

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

August 3, 1999

7:00 PM

Mayor Wieczorek called the meeting to order.

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

A moment of silent prayer was observed.

The Clerk called the roll.

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

Absent: Aldermen Wihby and Klock

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.

Irene Robie, 1046 Hayward Street, Manchester, NH stated:

I have over 1,000 signatures that I would like to present to the Mayor tonight. I represent the seniors. I represent those who are looking for a center here in Manchester. They are the forgotten generation of this number one City. It seems that so much building is going on and so much money is put into buildings and activities that is meant mostly for the younger people and the athletes. The demand to make more sports centers in this community is really taking up all of the time of the people. There is the Riverwalk and the stadium, the civic center and now also you have the skateboard arena that is about to go up. I wonder if these people have paid their dues. Maybe this is what makes Manchester the number one City, but we have to remember who made the City and that is the seniors who are so grateful to the City of Manchester that they had mills and shoe factories and they had five and dimes and other menial jobs to work out. They were so very, very grateful and they never asked the City for anything else. They lived through a very, very serious depression and at no time did they ask to lean on the City for help. They worked through wars doing anything they could do to help. When they retired, they still

felt that they owed the City of Manchester a great deal more so they spent all of their time volunteering. You will find them in schools and in hospitals, you will find them in the libraries and you will even find them in City Hall if you look hard enough. They are the answer to the prayers of every non-profit organization because every one is ready to go and help them there. Twelve years ago, they were given a center. In fact, they were given two senior centers. One was on the West Side. That one is...when they started they had a membership of 400 people a month and now it has grown to 2,000 and I am wondering if anybody is keeping track of the numbers because the population grew but the center didn't. Another thing, if ever you went over there and you looked it over, you would have to crawl up a back alley and then you would have to fight for a parking spot and if you were lucky you might be the third one on a three deep parking area. If something happens or if somebody wants to come out they have to ask someone else to move and believe me the Beano players are a really very special breed of people. They do not drop their beans to go out there and open up. The one on Hanover Street is also not accessible. It is a beautiful building with beautiful walls. The place is clean and there is new furniture and new carpets, but there is absolutely no parking at all. What we need tonight is we need to ask everyone to be looking at the possibility of a new center. We don't want a building that we are going to have to share with other agencies. We don't want to move in to the future police station because there is no parking there either. What we want is a self-standing center on a large piece of land where we can have plenty of parking space and it must be accessible by bus. We need to have the handicap accessibility because that is mandated by federal law anyway. Administration director and commissioners are on site and program directors and coordinators and activities. If you have both of these in two centers you could be saving an awful lot of money if you had it in one center. New Hampshire is rated the fifth best state to raise a family and let's work together and see if we can make Manchester the very best City for seniors. Thank you.

Mike Lopez, 191 Woodbury Street, Manchester, NH stated:

I want to tell you and most of you already know that I am retired. I had 22 years in the military service and 20 years in the post office and I have been around a lot of states and I can tell you that they have better senior citizen centers than the City of Manchester. I want to thank the Chairman, Alderman Reiniger and Alderman Clancy for tabling my request that I submitted on June 10 of which I gave everyone a copy. Manchester does need a senior citizen center. A good senior citizen center where they can do everything they want to do and meet the people and socialize and do all of the things within one major senior citizen center and there is no need for one of those small buildings. The reason I am very hard on this particular issue, as most of you all know, I spent 18 years on the Parks & Recreation Commission and I never got involved too much with the seniors other than Clem Lemire and a few others, but when I retired I was invited to join a dart program at the after school program at the Teenage Center on Maple Street and I played darts all winter long with 32 senior citizens. The knowledge and the questions they came up with were why they didn't have a nice place to go other than always being put in a small room some place. I totally agree with that. I made my proposal for Veteran's Park and the CIP Committee tabled it. I am glad they did table it and I thank Alderman Clancy for making that motion because it gave an opportunity to talk to more seniors as you sit there and look at them

tonight and the 1,000 signatures that you received. That was all done within three weeks. I hope that you will look at the proposal that Bob MacKenzie has graciously put together in your packet tonight and I hope that you will keep the authority within the City and not give it to anyone else. I want to thank you very much.

Murray Onigman, 324 Walnut Street, Manchester, NH stated:

Here I am back again everybody and guess what happened about 10 days ago. The city of Camden, NJ declared bankruptcy. The 18th city in the United States since 1980. We are being set-up as the first city in the United States and we are going to face bankruptcy in the 20's figures and do you know why? You have a civic center, which is not being funded privately. It is being funded with our money. I am one of the 12,000 that voted no. You didn't see any no signs for the civic center anywhere. You saw yes signs and they were put out there. We have one Alderman saying there were no signs. Who put them up? Ogden? They are part of the Chamber of Commerce. They don't even have a business in this town. But anyhow, what you have here is a potential destruction of our entire economy. You are using public money to gamble on a building and you don't even have from them, according to your agreement, their \$11 million. You don't have any plan. It is already into its 10th month since you agreed. You put on a non-binding referendum and you went ahead. Well I am asking you to repeat the non-binding referendum this November. Don't change a word. I know that according to the Charter you cannot have it binding. Repeat the non-binding referendum. Let us, the 24,000 that voted plus 100 or less 100, 49% or 47%, let the public tell us today that they want it. Where are your hockey people? I haven't seen one of them with their fourth rate team that they promised come here and say we want hockey. I haven't seen an agreement by a New York booker that he will bring a show in here for less than \$25 to \$30 because he is going to face, on his tickets, because of the debt service, every single ticket for the next 30 years the debt service on that ticket is over \$10 to pay it off. You are using all of our money, public money, to do this. I beseech you. I have asked you three times for a reconsideration of your action in three months and nothing happened. The four of you who are leaving the Board, why don't you now go ahead and for the last Board meeting of this century, why don't you stand up and show that you are thinking of the people and thinking of their money which we pay in taxes and we are not going to collect a property tax on that building because it is going to be a City building and the property tax at the present rate would be \$15 million a year on a \$50 million, but the overrun was going to put that building up to \$75 million. I will guarantee that it will be up to that figure and we cannot afford this as a gamble without guarantees and there are no guarantees. I just looked at the budget already set-up for now and up to this date \$2 million is being spent. Well I agree with the senior citizens on the center, but we have got two high schools over 100 years old. My grandson graduated from West High last year. I had three sons graduate from Central before. Do you know that my grandson's great, great, great grandfather went to either Manchester Central or Manchester West. Those schools were built in the late 1800's and they have to be paid for, not the civic center.

Billy Dodd, 181 Mammoth Road, Manchester, NH stated:

The first thing I have to do is apologize for a couple of months ago making the statement that I thought we were supposed to have a half hour for public comment. I was wrong. The City Charter just states that you guys have to give us a period for public comment, but when we came in here to speak several months ago on the City budget, we were limited to 2 minutes a piece. I don't think that is enough time for a person to express themselves on something as important as that issue. What really got me was not a single person on the Aldermanic Board raised their hand and asked why aren't these people getting more time. Were we only worthy of two minutes of your time that night? 10 people, 20 minutes? I think you should have given us a little more time, but I apologize for making the mistake that we had a half-hour. The other thing deals with the latest Yarger Decker Study, \$188,000. I am just curious as to what procurement procedure this contract is going through. Did it go out to bid or did we just chose this one company because they have done several other studies and done a good job on them? The City Charter states Section 701, Procurement Code, "all purchases made by the City for materials, supplies, services, repairs, construction and other items shall be made in accordance with the Procedure Code. The Procurement Code shall promote fair and equitable treatment, promote effective competition and make as uniform as possible the procedures among various departments and agencies of the City and promote the economical, effective and efficient use of the City's resources." Then it states about competitive sealed bidding, competitive sealed proposals, special competitive selection procedures and Section B says the City shall not preclude otherwise qualified businesses or individuals of the City of Manchester from participating in the bidding process. I sat here for two Aldermanic meetings and it seemed to me like that proposal got ram roded through pretty quickly so I am just curious to know if it went through the proper procedures. The last thing is the civic center. I think you have heard me in here a lot of times talking about the civic center. There was an article in the *Maine Sunday Telegraph* on July 18 of this year. Just a couple of highlights out of it. One of the statements was the financing has gone through several evolutions. Mr. Ashooh said that. Then another interesting two paragraphs. Portland officials, including a few City Councilors and the President of the Portland Pirates hockey team have traveled to Manchester in recent months and met with the arena's developers. The officials are learning all they can about Manchester's project as they prepare to hold a series of public forums on a proposed arena in Portland. My question is about the arena's developer. Is that you guys or is that Ogden Entertainment? What was the real deal that you guys entered into with these people last fall when this thing was on the ballot? Is it the same as it is now? If it has gone through several evolutions, I am just curious as to whether this is still a viable option that you are proceeding with. Do you know what the real deal is right now, tonight? When you guys entered into whatever agreement you did with Ogden Entertainment last year, did anybody come up with the stipulation that you not engage in any activities with another entity that wanted to build a civic center within whatever given area you wanted, i.e. 200 miles, 3 hours drive from Manchester, etc? These guys are working on your civic center and they are talking with Portland who is scared and they want to build another bigger civic center. Why are they down here talking to the developers of our civic center? Now if you guys didn't have some type of a stipulation in there stating that you don't engage in any

other bids with anybody else or discussions on another civic center within a certain area, if you fouled up on that one, heaven help us. What other stones are not unturned on this civic center that are going to come back and bite us? The last thing is the senior citizen center for the individuals here. How about McNeil's over on Second Street? That big lot there. How about the old Brown School? I don't think either one of those places...you put the money into it and you could make it a decent senior citizen center for them. The very last thing is the Chandler School. At some point you guys are going to vote on giving the Chandler School away for \$1 and the people that are going to take that school and rehab it to City building codes, to State standards and they are going to turn it back into a school and every parent that is going to send their kid there is going to be proud of it and they are going to get involved in that school. My question is, why can't the City of Manchester put life back into that school again as one of our own? If they can do it, why can't we?

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

Before I get onto the main topic I also want to support a new center for the senior citizens. If this City can come up with money for civic centers, a \$25 million+ new parking garage to support it, Riverwalks and all of the other projects that you are in the process of approving, than surely you can come up with the money for the senior citizens who have given so much to this City. I may be a little prejudice being a senior citizen myself at this point in time after many years of hounding you people, but I think the seniors of this City deserve ample respect and assistance. Last year, you put a question on the ballot regarding the civic center and prior to that question going on to the ballot we heard nothing other than that the public, the taxpayers would be protected and there would be special insurance or bonding in order to make sure that if anything went astray with the rooms and meals money coming back from Concord the citizens of this City would not have to cough up the money. In all of this time, no one has produced a paper or a letter of agreement or intent relative to such an insurance policy. Mr. Ashooh keeps talking about how it will be a company. Let him produce before you do anything else, before you bond anymore money or spend anymore money or contract for the City. Let them produce the letter of intent. The citizens and the taxpayers of this City who went to the polls and faced, as part of the referendum question, that they would be protected, we demand to see a letter of intent. Now a lot of things have changed since that referendum question and I am not going to go into all of the things that have changed. You are well aware of the changes. Would that question pass today if it were on the ballot? Are you afraid or are you willing to put that same question back onto the ballot this year and listen to what the citizens and taxpayers of this City have to say about it? I think you are afraid to do it because you know you can't deliver the good. Mr. Ashooh cannot deliver the goods and the taxpayers are going to face the inevitable responsibility of paying every dollar for that civic center and the widening of Granite Street and the parking garage and everything else that is going to be associated with this civic center. I challenge you. Put that question back on the ballot and see how the people feel this November. Thank you.

There being no one else present wishing to speak, on motion of Alderman Pariseau, duly seconded by Alderman Clancy, 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 the Board, on motion of Alderman Thibault, duly seconded by Alderman Pariseau, it was voted to adjourn.

A True Record. Attest.

City Clerk