

**SPECIAL MEETING  
BOARD OF MAYOR AND ALDERMEN  
(PUBLIC HEARING – PROPOSED FY2010 BUDGET)**

**May 4, 2009**

**6:00 PM**

**Mayor Guinta** called the meeting to order.

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

A moment of silence was observed.

The Clerk called the roll.

Present: Aldermen M. Roy, Gatsas, Sullivan, J. Roy, Osborne, Pinard, O’Neil,  
Lopez, Shea, DeVries, Garrity, Smith, Ouellette, Murphy

**Mayor Guinta** advised that the purpose of the special meeting is a public hearing to receive comments on the proposed Fiscal Year 2010 municipal budget, the proposed Community Improvement Program for the Fiscal Year 2010 to 2016 period in accordance with the procedures established in RSA 44:10 and in satisfaction of any other local, state or federal law that may apply. Mayor Guinta noted that the Clerk shall present the resolutions, the subject of which contains all of the appropriations as proposed, following which a brief presentation may be made. At this point we will ask all members of the public who have signed up to come to the nearest microphone and state your name and address. You will be provided three minutes to make your comments. We are going to have all residents and taxpayers first and then any non-residents following.

The Clerk presented the proposed Resolutions:

“A Resolution appropriating to the Parking Fund the sum of \$4,886,940 from Parking for the Fiscal Year 2010.”

“A Resolution appropriating the sum of \$15,169,079 from Sewer User Rental Charges to the Environmental Protection Division for Fiscal Year 2010.”

“A Resolution appropriating the sum of \$3,303,000 from Recreation User Charges to the Recreation Division for Fiscal Year 2010.”

“A Resolution appropriating to the Manchester Transit Authority the sum of \$900,000 for the Fiscal Year 2010.”

“A Resolution appropriating to the Manchester School District the sum of \$146,100,000 for the Fiscal Year 2010.”

“Appropriating all Incremental Meals and Rooms Tax Revenue Received by the City in Fiscal Year 2010 and held in the Civic Center Fund, for the payment of the City’s Obligations in Said Fiscal Year under the Financing Agreement.”

“A Resolution appropriating to the Manchester Airport Authority the sum of \$52,768,681 from Special Airport Revenue Funds for Fiscal Year 2010.”

“A Resolution appropriating to the Manchester School Food and Nutrition Services Program the sum of \$5,585,500 from School Food and Nutrition Services Revenues for Fiscal Year 2010.”

“Amending a Resolution ‘Raising Monies and Making Appropriations for the Fiscal Year 2010’ to \$126,682,940.”

“A Resolution appropriating to the Central Business Service District the sum of \$244,000 from Central Business Service District Funds for Fiscal Year 2010.”

“Resolution ‘Approving the Community Improvement Program for 2010, Raising and Appropriating Monies Therefore, and Authorizing Implementation of said program’.”

**Katherine Morrison**, 35 Andrew Street #11, stated here we are once again in budget season and again trying to defend our need for money. The Mayor is trying to underfund and blames it on the overpaid school teachers. As a taxpayer in Manchester, I worry about how my resale is going to be if the services continue to go downhill. Rather than dwelling on the budget issues, let's look at the furloughs. In education a furlough will not work since we only get paid for the days that we work. We do not get paid for vacation time or the summers. So if we were to take a furlough we need to call in for the seven days. This means that the City will be paying \$75 for each substitute for each of the seven days. This interrupts the education process for the students, which as a reminder we are trying to improve the test scores for these students. The other option is that we work the seven days and give up our pay for those days. This is not a furlough. This is giving the goods away for free. The thirteen dollars being saved on the taxes of anyone who still has a house worth \$250,000 is not worth this. We will be in schools next year that are lacking the proper supervision and administration, now that ten assistants have been cut. To continue improving our test scores will be very difficult with this situation.

**Christine Martin**, 518 Holly Avenue, stated good evening ladies and gentlemen. Four generations of Martins and Mativiers have lived here in the City of Manchester. Like my father before me, I am a city servant. My dad spent many years in the Building Department. I am proud to serve the community that I live in. I am very proud to own a home here. I am very pleased to pay taxes to live in my home to get the desired services. We have a difference in ideology in some respects as we looked at this budget. When I look at budgeting in my work life, I look at the end result. What do I want to have happen? The question we would then ask is, what do we want the community that we live in to look like? What services do we need to make it look like that and then what resources do we have to provide to make that happen? Unfortunately, the way life is, taxes are a resource. It is a revenue source. It is sometimes the only source we can go to

to fund programs in order to support the kind of community that we want to live in. I intend on living here for the rest of my life. I have no intention of moving to any other community. I find the school system here to be outstanding. I am a graduate of this school district. I would like to work here in this school district for the rest of my life and be the superintendent some day if you all think that wouldn't be such a bad idea. What I would say to you tonight, is I would ask you to listen to me as a taxpayer and know that I will vote for you, if you reasonably fund city services in this town, not to maintain but to make this the community that I want to live in, to make it an outstanding community. We can say that we don't need to throw money at things to make them grow but I will tell you that sometimes we do. My final thought for you is about my passionate topic and that is of course education, \$146 is an irresponsible budget, with all due respect Your Honor. It simply is. \$152 is a budget that we could live with. There will still be sacrifices that will have to be made and the community will not like what \$152 million of education looks like. That is a sad statement but that is the truth. I would ask you to do what you can and look in the areas that you can look in and fully fund the school districts \$152 million budget.

**Kevin Verville**, 48 Roysan Street, stated Mr. Mayor and Board of Aldermen, we find ourselves in a very tough economy. I work in the private sector now. I am a former high school chemistry teacher. My wife is a former high school Spanish teacher so I have seen this issue from both sides of the fence. I unfortunately cannot afford significantly higher taxes in the current economy. It is time for the City and the School District to learn to do more with less. I work for a very large employer here in Manchester. We have seen our sales volumes significantly drop. We have not cut our payroll. We have found ways to keep those people gainfully employed through this significant downturn in the economy but we are learning to live with what we have. It is time the City does the same thing. There is an important part of education that gets lost in the rhetoric. That is more money spent on education is not directly linked to higher test scores. In fact, it is the way that the public schools are forced to operate under the current society that is part

of the problem of the public schools. In fact, if we had a return to discipline, if we set the academic bar higher and insisted that our students rise to that level, that removes the City of Manchester out of district in need of improvement. Throwing money at it is no guarantee of improvement. We need only to look at some of the private schools who spend less per pupil on education and achieve higher results. It certainly is not only discipline and higher academic standards, there is a certain vantage that private schools have over public schools, a big one is with respect to special education. We need to do more with less. We need to work within the budgets that we can afford now. I would ask that you take a good long hard look at the Mayor's budget and you try to work as closely with that budget as you can so that those of us that are struggling in the down economy have more money to support our own families.

**Tammy Simmons**, 142 Parker Street, stated I come here tonight partly out of pure frustration and partly out of pure desperation. Part of me came here just to do my civic duty and speak up for myself and fellow taxpayers. We are all aware of the economic downtown that we face these days, whether it is the small business that has had to lay off one or two people to make ends meet or some of New Hampshire's auto dealerships that could potentially close their doors completely causing dozens and dozens of jobs to be lost. The pinch of this economy is widespread, yet once again the talk is of increasing spending and raising taxes, again. It seems every year I come here and say the same thing, please stop spending so much of the taxpayer's money. This year I am begging you because honestly there are far too many Manchester residents out there that can simply not afford another penny of higher taxes. You can debate whether you should increase them \$10 a household, \$50 a household, \$200 a household, the fact of the matter is that it really doesn't matter because any increase in this economy is too much for many to bear. I would like to believe that the only reason we would ever have to raise taxes is because we have an efficient and well oiled machine that is our city's government and that we truly just need more of our tax dollars for the city to exist. That is hard to accept when just his week it was announced that the City will be switching health insurance

carriers from Cigna back to Anthem even though the Cigna proposal would have saved us an additional \$102,000, or after hearing that a decision was made to continue health care benefits for the School Board at the cost of over \$73,000. Add to that the cost of the Aldermen's health and dental insurance at about \$110,000. I respect the work that you as Aldermen and the School Board Members do but they are not full-time positions and honestly we shouldn't be paying for your insurance. From 2005 to 2008 we decreased the number of students at West High by nearly 750 kids. Have we reduced the number of teachers to reflect that decline? We continue to pay \$300,000 annually to house the schools administrative offices, when one might think with the decline in students at West we could squeeze those offices in over there somewhere. Would it be comfortable? Probably not but it gets a little uncomfortable in my house over the winter because I have now had to turn my thermostat down to 60 degrees to be able to afford my heating bills. Probably the most frustrating of all is this business of furloughs. People in the private sector are asked or better told, that they will be taking weeks off without pay so that their company can manage through these tough times. The Mayor has asked the City to do exactly the same thing to save the City \$3.6 million and prevent 90 layoffs. Yet the unions are dead set against it. I have asked people both in the private sector and a few friends of mine who work in the schools, if they would prefer furloughs or 90 people laid off. Every single person I asked said that they would take the week off without pay without hesitation. Yet even in today's *Manchester Express* the unions said they are not interested in polling its members to see which one they would actually prefer. As a taxpayer, as the one who pays each and every city employee's salary, the city's expenses and all of the benefits, all of these things add up to me to just not believing that we do things in the most efficient way possible in our government. I wonder if being here tonight is nothing but a waste of my time and yours. Comments from some of you like, it would be unfair not to raise taxes, or not raising taxes will mean cutting services makes me really think that you are not even willing to try to find ways to streamline our government. Ask the average taxpayer what they think and I will tell you that most can come up with at least one way to save the city some money but they elected you to do

that. They elected you to be leaders. You to be the stewards of their hard earned dollars. Please show them that you can be leaders and that you do care about the people suffering financially and that you have done all that you can to make our government as sufficient as possible. Last month thousands of people gathered in Victory Park on tax day to say that they have had enough with every increased spending and increased taxes. Last summer over 6,000 people signed a petition to put a spending cap on the ballot and hundreds more wanted to sign but didn't have a chance to. Given the opportunity I believe that the people of Manchester will approve that spending cap. The message these thousands and thousands of people are sending is a very clear one. It is the same message that I came tonight with. Please stop spending so much of the taxpayer's money. I ask that you consider the Mayor's proposed budget and work to make ends meet the same way the taxpayers in this great city of ours are doing each and every week just trying to make ends meet. Thank you.

**Arthur Adamakos**, 1196 Union Street, stated good evening everyone. Welcome to Memorial High School. For the short time you will be here...I am sure it will be double digit hours for me but for the first time in my career I am at the point where usually I give an impassioned speech and it is full of cleverness and everything else but I am at the point now where for the first time in my 30-year career in the district, I am worried. I am really worried. Working in the front lines with over 2,000 students each and every day, I see how our populous lives in this city. It is not the same as it was five years ago, ten years ago, twenty years ago or even back in 1979 when I first started as a teacher at Hillside. We have a lot of people who need our services, a lot of people. It is getting to the point where I am very concerned as a taxpayer in the city about property values, how the city takes care of itself, and the type of people we want to attract to the big city. I will give you a case in point. I was just talking with a few people earlier today and learned that 38% of our kids are on free and reduced lunch. 38%. I actually have to tell you that last week, I had to slip people a \$20 bill because I was worried about them not eating last week because we were on vacation. I have actually had students who have misbehaved

and as I am about to suspend them they tell me please don't suspend me or I am not going to eat the five days that I am out. I never heard that five years ago but I am hearing that on a regular basis. Theft is up. Of course in a bad economy theft is going to be up. They are stealing items to feed their families. It gets to be the point where I can understand one viewpoint. You are out there to protect the taxpayer. I am one of those individuals. What about our citizens? We have a lot of people in our district, we have a lot of people in the city, who need our help on a regular basis that I don't think you are aware of. You see it so often, people being sent to school sick because they cannot afford to take their sons or daughters to the doctors. Who is the first person in line? The school nurses. The school nurses are so busy. We are looking to eliminate many of those individuals to what end? How will they take care of that group? I just want to say this in closing, because I have an intimate knowledge of how the citizens need our services in this city on a regular basis, I would like to invite anyone who needs to talk with me about that in particular, you know where you can find me, just look in the phonebook under Memorial High School and I would be more than happy to sit down with you and show you some data that is so alarming to me, it should become alarming to you. I understand you have a responsibility to everyone in the city but the people who really need it, the citizens of this city, need our services now more than ever. I have to tell you I am getting more and more worried whether we are going to be able to meet their needs each and every day as I get older. Thank you everyone.

**Brenda Gekas**, 82 Campbell Street, stated I am a lifelong resident of this city. I have the great privilege and honor of being an educator at Weston School in our district. You are our city's elected caretakers. You hold our well being and our future in your hands. I thank each and every one of you for being willing to take on that responsibility and please don't take it lightly. As a Manchester taxpayer, I want all of our city's essential services to be adequately funded. I value our police officers, our firefighters, our highway workers, our sanitation, our health department. These are all essential services. They are not luxuries. They are vital. Then there is education. As a city, we are already

underfunding education. In an era of high standards with NCLB and NECAP and AYP our students are needier then they have been in decades. I first set foot in a classroom in this district at Beech Street School in 1976. I do know what I am talking about. The students are much needier than they have ever been. The demands of the curriculum are far greater. The demands of the curriculum are actually developmentally inappropriate for some of our young children. Instead of talking about full day kindergarten and going to half day programs, we should make sure that every single school in this district is able to offer not only full day kindergarten but bring back that readiness year for our developmentally young children. We can give them that gift at the beginning. I have a couple of questions: Where is the federal money and where is our adequacy money from the state lottery? Does this money go into the general fund? Who is responsible for seeking out these funds that we are entitled to and are they doing their job? I would like answers to those questions. It is not fair to just ask you questions and make demands. I have suggestions as well. Save money on supplies by using local vendors. I can buy crayons at Wal-Mart in August for probably half the cost that the principals who are being forced to use certain vendors and their purchase orders. That doesn't take much. Just to think Wal-Mart, Staples, Target, they are all educator friendly. Fine-tune transportation. Look into before and after school programs for profit. Increase taxes a little bit. I work hard, I want my city services. I have worked two additional part time jobs in addition to teaching. I am willing to pay a little bit more in my taxes to get the services I want. Please don't use the economy is bad as an excuse to shortchange us. In his *Nicomachean Ethics* Aristotle said the good is better when it is harder. Let's all work hard together and start thinking a little bit more outside the box and find creative solutions that will benefit all of the stakeholders in our community. Thank you.

**Ron Kew**, 249 Smyth Road, stated I am a resident of Manchester. I am the Assistant Principal at Henry Wilson Elementary School. Each day I have the privilege of working with students, faculty and parents in a public school. On a daily basis we encourage, we coach, we support our students dreams and aspirations. The work that we do is extremely

vital and important. A quality education is the foundation for everything our kids will be and everything our kids will do. Quality is the key word. Quality means moving forward not backwards. A quality school district supports initiatives and ideas and people. Any education is not enough. Manchester students deserve nothing less than a full staffed, fully funded quality school system. Monetary cuts to the school system take away our city's ability to educate. It overcrowds classrooms and eliminates student programs. Budget cuts have already resulted in ten assistant principals being pink slipped from schools where they are needed. These positions are too necessary to eliminate. All of our district positions are too necessary to eliminate. Every employee devotes time, skill and energy to our mission. To stop the momentum our school employees bring to our district would be halting progress. My daughters Madeline and Annie attend elementary school in our public school system. I want the very best for my children. I want the very best for the students I work with, which is a quality school experience. It pains me to think that slowly the schools are being chipped away, whittled down, to something less than they should be. I am proud of where I work and I hope that we as a city will preserve our education to quality education. Thank you.

**Kevin Phelan**, 1378 Wellington Road, I have been a resident of the city for a number of years. My daughter is a student at Weston Elementary School. I have several bullet points here but I did hear something earlier that I would like to address. That is the notion of the results that can be expected from a private school versus a public school. I will tell you what...I am not an educator, but if you give me the ability to select the students to work with parents who by definition are supportive of education and have the willingness and the ability to support their children in their educational experience I could provide good test results. Public schools are not what you might remember from 30 years ago. They are not what you might remember from ten years ago. The population that is being served here in Manchester is vastly different from your experience 25 years ago when you may have had 30 students in the class. The challenges and the demands on the school staff are much greater. The challenges for the students

academically are much greater than they used to be. This notion of public versus private, can we please put this to an end? There are some other points I would like to bring about. What are our values? We say we value education. How do we demonstrate that? In my mind, the way to demonstrate that is to provide the essential services and the essential characteristics of a flourishing school district. We are again; I have the statistics here from the State Department of Education, toward the bottom of the cost per student. Some may argue that throwing money at a problem doesn't necessarily bring about the solution you want. Not funding those vital services is going to come out with a negative outcome. I am a taxpayer too. I don't like taxes. Kiplinger's, a well respected financial publication, came out this year and sited the second lowest tax burden, not in New Hampshire, but in the country, is Manchester, New Hampshire. The reason for that is your discipline. You have made sound decisions while I may disagree at times that you have cut too far, I am suffering from cognitive dissonance. I am hearing the taxes are too high and we can't afford our schools. At the same time you read in the *Union Leader* citations of this article that it is wonderful how great we are at keeping our taxes down. Which is it? Are we the most taxed or the least taxed? The point is, you get what you pay for. Determining what is essential in looking at a home budget versus a government budget, a home budget you can cut non-essential services. You don't need cable TV, you can turn your heat down somewhat, and you can go from a high broadband to a dial up service. You can cut services. At a school you cannot cut the vital services that are required to provide for an adequate education. Thank you.

**Dan Garrity**, 341 Whitney Avenue, stated I would like to take this opportunity to possibly inform the taxpayers of Manchester about a small percentage of their tax bill pertaining to the Highway Department. Eleven percent of their total tax bill goes to the Highway Department. So a home assessed at \$275,000 at a tax rate at \$17.35 pays \$522.50 to the Highway Department for the services it provides. For starters, what you get for your money, we had twelve snowstorms last season. A few of those snow storms were longer than 24 hours straight. On top of that we resurface your streets. We sweep

your streets. We patch your potholes and if by chance we don't patch your pothole you can email us or call us and we will do our best to get to it. I know that there are still some out there. If you have any sewer backups in your basements, call the Highway Department we will come jet rod the line for you. Also if you have any drainpipes that may be broken on the streets, we repair those. We do graffiti removal. Your yard waste is picked up. Your garbage is picked up. Your recyclables are picked up. If you need any sand or sand bags you can pick those up at the Highway Department upon request. Stockades for block parties, we let you borrow those and we will deliver those if you need them. We are also responsible for your street lights, painting of your street lines, painting of your crosswalks, your traffic lights, your street signs, repair of all plow damage. An example of that would be your mailboxes, fences or irrigation systems. We also pick up any dead animals that you may happen to call in or that we see on the streets. We have a labor force that is used for other things besides Highway Department service. An example of that would be shoveling snow from the school roofs. We repair the bridges and we clean up homeless encampments underneath the bridges. On more occasions than not we find hypodermics at these sites so it is not the best job to do but we do those things. In tough economic times, I see no reason to be cutting departments like Welfare, Health and Human Services, Parks & Recreation and the Library. I think these departments should be enhanced at times like this especially when you may have strong strain of a virus going around or closing Crystal Lake when people can't afford to go to the beach. Or closing the library or cutting hours when people can't take a day to go to Boston. One other thing regarding schools, I just so happen to have four daughters that graduated from Central High School and three of them have gone on to higher education. One has a masters degree and two are working professionally. Unfortunately they had to leave Manchester to find employment. My fourth daughter has graduated from Central High School and is moving on to higher education. Thank you.

**Joseph Silvera**, 575 Rimmon Street, stated although I am a teacher in the city, I come tonight not as a teacher but as a parent with the insight of a teacher. I have three

daughters, six, four and two and half years old. I look at my daughters and two of them will be attending Northwest Elementary School next year. I look at them and as a high school teacher and with the discussion that is going on today, I say what is their education going to be next year? What is their education going to be like in five years and what is it going to be like when they hopefully attend the school that I attended and I now teach at? I watch Central High School battle with the budget cuts that may potentially be coming forth. I watch us cut upper level classes. I watch us discuss things that we can do to save money. What is going to be there for my children, my daughters when they get there? Will they have the courses that will push them or will they be in the courses that are just pushing the kids that don't really feel like being there? Are they are going to be the ones to be challenged and go on to Harvard, Stanford, Yale? The ones that I am teaching in Level IV or are they going to be the ones that are told we can give you this much? I push, as a teacher; I put my heart into it every single day, whether it is twos, threes or fours. I look at my daughters and they go to Northwest Elementary and their teachers bust their butts for my daughter. They work hard and they put in extra time. My daughter is an overachiever. If I wanted to put her into a private school, people talk about private schools, you know what she might not be so successful because I am counting on the services that the public schools provide. My wife taught at a beautiful, wonderful, Catholic, elementary school. It provided great opportunities but it wouldn't necessarily make my daughter successful. She attends classes with students who can't speak English. She sits in a classroom with 25 kids, in kindergarten. We talk about where are we going to make cuts? She is in a kindergarten class of 25 students; she is lucky enough and blessed enough to be in a school such as Northwest that has full day kindergarten. Why don't they all have full day kindergarten? Why don't we look at where we need to cut? As a family, I don't want my taxes going up. I can't afford it either but you know what it is about value. What do you value? Do you value the education? Do you not value the education? I know you are helping people in my situation by not raising the taxes but at the same time I can afford to maybe not to go get that ten dollar pizza next week, if it is going to mean \$100 or \$150 on my tax bill, if my

daughters and hopefully the future leaders, have the education that they deserve. I pray that you make the right decision and hopefully you will. Thank you very much.

**Carey Roessel**, 20 Shirley Hill Road, stated thank you for the opportunity to address you. I am here to try and defend the MTA. My predecessor last year did an excellent job. Despite his best efforts the MTA's budget was cut by 28%. This year the \$900,000 in the resolution is a cut of 35%. Taken together that is \$867,541 that the MTA is going to lose. This will cost the City more in social spending. In this downturn economy people will be losing their jobs because they can't get to work. They won't be able to find work. You are going to spend more on welfare and Medicaid. People will be impacted beyond their current expectations. The City contracts, I have heard, with about 100 human services agencies to provide services, if people can't get to those services, the money spends on those services is useless. Transportation is the glue that holds the social fabric together. It allows people to get into education, to get into family counseling, to get into nutritional counseling; all of those services that the City spends money on are worthless if people can't get to it. The MTA is slated to start new service. Years ago there was a grant put in with the federal government that has been approved and we are in the process of purchasing the equipment to run a shuttle service from the Millyard to Elm Street. You can question why this is starting now but the federal dollars are there. I just want to bring your attention to that at a time when we are being devastated and the MTA as you know it very well will not survive. The new service is going to start because it is 80% federal dollars and when you get federal dollars they expect you to spend them. The other thing is the kind of service that we run now; fixed route service is going to be flex route service. The bottom line, it will take people longer to get to where they are going. Their options will be limited. There will be more rules and things that they have to go through for elderly and disabled people. This is going to complicate their world tremendously. Finally, if you want to be known as a green community, you want to go green, you want to reduce congestion and eliminate pollution, transit is always a viable method of

reducing greenhouse gases and to cut transit is not going green or being environmentally friendly. Thank you.

**Debbie Stratton**, 105 McCarthy Street, stated I am here tonight to appeal to you because I believe the proposed school budget is not enough to fund the service for our kids. Our kids are our future and they deserve all that we can give them. We hired a new superintendent this year and I would appreciate his request to adequately fund the school district to be honored. The School Board is being forced to propose numerous cuts that I certainly don't have time to address but specifically I am here to talk about athletics. I have a son who is in the eighth grade at Hillside and he dreams of playing high school hockey. Hockey is one of the programs that is going to be cut 100% at all three high schools. I know that everybody understands the value of athletics, which at least for my boys offer a lot of motivation, and obviously the team work, the camaraderie, and the leadership are invaluable. My husband played high school hockey for West and we as a family attend hockey games and the family rivalries of my son hopefully playing for Central High School someday are there and we can't even imagine hockey being cut. My son would have liked to have been here today but he is playing baseball right now and my husband is coaching our younger son in baseball. We teach commitment to our kids. My husband and I are committed to the community and we are simply asking you to provide the School Board they need to commit to providing the services for our kids. Thank you very much.

**Jim Krolkowski**, 134 Cody Street, stated I have been a teacher here in Manchester, I have been retired now for the last 34 years. I am here to speak not so much on the school district. That has been adequately done by many speakers before me but on Manchester Community TV that I have worked with over the years and with Grace Sullivan. To quote a Manchester politician, "times are tough" and they really are. I am not doubting that. They have always been tough. In my 34 years of teaching here in Manchester with the school budgets but I have to say in 34 years here in Manchester, we didn't eliminate

showcasing the kids' talents. We have always been thrifty. Right now we spend \$1,500 less per child than the state average. Not the top districts but the state average. The times have always been tough here in the school district for us. It is very important in my 34 years in the classroom to find places to showcase kids' talents. We do it in athletics with games. We do it for musicians with bands and concerts. We did it with theater for actors and actresses and we do it for the academically talented with academic events but we also have to look at one thing that I have worked closely with is Manchester Community TV. One of the big components of MCTV is to showcase kids' talents. There is an educational component. It is very important for them to have that ability to enter the broadcast medium. Unfortunately the print medium is dying out but the broadcast medium is going stronger than ever. This is an excellent way of getting kids into broadcast and broadcast journalism. This is where kids on a first hand basis can learn the basics of this field of journalism with interviews, debates. We have had numerous kids interested in presidential candidates, mayoral candidates, and governors. Last year we had a national news network shadow our students doing exit polling at they New Hampshire Presidential preference primaries. They were put on national TV. I remember to this day that one of our kids, early in the morning, I think it was the polling place in Ward 2, starts to do his exit polling and all of a sudden the cameras are on him, he said I don't know what this is but I think everybody is voting for Clinton. He hit it right on the head. Please keep Manchester Community TV a separate budgeted entity so that they can deliver this educational showcase to these kids. Thank you.

**Peter Sorrentino**, 285 Milford Street, stated you should all recognize this. This is my tax bill. You may not recognize this one but this is it. I would like to see it smaller. I think most of us would. There are four parts to this bill. The two largest parts of it, you control. The other two parts are for county and state, which you don't control. When I look at the two parts, I ask myself, how does it compare? For ten years I traveled around the country and I helped very large businesses, much larger than the city of Manchester in terms of their budget, reduce their costs. There are a lot of different methods to do that.

One of the methods to do that is benchmarking. You look at other companies similar to yours and you look at what parts of them and how they spend their money and where is it that you are spending more than there are. Where is it that you spending less and maybe you are more efficient? If you look at our tax bill without getting into the down and dirty numbers, the two parts you control are schools and then town government. That is how it is divided up on the bill. I know it can be broken up in a lot further detail. Fifty seven percent goes to the town. The forty-two percent goes to the schools. I am not an expert in municipal governments in New Hampshire. I don't know if that is good or not. What I can do is look at other towns. There are towns we all would agree are more similar to us and towns that are less similar to us. Of course much like business no town is just like us. No two businesses are exactly the same either. So either way you have to deal with what you have for data. When I look at who spends, what towns in our state, money the way we do. There are five that meet those criteria. You should all know who they are if you have done this same type of analysis that I have. One is Hampton, one is Rye, the third one is Seabrook, fourth one is Moultonborough and the fifth is Wolfeboro. Their budgets in terms of the percentage of where you spend my money looks like ours. That surprised me. It doesn't make any sense to me. The towns that spend money that I would think that are more similar to us, of course not the same, are Nashua, Salem, and various other towns. As I said, we spend 57% on our town, Portsmouth spends 59%, Seabrook spends 55%, Hampton spends 51%, Wolfeboro and Moultonborough I didn't count but they are close to us. Nashua spends 45% of their budget, the money they take from their citizens, on their town. They spend 55% on their schools. Salem spends 44% on their town and 56% on their schools. Concord, again this is not apples to apples but you never get that in any business, is 43% on their town. I don't know what these numbers mean but if you don't, you don't know what to do with this budget. You are kidding yourself. You should be able to explain it. I have never heard it explained and I don't understand why what we did in business should be a lot different than what you do here and why there is such a big disparity on our spending. I keep reading in the paper and I keep hearing you and other members and our Mayor talk about where we are going

to save money and we continually look at the schools. My tax bill does not show me that that is the problem. It is a red herring. Thank you for your time.

**John Alexion**, 11 Blackstone Street, stated I guess this is my first time down here being a new home owner by default. It wasn't really my choice but I guess for the first time I am down here in the first 20 years of my life to speak with you. I really don't see that the education department is really going to be that much of a deal breaker in funding this education system. It is either we fund it or we don't fund it. The problem is if we don't fund it it is going to be lacking going forward and they will never be able to recover out of this. I for one would like to see my property taxes go down as much as anybody else but I think it all comes down to wise spending. Looking at your budget tonight, one of the first things that I noticed was your debt service almost \$8 million. On top of that was \$5 million of interest. Do you know that \$12 million could be applied to the school budget to get them to where they need to be and we wouldn't be here talking about furloughs and we wouldn't be talking about layoffs. There are other areas to look at in this budget to get this down without having to talk about dramatic cut backs. It is all dependent on selecting the wise choice. As I tighten my belt, I have done things that make economic sense for me. I hope that eventually this city wakes up and does the right thing and starts making some more prudent decisions other than sit here, night after night, down at City Hall, keeping the lights on until 11:00 or 12:00 at night talking about the budget. Also on the school side, talking about pizza contracts, there are more important things to discuss. There really is. I am not out here trying to make a point. The point is that I am trying to make is that you people have it within your powers to watch the bottom line. The bottom line is picking what to invest in and what to pay for that is reasonable. I am willing to accept something that is reasonable, especially in this day with the economy that we are living in. I am willing to live with a little less trash pick up. That is something that could have been done this past winter rather than picking up every week, you could have gone to a two week schedule from December through April and we could have saved a little bit of money that way. You people have some tough

choices and I don't want to be in your position. I would hate to be in your position. I am not going to sit here and talk numbers and percentages with you. I am going to trust that you guys are going to look at the budget again and try to hammer something down that is going to be reasonable to everybody, including myself and all the other taxpayers. Thank you.

**Kathy Staub**, 374 Laurel Street, stated by my count this is my tenth budget hearing. Every year I come up here and every year I tell you that this is the cheapest city in the state when it comes to funding education. I tell you this every year. I am not going to do that this time. We have this coming year, an opportunity to fix our schools. The great challenge that we have had is how do you keep the plane flying while you redesign it. This coming year the State of New Hampshire is increasing our adequacy grant by \$7.4 million. The budget that the superintendent presented to you of \$152 million would have no impact on the school side of the tax rate. However, what I do not want you to do is to take that money and use it to balance the municipal budget because right now we have an opportunity with that \$7.4 million in adequacy grants to help us preserve things like full-day kindergarten. The stimulus money that will be coming into this city, millions of dollars according to Arnie Duncan cannot be used to fund business as usual. That money has to be used to institute the kinds of changes that we need in our school system. I am kind of a geek. I spend all of my time on the Senate for Comprehensive School Reform website watching webinars of superintendents from school districts all over the country and they are talking about things like how they use data to make decisions, how they evaluate where each and every child in this school district is and where they need to be. Then they work with their teachers to figure out how to get what every child needs. That money that is coming from the stimulus is our last chance for us to move out of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. If we have to gut our core programs in order to do that we can't take two steps forward if we are going to take three steps back. What I would urge you to do is to keep that \$7.4 million on the school side, and I know you have some very difficult choices to make on the municipal side, but we have the opportunity once

and for all to fix our schools and to have a school system that we can be proud of and use as a vehicle to promote economic development and to bring young families and to keep young families into our city. As Mr. Adamakos pointed out, our city is getting poorer and poorer all the time. We need good jobs. We need working families. Thank you.

**Peter O'Connor**, 1178 Union Street, stated I am accompanied by my fellow MCTV independent study students here to defend MCTV the independent study program. With the proposed budget MCTV and MCAM would be combined and I am wholeheartedly against this because it would eliminate the MCTV independent study program. This past year I have taken part in this program and it has been a truly eye opening educational experience for me. Over the past couple of months MCTV has given me the opportunity to interview influential people like Governor Lynch and learn about the effect that media has on our everyday lives, understand what goes on in producing a television show and Mr. K came up and talked about how we showcase our talents through this TV program. It has been a great thing for me. My friends, my family have come up they have told me they saw me on TV. I do sports, I do well in school, but this is my passion. I want to go on and study communications in college. Grace Sullivan and the rest of the MCTV staff have been amazing instructors to me. Every second I spend at MCTV is an educational experience. I am sure my peers would say the same. We learn so much when we are down there. We learn about the pre-production of shows. We learn about what goes into the making of an interview. If this program is cut dozens of kids in the school district are going to be upset and they are going to be unable to experience this wonderful thing of broadcast television that I have. MCTV has been the most positive learning experience I have had throughout my career as a student at the Manchester Public School District. It is an amazing thing. I have learned more there than I have in most of my classes combined. It has provided me with the hands on experience I need for what I am going to go into in my life. If you cut this it is going to be devastating to kids like me, Jerry, and Nicky. I don't see where it comes from. How can you cut this Mr. Mayor? I don't

get it. For seventeen years education has been the foundation of MCTV. I don't see why you would want to take that away. Thank you.

**Juliette Dubois**, 118 Belmont Street, stated I am 86 years old and I am here begging you to not take away the Valley Street bus. They want to take that away from us and that is the only way that I can get somewhere. Otherwise, I am not going anywhere. Please I beg again and again to keep the bus going. Thank you very much.

**Lionel Leblanc**, 203 Belmont Street, stated Aldermen and Mayor, a lot of people in Manchester are not working. We have many City workers that work here for years and years. Where else can you work than in Manchester and be guaranteed a job for life? Through attrition they end up making a higher wage. When they retire if they worked the full gamut they are going to retire with, many of them, more than they earned when they were working. You Aldermen start standing up to the unions. They put a bunch of mandates and dictates on you people. You people are getting to be a bunch of puppets, pawns to the union. You have 90 people that might have to go home and face their responsibilities like all of you. Now anybody that has been working with these people that are going to be laid off, think about one thing, you could be in their shoes. You don't want to be laid off either. So what you should do right now is take His Honor, Mayor Guinta, the suggested seven days off without being paid so these people can keep on working. Right now in this budget.... I don't run my house that way. I find out how much I am going to spend and then I find out if I am able to take care of what I am going to spend. You have a lot of people in Manchester right now who, through the unions who are going to get a 3% increase in wages. Freeze those wages. Once they get the 3% that if for life until they get the next increase. Thank you.

**Richard Dichard**, 162 Valley West Way, stated I just want to make a point that we need to pick that lady up wherever she is. We will get that bus for sure. Fifteen dollars a month, ladies and gentlemen, isn't going to break anybody's bank even in the bad

economy. Fifteen dollars really doesn't go that far anymore, in case you haven't noticed. Why and I here? People like me are thinking about maybe moving out of Manchester. I originally come from Nashua. I spent the first 29 years of my life there and I am a new resident of Manchester, fortunate enough to land a job in the schools and I am not sure that I can stay here. Why? Well, because one of the most important things to me is the quality of the school district and ask any real estate broker they will tell you what the number one, or one of the top factors of why you would choose to live in a city, it is the quality of their schools. We have already heard the statistics. Manchester has one of the lowest tax burdens per capita not in the State of New Hampshire but in the nation. Great job, you guys are doing a great job. That means you are doing your job. We have this adequacy money and we have to use it for schools not to balance budgets. Not to fix potholes. You have to use that money for what it is designed to be used for. I am an assistant principal and I was laid off, pink slipped last year. I narrowly escaped by the pulling out of a hat this year being laid off. The person across the river from me, Carol Angrigarios, got laid off. She had served in this district for 42 years. You want to make your schools safe. You want to be able to have me supervise adequately the teachers. You want to be able to have me spend individual time with parents and students on the phone and yet you are decreasing West High School by one assistant principal, if you cut these ten assistant principals. I can't get my job done in the 224 contractual days that I have. I will put in again about 240 this year. Mr. Adamakos will probably put in 280. We have a very serious problem. You have solved it in the past. You have to solve it again. We can't have only two assistant principals at West High School for 1350 students. Thirty percent of our population is special education. That takes one person. She can't do it because she just got pink slipped. She does a decent job. She is getting better at it and we need to allow her the opportunity to do it right. Mr. Mayor, I beg of you if you wished for people like me, young people like me, who care about where they live, care about the people that they live with and someone who will stay here forever and work here forever for you, I beg of you that we have got to find a few million dollars to

keep these AP's and keep adequately funding our schools. I appreciate your time and your efforts.

**Debbie Rapson**, 901 Chestnut Street, stated I am not only a taxpayer but I am a mother. I also sub in the Manchester School District. I thank you very much for your service and I wouldn't want to be in your shoes. However, money is easy to slice and dice with a calculator but it is when you look into the eyes of the people that you affect with the calculators knife that things get really dicey. For example, if my family budget was over by the amount that it cost to fund Christmas that line item deletion would be very easy to cross off the budget but I wouldn't want to face my children and look in their eyes on Christmas morning and tell them that that is why they didn't have Christmas. Would you? All of our essential service workers are important. It doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure out that without their combined talents and efforts our city services will continue to decline and we will continue to slide downwards as a city. When our services decline our property values decline. When our property values decline, it affects every aspect of our city. I just got back from New Orleans and I can tell you what happens to a city where people to spend the money that is needed to fund all of its city services. Every city service is intertwined with every other city service. There is a city with no grocery stores, no banks. They have schools, they have teachers who have come out of retirement to take care of their children and they are being paid almost nothing to take care of those children. The teachers in this city care just as deeply for the children as the teachers in New Orleans do. Businesses can't draw people into a city with schools with a failing grade. I have had neighbors leave because their property values were too high or because of declining schools. You can give a man a fish and you will feed him for a day. You can give him a fishing pole and you will feed him for a lifetime. That is an old saying. What are we going to give our children? A fish or a fishing pole? Thank you.

**Joe Briggs**, 105 Burnsen Avenue, stated I have four kids in the school system and I am very concerned about education. When I first moved to the city one of the things I was most impressed with was the Highway Department and the trash pickup because they do a phenomenal job but I am most concerned as a parent about education. I am very concerned every time a good family who moves out of this city and claim it is because it's for the schools. It has been happening a lot. I have been talking to a lot of these people. I personally know about twelve, doctors, lawyers, professional people that move out of the city to go somewhere else. I ask them about this. Not a single person has moved to Bow because of the Fire Department. Not a single person has moved to Bedford because of their Police Department. No one has moved to Amherst, I'm sorry, because of sewer or trash pickup. It is all schools. That is the priority. I understand that you have a very hard job to do. You are trying to balance a budget. You have a finite amount of money. You don't want to raise taxes in these tough times. That is very reasonable. Last year, Aldermen Gatsas and Lopez got together and arrived at their own school budget based upon what they perceived as community values, what was most important to fund for the schools and based upon that they derived independently a number for the schools, a number that made sense and got us through another year. I am suggesting you need to do that on a City level and think about what these other people have said today, the property values amongst a number of things. What is signally most important to the people of Manchester, to the families of Manchester? Why do people move here? Why do people stay here? What do people have invested? Why are they concerned about their home values? Also come up with your own list about what is most important in funding the City of Manchester. I think what you will arrive at is that at least 60% of the total funds should be directed at education because that is where our values are as a community. You can go across this country and you can see many small towns that don't have a fire department or police department but they all have a school. That is where our priorities are. I am not suggesting that we need to get rid of those but

that is where our priorities are. If you have to make cuts that is where you need to look. Thank you very much.

**Pam Smith**, 103 Spingdale Road, stated this is my first meeting that I have come to like this. I have listened to a lot of people whine up here about wanting more money and can you say union. However, when I took my job, with all do respect to teachers and so forth, I knew what my salary was going to be. I knew what my benefits were and I knew the work environment. I made that decision based on my financial needs. If I understand correctly if children really want to work harder and get into a college there are scholarships as well. I think we are living in a society of give me's and handouts. I am actually even pretty disturbed to see that Welfare gets \$1,056,000 and Elderly Services too \$260,000. That is pretty pathetic but I have to say that I pretty much feel like you guys are our boss and you need to do something about the taxes. I am a Taxachusetts escapee and I think I am back there again and I am really hoping that you do your job and stop with the taxes and live within and spend within our means. I have to do it. So should you. Thank you.

**Colby Lynch**, 506 Kimball Street, stated I am going to read for everybody and article that I wrote that was posted in the *Manchester Express*. To the Editor: "In regards to the proposed budget cuts and to public education in Manchester, profiling groups of people and making reference to the economic demographic of the city does not change the situation. As a concerned parent I feel obliged to speak my peace. For a moment, disregard the cliché of the hard scrabble single parent who works close to 50 hours per week at a low scaled position. Regarding my place in society, my ship has yet to come in and I know this. After reading recent articles in the *Express* I have decided to attend the public education budget hearing on Monday, May 4<sup>th</sup>. I am not especially concerned with number crunching or arguing about how much the teachers make. I will be in attendance to oppose the cutting of many specialize programs, which by all means ought to be considered general education. By eliminating creative learning programs such as our

education band and afterschool sports we are undermining the abilities and eradicating opportunities for our youth. Children are children no matter what their family status is. Contrary to a columnist's opinion, if there is subsidized housing popping up all over Manchester, I can't understand why my son and I waited on a four year waiting list to obtain an affordable place to live. While I waited patiently on this list I worked the whole time while attending college classes." I am going to cut this short since I only have 30 seconds but I just wanted to say that my son goes to Northwest Elementary School and I was recently in attendance for Pirates the Musical and I have to say the kids and the teachers did an outstanding job with that. I just want people to realize that escaping Manchester by going to surrounding communities to send your kids to school isn't the answer. We have to work on fixing the problem which is here in Manchester and work on collectively fixing the problem together instead of just pulling up numbers, number crunching and cutting programs, which will benefit the children. Thank you.

**Nicole St. Hillaire**, 512 Brent Street, stated I am a graduating senior here at Manchester Memorial High School. I have partaken in numerous classes such as English, social studies, math and classes that are offered to every student in every high school. As a senior, I am going to college in the fall. I will be attending Hofstra University. I can promise you that without MCTV's independent study, as in my favorite class of all four years of high school, where I have learned the most in the most hands on way, is what will separate me and another student when looking at a college application. Sure everyone can take a social studies class, an AP class here or there but what makes a difference is that I can put down that I interview Governor John Lynch or that I had an interview last year with Jeanne Shaheen. I was able to work cameras. I am able to do photography. I am able to learn the production and the direction of a production. Without MCTV's independent study I would not be able to do that. MCTV's independent study is an incredibly unique program that separates my broadcast journalism major from the experience of students who are just coming into college this fall. MCTV's independent study should not be questioned but rather highly encouraged

as an opportunity for students to gain experience through media production in our very own community. Thank you.

**Marty Myers**, 95 Barrett Street, stated I would like to thank the Board of Mayor and Aldermen for hosting this forum and providing us the opportunity to have our voices heard. Like many other people in the auditorium tonight, I am a lifelong resident of the City of Manchester having attended our city schools as did my wife and as do three of my children. The educations we all received here helped mold our lives. In my opinion, the word education does not apply to academics alone but to the entire learning and growing experience. For me, school athletics have played a key role in our personal development, specifically, youth and high school hockey. The recent discussions about cutting high school hockey from the school budget prompted me to contact a couple of our School Board Members to discuss my concerns and this is the primary reason for me appearing before you tonight. I am sure most of you are aware how deeply rooted ice hockey is the fabric of our community, the State of New Hampshire and throughout the northeast. We have a rich hockey history in tradition with Manchester and its community leaders have played a crucial role in not only the history but in furthering the developing of the sport and the interactions between hockey and the student academics. I have a hard time accepting the city of Manchester, which has such a rich hockey history with the three city high school hockey teams being the only hockey programs in the entire state of New Hampshire being considered to be cut, leaving our students behind. Not only will this action be detrimental to the sport of ice hockey in the city but more importantly it would be tremendous loss for many of our students. Also, as the largest school district in the state, we will not be setting an example of prudent decision making for other schools and their administrators in surrounding regions. In my opinion, we should be setting the standard. When we hear school budget it sometimes sounds like a distant, ambiguous, abstracted thing that gets talked about by our elected officials, mentioned in the news, and has a dollar amount attached to it. In reality, the term school budget is our students. While there are many very important components to this budget, mainly teachers, at the

end of the day it is about the students and the young people in the city of Manchester. I strongly believe that taking away student activities and programming should be one of the very last things we look at in consideration of a budget. As part of a hockey sport, hockey instills discipline and provides a level of accountability that some student players may not receive in other areas of their education experience. High school hockey provides an opportunity for youth player to aspire to a higher level, as do college players provide the same for student athletes. Please consider the implications for our students and explore all available options with other leaders in the community before eliminating the student programming from our school budget. Thank you for your time.

**Christine Pratt**, 115 Seventh Avenue, stated I came here tonight because of the proposed cuts for the hockey team and the high school. I have two varsity hockey players and my two sons play varsity hockey and varsity lacrosse at Central High School. The reason I am speaking is because I feel that they have learned valuable lessons from playing sports. They learned teamwork and that everything isn't all about them. They have learned leadership and confidence and how to manage their time. They have learned how to be respectful, how to keep their grades up and stay out of trouble so that they can remain on the team and hopefully play at the college level. A lot of times if you cut this program a lot of the kids, this is the only sport that they play so that would be detrimental to them. Also if you don't have the sport a lot of the kids after school wouldn't have practices or games to go to and then therefore they would have more time on their hands. I feel that if a student is busy, it keeps them out of trouble. Otherwise, they will hang around their neighborhood or someone else's neighborhood and they can end up in gangs or in trouble. Too much time on their hands isn't a good thing. The other thing, I feel that if you cut three sports this year, what are you going to do next year? Next year your budget might be bad again so you will want to cut more. You will end up cutting all the sports out of high school. Every lesson that you learn in sports goes into your future and helps with your job. When you go to college and get a job everything that you have learned is taken forward. The other thing that I would like to

ask is that you please remember when you were in high school if you played a sport, how happy it made you feel. Thank you.

**Elaine Hobbs**, 62 Maverick Drive, Auburn, NH, stated I am the Chair of the Auburn School Board. Back in 2002 a group of people got together to hammer out the details of a long term arrangement for the education of Manchester, Auburn, Hooksett, Candia high school students. In 2003 that agreement was signed by all parties involved. It was a momentous day and the group was proud of the accomplishments because it had the students in mind as well as the community members. The group negotiated the contract in good faith and planned on sticking to the contracts tenants. I have been part of that process stand by that contract. On behalf of the Auburn School Board I want you to be aware that this is the third year in a row that we have had major concerns with the contract being upheld on your end. We just want you to be aware of the contractual obligations to Auburn, Hooksett and Candia community members and most importantly the students. Also over the last three years there has been significant increase in Auburn students looking to go to high school other than the agreed upon Memorial High School. I understand that some of this is because of the budget turmoil and potential cuts that are slated to happen. Parents want to make sure that class sizes, programs and extra curricular activities are going to be there so that children can have a well rounded accredited education. Furthermore, next year there will be upwards of 100 students from Auburn going to other schools. If you calculate that at approximately \$8,000 per student that is \$800,000 that could be in the Manchester school system. To me that is a lot of money. If you uphold your end of the bargain, we will all be better off. On a personal note, I have two children at this school. I am proud of them. I am proud of this school. I am proud of the education they received and I want to continue to be. Thank you.

**Chris Moquin**, 13 Autumn Run, Hooksett, NH, stated I am also here to support not cutting hockey. I am currently an eighth grade student attending Cawley Middle School. I will be attending Central High School for the 2009-2010 school year as a freshman. I

am writing this letter to express my feelings and feeling of many others about the idea of cutting ice hockey from the curriculum. Since I have was little I have set goals for myself having to do with my hockey career. I have achieved my goal of making it to the level I am at today. The next goal on my list is to play hockey for a good school like Central. Central not having a team will affect my overall goal of playing Division I college hockey and it is going to be hard enough entering such a big school like Central and it will be easier if I have a group of kids with the same interests as me. This applies to many other kids as well. I do understand that this choice might be made because of a budget cut but have you considered cutting freshman and junior varsity levels of some other sports and athletic teams? It wouldn't be fair for Central to not have a team at all because with hockey in Manchester if you don't make the team. you don't play at all. With some other sports if you don't make the top team you have other teams as a second or even third chance. Hockey is a great sport that keeps kids minds on their school work as well. Without good grades you can't play on the team and this helps kids keep their grades up. Playing hockey also teaches you life lessons as well. If you look at players in the National Hockey League today you won't find people with drug abuse or steroid use. Hockey can straighten kids out. For a lot of kids hockey is all that they have. When I say that hockey is all that they have, cutting hockey will cause them to become students that are not well rounded. We all know that students that aren't well rounded will be affected when getting into a good school. Also we are not looking for you to do all the work for us to play. Parents and we kids are more than willing to help contribute towards the money problem. Lastly I would like to say that you can't take something away from us that means so much to us. Thank you.

**Marie Papp**, 38 Castle Drive, Hooksett, NH, stated I have a daughter attending Central High School here in Manchester and a son that will hopefully attending there as well in a couple of years. I know a question that I hear a lot in my household lately is how much does it cost? Anytime my kids ask for anything the question is, how much does it cost? I am sure in your shoes right now you are asking that question a lot. How much does it

cost? What the question should be what is the cost? What is the cost of eliminating a teacher position? What is the cost of an overcrowded classroom to a students education? What is the cost of eliminating sporting programs? Eliminating music programs? Eliminating marching band? What is the cost to a student? What is the cost to a classroom? To a school? To a community? If you go to any school here in the city of Manchester any afternoon you will see a multitude of activities happening. Kids involved in play practice, sporting activities, math team, robotics team, practicing for a jazz band concert. There is a whole lot of activity going on that is incredibly positive and should make us all incredibly proud as we all are. Now imagine that school without those activities. Imagine those kids with no where to go after school. Not a pretty picture is it? It isn't for those kids. It isn't for the schools and it isn't for our community. I understand that we do need to ask what does it cost but you also need to ask what is the long term cost of eliminating these positions and these programs to our kids and to our community. Thank you.

**Lorna Andoscia**, 65 Trestle Brook Drive, Nashua, NH, stated I wasn't going to speak tonight until I heard everyone else speaking. I felt since I wasn't from Manchester it wasn't my place but when I heard everyone saying what is ten dollars? What is thirteen dollars? What is fifteen dollars a month? I would like you to know what a lot of your constituents feel about what that is a month. A lot of your constituents are in the same boat I am in right now. I have been out of work for three months. My husband has been told he has no more overtime. He recently redid our budget hoping we would have more in our budget since our heating bills are down. We have ninety nine dollars a month for food. What is ten dollars? What is thirteen dollars? What is fifteen dollars? That is a lot of macaroni and cheese. Maybe I won't have to cut a steak in four pieces to have meat with my meal. I heard one woman say what about Christmas? What would my children do about Christmas if I didn't give them a wonderful Christmas? I had to stay within my budget. This year my son got a book, a homemade scarf and a couple of five dollar games. That is where your constituents are right now. That is where they are. All of

these people out here telling you, how much money is that? We can find the money for all these programs. They are great programs but your constituents can't find the money to pay for them. I heard one man say that there are loads of children coming in with no food and that there is a high theft rate. How much higher is that going to be when those constituents have to pay those higher taxes? The extra curricular activities, those programs won't go away. I can tell you that because when I was younger they took programs away and those kids on those teams went out and they went to businesses and they got business sponsorships and they got them reinstated because it was paid for because those children learned a very important lesson that when you want something you work, you go out and you get what you need to get it. If those kids can do that then they would still have those programs. It is not fair to make the hard working people out there that are barely making ends meet find room in there overextended budgets to pay for your overextended budget. Thank you.

**Sharon Wilson**, 950 Beech Street, stated I teach at Central High School and I am finishing my eighth year as advisor to the Little Green. It is my last year. I decided last year that I would resign at the end of this year. My speaking for extra curriculars will not effect my financial situation whatsoever. A budget that strips extra curricular activities is more than sports. It is a newspaper. It is student government. It is drama. It is arts and it is band. If you are unfamiliar with the reaccreditation process, schools that don't have those programs lose accreditation and cities that don't have accredited high schools tend to lose their property values. That is a decision that will affect the children and it will affect the taxpayers. In addition, numbers at Central increased last year. We went up 100 students and we are holding steady for next year. We can't afford to lose an assistant principal. These people keep our schools safe and the best teacher in the world will not be able to find a student who is not coming to class and get them to class. When I have those students, if they are not coming to class more often than not, my phone calls home go unheated. My phone calls to the assistant principals are the ones that get results. I have four seniors this year that weren't going to be graduating in January but they are

now because their assistant principals cared. They went out and they found them when they weren't coming to class and they made them come to class. I ask you very respectfully to consider the ramifications not just on the schools but on the city and on the taxpayers.

**Will Thomas**, Auburn, NH, stated I had two children who attended Memorial High School. I am also a retired Central High School teacher. I am here also to support the Chair of the Auburn School Board. As I understand it we send approximately 300 students to Memorial and that means \$2.4 million into the coffers to support public education. Regarding what you just heard about accreditation, in case some of you were not on the Board when the contract was signed between Auburn, Hooksett, Candia and Manchester, I just want to read a little bit of this: "Manchester represents and warrants that it will during the term of this agreement provide a course of studies for grades nine through twelve and the necessary facilities, equipment, supplies, text books, teachers and administration so that all Manchester High School's qualify as comprehensive high schools in accordance with New Hampshire statutes and state standards." If you support a budget of \$146 million you, in my opinion, I am not sure what our lawyers would say, are breaking this contract. However, I believe in Dr. Brennan. I think he is a fair and honest man. Katherine Labanaris also supports a minimum budget of \$152 million which will maintain the status quo. I guess I am saying basically to take heart have courage, do the right thing, support the children, and support the schools. Thank you very much.

**Maxine Mosley**, 76 Sherburne Street, stated I just want to make a point that you may not know, tomorrow is National Teacher Recognition Day and I would like to know how we are going to honor the people who come every single day and they all showed up today, no swine flu scare here. What they are going to do to recognize the hard work of the people who come every day and work with our children no matter what issues they come to school with and what barriers they have to learning. I didn't know if you knew that tomorrow was National Recognition Day for Teachers but it is. Unfortunately we will

probably see pink slips going out later in the week. I am not sure that is a great message to send to our educators, parents, community or the businesses that may want to come. Thank you.

**Lisa Frisselle**, 322 Huse Road, stated I am a lifelong resident who attended local school starting in 1967 in Mrs. George's kindergarten class at Mr. Shea's Hallsville School. I graduated from Central High in 1981. I love Manchester. She offers an environment of cultural and economic diversity which I value. I have owned a home in the south end for 21 years. During Alderman Guinta's campaign for mayor in 2005 he published an opinion letter in the *Union Leader* titled, "After Six Years, it is time for action in the Mayor's Office." He accuses Mayor Baines of not living up to his campaign promises for public safety, education and making a plan for Manchester's future. Frank Guinta made a pledge to reduce taxes, increase public safety and improve our education. He said, "Our schools are overcrowded, our textbooks are outdated"; in 2005 he said this: "Our schools are lined by portable classrooms and for the second year in a row our schools have been red flagged as in need of improvement by federal government by federal government." Within the last paragraph of his opinion letter, he published in October 2005, he promises to develop comprehensive plans and to work to implement the plans that he has already developed. Mayor Guinta, you said that you have developed plans to improve our schools. Please tell us what they are. He promises to improve our education standing, increase public safety and reduce Manchester's tax rate. The last words of the paragraph are, "And I will keep my word." Frank Guinta has been Manchester's mayor for over three years. As Mayor, he is the Chairman of the School Board. He has more control than any other person concerning the direction Manchester is heading. Before Frank Guinta became mayor three Manchester schools we listed as 'in need of improvement'. Three years later, every school in our district is now listed as 'in need of improvement' and three schools are on the State's list for 'corrective action'. Mayor Guinta, it is now time for you to explain to us what these comprehensive plans are that you have developed over three years ago to improve education. Remember, you said

that you would keep your word. Mayor Guinta needs to be accountable for his campaign promise to improve Manchester's education standing. I purchased my home 21 years ago with the understanding that New Hampshire does not have sales tax. It does not have an income tax. The burden of covering the expenses to run a city is on the property owner. It is just the way it is. Bedford has decided to give their teachers a salary increase this year. The salary increase contributed to Bedford's property tax rate increase. Educating their children is a priority and they decided that it was worth the increase in taxes. Why is it so difficult in Manchester to make our children's education a priority? I am asking all of the aldermen to make Manchester's school system a priority. I cannot afford a private school education for my daughter. I can afford a tax increase to cover the cost of our school district and city services. We have a choice to invest in our schools to create an environment where families want to live or we can neglect the needs of our children and create an environment where families will pack up and leave as soon as they can afford to get out of town. I have to say that I agree with the last woman that was up here. We need to recognize our teachers. There was man, Howard McCarthy; he got an award from the Mayor for donating \$50.00 to cover city expenses. I love Howard McCarthy. Believe it or not my husband tapes his show every week. He reminds me of my grandfather, Richard McBride, who was an immigrant in the city. How about our teachers who donate hundreds of dollars every year to cover their expenses to do their job. I should be paying that as a taxpayer. They should not be paying that as a teacher. They should get an award from the Mayor not a pink slip.

**Tanner Carroll**, 94 Sugar Hill Lane, stated I am here as a taxpayer and as a parent of a middle school student and a high school student who have been given the love of music by teachers in the school district. Sometimes my home will be filled with music on different floor, competing against each other and it is a wonderful sound. It makes me happy to hear this music. I know that a budget is a tough thing to work with but you should really consider not cutting the music programs in the city of Manchester. There has to be some way to keep those programs in place. As I sent my freshman, last year, to

Memorial High School I was terrified to send her to this huge school. It is not huge compared to some but for me it was a huge school. Because she was involved in the music program, she had fellow students who supported her and encouraged her to be an excellent student. That is what you will see in the music program and the music students in this school, is that they are excellent students. They push each other. They encourage each other to do well and to take level four classes and to look at college. She is a sophomore and she is already talking about college and absolutely what she wants to do because she has students ahead of her that are doing the same. It is a pleasure to have music in our schools and there has got to be a way to keep this program as well as hockey and other extra curricular activities. Just on a side note, again the music department, there was a teacher who gathered over 40 students at eight o'clock on a Saturday morning. They volunteered to go do something for her that she had asked of a few students. Forty students and some of them were not even hers but they gave up their time on a Saturday to go help her. Please as you are looking at the budget do not cut our music and band program. Thank you.

**Mayor Guinta** advised that all wishing to speak having been heard, the comments presented shall be taken under consideration with actions by the Board.

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

A True Record. Attest.

City Clerk