

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

October 20, 2009

7:00 PM

Mayor Guinta called the meeting to order.

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

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

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

Lisa Frisselle, 322 Huse Road, stated:

My daughter Lindsay is in the seventh grade at McLaughlin Middle School. Prior to the start of this school year, we went to Staples to purchase needed supplies. Book covers for

her text books were included in our purchase. During the first two weeks of school I asked my daughter many times where her school books were and if they needed to be covered. How many text books would you expect to be assigned to a child if she attended seventh grade in a Manchester middle school? My daughter has not had one text book assigned to her this year. I am especially concerned about math and science. Why doesn't my daughter have a math or science book? My husband and I attended the open house at McLaughlin and discovered a stack of 30 books on the counter in the science classroom. There aren't enough books for each of the 130 students in my daughter's pod. The condition of the 30 books on the counter is horrendous. The description my sound dramatic, but I brought a picture to explain what I mean. I visited my daughter's math classroom during the open house. My daughter and her fellow students do not have a math book. Her teacher explained that the seventh grade math books are ten years old and do not follow their curriculum. The students do not have a math book to review math applications that were learned in the classroom. The teacher said that she was trying to put examples of what was learned in the classroom on the School District's website so the students could access this when they were doing their homework. I ask my daughter to try to finish her homework after school. My daughter's access to our computer is blocked after school because I want her to do her homework while I am at work. There is too much temptation to sign on to Instant Messaging. I am a concerned parent and that's why I do this. For me, this is not an acceptable manner for review of classroom work. My daughter and her classmates need a math book. On June 22, 2009, Dr. Brennan sent a letter to parents informing us that the Manchester School District will be entering its fifth year as a District In Need of Improvement. He explained three goals in the District In Need of Improvement Plan. Each goal emphasizes high achievement for all students. Not having a text book for math or science does not promote high achievement. I had a great experience when I attended public school in Manchester 30 years. Alderman Gatsas, you had a great experience in Manchester Public Schools 40 to 50 years ago. The great experience that we had many years ago has nothing to do with the experience of today's students. You need to talk to today's teachers to understand today's challenges and

understand that we need to support high achievement. The teachers at McLaughlin Middle School are very enthusiastic and caring professionals. Dr. Brennan and the Manchester School District teachers need your support. The text book deficiency is happening during a budget year without a tax cap. Just imagine what would happen if an already underfunded School District is subjected to a tax cap. This will only hurt the future of our children. I can't imagine my Central High calculus teacher, Mrs. Aldren, and my physics teacher, Mr. Brew, teaching without a text book. When will my daughter receive her seventh grade math and science books? School children cannot vote on Election Day. It takes bravery to speak up for the citizens who do not have a vote on Election Day. Thank you to Mark Roy, Betsi DeVries and Peter Sullivan for your brave decision to vote against the acceptance of this year's underfunded school budget. The underfunded School System is the reason families are moving out of Manchester.

Glenn Ouellette, 112 Auburn Street, stated:

Thirty books for 130 students. We should be ashamed. No wonder we are In Need of Improvement. I have always said that it is not about the money. It is how you allocate that money. Five years ago, you spent \$105 million to repair the high schools and the junior high schools. You foresaw the leaking roof at Central High School, but you decided to downgrade it to the bottom of the list so it did not get reached. Today we have a leaking roof, not just in the gymnasium, but also in some of the classrooms. You spent nearly a quarter million dollars five years ago to replace the floor in the gym. Now you not only have to replace the roof, but also the floor. A \$150,000 job five years ago is now going to cost you almost \$750,000. Talk about special interests. We don't need a tax cap. That's a gimmick because ten of you can override that. We need to have elected officials who will do the people's job in the interest of the majority of its citizens. The reason I am here tonight is enforcement. Most of you have been here since 2003. When the Verizon Arena was built, there was an Ordinance that was passed. It stated that you cannot tear down a building within X number of blocks of the Verizon and turn it into a parking lot. Twice in the last year you have waived and allowed buildings to be torn down to be

turned into parking lots. Now we have a dump on the corner of Pine Street and we have abandoned vehicles and empty tractor trailers that are parking there. Now you have invited more of those who like to mark our City with a paint brush. I'm not talking about artists. What are you guys doing? You want us to reelect you? Again, it is not about the money. It is about where and how you spend it. If you are going to bother to write and pass an Ordinance, why can't you enforce it? If that was my building or any other advertised space in the City, we would be fined and never get a waiver. Clean up that mess on Lake Avenue and Pine Street.

Gail Vallaincourt, 233 Fieldcrest Road, stated:

I'm here to speak on the issue of a dog park. I'm fully in favor of the location being at the West Side Arena and not at the dump. If you spend \$85,000 of Manchester taxpayer money it should be interesting to see how many people will bring their dogs to the dump. I don't think very many people will. I think it is a waste of money. 38% of dog owners in Ward 11 outweigh the residents of Douglas Street Extension. A few people on Douglas Street Extension should not outweigh the 38% and the rest of the people in your ward.

Colleen Lange, 285 Jewett Street, stated:

With the exception of two years of my 31, I have lived in Manchester. I have been a good resident. I don't ask for much from you guys. I am trying to figure out why the dog park is taking so long. I have been driving to Bedford, but now I have to go to Concord. I'm tired of wasting my money driving to both places when I could be buying gas from local stations. I get ridiculed from the people in Concord when they find out we don't have a dog park in Manchester because we are the biggest city in the state. It is embarrassing on our end. I don't know what the issue is, but I really hope you can figure this out and get it together so we can have a dog park. I have met some great people through my dog. He is a great dog and he got that way through socialization by going to parks and learning how to play. I know that my neighbors dogs bark because they are cooped up all day. They don't have time to bring them up to Concord, Bedford, Raymond or Derry. That upsets

neighbors and then people get cranky. If we could figure out a nice place, probably the arena...I don't like the idea of playing on the dump where there are diggers. I know there is a liability issue, but I'm an adult. If I'm stupid enough to put my hand in front of a dog that is going to bite me, that's my fault. You need to find out a way to work together so all the dogs and people can be happy.

Debbie Lane, 436 Elgin Avenue, stated:

I want to speak on behalf of the dog park. I have only been a dog owner for a year. Twice a week I go down to the Derry Dog Park. Part of that decision is because we have a leash law in Manchester. Some of my neighbors have dogs. One of my neighbors lets his dog run loose. Other neighbors keep their dogs in a fenced in area. They don't have availability to go the Derry Dog Park so those dogs are constantly barking. If they had an area that they could go to...I know they go to ball fields and recreational areas. The location by the West Side Arena is convenient to dog owners who are also visiting their children at sporting events. I have five children. We have been through the Little League system and all the recreational systems in Manchester. We have appreciated having those facilities, but at this point, I know people who are using tennis courts as an alternative to a dog park. I would much rather have a facility. We could call it a recreational facility for dog owners. I am at the phase in my life where my children are older and don't use the recreational facilities. To have an option for me to have recreation and have the ability to have enjoyment with my dog...my dog is only 13 pounds and he could be the biggest barker in the neighborhood, but I have only heard compliments as a result of him having the ability to go to a dog park in Derry. I want to encourage you to work on this. From what I am hearing the Aldermen are trying to find a way to discourage this from happening. I think it is on behalf of the entire City. Every Alderman should have a concern and a stake in this. We need to go door to door in Ward 11 where they are suggesting the location. I want to recommend that you think again about the dog park and find a way to get this passed and start construction in the next year.

Patricia Murdy, 106 Green Acres Drive, stated:

I'm here in support of a dog park. I have been a taxpayer for over thirty years. My taxes have gone towards all types of interest groups: children, seniors, playgrounds and so forth. I think it is time for Manchester to have a dog park. I don't understand what the hold up is, especially since over 30% of homeowners have a dog. I personally take my dog to Derry Dog Park. If you have concerns about a dog park in terms of liability I think you ought to physically visit the Derry Dog Park and you'll see what a well run park it is. The owners have a lot invested in the park. They take care of dog issues and they volunteer to build things for the park. They are on top of everything. If you have concerns about having a dog park I would suggest that you consider visiting one. They are well run and there are a lot of happy dogs and owners. I would like to see us have a dog park. The West Side Arena seems to be the chosen spot by dog owners and it would be a shame to have one or two people hold that up. I would hope that you would make a decision soon.

Phil Greazzo, 139 Parker Street, stated:

I live on the trail that was supposedly finished between South Main Street and the West Side Arena. The issue that we have is that we were made promises for the past ten years that there would be retaining walls to abate the erosion that has been taking place over the years from the City not maintaining its right of way. For those of you with laptops, I sent you photos of the end of Parker Avenue where the street dead ends to the trail and there is no guard rail. There are cars precariously hanging off the edge. Last year someone drove their car off the edge. Is it going to take someone being crushed from the cars above onto the people below? The City wanted to raise the elevation of the grade of the trail so that they could avoid putting in the retaining walls that were promised to the abutters along that trail. For ten years we have been dragged around, lied to and promised certain things that never came to be. It is a great trail, but it has some dangerous conditions that should be addressed. I don't see that happening. I think that before you opened the trail, there should have been a cross walk for the street so people don't have to jet out into traffic.

That is now being worked on after the trail has been open for several months. There are issues with the parked cars because the City's right of way is not defined from the property owners' parcels. I have never been able to get Frank Thomas or Ron Ludwig when they were directors of their department to address the issue. They have passed me back and forth from one to the other. Chuck DePrima is now sort of addressing it. He said that there were suppose to be retaining walls, but they raised the elevation of the grade at the bottom of the trail to avoid putting in those retaining walls. It seems that being promised one thing and being given another is the bait and switch that happens all too often in Manchester. I didn't want to talk about the dog park specifically, but we have been fighting for this dog park for over a year. Certain places were better proposed than others and we wound up getting the dump as the preferred site. I don't appreciate spending my time and energy working towards a positive direction for the City and then at the end being handed the dump.

Tammy Simmons, 142 Parker Street, stated:

I planned to speak about the spending cap, but I'm going to step off topic because something irked me on my way to work this morning. As I came down Varney Street to the intersection with South Main, I found myself in the middle of the same traffic mess that we have been dealing with for years now. Normally, this may not have bothered me too much because this intersection's chaos has been a problem ever since Walgreens went in. After hearing that my Alderman, George Smith, stated that he thought his constituents were the most important thing to him and he had addressed the problems at this intersection and I found myself sitting in the same traffic mess that we sit in year after year, the whole situation became that much more annoying. Residents have been asking for a green arrow light when traveling east on Varney Street or for Long Street to be made into a one way going east. These would alleviate the mishaps there. Instead, we seem to be moving lights from wire to poles and adding no turn on red signs. Now, not only can you not get through traffic to take a left, you can't make a right on red. That traffic backs up and makes the whole situation even worse. If this is what constitutes

addressing a problem and making it better, I'm sorry Alderman Smith, but that's not acceptable to me. I have some sample ballots with me. On the backside you will notice that finally the spending cap question is going before the voters. After 14 months of wrangling with the majority of this Board, the voters in this great City will finally be able to cast their vote on the spending cap on November 3rd, a full year after they should have been able to. I wanted to take an opportunity to remind viewers watching tonight of the eight Aldermen who prevented you from voting on this amendment last year when they should have been able to do so: Aldermen At-Large Mike Lopez and Dan O'Neil, Ward 1 Alderman Mark Roy, Ward 8 Alderman Betsi DeVries, Ward 4 Alderman Jim Roy, Ward 7 Alderman Bill Shea, Ward 11 Alderman Russ Ouellette and my own Ward 10 Alderman George Smith, who may have been the deciding vote on whether or not it went to the ballot. He originally told some of his constituents that he was going to vote for it, but then got upset because some people protested. I expect more than preventing people from voting out of spite of a few protestors. I coordinated the collection of those 4,036 signatures submitted to the City Clerk to get this on the ballot for the voters. We've dealt with closed door meetings between some Aldermen and the City Solicitor that violated New Hampshire's Right to Know Laws. We've seen out of state funded groups like Granite State Progress and Keep Manchester Moving, who hasn't filed legally in the state, come out of nowhere to pull out all the stops to prevent this from going to a vote. We've wasted taxpayer money on lawsuits filed not only by this group, but by the City Solicitor at the direction of some of the Aldermen. In 14 days the people of Manchester will finally have a chance to vote on the spending cap, whether for it or against it. I urge people to flip their ballot over and vote yes and force the Mayor and Aldermen to keep spending in check and make the tough decisions about what we can and cannot afford, just like you and I do in our homes every day. The taxpayers' pockets are only so deep and we've reached the point where we are picking through the lint at the bottom of our pockets to find the money to pay for these ever increasing tax bills, which conveniently come out just shortly after Election Day. On November 3rd vote yes on the spending cap

and remember who tried to keep you from voting on it in the first place and think about adding new faces in this chamber.

Josette White, 508 South Main Street, stated:

I am a volunteer with Keep Manchester Moving and I was elected president of the organization when we started. As many of you know, Keep Manchester Moving is a coalition of concerned Manchester citizens, businesses and organizations dedicated to protecting the quality of life in Manchester and opposing destructive political gimmicks like the tax cap. I would like to say that Keep Manchester Moving is proud to have teachers, fire fighters, police officers, parents, small business owners, local unions, retirees and clergy support us and our work. Over the last several months, we've used grassroots efforts to educate neighbors of the devastating impact of the tax cap gimmick. We're continuing those efforts this Thursday. Keep Manchester Moving is hosting a forum about the impact that tax caps will have on education and public safety. The forum will be this Thursday, October 22nd at 6:00 PM in the auditorium of the Manchester City Library. The forum will be moderated by Phil Garso, former president of the Heritage United Way and panelists include Mark Joyce, the Executive Director of the New Hampshire School Administrators Association as well as Manchester teachers, parents and fire fighters. Attendees will also hear directly from community leaders of other New Hampshire cities that have tax cap. A September forum hosted by Keep Manchester Moving included economist Brian Gottlieb of Polycom Research and Manchester attorney Brad Cook. That forum was geared towards the business community and had over 70 people in attendance. Thursday's forum will be focused on education and safety. The moderator will facilitate audience questions, following short remarks from the panelists. We would like other concerned residents of Manchester to come and learn more about the actual impact of that tax cap gimmick. If you are tired of all the politics surrounding this issue and really want the facts you can read the report by economist Brian Gottlieb or take another opportunity to review a City finance memo submitted to Mayor Guinta that calls the cap unworkable, poorly written and damaging. You can find

these documents on our website at www.defendnew.hampshire.org. We hope you will join us on voting no on the destructive charter amendment.

Dave Bigelow, 335 Laurel Street, stated:

Most nights I would have talked about the dog park, but I have two issues: the dog park and the fact that I didn't like the way I was treated Thursday by two Manchester cops. If I were to play this tape it would take two minutes. Basically, it is a message from George in May when I was trying to find out what was going on with the dog park and why there hadn't been a Committee vote on it when there was a recommendation made. Rather than play that I will hand this out. This is a summary of the tape and what was said and my take on it. Also, it had my reaction to the fact that I don't understand how Russ Ouellette could do research on the dog park after it was turned down in May before the Pistaqua River Trail was opened up. Why would there be complaints from people about a dog park if the trail wasn't opened yet? The next time the topic came up was August. I have had two roommates live in my house for over three years. When she moved in in June of 2006 I never knew that she had a shoplifting conviction where she stole over \$900 from Sears at the Mall of New Hampshire. Had we known that we she moved in...a couple months later she was convicted of shoplifting...he never would have turned her money over to her. He's from Portugal and doesn't speak English well. He can't read or write English well and can't do math. She took over all his finances and does all the banking in her name. Whenever they bought things he paid for them, but she put them in her name. She moved out because I was thinking of being a homecare provider, which means a criminal record check would be done on all three of us. We would have found out that she was convicted of shoplifting. She moved out in late August. She took all his money with her. As a result of a court order for her to get her stuff, she put a restraining order out on my roommate, which is bogus because she didn't put it out until I changed the house locks. On Thursday, she showed up before the cops got there. Basically, the cops let her in my house with three other people. They would not let me in the house so I could supervise what she was taking. They said that when she came out I could look at the stuff

and dispute whether or not it is mine. She took the motorcycle cover that belongs to my roommate. The Police make me let her take it. She takes a blanket of mine that I have had for 20 years. She was in the house with money and car keys lying around. I know she is a thief and a liar, but she could do whatever she wanted in the house and I couldn't even go in. There were court papers on my bed relating to the case of domestic violence. The Police let her take whatever she wants, even though some of the things are mine. Their response was for me to take it up in small claims court. I really feel protected and safe in my own home when the police are willing to help a thief take my stuff.

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

*There being no further business, on motion of **Alderman Shea**, duly seconded by **Alderman Sullivan**, it was voted to adjourn.*

A True Record. Attest.

City Clerk