

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

**January 3, 2000**

**6:30 PM**

Mayor Wieczorek called the special meeting to order.

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

Mayor Wieczorek stated let us keep in mind John Gancarz who was just buried over the weekend as we observe a moment of silent prayer.

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

Present: Aldermen Wihby, Pinard, O'Neil, Girard, Shea, Pariseau, Cashin,  
Thibault, Hirschmann

Absent: Aldermen Klock, Reiniger, Sysyn, Clancy, Rivard

Mayor Wieczorek advised that the purpose of the special meeting is to give residents of the City an opportunity for one-half-hour - and I'm going to ask the Clerk to make sure that we keep track of the half-hour, we'll start the half-hour now - to comment on a recently passed ordinance relating to compensation for Aldermen and School Committee members; that each person would be given only one opportunity to speak; that comments would 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, clear state their name and address when recognized, and give them comments.

Don Anderson of *The Union Leader*, Manchester, NH, stated:

Mayor Wieczorek and members of the Board, I'm here representing *The Union Leader and New Hampshire Sunday News*...more than 800 readers of our newspaper who have responded to the ballot that we printed for several days during the Christmas Holidays urging the Aldermen to give their salary increase back. I bring with me more than 800 ballots and I wish to present them to you and to the Board members to review, they represent a cross section of the wards in the City of Manchester. I respectfully request that you take these from us today and make use of them as you will. Thank you, Mr. Mayor.

Leo Pepino, 73 Walnut Street, Manchester, NH (Ward 4), stated:

I do not see my Alderman here, no political courage. Gentlemen,...

Mayor Wieczorek interjected let me just say at the outset let's not personalize this hearing.

Mr. Pepino continued by stating that as a State Representative, I find this kind of thing to be outrageous. We get a hundred dollars a year plus mileage. For me, that adds up to about six or seven hundred dollars a year. Out of that six or seven hundred dollars a year, I pay \$500 for dental insurance which leaves me with \$200. Having been both a State Rep and an Alderman, let me tell you that each is a time consuming public service and that's what it is -- public service -- that should be treated as public service and if anyone takes positions for the pay or benefits they think they're entitled to increase in pay or benefits, they are not doing it for the people. You knew what these positions paid for before you ran for office. Rescind the pay raise. Whatever the excuse is it did not have to happen this way. There were 66 people including the School Board, Aldermen and Mayor that ran in this past election. Never once was a pay raise mentioned. Even though you people were discussing one...and ten of you were on the ballot. Eliminate benefits for the Aldermen. Why should you get them, you took them away from other part-time employees a few years ago and you took away the stipends from most all other boards and commissions. Why should you get something you've taken from others. In order to restore trust/confidence, I feel you must pass the Charter amendment, it's no wonder people are distrustful about politicians and government. Now, you blame the Mayor, the Mayor seems to get blamed for all of this. This is a special meeting tonight.

Mayor Wieczorek interjected time is up.

Mr. Pepino stated the Mayor called the meeting tonight to discuss the pay raises. Now, last June, July or August the Board has a right to call a special meeting. So, if you were concerned about these things being on the agenda, you could have called a meeting.

Mayor Wieczorek reiterated, Leo, your time is up.

Mr. Pepino finished by stating, your Honor, you did the right thing tonight and the Aldermen did not exercise their right in the Charter to make this public. Thank you.

Jeffrey Plourde, 353 Amherst Street, Manchester, NH (Ward 4), stated:

Mr. Shea and Mr. Girard, thank you, I'm sorry to see you leaving. I don't know if any of you here, Aldermen, know any older people that go to the store and try to have...they have a hard time, they have to mark everything they buy for their meats...they're on fixed incomes, they have a hard time to hold onto their homes because their taxes are so high and they pay your salary. I don't know if you have any conscience, but you want to hear another thing too. Since 1986, I've been a crossing guard for the City of Manchester for the schools. From 1986 to 19998 which is 12 long years, with no benefits, we're there in the rain or shine it doesn't matter for the safety of our children for the schools and you know what \$6.50 an hour and every summer when it was time for a raise you know what the answer was...we don't have any raise, the Aldermen did not vote for it...no money in the budget. Finally, in 1998 we had a little raise. We're not even with Nashua to the equivalent yet. I think it's a disgrace. Please do what is right and just and give that raise back. If there is a group in Manchester that do deserve a raise, I think it's the crossing guards they're part of the City workers and they're there to save the

children's live probably. To you it might not be important but to the parents (mom and dad) it makes a lot because they feel safe to see their little children of six, seven, eight years old walking to school. So, please, do what is just and right and give this raise. I think you're a disgrace right now.

Peter F. Leonard, 31 Andrew Street, Manchester, NH, State Rep for Ward 3 and the newly-elected School Board member stated:

Good evening, Mayor and Aldermen, when I started running for State Rep I didn't care about the money, I was there to help the people and that's why I keep getting elected.

Karen Stone, 244 Day Street, Manchester, NH (Ward 1), stated:

Thank you for holding this opportunity for the citizens of Manchester to speak on this issue. The act of bringing up for a vote and then voting in a pay raise for yourselves without public input is unconscionable. This behavior was secretive, smacking of a lack of concern for those for whom you were voted to serve and represent. When people act in secret it is done for two reasons: either to protect someone from hurt and embarrassment or to hide something. Which of these were your reason. This raise would be completely funded by those whom you excluded, the citizens of Manchester. This behavior not above board, in my eyes, seemed to say that each of you were self-serving enough to ignore those that entrusted you with their votes and the responsibility to run this City in an ethical manner. While I do not necessarily have a problem with the pay raise itself, I have an immense problem with the act, your act, or doing so secretly. I urge you to rethink your actions.

John Stephen, 320 Currier Drive, Manchester, NH (Ward 2), stated:

I rise and ask you on behalf of myself and the people (over a couple of hundred individuals) I've spoken to over the last two days, urge you to rescind this pay raise. I also ask you on behalf of those citizens to amend the Charter. I was a Charter Commissioner and I ask you to amend the Charter and I'm prepared to give you some names (I can make copies for Carol today) of individuals that live in every ward, business owners, Rick Loeffler from Shorty's Restaurant, the owners of Chalifour's Flowers, the owner of McQuade's, Highway individuals who I stopped on New Year's Eve and I'm not going to tell you what they said, but they talked about the public notice. If you look at the public notice and I guess that's why I'm here. When a public notice says on December 17th that they're thinking about amending the Charter "by replacing language relating to the salaries of Aldermen and School Committee members by replacing language", I respectfully think that notice is not adequate, that's not the process. I thank you, Alderman O'Neil, for speaking to me the other night about this issue, I've heard you numerous times talk about the public process being the right way to handle this; that's why I'm here. I think it's about time that the people of this City decide or have the final say when it comes to a package and the ones I've spoken to in Ward 10, Alderman Cashin, don't necessarily object to the amount of compensation if it's just and reasonable. What they object to is the process. But, if you trust them and give them the ultimate say which this amendment proposes which I also respect incoming Mayor Baines for bringing forward a great idea, but that idea goes hand-in-hand with what this amendment does and I'm prepared to go through the petition process if I need to.

There's two ways under RSA 49 (b)-5 to amend the Charter. I could do a petition with the voters and if we can get enough names it will go on the ballot, but save us from that process. Give this final say to the people and trust the people that you work for. Thank you.

Murray Onigman, 324 Walnut Street, Manchester, NH (Ward 2), stated:

I come here tonight against because of something I read in the State's paper and that was that Alderman Hirschmann proposed a \$1,000 a year increment...when you ran again the next year it went up a thousand and another thousand and this was his result of getting it going, this so-called raise. He wants to turn us into Tammeny Hall, New York and he wants to turn us into the City of Boston. He wants graft to come into the picture when you run again, I'll take care of you, Alderman. How much money do you need for your campaign and when you get your raise you can take care of me afterwards. What kind of government are we asking for and getting this so-called raise. I say that when Alderman Hirschmann ran the first time in '97-'98 he won by 29 votes and then...

Mayor Wieczorek interjected, Murray, let's not personalize this, say what you have to say and let's go.

Mr. Onigman continued by stating okay, I was just trying to point out that it was only 700 votes and that 12,000 votes defeated and not defeated...it won on the civic center and that's a lot of votes for the mess we're in on that and now come in and have a mess on the raise. It reflects the thinking and I think that us taxpayers and property owners of the City of Manchester should think in terms of the new people every two years for the Aldermanic boards.

Larry Constantine, Manchester, NH, stated:

Thank you, Mr. Mayor and members of the Board, your jobs are public service. At no time during the past election did I hear any one of you mention anything about money, but it was all what you were going to do. Now, let's do it. No raises, you don't need it, you didn't ask for it in the beginning and you're not entitled to you now. It's still public service. Thank you.

Bobby Stephen, Bodwell Road, Manchester, NH, stated:

Thank you, Mr. Mayor and members of the Aldermen. Let's keep our focus on the central point of this controversy. The central point is not the enormous pay raise approved by the majority of the Aldermen, although obviously it is outrageous. The central point of this controversy only partially relates to the parliamentary games played by the Aldermanic majority although they were disgraceful and they have outraged many, many citizens in our City. Also, what the Aldermanic majority proposed to do and the way in which the majority proposed to do it are mockeries of the whole theory of what public service is. The sole purpose of seeking and holding public office should be to serve the public, if need be some cost to themselves and time and money, but never, never to serve themselves. Public service is a privilege folks and not an entitlement. This is one of the worse scandals I've seen in my many years in politics. It is the kind of scandal that alienates the citizenry from their government. It's the kind of scandal that will wreck many, many political careers. We must amend the City Charter to assure that this

does not happen again. The process is the way that this happened was wrong and I plead with you to amend the City Charter. Thank you.

Lionel Leblanc, Manchester, NH, stated:

I'm here for one reason. I'd like to see this pay raise rescinded. Tonight, I'm going to speak about the impromptu, uncalled pay raise by the Aldermen. I hope tonight following this hearing the Aldermen that proposed this pay raise will rescind it. I'm sure it won't impose any financial hardship. I have high praise for Alderman Shea, Alderman At-large Richard Girard for not voting for it. I can't forget also our honorable Mayor Ray Wieczorek who vetoed this proposal, I have high praise for him and believe me it was not a popular move. These three City Fathers had their constituents in mind by standing firm by voting against this pay raise. They were against imposing another financial burden on the taxpayers. Let your conscience be your guide when you meet following this meeting. Thank you.

Jeff Kassel, Manchester, NH (Ward 3), stated:

I'm Co-Chair of CACC (Citizens Against the Civic Center) and I've spoken before this group before. I spoke with Mr. Levasseur a couple of nights ago and he asked me to take it easy on the Aldermen, but it's really not my nature. You guys have done a terrific thing last week. You did something I have been trying to do for the last five months and I want to thank especially Mr. Girard for his article...I haven't read the whole thing, but I understand it brings quite a bit of information to the people of the City. You gave yourself a raise, to be honest with you I really don't care about the \$150,000 raise as you all know what I care about is the \$150 million you're about to spend for the civic center, \$150,000 is really not much money. But, I want to thank each and everyone of you who voted for this raise and I urge you again to vote for it again tonight. Everyone of you who voted for it before, vote again tonight, vote your conscience because that is what we need here in Manchester, we need Aldermen with principles and if you believed it last week I'm sure you believe it today. Thank you.

Billy Dodd, 181 Mammoth Road, Manchester, NH (Ward 6), stated:

I think all of you gentlemen are familiar with the little red book. When the City Charter was adopted several years ago, I did not knowingly vote under Compensations Section 8:04 that gave you guys the authority to raise your own salary when you wanted to, I didn't know I voted for that. But, you propose \$15,000. Why did you stop there, why not twenty or twenty-five. You spent \$188,000 for a Yarger Decker Study that didn't go out for bid, you're about ready to spend a lot of money on a civic center that's going to give Ogden Entertainment a minimum of \$2.7 million...

Mayor Wieczorek interjected will you please stick to the subject matter.

Mr. Dodd continued by stating \$2.7 million for zero investment. So, giving yourselves a \$15,000 raise, I guess, is just business as usual in City Hall. But, my question is why didn't all of this come up before the elections last year. I ran for Alderman, I thought there was a \$4,000 salary and \$1,000 stipend. I didn't know there was any health insurance, I was appalled to find

out that we're spending big money for health insurance for part-time employees. If what one previous speaker mentioned that you took health insurance away from other part-time employees...fair is fair. But, my question is how did this legal notice get in the paper on December 17th. Somebody had to approach the City Clerk's office to put it in the paper. The City Clerk, I assume had to go to the City Solicitor to get it approved for legal content and then cut a check to pay for it. If you didn't do it, Mr. Mayor, who did. You guys knew this thing was coming up on December 21st and you wanted to get a pay raise in before the new group came in and I'm glad Mr. Baines has made the statement that he's going to adequately review the compensation policies. But, you put this on a fast track, why haven't you done that with the Senior Center, put that on a fast track.

Artemis Paras, 1275 Hanover Street, Manchester, NH, stated:

Good evening, Mayor Wiczorek and Board of Aldermen, I thank you for this opportunity to speak to you on the ordinance that you adopted recently regarding the pay raises. I refer to the Charter authorities to help you understand that I feel that the adoption of that ordinance was in the absence of a needed policy. According to the Charter authority Article II this Board "shall act as the policy making and legislative body". You are the ones that make policies and you are the ones that make City law. What is puzzling to me is how could we adopt an ordinance without a guiding, matching policy to guide us in proper decision-making. What is curious about the Charter is that under Charter authority Article VIII, "the Board of Mayor and Aldermen 'may' establish rules, procedures and standards, hereinafter called policies." So, the whole process here has been questioned and I think it's been questioned because there was no accompanying, adopted policy to guide the full Board into making a publicly responsible decision. If we are or you are the legislative and policy-making body then you should have the opportunity to make these policies. I ask you to refer to City Ordinance Chapter 34 City Policies, again, it's all very vague and let's remember "may"...the Board of Mayor and Aldermen 'may' establish rules, procedures and standards called policies. "May" is permissive, there is no requirement. But, you shall be the policy-making body and legislative body. I have finished, I have indicated that the process, I believe, could have been improved.

Carlos Gonzalez, 1826 Front Street, Apt. 1-G, Manchester, NH (Ward 12), stated:

I ran for Alderman At-large and I didn't win, but I believe in participation and I'm going to use this phrase from Abraham Lincoln as I would note basically be silent, I need to mention to you that we need to have faith, that right makes might and that in that phrase let us to the end there to do our duty as we understand it. As I would not be a slave, I would not be a master. The process of democracy has been hurt and mistrust will continue to increase. It is time to speak and I speak as a fiscal conservative from the past and the present and in the future. The process has been broken. This is all heard neither the private sector nor the public sector have had a three hundred percent increase in salaries. The due process was not followed and this is the wrong time table to approach it when there is a transition from one outgoing Mayor into a new incoming Mayor. Again, I need to remember you from the Bible "do not fall in love with the love of money". We are here to serve. When I ran, I ran to serve, not to earn a salary. Remember the leaders that you elected were elected because that allowed the people who had

the wisdom to elect you. Let's be responsible and let's be honest and again let's stop the double standard of speaking one way and then acting another way. It is about time that you learn to serve and be honest. Let's not make hasty decisions. Let people decide and let's amend the Charter.

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

Decided to pass.

Walter A. Stiles, 226 Sagamore Street, Manchester, NH (Ward 2), stated:

Mayor Wieczorek and members of the Board of Aldermen. On December 28, 1999 Manchester lost an outstanding citizen. His name was John Gancarz. For many years, John was Chairman of the Concerned Taxpayers of Manchester, John was a fighter in more ways than one. He was a true friend of the taxpayers of Manchester. John wrote a great article in *The New Hampshire Sunday News* on December 6, 1992, it was entitled "When Taxes Go Up, Taxpayers Get Less". In that article, John stated "elected officials must stand up for the people who elect them and do what is right." With the exception of Alderman Girard and Alderman Shea, I'll have to say, Gentlemen and Ladies, that your vote did not increase your constituents confidence in you, that's for sure. In closing, I would like to say, your Honor, that I want to thank you for the ten years of service to this wonderful City. You did an outstanding job because you dedicated yourself to that job and I know that what I have said and what I will say is reflected by the thinking of a lot of the citizens of the City of Manchester. So, the citizens of Manchester were the beneficiaries of your five administrations, thank you very, very much.

Mayor Wieczorek called upon Mayor-elect Baines.

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

Thank you very much, your Honor. I'd like to reemphasize the statement that I made regarding this issue and read verbatim as what I sent as a press release, so that everybody understands exactly where I'm coming from on this issue:

"Today, I'm asking the Board of Aldermen to rescind the pay raises voted on December 21st. I am very concerned about the public outrage related specifically to the process followed in adopting these raises. If the Board votes to rescind these raises I will appoint an independent special committee to examine the issues of compensation for members of both Boards and to recommend a process to be followed for all future reviews of compensation for elected officials. This Board was not allowed the opportunity to study and deliberate this issue in the proper manner. I will provide you with that opportunity and to the public. We do not need a Charter amendment to do what is right. I strongly reject the call for a Charter amendment. Those of us who worked on that were very clear that that was not needed, that the decision rightly rests with you people and the political process will follow.

And, Mr. Stephen, I'd like to talk to you about that because I think we can establish a process where any review could occur before an election. There are ways to deal with that, so that the people would have to go unnoticed. Let's not divert the energy of the public into a Charter amendment process. It is critically important to maintain the trust of the people. By taking a step back, I believe that the Board will demonstrate responsibility to the voters and this will help to restore the public trust. I also believe that our elected officials are hard working and

contribute to our community in many ways. They're responsive to the public seven days a week and devote countless hours of service to our citizens and I do not believe you need to be berated with regard to your service to our community. It is our responsibility to begin a thoughtful analysis of the compensation issues in full view of the public. I believe that any eventual increases should be able to withstand any and all public scrutiny. Thank you very much.

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

This being a special meeting of the Board, no further business can be presented, on motion of Alderman Shea, duly seconded by Alderman Thibault, it was voted to adjourn.

A True Record. Attest.

City Clerk