

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

April 19, 2011

7:00 PM

Mayor Gatsas called the meeting to order.

Mayor Gatsas called for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Gatsas stated I would ask the three students from Webster School to be introduced by Alderman Craig.

Alderman Craig stated I'm very honored to introduce the following students from Webster Elementary School: Sawyer McDonough, Kelly Langley and Henry Roell.

A moment of silence was observed.

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; 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; that any

resident wishing to speak should come forward to the nearest microphone, clearly state their name and address when recognized, and give their comments.

Barbara Vigneault, Senior Services Director, stated:

I would like to take this opportunity tonight to announce the Mayor's Senior Luncheon will be held on June 17th at the Radisson on Elm Street beginning at 12:30 PM. The luncheon planning committee's goal is to raise \$20,000 to make this event special and we expect over 650 seniors in attendance. This is an opportunity for our community to show its recognition and appreciation for this very special population. There are several ways to support the event. You can be a gold partner for \$5,000, a silver partner for \$2,500 or a bronze partner for \$500. Each partner will receive specific recognition acknowledging the level of giving. Other opportunities include \$100 for a table sponsorship and in recognition, a tent card will don the table showing the sponsor name. All donors will be acknowledged at the event and showcased as being senior friendly. We want to thank the Friends of the Cashin Senior Activities Center for being the first major sponsor with \$5,000. They are such good friends of Manchester seniors. For those interested viewers who want more information, they can call me at 624-6533. This is the packet that I can mail out to anyone interested.

Jim O'Connell, 265 Prospect Street, stated:

I'm here to talk about the matter of the budget and my dissatisfaction with the result of the budget process and the end result of where the budget is. Although I could address many parts of it, I want to target my comments toward the budget for the School District. I believe the process by which we arrive at the budget is flawed. No attempt is made by the Board to look at what an adequate education for the young people of Manchester would cost or what an adequate education is and then back into a number from there. Instead, we start, it appears to me, from what the level of funding either was previously or what level of funding is

available and then we squeeze the result into that. As I have said to the School Board previously, there should be some honesty in the discussion so we actually know what is on the cutting room floor when we make these decisions. The Manchester School District, by any measure you use...I am careful when I use that term because I would challenge those of you who would say otherwise to find a metric by which you could say that Manchester schools are adequately funded. We are, as you know, the 87th lowest per capita spending district in the State of New Hampshire. There are 93 districts. The people who built this city, the names on the walls outside this hall, built this city that was to be the pride of the State of New Hampshire and this Board proposes to go forward with a budget for the School District that is woefully inadequate for the needs of our students. I would appeal to you; I would invoke the names of those people in the hall and the people who built this great City to change the view that we have of our education. Adequate, barely adequate, will do. We'll squeeze through this year, or let another Board in the future decide what they might do is not good enough. We should be aiming to have the best education possible with the funding available, the best education possible for our young people. The future mayors, the future business leaders and the future of our city and state are in our schools today and what they produce will determine the economic outcome for the future. We live in the greatest country in the world. New Hampshire is one of the higher earning per capita states in that country and we live in the City of Manchester. This is not a crossroads with the gas pump; it is not the Ozarks. This is the great State of New Hampshire, the Queen City of New Hampshire. Please fund our schools adequately. Those who I speak to, and I have spoken to many, are more than willing to pay their fair share, more than what they are being asked to pay today, in order to fund that education. Thank you for your time tonight.

Dick Duckoff, 380 North Bay Street, stated:

On behalf of the board members of the Friends of Stark Park, we ask you to please consider all possible options before disbanding the Manchester Police Department Mounted Unit. As you know, we have worked closely with the Mounted Unit from the time that we first formed as a neighborhood group in 2004. The officers have worked with us from that day to the present and were instrumental in the completion of the Preservation Master Plan for Stark Park. Included in that plan were matters relating to safety and the usage of that park. We are hosting our 6th Annual Spring Egg Hunt in Stark Park on April 23rd and the Mounted Unit will again be honored guests at the event. For many children in Manchester, this wonderful encounter with the Mounted Unit is the first and maybe the only time they will have such a positive encounter with a police officer. We invite you all to attend the egg hunt at 12:30 PM on April 23rd to watch the response when the officers and their horses ride into view. But, we are not here to publicize the egg hunt or Stark Park. We are talking to you tonight to urge you to consider all the work done by Officers Tardiff and Lachance. They do not just sit and groom the horses until a parade passes by. They are dedicated, experienced and hard working officers in our city who do much more than just staff the Mounted Unit. An examination of the hours they spend dismounted and on other police duties will confirm that they are needed in this city in all their capacities. Cutting costs in the City budget is admirable, but there are other important factors to consider. If we lose the Mounted Unit, I think we all know that it will never be reinstated. While perhaps gaining a few dollars, and it is only a few, to use elsewhere, we will lose something infinitely more valuable. These positive ambassadors are a credit to all of us in so many ways. Manchester is safer and more approachable when these officers are on duty. In many other cities around the area, Manchester is represented with pride each time the Mounted Unit appears at an event of any sort whether it is at family friendly events or at the funeral of a dignitary. Whether mounted or dismounted, these officers are an asset to our City that we cannot

afford to lose. We are ready and willing to do anything that we can to save our Mounted Unit. We can help. There is so much more at stake than cost cutting.

Glenn Ouellette, 112 Auburn Street, stated:

I think it is fair that the public be notified and told what the cost of having those two Mounted Unit officers is because it is very little. Is it just the officers? Are we planning on laying-off those two officers? What is the true cost in keeping those two horses in this city? The presidential primaries are upon us. That means big crowds will be entering our city. That is one of the reasons we have these horses, to control crowds. Summer is upon us. That is when our crowds come in. There need to be some cuts. Sometimes it bewilders me where you make those cuts. You take away the very services that help most of the public. You talk about layoffs. You know that when you layoff these people, the last one hired will be the first one to go. They are the youngest and the ones that are able to do the heavy lifting. If they go, who will do the heavy lifting? Let those who are ready to retire, retire and keep the City vibrant. I have notified the Parks and Recreation Department that Veteran's Park, other than two spotlights, is in the dark. I remember last year when the lights were out and we lost an entire panel of the WWII Memorial. Is that how we keep our City safe? Is that how we honor our vets, by closing the lights at the Veteran's Memorial? I would hope not. I hope those lights get turned back on. I wouldn't want to see any more damage to that or any other part of that park. It is funny, there are parks that are over lit and there are others that are completely in the dark. This is what the City is known for doing at its best sometimes. It cuts too much at one end and not enough at the other. We need a balance. I do want to say that the bricks, if you want an organization to maintain a piece of the park without them owning, I don't see what the problem is if they put bricks down there and they sell bricks so that they can give us the money to maintain it. That is less money for taxpayers to have to pay. You people have more serious problems than a problem of a brick.

Kathy Staub, 374 Laurel Street, stated:

I would like to talk to you tonight about the future. The other day I was driving down Beech Street and I noticed that the municipal complex is being torn down and that is fine with me because it was old and inadequate and obsolete and I know that there are plans to build a new municipal complex that is going to serve our community better. Our school system is also underfunded and it is also inadequate and in many ways obsolete. I see that with this current budget that is on the table, it is going to be dismantled. I see that happening every year. Some years it is teachers, some years it is programs, and some years it is administrative staff. This year it is going to be paraprofessionals. As far as I can see there are no plans to build a new one. I think that is what we need, a plan to build a new school system, but we can't dismantle the one that we have now because you cannot rebuild the plane while it is flying. You need to keep something in place while you work on changing things. When I think about the municipal complex, I think it is a great idea to build a new one. I think it presents a very positive view of the City when people come in. They don't want to see an old decrepit building when they come into Manchester, but I don't think that people, when they are looking for some place to live, are going to be looking at the municipal complex. They are going to be looking at the school system. If this city is going to be competitive with other cities in the northeast, we need to have a very good school system. We need to have a school system that is going to attract people to our city. I have been watching some shows on PBS about urban development. Some of them are about successful cities like Portland that are growing and changing and innovating. The last one I watched was about Cleveland and the way the show began, they were deciding how much they were going to fund the schools and they cut the budget. The first scene in the show was how they were going to dismantle their school system. You know what Cleveland looks like. They have lost population; it is a shell of what it used to be; whole neighborhoods are being torn down and I'm not saying that that is going to happen, but we need to remain

competitive. If we want people to move to Manchester and raise families in Manchester we need to have a really good school system and we need to begin working on getting one immediately. I want to thank you tonight for listening to me and I urge you not to dismantle the school system as it exists before we have plans in place for building a better one.

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

Mayor Gatsas stated we have some visitors with us. They are from several different countries. We welcome you to the great City of Manchester. I know that Alderman Craig spent a couple hours with them this afternoon and I came in and spoke with them and they had a lot of good questions about how government was run and what the makeup of the Board was and how it operated. The Easter Egg Hunt is on Saturday at Stark Park. It begins at 12:30 PM. Hopefully everyone can be up there and show great support. We also have a new gavel. Bill Glennon built a replacement for the old one that was missing. All thanks go out to Bill Glennon for his donation. Also, on Monday the 25th, General John Stark Day, there will be a ceremony at the gravesite at Stark Park beginning at 10:00 AM. Everyone is invited. On Thursday, there is a big birthday party for the Chamber of Commerce at the Verizon Center and everyone is welcome. They have been there 100 years and I understand that they are going to go through the last hundred years. There are different companies that are taking different positions on ten year increments and it is supposed to be an unbelievable show. I would invite you all there for Thursday. Don't forget that tomorrow is Taste of the Nation. It is at the Radisson and should be another exciting event for the City of Manchester.

Alderman Lopez stated I received a letter along with the other Aldermen for Manchester High School Alumni Network from Chris Kehas. I was very impressed by some of the things that the alumni had done for Central High. They donated \$5,000 to the Central High Alumni Scholarship Fund, \$25,000 for the installation of a granite patio at the base of the war memorial at the Central High courtyard, \$1,100 for the installation of a new scoreboard, \$500 to the Manchester oval at the Gatsas Athletic Center at Livingston Park and \$9,400 to purchase display cases at Central. I think they ought to be commended. The 165th birthday of Central High School is going to take place Friday, May 6th at the Radisson. I was very impressed with this. I wanted to bring it up and mention it because I would like to see what some of the other schools...because this is information that the public doesn't realize. There are a lot of people out there helping in all areas.

Alderman Arnold stated congratulations to Your Honor for your induction into the Hall of Fame at Central which I believe is going to be taking place at that celebration.

Mayor Gatsas stated it is. It reminds me of my youth, which was good and keeps me going.

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

A True Record. Attest.

City Clerk