

## **SPECIAL MEETING**

### **BOARD OF MAYOR AND ALDERMEN IN JOINT SESSION WITH THE BOARD OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

**March 7, 2001**

**7:00 PM**

Mayor Baines called the meeting to order.

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

A moment of silent prayer was observed.

The Clerk called the roll.

Present: Aldermen Gatsas, Levasseur (late), Sysyn, Pinard, O'Neil, Lopez, Shea, Vaillancourt (late), Pariseau, and Hirschmann (late)

School Committee Members Stewart (late), Elise, Leonard, Herbert, Labanaris, Gatsas, Cook, Healy, Paradis, Garrity, D'Allesandro (late), Ouellette (late), and Sargent

Mayor Baines advised that the purpose of the special meeting is a presentation of the interim report of the City's high schools by the Citizens' Committee on School Facilities.

School Committee Member Elise asked what is the format for this meeting.

Mayor Baines replied it is information and we will take questions from members of both Boards.

School Committee Member Elise asked is this a public comment period.

Mayor Baines answered we can probably keep it as informal as we need to and if other people would like to ask questions, I am sure we can do that.

School Committee Member Elise stated I am just questioning why we are receiving information from people.

Mayor Baines replied that is just sent out. Anything that comes in to the Board, you receive it.

School Committee Member Elise asked why here. This could be sent at another time. I don't want to look at this here.

Mayor Baines answered just turn it upside down.

School Committee Member Elise stated as procedure, if I was to receive information...this is not a period to receive information from anybody. I would like everybody's information here, not one person running for office.

Mayor Baines stated I would like to thank the Committee for their work. A lot of dedication and passion for the Manchester schools went into the efforts of this group. I want to remind both Boards that this Committee was formed by a vote of the Board of School Committee on the recommendation of the Chairman of the Building & Sites Committee, Chris Herbert. Special thanks to John Kacavas, alumni of Hallsville, Central and the father of what will soon be three boys who will attend Manchester schools. Special thanks to Wiggin & Nourie and to John's assistant who sent out notices and duplicated reports. I believe her name is Kim Stacy. Special thanks to Karen Stone and Rona Zlokower who worked on tonight's presentation and special thoughts for Dr.

Burton Kaliski this evening who underwent triple bypass surgery this past weekend. Having said that, I would like to now introduce Committee Chair John Kacavas to introduce his Committee and make his presentation.

Mr. Kacavas stated thank you for the opportunity to appear before this joint session and to offer you our findings and our recommendations. This presentation should not take more than half an hour depending on how talkative I get through the slides. Following the presentation, the Task Force members and I certainly will entertain any questions you may have and I am sure you are going to have plenty of them. The outline for this presentation is kind of dual. What I would like to do first is tell you a little bit about the Citizen's Task Force and how it was formed, basically what we were asked to do, who we are and what we used to perform the task and then we will get into the details of the report as soon as we finish with that. We begin with this paraphrase of a quote from Alexis Tatokville because we perceive that our commitment to public education here in Manchester has waned over the years and we perceive that it has been subordinated to other interests and other considerations, including financial considerations. We are asking you, based on our findings, to reverse that trend and to make our commitment to public education paramount to revive that commitment and then to devise a strategy to pay for that renewed commitment. That is why we begin with that quotation. This is the charge that we received from Chris Herbert and the Building & Sites Committee. We were to determine the availability of land and buildings for school use. We were to determine the feasibility of renovation expansion, new construction, land purchases or closure of school facilities based on available information. We were to make the recommendations to the Board of School Committee as a result of our findings and provide cost estimates on those recommendations. You will note that our report does not include a cost estimate. I am going to recommend one to you, but we did not include it in our report for reasons that I will explain later. The Committee will present its recommendations to the Board of School Committee no later than January 31, 2001. Our report was ready by the target date and for various reasons of scheduling we were not

able to present it to the sub-Committee until last week and we appear before you tonight for the formal presentation. Let me at this time give you a little bit of history into the methodology of how we compiled this report. This presentation is really intended only to highlight certain aspects of the report. It certainly isn't intended to be a substitute for the full report, which is exceedingly detailed. In terms of our methodology, we were 18 very diverse people on this Committee. Everybody brought their own world views and their own interests to this Committee and some of our views were very entrenched but I have to tell you that everyone kept an open mind and as a result of keeping an open mind and as a result of reading the many reports that we read and touring the facilities that we toured and listening to the testimony that we heard, we were able to coalesce those divergent views around our findings. Those findings are indisputable. They are hard, fast, black and white findings. They are certainly based on a set of assumptions, for instance, enrollment projections but if you believe those projections then the findings are indisputable. Our recommendations flow from those findings. You can all find something to criticize in our recommendation and you can all find something to disagree with. Our recommendations form the consensus of this Committee based on our findings. The two themes that run through this whole task and the two undisputed findings are overcrowding and neglect. These high schools are overcrowded and I am going to show you statistics about the extent to which they are overcrowded but these high schools have also been neglected and because of this long-term neglect, which is exacerbated by the overcrowding, we are now faced with a crisis situation in our high schools, particularly at Central High School. Less so at West and Memorial, but if we do not take immediate action and that is whatever action you may deem necessary, but we recommend immediate action and if it is not taken now that crisis situation will yield to chaos. The immediate action required...what we are asking you to do is to create and implement a long-range strategic plan. Report after report that we have read has admonished that a long-range strategic plan is necessary to address the problems in our high schools and the problem with overcrowding and the future problem with overcrowding. We have not had a long-range strategic plan and, therefore, we are

dealing with things in a reactive way. We are reacting to problems that exist now. What we are asking you to do is to develop and implement a long-range strategic plan that will allow the City of Manchester to be proactive and to anticipate our needs rather than react to crisis situations. We are also asking you, in addition to developing and implementing a long-range strategic plan, to fund and enact short-term tactical solutions to the overcrowding problem. These short-term tactical solutions, which we will detail in a bit are intended to address the overcrowding problem that Manchester high schools will face in September of 2001. If you believe the numbers, we are going to be exceeding the capacity of our high schools by about 2,000 students. The factors that the Task Force considered – none of these take priority over another. They are all equal in importance and not put up there in any particular order. What we did consider was the educational and workplace environment, the safety, maintenance and cleanliness of the high schools, the capacity of the schools, the tuition agreements with the sending towns – Bedford, Hooksett, Candia, Auburn and Deerfield. We assessed current and projected enrollment data, the availability of land and buildings for a fourth new high school and the cost of renovation, expansion, new construction and additions to the existing facility. Those are the factors that we considered and before I get into the actual findings in the report, what I would like to do at this point is introduce the members of the Task Force without whose dedication and commitment to this project we never could have come up with all of these recommendations. This was a tremendous amount of work. We took reports and you will see the list of resource documents in the report. Those were all scrupulously read and reviewed. We merged data and I think this is the first time that the City of Manchester in awhile has had a merged document like this where we have merged NESDEC projections with Parsons Brinckerhoff projections and I think this affords kind of an easy read and really throws into clear relief the situation that Manchester faces today. What I would like to do is introduce each member of the Committee. This is my opportunity to publicly thank them for all of their hard work. I really do appreciate them and I would like to ask each of them to stand individually so that they can receive your recognition as well beginning with Arthur Adamakos, Craig Annis, Philip Beaulieu, Bill

Boyd, Theresa deLangis, Elaine Hobbs, Dr. Burt Kaliski, Dr. Chris Kehas, Francis Kelley, Joanne McHugh, Mark Roy, Eric Sawyer, Donna Soulard, Dr. Karen Stone, Susan Thomas, Peter Van Berkum, Bill Zarges and Rona Zlokower. In arriving at our findings, in addition to all of those resource materials that we enumerate for you in the report, we had a number of meetings as you can see and we toured French Hall at Hackett Hill. We toured West High School, Central High School, Memorial High School and the Manchester School of Technology. Either collectively or individually, we interviewed a number of people who are all named in the report as well and on January 17 we had a public comments session at which 50 people were in attendance, 20 of whom spoke to us with great passion about what they hoped for Manchester high schools. Our findings are grouped into four – enrollments, overcrowding, facilities, and just general. These four categories are treated separately in the report but they are obviously all inter-related.

Enrollments. The total current capacity of three high schools is 4,886 students. As of October 1, 2000, total enrollment was 6,205 students, exceeding the total current capacity by 1,319 students. That was as of October 1. Based on projected enrollments, this is a trend that is going to continue steadily unless we do something. Enrollments are going to far exceed capacity unless we do something. As of October 1, 2000, of that 6,205 total, 4,450 or 71% of the students in Manchester's high schools are from Manchester and 1,755 or 29% of the students in Manchester's high schools are from the sending towns. Again, the sending towns are Hooksett, Bedford, Auburn, Candia and Deerfield. Based on those current and projected enrollments, if the tuition contracts continue, a new high school must be built to accommodate increased enrollment from the sending towns. This is indisputable. Parsons Brinckerhoff, their report indicates that existing facilities on their present sites cannot absorb the expected growth and that there is no room at Central High School or little room at Central and no room at West to build out additions in order to accommodate these projected enrollments. A new high school would be required in order to accommodate the projected enrollments and a new high school, according to Parsons Brinckerhoff numbers, would range anywhere from \$67 million to \$75 million to build. \$67 million if it is going to be a high school to accommodate about 1,800 students.

\$75 million if it is going to be a high school to accommodate about 2,500 students. We also found that existing facilities can accommodate Manchester's growing student population without the tuition students. For instance, by the Year 2004-2005, Manchester students alone will meet or exceed that 4,886 capacity. Manchester students alone. In that same time period, we expect approximately 2,000 additional tuition students. So, obviously Manchester and sending towns will far exceed Manchester's capacity in just a matter of two to three years. It must be kept in mind that if the tuition contracts are terminated by June 1, 2001 in accordance with the two year notice provision that is contained in those tuition contracts, students from Bedford, Hooksett, Candia and Auburn would be permitted to come to Manchester high schools through academic year 2002-2003 so even if we do...even if you elected officials do accept this recommendation and terminate the tuition contracts, we still face a dire overcrowding problem in the next two years and we make certain recommendations to address that overcrowding crisis as well. The second category is overcrowding. As we indicated, on October 1, 2000 enrollment exceeded capacity by 1,319 students. By 2002, enrollment is projected to exceed capacity by 2,054 students. According to Parsons Brinckerhoff's numbers, by the academic year 2004-2005 total enrollment for Manchester and sending towns will be 7,094 students exceeding Manchester's present capacity by 2,208 students and projecting it out 10 years to 2009-2010, total enrollment will be 7,352 students exceeding Manchester's present capacity by 2,466 students. As a result of the overcrowding that we presently face, not to mention the overcrowding that is only going to be compounded if we do nothing, we have found that teacher work space in the schools has been reduced or all together eliminated. We found that core facilities have been severely overtaxed and the last finding – their existing physical deficiencies are exacerbated by the overcrowding. The core facilities such as libraries, cafeterias, bathrooms, gyms, auditoriums and administrative areas are just crushed by the overflow of students. Capacity is just not able to absorb it. Course offerings have been eliminated. For instance the American Studies Program at Central High School, which was for a long time one of the more popular programs, had to be eliminated for lack of resources and

lack of space and that is just criminal. Traffic jams, tardiness and increased tension are a result of the overcrowding. Hallways are crammed at Central High School and at West High School. It is difficult for students, particularly at Central, to make it to class on time. They have four minutes between periods and the overcrowding problem impedes their progress. The classrooms do not even meet minimum state standards in size and capacity. You have 35 or 40 students in a classroom that should be accommodating about 22 to 26 students. I don't know if everybody can see that, but let it not be said that the Citizen's Task Force considered all options in addressing the overcrowding problem and for those of you who can't see it, the caption says Winston Central School Districts Finds a Solution to Overcrowded Classrooms and it shows bunked desks. The third category of our findings is facilities and what we found is that the three existing high schools anchor their respective neighborhoods. There is great sentiment in the community to retain these three high schools, but they are in poor to fair condition according to Parsons Brinckerhoff. They are structurally sound so there is no need to dispense with them, but a great deal of renovation certainly needs to happen. None of the high schools is fully in compliance with applicable safety codes. Obviously substantial renovation and expansion and/or new construction is urgently needed to achieve facility flexibility and to insure safety compliance with the applicable codes, including the Americans With Disabilities Act and the National Fire Protection Association standards. There is a packet of photographs, color photographs that we have and those are going to be passed around to you. They were so expensive to make that we only made a certain number of copies so we are going to ask that you just look at them and pass them on. These photographs were taken at Manchester Central High School and they depict what can only be described as deplorable conditions, including the failure to comply with codes such as the Americans with Disabilities Act. You will see in those photos cafeteria tables that have been damaged. You will see cafeteria tables with no seats on them. You will see deplorable lavatory conditions. You will see deplorable classroom conditions where teachers end up paying for drapes to keep the sun out of their room. What we also found was inadequate funding for preventative and corrective maintenance. The

conditions that we find ourselves in today are as a result of inadequate funding for corrective and preventative maintenance. These pictures are evidence, graphic evidence, of the lack of maintenance at Central High School in particular. The lavatories are deplorable. The classrooms are just no environment for students to learn in and no environment for faculty to teach in. The consequences of that failure to adequately fund preventative and corrective maintenance is that student and staff health and safety are affected. There are security concerns. There are leaky roofs, windows and pipes. You will see in those photographs pictures of leaking ceiling tiles that have not been removed. Unacceptable interior temperatures. We heard testimony from teachers who were teaching their classrooms and students were wearing winter coats, hats and gloves. Other teachers at the same high school were teaching their classes in zero degree weather with the windows wide open because the heat was too high. These are just unacceptable and not conducive to a good learning environment. It also affects the air quality and we found that there are inadequate, unreliable mechanical systems. According to the NESDEC report and by the way all of our source materials as I go through and cite NESDEC or cite Parsons Brinckerhoff or others, all of our resource materials are available in the Mayor's Office for anyone to view. According to the NESDEC report of November 1999, from an educational perspective the buildings are functionally obsolete and do not meet the needs of modern day program demands and in fact I have yet to find anybody who can dispute that our high school students do not have available to them the technology to put on a presentation such as we are seeing tonight and in the Year 2001 that is unacceptable. This is how we have been conducting presentations for years and Manchester's high school students are behind the curve because of that. Just generally, we found that there is no longer-term strategic plan despite the admonition to implement one. An admonition that I might add dates back to 1962. The facility at the Manchester School of Technology is underutilized. We are aware that the Manchester School of Technology is a regional vocational center and that implicates certain funding and revenue sources for the school, but we believe that the school is certainly capable of absorbing some growth in the physical facility itself and on the 11 acres on which MST

now sits. There is certainly room to expand if you so desire that is an excellent location in which to do it. Just as an aside, MST sits on 11 acres and it has about 800 students there through a day. Manchester Central High School sits on 4.3 acres and has about 2,200 students there in a day. So, clearly there is plenty of room to grow at MST and no more room to grow at Central. Remarkably, what we found was that despite all of these inadequacies and despite the physical deficiencies and despite the overcrowding that exacerbates these physical deficiencies, the students, the staff and the faculty at Manchester's high schools succeed and, in fact, they exceed reasonable expectations under the circumstances. All of our recommendations ask you to take immediate action. The first thing that we ask you to do is develop and implement a long-term strategic Master Plan for the school facilities and do what NESDEC admonished that we do. Develop a plan that looks 10 years out so that we are being proactive in anticipating needs and enact a plan that has short-term tactical goals that are consistent with the long-term strategic plan. The tuition agreements form probably the lynchpin of our recommendations. We ask you to address these tuition agreements because obviously the current and projected enrollment numbers are compelling and those are facts that are immutable. We can't change those facts and as a result we believe with practicality and common sense added to this whole mix that the tuition agreement with the Town of Bedford should be terminated immediately and when we say immediately we mean by June 1, 2001 with that notice provision, that two year notice provision permitting Bedford tuition students to attend West High School through the 2002-2003 school year. If the tuition agreement with Bedford is not terminated and it is continued, you can anticipate that by the year 2009 Bedford will be sending 1,200 students to Manchester West High School in addition to the projected 5.5% growth rate of Manchester students. West High School will be crushed by Bedford's projected enrollment. With respect to Hooksett, Auburn and Candia, by the Year 2009-2010 they collectively will send 1,270 students to Manchester high schools. Obviously, something has to give. We can't be going down this path without deviating one way or the other. One way is to build a new high school to the tune of \$67 million to \$75 million. The other way is to terminate these contracts

and allow Manchester high schools to accommodate Manchester students. We recommend the improvement and full utilization of existing facilities using appropriate technology. We were fortunate to have a professional engineer on the Task Force who opened many eyes to the wonders of modern technology and virtual reality modeling and rather cutting edge methods of looking to improve the use of existing facilities and we urge you to take advantage of such modern technology. Maintenance and cleanliness is not a real difficult thing to address. I went to Central High School and graduated in 1979 and I remember it being overcrowded and I remember it suffering from many of the same problems that it suffers from today, but it never was dirty. It really did not have the maintenance and cleanliness problems that we saw on our tour and that you can see first hand in these rather graphic photographs. Maintenance and cleanliness should be addressed and toilets should not be going unflushed. Toilets should be workable. We should have soap and paper towels in the bathroom. We should have a sink that you would want to wash your hands in. Those things do not necessarily exist at our high schools. We have, in our report, enumerated a number of revenue sources. Obviously we do not suggest that any one of our recommendations is a panacea and when it comes to raising the revenue to pay for what we need to pay for we only make these recommendations as options for your to consider. The short-term kind of tactical recommendations that we make aimed at addressing the overcrowding problem that is anticipated in September 2001 include portables at Central High School. There will be an additional 735 students at Manchester's high schools, both Manchester and tuition students, in the next two academic years. In order to accommodate them at Central High School it is the Task Force's recommendation that portables be placed on campus but that those portables exist at Central High School only so long as Bedford students remain at West High School. Once Bedford students are phased out of West High School, we recommend that Manchester redistrict and redistribute its students so that Hooksett students will go to West High School and it will create a proportional population at the three high schools. The portables at Central High School should go when the Bedford students leave and create room to move the overflow from Central to West High School.

Other suggestions to address the overcrowding problem, in September 2001, these are all options. These are all small measures aimed at addressing the overcrowding problem. We are not saying that one of these things will do it. We are saying that one or more of these things taken together may do it and one of the suggestions we have is to entertain the possibility of an open lunch period at Central High School in order to create more room in the cafeteria. The cafeterias are so crowded at lunchtime that kids in line at lunch do not get to eat their lunch in time to get to the next class. That is how crowded it is in the cafeteria so an open lunch period may alleviate that crowding and allow kids to eat their lunch. Extend the day. We understand that that also has implications, contract implications, etc. but if we could add more time between classes by extending the school day a few minutes that would certainly assist students who find it difficult to get from class to class in four minutes. You could also do that by reducing the amount of time a student is in homeroom or eliminating homeroom all together. These are options and as I said you can disagree with any one or all of them, but we believe that the homeroom option is one to consider in order to create more time during the day. Adjust student traffic flow. It may be necessary to recommend that you have one way stairways up on the East Side and down on the West Side. Addressing traffic flow to make progress more orderly certainly will allow students to get to their classrooms on time. Add replace or relocate lockers. In those photographs that are making the rounds you will see the lockers at Central High School. Many of the lockers at Central High School are in disrepair. They can't be used. Many students don't want to use them because they can be broken into so easily so students are forced to carry around a heavy backpack with all of their books for the day, their lunch, their gym stuff, everything. What we ask you to do is take a look at consolidating lockers. There seems to be plenty of room in certain buildings at Central. In order to do that and those photographs will show the situation. There is space along walls that is completely empty and that could be utilized for lockers creating space in other hallways for students to walk. It will make the use of lockers an attractive thing, perhaps, because right now it is not. Again, make efficient use of the cafeteria and that relates back to addressing the flow problems. Another option is to

allow juniors and seniors, those students who are 16 and older to opt for taking their high school classes at night and hopefully alleviate some of the overcrowding during the day. Expand MST offerings. What we mean by that is in going over some of the curricula at the high schools, we found that there was some overlap between course offerings at a particular high school and at MST and some of the course offerings may be more consistent with the mission of MST and we suggest taking a look at that programmatically and perhaps consolidating classes at MST thereby freeing up additional space at the other high schools. It is indisputable from our collective perspective that our high schools are in crisis. We all saw it first hand and we need to address that crisis today with urgent action and we have to make our schools the top priority. As I said at the top of this, I think that our commitment to our schools has taken a subordinate position. It has taken a backseat. The condition of our public schools today transcends politics, it transcends finances, and it transcends everything. Education should be paramount and that is what we are asking you to do. Make education paramount and devise a way to pay for that revived commitment to education. It is going to require some hard choices. There is no doubt about it. There is going to be some pain involved one way or the other. It is painful, in fact, to have to recommend that we terminate the tuition contracts, but failure to anticipate and take action in advance of the enrollments, the growing enrollments, forces us to recommend that these tuition contracts be terminated and obviously it is going to take a great deal of cooperation and collaboration to arrive at a solution to this and on that note, I would like to ask former School Board member and a member of our Task Force, Chris Kehas, to address you with some comments.

Dr. Kehas stated when David Scannell called me to say that the Mayor would like me to serve on the Committee he didn't exactly say why I would be a figure. He didn't say that I would be a figure like the Old Man on the Mountain but he did say something about bringing a historical perspective to the Committee. I am older than most of the members of the Committee. Lou D'Allesandro's statement that I was a member of the first

graduating class at Central in 1850 is simply not true. Don't believe it. Those of us who are long in the tooth do remember some things about the nature of the problems that we face today. There has always been a tension between the funding authority and the Board of School Committee around support for the public schools of Manchester. The reasons have varied through the years, but the tension has always been there. Some of you may remember that up until the 1960's, there was another player in this situation. There was a Manchester City Finance Commission appointed by the Governor of the state, which had full and final control of the purse strings, not the Board of Mayor and Aldermen. Now many were glad to see that Commission disappear and to see that Manchester's elected officials took control of the City finances, but that change did not result in any great changes for the public schools. The tension remained but now it was clearly between the Board of School Committee and the Board of Mayor and Aldermen. From my perspective, that tension can and must be used in a positive and productive way. Both Boards have to come together and develop a Master Plan supporting the public schools of Manchester. A Master Plan for the public schools. In the words of that famous educator, Yogi Berra, if you don't know where you are going, you will never get there. There is much wisdom there. We have been basically reactive and we must become, as the Chairman has said, proactive. Let's look at a couple of examples about not having a Master Plan. In the 1970's, Central was allowed to become overcrowded but we got lucky because the Catholic schools were in the position where they were going to close the girl's high school, Immaculata so they offered that to the City and the City bought it and we used it for 10 years and didn't have to do anything. What did we do after that? Well we made Immaculata an elementary school and we closed some other elementary schools. One of the schools we closed was Straw School. It had just been extensively remodeled and renovated and I am sure was not completely paid for, but we closed it. In order to fill the new Beech Street school, we closed some schools. Franklin was one school we closed. A bond issue was floated and Franklin was extensively renovated to house City wide school administrative offices. It included an elevator, which cost about \$25,000 or \$30,000. Shortly thereafter it was demolished to make room for the Center of

New Hampshire. Money well spent? Hardly. For both Boards the main goal should be to improve the quality of life for the citizens of Manchester. To decide first what the needs of the City are and then to pursue the funding necessary to serve and to meet those needs. Strong, bold leadership is essential to accomplishing that. As long as the Board of School Committee is perceived as and they perceive themselves as caring only for the schools and not for the entire City, and as long as the Board of Mayor and Aldermen is perceived as and perceive themselves as elected primarily to keep the tax rate down, little if any progress will be made. Often elected representatives say what my constituents want or my constituents would never support such a group. Now I am not in cahoots with the Mayor but I was delighted to see that he seated School Board members beside their Aldermanic counterparts. I think that is probably a first for the City of Manchester, but the Alderman from Ward 1 and the School Board member from Ward 1 have the same constituents. They are not in conflict with each other. They represent the same people. These elected officials should be on the same page and that is the source of another tension. The Boards are not simply a collection of individual wards. The Boards represent the City of Manchester. You represent the ward, but you also represent the interests of the entire City. I can use a personal example to that. When I was on the School Board and they were considering building the Northwest Elementary School I was very much in favor of that. I represented Ward 3 which at the time had no schools in the ward so perhaps I was the first member at large of the School Board not having a school in my ward but I was told by a School Board member from the west side, what do you care about the schools over here. You are elected by Ward 3. You have no business getting involved with what we want to do in our ward on the West Side. The people here do not want the Northwest Elementary School. Well, Northwest Elementary School was built and it certainly serves a need and a purpose in the City of Manchester. This Committee had no hidden agenda. We were brought together ostensibly to review a couple of reports. We did much more. We not only sought to define and delineate the problems, but we also researched the data to see how we came to where we are. We represent widely different viewpoints, but we hammered out a document that can be used

to improve the educational experience for our resident high school students, which should be our first priority and thereby improve the quality of life for all of the citizens of Manchester. We will continue our work as we look at the middle schools and the elementary schools, but the major challenge is yours. The citizens of Manchester will be watching and waiting for bold, strong leadership. Thank you.

Mr. Kacavas stated that does it for the presentation. We would be glad to entertain any questions at this point and I am going to ask my members of the Task Force if they have something that they want to comment on in response to a question to please chime in.

Mayor Baines stated I have several questions, but I will just leave it at two to begin with. The financial impact of tuition students leaving Manchester is something that all of us are very, very concerned with. It represents approximately \$9 million right now, Mr. Tanguay and will grow proportionately over the next two to three years potentially when some of the contracts start to expire or if we ask them to leave it could have implications of \$12 million, \$13 million or \$14 million. Did the Committee look at the impact of the loss of that kind of revenue on the School District and our ability to meet the demands that are there to meet the needs of the individual schools with that kind of money going out the door, sort to speak?

Mr. Kacavas replied yes we did. We realized that the City can ill afford to lose the tuition that the tuition students bring, but we have to tell you that in taking a first hand look at our facilities if we are profitable or if we are making revenue from these tuition students and the numbers are clearly rising, the numbers of tuition students are clearly rising, if we are obtaining revenue from these rising numbers of tuition students it is not evident in the physical facilities at Manchester Central, Manchester West and Manchester Memorial. While we recognize that we can ill afford to lose the revenue, I think we can even less afford to keep these rising enrollments in the City of Manchester because it is going to cost us \$67 million to \$75 million to build a new high school. There is no doubt

about that and I think that Manchester is going to be responsible for the majority of that amount of money. I think we can even less afford to keep the tuition students here and that was the debate that we had internally.

Dr. Karen Stone stated I simply want to make the point that cost and revenue is not only monetary. It also can be seen in means that are not so easily discernible such as learning, such as violence, such as tensions, such as pride. I hope that the decision makers take a look at all means of cost, all means of lets say figuratively revenue because it is not only just money that we should be looking at. Thank you.

Mr. Eric Sawyer stated one of the other things that we looked at was the current tuition contracts are very short-term. If you were to try to extend the contracts to amortize the building of a new school, most of the tuition towns would not go along with that idea. They did not want to sign a 30-year contract. Without that, you could well build a new school and they could go on their own merry way and build their own high school and leave you high and dry with an empty facility.

Mayor Baines stated my final question before turning it over to the Board is something bold, perhaps something dynamic, something outside of the box. Did the Committee explore the possibility of looking at land for the possible construction of a new high school that might involve the participation of Bedford and Hooksett and Manchester to share in the construction with some kind of an arrangement, whether it be a cooperative arrangement that is allowed under state law that would be unique and perhaps dynamic and perhaps even involve the university community in some kind of a new and innovative approach to education that focuses on the new century? Did you look at that kind of an option at least?

Mr. Kacavas replied we looked at parts of what you just referred to. We certainly did look at the availability of land. One of our first meetings was with Planning Director,

Bob MacKenzie, who gave us about a two hour presentation on the availability of lands for a fourth high school and based on the acreage required to build a fourth high school, it was the Committee's conclusion that Manchester simply does not have the land available to build a high school. Of course, Manchester Central sits on 4.3 acres. So much for standards. There may be land available, but it was our collective judgment, your Honor, that it was not sufficient to build a fourth high school to accommodate all tuition students and Manchester students.

Mayor Baines stated what I would like to do is perhaps go around this way and start with Alderman Gatsas.

Alderman Gatsas stated, John, I think I know the answer to this question but what standards...where did the standard come that we need 40 acres for a high school.

Mr. Kacavas replied as I understand it, from the state. They are state standards.

Alderman Gatsas asked do we have the ability to waive those standards.

Mr. Kacavas answered perhaps. We didn't look into that that deeply.

School Committee Member Elise stated basically I have a statement. I just want to commend the Committee on doing a very thorough study on this matter and looking at it from all perspectives, positively and negatively. I think the findings and the proposals have a lot of common sense to them and in terms of looking at a new high school and the thought of the tuition that we actually charge right now having to go up, it is just inevitable that the surrounding towns would say if we are going to pay Manchester that much money why don't we build our own schools and I wouldn't want to be in a position where we are left holding the bag on a particular huge financial issue. I think it would behoove the City to make plans to take care of our own students. Mayor, I thought it was

a very good question that you asked regarding the loss of the tuition money. Of course, I have asked that question myself and that question has been asked over and over again and in the last study it said that we were going to be losing \$8 million and then it was \$9 million and then \$10 million, etc. There was never an exact number and now I hear it is \$9 million. I really don't think that estimate is correct in terms of what are we actually going to be losing. I think that Dr. Stone's comments about looking at all other areas in terms of costs and expenses and losses is that we should be looking at a number of different things and not necessarily the dollar amount.

Alderman Levasseur asked did you look at the potential of stopping the City of Manchester from being a refugee center so that we wouldn't have as many ESL students going into Central. That seems to be the biggest overcrowding issue at Central. I don't know what the money number is for ESL students, but I am sure it is in the millions for what we have to do for overcrowding for Central.

Mr. Kacavas answered no, Alderman; immigration wasn't part of the scope of our charge. We looked at the existing overcrowding as it is and what we can do about it. We certainly didn't entertain the notion of stopping the flow of immigrants to Manchester as part of the solution.

Alderman Levasseur stated well not talking about that, I think we are a refugee center or a settlement center and we are not getting our fair share of money from the government. Probably you could answer this better, Mayor.

Mayor Baines replied first of all I would not be in favor of Manchester not being a refugee center or a center for immigrants. Committee Member Elise works at the center and she may be able to provide some insight into that issue.

School Committee Member Elise responded steps have been taken to settle refugees in other parts of the state, but that being said, I think it would certainly bring up a lot of discrimination issues eliminating a certain program like ESL versus another type of program.

Alderman Levasseur stated I am just trying to get to what the parameters of this were. I worry about losing \$10 million or \$11 million from people willing to come to the City and pay for school. Also, you say that we don't have any land but we have hundreds and hundreds of acres up at Hackett Hill Road and to not think about French Hall as an alternative, I think...I know you said that you dismissed it rather early and I don't understand why you dismissed it rather early when there is land galore up there and it is very close to the Hooksett line.

Mr. Kacavas replied we just found it too remote if you are going to build a fourth new high school that is going to encompass students from all over the City.

Alderman Levasseur responded they say they want to put portables at Central High School, but that would be a short-term solution until we could build an addition. Wouldn't it make sense to use French Hall as the Administration building and use the Ash Street School for classrooms for the two years you are going to use the portables? Instead of spending the money for the portables, wouldn't it make sense to be creative and try to use what we have for facilities at this time?

Mr. Kacavas replied we entertained the option of using the Ash Street School and it was something that didn't pass the Committee. We listened to the teachers at Central on that issue and we believe that the portables are more cost effective because they are going to be short-term. We don't want a situation where Ash Street School is going to turn into a permanent annex to Manchester Central.

Alderman Levasseur stated as far as getting rid of the Bedford students and potentially Hooksett students, Manchester once had a chance to bring Jordan Marsh downtown and we decided not to let them stay in Manchester and we saw what the long-term effects of not allowing that building into downtown were. It took a long time, but it finally fell completely apart. The long-term effects of kicking these Bedford and Hooksett students out in my estimation is it is going to probably make a lot of our upper level income people want to move to those outlying districts because they will have better facilities and better schools and the tax rates will probably be less for what you are going to be able to buy. Did you think of the long-term affects of what you are proposing, which I think is a drastic measure by letting these students leave and causing us to become a very competitive and try to have to compete with these new facilities? That is not a bad thing. Competition isn't a bad thing. Competition improves people. It improves facilities. That is the goal. That is the reason we recommend that the tuition contracts be terminated. We believe we can improve our facilities. We believe we can create an environment in which Manchester students learn, succeed and exceed by doing what we recommend. I share your concern about the loss of revenue, Alderman, but as I said before I think it will cost Manchester more in the long run to continue to accommodate these tuition students when these towns themselves recognize that they have grown into their own high schools. This isn't 1936 when these tuition contracts started. This is 2001 and these towns have grown and their growth rate is 10% or 12%. They have grown into their own high schools and we believe that our recommendations will accommodate Manchester students. Let me respond to one more point you raised earlier that we lose that revenue and we create a situation where we have schools where nobody wants to go. I think we have schools now where nobody wants to go and that is the point. We are at the bottom of the barrel. We are looking for a way up and out and I believe that this is the way to do it.

Mayor Baines stated just to piggyback on a point of agreement that I would have with Alderman Levasseur that if, in fact, the surrounding towns did build the kind of high

schools that they probably would end up building, unless we in Manchester made a very serious effort to upgrade our facilities and programs, exactly what he said would happen. You would have tuition students coming out of Manchester into those schools, but that gets the element of competition. We have a competent responsibility to update our facilities and make them as competitive as they should be right now.

Mr. Kacavas replied I think that is the assumption that we are making here. The foundation of our recommendations is that we are striving to improve our facilities. We are striving to improve our environments. This is a way we can do that.

School Committee Member Leonard asked did you look at private schools or to make the City schools private.

Mr. Kacavas answered no we didn't look at that particular issue, but we did have some discussion about the use of private schools and space in private schools to have public classrooms. That has been done in other localities but the logistics of that would be just too difficult to implement.

School Committee Member Leonard stated Derryfield charges their students \$15,000 a year. Also, we are band-aiding the schools too much because we need to do something right now and repair them all to bring them up to state standards and Federal standards because if we don't do that we are going to end up like California and some of the other places with the shootings.

School Committee Member Herbert stated I asked this at your last meeting and I will bring you back around to it. That is the financial aspect of your recommendations.

Mr. Kacavas replied once again, I am going to thank you for bringing me back around to that. I would rather forget having to spend \$18.8 million but that is the price tag of our

recommendations. According to the renovations, expansions and additions that Parsons Brinckerhoff found necessary to accommodate Manchester students, it would cost about \$18.8 million. We compared that with the \$67 to \$75 million price tag a new high school would bring and even if you got capital contributions from the surrounding towns, Manchester would be footing a majority of that I am sure and I think that the numbers in addition to the enrollment projections, the cost numbers are just compelling. So, \$18.8 million is approximately what the price tag is.

Dr. Kehas stated before it gets too far along, are we saying that we cannot afford to have public schools for the resident students in Manchester. That we can't pay for our own house and we need to rent rooms to Bedford and to Hooksett and Candia, etc. in order to get money to support our own students? I find that just impossible to believe that elected officials in Manchester are not willing to spend whatever money it takes to educate their own students without having to rent rooms.

Mayor Baines replied the only thing I would add to that is that might be a perspective, but the mix of the students as you know has always been a dynamic at Central, at West and at Memorial that has been of tremendous benefit so I don't look at it from renting rooms. The diversity that it brings and the dynamics of the relationships that exist in the Greater Manchester area has been the power of that relationship, not the renting of rooms.

Dr. Kehas stated we have diversity already. At Central, for instance, I don't think there is any claim that there is no diversity and you do have diversity at West but what happens is that Bedford students get the diversity. It is a two-way street. Bedford students don't have typical students like we have in Manchester. We have in Manchester on the West Side a broad range of students. Parkside is different from McKelvie. Coming together there is diversity, but we have and as things are expanded on the west side we are having a different kind of population coming to live on the west side.

School Committee Member Herbert stated the \$18.8 million, approximately 30% of that is refunded by the state so you are not looking at \$18.8 million in terms of local taxes. The other thing is and this deals with...I guess everybody doesn't have it here but this is Option N in Parsons Brinckerhoff and that details where the money, in fact, would go in various areas. I would like to hear from Mr. Clougherty. Are we going to hear from Mr. Clougherty tonight?

Mayor Baines replied we will talk about that. He may have some comments at the end, but I want this time just for members of both Boards. We don't want to get to the bonding issues and all of that tonight. That is very complicated and it is causing a lot of stress at City Hall right now for a lot of us.

Alderman Sysyn asked does that \$18 million include the \$10 million from tuition.

Mr. Kacavas answered the tuition students would no longer be paying the \$10 million because we wouldn't have tuition any more.

Alderman Sysyn asked so the total thing would cost \$18 million.

Mr. Kacavas answered that is correct. The \$18.8 million is for renovations, expansions and additions to the buildings.

School Committee Member Labanaris asked for the short-term, were the on-site portables the only solution that you discussed for Central High School's overcrowding.

Mr. Kacavas answered no. We discussed the option of using the Ash Street School. We discussed double sessions. Neither of those recommendations came out of the Committee with majority approval. Obviously we discussed the night school option, but the portables is where we all came together on the assumption that the portables would

leave and be taken away as soon as Bedford students were gone. We are wary of the existence of portables. There is no question about that. We are obviously keenly aware of that and are wary of that and that is why we tie it specifically to the continued presence of the Bedford students. It was just our collective belief based on our interviews with various folks at Central that a new annex situation at the Ash Street School was...certainly it is a viable option, just not the best option.

School Committee Member Labanaris stated taking that out of the equation thought, how about dual sessions. Did you give that any serious consideration?

Mr. Kacavas replied we did and I am sure that you will all be receiving a note from Dr. Kehas about that. We did consider double sessions, but logistically speaking we had some concern that it would be implemented by September 2001 and if you are going to go to double sessions at Central it stands to reason that you would go to double sessions at West and that you would go to double sessions at Memorial and they don't need them so double sessions to us are a logistical nightmare that the Committee just generally could not agree on.

Alderman Pinard stated the pictures kind of disturb me because three years ago I got going looking at the condition of the schools. When were those pictures taken?

Mr. Kacavas replied in the last week.

Alderman Pinard stated I rest my case. Why I brought that up is I am very firm on cleanliness of the schools and I think Mayor Baines knows that from three years ago when Craig Annis started this thing and I think the urgency of what we are here for tonight...I think what we, the Board of Aldermen, should consider working together to find ways to fund things so the general public will not get hurt, but will work with us and

there has to be a way of doing it. These pictures, Mr. Tim Clougherty, I want to meet with you after the meeting tonight.

Mr. Kacavas replied let me just respond to that by saying that while those pictures were just taken in the last 7-10 days, when we took our tour of Central High School, the conditions were virtually identical. Nothing changed and we took our tour last year, in December of 2000.

School Committee Member Gatsas stated I would like to start off by saying that the agreement between the sending towns and Manchester has been a positive for both sides over the years but I have been very outspoken on this and I think that you get to a point where you have to separate. I am a big proponent of the Manchester students and we were elected to support and make education for Manchester students the best possible. Just a little background here. I am sure some of you know Bodwell Road. That development went up and all of those kids came in and we have overcrowding and the new McLaughlin Middle School has to be expanded two years down the road. We go over to Wellington Road and you look at the development over there. Those students are going to be high school students eventually. It is nice to give out building permits and I have stated this many times. We don't have a plan for that either. A couple of questions, statements or whatever. The \$65 to \$70 million the way I understood it was to build a high school. That does not include acquiring the land is that correct?

Mr. Kacavas replied that is exclusive of the acquisition of the land.

School Committee Member Gatsas responded so lets not leave this room thinking \$65 or \$70 million like other projects. We could be talking \$100 million.

Mr. Kacavas replied that is speculative but sure. It would cost more than the building of a high school because we would have to acquire the land.

School Committee Member Gatsas stated since this hit the newspaper I have gone around and talked to some PTA and people like that and the feedback that I get from these people that all of us represent, they see for Central next year a short-term solution of double sessions or portables and a long-term solution of partial or all non-tuition students and/or the building of a high school. Mayor, you are a former principal, Central High School is a great building. I don't see how with safety and making it a friendly atmosphere you could add and make it any bigger for an administrator to run that facility.

Mayor Baines replied I agree.

School Committee Member Gatsas stated the other thing that I think is disappointing to me is I saw in there safety concerns and I remember Pip Adams came to the School Board a few years ago and he listed some of the safety issues that the schools had and he was written up or he was given a letter about that because he was honest and truthful to the situation of the schools. If this was an apartment building or a business and they had those violations, they would shut them right down. We have our most precious resource in these buildings every single day and people have to understand...tax rate or no tax rate and I think that Dr. Kehas said it right that there is tension but you know what and you said it Mayor we all try to make the right decisions and we have to do a giant balancing act but I have sat on this Board for a long time and a lot of money has not gone into renovation of buildings. It is quite appalling...I spoke with Mr. Levasseur and he went over to Central High School and noticed the facility over there. The conditions are appalling. In closing here, I think that when we are looking at the scheme of this whole picture, West and Central are in dire need right now, but let's not forget about Memorial High School. I remember a few years ago the bleachers in the gymnasium were supposed to be fixed. That is what was told to me by some of the Aldermen. The money then went to West High School and that was taken care of. Memorial High School has still not been taken care of. They used some of that money to fix the bracing at the JFK Coliseum. I

think that as our buildings are getting older we have to be wiser in how we are going to develop a plan to deal with that. The last thing is the \$18.8 million that you refer to in the renovations or updating the buildings, that would be...I heard Committee Member Herbert saying 30% from the state but that is over the life of the bond issue. That is not 30% up front.

Mr. Kacavas replied yes that is how I understand it.

Mayor Baines stated just to reinforce something, I am not aware of that happening with Mr. Adams a number of years ago but in 1980 when I got to West there were lots of doors that were chained and barred and common sense said to me we are in violation of the fire codes and safety codes of the City and I had a meeting at West and I brought in the people from Fire and Building and I said if we were a private business what would you do and they said we would close you down. The schools have to have the same standards for safety and we have made a lot of progress over those 20 years to bring them up to standard but the same standards should prevail for our schools. If it is a safety issue at a private business like Blue Cross/Blue Shield, it should be a safety issue in our schools and we should be held to the same standards.

School Committee Member Gatsas stated I think that I had stated this before. We have a Joint Building & Sites Committee and I never see them reporting to the Board of Mayor and Aldermen about projects and ongoing situations. I think it would be very helpful for the Aldermen to see these situations and hear from the Joint Building & Sites Committee and what is going on with the projects and how the money needs to be directed.

Alderman O'Neil asked if the agreements were reworked and included the towns contributing to the capital cost, whether it be a new high school, renovations, additions, etc., do you believe that would change any recommendations from the Committee.

Mr. Kacavas answered I suppose it depends on the level of the capital contribution. I still think that Manchester would be footing the majority of the cost of acquiring the land and building the new high school. We throw this out as a recommendation to you to consider. It is, I think, the belief of the Committee however that Manchester should tend its own backyard right now and take care of its Manchester high school students and let Bedford go.

Alderman O'Neil asked if I look at your numbers, roughly 30% of all high school students are tuition students.

Mr. Kacavas answered roughly 29%.

Alderman O'Neil asked could we conclude then that possibly the towns should be paying approximately 30% of any capital improvements.

Mr. Kacavas answered it is a corresponding amount so sure.

Alderman O'Neil asked but the agreements would have to be reworked probably for a longer term.

Mr. Kacavas answered they would have to be reworked for a long-term, we are talking at least a 20 or 30 year term contract. There is no question in my mind that if sending towns are being asked to make capital contributions they are going to seek a commensurate share of representation on some Board and I don't know logistically how that works unless you enter into some sort of area type agreement. It is going to be a difficult conundrum.

Alderman O'Neil asked similar to what some high schools...I think the term is co-op.

Mr. Kacavas answered yes.

Alderman Lopez asked when you looked at the projections did you go back five years or ten years to see how close these projections were.

Mr. Kacavas answered we went back as far as Parsons Brinckerhoff and NESDEC allowed us to go back. I don't think it was 10 years but we went back 5 years anyway and they were close.

Alderman Lopez asked very close.

Mr. Kacavas answered not very close but they were close enough. They were in a range and as I said our recommendations are based on assumptions and one of those assumptions is that these numbers are true. Based on past experience, they are not that far off.

Alderman Lopez asked your comment before regarding double sessions, did I understand you correctly that you looked at all three high schools and not just one high school and why couldn't just one high school have a double session.

Mr. Kacavas answered one could. We were just saying that it would make for, I think, odd scheduling when you are talking about athletic teams and competitions and things like that if you have one high school on a double session schedule and other high schools going as they normally would. I think that unless it is uniform it is difficult to implement, but that is up to you.

Alderman Lopez asked in reference to the City employees as custodians of high schools, wouldn't it be better if we had custodians taking care of the high schools. Maybe we wouldn't even see these pictures.

Mr. Kacavas answered you are absolutely right on that and that is one of our recommendations; that we get dedicated custodians and I don't mean dedicated in a hard working sense, I mean custodians who are both dedicated in a hard working sense and also dedicated to a particular school rather than having them floating around to the three high schools. It is better to have somebody on-site at the same school all the time who takes a little pride in that school. That is the way it used to be and we suggest that is the way it ought to be. I think that you are right. We wouldn't see these conditions we are seeing today.

Alderman Lopez stated I know that we have given a lot of money and accountability has to be taken into consideration because everybody passes the buck. We give the money and Building Maintenance takes care of the schools and the schools don't have any say in where the money goes. Maybe we are not getting the best for our buck. I agree with Alderman Gatsas who thinks that maybe the procurement code ought to be changed so that we can get more for our buck. I am looking at the recommendations here and out of all the recommendations, I don't see why 11 of them couldn't have been implemented a long time ago with Central High School. I don't know who is responsible for that, but to me they are all just common sense things. Maybe you ought to take a good look at that.

Alderman Shea stated, John, I am very proud of you having come from Hallsville School. One of the first questions I would like to ask is whose decision is it to terminate any educational agreements with Bedford?

Mayor Baines replied the School Board.

Mr. Kacavas stated it is only our recommendation. It is ultimately up to the School Board to do whatever they want to do.

Alderman Shea stated my second question has to do with the gentleman on your right. There was an objective about technology and so forth but there was no real follow-up and I would be interested to hear more about that.

Mr. Eric Sawyer stated some of the things we noticed were that we always tend, at least in the City schools to go with traditional building methods. There are building methods out there that use precast modular concrete structures and I will pass this around. We can build essentially the same school for \$50/square foot versus \$150/square foot. I have personal experience in building a 20-room school at \$50/square foot using this type of construction. There are other modern methods of construction that are not being pursued and that weren't in the report. I think that if you move forward in an expeditious manner and take into consideration some of these things, you can avoid the intermediate step of temporary solutions and wasting a lot of money there. You can move on and effectively do a permanent solution. The 20-room school that I am talking about was...nobody gave the okay to start that until the end of April and it was ready on Labor Day.

Alderman Shea asked would this have to do with additions as well as renovations.

Mr. Sawyer answered yes and when we speak of renovations, I think that the 30% from the state that you are talking about for renovations I believe the statute says that it has to be substantial renovations and our recommendation is for substantial renovations. When you remodel Central, we expect it to be every bit a modern building meeting all of the modern building codes without any grandfather provisions. We don't want you to remodel a 1920 building and have it remodeled to 1920 standards. We want the same type of remodeling that was done at City Hall. One of the other things that I am familiar with is virtual reality modeling. I just spoke with Mr. Matusziewski and apparently it is very expensive in this region. I was not aware of how expensive it is, but I don't advocate doing virtual reality modeling just to see what it is. You should have a definite

construction trade-off and money saving goal when you enter into that kind of endeavor let's say. So, those are some of the things that I had in mind when we put this together.

Alderman Shea stated I have a question for Norm Tanguay. If the School District were to terminate the agreement with Bedford, financially that would take away from the \$9 or \$10 million what percentage approximately. 50% or 40%? In other words if you retained Hooksett and Candia students.

Mr. Tanguay replied it would be about 50% of what we are receiving now. It is an even distribution between Hooksett and Bedford in terms of the students. Approximately 50% each. Hooksett being Auburn, Candia and Deerfield as well.

Alderman Shea asked in other words it wouldn't be a \$10 million tuition loss it would be a \$5 million tuition loss.

Mr. Tanguay answered it would be approximately half that amount plus you are looking at downsizing as well so there would be some additional savings if you will.

Alderman Shea stated I wanted to comment to on the cleanliness and the maintenance of buildings and I think that a decision was made a few years ago to do away with custodial help and to have private business do that. I think that perhaps it is time now for the City to take a look at whether or not we want City residents who have a vested interest...I know in my building when I was at Hallsville, Mr. Mason had a daughter there and he was very solicitous about the cleanliness of the building. He would come in on Sundays and on holidays and he would do the shoveling if needed. He would help teachers with supplies, etc. It wasn't an impersonal relationship. It was a very personal relationship and I believe that the City erred greatly when they decided to do away with the custodial situation. I am not sure if that can be brought back, but I know it was a decision made by the former administration in order to save money on the tax rate. It certainly has not

allowed the City, in my judgement, to maintain the schools at an adequate level. The other point is that in looking at the condition of the lockers, I wonder if and I am not sure if the expert can answer this but are there ways of...we live in a tumultuous kind of society where kids have lost a little bit...not all kids but those few kids that are in the minority cause a great deal of problems and it is reflected in the attitude of adults towards the majority of students. We know that at Central and West and Memorial 90% to 95% of the students are good kids, outstanding kids who work hard but that other minority seems, for whatever reason, to be a little bit aggressive in terms of destroying property and things of that nature. Are there ways to say have lockers or other types of material that would lead less to destructiveness? In other words, do they make materials so that a kid can't go by and...

Mr. Sawyer interjected yes they do but I am not sure lockers are constructed from them. I wanted to go back to your earlier question. One of the other concerns that we had or that I had anyway...one was that we seemed to have this cyclical spending of money on roofs and we felt that or I felt that we should look at maybe changing the style of roof from mop tar to your standing seam sheet metal, which is a permanent roof and doesn't require periodic replacement. Another thing was that at the Manchester School of Technology, although they do have a woodworking program, they do not have a cabinet shop. I know that several of the major manufacturers of woodworking equipment will donate equipment and this is professional equipment, to schools for a cabinet making shop and in turn you could use the classes at the Manchester School of Technology to be a fixture source for all of your schools.

Alderman Shea stated I think that the more emphasis that is placed upon the value of education, the type of responsibility that City officials have, the greater the awareness of the public and I know when Dr. Kehas mentioned about those public officials who weigh the cost of education versus the tax rate and the constituent's concerns, I think that the message has to come out and this is a fine forum by which it can come out that the

emphasis has to be placed on the value of how important education is and how vital it is for all of us to work together in order to accomplish the objectives that should be accomplished.

Alderman Vaillancourt stated I appreciate the work of your Committee and I would like to offer a comment that is uniquely my own and then for my question I will rely on the wisdom of others that has inspired me. First of all, I would just like to put what we have heard here tonight into perspective and I don't wish for one moment to minimize the value of education. If it were not for me being educated in a public school, albeit not in Manchester, I would probably not be able to draw upon my knowledge of the definition of paramount. You declared earlier that our goal should be to make education paramount. That seems to be a mantra that we hear not only at the City but the state and national level and again I don't mean to minimize the value of education, but by using the word paramount I believe we are putting it as a top priority and I think we have to think tonight not only about education as a priority but about sharing priorities. When we have three feet of snow in the streets, maybe we need to make plowing the roads paramount. When our house is burning down, maybe we need to think about making fire protection paramount. When we are being robbed on the street or someone has hit our car, maybe we need to think about making police protection paramount so while again I would never minimize the value of education, I don't think it can be the be all and end all of our spending priorities. I think you will have to realize that if not on the School Board, those of us on the Board of Mayor and Aldermen have to consider other priorities. By passing around the pictures I am sure you meant to evoke some kind of sympathy for the condition of our schools but to me when I see vandalism I have to wonder how that vandalism was created. Just by coincidence I spoke with and I am going to use the word a very liberal friend of my yesterday who 40 years ago taught school and said that she used to strap for two reasons – students that lied to her and students that vandalized school property. Now I don't suggest we go back to strapping, but what those pictures told me is that there seems to be a lack of respect for school property and we have to start

sharing responsibility for the schools with students and parents, as well as public officials and taxpayers. Having doused a little water, I just thought we needed a certain perspective. I am not against spending monies for schools but we have to realize that we have other priorities as well. For my question, I would like to refer to a document...all of the material you presented to us tonight is something we have had for awhile so it is not new to us but there was a document when we came in from Richard Girard who presents a rather interesting perspective as far as making the Manchester School of Technology...I think he goes one step beyond what your plan projected and he wants to make it a school that can handle 1,500 students full-time and thus ameliorate the problem and make it possible that we won't have to consider one of the options you have given us – either building a new school or getting rid of the tuition students. I wonder if you have had a chance to review this plan and if not if it might be worth pursuing as some kind of middle ground. For those people who haven't seen the plan, it would involve as I understand it, making a charter school out of the School of Technology and putting 1,500 full-time students there to alleviate the overcrowding in other schools and maybe be a solution worth looking at thinking beyond the scope.

Mr. Kacavas replied first of all I did not see Mr. Girard's plan. I was busy preparing our plan for your review. In response to your comments about making education paramount, we understand as citizens of this City that our elected officials have a number of priorities that must be addressed, but what we believe is that you have made revenue paramount over education. We are asking you to flip that on its head and make education paramount over revenue. Let's determine what we need to do to make Manchester schools what they ought to be and then let's devise a way to pay for it. That is what we are asking you to do. We fully recognize that there is a limited source of revenue, but we are asking you to be creative, to be bold and to find ways of financing the renovation and expansion of the high schools so that they can be what they ought to be.

Alderman Vaillancourt stated I will just conclude by saying that I think Mr. Girard has been bold and creative and I very anxiously await the comments of your Committee on reading and studying his proposal.

School Committee Member Paradis stated I would just like to make a few comments. The first one would be that going back to the days of Mayor Benoit, God Bless him and he was in office I believe for 18 years, he kept taxes very, very low for the City but did not do any type of renovations in any of the schools. My husband and I looked up a little bit of history on him and it was quite interesting. Going from there, I wanted to ask, Mr. Tanguay, for clarification \$6,078 is the amount of money we spend on a high school student? Is that the new amount?

Mr. Tanguay replied that is correct for this year.

School Committee Member Paradis asked how much do we collect.

Mr. Tanguay answered that same amount.

School Committee Member Paradis stated it has gone up. I remember it used to be \$4,200 and then \$5,000 and then \$5,500 and now it is \$6,078. Also, the New England Accreditation going back 11 years ago when Mr. D'Allesandro and myself and some other School Board members that are here listened to the New England Accreditation teams and what they were saying about our high schools they always made the comments that the physical condition of our buildings were poor. Everything was not good there and that was going back 10 or 11 years. Myself, I believe we should have a short-term program and we should have a long-term program and as John Kacavas said go forward and do something bold and get something done.

Alderman Pariseau stated School Committee Member Paradis told me to keep it short, your Honor. I would just like to commend the Committee for their efforts in making this presentation this evening. I have to go along with my comrade from Ward 8 relative to the deplorable conditions. From what I observed, it did look like vandalism more than aging and I think it is time that discipline is reinstated into the school system. There isn't any. None by teachers. None by administrators or anybody and I think if that was reinstated, the conditions of some of these schools would improve.

Mr. Kacavas replied I would like to respond and then yield the floor to a couple of members of the Task Force who would like to respond on that point. We didn't pass those photos around to engender any sympathy. We passed those photos around as a reality check to engender disgust. That is what the condition of our high schools is whether it is from vandalism, some of which may be from vandalism and vandalism is bad but you know what, vandalism is going to happen. Much of what you saw in those pictures is due to neglect and even if it is vandalism, vandalism can be cleaned up too and it has not been. That is just a function of neglect. Cafeteria tables without seats isn't necessarily vandalism. That is neglect. The classrooms are not vandalism. That is just long time neglect and teachers are forced to try to address those issues by themselves with absolutely no help so those photos weren't passed around to engender sympathy. That is all I will say.

Ms. Rona Zlokower stated on the issue of vandalism, we were told by a number of teachers and administrators as well as parents that the lack of security and the conditions at the school – windows which couldn't be locked and sometimes doors which couldn't be locked, contributed greatly to the vandalism and that a lot of the vandalism was occurring after school hours. Teachers were absolutely stripping their desks in their classrooms of anything of any value themselves when they returned home because they didn't know when they returned in the morning whether those things would be there or not. So, some of that vandalism is a factor of our society and may not be directly related

to students in the school and has to do with the conditions of the lack of security and some of the easy entry into the classrooms in the schools. Also, with regard to the look of what is vandalism, it was discussed and observed that the schools have reached the point where I am not sure that the students even see some of the deterioration of the school anymore. It is to the point where this is the only standard that they have had beginning in some of the elementary schools right through the middle schools and on to the high schools. I would certainly not think that we need to place all of that responsibility on the students themselves. If they are given an environment which engenders pride which is clean and up-to-date and they have places to store their equipment...we heard stories from parents of music students who said that the students would go to concerts and during the concerts because the lockers didn't lock things would disappear. Instruments disappeared and the students are now at the point where they really don't trust the environment too so it is two way. It is not just the possibility that the students are creating this look of vandalism, it is also the environment that has not allowed them to keep things secure.

Mayor Baines stated also students reflect the environment which they are in, unfortunately. I can say that discipline is excellent in the Manchester schools. Vandalism is minimal from my perspective as a high school principal and things like graffiti, you get rid of it immediately when it happens. If somebody writes graffiti in a restroom, it is removed that day and it should be gone. There are some issues at Central related to some of the equipment there but it is not a pervasive problem at the schools from my perspective. There are other administrators here and people from the schools. There is vandalism. There is no doubt about it, but it is not pervasive vandalism.

Mr. Kelley stated I was going to make almost the same comment that you made, Alderman Vaillancourt made a good comment that the students don't show respect in the facilities but when there is so much graffiti that is painted and nobody replaces it, we have to maintain the facilities. We are not showing respect for our own facilities so why

should we expect them to start showing respect? It is not right that it happens, but if we were in a situation where as soon as graffiti was written the next day the thing was painted over and people knew that it was not acceptable and they would be punished for it, then you wouldn't have it.

Dr. Karen Stone stated I would like to make a point of clarification on some of those pictures. Where you see names painted on the walls, that is not graffiti. That is a purposeful...it is a tradition I have come to understand and perhaps I am getting some departments in trouble and I don't mean to but please don't take that as graffiti. Please don't take that as vandalism or as something that was defacing the environment. In fact, it was meant to enhance the music department environment. I guess it is a tradition at Central High School that I hope by you seeing these pictures that tradition will not be forced to be abandoned but the names as you see are quite nicely painted. That is not what we are depicting. We are depicting the corner that you will see in one picture where there is no wallboard. That is a problem, not the carefully painted name and the college where that student has been accepted. That is not the graffiti.

Mayor Baines responded I don't think we are talking about that but when you do look at a cafeteria table whose surface has been ripped off over a period of perhaps weeks or months or years or whatever it is, I think that is what people are looking at.

School Committee Member Garrity stated I just want to make a quick comment about the pictures. As a School Board member I make a point of going into every school at least once a year and I have been to Central three times this year. Central certainly has their problems, but I just want the public to know that district-wide all of the schools are not up to par like Central is...I mean not in the same shape that Central is in. Each school certainly has some problems, but not as bad as Central.

School Committee Member D'Allesandro stated first I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Committee. I think that they were creative and they were responsive and I think they pointed out many of the things that almost everybody in this room knew but it took a re-emphasis to focus in on these items. I would like to talk about two things and query you on two things. We receive the School of Technology, free and clear in 2002. Two years ago I made a suggestion to the Planning people that we look at creating a situation where the School of Technology would become a school. That school has the ability to house about 1,500 students and then look at the Millyard and find an establishment in the Millyard where we could create the vocational environment that we were abandoning there because of the fact that that vocational environment would be supported by the business and industry that has grown up in the Millyard. Now I have seen renovation after renovation after renovation in the Millyard, which has proved to be extremely satisfactory. Did you ever look at that and consider taking...there are many thousands of square feet that are available and using it for that particular application?

Mr. Kacavas replied we did consider it. We didn't give it great consideration because we believe that we can use the Manchester School of Technology as a vocational technical high school and it certainly is sufficient to house 1,500 students for that purpose so we didn't envision using the MST facility as a regular high school.

School Committee Member D'Allesandro stated the other item is there has been some talk about the building, which is now called French Hall at what was the University of New Hampshire in Manchester and that will become available, will become vacant. Now, what consideration was given to using that as an alternative facility in that if you redistrict it you could certainly accommodate a number of students?

Mr. Kacavas replied we did consider it to the point where we went there and took a tour of the facility, which is in need of tremendous renovation to make it ready as an educational facility certainly. We also considered it as an option for administration to

move administration there and create room at Ash Street School for the overflow at Central High School. Those were considerations, but we just believed that French Hall was not the best option that we had and we tried to give you the best options that we believed were available.

School Committee Member D'Allesandro stated I just want to make one other point. What people pay us in tuition is the actual cost of educating that student within the Manchester school system. That is not a profit-making venture. That is exactly what it costs to educate a student. That is the law. The law says that we may charge a sending district the actual cost of education so this perception that it is a big money maker, that is nonsense. We are paying...that is what it is costing us to educate those students and in essence the thing that makes it such a wonderful deal for the sending area is there is no capital outlay so you are paying an operating expense and you are having a capital expense that is in essence being borne by the receiving institutions.

Mr. Kacavas replied absolutely. We are in full agreement.

School Committee Member Ouellette stated I think the three of us who are going to go next have a different perspective because all three of us went to Manchester West and we went to school with the Bedford students so it is not an easy "kick them out". I spent the four best years of my life I like to say with my friends from Bedford and made some long lasting friendships with them but I do, you know, believe that sometimes it is time to move forward. Basically, the Bedford long-range facility plans, you looked at that right?

Mr. Kacavas replied yes and Sue Thomas can speak to that in some detail and I know she plans to at the end of this.

School Committee Member Ouellette asked can I ask her some questions.

Ms. Susan Thomas stated I was on the Task Force but I am also a member of the Bedford School Board.

School Committee Member Ouellette asked in your long range plan is a high school facility included.

Ms. Thomas answered next week we are voting on money to put in our land trust specifically for a high school. There is also \$75,000 in our budget which we hope will be approved next week for engineering and architectural studies and next March we plan on putting an approximately \$39 million high school on the ballot to open in 2004.

School Committee Member Ouellette asked so that is in your plan.

Ms. Thomas answered yes.

School Committee Member Ouellette asked the tuition towns...we had information today that the tuition towns did not want to engage in a long-term relationship contract with the City. What basis was that information given on?

Ms. Thomas replied there has been a lot of talk as to what would happen and actually I had a lot of questions, which I had planned on asking when this was all done from a Bedford perspective to all of you as to if Bedford or any tuition town but Bedford specifically entered into a long-range capital plan with Manchester to build a new high school, how much would we have to pay and would all of our students be able to go to the new high school that we would be helping to pay for?

School Committee Member Ouellette stated that was the same conversation that I had with a woman who was from Manchester. She had those same concerns.

Ms. Thomas replied the Bedford School Board has taken no stand. Everyone in Bedford is talking about it. It has been in the news and the thought of signing a 20 to 30 year contract is of great concern.

School Committee Member Ouellette stated I have one final question for you. If we terminate the contract in June, what will your plans be if the voters reject the \$39 million high school?

Ms. Thomas responded that is actually another thing that I did plan on addressing so I will do that right now. Like I said, we do plan on putting it on the ballot next year. The School Board certainly believes that if Manchester terminates our agreement, a high school will pass. In fact, it is the one way we are pretty sure that a high school will pass.

Mayor Baines stated it is probably the only way.

Ms. Thomas replied it probably is. I have lived in Bedford for 11 years and I have been on every high school committee, however, and I will do this now because it kind of ties together. It has been a great relationship. My kids are just getting to the high school point, but I am a basketball coach and softball coach and I know a lot of kids who have gone to West. They love West and we as school board members are happy that they love West. It is where we send them to high school and it has been a great relationship but Bedford has grown 32% over the last 10 years and just to clarify something for Bedford alone over the last 20 years our actual enrollments versus projections is over 99% so we are pretty darn accurate. I have to give that to the Superintendent. So, we do believe though and everyone has said from the Bedford Taxpayers Association to the Bedford Taxpayers for Quality Education that if Manchester ever terminated our relationship they would vote for a high school. If it didn't get approved in the first go round, we do have the ability to call an emergency vote and we can do that as many times as possible, but one note, most recently both Bow and Litchfield passed their high schools on the first try

when push came to shove and they had to do it. We have a good organization. There are a lot of people in Bedford looking at this. We are going to put it on the ballot regardless of what the decision is and it will just pass a whole lot easier if you terminate our agreement.

School Committee Member Ouellette asked, Chairman, and I am sorry that Burt Kaliski is not here because I would ask him and I am sure that you talked about this in your Committee, his report recommended that we keep the tuition students and I read in the paper the differences that maybe they really didn't look at the facilities aspect when they were doing their report. Was that talked about and I am kind of confused as to why there are two different recommendations?

Mr. Kacavas replied that is why in some part I am glad that Burt was on our Committee and we got that perspective that he had on that tuition committee report. I just think that their work was not as comprehensive as ours was because they didn't have the luxury of Parsons Brinckerhoff numbers. They just did not have that information that we had available to us. Really, the information and the data provided by Parsons Brinckerhoff made our decisions easier.

School Committee Member Ouellette asked so you felt that was much more extensive than the NESDEC report.

Mr. Kacavas replied absolutely.

Alderman Hirschmann stated I will try to be quick but there are a lot of issues here. I want to start off by saying that I personally am in a unique position because I am a parent and I am also a coach at the high school and an Alderman. That means I am in West High School five times a week and it also means that I am in all of the other high schools in Southern NH and throughout the state many times during the year. I have been at

Timberlane High School. We had a football scrimmage out there. I saw that they are building a huge addition. Growth is hitting Timberlane, which is in Plaistow. Souhegan wants Bedford. Londonderry didn't exist a few years ago. They are huge now. Merrimack is building an addition. Spaulding has a very good facility. I went to a wrestling tournament there. They hosted a state tournament. That school was in excellent condition. People were yelling at me not to walk on a certain part of the floor because it was just polished. I am ashamed of what I see in these pictures of Central High School. The Citizen's Committee, as well as the School Board as well as the Aldermen...we all know what is going on in Manchester. I think the task has to be to change it. Knowing something and not doing something about it is a bad thing. You went on your tour last fall and saw these broken tables last fall and they are still not fixed. Whose fault is this? We have administration. We have School Board members. We have the Joint School Building Committee. We have Aldermen and School Board members both serving on the Building and Sites Committee and yet we have something like this. I am ashamed of Central High School's condition. I can only reflect on what I see at West High School. I went over to Memorial because I have nieces who go there. Memorial looks very good. The condition is very good. The condition at West High School is impressive. For an old school, it is in very good shape and even people on the Citizen's Committee have put countless hours in to raise money and build a fitness center and I helped to. Private/public partnership to make the school better and I was a little upset...I didn't know Ms. Thomas was a school board member from Bedford and the reason it upsets me is I thought this was a citizen's panel. I didn't realize that you had a vested interest in what happens over in Bedford. That upsets me to a point because Mr. Kehas brings up history. Well the history of Bedford is they put a charter school on their ballot and they put a public school on their ballot and they both failed because the education at West High School and the opportunities at West High School are outstanding. Growth happens and Bedford is growing. I do a lot of work over in Bedford. There are more houses in Bedford than you can imagine so they are going to have to have their own high school, but I challenge this School Board, do not force

someone's hand. That is not right. Negotiate. Keep the Bedford students as long as you can. Do not just terminate an agreement to please someone's political aspiration to make something on a ballot pass. That is not right. If Bedford wants to pass it on their ballot, let them do it but you will know they are doing it. You don't have to force their hand. That is a political will behind-the-scenes and I don't like it. I just found out that you were on the Bedford school board. I knew Chuck Grough was pushing to build his own high school and Bedford school board members, you should be wanting to build your own high school but I don't want you on a citizen's panel telling us how to run our high schools. I don't think that is right.

Mayor Baines stated why don't we let Sue respond.

Alderman Hirschmann replied I am not done yet and then she can say all the things that she wants to say.

Mayor Baines responded I am just going to interrupt you for a minute to allow her to respond and then you can continue.

Ms. Thomas stated first of all and I was going to say this when I was all done. This has been a tremendous Committee to work on and I do want to thank Manchester for giving Bedford the opportunity to have someone on the Committee. We had arguments, we had discussions, we went round and round but it was always with respect and actually the other members from the other sending towns were school board members also. I did not come on this Committee to push any particular agenda. My one agenda is education. I wouldn't be here and not home with my three children if I was just worried about my kid's education or even just Bedford's education. I have been on every high school committee and I think it would do a great thing for Bedford. Bedford will put their high school on the ballot and I am not here and I was not on this Committee to ask them to do it. In fact, I purposely never even gave our report out or mentioned it until we had a

whole discussion on high schools and quite frankly I didn't push it. It was brought up and it was a unanimous vote and I purposely didn't push it because I knew that it would be perceived as my coming on this Committee. None of you were there...once it was brought up I am going to say that I am for a Bedford high school. I am not going to say I am not, but at the same time...well let me put it this way. I am for something to change. The high schools are crowded and if you don't want to believe the NESDEC numbers than sit in the high school in the morning when classes are changing. They are crowded and something needs to be done. Putting 600 students at French Hall is not enough. There are 2,000 students over projection so there are two options that we spent the last I don't know how many months looking at. Terminate the tuition contracts or build a new high school. Those are the two long-term options. So, from a Bedford point of view and actually there is a Bedford person here who would probably say all of the same things that I am saying because it is nothing new to Bedford, what will be done if Manchester chooses to maintain its relationship with Bedford? Is the choice going to be live with the situation as it is right now? That is unacceptable to the kids. It is unacceptable to the parents. It is unacceptable to Manchester and Bedford and Hooksett if we don't do something. So, the only other thing to do is to build a new high school and I am a Bedford resident as much as I am a Bedford school board member. I have been a Bedford school board member for one year next week so I have been doing this a lot longer than that. We do expect the tuition districts to help pay for a high school and I think that has been discussed. Bedford is 13% of the Manchester high school population. Therefore, would you expect Bedford to pay 13% of the capital costs? Right now, one of the things that Bedford enjoys in Manchester is that our entire student population attends West so West is our high school. West is Bedford's high school. In a few years, Bedford students will make up 89% of the West High School population. Our population is growing. If we paid 13% of a new high school, would our students get to go to that high school because the Bedford students would expect to go to the high school that they are paying for. So, these are just questions...I did not take as many months out of my schedule to push this because we could have gotten someone like Henry Veilleux to do it.

It was just...the Bedford School Board was asked to send a representative. So was Hooksett. The member from Hooksett was a school board member and I think the person from Candia was a school board member.

Alderman Hirschmann stated the real problem that exists and everyone in the room knows it, is the overcrowding problem at Central High School. There is no problem at West High School. West is not overcrowded at this time but they are telling us and giving us good information that it will be in the future. Central High School is where your problems lie. The recommendation from the Citizen's Committee would be to move all Hooksett students to West and I challenge the School Board to find a better solution with redistricting. Hooksett and the far reaches of Hooksett are very far to West High School. I think that moving one population of people out and another population that is remote in is shortsighted and a quick fix. I think you have to find something more thought out that is going to help West High School if Bedford eventually is going to leave. John Gatsas brought up a very good point at the Land & Buildings Committee of the School Board and that is when they have their referendum in Bedford and if it does fail and the people decide once again to be tight fisted with their dollars and not build a high school, the legal question is do the kids still come to West High School. Dean Eggert, you need to spend some more money with him to find out if, in fact, the Bedford students still come if that resolution fails. When you go to negotiate contracts with Bedford, I would be very careful with what happens because the state may tell you what to do. I don't want to be long winded. There are PBS funds in the amount of \$4-5 million in the budget to fix the schools. That is not included in the regular operating budget. That is money to fix the schools so the Aldermen are trying to address the School Board's needs. As far as construction in the past, the Board of Aldermen have dedicated through bonds, notes or lease purchases \$40 million in recent history and most of those bonds are still floated. We have committed substantially to the School District, but the School Board always sets the priorities for the Aldermen and we try to give them the money that is required. We build McLaughlin School. We build additions. We put in

heating and ventilation for millions of dollars. The Aldermen are not short-sighted in their task and I know that Mr. Kehas I am just going to say because you have made a couple of statements, you had a long history of seeing the School District, well a lot of people on this panel have as well and they work very hard to do what is right. No one here is shortsighted. All of these School Board members work very hard and try to give their proposals to the Aldermen and the Aldermen try to fund them. Do we need to do better? Absolutely and that is what we are all going to do and I think we are all going to commit to that. I don't think we are going to break the bank though but we are going to do better.

Mr. Kacavas stated just a response to Alderman Hirschmann's concern. We made the decision to eliminate tuition students from Bedford. All 18 of us. It was a citizens decision. With respect to the Hooksett students going to West High School and the hardship that it might present, there are currently 160 students going to West High School from Hooksett and we suggest that the additional 800+ would not be a tremendous hardship shifting them over. The final point I had I forgot.

School Committee Member Sargent stated I have a few things. I wanted to comment on the aspect that somebody mentioned about why the 10 or 11 issues weren't implemented that we have known about for years. Recently I have learned that the devil is in the details. The 10 or 11 things might seem all nice up there on the screen, but as our Superintendent knows and as the teachers and administrators know implementing all of those things or even a few of those is going to take the consent of the students and that is going to be a tough thing to get. Just to take one of them, the directional stairways. I don't know how you would enforce that. You would have needless detentions given out. You would have people not going to those detentions. You would have suspensions and possible expulsions. The implications are endless. That is not my main point. My main point is I want to discuss the process that is supposed to occur now. We have the information. We have the NESDEC study. We have the last study results. What is

going to happen now? Do we vote at the next meeting or the meeting after on tuition students? We have to know what is going in the CIP budget and that is going to come up relatively quickly isn't it?

Mayor Baines replied we are dealing with that right now.

School Committee Member Sargent stated so we need to know whether we are going to have the tuition students or not.

Mayor Baines responded let me just clarify the process. This report goes to the Board of School Committee, which is ultimately responsible for making whatever recommendations or decisions have to be made. It is my understanding that first it will be dealt with by the Building & Sites Committee, which will grapple with the recommendations in the report and I am sure there are going to be a lot more suggestions coming forward and I hope the public weighs in with suggestions to Aldermen and School Board members and to the Mayor's Office because I think it is the type of issue that is very complex. The stakes are very high and I think we need to look at some creative approaches here. The process would be to go to the Building & Sites Committee. They are going to be grappling with it. There will be some public forums related to this and ultimately by the end of June the School Board has to either take action and notify the tuition towns or take no action. If they take no action, the contracts are automatically extended for an additional year and that is what we did last year. So, the process now goes to the School Board.

School Committee Member Sargent stated I just want to say that it has to be expedited. It is not just the surrounding towns that we have to notify, but the Board of Mayor and Aldermen will need this information quickly. I also wanted to comment that the phasing out of other districts like Hooksett and Candia, did you consider that in your discussions?

Mr. Kacavas replied we did and that is one of our recommendations. We recommend that the tuition contracts with Hooksett, Candia and Auburn be phased out by 2007-2008 and let me add that the school board member from Hooksett, Joanne McHugh who is unfortunately not here, one of our more vocal and committed members is unable to be here tonight but obviously she came into this hard and fast against terminating the Hooksett contract but when we took the final vote to phase Hooksett out, Joanne McHugh raised her hand voting in favor like the rest of us.

Mayor Baines asked was it mostly unanimous votes on these recommendations.

Mr. Kacavas answered yes on most recommendations we found unanimity. On some, it was a clear majority.

Mayor Baines asked but on the major issues.

Mr. Kacavas answered on the major issues there was unanimity.

School Committee Member Stewart stated I, too, like my fellow School Board members want to thank the committee for their dedication and expedient work over the past few months because having served on committees as you have just recently I know how much time and effort goes into that so I thank you. To piggyback on something that Alderman Hirschmann said a few minutes ago, although we have put \$40 million in capital bonding in the school over the past few years including some of the things he outlined, it is obvious that some of your report is indisputable and that is the facilities portion of the report. Our core facilities don't meet the needs that we have right now for educational needs. Our facilities aren't equipped technologically for the 21<sup>st</sup> century nor are they ADA compliant. So, those substantial renovations and some new construction clearly needs to happen referring back to the \$18.8 million that we talked about earlier tonight, I would suggest to all of us around the table, however, that \$18.8 million might not do the

job. That was a first glance from Parsons Brinckerhoff to give us a ballpark figure but once we go in to our Building & Sites Committee and with other consultants to look and see what really needs to be done and what is it we want to do educationally, that number may very well be low when you look at \$40 million over the past few years in terms of some of those things that we do. I would suggest that that portion of the report, the renovation, must happen no matter what our other decision making processes lead us to and that at least we focus on that as a beginning point and move ahead and then grapple with some of these other questions also quickly, but at least we know that those things need to be done and we come to some general agreement and move ahead in that area because that without question is something that needs to happen in Manchester.

Alderman Levasseur stated first of all I don't know why Bedford would want to leave after we have the most beautiful football field in the state and probably in about four states. Talk about facilities, we have one of the most upgraded facilities at West High School and Alderman Hirschmann and the Mayor all have to be commended on that because that is a beautiful facility and I don't know why West would want to go but I found a solution. I am glad I came to this meeting tonight because I found a solution. Hooksett and Bedford are going to build really nice, beautiful big schools and then our overcrowding is going to happen and we are going to send our Manchester students to their schools so they will take our overcrowded students and we could pay the \$6,000 a year and do all of that wear and tear on their property for about 10 years and we could all do this together.

Mr. Kacavas replied we already discussed that. That is not something that passed our Committee, but...

Mayor Baines interjected the reality is that the tuition will be \$9,000 or \$10,000 or \$11,000, not \$6,000 as it is in Manchester.

Alderman Shea asked when the School Board meets to make a decision is it a simple majority that you need.

Mayor Baines answered yes.

Alderman Shea stated I am going to put the Aldermen on the spot right now because the Aldermen's priorities have to change. As a community and I think the Mayor and others are very much aware of what my priority is in terms of the local building that we are putting \$130 million into and Riverwalk and other things...we have to refocus our immediate attention on what is important for our society. If we don't do that we are going to pay the piper eventually because we are not going to have any kids who are going to stay around Manchester because they are not even going to be able to pass any kind of test and unless we get everything that we need to do in the schools and I don't just mean upgrading the facilities, I mean upgrading the curriculum and making sure that we reach all of the kids – the gifted and talented and other kids who are in our schools. We don't devote any money towards the gifted or talented and we are losing these kids along the way and I think that that is the responsibility of the administration and we have to focus. We have to set aside. We have to introduce. We have a growing population of Spanish people in our community. We have to begin educating kids in different languages. If my little granddaughter in the fourth grade in another community is studying Spanish and my granddaughter here is an A student at the middle school, I see no reason why that youngster cannot get the same benefits here as my other grandchild in another community. That is putting more money into education that is going to make the kids in Manchester educationally sound and able to go in to industry. I think that is where we are losing. We don't have to just put money into facilities. We have to put money into programs that are going to allow the students to progress. As Aldermen, we have to begin to focus on what is important and what is not important. The last one I want to call on is Kevin Clougherty in terms of our ability to finance or to bring us up-to-

date on what we need for bonding or what we can afford because we have over-committed and so forth.

Mayor Baines stated I have talked to Kevin and we are going to do an analysis of some of the information that has been presented. There has already been a meeting about the bonding capacity issues. It is very, very limited as you know, Alderman, at this point. There are going to be some additional discussions tomorrow about the debt of the City and the long-term ramifications of it. Kevin, if you want to make a brief statement...I don't want to get into a long drawn out discussion about bonding tonight but just a summary.

Mr. Clougherty stated as the Mayor mentioned we are trying to pull together for the City a debt affordability and one of the things that makes that difficult this year is that when you are taking a look at what a City can afford for debt, there are three key factors. The first key factor is what is your assessed valuation. As you know, we are in the middle of going through a revaluation in the City. Now, if that revaluation comes in and some of the capital projects that have been invested in help to raise that, then that may increase the capacity for what we can issue. We may not know that number until some time in November when that is finally reported to the state. The second key figure that goes into the calculation of what you can afford is your population. Now, the US Census information hasn't come out yet. We heard parts of it, but there are two pieces that are important there. One, has the number of people in Manchester gone up so that your debt per capita, the more people that it is spread over that is a good thing but if you are spreading it over more people who are not as affluent, that can be a negative issue so you really have to wait until you have that information and we are hoping to get that some time in the fall. The third thing that you need to have is a state tax policy with respect to how you are going to fund education and some of these issues. So, we have three of the key factors that are up in the air right now and we are waiting for a response to be able to put in place a good plan. We don't want to do a speculate and guess. So, we are in the

process of getting some answers on this and we will be pulling this together for the Mayor and giving a written report in terms of affordability in the next few weeks hopefully.

Mayor Baines stated as you know, the outlook is rather bleak in terms of our ability to absorb a lot of debt at this particular point in time, which again is another subject for another day and another report at the end of the month when I deliver my budget message, but it is going to be a very tough time.

School Committee Member Leonard stated regarding disciplining the students, the state and national courts say that we can't do anything with the kids so the teachers and administration have their hands tied. As soon as we can get the courts out of the system and social services out too, then we can do something about disciplining the students.

School Committee Member Gatsas stated one thing I would like to say since Tim Clougherty and Kevin Shepard have taken over from the Highway Department, there has been better communication. They have responded to the needs that the schools have and I think those two gentlemen have done an outstanding job in helping the schools. Just two other comments on those photos. Many of you Aldermen sat here when we had Chandler School and the presentation on that. It wasn't vandalism there; it was deterioration of the building. I will give you a perfect example. The then Public Building Services put a brand-new bubbler on the second floor and you couldn't use it because there were lead pipes so we spent the money and bought the bubbler but we couldn't use it because of lead pipes. The portable classrooms had mold growing in them and secretaries and others worked for years with that health hazard and no one was concerned about it. The last thing is this is just touching base on the high schools. If you look at ceiling tiles and here is another situation. I will take Green Acres School. Green Acres School had a leaky roof so they were replacing the ceiling tiles, but the ceiling tiles are asbestos. After 25 years, there are still asbestos tiles down there. They still haven't

fixed them. We have asbestos in our schools today that still hasn't been removed and every year we wait the cost goes up and up and up. So, I just hope that we look at the broad picture and I understand taxes and everything, but the buildings are getting in worse shape. I would like for each Aldermen to go to a PTA meeting and sit there and meet with these people because you know what they tell me, some people never show up. Some Aldermen don't even go to schools and they are voters too just like the other tax concerned people. Everybody is a voter. Go into these facilities and see, like Chandler School. It is not a three-year-old or a four-year-old ruining that building; that was neglect. I would just like to say in closing that Tim Clougherty and Kevin Shepard have done a great job, Mayor and it is a great asset to the School Department having them on board.

Mayor Baines replied I appreciate you making those comments because that is probably the most significant difference that is heard in the schools is the leadership that has been provided since Frank Thomas and Kevin Shepard and now Tim Clougherty have gotten involved.

School Committee Member Cook stated I would like to second something that Ms. Stewart said. This Committee may think that their proposal is a bold proposal but I think it is a minimum proposal. The \$18.8 million to fix the high schools is the very minimum least creative thing they could have said. It is the lowest common denominator. Now we have to do that and I appreciate what they did and I have a lot of friends on this Committee, but we have to do a lot more than this. I think it would be a tragedy, not so much from a financial perspective...I mean there are people on this table who have been confusing capital costs with operating costs and subtracting \$9 million from \$18 million and they have nothing to do with each other but it is not the \$9 million that the tuition money brings in. It is what having an expansive school system that includes a lot of other people in it and is not limited just to Manchester that would be a pressure cooker of educational policy that makes having those students from outside of Manchester

important. I think something the Mayor said early on about did we consider the model that perhaps Merrimack Valley Regional has where a portion of the City of Concord is in a cooperative school district or various other things. I think Mr...and I hate to say this because he may not be the most popular guy to bring up but Rich Girard's proposal is at least thinking creatively about how you could do something differently. I don't think that Charter schools are an end all, be all. I don't think so at all but magnet schools and Charter schools and going into the Millyard and doing other things...we have an opportunity today because of where we are to do the most creative thing we can do for Manchester or the least. The \$18.8 million is a good start. We have to fix those schools, but I don't want accepting or receiving or anything else about this report to indicate at least from this School Board member's perspective that we are not going to think creatively about all of the other options we have because frankly I think those tuition students are important to us and I think we are important to them. I think we have to think about how we provide education to the region and we have to be willing to consider how we have partnerships with them as we have had. They have been guests and if we are going to continue with them, they are going to have to be partners. We can't do it. We can't do a high school in which Bedford has 50% or 60% or 70% of the students and charge them 38% of the cost. That is not logical. If they are 50% or 60% or 70% of the students, they have to pay 50%, 60% or 70% of the costs, but we have to go talk to them about that proposal. We have to go talk to them about how we do that kind of stuff before we make any conclusions to slam the doors because once you slam it, you have lost the opportunity forever.

Alderman Gatsas stated I have now sat here through Dr. Kaliski's study, the Brinckerhoff study and the great study that this Committee put through and we are still on square one talking about the condition of schools and what education needs. We sat around this table probably almost close to a year ago and I suggested and made a motion of a \$35 million bond project and couldn't get anybody to move on a second because people said we are going to continue to study this. I look at Nashua and don't understand how they

are building \$145 million high school and I look at it and say there must be possibilities that we can do. I think everybody here is creative. I think that the students are the number one priority that we all have and we need to sit down and figure out how it can be done whether it is a different revenue source that we find...you know I made some suggestions to Jay Taylor to see if we could get some telephone towers out there that we could dedicate to funding schools. I am still waiting for that report to come back to see how that would work, but I think we need to be creative. We need to do something. If this was private enterprise, we wouldn't have waited two years to solve a problem. We would be doing it today and fixing it because the longer we wait and I guess the big question I have and I have it written down is how does Bedford build a high school for \$39 million and it is going to cost us somewhere around \$75 million. I am just saying that obviously we have studied it. We can continue to study it and we are not going to be any closer to a resolution than when we talked about this almost a year ago. I think we need to start making some hard decisions and look at where we are going with the education process.

Mr. Annis stated I just wanted to make two quick points. I think our MST proposal sort of got lost in the shuffle here. I saw the response of some of the members to it. When we proposed expanding or fully utilizing MST, we did so knowing that we would need to expand the core facilities like making an addition to the cafeteria because there isn't really one now and adding a gymnasium and adding a library. It wasn't just expanding it as it is. We do recognize that that would have to happen in order for that facility to be fully utilized, but in terms of the tuition students there wasn't one member on the Committee that decided that we wanted to end tuition agreements easily. All of us struggled with it, I think. I don't think there was one of us who thought that it was an easy decision because we all recognized the importance of that relationship that we have had over the years and we certainly don't think that the \$18 million is the panacea to this whole problem and that is going to end all of our problems, but we do believe it is a good start. I think something that has been missed is that if we did go forward and build a high

school at whatever number we have suggested, whether it is \$40 million or \$100 million, there is still more that needs to be done. If you spend \$40 million or \$80 million on a high school, you still need to renovate Central, West and Memorial and even more importantly in some people's minds we have to renovate the middle schools and the elementary schools. So, this recommendation was based on all of those facts. That we had to start somewhere and we do have other responsibilities that have to be addressed eventually – sooner hopefully than later. Building one high school would absorb almost all of the money and we are not sure what the bonding capacity is but it would absorb almost all of the money for one project, leaving all of the other 22 schools untouched, which all of us believed wasn't the right way to go about business and certainly wasn't fair to the other schools that have drastic needs. They may not be as drastic as Central, but they certainly have needs that need to be addressed.

Ms. Theresa deLangis stated in many ways I am glad I just came after Craig because I wanted to expand on his comments. One of the reasons why we were able to work so cooperatively as a group is because we realized very early on that we had very few choices so when we were going through the data, when you find out that Bedford students are going to comprise 89% of a Manchester school's population, it is easy to make that vote that Bedford needs to go otherwise we are building a high school for Bedford students. When you have very little land in your City and even less bonding capacity, a new high school no matter how empowered you feel to be bold, isn't really one of the options. So, what we decided as a Committee very early on and we had a lot of consensus to this particular aspect of our report, was that we should spend the money to invest in the three high schools that we have and expand MST as a fourth high school. So, to use the limited funds that we had to renovate and make those schools the best that they could be by exploring things like historical funds because Central is the oldest school in the state, making that a community center for the population around it, for ESL classes, for parents and computer classes for citizens. So, we were trying to be realistic if we weren't exactly bold. I do also want to point out in terms of the facilities at Central

that we had suggested that we have this meeting at Central so we wouldn't have to show pictures and we weren't able to do that because it is not handicapped accessible and because there is no parking and there isn't a facility like this, a room even close to this, where we could be this comfortable. So, I hope you will take...this was a lot of work for all of us in terms of seeing that our choices were narrowing and in some ways that is what this report really represents – that we don't have very many choices.

Alderman Levasseur stated I did go to Central and as far as vandalism goes, that is not vandalism. That is just poor conditions over there and no student should have to eat lunch in that cafeteria. The Health Department would shut us down in a heartbeat if that was something they could do. I hope that we send the tape of this meeting to Bedford. I know they have community television. I know the *Union Leader* tries to get most of the story in, but this would be a more clear cut way for them to see the discussion that went on about the situation over there.

Ms. Thomas replied I think that would be a great thing for the Bedford people to see because this has been an excellent meeting and as I said before, I am really glad to have been part of this Committee and for the Bedford people to see that Bedford was included in the high school decision is very important to them. To School Committee Member Cook, I think Bedford would always entertain any type of creative results, but one thing I do ask as a Bedford taxpayer is come June I would ask that the contract not just be rolled over for another year. We all need to do something – Manchester and Bedford. If we wait and talk about this for another five years, an 8<sup>th</sup> grader is going to be in college by the time a decision is made. We need to make a decision and the Bedford people need to know which way Manchester is going because it does affect our decisions.

Mr. Eric Sawyer stated Alderman Shea I would like to respond to some more of what you asked me. One of the things that I had in the report was computer-aided scheduling. People tend to, when they do it manually, is just group all of the tasks in series. There are

a lot of good computer-aided scheduling programs out there. A very low end one would be Microsoft Project and I think the City generally in its other projects would benefit from that. When we talked about French Hall one of the things that was never brought up and I don't know quite how to address it, but the building is very close to Public Services high power transmission lines and I don't know what the EMF damage hazard would be for people occupying that building, but it should be a question that is on the top of the agenda before you do anything with that building. When we talked about vandalism, one of the things that is absolutely inconceivable to me is that you have these very large buildings but you don't section them off after hours. So, a vandal can get in and have the run of the building. More importantly, there is a lock box key outside so the Fire Department can get in right away, but the Police Department waits 40 minutes to an hour for someone to come down with a key. Why can't that key be made available to the Police Department?

Mr. Mark Roy stated I was going to keep quiet this evening because I have some very passionate ideas, but one point I would like to make is former Alderman Girard left us a letter suggesting using MST. Number 12 in our recommendations was converting MST to a full-time vocational school. In 1974 a report that the taxpayers paid for, the Englehardt and Englehardt Report, suggested looking into a full-time vocational school in the City of Manchester. Whether you like our recommendations, whether you don't like our recommendations, whether they are good for the taxpayer or bad for the taxpayer, don't let this gather dust like that suggestion did so that some Committee years later is looking at this and coming up with it as a new idea. We found many ideas that could have alleviated all of our overcrowding problems, curriculum problems and tuition problems that were addressed 10, 20 or 25 years ago. Let's react to this now while we have the citizen support, while we have good committees working on this and by committees I mean citizens, school and Aldermen.

Mayor Baines stated I have some closing comments. First of all, I would like to thank the Committee for your very, very hard work and your spirited discussions, which I am sure were pervasive throughout the process. I would also like to thank members of both Boards for raising some very interesting issues and ideas to confront the challenges. Sort of piggybacking on what Alderman Gatsas said, the time to act is now. These are issues that have lingered for too long. I, for one, am not willing to give up on the tuition arrangements and I will get heavily engaged in this issue to try to prevent that from becoming a reality. It is time to be bold and creative with the sending towns and I believe there are opportunities to work together to perhaps financially look at how over a short period of time we can build a first-class high school that would serve the needs of all of the communities. As I said earlier in the meeting, I think there are opportunities to engage the higher education community – St. Anselms, UNH, Notre Dame and all of the other institutions that are here in our community. There are also opportunities to engage the high tech community, which has become a very important part of our community to engage in an effort to create a world-class educational institution that will serve not only the students of Manchester, but the students of Bedford, Hooksett and some of the other surrounding towns. We need to look at the magnet school approach. We can look at Charter school approaches. We can look at a whole myriad of different approaches, but the relationships, I believe very strongly that Manchester has had with the surrounding towns is one that should continue and that we should pull out all stops to make that relationship endure. Let's not lose this opportunity to do something great, something dynamic and something that perhaps will change the face of education for many years to come. That is what I want to work with the Boards over the next few months to help to achieve and chart a course of action to do that. Thank you very much.

This being a special meeting of the Board, no further business shall be presented except by unanimous consent, and on motion of Alderman Pariseau, duly seconded by School Committee Member Garrity, it was voted to adjourn.

03/07/01 Special BMA

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A True Record. Attest.

City Clerk