SPECIAL MEETING
BOARD OF MAYOR AND ALDERMEN
(PUBLIC PARTICIPATION)

January 7, 2003 **7:00 PM**

Mayor Baines called the meeting to order.

Mayor Baines called for the Pledge of Allegiance, this function being led by Alderman Wihby.

A moment of silent prayer was observed.

The Clerk called the roll. There were fourteen Aldermen present.

Present: Aldermen Wihby, Gatsas, Guinta, Sysyn, Osborne, Pinard, O'Neil, Lopez, Shea, DeVries, Garrity, Smith, Thibault and Forest

Mayor Baines 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 two minutes to allow all participants the opportunity to speak and any comments must be directed to the Chair.

Mayor Baines 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.

Elias "Skip" Ashooh, Member, MDC Board of Directors, (Re: surcharges) stated:
I am aware that at the last Aldermanic meeting Alderman Lopez asked a question "who the heck is Skip Ashooh" and I was hurt, so I came back to reintroduce myself. Actually, I'm here to talk about the surcharge question that was brought up that night and we had over the last year, the MDC Civic Center Committee had gathered some facts pertaining to the assessment of the second surcharge on the tickets and what I want to do in two minutes is give you some basic facts on what a second surcharge entails. First of all, the product that exists in the management agreement, right now, for the arena reflects Alderman Thibault's well-intentioned proposal. To put a second surcharge in the language and, if necessary, an economic viable, it can be instituted. We held a meeting on February 21, 2002 and at that meeting that was attended by myself, Alderman Thibault, Alderman Lopez, Tim Bechert of SMG and Jeff Isenberg of the Manchester Monarchs dealt with some of the issues surrounding the assessment of a second surcharge. As you may be aware, there is already a first surcharge on those tickets. That was part of the original pro forma. We sought the opinions of Steven Stern who you will recall did the financial architecture for the arena, we

got the opinion on bond counsel for the City of Manchester (Ropes and Gray) and there are a couple of things to consider. First of all, the City made a very wise decision in the first concept and that was to hire a professional company to come in and manage the arena. Part of that contract was to provide a guarantee against operating deficits so that if at any time during the 15 years that this contract existed the building would lose money on its operations, the management company not the City, would pay any deficit that would come out of that. Alderman Thibault's proposal in order to get in there had to recognize certain things. There are certain requirements by federal tax law, certain requirements by the management agreement and one of which is if we hope to protect the taxpayer and guarantee that no losses would come out of this building and go to the taxpayer that the building management company would have to agree it's economically viable, it's their business decision. We've hired them to make these appropriate decisions. Two other things, any revenues from a surcharge that are assessed on a ticket go to the arena, they are part of the arena revenues and would be used to pay expenses in the arena. Any excess revenues would then flow to accelerated debt payment within the building. These funds would not be available to the City for general purposes. Lastly, if the City receives any substantial funds from the arena during the time that any of these bonds exists, the MHRA bonds, substantial revenues would trigger these bonds becoming taxable. They are now tax exempt, it would represent a breach of faith to those who bought these bonds. So, I'd ask you to consider these very important factors that first, I don't think we need an additional surcharge, there's an audit underway now and I think when that is done, I think there will be some excess revenues available to the City under the rules that make them available to the City. So, that's the basic information, we will have more if you need it and you can get a hold of me through MDC.

Will Infantine, 89 Winward Lane, Manchester, NH (Re: recycling pick-up and snow removal), stated:
When the City hires a contractor to do any kind of a job they expect that contractor to abide by the specifications of the contract. If they don't the City is within its right to back charge that contractor for not performing their obligations. Well, Mr. Mayor, tonight I'm here in jest to back charge the City of Manchester one weeks worth of my property taxes for lack of recycling pick-up and inadequate snow removal for the week of December 24-31. Recycling never showed up…of course, it was scheduled for the 25th nor expected to show up the 25th, but the 26th, 27th, 28th they never showed up. So, now, I have approximately a month's worth of recycling sitting in my garage. When I called Waste Management they apologized, didn't give me a reason for why it wasn't picked-up, but it was obvious they blamed it on lack of being able to get on some of the roads because of poor snow removal. Now, snow removal is another issue in my neighborhood. I think I'm the last road in the City to be plowed. It's so bad that the plow actually lifts his blade in front of my home and doesn't plow because in year's past they got stuck. So, in jest, Sir, I am going to send you a back charge for $100.00 tonight which represents $100 of the $5,200 or one week's worth of my property taxes. I don't expect this to go anywhere but I like to make the point that you made a very

compelling argument for Bag & Tag and with all due respect the City plowing is inadequate and the vendor that's currently being used to pick-up recycling can't even handle it on a regular week and if you have Bag & Tag you're going to surely increase the recycling to be picked up, so I would really hold off against that, Sir, and maybe we can do something to do a little more efficient plowing because I did go out and look for the plow at nine o'clock on Christmas night after there was about 10 inches of snow on my road…I found him and followed him for about 20 minutes with my wife's 4-wheel drive vehicle and I'll tell you the path he took would even confuse Mr. Magoo as to what he was doing and which route he was following. So, just a point, Sir, that I wanted to make to you folks. I don't come here often, but I had to dig out my recycling out of the snow the other day when the third snow storm came so I wouldn't have to have it strewn all over my neighborhood. Thank you.

Jeff Kassell, 22 Appleton Street, Manchester, NH (Re: ball park & MCTV), stated:
I'm not wearing my official COMP T-shirt tonight…I saw myself on TV when the meeting was replayed and I looked a little poorly, so I kept it off…but, I came here tonight (again) to remind anyone that either heard it or did not hear it what's happened to my property taxes in the last 25 years and I think this is pretty much what's happened to everybody's property tax in the last 25 years. When I moved here in 1977 I bought a house in the north end on Appleton Street and my taxes were a little over $700 a year and Manchester was a very affordable place back then and now my taxes are approaching $4,000 a year…there's a 500% increase in my property taxes and I think there are similar instances in a lot of other peoples property taxes as well and I think this reflects the way this City has been managed in the last 25 years. I've been a little critical of things that have happened here but tonight I am going to say that it looks like I was wrong about what's happened with the civic center and I'm going to admit that the attendance at these hockey games has really surprised me, I think it's surprised a lot of people and I hope it continues. But, in response to something that Mr. Ashooh said I would very much like to see this Aldermanic Board institute the suggestion and what they voted on a couple of years ago by Mr. Thibault regarding that $1.00 surcharge, I would like to see that added. I believe that Mr. Ashooh is wrong, this does not represent substantial income that would negate tax free bonds because this is still a non-profit situation. If, for example, there were one million visitors to the civic center, we're talking $1 million…the City now pays at least several million dollars in debt service and in other costs for the civic center. So, to recover $1 million would not represent any profit. Finally, I would like to make one other statement about MCTV. MCTV has moved the public portion of Public Access to Channel 96 from Channel 16, so people no longer cruise through it to see the soap box that was available to anybody that was a citizen of this City and I would like to see that moved down into an area around Channel 16 and Channel 22 where it was before. A lot of people never go up to Channel 96 because those are the premium Channels and this public forum should be available to everybody in the City. Nobody's going up there, nobody's watching that anymore…maybe that was the intent.

Joe Kelly Levasseur, 866 Elm Street, Manchester, NH, stated:
I'm not saying anything about the civic center, I don't want to jinx it, but thank you very much for that comment, Jeff. First of all, I'd like to say Happy New Year to all of you. Good luck in your deliberations in this forthcoming year, I understand it's going to be a tough year budget wise, you already know what to do so I'm not going to give you any speeches on that. What I'd like to talk about is something that I find very disturbing. I've heard from very good sources in Bedford that the Mayor of Manchester has been applying for jobs as superintendent of schools in Bedford or in other places and I'm hoping that you make a public denial of that, Mayor Baines….

Mayor Baines interjected I'll do it right now. I've never applied for any jobs and if you have one to offer me I'll consider it. I don't know where you get your stories.

Mr. Levasseur continued by stating I just wanted to make sure you got a chance…I got it from some really good sources, but that's good that you cleared the air right now because that would be pretty disturbing if that was true. Second of all, I'd like to clear the air on Alderman Gatsas…Alderman Gatsas, you're being blamed for the change of Channel 96 from 16 to 96 and I'd like to say that it had nothing to do with Teddy Gatsas at all. As a matter of fact he fought hard to get us the stations that we have, but I would, of course, like to see us put back to where we should have been which is Channel 16. I'm very disappointed that the Mayor is allowed to go on Channel 22 and pontificate for 24 shows over a 4-day span on how great the baseball stadium is going to be for Manchester, yet us guys over on Channel 96 have a very small audience because most people can't get that station and I think that's very unfair and again a use of unbridled discretion on the part of MCTV Director Grace Sullivan. It was her decision to move Channel 96 from Channel 16 and she may deny that but I've talked to the people at AT&T and they say we have the choice to put our Public Access on whatever station we want to. Third of all, I would like to say to this Board, please do not go forward with this tuition agreement, building these additions. The cost to this City is going to be ridiculous over the long haul. The fact that these people can get out after five or ten years and leave us footing the bill, never mind the operating costs that's going to go forward on this. This is not a good plan for the City of Manchester in this time that we are in right now. Why don't we just let Bedford build their own school, we can keep the other surrounding towns, take away a thousand people and not have to build the additions and spend the money on renovating the schools the way they're supposed to. I think we've been doing a good job renovating the schools over the last three, four or five years…taking care of the problems and getting these things fixed up. I think this is a disservice to the taxpayers of the City of Manchester to keep welcoming these towns that keep getting bigger and bigger and bigger. They have the land to keep growing and when they grow this puts the burden on us. It's not even going to be a matter of time before we're having to put additions on our additions and I hope that this Board will be responsible, like it usually is, in stopping this School Board from going crazy with the spending that they want

to spend. The School Board is not allowing a public hearing on this matter which I think is not the right thing to do and there should be an open public hearing on this matter before we get through this.

Bob Shaw, 172 Arah Street, Manchester, NH (Re: snow), stated:
This is the 19th anniversary of the first meeting I had as Mayor of the City of Manchester. At that meeting I received a nickname called "Sunshine" and that's because I asked the Board of Aldermen to go into executive session to discuss the plowing situation in the City of Manchester. It was obvious you couldn't do that under the Right-to-Know Law but I ended up with a nickname anyway…what I was hoping…I'm coming here with a suggestion rather than to criticize at all because I'm very lucky the Highway Department has never acknowledged that I am no longer the Mayor of Manchester and my street is one of the best plowed streets in the City of Manchester. I said that to my wife the other day, don't those people know that I'm not Mayor any longer. But, I think that over the last few years especially that we're still doing it the same old way and I'm hoping…what I'm hoping for and what I'm here tonight to suggest is that the Aldermen form a committee, if they don't have one already, that looks into plowing. Not as to how the job was done because nobody moves 24 inches, 36 inches of snow easily. But, are we doing the plowing correctly. Do we have the right trucks? Do we have the right manpower to do the job? Does some of it need to be jobbed out because it can't be done quick enough, that's the suggestion that I'm making to this Board. You look at the whole thing. We found out 19 years ago that the Highway Department had trucks that didn't work, they were breaking down all the time and, therefore, they couldn't do the job that we were paying them to do and I see them in the back tonight…they must have been sitting here for 19 years to come forward tonight and explain their performance. It's not easy for them to do the job that they're doing but it's up to you people as the leaders of this City to see that they have the right tools, that they're doing the job in a manner that is both efficient and cost-effective and after reading today's paper I don't think they're doing it cost-effectively, I think they're doing it the same old way 19 years later.

John Latsha, 10 Gantry Street, Manchester, NH (Re: tuition contract), stated:
I usually don't have a chance to come to any of these meetings, I usually watch them on television and first of all I would like to thank Aldermen Gatsas and1 Wihby and Garrity, among others for looking out for people like me as far as the taxpayers of the City, I really appreciate it. A lot of times I watch Alderman Gatsas pushing the buttons on his calculator and everything else and a lot of times, some of the times I don't understand a thing of what he's saying but I know that he's looking out for people like me, the taxpayers of the City of Manchester and I just want to tell him thank you very much and I think you're doing a great job. Thank you. The reason why I came here is that I want to talk about the tuition agreement contract. As far as the taxpayer's are concerned I'm very concerned about after a 10-year period Bedford can decide to go on their own and Manchester gets to pick up the burden from that. I'm really worried about that as far as the contract is concerned. I just

wish there could be some kind of a deal worked out where they could put a little bit more of the tuition money into a reserve account where if Bedford decided to leave or whatever they wouldn't get that money, but if they decided to stay for the 20-year period they would get reimbursed for that money. I think that might be a good idea. The *Manchester Union Leader* had a good idea on Sunday in their editorial column and it said basically "Manchester town taxpayers are in the dark"…it says "Manchester's School Superintendent, School Board including Mayor Baines as Chairman has thus far refused to tell the people what's being planned in their name and with their money. Never mind exact cost the public doesn't even know the scope of the projects and whether they make sense." So, Mr. Mayor, I hope you will tell us all tonight what you're going to do with our money on this project, I appreciate it. Thank you very much.

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

This being a special meeting of the Board, no further business was presented,, and on motion of Alderman Shea, duly seconded by Alderman Lopez, it was voted to adjourn.

A True Record. Attest.

City Clerk