

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

**December 19, 2000**

**7:00 PM  
Aldermanic Chambers  
City Hall, 3rd Floor**

Mayor Baines called the meeting to order.

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

A moment of silent prayer was observed.

The Clerk called the roll.

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

Absent: Alderman Sysyn

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:

Here I am again trying to bring some kind of understanding between City Hall and the seniors. They are very upset. The Sears building is not primarily for the seniors, but mainly for the Manchester agencies. So, again in their lives they are expected to carry the problems of others on their backs. All of their working years they have paid their taxes and asked the City for nothing. When they retire they still help the City through volunteerism, but yet they continue to be treated as second class citizens. They are

asking for a free standing building in a country setting so that they can have activities in the summer and be able to breathe clean air. We also would like to have a building that we can approach with dignity, socialize and enjoy continued education. We, the seniors, have gained the support of three other organizations here in Manchester. One of them is the AARP. The other is the Concerned Taxpayers Association and the Council on Aging. This organization, which was formed to perpetuate the dignity and well being of the senior citizens. These organizations provided me with postcards, which I distributed and collected and tabulated before they were mailed to you. Five percent of those votes went to the Sears building. Twelve and a half percent went for the Derryfield Park. The rest were all for Singer Park. Seeing that Derryfield Park is out of the question, that makes me feel that the seniors have voted for...95% have voted for the Singer Park. Now, the seniors have spoken and they have spoken very many times. Are you listening to what they are saying? You have talked a lot about saving money tonight. The \$4 million that would buy the Sears building could build our center on City owned land. The \$3 million that would renovate the Sears building could be used to renovate the City owned Brown School and put all of the Manchester agencies in that. Now, the City could continue to get its tax dollars each year. While you are contemplating your position on this, please remember the seniors. Thank you.

Richard Magoon, 470 Silver Street, #414, Manchester, NH stated:

Good evening Mayor and Aldermen. This is my first time here. The reason I came here was my concern about the expansion of the Manchester Airport. I am not really here to address the noise or pollution problems that exist, but more concerned about the capital or the money that is being expended to improve or increase the capacity of the Airport. I am looking at well have the resources that are available in the capital risk study, have they addressed using of these resources in a more efficient manner. For example, if you have been at the Airport as I have on the weekend or some day you will notice that a number of the gates are empty. Has there been consideration given to non-exclusive use of gates for example? If Southwest Airlines says that their turn around time is 20 minutes and they say that they could sub-lease the gates that they use at the Airport, couldn't this be a win-win situation for Southwest Airlines and also for the City not having to spend many millions of dollars to expand the capacity of the Airport? Also, are we looking at a situation in the growth of the Airport that is an expedient curve where the propensity to increase is limited propensity due to the competition from other airports and due to the technological changes in the way that our air service is delivered? For example, if we do increase the capacity are our neighbors at Logan field or our neighbors at Pease going to say well we need to increase our capacity and service also and, therefore, we would get into a situation of five or six years out where our risk capital is in jeopardy?

Rita O'Connor, 23 Country Club Drive, Manchester, NH stated:

I am sure you are just as tired of us being here as we are of being here. As you know, Mayor, at both parties you attended you had the seniors tell you that they don't want to go to Sears; they want to go to Singer Park. Talking about consolidating the City's office, then we are going to talk 50 places already at the Sears building before there will be any parking when they get there to go to work in the morning. Where are the seniors going to park? We have them on oxygen. We have them in wheelchairs. They could not possibly go there. They don't want any part of it. It is not a safe area and now I hear a gentleman tonight say that in Singer Park we will put a baseball park in preference to seniors. We are talking money. We are going to lose \$9,000 in taxes as far as the Sears building. Why can't we go to Singer Park where we already own it and we don't have to pay the taxes? This is what the seniors want. A baseball park and everything for the children, fine. What happens to us? That is all I have to say but I hope you will consider sending us to Singer Park where we want to go and not where somebody wants to send us because it is going to save money. Thank you.

Fred O'Connor, 23 Country Club Drive, Manchester, NH stated:

My concern right now is not good for the Sears building. Second best would be Singer Park but you, yourself, recommended a lot of land owned by Velcro. As near as I can tell, it is close to 50,000 square feet of virgin land. Velcro is moving within two years. They have already bought land and they are building a building to move into which will be ready in two years. That is a good suggestion right there. We get away from the smells down at Singer Park and get away from the congestion at the Sears building and we will have our own area with plenty of parking spaces. Thank you.

Michael Porter, 142 Golfview Drive, Manchester, NH stated:

I, along with the employees of the City Welfare Department, would like to commend the Mayor and Wayne Robinson, along with the Human Resource Department for being so attentive to the very serious situation at the Welfare Department. I, personally, would like to extend my thanks to all of them as well as a couple of Aldermen who I have had great conversations with who have asked me questions about the situation. There are many unanswered questions here, ladies and gentlemen and as you know in your agenda there is a request by the employees of the Welfare Department to change this position from elected or appointed or hired. The reasons are outlined in that letter. In the letter, we did outline a few reasons, but not all of them. I would like to touch on one. By changing the position from elected to appointed or hired the position would fall under Yarger Decker. This would mean that the Board of Mayor and Aldermen would have supervision and direction over the Welfare Commissioner. As the position currently exists, the Welfare Commissioner is not accountable to anybody. We understand the

predicament that you folks are in and that Human Resources is faced with. Had this not been an elected post to begin with, the situation would have been resolved a long time ago. In fact, the situation never would have risen to the level where an investigation was warranted. These problems presented during the investigation have been ongoing for years, but because people feared retaliation and losing their jobs, nobody dared to speak out. I am hopeful that tonight you will have an opportunity to review the situation in further detail. This brings me to the issue of accountability. At this time, there is no accountability for the Welfare Commissioner. The current elected Welfare Commissioner, as publicly stated, was out of work for one month before the Mayor was notified. Commissioner Lafond only notified the Mayor after a front-page news article described her as being absent. The Commissioner's unexplained absence between September 27 and October 27 is nothing new to this department. The lack of accountability invites this sort of abuse that is clearly evident by these actions. On or about October 28, the Deputy Welfare Commissioner was named acting Commissioner and ladies and gentlemen, since the deputy took over the morale in the office has skyrocketed. The fear factor that the employees had experienced under Commissioner Lafond is gone. More importantly, we are treated as professionals in all aspects of our job. This is a great credit to the acting Welfare Commissioner at this time. She has been a tremendous leader to all of us and she has created a professional atmosphere within the office. I have seen this issue take a political turn somehow. This is not about politics. This is about right versus wrong and what has happened in that department over the years is wrong. It is time for the Board to take action. It is time for this Board to send a very strong and clear message to the public and to the employees of that department that you will not put politics before the people's interest. Show that you are not conducting business as usual. Send a message that the actions of the elected Welfare Commissioner will not be tolerated any longer and that you support the employees of this department. It is time to change this position from elected to appointed or hired. For anybody on this Board who does not agree to changing that position, I ask you what is the benefit of keeping this an elected post? I see on tonight's agenda that there is an issue on the Mayor's agenda, Item 14, which is an update to the Welfare Department and I would hope that you will deal with this issue publicly due to the fact that the Welfare Commissioner is currently an elected official and that is the people's business. I thank you very much for your time.

Mayor Baines replied as you said, I do have an agenda item and a full report will be given to the Board with a recommendation to deal with this situation as well but we appreciate your comments.

Mayor Baines stated we do have some guests here this evening and could somebody tell us what is going on here.

Ms. Lowry stated we have had a program throughout December in front of our Christmas tree at City Hall. We have invited dance groups, clubs, and organizations and a lot of Scout groups have decided to join us to come down and sing Christmas carols in front of the Christmas tree and get to know their own City Hall and their City government.

Tonight we happen to have a group who scheduled to do some singing in front of City Hall and lo and behold we had a meeting tonight so they wanted to come up and see what a real meeting was like. I hope you don't mind a little intrusion, but I will turn this over to the troop leader for one moment.

Mayor Baines asked that all of the children come to the front of the Chambers. Before we begin we did start a new tradition at City Hall this year. With the help of Stephanie, we had a discussion right after I came to office and I said I have always brought my family every year to Boston for the lighting of the tree at the Prudential Center can we do something and Stephanie had already been thinking along those lines so we made it a reality. There has been a great response from the community. On Friday nights we have had musical entertainment, some of it outside and some of it inside. This Friday night we were over at the City Hall Plaza building. It is a great way to bring the community together around this great holiday season so I want to publicly thank Stephanie for all of her work to make this a reality and all of the cooperation we have received from departments across the City, especially to make sure that the tree wouldn't fall down or blow down. I will now turn it over to you. First of all, Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all of you from all of us. This is really a wonderful occasion that you came to share with us.

The troop leader stated there are four different troops from St. John the Baptist Church. They are Girl Scout groups ranging from Daisies all the way up to Senior Girl Scouts. They sang "We Wish You A Merry Christmas."

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

Good evening Mr. Mayor and fellow Board members. I come here tonight to speak on two issues. The first one is a Senior Citizens Center. My vote is for Singer Park for several reasons. One, as a senior and a member of the senior dart club, which some of you people might not think it is much of a club but it is, we have 40+ members and that is all we can take. We can't handle anymore because we have our meetings on Tuesday mornings at the Youth Center across the street from the coliseum. It is next to Hunt's pool and Mr. Lopez is one of our fellow members and he can tell you that we have two handicapped parking spaces and probably six in front of the building. The rest of them have to park across the street. Now, we have one young lady who is 93 years old. She has to park across the street at the coliseum to come and play darts with us. Now can you

imagine here walking across Maple Street at 9 AM? She is taking her life into her hands. That is one of the reasons we want it in Singer Park. We would have plenty of parking for the elderly, as I am. I realize that I am only 67 but I will be 68 in a couple of days and that is the place to have it. There is no reason why you people should bicker. We have at least 40 citizens, 40 Manchester residents, that go to Nashua at least once a month for Saturday night dancing. There is no place in Manchester for us to dance. I realize that they charge \$5 per year in Nashua, but I think any senior citizen would be willing to pay \$5 to have a place that they can call their own here in the City. When I retired from teaching at Memorial after 35 years, I had to go down there to take a computer course. I went down there to sign up for Social Security. I went down there to go to a workshop on long-term care insurance. I mean give us a break. Give us a place that we can call our own where we can have these workshops here in the City. Please, stop this bickering and accept the Singer Park location because this is where we want it to be. Wouldn't it be nice during this Yuletide season if you would give the senior citizens a beautiful Christmas present by giving them a new and separate senior citizens center at Singer Park? The second thing is the Airport. Now I may be talking on deaf ears on that, but again Ward 8 and Ward 9 and in the future Ward 6 will be in that predicament, the noise that we are getting from the Airport and the traffic that we are getting. Of course, Huse Road is nothing but the Indianapolis Speedway. We do have police protection occasionally, but it could be increased I believe. The inconvenience that you are putting these people under. You have moved them out of their homes. You have moved an entire parish and I believe it was yours, Mr. Mayor. You moved their school. They had to move to Litchfield. You have displaced I don't know how many hundreds of people. I ask you gentlemen when are you going to say to the Airport Authority enough is enough, we have had it. Why should we build an Airport and enlarge it so that people from Massachusetts will come up here and take their little ride from Manchester to Orlando to Chicago. You know you have Hanscomb Field building up. You have the Worcester Airport building up and you have the Portsmouth Airport building up and even Portsmouth is complaining about the noise and they haven't even started. Give us a break and tell the Airport Authority you have had enough, it is big enough and it will handle all of the people in New Hampshire. Now, I could care less about the people in Massachusetts coming up here and the Airport is advertising that over 50% of the people are coming from Massachusetts. Let them stay down there. Thank you.

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

I was here on November 29 to talk to the Board about the conditions at Highland Goffs Falls School and how I had to take my daughter out of the school. The Airport installed a ventilation system there in 1993, but the City of Manchester did not maintain the system, which caused it to fail, which caused me to take my daughter out of the school and put her into a private school. Now you may say well that was your choice. That wasn't my

choice. The City of Manchester made that choice for me. I was amused to see Mr. Frank Thomas come up here on November 29 and say that the system was working mechanically 100%. I have a letter here dated December 1 and by the way Mr. Frank Thomas and his staff must do some pretty fast work because I have a letter here dated December 1, which is two days after Mr. Thomas spoke and it says that there were significant mechanical problems and impediments in the system that need correction. Also, School Committee Member Paradis said that the problem has been going on for at least three years. The City is responsible for repairing the system, not the Airport. The Airport has nothing to do with it. The City is also responsible for paying me my \$2,000 back that I had to pay to send my daughter to a private school. If the ventilation system was working at the school the way it should have been, she would still be at that school today. I hope and I wish that maybe Alderman O'Neil and Alderman Gatsas as State Senators would maybe contact Governor Shaheen and bring it to her attention and make the inspection of ventilation systems at all schools in New Hampshire a law. They inspect elevators at schools on a yearly basis so why not ventilation systems? Thank you very much.

Mayor Baines recessed the meeting to call the Board of Mayor and Aldermen meeting to order.

Mayor Baines called the meeting back to order.

Hubie McDonough, 65 Holmes Drive, Manchester, NH stated:

I never expected to speak about the senior center but that is why I am here. It seems that it has been going on and on and on. I was a middle-aged guy when it started and now I am a senior citizen. I know I don't look it. I have two points. One is where and one is who. Where should it be located? I agree at Singer Park. These renovated buildings don't quite make it. I have seen a few in my day. I have worked in some and tried to play hockey in others. They don't always work. You talk about the 24,000 square feet versus the 18,000 square feet. If you build your own building from scratch, say it is only 16,000 or 14,000, if you put the basement in it you have another 6,000 or 7,000 square feet and if it is built with the seniors in mind, it will be built so that you can use the up and down. You can have a one-story building and if you give them a good basement it will be like a second story. Singer Park seems to, from what I gather, fill the bill there. As to who, does this generation of senior citizens fill the bill? They are called the greatest generation. The Depression and world wars. These people came through them. They are the backbone of our City. They are your parents and your friends. They kept Manchester rolling and Manchester seems to be rebounding. Thank them. I think we should oblige them in this way. Seriously, they are your friends and my friends and they deserve the best. As I said, they have been called the greatest generation and I believe

they are and their numbers are only going to increase folks. We sit here and ask how many come in on an average day and how many will be coming in a month from now or a year now. There will be more. Obviously everybody is living longer and we are going to have more senior citizens. The baby boomers are moving into that category. You may have to add on to the building eventually. Seriously though build it big enough and build it well and give these people who have earned it what they deserve. Thank you very much.

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

I would like to see what you are going to do for the people for a change instead of for big business. A couple of months ago one of the Aldermen gave a pre-campaign speech about how much land was being set aside for conservation purposes up on Hackett Hill and he kind of let the cat out of the bag that there was an additional 200 acres and Mr. MacKenzie stated that he was negotiating for that 200 acres. Now I assumed that it was going to be for the conservation rights on it, but I found out in the paper that the City is contemplating buying that land, that 200 acres. I would like to know who gave Mr. MacKenzie the authority to negotiate a purchase agreement on that. Did this Board do that? I don't think so. The civic center. You are taking \$3.5 million a year out of what could be going to pay for the central services of the City and giving it to private enterprise over there. The Airport expansion. Here we go with another garage out there. The cable franchise fee. You upped it from 3% to 5% and I don't think that entire 5% is going to go to the MCTV budget. You are going to use it for other little pet projects. How about turning around and doing something for the people for a change. The senior center. You have been tossing that thing around forever. Alderman Pinard, I think, came up with a very good idea for using the vacant lot across from the East Side Shopping Center on Hanover Street. Now there seems to be some kind of confusion on that being park land from the government to the City and it has to be used for parks or whatever, but if you put a little park in there next to the stream that comes down like I have said before, I think you could get around the gray area and the seniors would have a nice place. They have the Chinese restaurant, the dollar store, the grocery store, a place to mail their packages...a lot of pros to that site up there but I don't think that anybody on this Board, besides Alderman Pinard, has given that site any serious consideration. The schools. Do something for the people again. The lack of maintenance on that and the over budgeting. You terminated the City janitors that you had there. Get some control on that thing and give me some tax relief. There is one person, two people actually who have been screaming for the School Board and this Board to do something with getting more money for special education. That has been Mr. Gatsas on the School Board and Alderman Vaillancourt. I have said it before. You guys need to get together and get more money for that project out of the Federal government, which would loosen the load on our tax dollars and our wallets. The housing development next to an agricultural zone, Bodwell

Road. Now if you are going to buy an extra 200 acres on Hackett Hill to appease the Sierra Club so that they will let up and let you put your business park in, how about some relief for the people up there who have to deal with the pig farm? You might be too late on that one. There might be somebody knocking on his door ready to put more houses out there. That would be a perfect place to buy that property out and clean the place up and do something with it. Before you put anymore housing developments in the City, please do one thing. If you are going to allow the housing developments to go in, don't burden the people with extra sewage charges like out on Bodwell Road and up on Carrier Hill. If you are going to put the houses in, the City should pay for the pumping stations. Those people have to pay their City water bill, their City sewage bill and a private sewage bill for a pumping station. Do something for the people. If you are going to put it in, pay for it.

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

I am here tonight to talk on several subjects. I will be brief on all of them hopefully. Number one, I am glad that you mentioned Roland Turgeon who just died the other day. Roland and I served in the Legislature together. In fact, we sat in the same section and in the same row. Roland was a wonderful man and the City should be indebted to the service that he performed for the City. Also, of course I know you probably mentioned Dan Healy. He was in the Legislature for 52 years. Dan was a fine man. Once in a great while I would pick up Dan and take him up to the Legislature. Dan died in New Jersey and the service was held last week at St. Anne's Church. In fact, the family of Dan Healy has bought the last bench out here in front of the West Wing of City Hall and that will have his name on it. They are going to put the inscription on it as to what they would like to have. Another thing, I would like to mention that the City of Manchester did a great job in paving Sagamore Street. Sagamore Street is where I live. I have been there for 78+ years except when I was away in the Marine Corps in World War II and at UNH and so on. I just spoke to Frank Thomas about maybe for old time's sake we might have one weekend of sliding on Sagamore Street. Now that was one of the greatest streets in the City of Manchester for sliding. I still have my flexible flyer sled that I used when I slid on Sagamore Street and if any of the Aldermen or anybody in the audience would like to use it if we get the street blocked off for a weekend, you are welcome to do it. This is just for old time's sake. Incidentally, in reading Flags of our Fathers, which was the book regarding the people who raised the flag on Iwojima and of course you know Lenny Gagnon from the City of Manchester here was one of the people who helped raise the flag and Mr. Bradley, the son of the corpsman who helped raised the flag, wrote a book called Flags of our Fathers. Believe it or not, I read the book and in the book it said that Lenny Gagnon used to slide on Sagamore Street and I was flabbergasted. I don't remember that. Of course, I didn't know Lenny Gagnon in those days. In fact, I never ever met the man. I know his wife, Pauline, though. Anyway, I would like to for old

time's sake have a Saturday and Sunday for sliding. As far as the senior center is concerned, Hubie McDonough called it right in my estimation. In fact, when I had my paper route up on North Union Street, Hubie McDonough used to help me deliver the papers when he was a kid. He is a little younger than I am, but he used to help me. Frankly speaking as I have told Irene Robie, I don't need a senior citizen's center myself but there are a lot of people in this City who do; a lot of them. A lot of people can't get out and they need to get out and be with people and they will feel better and it will make them more active and maybe they won't go downhill so fast. I think, in fact, I told Irene Robie that I would like to see the place called the Irene Robie Senior Citizen's Center. I don't know if she will agree or not. She has really pushed for it, that's for sure. In closing, I would like to say that there is one more building we are going to restore in this City and that is the Weston Fire Station. This is going to be...that is up off of Bridge Street. This is going to be a firemen's museum and it will have a classroom in it. The building needs restoring anyway just like City Hall needed restoring. The building was built in 1902 and I figure if we can get this job done by 2002, I told the Chief that we can have a big parade and celebrate and have a great time. Dan O'Neil, incidentally, said that he would see to it that the wiring would be taken care of. Thank you for letting me speak.

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

A True Record. Attest.

City Clerk