

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

May 4, 2004

7:00 PM

Mayor Baines called the meeting to order.

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

A moment of silent prayer was observed.

The Clerk called the roll.

Present: Aldermen Roy, Gatsas, Guinta, Sysyn, Osborne, Porter, O'Neil,
Lopez, Shea, DeVries, Garrity, Smith, Thibault, Forest

Mayor Baines stated just in case people are wondering where I was, I was presenting the Manchester Historic Association People's Choice Award this evening to St. Anne's Church. The oldest church in the City of Manchester, built in 1985 and also the longest continuous use Catholic Church in the State of New Hampshire. It was the People's Choice award and it was an honor for me to present it because obviously the situation with the building now and the Historic Association is commended for this wonderful program recognizing so many great historical buildings. Among the buildings being recognized tonight were the Odd Fellows Building and a number of other historic buildings around the City. Alderman O'Neil wants to say something.

Alderman O'Neil stated St. Anne's is the home to 3 maybe 4 Aldermen. Alderman Smith, Alderman Garrity, Alderman Osborne, Alderman Shea, and myself. We were all brought up at St. Anne's. Very appropriate Your Honor. Thank you.

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

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

Lorraine Farrell, 9 Arthur Avenue, stated:

I'm the current PTSO President at Central High School and a member of the Coalition of Quality Education. I'm here today to ask you for every single dollar you can put toward schools. Over and over again this fight is done every year. I'm a taxpayer, like everyone else, I don't want to see my taxes go up, but happily pay my taxes and the increase especially for the benefit of schools. One thing I'd like to point out as a taxpayer in paying these increases, as a parent of students in the schools I continue to spend extra money, hundreds of dollars, every year to make up the differences that do not get made up by the budget cuts that you make. And as a parent volunteer I am one of many parents that spend hundreds of hours in the schools volunteering at the smallest level copying for teachers, to the highest level fund raising for school supplies and for larger items like computers and other equipment. So if you really want to look at it, I'm being taxed over and over and over again because I'm a parent in the schools and you continue to cut money. So I'm asking you, please give every drop you can.

Maureen Molly Lee Sherman, Ward 3, stated I want to talk about the stuff there is to do around Manchester. I wanted more stuff to do around Manchester that is inexpensive because all there is is going to bars

Jennifer Thornton, 501 Concord Street, stated:

I'm an active member of my local PTA, a member of Manchester's Coalition for Quality Education, and a Sunday school teacher, but more importantly I'm a mother of 3 children. My oldest is in 1st grade at McDonough School. I am here tonight to encourage you to support the Mayor's budget. I would like to begin with this quote, "It is only education if you learn something that you did not know before you started." This quote is important to me because my oldest daughter is gifted. A lot of people don't know exactly what it means to educate a gifted child. Some people believe that we should concentrate and focus our resources on advancing the knowledge of children through tests with below average intelligence before we consider those with above average intelligence. Some people believe we should multiply the workload for gifted students, giving them more work to complete instead of providing them with work that targets and stimulates their intellect. Still other people believe that if we leave the gifted children alone on their own and without directed instruction, they will figure it out for themselves. After all, they are gifted. The truth is it is not an easy task to educate a gifted child. Sometimes they do not need any direction, but more often than not, they need a planned in depth program to focus their skills, excite their senses, and truly expand their knowledge. This takes consistent planning, competent direction, and vigilant monitoring to ensure they are learning to their potential. It is not a part-time commitment. I am fighting to give my children the unique opportunities in life that all parents hope to give, including a well-rounded satisfying education. It is ludicrous to think that I might have to renegotiate a learning process each time a new substitute teacher is introduced, made necessary by an alternative budget. It is further disturbing to think that my successes could be postponed or nullified by inadequate or incomplete building maintenance driven by a reduction in funding, also proposed in an alternative budget. I feel my efforts

and energies are better directed toward collaborating with other parents, community leaders, school faculty, and administrators who might share my goal of offering a challenging and gratifying educational experience to my children. I am counting on each of you to assist me in my battle by supporting the Mayor's budget.

Jeff Kassel, 22 Appleton Street, stated:

Last week Mayor Baines said he missed me, so I thought I'd come back again. Mayor it was a little dismissive but I took it as the joke that it was. Some people might have thought it was a little obnoxious, but some people think I'm a little obnoxious. I wanted to announce that I finally got elected to something. I was named Chairman of Concerned Taxpayers, and as you know I'm a concerned taxpayer as everyone in the City should be. We're going to start giving out awards, the group decided to give out awards on behalf of some of the leadership of concerned taxpayers for their position on taxes and spending and that will be coming up. We're going to be giving the golden screwdriver award. They used to give it, but they decided to reinstate it. It actually wasn't my idea, but I do kind of like it. I heard a story that was kind of funny last night. It was about Mike Lopez. Mike said that the tax situation, the budget, he said it's too high. Mike, when you vote for every multimillion-dollar project in the City, taxes and costs go up. It's just arithmetic, but I thought I'd you of that. I agree with you that taxes are too high, but when you're building stadiums and civic centers and renovating schools as \$100 million, it's a serious problem. I obviously do not agree with the 2 previous speakers. I think we should be cutting the budget. I like Senator Gatsas' plan, I would be happier if he cut the budget about 5 percent. I'm a budget hawk, we don't have too many of those on the Aldermanic Board and I can't seem to get elected to it. I wanted to just make one other comment and it's about elections. Votes are actually getting bought and I'm going to address this TV audience, what is happening is municipal employees, school employees in this town are being pandered to by this chamber, the Aldermanic chamber, the Mayor, and in return for that these people keep getting reelected. They get raises, teachers an average of almost \$50,000 a year, plus another \$15,000 in a benefit package. That's a lot of money and it's coming out of a lot of people's hides, but that's a big voting block, 2,000 or 3,000 people that are municipal employees. They have families, it's very, very tough to overcome, it's very tough to be a budget hawk and my congratulations to anybody in this Alderman chamber who is a budget hawk, I just wish you would get more hawkish.

Greg Salts stated:

I wasn't going to speak but we had 2 PTA people in favor and only 1 opposed, so I want to even things out and make it 50/50. I think I read something in the paper that if this 8 percent budget proposal was passed, people would come down to City Hall and tear it down brick by brick. But judging by the lack of outraged taxpayers here it doesn't look like that's going to happen and it seems like the latest proposal hasn't proposed to reduce down 7.3 percent, which still in my opinion as a taxpayer is not enough. I've heard tonight on this mic that this budget will cut money and will reduce funding, but I'm looking in front of me here from the

Mayor's web site, 4 year budget trend in education in 2001 was \$106 million, in 2004 is \$126 million. That's a \$20 million increase in 4 years. I don't see any cuts. I see a lot of money put into education so let's cut the rhetoric and let's cut the budget more than the 7.3 percent now and I support Alderman Gatsas, Alderman Guinta, Alderman Garrity. I hope that the other members strive to reduce that number some more because Dr. Kassel spoke here last week and projected the tax increase 20 years from now that the property taxes will be \$20,000 a year and that kind of scares me seeing I've been a homeowner for 4 months now. So I would hope that you wouldn't drive me out of my home at the same time that I'm retiring from my work.

This being a special meeting of the Board, no further business was presented and on motion of Alderman Forest, duly seconded by Alderman Roy, it was voted to take all comments under advisement, receive and file all communications submitted and adjourn.

A True Record. Attest.

City Clerk