, the additional costs to provide the appropriate services for refugees will be settled in Manchester through the Community Health Center or Child Health Services or other providers.

Alderman Girard asked so you are currently working to try to get more money from the State to handle that demand.

Mr. Rusczek answered and frankly we are hoping that some of that tobacco settlement money will help shore up some other public health programs that might assist in this area as well and we are aware of a bill being submitted by Senator Squires that may help do so.

Mr. Clougherty stated I just wanted to go back to something that Representative Vaillancourt said about disruption and how that is something important and I would ask the delegation, as they are deliberating on Claremont to take heed to what he is saying. We have been meeting with the finance officers from the other cities, as well as with the Department of Revenue Administration, the State Treasurer, the Attorney General's Office and people from the School Board Association and once you get beyond April 1, there really are some very, very serious problems for the cities and the towns and we have been trying to itemize those, bring them up through the public policy group at the University through Doug Hall's group and in a constructive and non-alarmist way try to point out some of the things that can happen but I would ask the delegation to pay serious attention to those things because it really can raise havoc with the City of Manchester. If you come up with a solution after April 1 or that approaches June, it puts problems on the Board of Aldermen and the Mayor in the development of this year's budget and in taking a look at how things are going to be financed and having to deal with terms that we haven't had to deal with in the past in terms of how we will finance education so the sooner that we know where the money is going to come from from the schools, the less disruption we are going to have here and if there is anything that my office or that the City can provide you, if you have any questions as to whether someone is telling you that this is

something that might happen or not, we will be happy to field a phone call and give you an honest answer because it is very important to us that this get resolved and get resolved soon in the least disruptive fashion so the City can function without having to increase its budgets or divert dollars in the budget process that we may or may not use and have to have for contingency purposes that could otherwise be programmed into things like health or education so we appreciate what you are going through. We know it is not easy and if there is anything my office can do, please call.

Representative Vaillancourt stated I would like to ask the Aldermen, yourself and anybody else that if you have had a chance to look over these four proposals and I don't mean to slight the Krueger-Brown proposal, but the four that I have put on the sheet, that if there is anything that you would favor among these four, if there are any ideas that you have heard from constituents, I can't say we are going to follow what you tell us, especially if you tell us four different things, but I would like to have some input when you look at the pluses and minuses, which way you would like to see us go.

Mayor Wieczorek replied I don't think we would want to follow what they tell us. I don't know what you are hearing, but whenever you talk about anything that is going to bring in a tax increase then obviously you know that people are very upset about that.

Representative Williams stated I just wanted to, one of the things that I was concerned about, occasionally something comes before a committee that I am on and it may affect the City at some point. I am on, for instance, Resource Recreation Development so we have like Lake Massabesic, we have water quality, and I just wanted to let the Board and the Mayor know that if you ever feel that there is a bill before my committee, feel free to call me and let me know how you think I can support the City and maybe I will vote your way. No, I am just kidding, I will support you.

Mayor Wieczorek stated we are now going to talk about the process of how we are going to meet in the future. You know last year we were meeting at 8 AM on Monday mornings and we would have whatever legislators were available and the department heads that had concerned. We always hoped that we would be able to have an exchange that would be helpful and beneficial for things that have to be done for the City of Manchester. So Representative Vaillancourt, since you are the Chair of the delegation, how would you like to proceed?

Representative Vaillancourt replied I don't think there is a need to meet every week. I think that if there is a concern, then maybe we should meet on a less frequent basis and I am not sure how other people feel but a lot of people are working in the morning and Monday mornings is basically the most open time for Representatives since we don't usually have committee meetings, but I would be welcome to suggestions. I am not sure we need to meet every week. I think a forum like this maybe two or three times a year would be good.

Mayor Wieczorek stated I know that now while the focus really is on Claremont, there are not a lot of other things going on or it is going on minimally, but early in the session I know that there is a little time and you don't have to probably meet as frequently, but once we get closer to the end, things begin to intensify and the activity level picks up and that is when I think you really have to get together so that we can express our various viewpoints.

Representative Garrish stated well it seems to me that most of the committees are hearing, the House committees are hearing bills right now, non-Claremont bills as well as Claremont bills in Finance and Education, we are going to be more inundated after we send our Claremont bills to the Senate, after next week. I sit on Commerce, for example, where we will deal with banking, insurance, consumer, business and industry and other issues that would be very much of concern to the City of Manchester but I know that we are going to get much busier with health care bills and other things after the House sends things out so it might be beneficial to look at that timing and insure that we do meet when we start to hear more bills. The other thing is it might be helpful or would it be helpful for you all to know what committees we all sit on?

Representative Vaillancourt stated I have a sheet that I handed out that lists everybody alphabetically and by ward with the home addresses, phone numbers and committees and I have a couple of hundred copies that I have given to your clerk.

Mayor Wieczorek replied everybody has those and that will be very helpful.

Alderman Girard asked is your office still tracking legislation as it had done in the past.

Mayor Wieczorek answered yes.

Alderman Girard stated perhaps it would be helpful to the legislators and to the Board to understand what your office does in tracking legislation for the City.

Mayor Wieczorek replied well we try to keep the department heads informed as to what is happening, but usually through their associations they have a pretty good idea of what is happening and if there is anything that we can do, we always try to notify them that there is a bill that is coming up and we want to make sure that we have the City's position on that straight so that when we get up there to testify we are going to be testifying on how it is going to be beneficial to the City.

Alderman Girard asked so you are still informing the departments.

Mayor Wieczorek answered we are still doing it just like when you were here.

Alderman Girard replied well, your Honor, I don't think everyone here is privy to what your office does in doing that which is why I asked the question. I know what happened and I know

what used to happen there. I am sure you know it still does. The point of the question was for you to share that with everybody else. The point is that you still notify departments of bills.

Mr. Thomas stated right now the City departments are tracking around 337 bills and, of course, the great majority of them that they are looking at right now is anything to do with Claremont. Of course, you know that there is a stacking up front of certain bills by departments and the Mayor's Office, Finance and the Solicitor's Office regarding Claremont, but I am seeing that a lot of departments are asking for bills and we haven't even seen the copies come in yet. I know that Senator D'Allesandro's bill on the pension system hasn't even been printed yet and you were lucky enough to get Senator Krueger's bill today which was printed, but we generally work with departments, send them copies of bills, ask for their input back and if there are points of concern we deliberate with them and if we feel that it is an issue that we need a policy decision from the Board, we bring it to the Board right away for a vote.

Alderman Girard asked generally they are administrative matters.

Mr. Thomas answered yes.

Mayor Wieczorek stated then if we have anything that we need to get to you, we always put it in your mailbox in Concord or we certainly feel free to contact the Chair of the delegation so that we can let you know what it is we are interested in and then you will get the word to the delegation.

Alderman Shea stated I just want to compliment Steven Vaillancourt on the preparation for tonight's meeting. I think it was very helpful and very informative and all the other people who participated.

Mayor Wieczorek asked, Representative Vaillancourt, if there anything else you would like to say before we adjourn.

Representative Vaillancourt stated I just wish us all God speed as we try to get this Claremont thing in before April 1. I am confident that we will do it, although every day I become a little less confident. As I said, I think it is going to take some compromise and I would appreciate anybody's input. I am not sure we are all going to agree, but we have got to do it one way or the other and just, again, remember that for every gain there is some loss. You can't do this without some kind of new tax. Even the Speaker's proposal has a new tax in that it is a state-wide property tax at a low level. It is very, very difficult but I think we will get through it and then we will get onto other things. Just to comment on Sean's comments, we are a little bit behind in printing. As you know, there is usually a roster of all 400 State Representatives. That hasn't even come out yet so this is an unusual year in that some things are behind schedule and I am not sure if we are going to get caught up quickly, but people are up there working on a regular

basis to try and get it ready and Claremont is number one on everybody's list, but there are a lot of other things that will be coming up after that.

There being no further business to come before the Board, on motion of Alderman Shea, duly seconded by Alderman Rivard, it was voted to adjourn.

A True Record. Attest.

City Clerk