

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

January 21, 2003

7:00 PM

Chairman O'Neil called the meeting to order.

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

A moment of silent prayer was observed.

The Clerk called the roll.

Present: Aldermen Gatsas, Guinta (late), Sysyn, Osborne, Pinard, O'Neil, Lopez, Shea, DeVries, Garrity, Smith, and Forest

Absent: Aldermen Wihby, Thibault

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

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

Joe Levasseur, 866 Elm Street, Manchester stated:

I am sorry to see that Mayor Baines isn't here but it is good to see you there, Alderman O'Neil. The first thing I would like to say is I would like to send my personal condolences to the Welfare Commission, Mr. Martineau. He is a friend of mine. I have known him for a very long time and as City Chairman of the Republican Party we extend the same condolences and hope that he has a speedy recovery. I want to talk a little bit about...there was a Concerned Taxpayers meeting last night. A lot of people did actually go out into this very cold weather and come to a Concerned Taxpayers meeting and one of the big topics is the concern of the additions that are being built on the high schools. There was a majority vote taken that the Concerned Taxpayers would rather not have those additions built. I would like to bring that to your attention in an election year. Another thing that I was asked to speak about was the wonderful work of Kathy Gatsas for what she has done on her own to take it upon herself to fix the chairs. That kind of spirit I hope will keep going through the School District. I know they are having some problems. They are already talking about supplies being stopped and cut-off with budget problems over there. The Concerned

Taxpayers asked me to come out and say thank you to Kathy Gatsas for what she has done. I would actually ask this Board to maybe take a little bit of their own money and pay her back for what she has done. I don't believe that teachers should be paying money out of their own pockets for these kind of entrepreneurial spirit things. Fourth and lastly I would like to thank Alderman Garrity for his vote against the baseball stadium being built. I think it was a very smart vote. I also appreciate Alderman Gatsas' motion for reconsideration on that vote. We should not have expended the money until we knew, for a fact, that the Red Sox were going to take away their territorial rights and allow us to build before we spent the money on that so I would like to congratulate Alderman Garrity and Alderman Gatsas for their votes on that.

Walter Stiles, 226 Sagamore Street, Manchester stated:

I have lived at 226 Sagamore Street for 80 years. I don't have laryngitis actually but I had a corroded artery operation and 90% of the people that have it don't get this condition. I am the 10% that does. Anyway, I didn't know who was going to be here tonight from the Concerned Taxpayers Association but we had the pleasure of listening to Keith Hirschmann last night and he told us about the Charter Commission meetings and what was going on. I just want to repeat what Joe Kelly said, that the majority of the taxpayers that were there last night were really not in favor of building schools for the surrounding towns. I know there is a lot of controversy on the thing but nevertheless you ought to hear what we had to say anyway. We are known as the Concerned Taxpayers of Greater Manchester. I also wanted to mention that the teacher who contributed her own money and did a lot of work at Hillside School is to be congratulated and she should be reimbursed. The fourth thing I would like to say is that I think we need more than two minutes to express our opinions as far as what is going on in the City of Manchester but tonight my voice will only last for about two minutes anyway so I want to thank you for listening to what I had to say. Thank you.

Billy Dodd, 181 Mammoth Road, Manchester stated:

A picture is worth 1,000 words. Yesterday's paper a picture of the Masonic Temple down on Elm Street. Interesting thing about it is it looks like the picture was taken back in the late 20's or early 30's. You can see the curb. Try to find a curb in the City of Manchester. Maybe in front of the civic center but anywhere else, no. It took three weeks for Stark Street to get the snow removed. Ridiculous. Right over here on Franklin Street cars are parking halfway out of the parking lanes. It is tight. I think the Public Works people should get out and ride around and maybe you guy should ride around and find some of the tight spots. South Willow Street. There is a sidewalk somewhere on the overpass over the highway. Those things have been bottlenecks for years whenever the snow piles up. The big snow banks right there when you come off the highway – somebody is going to get whacked. The other thing is cable TV. I lost three stations. I have the analog system of cable in the City. I don't have digital. I lost three stations because they decided they weren't going to broadcast them on analog anymore. They moved them to digital. In order for me to get those three stations – 69, 70 and 72, it is going to cost me \$14.95/month more. I have to switch to

digital. What they told me was that pretty soon everybody is going to be digital. Somehow you need to go back and look at that contract and get some competition in here. This is ridiculous. The other thing is I am getting tired of hearing Mr. Skip Ashooh come in here and other people and say we can't get the \$1 that Hank Thibault wants for the surcharge on the civic center. My Alderman, Mr. Shea, I am going to ask you to find out why we can't do it and not just an explanation that it cannot be done. Something in black and white that says the bonds are jeopardized or you can't do it. I wouldn't have a problem with the City going out and spending \$20,000 to \$30,000 and getting a good New York type lawyer to go in and break that contract on that clause. You got into that position and I think you were quoted in the paper, Mr. O'Neil as saying you don't know how you got into it but something was missed on that contract when it was written. You missed it because this Board in previous years has had a policy of approving things to go to the City Solicitor for the final period to be put in and then signed by the Mayor and you people don't get a chance to look at it before that final period is put in. That is how Hank Thibault's \$1 surcharge got left out. We should have a New York type lawyer look into that and I wouldn't have any problem spending some good money because just on the attendance if close to 700,000 people paid an extra \$1 to SMG to get in there and we spend \$20,000 or \$30,000 for \$700,000 in exchange that is not a bad equation in my book. Please look into the AT&T cable and see what we can do about getting some competition in here and just look at some of the snow banks around the City. They did a good job of plowing after the storms and everything but it is after the fact that they need to touch up on.

Keith Hirschmann, 296 Dunbarton Road, Manchester stated:

I had the fortunate experience yesterday of getting a haircut and Norm Longval who is also Norm the Barber gracefully cut my hair for half an hour as he giggled telling me how he is on the board of the Bedford Taxpayer's Association and how he will gladly enter into this new agreement that someone has put together because Bedford will never have to put on teachers. All these additions that are being built, they will never have to pay for a single teacher. \$6,500 per child they will gladly write the check and get the contract out tomorrow. I know that Norm is the most conservative barber in town that I know of and if he is happy about this deal it has to be a great deal for the Town of Bedford. I personally care about Manchester. As an Alderman, one of the proposals that I put on the table was whenever there was a construction job that was a big job we had to know the future impact on the operating budget. That is why when the fire station that was being built in Alderman Pinard's ward was on the table I asked how many firefighters needed to be in the house. I understand now that those firefighters aren't even in the upcoming budget deliberation so when you go and vote for these school additions and encumber millions of dollars in taxpayer's money how many teachers and how many millions of dollars of salaries and benefits are you going to need in the future. Really think these things through. I implore you. The Town of Bedford has been very good to West Manchester. It has been a great relationship but I am a conservative person that would say Bedford maybe it is time to have

your own high school if you have 800 or so students. Don't base everything on money or revenue. Think of the taxpayers of Manchester. Thank you very much.

There being no one else present wishing to speak, on motion of Alderman Smith, duly seconded by Alderman DeVries, it was voted to take comments under advisement and further to receive and file any written documentation presented.

This being a special meeting of the Board, no further business was presented, and on motion of Alderman Smith, duly seconded by Alderman DeVries, it was voted to adjourn.

A True Record. Attest.

City Clerk