

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

June 3, 2008

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

Mayor Guinta called the meeting to order.

Mayor Guinta called for the Pledge of Allegiance, which was led by Alderman Domaingue.

A moment of silent prayer was observed.

The Clerk called the roll.

Present: Aldermen M. Roy, Gatsas, Sullivan, J. Roy, Osborne, Pinard,
O'Neil, Lopez, Shea, DeVries, Garrity, Shea, Ouellette, Domaingue

4. **Mayor Guinta** 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 our community; that each person will be given only one opportunity to speak; that comments shall be limited to three minutes to allow all participants the opportunity to speak and any comments must be directed to the Chair.

5. **Mayor Guinta** 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.

Kathy Staub, 374 Laurel Street, stated:

I'm the president of the Manchester Coalition for Quality Education. I've been coming to these meetings since my daughter was in third grade and the roof leaked and there were 29 kids in her third grade class and Peter Duffy was running around trying to solicit paper donations from local businesses. I don't know...she's just finished her freshman year at Georgetown University...and I don't know if there is anything I can say to you that I haven't already said, so I think I'm just going to go over the highlights. First of all, we are one of the lowest spending school districts in the state. Only a handful of districts have a lower per pupil cost than we do. Nobody spends less than we do on our high school students, which goes along way to explain why 350 kids or more drop out of our schools every year. Most of the increases in the school budget have been funded by state adequacy aid and tuition revenues. Since 2005 the Board of Aldermen has essentially level funded the School District, and last year you chose to decrease the amount that the School District received from the City by \$800,000. This year 2000 people showed up at the budget hearing. And that would not happen unless it was really important to them. Some people have credited me for getting these people out, and I can assure you that if was possible for me to do that, I would do it every year, because I think it's really important for elected officials to hear what people have to say between the elections. This is for real. These are the people in the middle. These are not the people at either extreme. These are people in the middle who are extremely concerned about the School District's proposed budget. The other thing that I would like to say is that we need

to move now. We need to start investing in our schools. I don't know what's going to happen next year. I know at this point we cannot afford to lose ground. We were going to buy the same math textbooks that students in successful school districts are already using, and it's up to you whether that's going to happen or not. It's not just the kids in the center city who are not going to be getting those textbooks, but it's also going to be the children of the lawyers in the north end, and if we want those people to stay in our city, we have got to invest in our schools and we have to give them a reason to stay here. I don't know what you're going to do tonight, but I will tell you that the decisions that you make tonight, a lot of people are watching this conversation and the decisions that you make tonight are going to have repercussions for the City beyond the next school year and also beyond the next election. In five or ten years, I don't know what we're going to be looking at if we fail to invest in our schools, we'll set ourselves on a path to becoming a community where no one who lives here will be able to afford to pay taxes and everyone is going to need more services. Thank you.

Glenn R. J. Ouellette, 112 Auburn Street, stated:

Projects. Why do we expend taxpayers' money to do projects to improve the City? I understand that the snow came early to finish the project on Green Street, the upper end between Beech and Union in Ward 5, but in mid-April the lights were installed, the wires were plugged in, but there are no lights. Last August that very park...the City was asked by that neighborhood to please turn on the lights because extra curricular activities which are undesired in a children's park happen in the early morning hours. Well, it was repeated in the fall. Again, the lights are still not turned on. We're asking again, please turn on the lights in those parks. At two or three o'clock in the morning you have sex going on in those parks. That's undesirable and this City should not stand for it. The same thing is presently going on in the Valley Street Cemetery which I live right across the street from. The upper level lights are on, but someone shut off the lower lights in the valley.

And there are some undesirable things happening in that cemetery. Not too many years ago, we knew that a lot of arrests were made there. There were rapes. I don't want to see us go back to that condition. So if we're penny-pinching here, we're pinching in the wrong area. It's going to cost us more somewhere else. Tonight watching one of the committee meetings, I heard it may cost \$55,000 or \$60,000 to repair a truck. That probably should have been repaired sooner. Again, in the last two years the \$13,000 budget for rust maintenance in the Fire Department got pulled out. Maintenance is important for a reason. Something happened to the Police Department last year. The \$14,500 in the budget line item for the Police Department for prostitution, half of it was taken out. We still have a prostitution problem in this City. Once a budget is budgeted please don't pick and take money that's well needed. If we solve these small problems now they won't get greater. It will cost the City less in the long run and the quality of life will improve. The last thing I want to say is I notice you haven't done your numbers yet for the School. My suggestion is \$143 million, and you need to move out of the administration building. That is a costly building in the Millyard that is costing us more money than it deserves. The City owns buildings that are adequate and available to house the School Board and the administration. Thank you.

Billy Dodd, Ward 7, stated:

Two things I'll talk about tonight. The first thing is called a dust off and the other thing is a half a bubble off a plum. I'm sure you guys have heard that phrase before. Sure enough, your desk is just about a half a bubble off the plum. Pretty close. Dust off. The last time I was in here I talked to you guys about why we don't try to save some money in the Fire Department by having some trained volunteers to ride nights and weekends. A dust off is a term that we used in the military when I was in the air crash rescue units for a chopper coming in under power that was not going to completely shut down, just unload patients and take

off. Two weeks ago I met the new Fire Chief in the hallway coming up here and I got a dust off. He really didn't stop, but as soon as I mentioned something to him about volunteers in his department he was off and running. They've got a training officer. There was an article in the paper a while back where like 80% of the firefighters in this country are volunteers. They're pretty professional, and you could integrate guys like that into your paid department and help you with your budget problems. I also watched a meeting where the Fire Chief was here talking to you people, and he made the statement that you guys set the policy. Well, set a policy and let him run with it. Integrate them and it will save you some money. The other thing is that there was a nice article in the paper, an editorial, about the school budget and what have you. And there was one Alderman that said he never thought any teacher should be laid off. That's a scary thought because the budget will go nowhere but up if all you guys have that same theory. It seems that all the School Board members have that theory because they voted not to lay any off. But the editorial here goes on and at the end it deals with how private sector employees have to deal with layoffs and tough times. Why not teachers? It seems like the school administration is maybe a half a bubble off the plum in their priorities where they've given exorbitant raises to the new school superintendent each time you bring one in. And you've added a lot of teachers when you should have been cutting back some because of Bedford leaving. So maybe some of that money could have been used for textbooks. The other thing is loud pipes. Motorcycle pipes, car exhaust. Nice article here in the paper here about Milford is going to be cracking down on it. Maybe Manchester should try the same thing. I've talked to the Police Chief and he's going to make an honest effort, and I'll thank him for his word on that. You guys need to get behind him on that and see if he has the proper equipment to work with. And for the two State Senators sitting here, the other thing that was right above it was White Mountain National Forest fire up in Rumney. It's in its sixth day. You guys should start a dialogue up in Concord and get the Governor behind it that you bring in, and adequately

have around the country, start with New England here because of the White Mountain National Forest, some aerial tankers, C-130's and up. You can move those things around like crazy. For a fire to go from seven or eight acres a week, and they're just now getting it contained at 50-some, almost 60 acres.

Unacceptable. Fly in guys from Illinois, special hot-shot team, to fight it. I'd appreciate it if you guys would start a dialogue with the Governor to maybe start something nationally to have these aerial tankers around where they can move them and come in and squash a fire like that real quick. Thank you.

Wade Ewing, 275 Patterson Street, stated:

I wouldn't expect you to necessarily remember but I spoke to this Board back in March. I know it seems like a lifetime ago, given the budget season, and I want to thank you, as a side note, all the hard work and extra hours the City has been putting in. I've been actually watching some of it on TV and I appreciate the effort to get the system to work. I spoke in March to thank you for adopting the Ten Year Plan to End Homelessness. As I mentioned at that time, I'm involved in my church, First United Methodist, on Valley Street, and there is weekly outreach to what the plan calls the chronically homeless. It does sadden me to come here tonight and have to say that I actually had lost two of my friends on the street, both since I've talked to you. He was a 60 year old veteran from Vietnam. Joe was a 44 year old person, my age, who was a lifelong resident of the City. I kind of want to just come here tonight and mention to you the importance of this issue, that there is a human face to this, and I've seen that in my involvement. I really just want you to keep that in mind as you debate issues and funding so that we kind of can move beyond our human differences and reach a higher purpose.

Thank you for your time.

*On motion of **Alderman Pinard**, duly seconded by **Alderman Sullivan**, it was voted to take all 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 J. Roy**, it was voted to adjourn.*

A True Record. Attest.

City Clerk