

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

September 16, 2008

7:00 PM

Mayor Guinta called the meeting to order.

Mayor Guinta called for the Pledge of Allegiance, this function being led by Alderman J. Roy.

A moment of silent prayer was observed.

The Clerk called the roll.

Present: Aldermen M. Roy, Gatsas, Sullivan, J. Roy, Osborne, Pinard, Lopez, Shea, DeVries, Garrity, Smith, Ouellette, Domaingue  
(Alderman O'Neil arrived late.)

**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 the 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. He 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.

**Carol Williams**, 127 Prout Avenue, stated:

I came tonight because I have some very serious concerns regarding the tax cap. I've been doing some research on what has happened in other communities that have adopted tax caps. In my opinion, or it appears to be a combination, the less critical portions of a city budget are cut drastically or eliminated. It has affected senior centers and libraries. They seem to first lose funding or sometimes close. Municipal contributions to essential programs like Meals on Wheels are affected. This is what has happened in town after town in other communities like Colorado and California. I don't know about you but these services are very essential to the elderly and people with disabilities. Roads get neglected and deteriorate. Services like trash pick-up get reduced. I don't know about you but many of us can't get to a trash drop off center, and I need curbside trash pick-up. One thing I noticed is that handicap access, which I believe is already on a back burner, gets even more neglected. Approximately 16 years ago, Americans With Disabilities Act was passed, and yet our City's infrastructure still is not in compliance with this civil rights legislation. How deep would the cuts be to those concerns that I have? In conclusion I just want to share a quote from the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities: "These caps may hold down property taxes. They are likely to impair local governments to provide services residents demand and need, and are likely to make local revenue systems more regressive." Thank you very much for listening and your time.

**Ginger Ferrer**, 521 Pine Street, stated:

I was reading the Union Leader regarding the alleged missing amount of \$6,014 from the dog licensing here at City Hall. I did a little math and came up with an amount that defies understanding with regard to the potential that at least 722 transactions have been lost or placed in another department within City Hall. In accounting, paperwork is essential. A hard copy becomes a source for further

documentation of an accounting process, as input into a computer program, to account for said department. There are checks with numbers and the pay information from credit cards. With that information, cash transactions would indicate a receipt necessary to document the transaction, with a copy for the payee and a copy for the accounting department processes. How was the amount of \$6,014 arrived at if the paperwork or documentation of these alleged transactions is missing? I divided \$6,014 by \$25, which is the total amount charged by the three different levels of dog licensing: \$7.50 for a puppy, \$10 for an unneutered animal, and \$7.50 for a neutered animal. I used it as an approximation to divide into \$6,014 and I came up with 240.55, which is then multiplied by three for the three separate transactions, and it came to 722 transactions, with no apparent paperwork, hard copy, or computer generated documentation of these missing transactions. How could anyone make this kind of an error 722 times and no one caught it? How did the days' tallies reconcile when there appeared to be no paper trail for the end of the business day, week or month? Are these transactions or money stored in a safe until the amounts reach a certain increment before depositing? Or was it all cash? Or is it a daily deposit at the end of the business day? This is not a criticism. It is a question. I've done a lot of accounting work in my life, and I understand the process, but I don't understand how this kind of a mistake could go unnoticed for so long. End of my remarks, thank you.

**Scott McGilvray**, 1750 Elm Street, stated:

I want to take this opportunity to thank Aldermen O'Neil, Mark Roy, Jim Roy, Ouellette, DeVries and Smith and Chairman Lopez. Two weeks ago you eight Aldermen showed great courage in standing up for those who would be too hasty in getting the idea of a tax cap on the Manchester ballot this November. This is a very important decision for the voters of the City. Voters need time to learn in depth about the pros and cons of this initiative. It takes time for advocates on all sides to analyze this kind of complex issue, and it takes time for the voters to study

the information received to make informed and educated decisions. Some have said this issue has been around long enough for voters to know where they stand. This is misleading. The competition was submitted at the last minute so anyone who questioned it would not have enough time to get complete information. Citizens want a fair and open city government. All citizens deserve not only to have the opportunity to participate but also have the time they need to educate themselves in this important issue. The Aldermen who refused to rush this to the ballot did the right thing; I am proud of them and stand by them. Tax caps do have an impact on city services, including education, that are provided to the citizens. I have taken the last two weeks to talk to my colleagues around the country where tax caps have been put into place. In Colorado, which has a state-wide tax cap, the effects were so bad that the citizens voted to suspend the tax cap. Colorado's average per pupil funding fell by more than \$400 relative to the national average. Colorado's children suffered. The proportion of low income children who lacked health insurance rose, while it declined nationally. Students were forced to pay large fees to participate in extra curricular activities such as student council, drama club and athletics. The education system could not follow through on the initiatives needed to meet the mandates of the national No Child Left Behind. The mayor of Franklin spoke to this very Board. He said a tax cap made them think of creative ways to generate revenue and savings. That is what needs to be done. One of the creative ways he testified about was to increase host fees for other towns to dump their garbage in Franklin. Here in Manchester we've had an outcry from citizens over the location of a transfer facility. Can you imagine what they would say if the proposed facility was to become a host for waste from other towns? What the mayor of Franklin did not tell you was one of his creative solutions was to turn off every third street light in the city, or even on some streets, every street light. Is that a solution that we want here in Manchester? In Chelsea, Massachusetts, the city was forced to close several fire stations and lay off approximately 10% of the recommended number of firemen. Manchester can do

better than this. We should be striving to become a vibrant, modern city that invests in public education, not the city that enters the race to the bottom. All stakeholders need to become informed about the impact, both positive and negative, when instituting a tax cap. Everyone now has the time. Thank you, Aldermen, for doing the right thing for the citizens of Manchester.

**Glenn Ouellette**, 112 Auburn Street, stated:

I have a letter addressed to the Board of Mayor and Aldermen about the effects of the tax increase on parking on businesses in the City of Manchester. When entering Manchester's City Hall these days, one must wonder if the people's doors to freedom are open today. You know, I want to state here before I continue that I did not sign the tax cap and have never signed it. I've always thought that our elected officials would do the right thing and spend the money wisely. But I would never have imagined that after a legal petition was driven, legally, and the state has accepted it, that you would not let it go on the ballot. Your Honor, can you freely open the doors to City Hall for the people to enter without the fear of being thrown out? In order for us to talk about a spending cap, without the Aldermen's permission, the dancing around the halls of the City chambers, looking like the Mayor has to beacon the Wards' representatives to rally them just to talk about an issue that could affect every citizen of Manchester is like running around with one's mind detached. You the Aldermen are not in touch with the people's wishes, even in times when the law requires it. Can you imagine not having an open mind on the issues petitioned you in order to act in accordance with our City Charter and the laws of the state of New Hampshire? You the eight Aldermen, and you know who you are, have consistently been voting and voting often to not allow we the people the right to vote in a timely and lawful manner on issues that govern our City; that affects our everyday lives. To think of the average voter as not having the intelligence to filter information from the facts to the untrue politics as usual is truly dumbfounded on your parts and not the people.

After all, we the people have learned to divide the truth from the tall tales and the false impressions of your half truths that have for too long, many years now, gotten the City taxpayers to pay for your mistakes, not to mention the costs we have to bear in correcting those mistakes that have created crisis after crisis these past eight years of misspending of the hard-earned taxpayers' dollars. We saw the City's Mayor two weeks ago doing his calling dance to rally all of the Aldermen together in asking them to do what's right in allowing the people their rights to vote on the spending cap. Let's not forget that it is you, the Aldermen, who also decided for us that we, the voters of this great City, were not intelligent enough for you to allow us the people who voted you into office the right to decide for ourselves if we want to continue having a school district or if we want a school department. Please, I beg of you, give the voters of Manchester their due right of intelligence. And give them their honor to make their own decisions on these most important issues that will not only affect our daily lives, but in paying the local City property taxes that is evident in its effect on our money pockets as well. You, the Aldermen, keep claiming that the City's revenues are not forthcoming as they have been in the past. Yet, almost on a quarterly basis, we find in the news that thousands of dollars are being found missing. But when an idea is brought forward to protect the taxpayers' money, you do nothing but argue that it isn't so and try to blame each other. Well, there seems to be enough blame to go around for all to share. So let's stop bickering about the fact that monies are missing and actually do something about them being found and returned to the City coffers where they belong. Leaders are elected to govern the people's work and not to rule its citizenry, as would a dictator. Well, when our local elected officials begin to fear the very voters that have elected them to do their work, but instead ignore the laws written to protect those who petition them in accordance with those laws or by not allowing the people's right to vote on important issues that may affect the majority, you are in essence insulting the voting intelligence of your constituents. If you the Aldermen start governing the people's work as you were

elected to do and less about insisting that you rule its citizenry of the people's right to vote, then a true democracy will once again begin to exist in this fine City of our hardworking people. Thank you.

**Sandra Paradis**, 33 Karin Street, stated:

I just want to give a 'thumbs up' and a blessing for William Shea for coming forth on the Two Joe's television studio live last week, also with Mike Biundo. They both spoke and I thought it was very informational. Mike spoke on how much money goes into this coalition, a little bit of background on the coalition, not too much but a little bit. Mr. Shea gave some very good points and came forth with some information. I believe we need a lot more information on this issue for this cap petition or spending cap, or whatever you want to call it. My family signed this petition. There were probably eight or nine of us that signed it in our family. Now we're re-thinking it. Part of it had to do with the Joe Kelly Levasseur show and the Joe Briggs show, part of it. Looking into it a little bit more, we find that we need more information. We have to be actually better educated on this tax cap, from some information we've heard from some out-of-state people. If we're ever going to put this on the ballot, it's got to be in plain, laymen's language, something the people really understand. When I ran for office, for School Board, people would say to me, what was that referendum? They read the whole big half a page of something, and they weren't sure what they were voting on. So if it ever does come about, it has got to be really understood. The people of Manchester deserve this. We really need to be properly educated on this, and we don't want to see the general public here being hurt by this cap. Enough people are paying last year's fuel bills. It's unbelievable, some of the people I'm talking to, my age and younger, who still owe a thousand or twelve hundred dollars on their fuel bills from last year. And here winter is coming. Could this cap mean higher property taxes? Could it mean less public services, less garbage pickup? It could be only twice a month instead of once a week. Less police and fire coverage... We had a

lot of fires this year, if you'll remember, last fall and going into the winter. Less road renovation, such as the huge potholes that everyone has been dealing with. I know I spent \$100 this year, and only because my brothers own a garage did I only pay that much, because I not only had my tire ruined but I had my rim ruined. So I went down and got one at Lambert's junk yard. Anyway, our family is definitely concerned, and we need to have a better understanding of how this will affect all of us in Manchester. A lot of our families have been here for many years - three, four, or five generations. I just want to say again, thank you to the seven Aldermen who are really looking into this, and also a special blessing to Willy Shea.

**Josiette White**, 508 South Main Street, stated:

I want to thank a majority of the Aldermen for what I think was very principled leadership on the tax cap, and voting to move it to the ballot in 2009. I think that there is still some misunderstanding out there. All of the voters in Manchester will in fact have a chance to have their say on this issue. I think that's very important. I am firmly against the tax cap. I think there are still a lot of unanswered questions. Many people have raised quite a ruckus about making sure it is on the ballot this November but have failed to provide any real detailed information about what this tax cap means. There are a lot of questions about it. One, in particular...I think I'm pretty smart...I haven't quite gotten my head around. What is a negative revaluation? What does that mean for Manchester, in addition to the various other concerns that have been brought forward today about services and the impact on the City. What does it mean to be a resident here in Manchester? I want to thank you, Aldermen, for taking the time to not just adhere to the absolute minimum standard of the law, but to do what's in the best interest of the people of Manchester. I think that the time that we have...while folks have repeatedly stated that it has been before us, we've yet to see any detailed explanation of what it means. So, I appreciate the time that we have to understand

it before it moves to the ballot, and ask all of the questions. Certainly after I find out every new piece of information, it leads to yet another question. Thank you again for your leadership. I know it was a very difficult decision, and I appreciate that it will go to the ballot in 2009. Thank you.

**Ben Dick**, 289 Harrison Street, stated:

I am a teacher in the City. I would like to take the opportunity also this evening to thank the eight Aldermen who stood strong, not at one but at two separate meetings, in the face of often boisterous and often belligerent comments from a small group in the gallery. I want to thank you because what you did was you did what you were elected to do, which wasn't simply to look out for the 4,000 people who signed the petition, but to look out for the 100,000 people who live in this City. You looked out for them while keeping the 4,000 plus signees in mind, because they will, as was previously stated, have their opportunity to vote. It's important that the citizens of Manchester, all the citizens of Manchester, have a chance to become educated on an issue as great as the tax cap. Thanks to the vote you took, again not at one meeting but at two, you've given them the opportunity to get educated and make the decision for themselves, and I thank you.

**Karen Carter**, 502 Chestnut Street, stated:

I'm a lifelong resident of Manchester. I'm not sure, and I think I'll never know why the chaos has visited our town for the last five years, but I do know that it has been kept down. We had the wild, wild west out here. I'm a victim of it. I live at the Cadillac Motel. Our police, not just our disabled residents who are living there, are in peril in that building. There is no security; there is no housing for us. We are your seniors. We are your children, because I'm not positive why this evil came upon our town, but it's been five years of sheer hell, and we really have been doing a good job. I don't appreciate being called crazy because I'm not. However, I do appreciate this town. I'm actually a resident of Massachusetts and

Maine by birth. And I'm Native American and Italian, so I shouldn't have a terrible temper. I believe it's buffered. Thank you, Your Honor. Thank you, Aldermen. Please keep it up, and let's keep these fires down. We don't have housing. And could we please get a police station? They shouldn't be homeless.

*On motion of Alderman Pinard, duly seconded by Alderman Domaingue, 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 Ouellette, it was voted to adjourn.*

A True Record. Attest.



City Clerk