

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

**November 21, 2000**

**7:00 PM**

Mayor Baines called the meeting to order.

Mayor Baines called for the Pledge of Allegiance, this function being led by Alderman Sysyn.

A moment of silent prayer was observed.

The Clerk called the roll.

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

Absent: Aldermen Clancy, Lopez

Mayor Baines stated just so the Board knows, Alderman Lopez is home recuperating. I have talked to him and if we need him this evening, we can call him. He is doing very well and we wish him a speedy recovery.

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.

David Pray, 345 Brent Street, Manchester, NH stated:

I come before you today to voice my opinion and concerns regarding the air quality issue at Highland Goffs Falls School. My first grade daughter currently attends this school. My sixth grade son would have attended this year, but due to overcrowding is not at Southside. Whether it is just one child or one hundred children that get sick, I think it is our duty to our children to provide a safe environment in which to learn. I don't

understand how we can have about the highest property tax in the State, if not the nation, and not provide an adequate ventilation system at this school. As it is, the children do not have adequate educational tools on par with the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Art and music classes are taught in outside trailers and many tutors are laid off. I have a hard time understanding where all of the money is being spent, but surely there is something left in the budget for the health of our children. The Airport continues to expand, houses are bulldozed or soundproofed and traffic continues to build. The people in the south end Goffs Falls area have endured a lot and I am sure that a lot more is in store for us but we will not stand by idly when the health of our children is at stake. We need some action by Congressman Sununu and this Board. We shouldn't have to come to this meeting and beg this body to look into and fix the ventilation system at this school. Thank you for your time.

Mayor Baines stated I appreciate your comments and I will veer from the normal procedure to let you know that we have been addressing that. I have a memorandum from Tim Clougherty who is a facilities engineer and is on top of the issue. As you may be aware, a new system was put in place in 1993 and at this point in time they are looking at the fan belts, the operation of the motors within the system and have every expectation that the system will be corrected and fixed. They are dealing with the contractors who originally were associated with that project and we will keep you updated as time goes on.

Alderman Vaillancourt stated since you are veering from tradition, I will hand out at this time a packet of 20 letters that I have received from constituents in the area and a letter that I have today sent to Congressman Sununu to address this problem and this will be brought up...Alderman Pariseau has agreed to invite the Congressman to the meeting next Wednesday night at 5:30 PM, the Airport Aldermanic committee on the second floor of City Hall.

Mayor Baines replied we appreciate that.

John Latsha, 10 Gantry Street, Manchester, NH stated:

I was one of the individuals who had to take my daughter out of Highland Goffs Falls School because of the conditions there. She was experiencing headaches and sweating. I took her out of the school and put her into a private school and now she doesn't have anymore headaches or any sweating episodes. In fact, she is excelling. Mr. Mayor, if I was to say that the four out of the five major operating units of the ventilation system at Highland Goffs Falls school were inoperable, would that be a correct system.

Mayor Baines replied not according to the reports that I have.

Mr. Latsha responded I got an e-mail from Pam Kosher who is a secretary for Mr. Sununu and she called Mr. Paul at Highland Goffs Falls yesterday and he said he spoke with Mr. Chapman and Mr. Chapman told him that out of the five major operating units of the ventilating system that were checked last week, four of them were inoperable.

Mayor Baines replied that could be. This letter is dated November 9.

Mr. Latsha stated my letter is dated November 20. According to School Committee Member Sandra Paradis in the Union Leader article on November 2, 2000, "the problem with the air circulation and quality has been going on for three years." She also said in the same article, "there appears to be quite a number of children with respiratory illnesses at the school" and she voted to contact Congressman Sununu's office for help along with everybody else on the Building & Sites Committee. I brought this to your attention, Mr. Mayor, on September 20, 2000 on your Ask the Mayor show that you haven't had since because I asked you the tough questions. Mr. Sununu, on November 1, said according to his secretary, if the students at the school are experiencing physical problems because its ventilation system is inadequate to meet its needs, Congressman Sununu would be willing to pursue this matter with the FAA to determine if there are any funds available to correct the deficiency. Are we going to take this route, Mr. Mayor or are we going to use taxpayer money to pay for this system?

Mayor Baines replied once we get into the regular part of the meeting, we have the people from Public Building Services and from the Airport here and we will have them come up and address exactly what is going on with that issue.

Zane Knoy, 105 Garden Drive, Manchester, NH stated:

I am the Co-Chairman of the Manchester Regional Area Committee on Aging. A sub-committee of our Area Committee has been meeting with advocates and senior officials and strongly supports the concept of a free standing senior center for Manchester that will serve not only the seniors of today, but those in the large boomer generation who are fast becoming seniors. The experience of our Committee has been that free standing or sole purpose senior centers are the most successful and will provide the kind of space that will more fully meet the needs of the largest number of seniors, both men and women, because men do go to centers too, meet the needs of this people in Manchester. Our sub-committee continues to offer itself in our role as advocates and as persons with a wide variety of experience in the field of aging professionally and personally and we look forward to continue to work with you.

Dennis Turpin, 122 Myers Street, Manchester, NH stated:

I come here to express my displeasure and it may seem a minor point to you, but I got a \$15 night parking ticket. My wife came home from Shop n' Save in Raymond where she works and mistakenly, along with a whole row of people, parked on the wrong side of the street on November 17. It became November 18 and she was on the wrong side. Last year, the same thing happened and I got a warning on my windshield. This year, I got a \$15 ticket. I paid the ticket, but there was a whole row of people on Myrtle Street who got that ticket. I don't care about their finances, but some of them may not have been able to pay it or it may have extended them a bit. I think everyone who got a ticket on Myrtle Street that particular evening should have their money refunded or the violation revoked. We are not talking about law here. I understand the law. I want justice. Thank you.

Francoise Elise, 362 Myrtle Street, Manchester, NH stated:

I am here as Director of the Franco-Americaine Center and to speak about the issue that occurred over a month ago regarding the potential loss of CKSH TV. The Franco-American population was very, very concerned about the potential loss of the French channel and I realize this happened over a month ago and for you people it might seem over and done with, but for the Franco-American community, they are still very concerned that there was a threat to the loss of this station, as well as maybe potentially the threat of losing it in the future. First of all, I want to thank the Mayor and his staff for really advocating right up front when this issue first broke about keeping this station. I am very, very thankful to you, Mayor, for doing that and I have had reassurance from the Mayor as well as Tim Gage from AT&T that this station should stay, but this is not written in stone and we have over 60 people here who voluntarily came themselves because they are worried and they are concerned and this station is very, very important to them. If the people here who are concerned about this station could just raise your hand to show that they are here to say that they are concerned and they want you people to know about it. Up until today, there had not been a public forum in which they could have expressed themselves. I do have a petition here signed by 150 people. This petition was collected by August Futiere and I wanted to present that to the Board. I know that you are doing your best to make sure that this station is kept in the City. There are two other people who would like to give some testimony as to why this station is important to them and they are the next speakers in line. I would like you to listen to them. Thank you very much.

Liutte Morin, 111 Allen Street, Manchester, NH stated:

I am here tonight like she said regarding my concern about the French channel. To me, it is nice to keep contact with the Canada soap opera and even the hockey though they are

not doing too good this year. I like to watch hockey games too. When they have special events, like the election pretty soon, we like to see that and keep in contact with our family. When we go to Canada, we would like to know if it is going to rain or snow. It is fun to watch the French channel so I am here with all of these people and I hope we can keep the French channel.

Ronaldo Parent, West Hartford, CT stated:

Mr. Parent spoke in French.

Jackie Domaingue, 102 Donahue Drive, Manchester, NH stated:

The first issue has to do with the Hackett Hill development and I would only ask that you all take an awful lot of time to consider your options and not rush into anything. You did make an awful lot of promises to the businesses in the Millyard. The second issue, which is really why I am here this evening, has to do with an incident that occurred on November 6 at Memorial High School involving a spill of liquid of unknown origin in the newspaper office. One teacher and one student were transported by ambulance at the decision of the school, out of caution, to Elliot Hospital. The parent of the student was contacted by telephone and told that he could join the student at the hospital. The decision to transport the student and the teacher was made by Memorial High School staff and not the parent. It was made as a result of not knowing what the spill represented. The x-ray was taken at the hospital of both the teacher and the student to insure that there was no damage to the lungs. The bills have arrived, ladies and gentlemen, at the homes and the parent inquired of the principal at Memorial High School where to send the bill and was told I don't know. So, the principal contacted the Asst. Superintendent for Secondary Education, Mr. Adamakos, called the parent back and the principal reported that Mr. Adamakos' response was we don't handle that. Let me assure you that I definitely looked up the September 15<sup>th</sup> article in which the City of Manchester elected to engage in a three year contract with principals and assistant principals and they are being paid an awful lot of money as administrators to give us some answers. Now, they may not have all of the details, but certainly the courtesy of giving direction to a parent who inquires regarding an incident that occurred and originated in the school system should be handled a little bit better than this one was. I will leave it to you, Mr. Baines, since you are also Chairman of the School Board, to send a message to these people that that response was unacceptable. The bills will be forwarded, thanks to Mr. Ntapalis at the Risk Office, to the proper area and I hope that you will investigate why we are paying such high salaries to administrators who cannot give direction.

Mayor Baines replied just to follow-up, a call came into our office on that and I think Mrs. Blushiy gave the proper direction in terms of how to proceed with that.

Ms. Domaingue responded Mrs. Blushiy did give the proper direction followed by Mr. Ntapalis, but unfortunately I don't think Mrs. Blushiy should be responsible. The first call went to the administrator of the high school.

Mayor Baines stated I understand. I just wanted to make it clear that we did get involved and Mrs. Blushiy did a good job in getting the right information.

Richard Girard, 166 Moore Street, Manchester, NH stated:

I read in the newspaper that Alderman Wihby is going to resurrect his charter amendment to make the School District a department of the City once again. To be honest, I don't know whether or not I support the amendment, but I do know that I support the intent. It seems to me that the intent of the amendment is to insure that the School Department comes in line with what the City needs in order that it might get its tax bills and other financial items in order. The reason why I am not sure that I support the amendment itself is because I am not sure it is the best way to achieve that end. Having served in the Mayor's Office for six years and on this Board for two, I recall with painful detail the fact that even when the School Department was treated as a department it was hardly forthcoming with the information that the City needed to do the work it needed to do. It has been particularly painful under the guidance of Superintendent Tanguay. Fiscal year 1998, a year in which the school budget was fully funded, saw the school budget go into the tank. This Board, in conjunction with the School Board, created a committee to oversee the School Department's finances in subsequent years. It also came up with a resolution that was supposed to settle the deficit problem and this Board was told that never again would you see the School Department's budget overspent. Fiscal year 1999 went into the tank. I know technically it didn't because an accounting trick pushed half a million dollars of budgeted expenses into fiscal year 2000 and if I read the paper correctly we are looking at another \$4 million deficit, not counting if I understand correctly, the \$1.4 million the School Department says the City still owes it from fiscal year 2000. So, the taxpayers right now are looking at \$5.4 or \$5.5 million worth of potential deficit. This is what I have been able to gleam from the newspaper and if I have misunderstood anything, I am sure that Mayor Baines when the matter comes up, you will correct the record. However, my point is this. There were those of us on this Board who took a rather sound chastisement from various members of the education establishment for opposing that solution feeling that it did not hold the appropriate bodies or the appropriate people accountable for their actions and provide assurance to the taxpayers and to this Board that the matter would not be repeated. I suggest, with due respect, that a better solution at this point may be this because I have never been known to be critical without proposing a solution. I think if this Board is going to intervene, and by the way as the taxing authority, the appropriating body in the City, I believe this Board

needs to approve the \$9 million loan the School Board wants to take. They are not financially responsible, the City and Board of Aldermen is. I believe that any resolution moving forward needs to include the resignation or dismissal of Superintendent Tanguay and to retire the debt that these mounting deficits have posed to the City, the interest line as we know now the School Department gets to keep its interest from the monies that get deposited into the accounts for it, the money generated off of those bank accounts, that interest, should be used to retire over whatever period of time necessary, the deficits and the debt that they have incurred so that the taxpayers of this City don't get hung out to dry once again. I will wrap up with this. The idea that the Canadian channel could be taken off as a local station leads me to say so, allure, don't let it happen. Thank you.

June Larkins, 245 Carnegie Street, Manchester, NH stated:

Tonight I would like to speak in favor of the senior center, but in a downtown location like the Sears building if that indeed is possible or some other central location. For 10 years, a tremendous amount of time and money has been spent trying to attract people besides just business people to the downtown area. This, I believe, is a golden opportunity to get another group to come to downtown and be a part of the City core. In order for the City to remain vital or become more vital, it needs to have mixed use, not just business people who leave at 5 PM and the sidewalks roll up. So, this would be another group of people that we could have come to the downtown area. The other advantages would be that this is an existing building with a large parking lot. It is served by three bus routes that go directly in front of the building. The other location, I believe, under consideration is Singer Park and that is not currently served by public transportation. The Sears building is handicap accessible and there are lots of other services nearby, such as a bank, several restaurants, beauty shops, shoe repair and several other businesses that might benefit from having people come down to that area. One objection that I have heard to this location is that financially it will remove that building from the tax rolls. I have not seen an analysis on this nor do I believe that one has been done regarding what that financial aspect would be. The Sears building would be low risk and flexible. If the senior citizens needed more space and the center needed to grow, it could expand into other parts of the building. One final point is that concerning Singer Park, I would be interested in knowing if there is a long-range plan for its development and it might make sense to keep the park as a green space as opposed to using it as building real estate.

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

I used this phrase once before and it seemed to work. No, this is not Alderman Girard, but I hope I can get as much time as he had. I happen to be the junior member of the South Willow Street Dunkin Donuts AARP coffee table in the morning.

Mayor Baines asked what time does that convene.

Mr. Dodd answered 7 AM. One of the members, Mr. Bennett, says we see the Aldermen ask questions at these meetings on TV but the citizens never get to hear the answers. He thinks, and I agree with him, that it would be a good idea when you start your regular meetings off maybe you have a little list of some pertinent questions that were asked at the previous meeting that you could give a little synopsis of some answers so that the general public could catch up on what happened the previous meeting. We used to have a gentleman here who talked about corporate welfare. I don't see him here tonight but you all know what this is. It is one dollar. That is what you gave away the Chandler School for to the Holy Family Academy. They had an open house recently and they turned that back into a schoolhouse. Why didn't we do that? Why didn't you and the School Board do that? They seemed to have done a very good job at it. At one of your meetings back in October, one of the Aldermen here had a pre-campaign speech about how much acreage was being set aside up there by the City for conservation purposes. I think between last night and what has been in the paper, we finally got the right answer about how much land the City is setting aside up there and it is not as much as we were led to believe. The Millyard parking. I am simply amazed that at the October 17 Aldermanic meeting there was discussion going on about putting a parking deck down at the old Seal Tannery building and Mr. Gatsas, Alderman Gatsas, asked you guys to put the brakes on, step back and look at this project again. The deck was going to cost you somewhere in the neighborhood of \$17,600 a space and was going to cost you \$1.7 million to build. He questioned the cost for the garage at the Airport at \$10,000 a space and why couldn't we stop and rethink this program and do it the right way and get a bigger bang for your buck. He has a very good idea. You could do the same thing with the Bedford Lot. You could put a mini garage on there. A pre-fab thing like you did at the airport and get a bigger bang for your buck. I am implore one of you Aldermen please ask that this motion be reconsidered and the rest of you get behind it and stop and look at this thing. It seems to be following the path of the senior center. The last thing I want to talk about, and I didn't get it in the last time I was here, I am simply amazed at the cable contract that you guys signed. I watched this on TV and again I was amazed that Grace Sullivan could not be included in the negotiation. This 65-page contract here has some technical terms in it and I don't know whether the Committee that was doing this knows those technical terms but I think she would have. What really amazed me that I was oblivious to was the franchise fee. When you get back to Page 29 of this document, the last paragraph and Item E says, "the franchise fee may appear as a line item on the subscriber's bills." I went and got my cable bill out and I looked at it and there was \$1.70 franchise fee for the old contract. What that really amounts to is a tax that you are putting on the cable subscribers to be able to watch cable TV. Short and sweet those are the facts. They charge the money as a franchise fee, we pay it, they hold it for three

months and then they turn around and make quarterly payments to the City. I was really amazed at that. Call it a tax, which is what it is. For the money that you are going to get this time, my rough calculations show that franchise fee going up to about \$2.15. If you guys continue to spend money foolishly on a parking deck like that, those of you that are going to be running again next year I don't think you will have to worry about a recount because if enough people realize that you are wasting money like that on a lot of projects, there might be some discontented voters.

Mayor Baines advised that if there is no one else present wishing to speak, a motion would be in order 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 Cashin, duly seconded by Alderman Pariseau, it was voted to adjourn.

A True Record. Attest.

City Clerk