

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

August 02, 2016

7:00 p.m.

Mayor Gatsas called the meeting to order.

Mayor Gatsas called for the Pledge of Allegiance.

A moment of silence was observed.

The Clerk called the roll.

Present: Aldermen Cavanaugh, Ludwig, Long, Herbert, Sapienza, Pappas, O'Neil,
Levasseur, Shea, Shaw, Barry (late), Gamache, Hirschmann

Absent: Alderman Katsiantonis

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 any comments must be directed to the Chair. Any resident wishing to speak come forward to the nearest microphone, clearly state their name and address when recognized, and give their comments.

Hal Sullivan, 93 Juniper Street, stated I am the chairperson of the Highway Commission. About three years ago the City hired Mark Gomez as the Environmental Programs Manager, which is part of DPW as I am sure you know. He was hired to bring new ideas and efficiencies to Manchester. When Mark started, he had a number of goals and included among those was to improve efficiencies, to clean up the City, to increase recycling in Manchester, to reduce workforce injuries and to provide cost-effective services to work within the City's cap. It was never a goal to reduce the workforce or eliminate positions. Tonight, you will hear a proposal that Mark will bring forward about automated collections for trash. It is a new idea for Manchester but it is certainly not a new idea for large cities in the northeast and around the country. We only need to look as far south as Nashua to see that it can work in a city of our size or similar size. The idea has merit and we believe it should be considered, at least as part of a pilot program. I know there have been a number of concerns that have been expressed by members of the

board but it has never been the intent to initiate lay-offs or to eliminate positions. That has never been the intent. The idea is really to move employees to safer jobs within the department, to reduce the injury reports and workman's compensation claims, to allow the employees to work in more satisfying positions paying similar or better and to be able to assist with other tasks such as snow removal in the winter and other things that can improve the City's conditions. As a side benefit to this proposal, I do think we will have a cleaner City, we will have savings on the workman's compensation claims...you may have seen an article today in the *Union Leader* about some of the potential savings that could be realized on workman's compensation and I do think that it will be an inducement to recycle and lead to a better environment that we all live in. It is just a more efficient way of doing business. Just like in every other business, automation has come and it is a more effective way of doing business. Let me stress again that it has never been the intent to eliminate positions or to reduce the workforce. I am going to pass out a couple of pictures of conditions of trash that has been put around the City. You can see the need to help clean up the City and maybe find a more efficient way of picking up the trash. Thank you for your attention.

Jeff Marcoux, 569 Rimmon Street, stated I am the steward for the Highway Department division and the Refuse division. I am here tonight to represent AFSCME Local 298, which represents Manchester's refuse workers. I am here tonight to urge the board to carefully consider any proposals to change the way we conduct residential waste serve in Manchester. As a union, we are mostly concerned with the effects of change in our members. We appreciate the department's position that the reduction in the numbers of workers on the trucks will result in reassignment of those staff members. However, we know that in the end this board, not the department, will determine whether or not these positions are retained. Obviously, we oppose elimination of these positions but even if they are reassigned they would most likely be reclassified as laborers. The reclassification would result in nearly a \$4,000 reduction in their salary per year. That would be devastating to the employees and their families. Secondly, as the people who actually do the work, we question whether the proposed program can accomplish its stated goals. We do understand the concerns that the department has about worker's compensation costs but the fact is that the annual claim costs have been decreasing over the last three years. Also, much of the refuse we pick up each day simply will not fit into a toter and often exceeds the two toter limit as proposed in the program. What would the impact of those costs be to our fellow citizens and how we will keep our streets clean? These are some of the issues that we think need cautious and due consideration by the board before making this type of change in the way we do business. On behalf of my fellow workers, we want to recognize that under the supervision and leadership of Bob

Never we believe that we are delivering a very efficient and effective service to our fellow citizens. Please approach this issue with caution and give due consideration to our concerns. Thank you very much.

Dan Leclerc, 88 President Road, stated I am here with my wife, Francine. First of all, the gate finally got moved so thanks for that. It was a couple of weeks later than most people expected but I don't blame anyone for that. I know how projects go sometimes. This past Monday Francine had the day off so she kind of sat on the front porch on the President Road side and watched the traffic. Even though the gate has just been moved and I understand that, the traffic really hadn't decreased in her opinion at all. I believe that people do see that the gate has moved when they are facing west going up Gold Street but I believe also that a lot of the traffic comes from the south so they are going, again, left and heading down President to get back to the highway. Moving the gate did help. I think it helped the people on Beech Hill and the people on Mack Avenue and by the way thanks for the stop sign there because I could see a lot of potential accidents happening there but thankfully nothing serious has. The traffic did let up a little as far as that goes. I am just wondering because earlier some proposals about traffic studies were talked about and I am wondering if those have started yet and if they haven't why not. Of course I don't know if they have but hopefully they have. Again, I don't think that moving the gate is going to be a 50% difference in traffic as may have been thought before and trust me, I hope I am wrong. I really do. I would really like to be wrong on this. We have kind of said it before and we are going to say it again. In my opinion, we should either close all the roads or open all the roads. Thank you.

Glen Ouellette, 112 Auburn Street, stated I see that someone has missed the opportunity to repair the Aldermanic chambers. The starting date was supposed to be July 1 with an ending date of July 31. Nothing has changed. Just think of all the effort that you guys made to clear this room for an entire month and the money expended now knowing you are going to have to do it again. What happened? Where is the communication? That is called waste. Not only of time but of taxpayer dollars. Now the rumor is that it will get done by November or maybe next year. Whenever it does get done, you will have to go through the same mess you went through this month. Just remember that. It seems to me that in this City when we do projects, we can't seem to do them right the first time. Like redistricting. We are on our 16th year. You say seven, Your Honor but it was before you became mayor that they started considering it. Since 2001, every year we have been considering redistricting. If we can't get it right in 16 years, we have problems. Yarger Decker. Your Honor and the board you are now negotiating with City employees. Now the mayor and Joyce Craig who was running for mayor almost two years ago made it

very clear in the debate that Yarger Decker has to be renegotiated with the unions but how can you do that because for the last two years you have had it tabled. Until you take it out from under the table and use it as a tool, it is stuck and every year it is costing us money and you are not negotiating Yarger Decker. For example, new employees shouldn't be under Yarger Decker. It wasn't meant for that. Just think, millions. Number three, automated garbage disposal. You know my first campaign was in 2001. It was in my bulletin then so it is not a new idea. It is just that in this City it takes forever to have a discussion and move the City forward. We move one step forward one year and three steps backward the next. Now if you are going to do this, don't you think you should make it an ordinance or at least enforce the one that exists that everybody has to have the green barrel? That is why you created that ordinance. To make another point, to have your recycling more successful, you have to make sure that every household and every property has at least one blue barrel. You can't have efficiency if you don't provide the people the tools or you don't enforce the tools that you are trying to provide. Why should someone have to pay \$95 or \$65 for a barrel when somebody else can go to Walmart and buy a \$10 bucket? Rules are rules. If we are going to be one City, we have to be efficient and save money. The last thing I want to say is it has been said by lots of aldermen that only 10 employees might lose their jobs but you are going to then use them in other areas of the department because you need them. Well if you need them so bad, why can't you guarantee it now? Why is that a pressure point? It shouldn't be. You are all admitting that you need the extra help to keep the Highway Department going all four seasons of the year. So what are we waiting for? Make it easier and get the job done right the first time. Thank you.

Jon Hopwood, 445 Mast Road, stated sources have told me that Mayor Gatsas' Chief of Staff, Samantha Piatt, prior to the recent announcement of her leave of absence was working many hours on the Gatsas for Governor campaign. Sources also tell me that the City of Manchester, that is Queen City taxpayers, continue to pay Ms. Piatt's benefits package while she is on a leave of absence working on the campaign. I come before the Board of Mayor and Aldermen tonight to ask the board to find out whether this is true. The *Union Leader* reported that in 2014 Samantha Piatt made \$70,763.67. With benefits, the taxpayers of Manchester likely are paying out \$100,000 or more to provide Mayor Gatsas with a Chief of Staff. That is Chief of Staff of the Mayor's Office of the City of Manchester, not a staffer in the Gatsas for Governor campaign. Sources indicate that Ms. Piatt worked months on the Gatsas for Governor campaign while serving as the Mayor's Chief of Staff during office hours. At \$8,000 a month plus, as a Manchester taxpayer and as a citizen of NH, I ask myself whether using a City worker for a political campaign not only constitutes an election law violation but potentially an illegal conversion of City

funds for personal use. The Board of Mayor and Aldermen needs to find out the truth of Samantha Piatt's dual allegiance to the City; that to Ted Gatsas a Mayor and to Ted Gatas as a private citizen. If there has been a diversion of City funds to the Gatsas for Governor campaign, I ask the board to take action against Mayor Gatsas. Theodore Gatsas is a rich man. This is not a question of using his free parking placard to beat the City out of \$.75 while he visits his Manchester campaign headquarters. This is an issue involving the potential diversion of thousands of dollars of City funds to his political campaign. Have other staffers been involved? If it will help, I will formally ask for the Board of Conduct to be convened to investigate and I will insure that the taxpayers of this City and the voters of the state know what is going on. A look at the Gatsas for Governor website indicates that the candidate has made many trips outside of Manchester during what constitutes the normal working hours of the City. Theodore Gatsas, when he ran for mayor last year gave no indication that he intended for his fourth term to be a part-time job and that he planned on exiting the post with half a term served. If he was an honorable man, he would have resigned. Better yet, he would have not run for statewide office while serving as mayor. Thank you very much.

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

Mayor Gatsas asked rather than adjourning, is it okay with everybody if we have Judge Broderick come up and do his presentation while we still have some time?

John Broderick, stated I am here tonight on a campaign, a non-political, non-partisan, public information campaign about mental health awareness. It may be the most important thing I have done in my professional life. My family, as was widely reported in the press in NH a decade or more ago, walked through the valley of mental illness in a very public way in part because I made mistakes and didn't know what the signs and symptoms were of mental health problems and my son didn't realize he had a mental health issue. Last fall I was asked to contact a woman who is a child psychologist in Maryland. Her name is Barbara Vandalen. She was on *Time Magazine's* 100 list in 2012 for a program she started called Give an Hour for veterans and their family members who needed mental health counseling and 10,000 people like herself across the country responded. Admiral Mullen nominated her for the *Time Magazine* 100 list. When I called her I said she has to know someone in behavioral health and she said she wanted to

start a campaign and she wanted to start it in NH. The goal of the campaign is simple and powerful and I can tell you from my personal experience how valuable it is. She said John what I am trying to do is the following. I want people to know the five most common signs of mental illness like we know the signs of a heart attack or a stroke. She said we know those don't we and I do know them. I am not sure how I know them but I do know them and you probably know them too. She shared some statistics with me which are not widely known but are compelling. Half of all mental illness in the United States arises by age 14. That would have been my son at age 13. She said 2/3 of all mental illness in America arises by age 23. Last year she told me that more people died by suicide in American than died on America's highways. Think about that. She said to me that 22 veterans take their own life every single day in America. She said the largest providers of mental health services in this country are jails and prisons. Does that seem like a good system to you? It didn't seem like a good system to me. So I asked what can I do and she said you can form a steering committee so I reached out to everyone I thought would be interested and everyone said yes from the attorney general to the head of safety to the head of HHS to hospitals to medical health providers to families. We launched this campaign at the State House on a non-session day, May 23. Over 400 people came. I don't think a published information campaign in the history of NH has had that turnout. Every member of our congressional delegation came, the Catholic Bishop came, members of the Supreme Court and the attorney general...I had never seen an audience like that. Representative Kuster told a story that day about her own family. Congressman Guinta shared a story about his family. I can tell you since my family's tragedy in 2002 to this day, dozens and dozens and dozens of perfect strangers have come to me and shared their own stories. I can tell you pretty affirmatively that mental illness is everywhere but you wouldn't know it because we don't talk about it. It is in the shadows in America and it has always been in the shadows. We spend more time in America talking about transgender bathroom privileges than we do talking about mental health. Mental illness is a huge issue in our society. I guarantee you, not from my knowledge but from those I respect, that a lot of these kids who are overdosing on heroin have an underlying mental health problem that may have started them down that road. I have been making it my business and I continue to reach out whenever I can to see if people will help us get the word out. I am going to be speaking to the teachers group and the superintendents group. I have been speaking to city councils around NH. After those meetings and sessions, people come up to me who I don't know and they share their stories. My guess is people on this council have stories that they haven't shared. Barbara Vandalen, the genius behind this campaign at the State House that morning in front of over 400 people she had never met said if anyone in this chamber this morning has not touched a mental health issue personally in their family or their extended family or

among their friends and co-workers, raise your hand. No hands went up. I said to her afterwards Barbara is that common and she said that happens everywhere I ask that question. If mental illness, which affects tens of millions of Americans, were a physical health problem it would be a public health emergency in America. I asked John McQuade of the *Union Leader* if he would be willing to publish monthly a firsthand account on mental health from someone affected and he said yes. The first story ran a month ago and another will run in another week. People came up to me this morning, and I don't know them, and asked can we tell our family story. I believe that this issue has been in the shadows for far too long and just so you understand, I am not here because I am particularly courageous or righteous. If my family story were in the shadows I would keep it there too. I understand why people do that trust me. I want to close with a story and a request. In the course of this campaign I went to the seacoast and met with 30 people who all had the same sort of job and were all professional people. The woman who hosted the meeting spoke to me for five minutes. I had never met her. I asked her all to come to the launch and by the way the mayor came to the launch which meant a lot. A week later I got a phone call from a woman and I didn't know who she was and I didn't hear it until later in the day so I called her the next day thinking it must have been a wrong number. She said I was the woman who hosted the meeting you came to. I thought she was calling to say I am coming to the launch. I asked how I could help her. She said my husband, and she told me what he did and he had a very good job and she was probably 50 or 51, suffers from mood disorder depression and anxiety and he has been hospitalized. She then started crying. I was as close to the yellow pages as you can be. I was five minutes removed from a name in the yellow pages but she called me because she knew that I wouldn't be judgmental. I made mistakes too. She said I was going to ask you to come visit my husband in the hospital. I never met her husband by the way and I said you know I would have done that and she said I know you would have and that is why I called you. I asked what did you tell his employer and she said you can't tell your employer that you have depression. I said if he had broken his hip would you have said he broke his hip and she said absolutely. I said what if he had emergency coronary bypass surgery and she replied yes we would have told them that. A week later I went on public radio after the launch with the woman whose genius this campaign is and I couldn't get that woman out of my mind so I called her up and I said your husband may want to listen to this show. We broadcast at 8 PM. She said thanks for calling. Several days later she called me and said my husband and I listened to it and he felt inspired by it so could you come over and meet with both of us because he would like you do to that. I said sure I will come over. So I drove over and spent two hours with them. Two hours. He was so relieved to tell somebody. Now these people are professional people. They have children and families and colleagues. They picked me

almost from the yellow pages and I was proud for them that they did it but I was sad for them that they felt that I was the only safe person they could talk to. If now is not a good time in American life to talk about mental health and mental wellness, when would be a good time because I would be happy to come back? If this campaign which is simple and powerful is not the right campaign, I would like to know what would be a better campaign. So what is my ask? I have some materials here that I would like to leave with you and I would ask that you read them. There are these rack cards that have five emoticons on them with some printing that tell you the five most common signs of mental illness. What would I like? I would like everybody in Manchester to put one of these on their refrigerator to learn the signs and talk to their children. I would like these emoticon placards in City Hall Mayor. When I was up at the Governor's Office two weeks ago, in the outer office on the bookcase, Governor Hassan had these signs in a clear plastic card holder. I said to her you must be the only governor in America who has these and she said I hope that isn't true for much longer. Senator Ayotte has been so helpful and supportive. This is not about politics. Everything in America is about politics and it is about time that we started to talk about mental health and mental wellness and mental illness so that people can feel empowered to come forward. In any given year, one in five adults and that is 40 million people, have some form of mental health issue. We have made enormous strides in America on breast cancer. People used to whisper the word cancer. You may remember that. I do. When I was a child the only person who said the word breast publically was Hugh Hefner. It is true. Finally someone said breast cancer and look at what was happen for women and outcomes. Last year 270,000 women had breast cancer, which is 270,000 too many but the outcomes are dramatic. Mental illness affects far more people, it destroys more lives and I can tell you this and I will close with this. I know what I am talking about because I have experienced it. I don't know the medicine of mental health but I can tell you that I know the journey and my son knows the journey and my wife knows the journey. We can turn a blind eye for years to come because it is uncomfortable to talk about but people are talking to me about it and they probably won't talk to you because they are afraid. I would like the City mayor and members of the board to take a very public role. I would like to get these cards and posters...

Mayor Gatsas interjected I will ask for a motion to distribute these to every employee and every department in the City. I just need to stop you for a second so I can adjourn this meeting and start the next meeting and then I will let you continue.

On motion of Alderman Ludwig, duly seconded by Alderman O'Neil, it was voted to adjourn.

A True Record. Attest.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matthew Normand". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline.

City Clerk