



Theodore L. Gatsas
Mayor

FY 2011 Budget Address
March 29, 2010, 7:00pm

Introductory Remarks:

Good Evening.

During my inaugural address in January I challenged the Queen City and its leaders to imagine the possibilities; to put politics aside and work together for the greater good. I stand before you tonight and I am proud to say that we have collectively begun the transformation of this great city.

I'd like to take a moment and begin by thanking my colleagues on the Board of Aldermen and the School Board. It has been a pleasure to work with each and every one of you. I thank you for coming to the table with an open mind the willingness to listen and the resolve to find solutions. Together we have made great strides and I know that in the future we will have many more achievements to celebrate.

To the Aldermen that I served with prior to becoming Mayor - - Chairman Lopez, Aldermen O'Neil, Shea, Roy, Osborne, Devries and Ouellette - thank you is not enough. With your leadership on this board the promise of today that we envisioned together in January is now a reality. I know that you would forgo credit but today credit is long past due. And to the Aldermen that are new to this Board you've come to this process with an open mind and willing to roll up your sleeves. I thank you all.

I would be remiss if I didn't take a moment to thank our City Department Heads. In December I asked each of you to present me with a budget that cut one and a half percent off last year's number. It was just a starting point and it wasn't easy but you did it. You understood that times were tough and we are all in it together. Not once did you ever say to me, or this board "We Can't" and beyond that you were unwilling to sacrifice services. We are lucky to have each of you as a leader in this city and I would like to take a moment to recognize you for all

that you do on behalf of the City of Manchester. Please join me in a round of applause for our City Department Heads.

And to the Finance Officer Mr. Sanders, as you turn a shade of red I have never seen, it has been a personal honor to work with you. It has been a journey one of which you were unsure of in the beginning. I enjoyed working with you and appreciated the challenge you laid out before me. I think I speak for all when I say it's a privilege. You are truly an asset to this city.

We are gathered here this evening for a presentation of the Mayor's Budget. The charter dictates that this document be called the Mayor's Budget, but that's not a true representation of what's on the pages before you. Rather this budget is the budget of the Board of Mayor and Aldermen.

For the first time we have crafted a budget together and we all sit here knowing what's on these pages. There are no surprises. Further, School Committee members and Department Heads sitting in this chamber are aware and know that this is always a work in progress.

In my inaugural address I vowed to end the bitterness and the resentment that we all came to expect of the budget process. This evening, in this chamber, the bitter process, the resentment and the divisiveness has come to an end.

Tonight we will turn a page and we will all move forward together. We will move forward as one City. Not a City divided into departments, not a city of two governing bodies and not a city divided into the west side and the east side. We are one city, we are a city of the whole, we are the Queen City, we are Manchester and we are proud!

Since we took our oath of office in January we have worked together to craft this budget and find revenue opportunities that would benefit the city residents. The process has been transparent and inclusive and unprecedented in the recent history of this great city.

Tonight we propose a fiscal year 2011 budget that achieves the following:

- The full funding of public safety;
- No layoffs and no furloughs;
- We've set priorities;
- We are making a significant investment in our community and infrastructure;

- We have also made an investment in our schools that will allow us to hire more teachers, invest in critical needs, buy books using a city school partnership and once and for all shed the title “A District in Need”

We bring this all to you in the midst of an unprecedented economic storm. We are weathering it and we are faring well. Municipalities throughout this country and this state are talking about layoffs and tax hikes that reach far beyond the Consumer Price Index.

In Manchester the conversation is very different. In Manchester, the budget will see an increase of .39% that’s less than one half of one percent. Significantly less than the rate of inflation - which as of this morning stood at 2.1%. For the average taxpayer this is an additional \$14 per year on a \$200,000 home less than 4 cents per day. Your services have not been sacrificed and by this I mean there are no cuts to services in this budget.

As your Mayor I want every taxpayer to know I don’t make this recommendation lightly. But I stand here before you this evening and I tell you we have left no stone unturned. We have knocked on doors with our hands out and even knocked some down. We have found new revenue, taken past expenditures off the books and been creative with the services we are offering. Today you can even get married at City Hall and so far we’ve had 5 happy couples.

And I know that we are all committed to continuing this journey to deliver essential city services in the most efficient and effective way possible. Over time this commitment will continue to deliver additional cost savings and value to the taxpayers.

As your Mayor I stand behind this budget, and I will now look to my colleagues for an in-depth look of the proposed fiscal year 2011 budget.

(Individual Remarks by Aldermen)

Concluding Remarks:

Thank you to everyone for being involved.

I would just like to take a moment to offer some closing remarks. The budget before you this evening is a starting point. As Chairman Lopez stated we had many challenges to overcome. I pledge to each of you, and the city taxpayers, that my work will not stop. Tomorrow I will come in and I will look for savings

in hopes of decreasing this modest increase. I think it can be done and I'm not willing to say it can't.

I look to everyone to join me in this goal including the residents of this city. On April 7th we will have a public hearing in this chamber on this budget. Please, I ask of you, participate. We want to hear from you. This budget is now posted on the home page of the city website and available for everyone to review.

Everyday we are faced with challenges, we accept them and so far we have done a good job. No we've done a great job of managing them and proposing solutions. And this will continue.

Again, thank you for joining me this evening.

Good evening and Godspeed.