

BOARD OF MAYOR AND ALDERMEN

February 2, 2000

**7:30 PM
Aldermanic Chambers
City Hall (3rd Floor)**

Mayor Baines called the meeting to order.

The Clerk called the roll. There were fourteen aldermen present

Present: Aldermen Wihby, Gatsas, Levasseur, Sysyn, Clancy, Pinard, O'Neil,
Lopez, Shea, Vaillancourt, Pariseau, Cashin, Thibault, Hirschmann

CONSENT AGENDA

Mayor Baines advised if you desire to remove any of the following items from the Consent Agenda, please so indicate. If none of the items are to be removed, one motion only will be taken at the conclusion of the presentation.

Informational - Referred to the Committee on Lands & Buildings

- A.** Communication from Ronald and Kathleen Gosselin advising of their interest in acquiring property known as Lot 750/11 located on Pond Drive.
- B.** Communication from Timothy Theochares advising of his interest in acquiring property known as Map 492/Lot 6 located at 200 Groveland Avenue.

REFERRALS TO COMMITTEES

COMMITTEE ON BILLS ON SECOND READING

- C.** Ordinance:

"Amending Sections 33.024, 33.025 and 33.026 (Property and Contract Administrator) of the Code of Ordinances of the City of Manchester."

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

- F.** Communication from the NH Charitable Foundation requesting \$5,000 as startup monies to develop a comprehensive cultural plan for the City of Manchester; and further seeking additional funding in the next fiscal year.

- G.** Bond Resolution:

"Authorizing Bonds, Notes or Lease Purchases in the amount of Six Hundred Sixty Thousand One Hundred Sixty-Eight Dollars (\$660,168) for the FY2000 School District Lease programs (Portable classrooms at Hillside and Southside Middle Schools)."

- H.** Resolutions:

"Authorizing the Finance Officer to effect a transfer of Six Thousand Six Hundred Fifty-Two Dollars and Eighty Cents from Contingency to the Manchester City Library."

“Authorizing the Finance Officer to effect a transfer of Ninety Thousand (\$90,000) Dollars from Contingency to the Human Resources Department.”

COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RESOURCES/INSURANCE

- I. Copy of a communication from Louise Gazda to the Amalgamated Transit Union advising of continued personnel/management difficulties.

COMMITTEE ON TRAFFIC/PUBLIC SAFETY

- J. Communication from Roger Bjornberg expressing his concerns relative to the parking situation on Notre Dame Avenue in the vicinity of CMC.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

COMMITTEE ON HUMAN RESOURCES/INSURANCE

- L. Recommending that a request from the Tax Collector to take sick leave severance pay for an upcoming Customer Service Representative III vacancy from the Salary Adjustment account and to replace the position immediately be granted and approved.
- M. Recommending approval of a request of Youth Services for replacement an upgrade of an Office Assistant to an Administrative Assistant II.
- N. Advising that it has referred the PIP Automobile and Home Insurance Program request for distribution of information to the Human Resources Health and Benefits Fare to be held February 28.
- O. Recommending approval of a request from Chief Kane relative to overtime payment for Deputy Martel should he be activated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency's Urban Search and Rescue Task Force, advising that related costs are to be absorbed by Federal funds.

HAVING READ THE CONSENT AGENDA, ON MOTION OF ALDERMAN WIHBY, DULY SECONDED BY ALDERMAN O'NEIL , IT WAS VOTED THAT THE CONSENT AGENDA BE APPROVED.

- D. Communication from Calvin Raymond advising of poor sidewalk conditions adjacent to property located at 143 Beech Street.

Alderman Shea moved to refer this item to the Highway Department for disposition. Alderman Wihby duly seconded the motion. Discussion ensued where Alderman Shea noted that the intention was to have Mr. Thomas forward a letter advising of the process relating to the 50/50 sidewalk program.

- E. Communication from the Manchester Police Athletic League requesting \$85,000 to purchase the parking lot adjacent to St. Cecilia's Hall at the southeast corner of Lake Avenue and Beech Streets contingent upon appraisal value.

Alderman Clancy stated I know this item is going to Finance, but I would like to St. Cecilia's Hall and the parking lot stay together. There is no sense in somebody just buying the parking lot and leaving St. Cecilia Hall because it will be like a white elephant and nobody will want to buy it. I hope that if the Police buy one, they buy the whole package.

Alderman O'Neil stated some of you may remember that the Board approved \$75,000 last year to buy the building but at the time the Diocese was not willing to sell the property. The parking lot is what this issue is and I believe that ultimately it is going to end up in the CIP Committee. Thank you.

Alderman Hirschmann stated I was given a letter by the abutters stating...I actually have to get the letter to the Clerk. It is in my vehicle. They are opposed to the lot going...they want to see it go on the tax roles if anything. You are talking about \$85,000 in City tax.

Alderman Lopez stated as most of you know I sit on the Board of Directors of the P.A.L. League as does Alderman O'Neil so we are abreast of the situation. This is just a formality procedure at this stage of the game because when the time comes down there is a Committee that will be appointed and Felix Torres and a few other people will be on the Committee to advise us as to whether we are getting the best deal for the City so I agree with Alderman O'Neil that this should go right to Committee and worked out there.

Alderman Wihby asked shouldn't it be going to Lands & Buildings then.

Alderman Pariseau asked do you think it would be appropriate if we were to send a letter to the Diocese to see if they would be willing to make a contribution to the City.

Mayor Baines stated if this is going to be discussed, it really belongs in some Committee someplace where a proper dialogue can take place. I don't think we are going to solve those types of things this evening. The question would be whether it belongs in Finance or it goes to Lands & Buildings.

Mr. MacKenzie stated in this case the Police Athletic League is looking for a grant to purchase the property. It was not intended to be City property so I think they are looking for the funds to acquire it. I think it should perhaps go to the CIP Committee to program the funds.

Alderman Thibault asked at that point will it pay taxes to the City. I think that is the question that was brought up before and I think that is the important question here.

Mayor Baines answered let's send it to the Committee. Do I have a motion to send it to CIP?

On motion of Alderman Clancy, duly seconded by Alderman O'Neil, it was voted to refer the item to CIP.

Alderman Levasseur asked is there any reason why we wouldn't bring it to Lands & Buildings.

Deputy Clerk Johnson answered the basis of the reasoning to send it to CIP is you are looking for funding and CIP is the funding issue. It is not a City property so Lands & Buildings wouldn't have jurisdiction over it.

K. Communication from Alderman Vaillancourt requesting that the following item be placed on the agenda:

Motion - That the Board of Mayor and Aldermen pass on to the Special Airport Committee the request to look into the possibility of attaching a 10 percent surcharge to all parking at the Manchester Airport, the monies to go directly into the City's general fund and be used to offset the cost of provision on Police, Fire, and other services in the section of the City near the Airport; and that the City Solicitor be asked to render an opinion as to the legality of this surcharge and that his office draft the appropriating wording.

Alderman Pariseau stated as the Chairman of that Special Committee on the Airport, this item was already looked at and we were advised by Airport Director Testa last June that because of FAA regulations you can't charge the Airport.

Alderman Pariseau moved to receive and file the item. Alderman Hirschmann duly seconded the motion.

Alderman Vaillancourt stated notwithstanding anything that has happened in the past, this motion that I put forward was simply to refer this to the proper Committee where an investigation could be made. I am sure we know that things change. Mr. Testa is, for better or worse, no longer with us and this new building according to the documentation that I saw in the packet that came prior to this meeting made it very clear that this garage was bringing in a lot of money. Now to me there is no reason that we can't investigate the possibility of the City of Manchester getting a part of this to offset some expenses. We have parking meters in the downtown area that generate revenues for the City and I think it is incumbent upon this Board to exhaust all possibilities of looking into every option if we can get \$1 million or \$500,000 or \$2 million and I have many, many questions that I would like to ask and as a new appointee to this panel that looks into the Airport, I don't believe that I should be denied the opportunity to do that and I believe there will be other people on this Board who might be able to do something a little more creative than people in the past have done.

Mayor Baines stated what I would like to suggest and we do have a motion on the floor that perhaps Mr. Dillon could come to the next meeting on the Special Committee on Airport Activities and address the specific issues relating to revenue generating issues as they apply to the Airport and the City's ability to either collect or not collect some of those revenues. Perhaps that will take care of some of Alderman Vaillancourt's concerns and also recognizing that we do have a motion on the floor. This is not something that we are going to settle here tonight. I think we can rely upon the Director of the Airport, Mr. Dillon, whom I have a great deal of confidence in, to bring the facts to the table to that Committee where they can have a very thorough discussion of the issue.

Alderman Pariseau withdrew his motion.

Alderman Hirschmann stated point of order. All new revenues that are requested have to go through a public hearing. That passed the Board in 1997.

Mayor Baines replied I appreciate that information.

Alderman Thibault stated if we are going to have this kind of Committee meeting, I would certainly like to have Solicitor Clark there because I think he is very much in the know as to what the Federal government will allow us to do and not allow us to do. I agree with Alderman Vaillancourt that it is a good point and it should be investigated, but I would like to have our legal advisor there.

Mayor Baines replied I appreciate that and I would like to entertain a motion to refer this item to the Special Committee on Airport Activities.

On motion of Alderman Pariseau, duly seconded by Alderman Vaillancourt, it was voted to refer the item to the Special Committee on Airport Activities.

Alderman Levasseur stated Mr. Dillon is in the building right now. I don't see why we shouldn't have him discuss this and get it out of the way right now. I think we know what the answer is already.

Mayor Baines replied there is a motion on the floor and there is a general feeling that at Committee level these things can be discussed. Does anyone want to talk about voting for or against sending this item to the Committee?

Alderman Pariseau stated I just want to inform the Board that a meeting of that Committee is tentatively scheduled for the week of February 22.

Mayor Baines asked are you okay with this, Alderman Vaillancourt.

Alderman Vaillancourt answered absolutely and the response to Alderman Hirschmann's comment about going to Finance is that I certainly would want that to happen eventually but if you will read the motion it says to look into the possibility. That is all it is at this point is a possibility.

Mayor Baines called for a vote on the motion. The motion carried with Alderman Hirschmann being recorded in opposition.

Nomination presented by Mayor Baines.

Robert J. Jobin to succeed himself as a member of the Highway Commission,
term to expire January 15, 2003.

Mayor Baines stated I have known Mr. Jobin for many years and he is a dedicated public servant and someone who has served at the Highway Commission and in various other capacities of great distinction and it is a personal honor of me to have Mr. Jobin as my first nomination.

On motion of Alderman Shea, duly seconded by Alderman Pariseau, it was voted to recess the regular meeting to allow the Committee on Finance to meet.

Mayor Baines called the meeting back to order.

OTHER BUSINESS

A report of the Committee on Finance was presented recommending that Resolution:

“Authorizing the Finance Officer to effect a transfer of Six Thousand Six Hundred Fifty-Two Dollars and Eighty Cents from Contingency to the Manchester City Library.”

ought to pass and be Enrolled.

On motion of Alderman Shea, duly seconded by Alderman Clancy, it was voted to accept, receive and adopt the report.

A report of the Committee on Finance was presented recommending that Resolution:

“Authorizing the Finance Officer to effect a transfer of Ninety Thousand (\$90,000) Dollars from Contingency to Human Resources.”

ought to pass and be Enrolled.

On motion of Alderman Clancy, duly seconded by Alderman Pariseau, it was voted to accept, receive and adopt the report.

A report of the Committee on Finance was presented advising that it had approved a \$5,000 request of the NH Charitable Foundation as start up monies to develop a comprehensive cultural plan for the City of Manchester.

On motion of Alderman Shea, duly seconded by Alderman Thibault, it was voted to accept, receive and adopt the report.

8. Communication from Alderman Vaillancourt requesting an item be placed on the agenda.

Alderman Vaillancourt moved that the Board of Mayor and Aldermen rescind the motion regarding the civic center taken at the December 21, 1999 meeting (the one which passed by a 9-5 vote) and at the same time instruct the Civic Center Committee to investigate and report back on the possibility of proceeding with a 6000-7000 seat arena at a cost in the \$30 million range. Alderman Shea duly seconded the motion.

Alderman Vaillancourt stated as you will recall, at the meeting two weeks ago I confined my remarks to the move to reconsider. I did not get into the negatives and the positives regarding the civic center because I believe it is important that we follow parliamentary procedure so I did not go into a long dissertation as to why I believe the civic center is a bad idea, but in the move to rescind this motion, I believe more of an explanation is in order and I think that we have had much water pass under that old bridge since December 21 and the only responsible thing for this Board of Mayor and Aldermen to do is to rescind that motion made by the previous Board of Mayor and Aldermen on December 21 and then move forward with our own motion. Your honor, you mentioned at the conclusion of our discussion as the midnight hour either approached or passed us a couple of weeks ago that never again should we allow this process to get out of control of this elected body and I agree with you wholeheartedly as much as I can, which is 100% and you will never hear me use the word 200%. I agree with you 100% that that should never happen again, but I contend that that should never have happened in the past either. We have it in our ability to make sure that this does not happen. We can rescind this and make sure that we take control of this. I just wanted to bring up a few points and I do have a handout that I prepared in the past several days with some research that has been done with my own sources because when I went to the City Finance Office I was denied the use of their personnel. They said that I would have to come before the entire Board before Mr. Sherman would allow me to get any research from his office so I did it on my own and I am quite willing to do that. I have put together an analysis of American Hockey League attendance because I think we all agree, based on the comments from the gentleman from Price Waterhouse last week that if the attendance falls below 6,000 or 5,500 that this project is doomed to fail and I agree with him. He cited the attendance from the American Hockey League in the \$40,000 report that he prepared for us, but it is my contention that he really didn't look into this attendance the way it should be looked into, which is not to take Philadelphia and Providence and these cities which have a National Hockey League team and a population...I don't know it is the fifth largest market in the country. My contention is that we cannot compare Manchester to Philadelphia when we do a study. What I have done in my analysis is take the top six teams in attendance in the American Hockey League which would be Philadelphia, home of the Flyers as well as the American Hockey League team; Providence, another major City; Wilkes-Barre; Scranton, PA; Rochester; Hartford, a former National Hockey League city; and Hershey, PA which has been in the American Hockey League ever since I was back in Vermont listening to games in 1966. The average of those six cities is 7,257. If you take the middle seven cities, Worcester, Louisville, Kentucky, Syracuse, Cincinnati, Springfield and Portland, the average there is 4,953. Then you take the bottom six teams in the league: Lowell to our south, which is averaging 3,084 fans a game; St. Johns, Newfoundland; Quebec, a former National League Hockey city; and St. Johns Hambleton in Albany, the average there is 3,715 per game. I would contend that Manchester is more likely to draw the average from those final six teams I have mentioned than it is to draw in the likes of Philadelphia and Providence. Even being generous, I contend that Manchester is more likely to draw 3,715 a game. We do not need a 10,000 to 11,000 seat arena for 3,715 people per game. Even if we were to get 6,000 a game, we would not need this large an arena. Alderman O'Neil presented the Board, in our mailing a few weeks ago, a very important document comparing what has been done in Manchester or what will be done in Manchester

with what has happened in Durham at the Whittemore Center and in Lowell at the Saungus Arena. The Whittemore Center was built for \$26 million in 1995 at 7,000 seats. The Saungus Arena in 1998 was built for \$28 million at 7,800. Why should it cost us two and a half times to get an arena with 1/3 more seats. That is a question that begs an answer. Alderman O'Neil has also presented us with a document dated January 24 regarding the problem with other possible hockey owners not being sufficiently vetted, I guess the word would be, and I do notice once again at the last possible minute we have a response to Alderman O'Neil's letter. This response was written apparently on December 25, yet here we are February 2 getting a response at the last possible moment again. We need to look at the hockey team. We need to make sure that Howard Baldwin is, in fact, responsible and I have some information contrary to what Price Waterhouse told us last time and again this is the reason to rescind the motion that was made on December 21. There seems to be some problems with the statement that Howard Baldwin has made. He claimed in a bankruptcy suit that he has no assets, yet he told Price Waterhouse that he has enough assets to keep this team going for two years. Now either he is not telling the truth to the Bankruptcy Court or he is not telling the truth to Price Waterhouse and I suggest that the latter is probably more likely. We also have the prospect of interest rates going up and up and up. I believe 75 basis points since this proposal was last vetted. Who knows how much more Chairman Greenspan is going to allow them to go? I would suggest perhaps another 50 basis points, which will drive the cost of this up, it seems to me, \$15 to \$20 million over the next 30 years. I was in Concord today and our finance hole in the budget has gone from \$30 to \$37 million with another \$30 million problem pending there so I don't, again, think that the State aid is necessarily a given. I think that what we have to do is realize that other priorities are necessary. We talked tonight at length about this, I guess it was a five year bonding for these portables. Now to me it would be a legitimate thing to bond these over five years. I didn't refer to it at the time because I thought I would save it for now. There is much opposition to funding these over five years in a capital budget, but people who seem opposed to that think nothing of bonding the civic center, which is going to end up costing the City of Manchester \$150 to \$200 million at the current rate. Aldermanic oversight is very important being up-to-date on the interest rate and having all of these things in order before you go forward is even more important so I think the only appropriate thing that we can do now in our fiduciary responsibility, those magical golden words, is to take another look at this and decide that we can get by with an arena much smaller at maybe 1/3 the cost. We don't need a Lamborghini. A good old Chevrolet would do the deal for us and it would even be a more comfortable arena because if you go watch a hockey game in a 12,000 seat stadium and there are only 3,000 people in there, it is not nearly as good as if you are in a stadium with 6,000 or 7,000 seats with half of them occupied. We don't need this. We can use the money for other means, such as, as we have heard in the last two weeks heating our schools, making sure that the plumbing doesn't fall apart in our schools, taking care of the portables we need, policing the streets, and fixing the streets. There are many, many other priorities and if we are to go ahead with this project, I suggest that we take a step back, do it the right way and do it in the most fiscally responsible way. We can always be more fiscally responsible if we sharpen our pencils and I suggest that the pencils weren't sharpened enough in this deal so I would move forward with a motion to rescind so we can go ahead and do it the right way.

Alderman Hirschmann stated what I have to say on this issue is this is called the Manchester Civic Center. It is not called the Manchester Hockey Arena. Hockey is going to be a venue in this building 40 nights per year. We have been discussing this issue for two years. Everyone knows that hockey is a 40 night a year venue. What the real issue here is, is bringing major entertainment into the City of Manchester and having civic pride in your City and filling that building up when major events come. People want to see concerts. They want to see the Elton John's and the Janet Jackson's. They want to see major performances. In our school system alone, there are 17,000 children. If Disney on Ice came, we cannot build a 6,000 seat stadium. You are going to sell the place out and the kid is going to be left short. Elton John and Janet Jackson. Those people won't come to a 6,000 seat arena. The revenues from a 6,000 seat arena won't fund the building. The building will be a failure and that is exactly what some opponents want. They want this building to fail as they always have. It was a great personal tragedy to some that this building passed.

Mayor Baines stated I am interrupting to make a comment. It is a parliamentary comment. I would like to try to keep as much as possible and I realize that there are a lot of speeches on this subject and most of us have heard them many, many times but please speak for or against the reconsideration.

Alderman Hirschmann replied Alderman Vaillancourt was able to speak for 15 minutes about other issues that had nothing to do with this and all of the sudden I am putting valid points out and...

Mayor Baines interjected I am not cutting you off but there will be respect for the Chair at this meeting and any meeting that we have. When I rule as a Parliamentarian or I interrupt the discussion, that is what we are going to do and there will be respect for the Chair. All I was about to do is urge the Board to confine their comments to being either for or against this motion. That is all I was going to say, and I was not going to cut you off.

Alderman Hirschmann stated I would like to finish and I would like to say this. You recognized the discussion for a 6,000 seat arena. Can I proceed on that? Proceeding on a 6,000 seat arena, it would be a failure to Manchester and I fully request that this whole Board object to this and stick to what we voted for on December 21, which was a 10,000 seat arena. There are 17,000 school students in this City. There are four major colleges. The business community bought into a building to seat 10,000 people and bring in major events to you people at home, not 6,000 seats.

Alderman Shea stated I would like to refer to the *Nation's City Weekly*. We, as Aldermen, all receive this. It is a magazine or a newspaper that we all receive and I would like to make reference to the January 31, 2000 edition on Page 6. What it says is, "Report Examines Fate of City's Downtown Course." I want to make mention of the fact, your Honor, that they list the guidelines to help cities remain competitive in the new economy. "The future of the American

City can no longer be identified to the construction of ever taller buildings and ever more dense downtown office districts. City competitiveness depends upon identifying and developing unique cosmopolitan niches as opposed to trying to recreate the population and economic centers of the industrial era. Cities must nurture the grassroots economy, including specialty stores, manufacturing and other small businesses as opposed to lavishing tax breaks on favored large employers. Decentralized governance recognizes the unique needs of unique locations and is better suited to encourage the kind of local vitality critical to City competitiveness". Here is the key, your Honor, "revitalization must be an organic, market-based process as opposed to an artificial effort like expensive stadiums, government funded culture centers or street malls." What I am trying to indicate, your Honor, is that unless we focus our attention on economic development per say, we are losing at least in my judgment, the targets that we should be aiming at because if we put our resources in large civic centers to the detriment of building up local economies, I believe that we are moving in the wrong direction.

Mayor Baines asked so you are arguing to rescind.

Alderman Shea answered my argument, your Honor, is the fact that if we are going to put millions and millions of dollars into a large civic center what we are going to do is we are going to do that at the expense of utilizing funding that could be used for small businesses and for helping certain types of entrepreneurs. That is my contention.

Mayor Baines asked so you are arguing to rescind.

Alderman Shea answered that is right.

Alderman Levasseur stated I would like to commend Alderman Vaillancourt for his eloquent speech. It is good to see that he is passionate about a subject. It has been two and a half years and finally he has agree that we need at least a 6,000 to 7,000 arena and I want to commend him on coming over finally on that issue. I think that we shouldn't stop at 6,000 or 7,000 because then we are non-competing against Lowell and the Whittemore Center. I would like to ask the City Solicitor what would happen if we did rescind this motion.

Solicitor Clark replied since the December vote, the various parties involved in the project have been moving forward and incurring additional expenses. There will be economic liability to the City if we do rescind at this point.

Mayor Baines asked could you define that.

Solicitor Clark answered the architects have been working on the final plans. The City and the management company, Ogden, have been negotiating vigorously with the banks to make sure that all of the terms are proper. They have been incurring very hefty legal expenses on that. There will be legal expenses for the Housing Authority, for Ogden, for the banks and any other actions that the parties have taken in reliance on the Board's prior vote.

Alderman Levasseur asked so there would be some breach of contract issues here.

Solicitor Clark answered there would be potential liabilities to the City.

Alderman Wihby stated first of all, when you look at this motion it is rescinding something that we did and to me it feels like we have already voted on this before, we already reconsidered this and I still don't think we should be voting on this today because I think it shouldn't be allowed but I talked to the Solicitor and he feels like it is okay so we will vote but I still think it is an illegal vote, your Honor. We have all looked through this. We have all worked with this. Some of the new members of the Board have looked at this intensively. They decided at the last meeting that it was the right thing to do. It is almost like there are a few people and a few shows on TV that say these people aren't doing their job by evaluating this right because they are not agreeing with my point of view. They looked at it and they agreed that it was a good thing to do and they voted that way. No one is going to sit here today, I don't think, and change their mind after two weeks of looking at this. There is no new information that has come forward. In response since you let Alderman Vaillancourt speak on the bonded debt, absolutely bonded debt leasing should be done. The portables should have been bonded. That wouldn't have been a problem at the time. They decided that they were going to pay cash and I feel that if we allow them to bond that now and go above that budget, that is mismanagement on their part and it shouldn't be allowed. There is also...I just want to touch upon the letter that Alderman Vaillancourt spoke about. It was in reference to Alderman O'Neil who had a concern. The third paragraph there pretty much says that the local ownership group withdrew. That was the other party that we thought might not have been looked at carefully enough. I did speak to that person today and I asked them about this particular thing and he agreed with exactly what is in here. He withdrew due to his inability to accept the lease terms. This isn't a problem. We only had that one person and that is why they went forward with that, your Honor. I would request a roll call if we are ready to vote.

Alderman Gatsas stated Alderman Vaillancourt, I think, made some valid points. The UNH arena is 6,000 seats. It has no air conditioning and no box seats. Acquisition of the land cost was nothing because it was already the university's so I think the figure of \$26 or \$27 million is probably not a correct figure. I think that if you look at the highest youth hockey in the country being here in Manchester, NH, that has to tell you that there certainly is a following in the hockey industry. I think from that point, certainly 10,000 seats...UNH fills their 6,000 seat arena. I think that they would probably like 7,000 or 8,000 seats at this point but they don't have that ability.

Alderman Thibault stated this has been an extremely controversial subject on this Board for the past couple of years. The point is this. I was at the election yesterday at the polls all day. I wasn't running. The people were coming in there and talking to me about this subject. A subject that we have already voted two or three times on, but here we are still stuck with trying to make a decision on it. I have made my decision. Let me tell you this, of all of the people that

I spoke with and all of the negative things that have happened surrounding this civic center deal in the last two years, not one person that came to me yesterday went against what I have already done and I am not about to change my vote. Let me tell you another thing too. Most of the people are telling me my kids are driving to Worcester, to Boston, to Portland and to all of these other distant arenas to go to concerts and Disney on Ice or whatever else is happening there. We do not have a place in the City of Manchester that can accommodate anything like that. We don't have a place that can actually hold a Mayoral Ball properly. Everybody is so intent on this hockey thing. This is not just going to be a hockey rink. I have to agree with what Alderman Hirschmann is saying. This is going to be a place where things can happen in the City of Manchester and where people can congregate and see something happening in this City and not having kids driving 200 or 250 miles to see something. I am certainly not going to change my vote, your Honor.

Alderman Lopez stated I would like to address a question with Solicitor Clark from a concerned citizen that I spoke with today and I also turned his letter into the Clerk's Office who will in turn pass it out to the Aldermen. Mr. Clark, I talked to you today in reference to the construction contract. I would like to ask you, for the record, to explain exactly what that means because there was concern that if somebody could do it cheaper...was there a window in there where the evidence could be produced. Could this be done?

Solicitor Clark replied as you and I discussed today, the Housing Authority went out through a competitive selection process and selected Gil Baine to be the construction manager. That process required that Gil Baine put forward a guaranteed maximum price for the construction project. Anyone that has suggestions on how this building can be built at a cheaper cost or less cost to the City, the City would be happy to receive the information and pass it on to the architects and the Housing Authority to incorporate into their plans. Yes, it can be done.

Alderman Lopez stated first of all I have been supported for my vote and I have been criticized for my vote. That is the process and that is the Democratic process. I don't have a half an hour to explain everything, but I would like to take a minute. One, it is true that in October of 1998 when the referendum question was put on the ballot I did oppose the civic center at that time with the information I received. The majority of the people in Manchester voted for it. In my campaign for Alderman At-Large, I never misled the people of Manchester, my supporters or my friends or those others that did not vote for me. I have always said in my campaign that if the civic center met the 12 parameters I would vote for it. There is plenty of documentation in The Union Leader and I also have videotapes of other shows that I have said this on. Each of us have a viewpoint, wrong or right. I shall always respect that and would hope that others would respect my point of view. It was this Board or the previous Board that set-up those parameters and I have sat in many meetings where I have seen the Committee point fingers at the people who were charged with bringing the parameters to the Board. They shook their finger and said don't come back to this Board unless you meet all of the parameters, including the Mayor of this City. I have spent a lot of time on this question like many of you and at the last minute wanted something in writing in reference to the financial aspects. Some people said how can you read

this document in 15 minutes. The question was do they have the finances? Was it signed? Yes. Are there parameters in there? Are there additional collateral that they have to comply with? Absolutely. I am here to make a decision. Tom Clark is a lawyer. Bill Craig is a lawyer. The finance people that we pay are there to insure that our City is protected and if they fail to do that then their fiduciary responsibility also fails. I don't think that any employee of this City is going to let us down. As I said in 1998, I still believe in priorities that have to be met and I have confidence that this Board will meet these priorities. One we talked about tonight and that is School, which we should have passed but that is okay because more information is coming. I am not willing to have this City go into a lawsuit, which has been indicated by the City Solicitor. This thing has been going on and on and on. Everybody has a comment. Everybody is an expert. When this vote goes down, I shall vote no to this motion.

Alderman O'Neil stated my position has not changed. I believe this is a great deal for Ogden and I don't believe it is a good deal for the City, but the bottom line is it is a deal. With regards to the letter that I sent out after having a conversation with a local businessman, the reason I sent it to City staff was I thought they were heavily involved and Skip Ashooh's response dated on the 25th talks about the City and its representatives at MDC, Ogden Entertainment Scheer Sports and William Huff and Company. No mention of City staff. I think one of the things, and I am guessing that the motion is going to be defeated and we are going to continue on here but the City of Manchester, through its elected officials, the Board of Mayor and Aldermen and its City staff needs to get back heavily involved in this project and I feel very strongly about that. There are so many things happening out there and I don't believe that anybody is doing anything intentionally to hurt the City, but I think we have to get control. We are still the risk taker here. Whether it be construction and we have received some documents with regard to construction and some different project labor agreements, etc. and now I understand that this thing is getting chopped up so bad that who knows where they are getting the help from. I have a concern about that. We believed that we had an agreement to maximize the use of local help on this project. I have no idea if that is in the works. I still, today, don't know if we are going to be responsible for any City services outside the building or whether or not that is going to be charged to operating costs. One of the things I may suggest to the MDC Committee and City staff is that maybe a weekly summary can come out of all activity that happens whether it be on the financial end or the construction end that brings us up-to-date on what is going on. Thank you.

Alderman Clancy stated my position has not changed. I here for my constituents who tell me that their children go to Central High School and have to wear their coats and hats to take tests. The heating system is bad. How can I vote for the civic center now? I will never vote for the civic center. We have to take care of our infrastructure. Look how our schools are. Look how our buildings are. This is awful. We have to look at what is best for this City. We are never going to have an average of 4,500 people for 40 home hockey games. We couldn't do it down at the coliseum for \$3 so how are we going to do it for \$7 or \$8? Right now, this is awful and people in my ward are really disgusted because there is no parking. If we get this civic center, where are they going to park? That is my contention. Thank you.

Alderman Shea stated I was a little bit concerned because, and I wanted to ask the City Solicitor, this evening there was a discussion about the new Police Station and there is concern now on my part that if something isn't done regarding that are we going to be in legal problems as well. We have hired an architect.

Mayor Baines replied that is not related to this specific issue. I would be glad to take that up under New Business or somewhere else, but I would like to close out discussion on this issue.

Alderman Shea responded but he did mention that, your Honor.

Mayor Baines stated I know but it is a separate issue and I am trying to keep things focused where they need to be. I think that is a wonderful question, but it should be asked at another time. That is all I am saying.

Alderman Pinard stated what is the liability going to be if we don't move forward on this.

Solicitor Clark replied they have been building up fees at a rapid rate since the end of the year when the Board gave final approval.

Alderman Pinard asked what would be the number.

Solicitor Clark answered I don't have a number. It is hard to tell exactly what the number would be. It would be costs incurred and anybody moving forward in reliance upon final approval could have the opportunity to also seek lost profits. You just couldn't analyze the whole thing at this point.

Alderman Pinard asked how long would it take to get a number.

Solicitor Clark answered you wouldn't have a number from us. It would take a long time to analyze that number.

Alderman Pinard stated it might be worth our while to wait a month and get a number before we reconsider the whole thing.

Mayor Baines stated I would like to make some comments here. I think there are people who are out here that have been very diligent in terms of their passion about this issue I want to commend you for it. I also want to commend you for your tenacity in terms of dealing with this issue, but I want to talk about the word integrity a little bit. Some of the people have a contrary opinion about the project itself and the process, which by the way I happen to agree with and I have made myself, I think, abundantly clear on that issue but there are people out there in various meetings that talk about integrity. I have been around City government on the periphery for a long time and I am in the middle of it and I can attest to you that a lot of people have differences of opinions on this Board, but the integrity of every single one of the members of this Board from my perspective and I think that I can be as objective as anyone on this issue, the

integrity of everyone involved in this process is intact. I am talking about elected officials now. I have heard people talking about deals. Maybe you are in a different community than I am in, but that is not the way we do business here in Manchester and it is not the way this Mayor should do business. I have heard talk about well someone was appointed Committee Chair because they would make a deal to vote certain ways. I do not deal that way. I will not conduct this office that way, nor has anybody asked me to conduct this office that way. So, integrity is a very important part and I think Alderman Lopez and some others were talking about that. However, I want to reassert something very clearly on this and this goes to Alderman O'Neil's comments. He is absolutely correct and this goes to the critics that the people involved in government have not been as involved in negotiations in terms of every aspect of this project as they should have been and I want to make that very clear. Even dealing with the ownership issue. The hockey team ownership issue. People in government have not been involved because a decision was made some time ago that this was going to be carried on externally from government. The people externally involved in government, however, have conducted themselves in a manner so directed and have conducted themselves with honor throughout the process, but Alderman O'Neil's point is very well taken. This cannot happen again. If we are going to get involved with projects of this magnitude, government has to be in the middle of it and intricately involved as I am now on this project and I believe we will implement your suggestion in terms of giving periodic reports, written reports to the Board as to what is happening with this project and I think that will help to destroy a lot of the cynicism that exists around this project because we have to restore integrity. I hope I have made myself very clear on this, however, what has to be understood is that people have very strong opinions on this and I respect those opinions and that is why I have been gracious in terms of discussion on this issue because I believe that it was critical that this be heard at this time. Thank you for listening to me and now I would like to take a vote and a roll call has been requested by Alderman Wihby.

A roll call vote was taken. Aldermen Wihby, Gatsas, Levasseur, Sysyn, Lopez, Pariseau, Thibault, and Hirschmann voted nay. Aldermen Clancy, Pinard, O'Neil, Shea, Vaillancourt and Cashin voted yea. The motion failed.

Alderman Vaillancourt stated I wanted to follow-up on your comment about cynicism being rampant in government and I wanted to say that I would be very relieved to have less cynicism as well, but when the City Solicitor was asked to put a figure to quantify the numbers we didn't have that so I am just wondering if we are going to get a hold on this if he could give us any kind of ballpark as to how much liability we have already incurred tonight.

Mayor Baines replied that would be a legitimate question and I would ask the City Clerk to get some information on that and get that information to the Board. I don't believe that he should be able to come up with an answer this evening.

Alderman Pariseau stated it is my request that if any other item for the agenda relating to the civic center comes to your desk for review that you don't put it on the agenda. I am getting sick and tired of the same old crap.

Mayor Baines replied no motion will be accepted on that. My style of governance would be to allow Aldermen to put items on the agenda. They are elected officials.

Alderman Pariseau stated, your Honor, the action was discussed on December 21, again on January 18 and it was over.

Alderman Shea stated I would ask to follow-up on my comment before. In the Lands & Buildings Committee this evening we discussed the police station and the fact that...I am just concerned that there might be costs incurred so if he is preparing some type of a problem concerning liability, I am hoping that we are not incurring any kind of architectural expenditures or things of that nature because we have postponed that particular project and it is on hold now.

Solicitor Clark replied the police station project is comparing apples and oranges to the civic center project. That project never received final approval. The only approval that was given on that project was to expend money to have an architect and the fees that the architect has incurred to date will be paid and probably have been paid already. As I understand it, the design has since stopped so we are not incurring any more fees.

Alderman Shea asked so as of right now we would only incur the fees that we have incurred up to now.

Solicitor Clark answered that is correct.

Alderman Wihby stated I want to clarify what Alderman Pariseau just said. So is it your response that anytime we want to bring up an issue we can just call up the Clerk and tell them that we want an issue on the agenda and if we want to bring it up 100 times we can?

Mayor Baines replied let me just respond to you this way. I believe that you have been elected as representatives of your constituencies and obviously we have to work reasonably, but my normal judgment would be to allow Aldermen to submit items for agendas. I think that is the Democratic process and I will follow that and I will not apologize for following that.

Alderman Hirschmann stated going back to the civic center, the referendum, the vote from the last Board, the two votes of this Board, isn't that enough to say that now we are going to move forward and you are going to support the team of experts.

Mayor Baines replied without a doubt. I respect government and government has made a decision and I have made it very clear that we will move forward. Have no doubt about that.

9. AFSCME Master Agreement

On motion of Alderman O'Neil, duly seconded by Alderman Sysyn, it was voted to approve and ratify the agreement. Alderman Wihby was duly recorded as abstaining.

10. AFSCME Educational Assistants Agreement

On motion of Alderman Pariseau, duly seconded by Alderman Lopez, it was voted to approve and ratify the agreement. Alderman Shea was duly recorded as abstaining.

11. Resolutions:

“Authorizing the Finance Officer to effect a transfer of Six Thousand Six Hundred Fifty-Two Dollars and Eighty Cents from Contingency to the Manchester City Library.”

“Authorizing the Finance Officer to effect a transfer of Ninety Thousand (\$90,000) Dollars from Contingency to the Human Resources Department.”

On motion of Alderman O'Neil, duly seconded by Alderman Clancy, it was voted to read by titles only, and it was so done.

The resolutions were taken separately for enrollment.

“Authorizing the Finance Officer to effect a transfer of Six Thousand Six Hundred Fifty-Two Dollars and Eighty Cents from Contingency to the Manchester City Library.”

On motion of Alderman Shea, duly seconded by Alderman Pariseau, it was voted that the Resolution pass and be Enrolled.

“Authorizing the Finance Officer to effect a transfer of Ninety Thousand (\$90,000) Dollars from Contingency to the Human Resources Department.”

Alderman Clancy moved that the Resolution pass and be Enrolled. Alderman Lopez duly seconded the motion. The motion carried with Alderman Hirschmann duly recorded in opposition.

Mayor Baines stated before we get to the tabled item, I am going to recommend that this be referred to the Committee on Accounts. I have met with the people involved and they are agreeable to that.

TABLED ITEM

On motion of Alderman Shea, duly seconded by Alderman Pariseau, it was voted to remove the item from the table.

- 12.** Communication from Riverfest Board of Directors advising that an approximate \$12,000 owed the City cannot be paid at this time because of a deficit balance from this year's programs. The Riverfest Board is also suggesting that the City budget for coverage provided through City employees/departments in the future for this annual event.
(Tabled 01/03/00 pending discussion with Mayor Baines.)

On motion of Alderman Pariseau, duly seconded by Alderman Sysyn, it was voted to refer this item to the Committee on Accounts, Enrollment & Revenue Administration.

Alderman Hirschmann stated there is a second paragraph there that says that the Riverfest Board is also suggesting that the City budget for coverage provided through City employees/departments in the future for this annual event. That should go to you for your budget.

Mayor Baines replied yes and it will, but I would like the Committee on Accounts to look at it, study it and perhaps make some recommendations.

13. NEW BUSINESS

Alderman Vaillancourt stated I gave to the City Clerk's Office a communication from a Ms. Charlene Hurst from the seacoast regarding a potential fire code violation of this building. I wonder if that has been submitted to the Aldermen.

Mayor Baines asked what building.

Alderman Vaillancourt answered this very room

Clerk Bernier stated I haven't had an opportunity to look at it and see if I can address it. I will get back to you.

Mayor Baines replied we will follow-up on that.

Alderman Shea stated I would like to bring up the fact that the Police Department in Ward 7 is in need or is requesting an approval of a substation at 207 Wilson Street and this is an area of Ward 7 that has had serious problems for the last several years. Police presence in that area would certainly help with resident safety. I was hoping that Chief Driscoll would address that issue.

Chief Driscoll stated I apologize bringing this forward under new business, but it is a very important issue and I think it is a fairly simple issue. We tried to get it in on time. I think it did get delayed. It was my intention to have it on the agenda and I called and spoke with both Deputy Clerk Johnson and the Mayor and asked Alderman Shea to introduce it since it is in his ward. It is 207 Wilson Street. It is a small storefront. We have spoken with the owners. It has been vacant for a long time and they are willing to do significant renovations if the City agrees to sign a two-year lease or if the Police Department does. There are no new added monies to our budget. It is \$3,600/year for a period of two years. I can pay for that out of a grant. I would encourage the Board to approve it. We have run the lease by the City Solicitor's Office and they

have made slight alterations and approved it for signing so I would encourage the Board to approve this.

Alderman Shea moved to approve the lease subject to the review and approval of the City Solicitor. Alderman Wihby duly seconded the motion.

Alderman Wihby asked what are your plans in the future as far as having substations.

Chief Driscoll answered this would be the final one. This would give us one in each sector of the City. The City, as you know, is broken into three sectors that we use for our enforcement purposes. There is also one at the Mall of New Hampshire and there are two in housing developments in the City. That will complete the program that we are looking to initiate in the City.

Alderman Pinard asked is there a way...you say this is it for now but we are having problems on Bodwell Road and the surrounding area. Is there a chance of looking at having a substation in that area? In the past few weeks there has been a lot of break-ins in the Megan's Meadow area. I don't think we should just sit there and say this is it.

Mayor Baines answered that might be an appropriate discussion for another time, but I would ask that we focus on this issue.

Chief Driscoll stated we would be pleased to meet with Alderman Pinard as we did with Alderman Shea to determine if that is appropriate.

Alderman Lopez asked are you going to have air conditioning.

Chief Driscoll answered there is no air conditioning now. If, in fact, there is a need then we will install it at some point.

Alderman Lopez asked would that come out of your budget.

Chief Driscoll answered yes.

Alderman Pariseau stated I have a question that is not relevant to this item. I was in receipt of your annual report, Chief. I have a question relative to why there isn't listed anything to do with drug forfeiture monies or the D.A.R.E. Program donations that you receive.

Mayor Baines stated what I am going to do is keep the discussion on this and then we can keep the Chief up here to respond to other questions.

Alderman Clancy stated I see you said 207 Wilson Street, but I see on the pamphlet here it says 197. Is that the old florist on Wilson Street?

Chief Driscoll replied I don't know what was in there previously. I believe the address is 207. In fact, I am sure it is.

Mayor Baines called for a vote on the motion. There being none opposed, the motion carried.

Mayor Baines asked, Chief, could you answer Alderman Pariseau's question.

Chief Driscoll answered we have 34 what we call projects and that is one of them. None of them are listed in there.

Alderman Pariseau asked I wonder why that it. It is considered as revenue for the Police Department. Does this give you the privilege of doing what you wish with it?

Chief Driscoll answered within certain guidelines.

Alderman Pariseau asked could we assess your department a certain percentage of drug forfeiture money or whatever towards the salaries of police officers.

Chief Driscoll answered I don't think we can do that, Sir.

Alderman Pariseau asked why.

Chief Driscoll answered I think there are Federal and State guidelines that state that the money taken in a drug forfeiture has to be turned around and used for that specific purpose or something directly related to that. We haven't looked at that before.

Alderman Pariseau asked could we get a listing of how much money there is in those separate accounts.

Chief Driscoll answered absolutely.

Alderman Vaillancourt stated a couple of items came up at the Traffic and Public Safety Committee meeting earlier this evening. I will allude to one of them and leave the other one to Chairman Clancy, but I did get a call from a constituent today who wondered why we are not more strictly enforcing regulations against parking on sidewalks. I just want to bring to your attention that apparently there is a widespread abuse of the violation against parking on sidewalks. He mentioned specifically the Central/Beech Street area.

Alderman Clancy stated we had one more item that came up during our Traffic meeting and this doesn't concern you, Chief, but you can have your men on the beat be aware of this. There seems to be a lot of private people plowing snow from one side of the street to another and an awful lot of people plowing snow and blocking the sidewalks and when the City plow does go

around he has to go through a pile of snow maybe 6' to 8' high so if you could let the guys on the beat be aware of this I would appreciate it. Also, Mr. Thomas I see you are in the audience here and I would like to thank the Highway Department for doing an excellent job of plowing the streets this last storm. I did get a lot of good compliments on it.

Alderman Levasseur stated I have a question for the City Negotiator. Is it possible that you could get me a copy of the guidelines for the supervisor of each department when they make a determination of when a person reaches the outstanding limit that gives them a 3% raise? I am a little confused about that. Every year a person could be getting an outstanding review and get 3% each year, plus the cost of living raise? I am wondering how that is done.

Mr. Hodgen replied during the Yarger Decker Study, the consultant, Dr. Luthy, recommended an employee development program to the City which we adopted and there are extensive forms to be pulled out and evaluated by the supervisors and if an employee attains a sufficient numerical score in that evaluation, then he or she would be deemed to be eligible for an outstanding performance award. We can provide copies of those documents to you and answer any further questions that you might have.

Mayor Baines stated also, Alderman Levasseur could maybe sit with you and Mr. Hobson to go over that whole process because that is basically following the directive of the Board for those policies.

Alderman Clancy thanked the Fire Department for the excellent job they did up on Merrimack Street. That was a very good job as far as firefighting. It was a cold morning and they saved the lives of those people up there. My hats off to the Fire Department for an excellent job.

Deputy Clerk Johnson noted we do have a letter that was submitted by Alderman Lopez to the City Clerk that he referred to earlier in his comments that we will be referring to the Civic Center Committee. It contains various information related to the Whittemore Center. We wanted to note for the record that there was a question on the liability issues for the civic center and it is a financial question and it is my understanding that the Finance Department will respond to that rather than the Solicitor.

Alderman Cashin stated first of all I would like to thank the Police Department in reference to the Gore Committee. Chief, I want to thank you and your men for a tremendous job, especially Captain Leidemer. Getting the Vice President around this town is really a feat and you people really went out of your way and we appreciate it. Thank you very much. I would also like to say that I spoke to Alderman Vaillancourt tonight about his position as liaison to the Library and he has agreed to relinquish his position in order to allow Alderman Thibault to serve and I want to thank him for that.

Mayor Baines stated I want to introduce concerns that we have about Senate Bill 388. Mr. Thomas, can you come in and talk about this? What I would like to do is I sent a letter to the

Greater Manchester legislative delegation indicating some concerns we have about this bill and if the Board would so be inclined to support us in this endeavor in opposing that bill.

Mr. Thomas asked is that the bottle bill.

Mayor Baines answered yes.

Mr. Thomas stated we wrote a letter to the Mayor and to the Committee recommending that the Board of Mayor and Aldermen do not support this bill. Right now, we have a major solid waste contract with Waste Management for recycling. If this legislation passes and the bottle bill does pass, these materials will come out of the waste stream. If the materials come out of the waste stream, it will allow Waste Management to open the contract by what is called a change in the lock clause of the contract. There is a value in aluminum and some of these other products and if our contracts are open, they will be significantly impacted so we would urge the Board of Mayor and Aldermen to support our position of not supporting this legislation.

Alderman O'Neil stated this is not specifically about this issue, but we talked about it at the last Board meeting. That was the first letter I have received from a department with reference to legislation. We tried last year to start getting everybody to inform us on all bills that they are going up to prepare on so that when we run into State Representatives or State Senators we at least have some knowledge of the City's position so again if we could remind the department heads to inform us of what is going on.

Mayor Baines replied I would like to introduce David Scannell, the new Assistant to the Mayor who is going to be dealing with legislative matters and he is going to be setting up a series of meetings to make sure that we are following the legislation and keeping people informed.

Alderman O'Neil asked so the departments will be working with Dave to coordinate that and we will at least get a copy of that.

Mayor Baines answered that is correct.

Alderman Vaillancourt stated I was looking forward to meeting your new assistant because we did speak and in lieu of department heads meeting with the Manchester Legislative Delegation, we will be setting up a meeting for him to meet with the Delegation. Are you asking for a vote on the bottle bill? Since I do believe that conflicts of interest should be taken seriously by all of us, and since I am a State Representative and will be discussing that matter in Concord, I will abstain on that vote at this time. I am cognizant of the letter and did you send that to everybody or would you like me to?

Mr. Thomas replied we did.

Alderman Shea moved to support the City's position in opposing Senate Bill 388. Alderman Sysyn duly seconded the motion for discussion.

Alderman Thibault asked how long is the contract for with Waste Management.

Mr. Thomas answered the contract for recycling is five years with the option of renewing it for another five years.

Alderman Thibault asked how far into it are we.

Mr. Thomas answered we are approximately three years into the first contract.

Alderman Thibault stated so for two more years we would be committed.

Mr. Thomas stated in two more years we would have the right to extend it for another five years. They do not have the right to cancel it. Because of the drop in the value of recyclables, quite frankly, our contract is very, very favorable and I recommend that we continue with the program.

Alderman Thibault stated what I am asking is in two more years if we wanted to change anything there would be no penalty for us.

Mr. Thomas replied if we wanted to extend it or cancel it, but we cannot modify the contract. If we open the contract, then it would open it up to negotiate the fees and as I mentioned the value of the contract on our side is very, very favorable right now.

Alderman Levasseur asked how do you feel Waste Management is doing. Are you happy with the service we are getting from them?

Mr. Thomas stated they are having some operational problems because of the economy. They have experienced large turnover in their staff. When they have new personnel coming in, especially in the recycling routes on certain days, alleys are missed and locations are missed, however, they are very responsive to problems as they develop and they get resolved. We are having operational problems with them in that area and the yard waste area and quite frankly in their transfer facility we are experience some delays, but again they have been receptive.

Alderman Vaillancourt stated as a point of information, I think you can sleep safely at night, although I am not a gambling man I would dare say that the NH House has not been inclined to pass bottle bills in the past and the odds of it passing this time are rather remote indeed.

Mayor Baines called for a vote on the motion. The motion carried with Alderman Vaillancourt abstaining.

Mayor Baines stated I want to tell people that Alderman Sysyn and I had the opportunity to attend the opening of the new recreational center down in the inner City with Neighborhood Housing Services, which is a tremendous asset to the inner City neighborhoods and we got some wonderful comments, especially from some of the new immigrants to our City and plus some people have come here from other communities. We heard a beautiful story about a lady who came from St. Louis and when she first got here she was walking the streets of the inner City and somebody said good morning to her and she asked her son what did that man say to us and he said good morning. She said in St. Louis no one would even speak walking in the inner City like that. She said that the people of Manchester hold their heads high and that we have a friendly City. I know that meant a lot to both of us. Also, a number of us attended the open house of the new fitness center at West High School. I would encourage people to go over there and look at a community volunteer project that Alderman Hirschmann, Alderman Thibault, Alderman Cashin and others have been involved in in helping the parents make that a reality. That is about a \$500,000 to a \$750,000 million investment by parents of the City working very closely with Kevin Sheppard. They have done an absolutely beautiful job. It is worth the look. If you want to go over and see a first-class fitness facility from volunteers in this community, it is absolutely extraordinary.

Alderman Hirschmann stated the open house that they held last week was wonderful and it got a lot of press and I did put in a nomination for them to win the Spirit of Manchester award so I am hoping that you will all consider that.

Mayor Baines stated also to reference, although there were some weather difficulties, I did attend the US Conference of Mayors in Washington, DC last week and made, I think, a lot of favorable connections that will ultimately benefit our City dealing with some critical issues. I did have the opportunity, as all of us did, to meet with the President at the White House on Friday. I want to give special notice of a bill in the President's budget about school modernization bond proposal, which I think is worthy of support with our legislative delegation. It would provide \$24.8 billion in tax credit bonds over two years to modernize up to 6,000 schools. Basically, it allows the communities that are selected to bond issues without having to pay the interest on the bonds. That is a tremendous issue, especially as we look at some of the challenges in our community. Also, City Clerk Bernier and I attended the dedication of the new Fradette & Belliveau Law Firm, which is absolutely beautiful edifice and we should be very proud that people and businesses are relocating in the City. It is a building directly in back of the Lambert Funeral Home and if you drive by that we should take great pride that people are investing in our community with projects of that nature. Also, the Normand & Shaughnessy Law Firm hosted a wonderful neighborhood gathering. A number of Aldermen attended and there was a reception in honor of my election as Mayor and the neighborhood came and it was absolutely gratifying to see the people come out and support that. I also want to make sure that the Board is aware that we are in the middle of the budget development process and the CIP process and everything is going along with the schedule. Also, this is Catholic Schools week as many of you may know and I spent a couple of hours this afternoon with the students at St. Anthony's School. It was a wonderful experience interacting with all of the young people and

the people at St. Anthony's should be proud of the wonderful school that they have and the terrific behavior of the young people. I have also had meetings with the leadership of both the Catholic Medical Center and the Elliot Hospital regarding issues facing our community and all of us should hope that there is a fair and equitable settlement in the best interest of all of the citizens of Manchester as these two hospitals go through a very difficult time period. I want you to know that I am staying attuned to the process and have opened up a dialogue with both of the fine leaders of both of these fine institutions. Also, there will be a special School Board meeting on February 7 just to deal with the CIP process on the school side and that will have a public comment section so that we do not end up with the situation that happened last year when CIP was over here and all of the School issues were being addressed over here without the priorities being established on the School side. If anyone would like to attend that, please join us. I should note that we have seen tremendous responses from the community regarding Board and Commission vacancies and applications are coming in every day and we will be setting up a process to review those and we will have some nominations at the next Board meeting. Finally, I would like to commend City Clerk, Leo Bernier, and his staff for the wonderful job that they did with the election process. We registered 4,000 new voters yesterday. 4,000 new voters registered at the polls yesterday and going around the polls and watching these wonderful, dedicated people working on behalf of the City, all of us should be very proud of the job that they do in the City Clerk's Office. In the short time that I have been around here, we are very fortunate to have such a dedicated staff and it is a tribute to Leo and Carol and everyone involved in that and seeing such a tremendous turnout of voters across the City was absolutely gratifying for all of us involved in the election process. Finally, I had on my list again commendations to the Police and Fire Departments as it was already so noted and the Highway Department for the tremendous job that they do in keeping our City the kind of City we all want to live in. Finally, I want to close by talking about the horrific conditions that exist at some of our schools that were experienced during this cold spell. I want over to Central High School and toured that facility and again you look like a proud institution like Central High School, certainly one of the most prestigious institutions in the entire region, and seeing students taking final exams with their ski caps and mittens and gloves on should be an embarrassment to all of us as they sit in classrooms with duct tape on the windows and the inability, despite the enormous work from PBS to keep those buildings in proper conditions for our young people...we have to begin to address those needs over a long-term basis to make sure that our students get a fair shake, and get a good education, which all of us would want for all of our children and we need to pay special attention to that and I would urge you to visit schools on cold days and see some of the conditions or just go to Central High School and take a look at what is happening over there. I am committed to addressing those problems and I hope that you get behind us with a prudent plan to address those over a long period of time.

There being no further business, on motion of Alderman Pinard, duly seconded by Alderman Pariseau, it was voted to adjourn.

A True Record. Attest.

City Clerk