

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

**June 22, 2010**

**7:00 PM**

Mayor Gatsas called the meeting to order.

The Clerk called the roll.

Present: Aldermen Craig, Ludwig, Long, Roy, Osborne, Corriveau, O'Neil,  
Lopez, Shea, DeVries, Shaw, Greazzo, Ouellette, Arnold

**Mayor Gatsas** 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; and 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 Gatsas 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.

**Mr. Leo Pepino**, 73 Walnut Street, stated:

Seventeen years ago, when the ambulance contract was signed, none of you people were on this Board. I negotiated that contract so I know what it is all about. It was \$1 million a year for a carrier. They asked for a quarter million dollars the first year and the next four years were free. That opened the door up for ambulances to save enough money and Rockingham proved it. Now for the 20 years that they were there and what they did for the City, they saved the City \$20

million in those 17 years with the rates they were paying before. I attended the Committee meetings here too. One thing that I didn't hear and I listened very close to six towns and you can list them if you want that AMR was kicked out of. They finished their contracts and left, right here in New Hampshire, not 25 miles from here. One thing that I like about this Board, the past Board and the previous Boards is that you always said that no City employees will get laid off. Now what is the difference between these 100 people here and City employees in Manchester? A lot of them live in the City, I believe about 100 of them. This company says that we are not going to lay them off and they are going to hire them back. We hear that in talk only. There is nothing in writing, just their word. At the time that we negotiated their contract, the previous Board still wanted to take the old board back that we were paying \$1 million a year on. Like I told you, when you figure it out, they opened the door and saved the City \$20 million. They did pretty good. These people, if they get laid off, are going to lose all their benefits, vacations, and holidays. There are 100 of them. I'm not sure, I gave the number today, of those who lived in the City and I was wrong. That is the figure I was given. That's all I have to say. I'm just telling you what they did and giving you facts and figures. Six towns they got booted out of, right here on the coast...I can name them if you want, name the figures. I talked to the fire chiefs over there and when we always negotiated this contract, a committee of Aldermen always took care of this, not a department head. We came in with our division and one night there was a decision that was so close I held my meeting at 28 minutes past seven the night of the meeting because I didn't want the rest of the Aldermen to know what was going on.

**Wilfred Biron**, DAV #1 Commander, stated:

Mr. Mayor, as you know, we were at the office last week and I forgot to give you something when I was here. My adjunct and I would like to give you something else.

**Mayor Gatsas** stated I think you signed up for the public comment, but if you can wait until the full meeting, we will bring you folks back up.

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

There is a new newspaper here in the City. It is called Queen City Examiner. This is the June/July issue. It is going to be a monthly issue. Today my partner and I, Jay, opened our headquarters at 814 Elm Street, the Beacon Building. It is a new business, it is small, it is a non-profit, it is not there to make money; it is there to inform the public. It is an independent paper and the writers are the people here in the City of Manchester. As our statement says, all of you are invited to write articles. If you and the Board of Mayor and Aldermen want to write an article about an issue, just email it to [queencityexaminer@gmail.com](mailto:queencityexaminer@gmail.com). The next issue is out August 2<sup>nd</sup>. All articles and advertisements must be in by the 22<sup>nd</sup>. Now I want the rest of my time to go towards PEG TV. I am amazed how we are trying to save money in this City by consolidating departments, but then we turn around and try to increase government. Bigger government does not solve problems and it does not save money. You heard the last gentleman who spoke before me. Rockingham saved the City in the amount of years they have been here \$20 million. It works. Most of them live here in our City. They live here, they pay taxes here, and they use our hospitals and our businesses. Bigger government is not the solution. PEG TV...it is a shame that you are reinventing a wheel that was already round and had nothing wrong with it. There was no problem. You put the MCAM contract...and for the record, Your Honor, the MCAM Board did not willfully reject this contract. We were told to or else. The last vote this past Wednesday, there is someone in this administration that literally wrote the motion, not someone from our board. That is pretty arm twisting. Your Honor, I believe in most of what you do and you know that I do, 90% of what you do I agree with, but that 10% we are really far apart. It is supposed to be power to the people and

not power to the elected officials when it has to do with greed and power. Censorship...please be noted if there is censorship, the Attorney General's Office will be called. It should not be allowed in this City. We had a community center of 10,000 feet that took care of all our citizens no matter what religion, nationality or language they spoke. Now we are being put in a room that is not much bigger than a closet. In this City we had three studios between the three stations and we are now going to have one. You can't downsize when we have all these people who are interested. There will be no more music and no more dancing because there is no room for that. The last thing that I want to say, Your Honor, this Thursday, the last big event being held at MCAM is the wildlife rescue. They are bringing about 25 to 30 animals at the MCAM studio and we are inviting all the community and the children because they will be educated.

**Mr. Keith Hirschman**, 296 Dunbarton Road, stated:

I'm here as a private citizen, just a member living on Dunbarton Road. I'm here to speak of the RFP for ambulance service. I support Rockingham Regional Ambulance for many reasons. One of the main reasons is a 17 year commitment of excellence and a corporate culture that they bring to our City. Their mission statement, their parent company, the whole subsidiary of St. Joseph's Hospital...St. Joseph's Hospital has a mission statement of patient care and caring for the community. What they have done for the past 17 years, I think should continue for another 17 years. They should be given a plaque, they should be given an award. A no cost component to City government, without a complaint...I am a citizen coming forward saying that I think that you should continue with them. I don't see anyone coming up from the private sector saying go with AMR. AMR is purported to be the Wal-Mart of ambulance companies. Our Fire Chief, I respect him greatly, he is a friend of mine. He stated today that there were 12,500 calls for ambulance or 911 services. That comes out to about \$6 million at \$500 a call. This is a \$6 million operation. If you take the 100

employees, you are probably looking at \$4 million of that revenue that goes towards their operation. That doesn't count putting 25 ambulances on the nearby, which you are not going to have. Rockingham has built an operation that encompasses Rockingham County, Nashua area, Manchester area, excellence with CMC, the VA Hospital, the Elliot Hospital, and Dartmouth-Hitchcock. I'm a new grandfather. My grandson was in Elliot Hospital for 100 days. On Christmas Eve he needed an emergency transport to Boston Children's Hospital. There was no wait. There was an ambulance waiting at the NICU, the intensive care for newborns, and I followed that ambulance and I stayed at Boston Children's Hospital until Christmas Day. I have to tell you that I am in their corner 100%. I am told that they came back with more money and put more money on the table. I would say that if it is even close...there aren't even comparison proposals. Rockingham has far more resources at stake in the area. AMR is in Somersworth. AMR was in Plaistow and they are no longer there. I called the Plaistow Fire Chief and they are not in Plaistow. There are not in Ipswich, they are not in Rowley, not in Natick; there are a bunch of places they are not. I don't think you should bring them to Manchester. Everything that Rockingham has done, through thick and thin, the culture of care through our community...when gas was \$4.28 a gallon, they weren't asking for money. They took the hit. When the floods were here they were working. There has never been a complaint. I say that if it is not broken don't fix it. I applaud you for trying to get revenues for the City. If you do award them a contract, you will be getting dispatch revenue in the amount of \$150,000 a year. I applaud all of you for getting that revenue because these are tough times. They are one of our top Chamber mates with the Manchester Chamber of Commerce. They serve the Verizon and they serve the Fisher Cats Ballpark. All their transport contracts are not going away. You are going to bring in an ambulance contract from nowhere and they have to survive on 911 calls and that is it because these people are so good they are going to keep those transport contracts. It is going to be hard for AMR to come here. They are going to have to

utilize this company as a resource if you give them the contract. There is no way they could do it on their own. I firmly believe that. I'm sorry I'm so passionate, but I love our City and I am asking you to do the right thing and stay with Rockingham Regional.

**Ms. Debbie Murphy**, Gold Star Mother's Memorial Association, stated:

I'm the Vice Chair of the New Hampshire Gold Star Mothers Memorial Committee. Two months have passed since I was last here at the table on two separate days. One day was to face the Committee on Lands and Buildings on April 19, 2010. Various members on that Committee voted to bring the location of the statue back to the full Board of Mayor and Aldermen as members felt that it should go in either Veteran's or Victory Park. As you know, the vote passed and forced our committee to come together for another meeting to be held the next day on April 20<sup>th</sup>. Various members of our committee were present and you will recall that we had a lengthy discussion about this statue with the end result being to keep her at Stanton Plaza. The vote was eleven to three. Mayor Gatsas stated NHGSMMA should work with the City to get the contract drafted within two weeks. The Aldermen voted to allow until mid-May to work out the contract. Subsequent to that meeting, Kathleen Sullivan of Wadleigh, Starr and Peters offered NHGSMMA her assistance in drafting up the contract. The contract was completed and delivered to the City of Manchester as you will see from the letter dated May 10, 2010, signed by Tom Arnold III. I do have copies that I can distribute to you all if you need that. Our committee had no further contact and we received a copy of the letter dated May 20<sup>th</sup> from Matthew Normand. From that point, I then heard on Wednesday, June 16<sup>th</sup>, from a correspondence from Kathleen Sullivan as she received information from Tom Arnold that there was an issue with our paragraph seven. The suggested wording I have yet to see, but indicated that should the City wish to relocate the statute to a location other than

Veterans or Victory Park, the City shall notify the association. We are not in agreement. From the incept of this project, we have stated the position that should Stanton Plaza's use change, the association will be brought to the table to be included in any relocation discussion, should the use of Stanton Plaza change. NHGSMMA's position remains, as Attorney Sullivan stated in her letter send to Tom Arnold yesterday. Should I pass out the copies of the letter?

**Mayor Gatsas** replied I think they have already been passed out.

**Ms. Eunice Kouveliotis**, Gold Star Mother's Memorial Association, stated:  
I am on the Board of Directors for the Gold Star Mother's Memorial Association. What is the real deal? Why is it that we have to keep the placement? Honesty is the best policy.

*On motion of **Aldermen Craig**, duly seconded by **Alderman Long**, it was voted to take all comments under advisement and further to receive and file any written documentation presented.*

*On motion of **Alderman Shea**, duly seconded by **Alderman Lopez**, it was voted to adjourn.*

A True Record. Attest.

City Clerk