

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

**September 5, 2000**

**7:00 PM**

Mayor Baines called the meeting to order.

Mayor Baines called for the Pledge of Allegiance.

A moment of silent prayer was observed.

The Clerk calls the roll.

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

Mayor Baines advised that the purpose of the special meeting is to give residents of Manchester the opportunity to address the Board on items of concern affecting the community; that each person will be given only one opportunity to speak; that comments shall be limited to two minutes to allow all participants the opportunity to speak and any comments must be directed to the Chair.

Mayor Baines requested that any resident wishing to speak come forward to the nearest microphone, clearly state their name and address when recognized, and give their comments.

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

In May of 1999 I spoke to the Board of Mayor and Aldermen about the terrible condition of the senior centers here in Manchester, the #1 City. The very next morning, the telephone rang like I have never heard it before. I never realized how many people were waiting for someone to speak up for them. Amongst them were Mr. William Shea. He told me that he would help me to organize and go ahead and see if we could go forth with it. On his heels was a call from Mike Lopez. He repeated his offer. I thought this is great. We have two good helpers and two good friends. Later on, we decided to have a large meeting at Tarrytown Road and we had...our speaking guests were Barbara Vigneault, Bill Shea, Mike Lopez, Ted Gatsas, and we also acquired another friend and that was Joe Kelly who offered to give us beverages and refreshments. Barbara Vigneault warned us about the ups and downs of trying to get this center going at a time when things were very tight in the City of Manchester and that we had to have a lot of patience. We thanked her for that. Alderman Shea came along in his quiet, determined voice and warned us that things do not come easily or come very quickly and we would perhaps get some money the first year, some money the second year and perhaps we would have to wait a third year. All of us thought, we can't do this. We are too old to

wait so long. Mike Lopez came along and he supported his theory. Then, Mr. Gatsas came along and he stood up there in front of us and said don't wait for anything. There is money to be had. Go out and build the biggest building you can find and make sure that you build it tomorrow. Tomorrow has come and we don't have the building yet, Mr. Gatsas. However, we thought wow we sure have a lot of friends and we are going to get somewhere. Tonight, the seniors were walking around. They are getting very, very nervous. They are hearing all of this talk about a building called Sears up on Elm Street and they are thinking that they are going to be put in the basement. They are thinking that all of the problems they have at West are going to be transferred to the Sears building. We don't want that and it is not fair that the seniors should be so worried. As long as we know we have all of these friends, we will speak to the rest of the Aldermen. Please, as quickly as you can find out where you are going to put us...we don't care if you are going to build it this year or next year, just let us know if you have decided on what parcel of land this state-of-the-art, self standing building will be put on so we can enjoy it.

Joe Dutile, 156 Huse Road, Manchester, NH stated:

What can I say about Huse Road, Mr. Mayor? We have two problems on Huse Road. One, of course, is the speed and it has increased this past week or so because they closed Mammoth Road. Now we have the north and southbound traffic from Mammoth Road on Huse Road. I had to work around the front of my house this morning and in the latter part of the afternoon and it is unbelievable the speed that they travel on that road. Something has to be done. Somebody is going to get killed. We have kids going back to school tomorrow and we have a problem on our hands. Secondly, is Waste Management. My pick-up was last Thursday and it was not picked up. I called at 4:45 PM and the girl told me they are behind a little today, but we will pick it up later tonight. Friday morning it was still out there. I called and they said we are a little behind but we will pick it up today. I said okay. Friday night I called and they told me again they were behind but they will pick it up on Saturday. Saturday, the same thing. Now I have 11 barrels out there. They stayed out there for the week and my wife wanted me to bring them in the back of the house and I said no way, they are going to stay out there. So, they stayed out there. Of course this morning I had two barrels knocked over. With all of the traffic we have on Huse Road, it is a traffic hazard. So, this morning I called and I talked to this guy by the name of Joe and he tells me that it is not a priority. We have priorities he said and I asked what about me. I am not the only one. All of Huse Road hasn't been picked up. He told me that it wasn't a priority and that they had other priorities. So, I came down to the Mayor's Office and I talked to David and he said I will make a phone call so he made a phone call. He was assured that it would be picked up today. He said if it is not picked up by 3 PM give me a call, so I called him up at 3:15 PM and informed him

that it was still out there. He made another call and he was told that it would be picked up. I left at 6:15 PM tonight and it is still out there. Now, we have a safety hazard.

Mayor Baines stated Hector, before you begin I want to commend you and your community on the wonderful job you did organizing that spectacular event downtown. It seems that anything you decide to do, you do it well. On behalf of the Board and the citizens of our community, I want to give you a public acknowledgement for all you are doing on behalf of our community here in Manchester.

Hector Velez, 269 Central Street, Manchester, NH stated:

I just wanted to comment on...you know I moved here five years ago and one of the beautiful things about Manchester is that I can walk down the street and be with my son and my son can say hey, there is the Mayor and he knows or I can call one of the Aldermen at home, any one of you, and I commend you for that and speak to you and you give me your time. If I want to talk to one of the Mayor's assistants to get a message to the Mayor, David has always been there and I want to commend this Board of Mayor and Aldermen for making that...when you first came in in January, that open door policy available for people to come in and I respect you for that and I have used it a lot. Why I came here today is last year and again throughout the summer this year, I haven't had that open door policy happen with me in regards to the School Board. I want to have the Board of Mayor and Aldermen talk to the School Board because somebody like myself who is outspoken...I am not afraid to come and talk and let anybody know how I feel about something, but I look at the person who is timid or quiet or who doesn't know and think the Mayor is a hierarchy and thinks I can't talk to him or is afraid. That same policy is not available at the School Board and I wish that the School Board, for all of the fighting that they do or they say we are not working together, etc., I wish they would take the example of what this Administration is doing and would have that same open door policy with people in the community. I think one of the things that Superintendent Tanguay could do is come out into the community and meet people and talk to them about real issues and look them straight in the eye. You can't hide behind your desk or your secretary. I just wanted to let this Board know that I appreciate how each and every one of you is doing your job serving the community and I wish the Board of School Committee did the same thing. With that, I leave you to the tremendous amount of work you have ahead of you tonight.

Mayor Baines stated Hector there is a public participation meeting at the School Board too and you may want to come over there and take advantage of that.

Richard Girard, 517 Hevey Street, Manchester, NH stated:

I am coming to speak on two items tonight. The first is the cable contract that I understand is on tonight's agenda and the second is on the proposed Master Plan for Hackett Hill. First, with respect to the cable contract I have to say that as a member or former member of the Committee on Administration I was surprised to see that these contract negotiations were carried out in private. I find it something of a paradox to see that happen given that at the beginning of the renegotiation period, the Committee, chaired by Alderman Pariseau, had several public hearings to gather public input. So, what will be presented tonight I guess is the purview of the Committee members and the Board of Mayor and Aldermen. I know that when the Committee on Administration met to review the ambulance contract, the Fire Chief was involved in all of those discussions so I also find it odd that Dr. Sullivan was not made part of the process. More to the point, I hope that the cable contract took into consideration the significant input that the public did give. I hope to see MCTV moved to the very basic, first level or whatever they call it of programming so that you don't have to pay \$30/month just to see what is going on in your community. I hope that there will be an expansion of the number of channels available for religious programming so that the folks who want EWTN 24 hours a day and INSP and the Odyssey Channel as they came to our Committee, will be able to have the opportunity for that type of programming. This Board sent a letter in the last term to MediaOne asking for a family friendly tier of programming to which MediaOne was receptive. I hope that there are going to be provisions there so that people with families and children who don't want to be exposed to some of what is on TV these days have a basic programming options available to them. I also hope that the cost of the Internet is not passed on to the ratepayers. Regarding Hackett Hill, I see there is a proposal that would allow up to 400 housing units to be built, I believe, on the north side of Hackett Hill. In short, I think this is a pretty serious mistake. If you take a look at all of the schools on the West Side, whatever we raise from the measly fees we charge developers for development, it is not going to do anything to alleviate the school situation. You don't have any spare classrooms on the West Side and given the amount of developable industrial land we have in the City, I think it would be foolish to take any of that land and zone it for residential use. It all ought to be commercial/industrial and the fact that values are rising is a good thing for the City. We should be able to rehabilitate some of the older stock in other areas. Thank you.

Mary Fecteau, 579 Clay Street, Manchester, NH stated:

This is about the MTA. Crossing at Merrimack and Elm is much more dangerous. It is a very busy, four-way intersection where at City Hall there is only one traffic light but not a busy intersection and it is right across the street from the North Elm buses, not halfway down the block, which is very daunting to those who aren't quick and nimble on their

feet anymore. It is said that the bus stops haven't changed, but not all of the buses come down Elm Street by City Hall anymore. Just some of them do. One lady had been waiting two hours before she found out that the Lake/Hanover bus only came to the Center of New Hampshire. It never came by City Hall. Another lady almost missed her Page bus at the Center because the operator forgot to change the sign. She asked when the Page bus was coming and she said this is it and then changed it. Why can't they change the signs like they used to? As for Valley/Weston, it goes almost to the Mall. Why not go all the way and then to Weston? Why not come back downtown by Somerville and Wilson? There is a big space from Belmont to Wilson on Valley where there is no residential need for a bus.

Cecile Benoit, 138 Taylor Street, Manchester, NH stated:

The last words heard at the July 26 meeting were do something about the Valley bus and before tomorrow. That to me meant to it soon. So far, we have seen no alteration on that bus route. This to me indicates an unwillingness on the part of those who have created this new schedule to cooperate and do something when there is a problem. The Valley bus is not the only one with problems. Connecting with any bus along the route means a long wait and an extended trip wherever you go. Ridership is down, although it may appear not to be because we are counted so many times because of so many transfers. Veteran's Park and the Center of NH as a terminal is a bad spot. The traffic is heavier and faster at that point than it is towards City Hall. The traffic light is shorter and getting across the street you can only make it across within the light if you run. We are told that we can get transfers anywhere along Elm Street, but not all of the buses go along Elm Street. Some people have been stranded. Winter is coming and the area at Veteran's Park and the Center of NH will certainly cause some health problems in the cold weather when there is a long waiting period and sometimes it is as much as an hour if you have missed the bus. Our eyes were placed in the front of our head so that we could see where we are going. It would be nice if the buses did the same thing and told us where they are going, not where they have been. We are still having problems with those signs and people are still missing buses because of that. In closing, I can only sympathize with the drivers. They certainly don't have it any easier than the riders. Management may drag its feet about cooperating with its workers and clients, but the problem won't go away. In the meantime, in fact, the problem gets worse and the bus system is being run into the ground. Riders are jumping up to speak to the drivers to find out where they are going and all of this goes on.

Rick Darrah, Esquire, 64 Merrimack Street, Manchester, NH stated:

I am here on behalf of the elderly, the physically and mentally handicapped. I represent them in this matter. There is a serious allocation with one of the landlords in this City and his name is Philip Desmarais and I believe he is conspiring with Mr. Webster...

Mayor Baines interjected we have to be very careful that we don't go into personal matters or matters involving individuals.

Mr. Darrah stated I will say a landlord who owns and operates what used to be called Strawberry Oaks and is now called Red Oaks Apartments. A few years ago there was an elderly lady who lived on the fourth floor above me. She was confined to a wheelchair. She had asked that landlord if he would put in a wheelchair ramp for her. He refused. She then went to organizations like the Moore Center, Easter Seals, Vocational Rehabilitation and even State and City Welfare. I don't know if they did anything or if they talked to the landlord, but he still did not put in said ramp. She then wrote a letter to the Governor about it and after that he evicted her. There has to be something done about people like this. I believe he is in cahoots with Mr. Webster and Mr. Clay myself. I have had friends of mine do some investigating and checking and they have reported back to me that this has been happening. If something is not done, the crime rate in this City will go up even higher than it has been in the past.

Leona Dykstra, 21 Tennyson Drive, Manchester, NH stated:

I am speaking in support of our elderly citizens and their right to have a new senior center. Broken promises and business as usual should not be acceptable, not only to our seniors but to all of us. When I served as Alderman in the late 80's, the seniors were moved from the Carpenter Center where the City was paying a very low rent. In order to help the developer fill the space on Hanover Street, we paid a much higher rent. It was supposed to be something that was temporary and I guess 13 years have passed. It is a place where there is no parking and I sometimes wonder why it was in place for such a long time. I do not support putting our seniors in and I heard that it was the basement and I hope that is not true, but I am sure that this Board certainly wouldn't put our seniors in the basement of the Sears building, but they do deserve and do need a healthy environment. By purchasing the Sears building, who are we helping out now? Certainly not our seniors. After spending and committing a fortune on the civic center, this should be a piece of cake. Regarding MCTV, I am opposed to the Aldermen taking control of MCTV. Public access television should not be controlled by politicians who want to stifle public comment. It is important that our First Amendment rights be protected for all citizens. I hope that any contract negotiated with AT&T includes digital capabilities because the future growth and success of MCTV depends on it. I would also hope that the Administration Committee includes Dr. Grace Sullivan in some of these deliberations because I believe that her input certainly would be a valuable part of the process. Very quickly, regarding the Manchester Transit Authority, I just hope that you do whatever is necessary to help these people. There are many dedicated employees that you have working for the Manchester Transit Authority. I remember when I was an Alderman

many of them were there then and were long before I was an Alderman. They are good people and I hope things work out. I also ask that someone makes sure that whatever routes they have for the buses that they do not create a hardship on our elderly citizens and I thank you very much for the opportunity to speak this evening.

Aline Lotter, 227 Salmon Street, Manchester, NH stated:

I would like to offer a few observations on the proposals for development on Hackett Hill. I am sure you all read the Union Leader and the story that appeared on Monday. I am also pretty sure that if you were asked you would all condemn urban sprawl. Sprawl is not easy to identify in its planning stage. It always masquerades as growth and it is always accompanied by exaggerated claims of benefits to the economy and to improving the tax base. At this moment in time, there are over 1,000 acres of wild, undeveloped land on Hackett Hill. Land that is home to wildlife as large as moose and trees as unusual as Atlantic White Cedar. Not many cities the size of Manchester can boast such a gem. Most cities have long ago given up their urban forest in the name of growth and progress. Indeed, Hackett Hill has twice been the target of development only to escape ruin because of poor economic conditions at that time. That was pure luck. Before it is too late for regress, I urge you all to consider the true cost of any development on Hackett Hill. Once you have looked at the facts, I hope you will agree that development on Hackett Hill not only exemplifies sprawl planning at its worst, but also subtracts from the natural wealth of the City. I thank you for giving me this opportunity to speak on this issue, but please give the same opportunity to all the people of Manchester. Please arrange a public forum to address the pros and cons of taking our last wild land to make room for offices and housing.

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

I am starting to think that you guys are looking forward to seeing me here. Anyhow, let me say this. I have had property here in the City for 32 years. I have been in Ward 2 for 42 years. Some of you maybe weren't even born back then. So, I have been around. I am not running for office and I am not looking for votes. I am an observer and I point out certain things and I have in the past. I am one of the 12,050 that voted against the non-binding referendum for the civic center. Half the City because the total vote was only 25,000. Anyhow, one night I am sitting at home and I am working my remote control for the TV and I hit Channel 16. There I saw Alderman Levasseur with a tape recorder up to a microphone. I had the sound off so I don't know what was on it but he was making all sorts of faces as apparently a voice was coming out. I put on the sound at the end and some male voice was saying something and I don't know how legal that is to play on public television, a tape recording, but there it was. The next speaker was Alderman Hirschmann and I was enhanced and got my attention when he said about the civic center I am happy that we are getting it in downtown Manchester because when my

daughter goes to Worcester to see the Beastie Boys I worry about her. Now she will be able to come downtown to Manchester and it will be right here. For that reason, we are spending \$100 million? We are taking a big gamble on that building that is going up. There was an article in the Boston Globe, "Music Goes Upscale." In conclusion, it was \$250 to see the Supremes this summer and in another two years where are these prices going to go? That is my point and I will be back with more observations.

Mayor Baines recessed the special meeting to convene the regular meeting of the Board of Mayor and Aldermen.

Mayor Baines called the meeting back to order.

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

To start off on a positive note, I don't know if Alderman Pinard has mentioned it to you people but I have talked to him a couple of times and he has come up with a novel idea and I agree with it that right across from the Hanover Street shopping center would be an ideal place for your senior center. It is pretty vacant. You can start construction and I know that the doors will open before the civic center if you start moving quickly. I find it hard to comprehend how Mrs. Sullivan was left out of the cable contract negotiations. She has the experience in that area. I think it was a slap in the face to leave her out of it. The civic center contamination. Kind of a novel idea that it was going to cost too much to clean it up and now we are just going to leave it buried. I believe if anybody else had a piece of property, the State would demand that it be cleaned up once you discovered it. What is the difference if it was asbestos, chemicals or oil? Contamination is contamination. You deal with it now. You bought the pig in the poke and now you have to pay for cleaning it up. Do it right. The road closures. It seems like you guys jumped the gun when you put up the barricades over in the south end here and people have to go half a mile out of their way to get home. Apparently, according to the Union Leader there are some petitions circulating now to try and get you to change that back around. That is different. The last thing is this little book right here. The mini version of the City Charter and Section 9.03 Standards of Conduct, letter G. "The Board of Mayor and Aldermen and various boards and commissions of the Board of School Committee shall act in all matters as a body and shall not seek individually to influence the official acts of any city official." Last month, when this Board sat here and took a vote on an alternate for the Planning Board, that was an official City act. For an Aldermen to go on TV and explain why he voted the way he did...I will be damned if an Alderman is going to go behind my back and against the City Charter and approach members of this Board before that vote was taken and urge them to vote no on that nomination for his own personal reasons. My son has a lot of experience in a lot of different fields. When he was in the Air Force, he was giving briefings to Generals when an officer should have been doing

that and the Major that was in charge told me that he had the confidence in him. My son has a lot of integrity and he will do that position justly. Mr. Mayor, if Alderman Hirschmann did in a verbal way try to influence this Board before a vote, I would like to see you take this before the Conduct Board.

Alderman Hirschmann stated my comment was made after the fact. Let's get the facts straight.

Mr. Dodd replied I have the floor.

Mayor Baines stated you made your point and I thank you.

Linda Garrish, 7 Irwin Drive, Manchester, NH stated:

There are many worthy issues before you tonight as they are in front of the City's future, but I am here to speak about something very dear to me and that is Manchester Community Television. As a long time activist, I believe a democracy works best when people are active participants and that is why I have been a public access producer for six years. I ask you to delay and not make any decisions on Manchester's cable contract or the structured administration and organization of Manchester Community Television before you hold a public hearing on the pending contract, especially where negotiations have been so private. I ask that you also put aside your personal feelings, attitudes and disagreements about MCTV public access content and the opinions expressed by public access producers. I ask you to reflect on the power and the importance of the right you have as citizens and Aldermen to the freedom of speech. MCTV is the people's television. Of, by and for the people. It is democracy at its best reflecting the diversity of opinion, of politics, of need, of interest, of religion and of course expression and when you don't like it or someone doesn't like it or agree, they or you can always change the channel or develop your own programming or get on one of its talk shows and give your opinion. That opportunity just doesn't happen in mainstream broadcast, cable or public television with all of their advertisers, editors, directors, producers, sponsors, stockholders, members, censors and slick production shows and sound byte news. For all of its eight years, MCTV has reflected who, what, where, when and how of Manchester and how it has grown. It has been a center of creativity, of learning, of community development, of activism and sometimes anger and confrontation. Public access has given the people of Manchester a voice that they would not have had in mainstream television. On City Talk alone I have had a chance to showcase so many issues and actions and events and opinions that are important to the people of Manchester over my six years. Homelessness, housing, jobs, court appointed special advocates, Pine Island Park renovation and so many others. Many public access producers in this station have won awards. National and State figures and elected leaders have come to my show and

others because they recognize the value of MCTV. Despite the limited funding of the past, it has grown and excelled because of the dedication of Grace Sullivan and her staff and the thousand of volunteer hours that public access producers like myself have given to this community. The contract and the future of MCTV should receive a fair hearing before the public and include a fair portion of the franchise fee. At least comparable with the rest of the nation, as well as a reasonable investment in technology, equipment and channel capacity. At least equal to the cable business increase and the community increase. I just want to ask you...there are other things I would like to add to that but please do not vote on the cable contract until a public hearing is held and please hold in check your own personal disagreements and views on programming. Please do not make changes that attempt to reign in, censor or stifle what is Manchester's most democratic initiative. Thank you.

Alderman Vaillancourt stated before you take all comments under advisement, I believe there was a misstatement. It is not an opinion or anything, but I believe one of the speakers stated that you had to pay \$30 before you got MCTV. That is not correct, as I believe Alderman Pariseau can reaffirm. I believe the basic rate is \$10 and you get MCTV for that.

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

Mayor Baines advised that this being a special meeting of the Board, no further business can be presented, and on motion of Alderman Pariseau, duly seconded by Alderman Hirschmann, it was voted to adjourn.

A True Record. Attest.

City Clerk