

**BOARD OF SCHOOL COMMITTEE
MANCHESTER SCHOOL DISTRICT SAU #37**

January 23, 2017

7:00 p.m.

Mayor Gatsas called the meeting to order.

Mayor Gatsas called for the Pledge of Allegiance, this function being led by Committee Member Bergeron.

A moment of silence was observed.

The Clerk called the roll.

Present: Committee Members Ambrogi, Langton, Georges, Want, Freeman, Bergeron,
 Tessier, Girard, Terrio, Connors, Beaudry, Avard, Desrochers, Van Houten,
 Mayor Gatsas

5. Approval of minutes from the Board of School Committee meeting on
 January 9, 2017.

*On motion of **Committee Member Terrio**, duly seconded by **Committee Member Girard**, it was
voted to approve the minutes.*

RECOGNITION/PRESENTATIONS

PUBLIC FORUM

Mayor Gatsas advised that the purpose of the public forum is to give the residents of Manchester the opportunity to address the board on items of concerns 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; that any comments must be directed to the Chair; that any resident wishing to speak will come forward to the nearest microphone, clearly state their name and address when recognized and give their comments.

Mr. Jimmy Lehoux, 220 S. Hall Street, stated:

Last week my son came home extremely excited and said, dad, there is an open house at MST on Saturday and I think you should really go. I wasn't really into it, but I could see the excitement and he kept asking and asking so finally we went. I do have to say that MST, as you all know, is nothing short of amazing. We walked in there and he is interested in the engineering part. We walked in and it was a fortune 500 company is what it looked like. It was simply astonishing. We went where they talk about the school and their process and it got to the point of asking questions and I asked why is there a lottery and they said because we don't have so much room for so many kids. So I said, it is strictly a capacity issue and nothing else and they said yes, strictly a capacity. I implore you that there are over 100 kids that want to attend this program that get turned away. They want to learn. With the amount of space that we have, and I'm not naive to the budget crunch that we have, but with the amount of space that we have we should try to make this work. These are kids that want to learn. It is the future of learning. Part of my business that I work in is I deal with subcontractors all day. You guys may know, there is an incredible shortage of subcontractors in every field, electrical, plumbing, engineering. Ten years from now, the way we build buildings is going to be completely different than what we see. MST is well ahead of the curve to try and cut that off. I implore the board to promote the trades. I implore the counselors and school members to promote the trades. Ten years from now it is going to cost you more to get a plumber than it will to go see a doctor. Anything you guys can do to accept those 100 kids would be very much appreciated. I understand in a world where everyone gets a trophy it may not occur, but seeing the excitement in my child's eyes, it would crush me, any parent, where their kids are this excited to go to school and to go to a program that

they are excited about is just unacceptable, especially when they want to learn. I hope you guys take that into consideration.

Ms. Patrice Benard, 31 Aurore Avenue, stated:

Three things I want to talk about tonight. The first, on your agenda, item 14 a, from the Committee on Information Technology is to support moving forward with the computer science for all initiative and the national science foundation researcher practitioner partnership grant. When I looked in the packet on line it had links and it links to a k-12 computer standard and I'm not sure that this should have come from the IT Committee or if it should have gone to Curriculum and Instruction. That's my first question. My second, if this would be a backdoor to implementing computer standards for our children I'm a bit concerned as I have been in a third grade classroom a lot and we don't have time to add another burden to our teachers. They simply... Your Honor, your goal was, originally, you said you wanted all third graders reading at grade level by the end of third grade. We are not there yet and I would like us to hyper focus on that goal of literacy. Please don't impose more things for our teachers to do. They need to focus on literacy. The second thing I wanted to say is I have been in the classroom. I know you are in budget season and you and Dr. Vargas probably have been spending hours upon hours. If you ever forget or wonder why you keep banging your head against this wall, come over to Green Acres, come to our third grade classroom and see the children and remember why we do what we do. They are so full of hope. They are so excited about life. It is truly a pleasure to spend time with them every afternoon. That is why you are here. I can't believe any one of you was elected to this position if you didn't love children so remind yourself of why you are doing what you are doing and make sure that every budget decision focuses on not the teachers, not the administrators, not what looks good for the City, but focus on the children because they should be the reason why you are doing what you are doing. Thirdly, I wanted to comment, many of you may have seen on social media the letter that Green Acres' teachers sent to parents. Today I was able to talk to the teacher that posted that. This had nothing to do with the budgets. She said that, honestly, the Green Acres' teachers are just grateful for parents like myself and others that go in and help out. We read to classrooms. I tie shoes. I help spell a word. There are things that we do at Green Acres that no other school does and we are awfully spoiled. Green

Acres is the place to be. It is the best school in the community as far as we are concerned. I say that with complete bias. Thank you and thank you to the teachers at Green Acres.

Mr. Glenn Ouellette, 112 Auburn Street, stated:

The budget is upon us. It is a very important time, probably this time more so than every because we are in a deficit. Remember, kids first. That's what education is all about, kids. Before we do harm think of the future. This idea of picking Memorial or Central or West and deciding let's close one, before you even think of that, we need to have a discussion as a community, take the resources that we have in our city for our schools and find out what we need now and what will we need five years from now. If you close a school now, in five years you have to build a brand new one and we all know that when the city sells buildings in this city we don't get 100%. We are lucky if we get 50% of its value. Just remember that. Sometimes it has to do with the economics. I don't argue that, but that's the point and we are still paying the bonding on all the high schools. For you on the School Board, whoever you are, you know who you are, that are thinking of an idea of taking MST and putting it at West High that is not a financial idea. To take all that stuff out of there and take all the wiring and reinstall it in another school, where were you when you wanted to expand it? MST is a great school. It is an alternative school and in this day and age of the 21st century as the lady said before me, because of trades it is well needed. We see the Manchester Community College because of that. We should be no different here in our schools. Learning is different than when you and I went to school in some ways because the system has changed. Think about resolving the issues before pulling the trigger too fast. Yes, we are in a budget crunch, but remember, if the taxpayers gave you \$1 billion and you said you could solve all your problems I bet you would come back next year and you could find other ways to spend more money. We could all do that. Money itself does not solve problems. You could solve all the money in the world, but if you don't work on solving that problem you are going to keep spending and the issue will still be there.

Mr. Eric Gagnon, 452 Pine Street, stated:

Happy New Year to everybody. I have a pass out here from the Palace Theater Youth for their new season so if someone wants to come by and pass them out that would be great. Once again, happy New Year.

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

ACTION AGENDA

8. Ratify and confirm the phone poll conducted January 18, 2017 to have the superintendent write a letter of support of HB155 to have full time kindergarten included in the adequacy formula.

***Committee Member Beaudry** moved to ratify and confirm the phone poll. The motion was duly seconded by **Committee Member Connors**.*

Committee Member Girard stated as the lone vote recorded against this poll, I just wanted to explain my thought. It is certainly not that I am opposed to looking for additional revenue from the state. However, I think political capital and creditability are important things. I think the efforts of the board, honestly, would be better focused in bringing to the attention of our delegation and others in the state those things that the state has control over that impact us such as the catastrophic aid that has been cut, the differentiated aid that is insufficient, the CHINS aid that has been eliminated, the special education mandates that force us to pay for charter schools, the cuts at the state level in retirement, which have caused us to triple what we pay for state retirement in this district, the reductions in adequacy aid and the stabilization grant. I'm certainly not against seeking funding for full day kindergarten, but this board, at various points in history, voluntarily voted to do that and I think we weaken our political capital when we go asking them to pay for decisions that we have made that are within our control rather than focusing our efforts on those things that the state has impacted us by their decisions. I think we ought to be mindful of that and that is the reason why I voted against the poll to support legislation that would fund full day kindergarten.

Committee Member Van Houten stated first of all, the letter from Dr. Vargas was very well stated and I thank you for that. I think that may be helpful to us. I also have questions about

why we would oppose this. I understand your point of view, Committee Member Girard, if I may address him for a second, I do understand that point of view, but if we don't ask we don't get. It is roughly \$2 million. There are people up there from Nashua, for instance, who are in the same boat. They have philosophical concerns about kindergarten, but they are also aware that the money would go a long way toward keeping the kindergarten programs open. I don't know if Committee Member Freeman wishes to address it. I do realize that she testified against the bill on the day of the hearing. I was in another hearing, but I did go and sign off and record that I am in favor. I am strongly in favor of this. We have kindergarten. We apparently believe in it to keep the kindergarten going. Why not get the money for it?

Committee Member Freeman stated thank you, Committee Member Van Houten. I would be more than happy to address that. For all of the reasons plus that Committee Member Girard stated is why I am opposed to this. First off, full day kindergarten was our choice, not the state's. It is not a mandate. My biggest fear, especially in my ward, is that it will become a requirement of the state and subsequently, like all state programs, at some point it will be cut. Again, this was voluntary that Manchester go to full day kindergarten. This was not a requirements put forth by the state. Naturally I want to see as much education for kindergarteners as possible, but at what expense. There are no studies that prove that kindergarten at that level, fully day, is effective. Again, there are no studies to show that it is ineffective. Again, thank you for bringing me to this because I really did want to talk about it. Again, Committee Member Girard said it very eloquently that there are other bills sitting up at the state house right now that we should be focusing on, namely HB525, which will remove the annual 4% stabilization reduction. I think there are other bills up there that the state already has incorporated that we should be focusing on.

Committee Member Van Houten stated I simply want to say that it is not a matter of one or the other. The other bills may or may not pass on their own merit and by the basis of the votes. I'm not sure about that, but I do look around our city every day and I see that we have higher percentages of youngsters on free and reduced lunch. We have English language learner youngsters who are ready to fly, but we have to give them that first step from which they can fly. I will go to Concord and advocate for this bill. When I am there I am representing Wards 10, 11,

and 12 and not the School Board. I hope that there is support here because the money is well needed. We have made the decision to educate youngsters from an early age on and if the state has the resources and will give them to us... This one has a little bit of bipartisan support, perhaps more than some of the others. Governor Sununu has indicated interest in passing this as well. Let our consciousness guide us. I respect your opinions and I hope that you respect mine as well.

Mayor Gatsas stated this was in the very first budget that I brought forward to the School Board. It included implementing full day kindergarten. I can only tell you that I believe it makes a difference in a child's education. I think it is important. I think it gets the child to a point that they start understanding what school is at a much earlier age. I think that we can sit here and pontificate about it. The City has made a choice about implementing full day kindergarten. It is in place. We pay for it now and I would think that if it is something that is out there that the legislature is thinking about and we're not getting paid for it then we should go back and probably get rid of kindergarten all together. Oh, no, wait, the state pays \$1,900 for a half day of kindergarten. Oh, that's right, maybe that is why we implemented it because the state was paying for it. I don't know what makes us think that if we are doing it now and the state is thinking about it that if we are advocates for education and we have it in our district, why wouldn't we support it and say send us the money rather than take the money away?

Committee Member Beaudry stated I concur with your comments. One other thing I just want the public and board members to realize is that at one time we used to have Readiness and we eliminated the Readiness program. That is why I was so strong on supporting full day kindergarten because these kids are getting lost in the cracks. If they weren't socially old enough or mature enough to go to first grade, what do you do with that child because there is no Readiness? I do believe and I think there are statistics out there that show kindergarten is important. I can see that in my own grandchild that go to kindergarten, what they have learned before they go to first grade. I support this wholeheartedly. I would hope that any legislation that is up there, this board should be apprised of so we can make a vote collectively whether we want to support it or not. If there are that many pieces of legislation that bring monetary value to this then we should bring it up and write letters to whatever committee they go before, whether

we are in support of it or against it. Being the biggest district in the state I know sometimes that hurts us, but we have 32 state reps in the city and I would hope that they are looking out for the best interest of the City of Manchester.

Committee Member Girard stated I have a question before I make an additional comment. Assuming this legislation is passed by the legislature and signed by the governor, does it automatically follow that it is going to be funded in the budget?

Mayor Gatsas replied that's a good question. I can only tell you that normally, money bills, if they are extras or specials, and they are passed then they would be looked at at the end, during the budget process. I think that you have to at least be vocal enough to say you are supporting this from the very beginning and not waiting until the 12th hour and say you are going to pass this, well I think we should get some.

Committee Member Girard stated if it is funded in the budget. Your Honor, is there any guarantee that the state will actually appropriate the money before the aldermen will make an appropriation for us.

Mayor Gatsas replied I don't think you see the money in this budget that we are presently in.

Committee Member Girard stated I'm not talking about FY17. I'm talking about for FY18.

Mayor Gatsas stated I think you would see if for the second year of the biennium. You would see it there.

Committee Member Girard stated that would affect us in FY19 so it would not help with the projected shortfall.

Mayor Gatsas stated as I said, it would not be part of the budget because I don't think you are going to see a budget come out of Concord much before the middle of June. By then, everything that we have, all the deck chairs on the boat have already been laid out.

Committee Member Girard stated Your Honor, I don't disagree necessarily with your commentary. The only think I would say is and having spent a fair amount of time testifying in Concord when I was an aide to Mayor Wieczorek, and maintaining the relationships I do with a number of state reps across the state, I'm well aware of how the City of Manchester is viewed by other leadership in the state. I just think we ought to be cautious about asking the state to kick over funding on decisions that we make as a board rather than trying to remedy the hardships that the state has caused us. Representative Shaw, for example, has a bill in where Manchester is clearly at a disadvantage on transportation for CTE students. If Bedford puts kids on a bus and sends them to the Manchester School of Technology, Bedford gets a transportation reimbursement from the state. If we put kids on a bus from West or Central and send them to the same school we don't because the school is located in our borders even though that's a burden that we shoulder that nobody else in the state has to. I'm not debating the merits of kindergarten or anything along that line. I'm just simply of the opinion that we would be wise to pick our spots to that every time someone hears from the City of Manchester we don't sound like panhandlers taking a tin cup and rattling it against the fence demanding money, especially in areas where legislators like some I won't name because you know who they are, will turn around and say we are not obligated to fund Manchester's decisions. I think this is something that politically could cut the other way. That is the only reason why I voted against it. It has nothing to do with the merits of kindergarten or whether or not it would be nice to get another \$1.8 million to fund the decision that we made. It is strictly on how do you approach the state about funding those things where Manchester is disadvantaged through no fault of its own, rather than asking for money to fund decisions it has made. That's all I'm saying.

Committee Member Avar stated thank you, Your Honor, for putting this together for us and having it passed out. I think that is a great resource. I just wanted to speak to the need for full day kindergarten as Committee Member Beaudry had. In speaking with educators I'm hearing that students are coming in every year a little less prepared than the year before and it is a problem that we are seeing in society that the children aren't getting at home what they used to get from the two parent, single income, someone at home always educating the child. That is not the reality of society anymore. The students are coming in a little bit less exposed to reading, to

their letters. Some of these kids can't identify the alphabet letters as they are coming to kindergarten. It is all that much more important that we provide this service and when we are coming into budget shortfalls, we have to look at the potential of cutting anything. I don't want to see this one become one of the cuts. I think it is important that we support this bill going forward.

Committee Member Van Houten stated just very quickly, there are 400 of us up there. No one knows who I am. Half the time my badge is elsewhere. Manchester is not frowned upon, although individuals take on their own personalities and those are seen. If you wish, later on I will discuss the hearing on Barbara's Shaw bill if you wish. I realize it is off topic now, but I would be willing to do that if someone wishes to hear about it. I was there for most of that hearing.

Committee Member Georges stated in December there was a meeting at Hillside and in that meeting there was the state that was talking at that meeting, but it was there to give opportunity for all the kids for No Child Left Behind. If there was an opportunity to ask something of the state for the schools, we need to ask. I don't think it is a problem if we need to ask. The money is there for the children for the education for kindergarten. It is an opportunity. We need to ask. We are the board. We are here. We need to ask. Asking is not a big deal because the Bible says, ask and you will receive. If we don't ask we are not going to receive. We are not just going to close the door. We need to ask for something.

Mayor Gatsas stated I passed out a sheet to everybody. It is the three pieces of legislation that I think we should take up. I know that it is outside of this motion, but I would hope that, once we are on topic, once we take the vote on this one that we would at least have a conversation about the other two that are here because I think it is important that we send a message going to Concord this week.

Committee Member Beaudry stated I would make a motion that we support HB339 and HB525.

Ms. Maura Leahy, Clerk of the Board of School Committee, stated we have a motion on the floor right now.

Committee Member Beaudry stated once this is taken care of, will you accept that?

Mayor Gatsas replied yes, I will accept that. I think there is no question, we can all sit here and say what are we asking for and why are we asking for it. It is not our point of how it is going to be paid for. Our point should be that it is something that we have implemented and that we believe strongly as a board should be happening. That is what my position is and I probably understand that there are some people who think that we shouldn't be doing it. I certainly believe that nobody sat here two years ago, four years ago or six years ago when they took the 35% that they were paying for retirement and say by the way, take this away and we can find some other way to fund it. I think that it certainly behooves us as a board to take a look at what we are doing and why we are doing it and why does it make sense that we would be asking, not that anybody thinks that because Manchester is asking that they are going to send a check. There is a stabilization bill in here that talks about reducing the stabilization grant. I looked at some of the schools that they are issuing \$9 million to. There is a piece of legislation that 12 schools are getting \$9 million. Some of those schools are Windham, Bedford along with a bunch of others. Certainly, when you take a look at what we do here in Manchester, yes, we should be a voice because we are the largest school district. I think it is important that when we have bills that affect our community and our taxpayers, if you want to tell the taxpayers keep paying increased taxes and don't worry about it, that's fine, but that's not my position. My position has always been what's fair for everybody else should be fair for this community.

Committee Member Beaudry stated while we are on that topic, there are some bills and there is a bill coming in tomorrow that Representative Cushing is bringing in. There are two bills actually. One is going to EDNA and then the other one, because it is a tax issue, is going to a different committee. To bring back 15% of the 35% that the state was paying the local communities for retirement. That is something that personally we should probably go on record in supporting because I don't know what 15% means to us, Karen, but if we can get 15% back from the state, again, every dollar is a dollar we need. I would like to see the 35% reinstated, but

take small bites. There are pieces of legislation and my question is, I don't we don't have anyone on the school side, but is there anybody on the city side that goes up and testifies on behalf of the city on these bills that impact us?

Mayor Gatsas replied there are some board members that go up and look at the legislation and certainly support it. We have, on the city side, three aldermen who are state reps also.

Committee Member Girard stated just a point, Your Honor. The 15% would be about \$1.8 million, which is equal to what we would be getting if this kindergarten bill passed, just to underscore the point I have been trying to make about targeting your efforts.

Committee Member Beaudry stated we're half way there.

Mayor Gatsas stated again, nobody asked the question when they took it away from us, how do you feel about it. They just did it.

Committee Member Girard stated that, to me, is the fight that we should have about getting that back.

Mayor Gatsas stated we should have every fight that we can have. There was a fight that I looked to implement eight years ago because there was a bill that passed that the police officers that were hired after 2000 were paying 1.25% to the retirement system for their medical, but lo and behold, they were never going to get that money. If you were hired after 2000 you would never see it. To the City it was \$487,000. I wanted to draw the line in the sand and say let's stop paying it and we will hold it in escrow and let's go to court and talk about it because it doesn't make sense that you have police officers that are paying for something that they are never going to see, a benefit that is never going to be available to them. There are a lot of items out there and I'm sure that we will be hearing very soon, probably sometime in the first week of February, what the governor's budget looks like. I would hope that it is something that he has supported in his budget because he talked about it on the campaign trail, about full day kindergarten.

Committee Member Bergeron stated I have about three comments relative to this. I wanted to thank both Committee Members Freeman and Van Houten for bringing this information to us. If you recall, I'm not sure if it was last term, but I had as you, Mayor Gatsas, how you used to actually have the dotted lines from Concord to the City because I guess that used to be a standard function. I don't know what people would visit your office and now you are making it happen. It is actually happening and we are discussing it at a meeting. I think it is fantastic. I think it is great. In the City of Manchester I don't think it can be brought up enough, really. The more we get that out there, to your point, the better. Everybody needs to know how serious we are and I guess on that note because some of these house bills I'm just hearing about now so I guess I don't know whether I would ask for recommendations how to keep familiar on this or whether we just get periodic updates every meeting. I don't know if I'm asking to support something that I just saw right now. I don't know if I have to do that on my free time. I don't know the best way for all of us to be really knowledgeable about all of these things.

Mayor Gatsas stated take a look at the Senate calendar and the House calendar and they will tell you what bills are coming up and then you can go in and pull them up and read them.

Committee Member Bergeron stated I hear what you are saying. I guess if we are going to be discussing them we should go all the way and make sure we are informed. I don't know whether it is sending information. I don't know how to do this, but I think that we should stay informed through regular communication to us. Also, when it comes to kindergarten and pre-k, when I was at Parker Varney they were presenting all their data and enrollment numbers. I don't know if I remember hearing if pre-k was up or kindergarten. I know numbers were significantly up because of the success of some of the programs you are doing in the elementary schools. There are also challenges, different things that are coming like the opioid crisis is bringing a different skillset to our teachers and we are seeing some of the things early on that really need a lot of attention, which is great that we are giving the attention. I would think that we have elementary school principals here. I'm not sure if they really have an opinion on this relative to enrollment or trends or whatnot. I don't know the procedure, whether we could ask them or whether they would support the bill or not.

Mayor Gatsas stated we have a topic that we are talking about. There is a motion before us. What was your third point?

Committee Member Bergeron replied that's it.

Committee Member Girard stated point of order, Your Honor. This is a motion to ratify and confirm the poll that was taken. If we are voting yes we are voting that the vote we cast in the poll is the vote we cast in the poll and if we vote no we are disagreeing with the vote that we cast in the poll. Is that correct?

Mayor Gatsas replied this is about the poll, ratifying the poll that was taken.

Committee Member Girard stated if I could direct my question to the clerk. Was my understanding of a yes vote or a no vote on the poll to confirm a vote that was taken accurate?

Clerk Leahy replied yes, I would agree with that.

Mayor Gatsas stated we will have a chance to take a yes or no vote on the three that you have before you.

Committee Member Girard stated I just want to make sure that everyone understands that ratifying to confirm a poll is not...

Mayor Gatsas stated it is not a yes or no vote on the legislation.

Clerk Leahy stated correct.

Committee Member Girard stated that's what I'm trying to clarify.

Committee Member Desrochers requested a roll call vote on the motion ratify and confirm the phone poll. Committee Members Desrochers, Van Houten, Ambrogi, Langton, Georges, Want,

Bergeron, Tessier, Girard, Terrio, Connors, Beaudry, Avar and Mayor Gatsas voted yea. Committee Member Freeman voted nay. The motion carried.

Committee Member Beaudry stated I would move that the superintendent write a letter on behalf of HB339 and HB525, that this committee is in favor of both those pieces of legislation and submit that to the chairman of the committee.

Committee Member Beaudry moved to have the superintendent write a letter in support of HB339 and HB525. The motion was duly seconded by Committee Member Girard.

Committee Member Van Houten stated to go back to a point from Committee Member Beaudry, I did talk to Maura from the state house when the phone poll went out and we kind of talked about having some kind of a means of a memo between Committee Member Freeman and myself, some kind of a memo so we don't violate Right to Know with exchanges of information, but just so that people are aware of what is going on. I don't know if we can work something out like that without violating the Right to Know communication. I do agree with Committee Member Beaudry, it is important that we know what is going on and that we convey our wished to those people at the House. By the way, those of us who are on other committees, I am on a different committee, we are free to leave our committees and to go to testify. We are there to testify as well already.

Committee Member Girard stated just a point for people watching at home, HB339 is Representative Shaw's bill that would treat the City of Manchester like every other community that buses students to a career and technical education center like the School of Technology. Right now we don't get reimbursed where other communities that send their kids to the School of Technology do. It is the same cost. Why we are not reimbursed doesn't make sense. HB525 would stop the annual 4% reduction in our stabilization aid, which costs us half a million dollars per year. I don't exactly remember why the state passed a bill that reduced that grant to all communities by 4% a year, but if that were to pass, that would retain half a million dollars a year in revenue that we are otherwise losing from the state and having to shift to local property taxpayers to maintain our funding.

Mayor Gatsas stated it was passed because they needed funding for their budget.

Committee Member Girard stated as with everything they have done to change the adequacy aid, the catastrophic aid, the stabilization grant, the state retirement and everything else.

Committee Member Van Houten stated just one more point of information if I may, Your Honor. HB339 has already been in hearings.

Mayor Gatsas stated they haven't executed it.

Committee Member Van Houten stated they have not executed it and I'm absolutely in support of the motion as it stands. There was some conversation that I probably need to track down a little bit better. I think we have less of a chance on this one because it appears that there is a pool of money and if Manchester gets a little chunk of the pool the money will go down for other districts. We may be fighting opposition from other districts. I'm not sure that I'm fully clear on that. That may have been somehow researched otherwise when it left. I'm totally in support of this. I have already signed in on 339 as being in support.

Mayor Gatsas stated there will be a legislative open house on February 10th at ten o'clock right here in the chamber. All state reps have been asked to come along with other folks so that we can have a conversation with what's before us.

Mayor Gatsas requested a roll call vote on the motion to have the superintendent write a letter in support of HB339 and HB525. Mayor Gatsas, Committee Members Ambrogi, Langton, Georges, Want, Freeman, Bergeron, Tessier, Girard, Terrio, Connors, Beaudry, Avard, Desrochers and Van Houten voted yea. The motion carried.

CONSENT AGENDA (ITEMS 9-16)

Mayor Gatsas advised if you desire to remove any of the following items from the Consent Agenda, please so indicate. If none of the items are to be removed, one motion only will be taken at the conclusion of the presentation.

10. Report(s) of the Committee of Coordination/Administration, if available.

11. Report(s) of the Committee of Curriculum and Instruction, if available.

12. Report(s) of the Committee of Building and Sites, if available.

13. Report(s) of the Committee of Athletics, if available.

a) Approval of the coaching nominations.

15. Report(s) of the Committee of Student Conduct, if available.

16. Report(s) of the Special Committee on Redistricting, if available.

*HAVING DULY READ THE CONSENT AGENDA, ON MOTION OF **COMMITTEE MEMBER GIRARD**, DULY SECONDED BY **COMMITTEE MEMBER TERRIO**, IT WAS VOTED THAT THE CONSENT AGENDA BE APPROVED.*

13. Report(s) of the Committee of Athletics, if available.

b) Approval of the field use request from the Children's Hospital at Dartmouth (CHaD).

Mr. David Ryan, Assistant Superintendent, stated the request for the use of West High and Memorial High School was approved in Athletics. However, the turf is being pulled up by the end of May and the West field won't be ready until August 1. We have spoken with the folks at

CHaD and with Parks and Rec and they have arranged for Douglas Field to be used so there will be ample field usage for both of those teams moving into that all-star football game. It was unfortunate with the schedules being crossed, but we were unaware of the time of the letter that the turf fields were going to be installed at West High School during the same time period.

Committee Member Beaudry asked what two fields? You said West and Memorial they were going to use?

Mr. Ryan replied that's correct. That is what they requested. They requested each year to use that for a specific week. This year would have been June 23 through June 29 with the game on June 30. The turf is going to be pulled up beginning in May, as early in May as they can.

Committee Member Beaudry stated I understand that part. Is someone using Gill Stadium?

Mr. Ryan replied baseball. Several baseball teams will still be out there.

Committee Member Beaudry asked that field on Douglas Street will be sufficient enough for their practice?

Mr. Ryan replied it will. They don't need a lot of space.

Committee Member Bergeron stated I have seen this come before us a couple of times, maybe because I was appointed twice. I never really knew about this event so I actually did a little research and thought it may deserve a little time that they get a shout out as to what this event is and who started this thing. I did want to mention that it is on Friday, June 30 and it is at Saint Anselm's and it is the east and west all-star game. It is powered by the Bedford/Nashua surgical centers. That is, of course, because of its founder, which I can discuss in a moment. There are various stipulations. It features two teams of 40 players. Their nominations are taken from the head coaches during the fall. To be eligible an athlete must compete for a New Hampshire high school football program recognized by the NHIAA. Each NHIAA division is represented by at least one athlete and each school may not have more than five athletes as all-stars. They are

divided on geographical locations. At this point I think they have raised more than \$1 million in the last four years for this program. I did want to recognize the Memorial and Central athletes that are going to participate in this. The Memorial ones are: Anthony Angerami, Derek Terrazano. The Central students are Noah Chantasiri, Jason Jerome, Zach Minch and James Tanguay. I did want to recognize them. I just thought it was important that we do that. I know I signed up to volunteer. There are different ways to do that, buy a ticket. I just thought that we should know since it has come before me and I had no idea where it came from. I do have information on the founder as well.

*On motion of **Committee Member Tessier**, duly seconded by **Committee Member Beaudry**, it was voted to accept the report of committee and adopt its recommendations as amended.*

- c) To reaffirm the vote taken by the Board of School Committee on September 26, 2016 to approve the Athletic Director job description as presented as a full time position.

Committee Member Girard stated I'm not going to reiterate the notes that were in the agenda. I will say that I was disappointed that the committee was unmoved by the many conversations I had with many folks associated with Manchester sports programs, whether they were past or present coaches, coaches who are familiar with Manchester, people in the athletic equipment business or other athletic directors around the state. I understand the intent of what the district is trying to do with this job description. However, the many people that I shared it with and asked for feedback from did not have the same understanding of what this is meant to do that the administration has said it was intended to do, which means, at best, there is a disconnect between what they are presenting and how it is being received. I really don't believe that this description is going to do anything to help define the athletic program. I don't think it provides a good definition to what the athletic program should be. I don't really think it has any chance of attracting the caliber of person necessary to run an urban district's sports program like ours. That was the overwhelming sentiment of the dozen people that I spent an awful lot of time speaking to and taking notes on conversations from. I think, frankly, as much as the superintendent asked for feedback from members of the board after the board voted to send it

back to committee, I just was somewhat disheartened to see that it was all for naught. I can't support something that so many different people who are familiar with sports and sports programs and how they do run and how they could run, frankly, being totally ignored. I think this is not something that is going to help the district move its athletic programs forward. I would encourage people who want to see some change in how it runs to perhaps take the temperature of the people in the system and get some additional feedback and come up with something that makes sense for the district.

Committee Member Desrochers stated I guess I have a question for the superintendent because I'm confused.

Mayor Gatsas asked why are we going to ask the superintendent anything because every time he wants to do something we just keep hashing it around and talking about it and it comes out of committee a different way than what he wants.

Committee Member Desrochers asked do you know what I'm going to ask him, Your Honor?

Mayor Gatsas replied I don't know what you are asking, but I'm going to let you ask the question. I'm just saying that the superintendent already weighed in on this issue. He was very clear and this board gave him a vote to say let him handle it.

Committee Member Desrochers stated apparently the job is posted as of January 19th. The director of athletics is posted for a part time employee position. It is on the agenda to have discussion. I guess I'm confused by how this job is already posted. Can you answer that?

Dr. Bolgen Vargas, Superintendent of Schools, replied absolutely. The minute that I learned that you were okay with the job description that you send to me, and by the way, respectfully, I would tell you that the job description should be looked from the benchmark of other districts and what you are really trying to accomplish. I think I was clear and gave plenty of time to the board to give us feedback. The board voted to give me the altitude to either recruit a full time person or a part time person. Given our financial situation the commitment that I think we all have to sports, I made a commitment to see if I can maintain that as a part time position, given what you are facing next year. I will say that it is my hope and we are going to work very hard to maintain the services from a part time basis. Let me thank each one of you again. This happened repeatedly, where would we be had you not taken the action that you took, an action that none of you wanted to take, which was to put a budget freeze in place. Had we not done that we would be in a worse situation today. I respect, once again, and want to emphasize that some of the decisions that I'm recommending to you and that I'm taking are not because I want to, but because we have to, given our financial situation.

Mayor Gatsas stated the short answer to Committee Member Desrochers's question was you had it posted.

Dr. Vargas stated yes.

Committee Member Tessier stated in the board updates you have part time, the board updates of January 20th. On the agenda you have full time.

Dr. Vargas stated then that's a mistake.

Committee Member Tessier stated I just wanted that to come from you, not me.

Mayor Gatsas stated the agenda is what came out of the committee, being full time. It came out of the committee as a full time position. That is why it is posted on the agenda as a full time.

Dr. Vargas stated again, if it is my mistake I take responsibility. All I'm saying is that I did communicate that to you clearly. I always ask each one of you to please give me a call should you have any concern.

Committee Member Beaudry stated with that being said, Committee Member Girard pulled this off, but I was actually going to pull it off myself because I looked at the conflict there because I know we gave a clear direction to the superintendent that it was going to be up to him whether this was going to be a full time or part time position based on the budget and everything else. With that being said, I would like to amend...

Mayor Gatsas stated let's just get a motion to receive and file.

***Committee Member Girard** moved to receive and file the athletic director being a full time position. The motion was duly seconded by **Committee Member Beaudry**.*

Committee Member Connors asked does that mean receiving and filing the job description as posted as well?

Mayor Gatsas replied no, just as a full time position.

Committee Member Desrochers stated I want to go on record as stating that this will be the downfall to Manchester School District's athletic program. We are going to really do our children a disservice by hiring a part time person. The next thing you know we will have pay to play.

Committee Member Van Houten stated I do recognize that we gave you the option and we crafted in committee a full time position because that was our preference. My question is more specific than that. As I compared what is posted in AppliTrack there is a section mission. Essential physical abilities is not in the actual posting. I don't know if that belongs there or not. It is the part that says sufficient clarity of speech and hearing, sufficient vision. That is not in the actual posting. Maybe that needs to be reinserted.

Ms. Pam Hogan, HR Director, stated we could certainly do that. We don't always post the entire job description and that is why that piece was deleted.

Committee Member Georges stated for the position I know for athletics they need to hire somebody because if you look at the budget we have a problem with the budget. My question, are we able to hire the person for the money we have to pay? There is money for this position for part time or for full time?

Dr. Vargas replied the money is available.

Committee Member Beaudry stated just a question to the clerk or maybe to you, Mr. Chairman, as far as the motion to receive and file. The way I read this, we are accepting the job description. If we receive and file this, do we have a job description at that point? What I was going to do was just include, "or part time" after "full time".

Mayor Gatsas stated this job description as presented is a full time position.

Committee Member Beaudry stated but my understanding is that the job description is the same for the part time position.

Mayor Gatsas stated it has already been posted. This is a report from the committee.

Committee Member Beaudry stated I understand that, but have we voted as a board, collectively, on the new job description? The superintendent did add coursework in the area of business, finance and organizational leadership. I don't believe that was in the original job description.

Mayor Gatsas stated how about if we let him post it and hire somebody like we gave him the authority to do.

Committee Member Beaudry stated I don't have a problem, but I just want to make sure that he has the teeth of this board that the job description that is posted is what the board supports. I support you, Dr. Vargas. I just want to make sure that down the road somebody is going to say you never got authorization from the board on that job description. That's my only concern. I don't have a problem. I'll even make a subsequent motion that we accept the job description as a part time position and that way there we have it on the books.

Committee Member Girard stated Dr. Vargas, what job description have you posted to solicit candidates for this position?

Ms. Hogan replied as far as I know it is the last voted on job description with the changes the committee made.

Committee Member Girard stated which would be the one that is before us because it was referred to committee for additional work. If the committee didn't change it then what was originally adopted by this board is what is already in front of us, correct?

Ms. Hogan replied that's my understanding.

Committee Member Girard asked Dr. Vargas, are there any changes to this job description you feel should be made in order for it to function as a part time position?

Dr. Vargas replied I would, like I said, but I have never seen a job description being designed by an extensive committee. Normally a superintendent will recommend a job description, you make some adjustment and then we go forward. I'm just learning how you do business and engaging in the involvement with you. I just don't think from any organization, that's just not an approach that leads to the kind of outcome that I think we are looking for here.

Committee Member Girard stated given what the superintendent has said, if Mr. Beaudry wants to withdraw his second, I'll withdraw my motion to receive and file and make a motion that the superintendent draft a job description for a part time position he wants to hire for the consideration of the board.

***Committee Member Girard** withdrew his motion to receive and file the athletic director being a full time position. **Committee Member Beaudry** duly withdrew his second.*

***Committee Member Girard** moved to have the superintendent draft a job description for a part time athletic director position. The motion was duly seconded by **Committee Member Tessier**.*

Committee Member Terrio stated I'm just wondering, would it be more time efficient just to amend the job description we have before us to match what the superintendent has in mind? It seems like we would save some time doing it that way.

Mayor Gatsas stated it is already posted.

Committee Member Girard stated I don't want to speak for the superintendent, but I think there is a reason why he asked the board for feedback on this job description. Perhaps it was a polite way of indicating that he didn't think it was realistic, but he can correct me if I've misstated his thoughts.

Committee Member Bergeron stated I have this horrible sick feeling in my stomach from this position going part time. I hear from a lot of my constituents that you are the real deal and you are out there in the community and you are well regarded. Sometimes I just feel like we forget about the big picture. I keep talking about the School district's brand. The brand for the Manchester School District, the one that keep talking about in Concord... Our schools, our educators and our students are bringing up that brand and a decision to go part time like this is sort of bringing that back down. The reason I say that is because, to me, there could have been a vision with this to keep it full time but to either have more partnerships like what is actually happening naturally right now and actually make it attractive for people to come here because we

have such a robust athletic program. Right now we are moving away from that and I know when we took the strength and conditioning position away from West where they actually went through their money and took away a few of their sports programs to accommodate for that \$10,000 to work on their students and make them more motivated and get them strength and conditioned. Not only did we take that away from them, now we are actually giving them a part time athletic director. The message we are sending worries me. I remember I was hearing at an elementary school this week that Zillow has been reflecting raving reviews about our schools, especially in the elementary level. Decisions like this really could hurt our brand. I know not everybody necessarily will agree with me, but it is just a fact. We had an opportunity to really bring some vision to this district and I think we are basically sending the wrong message by doing this. Also, bypassing the job description like that, because we were in our Finance meeting and I was under the impression that everyone knew that if you had changed the job description it had to go back to committee. I'm confused. Did we post the job description that is different than the one that was at our Finance meeting? Did we answer that and I just missed it?

Committee Member Girard replied we didn't have a job description at Finance.

Mayor Gatsas stated we have talked about this issue.

Committee Member Bergeron stated I just want the question answered because it was discussed.

Mayor Gatsas stated we have talked about this issue since September 26.

Committee Member Bergeron stated I understand, but it was discussed tonight.

Mayor Gatsas stated it has been discussed at every single meeting.

Committee Member Bergeron stated I didn't quite hear the answer. Is the one posted the one that we had at the Athletics meeting or not?

Committee Member Girard stated yes, it is.

Committee Member Bergeron stated so no changes were made to accommodate part time. I just wanted that clarification because I didn't quite understand.

Committee Member Tessier stated I would like to not post that until Mr. Ryan looks it over and creates a part time job description. That is full time as it is posted. I don't think anybody can do that full time job on a part time level.

Mayor Gatsas asked Ms. Hogan, how did you post it, part time?

Ms. Hogan replied we didn't change the duties of the position so the position duties are the same as in the job description originally, but the title of the position is part time, athletic director part time.

Committee Member Tessier stated it is full time that has been adjusted to part time. That's all it is.

Mayor Gatsas stated I don't know what is so difficult about this. We have talked about this since September 26. How many more times can you talk about it?

Committee Member Tessier stated it is unrealistic.

Mayor Gatsas stated let's take a vote and let's move forward. We gave the superintendent the authorization to hire a part time or a full time, whatever he thought was best. That's what we did.

Committee Member Connors asked can you clarify what the motion currently is because it has been bounced around a few different times.

Clerk Leahy stated the motion right now is to have the superintendent draft a part time athletic director position. Your Honor, if I may note, there is a policy that says that the Committee on Athletics shall establish the duties and responsibilities of the athletic director so I would think that the job position would go through Athletics. I just wanted to clarify that before the vote was taken.

Committee Member Beaudry stated that's why I think it is much easier to accept what we have here, just add "part time" to this motion and we are done.

Clerk Leahy stated the motion to have the superintendent draft a part time athletic director position.

Committee Member Girard stated actually, my motion was to have him do that and bring it back to the board for approval. That was my motion.

Clerk Leahy stated that would go against a policy that we have.

Mayor Gatsas asked how many times are we going to bring it back to them?

Committee Member Beaudry stated can I just ask Dr. Vargas, what is in the packet right now is what you posted. Am I correct? The job description that is posted is basically what we have here on pages 7-14. Am I correct in that? The only thing that we have to change is the very last two words. It says, "presented as a full time or part time position" so the language will stay the same. You already have it posted. We won't have to make any changes.

Ms. Hogan stated it is the same job description, yes.

Committee Member Beaudry stated if I may, with all due respect Mr. Chairman, I would make a motion that we accept the language with the change where it says "presented as a full time or part time position".

Clerk Leahy stated we have a motion on the floor right now.

Mayor Gatsas asked do you want to amend the motion that is on the floor?

Committee Member Beaudry stated I'll amend the motion.

Mayor Gatsas stated we are going to vote on the amended motion first.

Clerk Leahy asked is Committee Member Girard removing his original motion that was on the floor?

Committee Member Girard replied no, I'm not and I'll tell you why. I made the motion after the superintendent's comments about how he believes job descriptions should be made.

Mayor Gatsas stated the amended version first and then the full motion after that. We are going to vote on the amendment first.

Clerk Leahy stated the amendment that we are voting on is to take item 13 c and at the end add, "or as a part time position".

Committee Member Beaudry moved to amend the report of committee to add "or as a part time position". The motion was duly seconded by Committee Member Terrio.

Committee Member Girard stated parliamentary inquiry. How can you amend a motion for a committee report without addressing the motion that is actually on the floor.

Mayor Gatsas replied we are going to come back and we are going to vote on your motion after we vote on the amendment.

Committee Member Girard stated his motion doesn't amend the motion that is on the floor.

Mayor Gatsas stated I believe it does.

Committee Member Beaudry stated if you want to change the criteria you can do it after you change it to part time.

Clerk Leahy asked is everyone clear on the motion? We are amending the committee report of item 13 c to add after “full time position” “or part time”.

Committee Member Girard stated Your Honor, that’s not in order. There’s a motion on the floor. That’s an entirely different motion. That is not even an amendment to the motion on the floor.

Mayor Gatsas stated I’ll ask the clerk. I guess I can rule on it. I’m ruling that we are going to vote on the amendment first. That’s what is on the floor. That’s what we are voting on. Then we will come back and vote on the committee report.

Committee Member Girard stated Your Honor, if that passes there is no reason to have the superintendent come up with a part time job description because you will have already made this a part time job description. I don’t think it is a realistic job description for a full time position. It sure as heck isn’t one for a part time one. I don’t know how the superintendent is going to find someone part time to do this job description. I think the reason why I made the motion is because...

Mayor Gatsas interjected we had one before.

Committee Member Avar stated not under this job description.

Committee Member Girard stated it is not an amendment. It is a substitute motion.

Mayor Gatsas requested a roll call vote on the motion to amend the committee report of item 13 c to add after “full time position” “or part time”. Mayor Gatsas, Committee Members Langton, Georges, Freeman, Terrio, and Beaudry voted yea. Committee Members Ambrogi, Want, Bergeron, Tessier, Girard, Connors, Avar, Desrochers and Van Houten voted nay. The motion failed.

Committee Member Girard stated move the motion that’s on the table, which is to have the superintendent draft a job description for a part time athletic director position.

Clerk Leahy asked and have that come back to the full board?

Committee Member Girard stated I would just assume not have it come back to the full board. I’ll leave it up to the discretion of the board.

Committee Member Avar stated let’s separate those two questions. They are two different motions.

Committee Member Bergeron asked don’t we have to send it back to committee because that’s what the rules say?

Committee Member Girard replied the board can override its rules.

Mayor Gatsas stated it is snowing out, folks. We keep talking this long about something we have been talking about since September 26th we are going to be here until tomorrow.

Committee Member Girard stated I will make the motion to have the superintendent draft a job description for a part time athletic director and submit it to the full board upon completion.

Committee Member Bergeron asked are we bypassing Athletics on this?

Committee Member Girard replied yes.

Committee Member Connors stated but it is coming to the full board though for a vote.

Committee Member Bergeron asked does that break any kind of rules?

Mayor Gatsas requested a roll call vote on the motion to have the superintendent draft a job description for a part time athletic director position and have it come back to the full board upon completion. Mayor Gatsas, Committee Members Ambrogi, Langton, Georges, Want, Freeman, Girard, Terrio, Connors, Beaudry and Avaré voted yea. Committee Member Bergeron, Tessier, Desrochers and Van Houten voted nay. The motion carried.

Committee Member Beaudry asked do we need a motion to suspend the rules to bring it to the full board so there will be no question that we are circumventing the committee. I'll move that we suspend the rules and bring it back to the full board.

Clerk Leahy stated to be clear, you would be suspending Administration 116: Athletics Program.

On motion of Committee Member Beaudry, duly seconded by Committee Member Avaré, it was voted to suspend Administration 116: Athletics Program to have the athletic director job description report directly to the full board. The motion carried with Committee Members Bergeron, Tessier and Desrochers voting in opposition.

14. Report(s) of the Committee of Information Technology, if available.

- a) To support moving forward with the Computer Science for All Initiative (CS4NH) and the National Science Foundation Researcher Practitioner Partnership (RPP) grant.

Committee Member Girard stated I would like to ask to have this sent to Curriculum and Instruction. I had several questions going through this, not the least of which was how does it fit in our elementary school grades in particular. To be perfectly candid with you, I'm just not sure exactly what the aim is here. We have had protracted discussions over whether or not we should embed drug lessons in our regular curriculum and it seems that the objective of the computer science program here is to do the exact opposite. There seems to be some inconsistency. I have spoken, frankly, to several teachers and principals about the work load that they currently have and I have people in the buildings tell me, for example, that they are not teaching cursive handwriting despite the fact that this board, some time ago, took an action to ensure that cursive was taught in our elementary schools. Some of the elementary schools that are teaching it are teaching it for 15 or maybe 20 minutes a week and the reason why they are not doing that is because between all of the other things they are required to do and all the testing and everything else they don't have time. We have had I don't know how many discussions at this board and at the prior boards about things like recess and how the teachers are reluctant to have a second recess because of their need for instructional time with everything that is being pushed at them. I just look at this in two ways. One, it is another thing we are dropping in the laps of the teachers, particularly the elementary school. Two, I have absolutely no clue, based on what is here, how this is going to be integrated into our curriculum at all, especially in the elementary grades.

Committee Member Girard moved to refer this item to the Curriculum and Instruction Committee. The motion was duly seconded by **Committee Member Terrio**.

Committee Member Avar stated this motion was made at the IT Committee's meeting just in support of the work that they have been working on, just saying that the committee was in support of them moving forward and continuing to seek out these grants that are available. This was all work that they were going to do with or without this motion. It is not implementing anything that is a curriculum change. It is not mandating anything of anybody. The intent, as was mentioned at that presentation was that everything was going to be brought over to the Curriculum Committee and presented there so that they had an understanding as to what the process was, what they have been doing, what they were looking at for the future. This is not an implementation vote. This was just saying that that committee was making a motion in favor of

the work that has been done and the continuation of that work going forward. This is just one step in a very long journey. It really doesn't even need to come forward to this board. It was a vote of the committee to say we like what we see, keep going. That's all this was.

Committee Member Connors stated just to add on to that, this was not about embedding it into elementary curriculum at all. We were talking about how there is a great demand out there for computer science jobs out in the field. We are not talking about developing webpages and basic things like that. This is a real STEM field that is growing.

Mayor Gatsas stated STEAM.

Committee Member Connors stated STEAM, thank you. There are very few people who are qualified right now coming out of college with it so this would be to help our high school students who are interesting going into that field to get a leg up on that.

Committee Member Beaudry stated I have two questions if I may. The first, is this time sensitive? When is this grant money available? I don't want to lose out on it by prolonging this. Asked does anyone have an answer to that?

Dr. Vargas replied it is. The person who is heading the department, this is part of some work that has been done as a consortium. It is time sensitive in terms of preparation. I think we have about four or five weeks. The other thing I would urge you to think about for a moment is that when you are applying for a grant, it is important to have the support of the board. That is one of the first criteria, particularly for a grant of this magnitude. It is fair to say that if you have a concern that we are going to change the curriculum that that is not what this is all about. Actually, this is more in the direction that you already have in place, which is the STEAM program and the STEM program.

Mayor Gatsas stated there is only one way in Manchester.

Dr. Vargas stated STEAM, which I believe is wiser than just STEM because you are adding arts to the approach.

Committee Member Beaudry stated my second question is on page 20, I'm assuming that either losing this grant or voting this grant down the district will be losing out on \$300,000. It says the dollar awards are \$300,000, \$1 million and \$2 million respectfully.

Dr. Vargas stated correct. This is a unique opportunity. This is beyond just what... Again, if you were at the committee meeting, if you didn't see the presentation, I would urge that you see it and perhaps you would be able to capture the essence of what we are trying to do here.

Committee Member Beaudry stated just one comment. If people have a concern, I know we look at all the agendas that come before the committees, but if there is a concern about a grant or a concern about what is coming up, they can attend that committee and raise whatever questions they want at that committee level. If what you are saying, it is going to go to Curriculum and Instruction at some point. I don't want to hold up the grant. I supporting the grant in Finance and I'll support it in Finance. I don't want to see us losing out on an opportunity because we want to vet it out at another committee.

Dr. Vargas stated if you are familiar with the work that is being done at the Manchester School of Technology it is along the lines to support that work. It is a shift that is taking place to make sure that our students are producing technology and not just consumers. It is not just soft, but it is for real experience that we will give our students versus, let's say, how to use a device. That is not what we are talking about here. We are talking about changing the trajectory of computer science where you shift from utilization and how you apply to how our students view computer science in terms of careers. For example, you heard about computer coding. We just got a fascinating grant from the Celtics and Southern New Hampshire University. It is to continue to support that work if I could say that.

Committee Member Girard stated I honestly don't recall this coming before Finance. Perhaps after the meeting Committee Member Beaudry could remind me when it did come through Finance.

Committee Member Bergeron stated it came through IT.

Committee Member Beaudry stated I'm sorry. I misspoke then. I thought this was on our last agenda. I want it for the record that I misspoke.

Committee Member Girard stated I'll make two brief points. This begs a question that I have been asking for some time and that is the board is presented with grants already obtained by the administration and we are put in a position of saying no to money, even though that money may or may not be in line with the district's goals and objectives. I think the board ought to play a proactive role in determining what grants do and don't get applied for so we are not presented with a conundrum that says here's all this money that we could use, but we are not either ready to use it or it is going to cause it us to go in a different direction than we want to go in. I'm not trying to take any work down. I can appreciate what people say about presentations, but one thing I have learned in particular over my financial services career is to read the documents. This document, while it does mention high school curriculum, also frequently mentions computer science coursework in elementary schools. My guess is that if we get one of these grants we are going to be obligated to do what is written in the documents and not what somebody may or may not have said in a presentation. That is something that we need to be mindful of. Then I see stuff about, frankly, political things, governors being in the position to raise awareness and here are things that you can do to persuade people in your state to move in this direction and bullet point this and bullet point that. I'm not sold on this. I think there are a lot of questions. I have consistently chafed under the idea that things are time sensitive and if we don't do this now we might lose a grant. If that's the case then maybe people need to bring these things forward to the board for a discussion that can help those of us who aren't the brightest bulbs in the chandelier understand what is going on before we commit to a course of action that someone is going to come back and say we got this money and some members of this board, perhaps even a majority, are going to say well that's nice, but we don't think that's the

direction the district should move in so we could look like heels and a cash starved district voting against grant funds that may cause us to do things we don't want to do. Having read the document, I don't believe this is limited to high school and I think it has impacts far beyond what people are telling us.

Committee Member Bergeron stated I just wanted to say that since I chair IT, we keep our meetings very limited. In other words, we hadn't one for a couple of months because we are working on certain initiatives and we don't want to have a meeting just to have a meeting. We have been asked to champion part of this. It was kind of an honor to actually do this. For us to work with the Department of Ed and just to let you know, if we don't participate the show is going on. It is quite an honor because I'm not sure if anyone here is familiar with how many computer science courses we currently offer in this district, but that's zero. We don't offer any computer science courses. There are 500,000 open positions in this country and if you go to code.org it will tell you exactly what our factsheet is for this state. 71% of new STEM jobs, in our case STEAM jobs, are in computing. This is for the state of New Hampshire. 8% of graduates are in computer science. We hear all the time from our employers. These are employers that support the district, that start things like the initiative at West, STEAM Ahead. What we are saying if we don't participate in initiatives like this is we don't really care about getting our students employment in New Hampshire. This initiative is actually amazing. 93% of parents want their child's school to teach computer science, but only 40% teach it. 75% of Americans believe that computer science is cool, but it is not even what people think, it is part of engineering, it is part of math. Some places even actually give you credit in those areas. I can go on, but basically this is an amazing opportunity with three stages of funding. We have to participate in each one of them. It is rigorous. It is a big program for us to participate in, but it is an honor. We are going to end up with a computer science course. We will actually have a computer science course in this district. It will be amazing. If it is something that you want to be presented, I'm not sure if it is something that we should present to the full board, but at this point in time it is a great initiative and we need to participate in this because it is an honor and it will bring computer science courses and opportunities for our students.

Mayor Gatsas stated I would suggest that we move this forward so that we can write the proposals and go out. If we are fortunate enough to get the money it will go to Curriculum and we can have the conversation. At that point, if the board doesn't want to move forward we shouldn't move forward. With that I'll ask for a roll call.

Committee Member Girard stated if you want, I'll withdraw the motion. I still don't know exactly what we are getting out of this.

***Committee Member Girard** withdrew his motion to refer this item to the Curriculum and Instruction Committee. **Committee Member Terrio** duly withdrew his second.*

***Mayor Gatsas** moved to accept the report of committee and adopt its recommendations. The motion was duly seconded by **Committee Member Avard**.*

***Mayor Gatsas** requested a roll call vote on the motion. Mayor Gatsas, Committee Members Ambrogi, Langton, Georges, Want, Freeman, Bergeron, Tessier, Terrio, Connors, Beaudry, Avard, Desrochers and Van Houten voted yea. Committee Member Girard voted nay. The motion carried.*

COMMUNICATIONS

17. Superintendent's Communications.

a) Budget update

Dr. Vargas stated I just want to thank everyone in the district and in the community that has been participating in the budget presentation, but more significantly, the staff is also working very hard to make sure that we have the minimal impact. Let me remind you about our financial condition. Our reserves are dangerously low. I just want you to hear me when I say that. It is my goal to work with you to rebuild the reserve because no organization that has the complexity of this one could operate on the long term basis without a reserve. That should be a goal for this

board at some point. We are, this year, working as hard as we can to make sure that we have minimal impact on the services that we provide our students and the support that our staff need. I do believe that through efficiency and other approaches that we can accomplish that. Tonight you will hear from our chief financial officer, Ms. DeFrancis, who will give you an update and perhaps we will give you a vignette or some of the work that we are doing bringing efficiency. If I could bring everyone in the organization, we could accomplish it. For example, today I had a discussion with one of the people who give me hope that we can bring this district to where it needs to be in terms of this financial situation and the service that our students need. This individual said to me you have health teachers at the elementary level, but you don't have it at the middle school level. She said to me, you and I know that as an educator you would never make that decision. I'm paying my price because when you ask people for ideas and opinions it shakes you a little bit. She is saying that I could come and recommend to this board services that as educators we all know, and also, more significant, common sense would tell you that children in middle school need the health curriculum and the health teacher, not that the kids in the elementary don't need it, but that we could shift it, some resources to that level. Obviously we cannot do everything. I give that to you as an example of what can be done should we decide that we are going to look and we are going to use an approach that utilizes best practices, things that are difficult to do, but collaborative with the unions and all of us working together that we can do it and we can get through this budget with minimal impact. Yes, you have to consider personnel issues because that's a significant part of your budget, but we are looking at everything. When I have said to you that we are not just looking at people, we are also looking at efficiencies and I'm going to ask Ms. DeFrancis to please give us an update and give you some idea of what kind of approach we are using that is consuming some time, but nevertheless, we hope that we yield some good results for our students and our staff.

Ms. Karen DeFrancis, Business Administrator, stated if you turn to page 26 of the agenda there are some financial impact here. I think most people are aware, we have talked about the \$6 million budget gap. What that \$6 million represents is our increase in expenditures for next year. Right now we anticipate that being between \$4.9 and \$5 million and our revenue shortfall, which is about \$1 million. Looking at those two numbers together, looking at FY17 as compared to FY18 there is a gap of about \$6 million. Keep in mind that that's before any kind of tax cap

increase that we may or possibly may not get. In looking at page 26 of the agenda, you can see that in FY17, the middle column, we have our anticipated expenditures, our appropriation, of \$165 million. If we were to look at a tax cap increase just on the expenditure side, the tax cap has been determined at 1.2% so that would give us a total spend next year in FY18 of \$167 million. Right now we are looking at our line items being, like I said, about \$4.9 million to \$5 million higher than it is this year so we would be looking at an anticipated expenditure line next year of about \$170 million and that's before any of the efficiencies that the superintendent just mentioned. In order to go from the \$170 million down to the tax cap expenditure budget of \$167 million, we would be looking to make up about \$3 million. Keep in mind this does not mean that this will be appropriated. We are losing money on the revenue side so we potentially might not see that appropriation. We have held public forums identifying that \$6 million gap and trying to get some ideas from the public. We also had a principals' meeting last week and in the future weeks we will be meeting, actually this week, with PTO groups and then I believe it is next week or the following week with the Chamber of Commerce so we are getting ideas from all of the stakeholders involved. We are also meeting with all of our department managers, as I mentioned, our principals and then our City service departments to identify both the \$3 million number if we were to get an increase in our expenditures and then also looking at what kind of reductions we would need or efficiencies we would need to get to the \$6 million number. We are planning to bring a budget forward. We are planning to bring a budget forward on February 13th. Again, we will be focusing on that tax cap expenditure budget of \$167 million, but want everyone to keep in mind that we may be looking to have to make up that \$6 million. Some of the things that we have identified, basically some of the considerations in closing the \$6 million gap were identifying efficiencies and we are also shifting from non-priority to priority areas. An example of that is our transportation. We met with the Manchester Transit Authority today and we are working on some ideas as to how to have some more efficiencies in our transportation. We are also looking to reduce our substitute cost. That line item is about \$1 million. We are looking to an adjustment to our staffing for the declining enrollment. We are also looking at utilizing our grant dollars more effectively and efficiently. We are looking at Title I, our Title II grant and also Title III as well as our other grants. We are working with the department managers to strategically reduce costs that have minimal impact on services to students and to staff. We will briefly talk about the IT department and some of the strategies that they have

come up with. Another area that we are looking at is adjusting for enrollment at the high school level. We are looking at managing our legal costs by reducing our legal line. Then we are also looking at other operational costs including our utilities. As I mentioned, we are going to meet with the City department directors this Friday and also next Monday to talk about their departments and what we can achieve there and also looking at all of our other line items such as supplies and textbooks to see what kind of efficiencies we could find there possibly through issuing additional RFPs or other ways to reduce our costs. I just want to give you some information as we talked about working with the department managers to strategically reduce costs, we talked to Jeff DeLangie who is the IT director and he has given us insight as to how he can reduce some costs in his department. What he would look at and some of this I'll just read, he unfortunately wasn't able to join us tonight, but he put something together for us. The following recommendations will have the least impact in services provided to our students while strengthening our position to grow over the long term. The different areas that we would focus on are teacher professional learning and then also our infrastructure, which would be our networking equipment, firewalls, switches, Wi-Fi. We would utilize a combination of grants, the federal E-Rate program and private donations which would allow access to dollars towards these areas for next year. We would be looking at about a \$250,000 reduction in areas that would consist of things such as looking a new classroom computers. Since 2012 we have increased the student to computer ratio from 15 to one to three to one. The strategy for next year would be to hold steady with the new equipment purchases and shift our focus toward teacher professional learning to increase the utilization of the existing equipment. Basically we have this equipment, but we really need to train the teachers on how to use it. That is, again, an area for next year where we would focus on professional development instead of adding additional dollars into the equipment line. We would look at the emergency notification software, which is about \$28,000. Right now there is a lack of implementation capacity so we would continue to utilize our Nixle service, which is a free service. On credit recovery, we are currently using a system that costs about \$30,000. We would look into a free system which is offered by VLACs. On our elementary school internet we would investigate the replacement of our current broadband service with a lower cost vendor offering a wireless microwave service, so a different type of service. The student information system, Aspen, we are looking at a reduction there and that's just based on the fact that our enrollment is declining and we pay for the student information on a

per student basis so we would see some savings there. Then also looking at the phone system, we would propose a change from the dedicated digital circuits per school to the lower cost internet based services, which is called SIP trunks. Again, we are meeting with all the department. This was just an example of how we have met with one particular department that has about a \$1.5 million budget and they were able to achieve potential savings next year without reducing service to students or staff.

Dr. Vargas stated I just want to echo this and thank the IT department. Notice that we are not talking about people here. At the same time there is no way, and I just want to be clear that I'm not saying that we will not be looking into people, we have to. Not that we want to, we have to. If you want to minimize and even in this situation if he was here he would say that in some areas you are going to provide even more services and also applying common sense. It doesn't make sense to purchase equipment if the people are not ready to use it or if you don't give yourself the space to provide the training that is necessary for them. As I look at the organization in my four months here, there is a lot of opportunity, but there is one sacred source in here to do this and that is that you need an incredible amount of collaboration. People will have to step in and collaborate and work together to meet this challenge. There is no other way. You couldn't do it without collaboration. As superintendent or School Board none of us came from top down saying you have to do that tomorrow. If you do it that way you did a lot of harm. We are trying to prevent that. We want to do it with people and not just throw a budget at them as could be the practice. It is a lot of work and I want to thank everyone because it is hard when you are looking at many things rather than following an approach that is traditionally used, which is called the roll over budget and you assume you are going to do exactly what you did the past year the same way. It is not the best way to do it even when you have money. In our situation it is essential that we examine pretty much everything that we do here.

Committee Member Beaudry stated Karen, this number that you have, \$167,155,387, you are assuming that the aldermen are going to give us a tax cap number. You didn't take into consideration our revenue decrease. If you take a look at the \$6 million you are saying we need and you add it to the \$165 million we really, to be whole, need \$171,239,109.

Ms. DeFrancis stated that would be correct. That would be the \$6 million, the \$6 million variance between FY17 and FY18, \$5 million in the expenditures and the \$1 million shortfall in revenues.

Committee Member Beaudry stated realistically, when you look at the \$167 million it is a realistic number on the expense side, but that's not considering making up for our revenues. We may be looking at, and I believe our revenues are down \$1 million.

Ms. DeFrancis stated just over \$1 million.

Committee Member Beaudry stated you take that into consideration we are looking at only about \$300,000 or \$400,000 coming into the district once the revenues are made up. That's if they give us a tax cap number.

Ms. DeFrancis stated exactly. These are all scenarios that we don't know at this point.

Committee Member Beaudry stated I raised this concern and I'll raise it again. I just got some more information from the clerk today as far as the interest. I would like to have somebody look at this. I would hate to spend money on attorneys, but someone in-house, but it does say that if there are any discrepancies on payments that we look at Judge Nadeau's decision. His decision specifically states that the district is entitled to the interest on school funds. He goes out and states how it should be. He states case law that whatever interest is earned on the money that belongs to us should come to it. If you are looking at \$76 million in local tax revenue times 1% and I'm assuming they are getting at least 1%...

Committee Member Girard interjected they are not.

Committee Member Beaudry stated I would say that's a comfortable number.

Committee Member Girard stated no. We are only getting a half a percent.

Committee Member Beaudry stated let's for simplicity use 1%. That's \$776,000 that we are losing out on in interest that the City is getting instead of the district. I would like to know, again, reading these because we have two separate rulings, but it does refer back to Judge Nadeau's ruling, which says the district has the interest. I would like to see us pursue that and get the interest that is dedicated to the district on the taxes that are raised through local property taxes. Again, even using a half a percent, that is still over \$350,000. Again, every penny that belongs to us we should be getting it. I would like to have that looked into and the decisions, I don't know if she gave them to everybody, I'm assuming she sent it to everyone if I got it, but it seems to be pretty clear. That's one issue. The second issue, when, Dr. Vargas, are you going to come out with how you are going to get from the \$170 million... I don't even want to use \$167 million. That is our tax cap number, but even using that, going from the \$170 million or the \$171 million that we really need to \$167 million, how are you going to get there? I want to see, and I think the aldermen need to see, what reductions we are going to have to have to get to just a tax cap number because I'm already hearing on the other side that we might be level funded and if that's the case, you are looking at a \$6 million whole.

Ms. DeFrancis stated if we were level funded at \$165 million then we would be looking at a \$5 million number that we have to make up because if we are appropriated \$165 million that means that they have made up the revenues on the revenue side.

Committee Member Beaudry stated good point.

Ms. DeFrancis stated if we were appropriated \$165 million we could spend \$165 million.

Committee Member Beaudry stated but we would still need \$5 million in reductions. I don't know when that is going to happen. I personally would like to make a motion that we send a letter to the aldermen that we get our budget by March 31 because if you look at the rifting, the RIF vote that would have to be taken would be, I believe, April 15 so that we would have sufficient time to look at the numbers and see what this district has to do. The mayor, from my understanding, is putting his budget out on February 15. That gives the aldermen six weeks to look at his numbers and come up with a budget for the School District. Giving us a budget in

June is not going to help us. If we vote and I don't support rifting teachers, but if they don't override the tax cap I don't see how we get there. If they are unwilling to do that we should know what number they are going to give us so we don't deficient spend. We are not doing justice to the superintendent if we wait until June and keep the status quo and then we get the \$165 million. I don't believe, correct me if I'm wrong, Ms. DeFrancis, do we have \$5 million in our budget that we can cut outside of salaries and benefits?

Ms. DeFrancis replied those were the items that we were just speaking about, different areas that we would look at.

Committee Member Beaudry stated I realize that, but do you believe that we can sustain a proper education to our students by cutting \$5 million out of whatever lines we have left? 87% of our budget is fixed. You have roughly 13% to cut \$5 million. I'm looking for your opinion.

Dr. Vargas stated we are going to present a budget to you on the 13th that meets both our obligations in both of the scenarios, the one with the tax cap, taking that into consideration, and the worst case scenario that we have before us right now is this \$6 million.

Committee Member Beaudry stated I don't know if someone would second it, but I would move that we send a letter to the aldermen.

Mayor Gatsas stated I'm not accepting your motion. Let these people have their opportunity to ask questions.

Committee Member Beaudry asked will you come back to me?

Mayor Gatsas replied I'll come back to you.

Committee Member Girard stated I actually have some questions for you because I'm looking at the assumptions here about tax cap numbers and I can't reconcile them with my understanding of the tax cap so I would like you, Your Honor, or if you want me to ask Ms. DeFrancis I'm happy to, but my understanding is that the cap is on tax revenue. If that's the case the City, because it is not a school cap and a City cap, it is an overall budget gap, the City, with the 1.2% cap is going to be able to increase property taxes by \$2.4 million, give or take, for FY18. Is that correct?

Mayor Gatsas replied that is partially correct.

Committee Member Girard asked where am I off?

Mayor Gatsas replied you are right that it would be \$2.4 million. However, there was a fund balance last year of \$1.9 million.

Committee Member Girard stated right, that you used a revenue.

Mayor Gatsas stated that revenue must be made up first because you don't have it this year so the difference is about \$500,000, both on the City and school side.

Committee Member Girard stated and I'm getting there. I want to try to step everybody through this. The City can raise \$2.4 million, but before it can increase spending it has to offset revenue loses so you have \$1.9 million in fund balance. We are looking at \$1.1 million in revenue loses on the school side so it seems to me that \$1.9 million and \$1.1 million is \$3 million, which means you are going to have to cut spending by \$600,000 to stay within the revenue cap overall citywide.

Mayor Gatsas stated if I give the School District level funding of \$165 million, that is correct.

Committee Member Girard stated would a better way to look at what our financial situation here be to subtract our revenue shortfall of \$1.165 million from our current appropriation of \$1.6573 million to basically say the tax cap budget, if you were going to assign our revenue losses to us, would be \$164 million?

Mayor Gatsas replied that's your assumption. I guess you will have to wait. It is a good try, but I would suggest that you wait until I give you the number.

Committee Member Girard stated I'm asking you procedurally.

Mayor Gatsas stated I'm saying that procedurally you will see my number on February 15th.

Committee Member Girard stated I'm not asking you for your number. I'm just asking you if my handling of the revenue loss as a budget cut required under the cap is correct.

Mayor Gatsas stated your assumption is correct. Just on Committee Member Beaudry's assumption on interest, if you take a look at page 37, the district earns \$135,000 in interest. Correct me if I'm wrong, do you pay your tax bill one a year or twice a year?

Committee Member Beaudry replied twice a year.

Mayor Gatsas asked do you think that the City should advance interest on money they haven't received yet from taxpayers?

Committee Member Beaudry replied the way the ruling read is whatever is coming to the district so if it is six months, but right now they are giving it to us by the month. I'll take six months. Give us the first six months and then give us the second six months and let us keep the interest in our coffers.

Mayor Gatsas stated I think you get it when you receive it.

Ms. DeFrancis asked the tax revenue? Our treasurer, as she needs it, develops a cash flow from the city. She gets it in maybe seven to eight installments a year.

Committee Member Girard stated if you look at page 49 on the agenda it shows the interest for each month and on page 50 it shows when the payments from the City were received. In the current fiscal year on about \$52 million that the City has paid over to us we have made under \$52,000 in interest income. That is another question. The final question I have, Your Honor, in this budget sheet here under local tax it shows a \$2.8 million increase coming in local taxes to fund the schools, but again, if I understand the tax cap correctly that's not possible. If all you can raise under the cap is \$2.4 million it is simply mathematically not possible to increase the local property tax by \$2.8 million.

Mayor Gatsas stated that is correct.

Committee Member Van Houten stated my question is far less technical. Ms. DeFrancis, you mentioned that we would be looking at sub costs for savings. Are we not short on subs and do we not pay less than most of the surrounding towns for sub pay? I don't know if that is still the case. That has always been my recollection.

Ms. DeFrancis stated actually, our HR director did have something from her HR group. Manchester is about in the middle. We pay \$70 a day. There are other school districts that pay that, some pay more and I'm not sure, some maybe even pay less than that. We are about in the middle. We are looking at different ideas. We have talked about permanent subs here at the board level before. We are also looking at absenteeism and different ways to maybe reduce that, which would reduce our sub cost.

Committee Member Van Houten stated we had actually been paying \$75 prior to three years ago.

Committee Member Beaudry stated we were paying \$75, but it was more than three years ago.

Committee Member Van Houten stated it just seems as though that would be a tough area to clip from given my understanding of how short we are in subs and how some people don't want to go anywhere for \$75 a day.

Mayor Gatsas stated if there is a two hour delay we dock them \$20. When I heard that, that just absolutely amazed me, that we call someone at five in the morning, can you come in and substitute and all of a sudden we say to them, by the way we are going to dock you \$20 because there is a two hour delay. That just absolutely boggles my mind how we do that, but that's a discussion for another day.

Committee Member Tessier asked you are going to bring in a tax cap budget on February 13th, Dr. Vargas?

Dr. Vargas replied we are going to bring both. We are going to bring the worst case scenario and one with the tax cap.

Committee Member Tessier asked is there any way of doing a needs budget too?

Dr. Vargas replied of course there is a way. I will say to you that the needs of the budget of this district, you need to take a look, of course, this year, but in the long term you are going to have to take into consideration some right sizing of the district. By right sizing I mean you cannot continue to have surplus space. You have to take into account the declining enrollment and you have to have a strategy. The most important strategy that this board could have is how a superintendent, board and community are we going to make sure that we stop the declining enrollment. We are doing that. You will have a very difficult time sustaining any needs budget. If I were to give you a needs budget, we would begin with middle school health teachers. I just mentioned that as an example. I think one of your colleagues recommended a work session and perhaps that what we need to have as a board and the superintendent to have a conversation and a discussion about what do I mean by shifting resources, what I mean by looking at efficiencies within the organization, what do I mean that there are certain things that you have to change. For example, I'm a great believer that the most important place that you have to start is that our

students need more instructional time. Does this board want me to pursue that? In order to do that that would require certain adjustments to our current resources that we have. There is no question that, for example, in the needs budget I would bring foreign language to you.

Committee Member Tessier stated that's what I had in mind, for example, foreign language in the middle schools. That is a need in our district.

Dr. Vargas stated absolutely. At the same time I would say to you that you have a need and what are your long term financial strategies to sustain it, right? If I could offer you one thing it would just to make sure that we should not subject this community to a year round budget situation, that we need to make sure that... I was surprised that when I first arrived here I was asked what do we do with the overriding cap, the financial dollars, that we got? That went to finance your budget gap or your structural gap. You have to look at all these components. You could make things in the short term, in this year's budget, you could make things much better, if we were to lift the budget cap that takes into account more foreign language teachers, more services for kids, more professional development, whatever that laundry list that we will come up with, more sports, more services, but at the end of the day, at what point do you then ask the question how are we going to sustain this in the long run? My suggestion is that rather than, because that has been done here before where every year you have this needs budget, that has been done, but what have we done with that? I want to be respectful. I could just bring you that budget that was put to you from my predecessor about needs. I'm asking this board and this community and this district, all of us, to collaboratively come up with an approach that is sound, one in which has the long term and strategic view of this district.

Committee Member Bergeron stated I wanted to ask you, Superintendent, if I could, I appreciated some of the comments you made this evening. I have been asking a few questions like for example it seems like my request to engage students as a stakeholder in our target market seems to be less than warm and I'm asking was it a dumb idea or something? It is really met with not much reception at all. I don't know if that is a standard thing, if nobody does it, but I just think that that should be a standard part of the budget process, ask students. I notice there is no forum with students. There are with parents, PTGs, which I think is great, and the Chamber

of Commerce, that's excellent. I just think that it should be standard procedure to check with our students. That's just something I want to mention going forward. I just think it would be a great idea. I don't know why it is not. Maybe someone can explain that to me so I can just shut up about it. At this point in time I did want to say that I'm always talking about messaging and I'm always worried that this doom and gloom of our budget going forward, which it is good to be realistic, is not necessarily great for messaging and attracting people to the district, talking about enrollment. If they keep hearing this all the time they are going to think I'm not going to go there, they don't have any money. They are going to cut this, they are going to cut that. I appreciate tonight when you are talking about things like meeting with the Chamber of Commerce because, to me, that means partnership, that means generating revenue because I don't see any focus on generating revenue. I hear about cut, cut, cut, but I just don't understand why there is no focus on areas that we can make money, how we can generate revenue. I know there are ways that we can maximize it, the way we did with IT. That is getting a little clever. I like that because when Jeff and I first met when I was honored to chair IT, we just said student engagement doesn't have to be expensive. Basically an example of that is the pilot of the student led help desk. That is a perfect example. That helps a lot of initiatives. There are some positives there that I heard tonight, but once again, I just wanted to mention about the messaging and tonight was the first time I heard hopeful things on top of that. I certainly have to tell you that I do appreciate that. It is actually incorporating a little vision. I don't hear much vision in this. I think that we should include a little vision, a little bit of hope for folks. You actually mentioned a few things of vision tonight.

Dr. Vargas stated we are going to engage students that you know in terms of the budget, at least I invited them to invite me.

Committee Member Bergeron stated it might be slow at first.

Committee Member Want stated I'm still trying to wrap my head around what Committee Member Girard said earlier about the appropriation that we have coming to us. I heard him say \$164 million as a possible worst case scenario. I just heard the superintendent say that he is going to present a budget to us on the 13th of worst case scenario and then the tax cap budget. I

know you said you are not presenting your budget until the 15th. Our meeting is on the 13th and you are presenting your budget on the 15th. Are you going to share with him before then what that number is so that he, on the 13th, because if we are talking about it on the 13th, that's part of our agenda, I feel like it is pretty important to know what that number is going to be. Is that fair enough as chair of this board that you will share that information with us on the 13th, at least the school appropriation part?

Mayor Gatsas replied it is appropriate that I share that with the entire city when I present my budget as I have always over the last seven years.

Committee Member Want stated I feel like Dr. Vargas's suggestion to us that we work collaboratively and we are all pulling in the same direction is very, very important. I feel like for a long time we have not done that in the city. I do feel, as chairman of this board, that you are working with Dr. Vargas. I don't know if that was the first time he heard that our appropriation could be that low. It was certainly the first time I have heard it. I just feel like we need to all start working together. We depend on you, Your Honor. This board depends on you. The City depends on you. The School District is depending on you. I know that you are working in collaboration with us is incredibly important. I'm just concerned about having a long drawn-out conversation on February 13th about something that you know full well on the 15th is not going to be the case.

Mayor Gatsas stated I think it is clear that Committee Member Girard asked me a couple of questions of what is the amount of money that is going to be appropriated by the tax cap. You can do the math. Bill Sanders sent a letter out. It is \$2.5 million, roughly, there about. The fund balance is about \$1.9 million. That leaves a balance, because there is always this assumption, people continue on this board to think that the School District gets a tax cap by itself on their number, on the \$1.6 million. That's not the way the tax cap works. It is not based on the City side and then based again on the school side. That is not the way it works. There is one number based on the revenues that are produced by the City. Right now the revenues produced by the City are based on roughly \$200 million. If you look at that number and you ask for 1.2% of that \$200 million it gets you to about \$2.5 million, a little less than that. That is what is available.

After you take the fund balance away from it, it leaves \$500,000. As Ms. DeFrancis just told you, if you get level funded of \$165 million you are getting \$1 million more because you have lost \$1 million in revenue. Is that correct?

Ms. DeFrancis replied that is correct, yes.

Mayor Gatsas stated if I was going to fund you based on what you should be getting if it was level funded you would get \$164 million. I think there are a lot of discussions. Ms. DeFrancis, maybe what you need to do is give these folks an exercise, what I have already done, and take a look at not only the FY18 budget, but what does the FY19 budget look like with the increase in salaries and what does the School District have to look at at that point? There is no secret the Board of Mayor and Aldermen broke the tax cap last year to fund you what you needed and that came from revenues from equalized evaluation. However, they didn't fund the City side. They broke the tax cap, didn't give the City side enough money and now we are in a \$1 million deficit on the City side that's short. Police is \$928,000. Fire is another \$142,000 that is short. That is because there wasn't enough money that was given out when they broke the tax cap. I would think that tonight a motion we would give Dr. Vargas is to do what he has to do as the leader of this district to come forward with a budget and the suggestions that he has, whether it is rifting teachers, whether it is eliminating substitutes and putting in permanent substitutes, whether it is finding teachers at the high school level that are going to teach a sixth period. He has been hired in this district. It is time that we do policy and allow him to run the district. That is what's most important. We shouldn't be second-guessing him when he makes decisions on what is best for the district. If it is based on a policy that comes forward, whether we test children more, that's where we should be coming into play. This budget is something that he should have to bring forward and say here is my proposal of what we need to do. We should give him a vote tonight that allows him to do whatever he needs to do to get that budget to come forward. It is not going to be a vote that is going to be any different two months from now. Do you have another question of me?

Committee Member Want asked could I ask Dr. Vargas a question? Dr. Vargas, do you know what the appropriation is going to be for next year if we said right now come up with a budget to present to us?

Dr. Vargas replied I do under the parameters that have been discussed tonight.

Committee Member Want stated I'm much clearer now too, Your Honor. Thank you for that explanation. I really appreciate it. I'm not happy about where we are at.

Mayor Gatsas stated I don't disagree. Neither am I. I wasn't happy when I had to veto a teachers' contract either that put us in this position. The increase in benefits and the increase in salary is about, Ms. DeFrancis, what is the number? \$4 million?

Ms. DeFrancis replied yes, because the \$5 million was basically salaries, benefits and about a half million dollars in debt service.

Committee Member Ambrogi stated Dr. Vargas, I would like to go back to something you said earlier just because I was intrigued by what you and Ms. DeFrancis were saying. Over the years that I have been on the board I have heard people talk when they come forward sometimes, people from the public, talk about zero based budgeting. It sounds like you are using a different approach then we had previously used in previous years, budgets, when they have come forward, have simply rolled over all expenses and then figured out what we needed to cut. Are you kind of in a hybrid situation or are you actually doing zero based budgeting where you are looking at what it costs to run each of our areas?

Dr. Vargas replied that's an excellent question. Thank you for asking that. I am using both. However, I will tell you that I know a little bit about zero based budgeting and it is very time consuming. You need a lot of high skill set. You also need an organizational culture that is willing to look at everything from the perspective of not doing the same thing the same way over and over again and expecting a different result. We are not there yet, but I do think that for Manchester using a hybrid I think would be very helpful. Thank you for your question because I

would like the board and your colleagues to become familiar and comfortable with the concept. I cannot thank Jeff enough for what he did on the IT side in which we are going to provide a significant amount of service for our students with less resources, financial resources, by just shifting and doing things a little differently than what we did in the prior year.

Committee Member Ambrogio stated if I might then tie back to what Committee Member Tessier suggested, I think it would be helpful and I know it is a lot of work, but we often, and I think you have already heard this kind of question from the Board of Mayor and Aldermen. We often get questions about, if you had more money what would you do with it. That question in the past has stumped up because we have just been doing these roll over budgets. If we don't have enough money to meet that budget, if we had more money we would roll over our budget. If you are breaking the budget down more than that it seems to me that maybe at least with some examples, if not a full list, you might be able to provide some answers to questions like that. If you are going to come forward with a budget that is at different levels, worst case, best case scenario or however you want to describe it, we might also be able to provide some information to the aldermen about how it would be nice structurally, it would be nice if we could implement foreign language in the middle school and this is what that would cost. If you are beginning to look at it from a perspective of what is sustainable, then we ought to be able to look at, if we are trying to improve education in the district and we know that, as an example, that foreign language in the middle school is a key piece to really achieving higher educational attainment for our students, we ought to be able to begin to talk about this is what that would take.

Dr. Vargas stated I agree that that would be helpful, but if I were in the seat, we want a plan that says here's the kind of result that we will see. For example, we will be able to... You heard earlier from middle school principals that they will say that if we have more reading teachers we can address our reading challenge. I also will say to them that it cannot be a one time investment. If you put foreign language this year and next year you don't continue with that investment then what is the point.

Committee Member Ambrogi stated I take that point. My point is more, if we are beginning to look at how we might restructure then I think we might be able to look at possible ways to continue to restructure to begin to add in some of the educational pieces that we would like to see for our students.

Committee Member Beaudry stated Dr. Vargas, I want to expand a little bit on what Committee Member Ambrogi was talking about. We always seem to go with the status quo. I think we should explain to the aldermen what programs we have lost over the last decade. I can give three or four right off the top. We had health, reading 180, our language arts were consolidated. These were things that we have lost over a period of time because of the budget gap that we had. I think the aldermen should be aware of that. Spanish in the middle school, we had for that a very short period of time. That was cut because of the budget. Those are the things that I would also like to present to the aldermen on what has the district, because they say that you guys get all the money and you just keep asking for more money, but we don't. Last month we had 140 teachers that we have less than a decade ago. We have lost all these programs. These are significant cuts that the district went through because of the budget problems we have had. That is something that I would like to have the aldermen know and understand. Their board moves around like our board so every two years new people get on. They are probably not aware of what we have had and what we haven't had. I think that behooves us to let them know what academics and what programs have been cut because of budget restraints.

Dr. Vargas stated absolutely.

Committee Member Bergeron stated I always say that when we have new people that work here, their perspective is so valuable because they haven't been here a long time so they can look at things with a different perspective. I feel like that is valuable for you, you are coming in saying why are you doing that, why have you always done that? It is a fresh perspective. I think it is very valuable and especially right now when we are looking at budgets, I think it's amazing to have that perspective. When I hear allowing you to do whatever you need, to me, that is taking out the collaboration piece and makes me a little uncomfortable that it is a go rogue kind

of thing. It is not that you haven't been here for a long time, but you haven't been here for a long time. I'm a little uncomfortable with what they may look like. I'm not sure, perhaps maybe I don't understand it enough, but that just makes me a little uncomfortable just because it will remove the collaboration unless we are communicated to the whole time. Just a couple of my misgivings. I also wanted to mention that I believe it was a proposal for citywide pre-k and I know that was to be funded. Do proposals like that coming back into the fold with you to... Save the Children is willing to fund and do some of the necessary changes to do that citywide. Are those considered as well, those proposals that we have had before us where they fully fund it? Or they have found partners that we can work with?

Dr. Vargas replied I haven't had the full proposal. That is work that was underway prior to my arrival.

Committee Member Bergeron stated it was on your shelf.

Dr. Vargas stated my understanding is that when they met with me they had told me that they had met with Dr. Livingston and the prior principal and someone in the building had made a commitment and I said, and I will say this to you, I think that you had to move with a plan. I'm a strong proponent of early childhood education. At the same time, you have to make sure that it is part of a plan that is well thought out. I'm not saying that partners aren't necessary. You cannot provide a strong childhood education without partners, but then how do you define partner and how many do you need? For example, your structural situation in terms of what a program to do, let's say you were to attach it to an elementary or a middle or a high school. In other words, you don't just enter into a partnership because the superintendent thinks it is a great idea. You vet it through certain criteria that this board is looking into. For example, I do believe a lot of things have been said about some of your schools and our schools are some of the best in New England. If you want, I'll show you. You have a great system here in so many ways. What I have been saying is what do you do, for example, with a school like West. I'm very troubled when people only view one or the other. You either sustain it the way it is, which we know continues to lose students, or you close it down. That is not an exciting discussion for me. An exciting discussion would be what can we do, let's say at West or throughout the

system, we could create a school, at West or any of the schools, utilizing the right spot, because they do have so many things going on. Even the governor invited them to go and sing for them. You have one of the best choirs there at West and you have AP. Remember, my first meeting here I said that 20% of American high school kids get AP calculus. At West they are taking those classes. How do we as a board and as a superintendent engage in a conversation that talks about the possibility rather than what we don't have?

Committee Member Bergeron stated the plan was sustainable and it did involve West. Perhaps can I suggest get a commitment to at least look at the proposal and apply your fresh perspective.

Committee Member Freeman stated point of order on that. That is a political action group that really should not be discussed right now. The superintendent will come to that conclusion on his own without any encouragement from a board member.

Committee Member Bergeron stated he can look at anybody's proposal. I don't care whose it is. Proposals like that, that were pretty well thought out and I'm just saying at that point in time were received by somebody. Perhaps it is maybe a time to look at those as well and any other ones as well, not necessarily just that one.

Mayor Gatsas asked why wouldn't we give the superintendent the authority to do what he needs to do with his budget? I would think that's the simplest thing.

Committee Member Girard stated Your Honor, that's why I had my hand up to be recognized. I was going to make a motion.

Committee Member Bergeron stated I sort of explained my feedback.

Committee Member Girard asked are you looking for a budget number in that motion?

Mayor Gatsas replied no, I'm not looking for a budget number.

Committee Member Girard stated I will then move that we authorize the superintendent to do whatever he deems necessary in order to meet currently levels of funding for the next fiscal year.

***Committee Member Girard** moved to authorize the superintendent to do whatever is necessary to reach a level funded budget. The motion was duly seconded by **Mayor Gatsas**.*

Committee Member Ambrogi stated I would like to be really clear about this. Might I ask the maker of the motion, within that motion, are we saying that we are authorizing any kind of action with respect to reduction in force? We need to be really clear about that if that's what you're saying. I don't think we ought to take that in an unclear motion that kind of implies that we are authorizing that. I think the people who are voting on the motion ought to know what they are voting on.

Committee Member Girard responded I think to answer the Committee Member's question, if we are going to receive, let's say level funding as our best case scenario, given what we have discussed here, I think that discussion is unavoidable. Whatever the superintendent comes back with, I'm assuming this board is going to have a discussion so if the superintendent believes that he is going to need to reduce personnel or take whatever other steps are necessary then we might as well authorize him to do it. We should, in my opinion, know that when he comes in in February. The motion is to authorize any and all action necessary to meet a level funded budget. That was the motion.

Committee Member Ambrogi stated thank you for the clarification.

Committee Member Terrio stated I'll plead ignorance on this. I didn't think we needed a motion. I thought it was an inherent duty on the part of the superintendent to come back to us with a tax cap budget at a minimum and a level funded budget. Do we even need to make a motion? I thought that was inherent in his duties as superintendent to already come up with a budget every year.

Mayor Gatsas stated or to do whatever else he needs to do. If it is a matter of laying people off then he has that authority to do it to come in within his budget. I think that's what's appropriate.

Committee Member Terrio asked do we need a vote of this board for him to do that?

Mayor Gatsas replied yes, we do.

Committee Member Avard stated this motion gives him the right to actually hand out the pink slips. This motion gives him the right to sell the district office—anything he needs to do to meet the budget. This motion gives him an open invitation to do whatever. He has the power to do anything he wants to do under this motion to meet the budget. He could close West High School. He could sell the district office. He could rift 300 teachers. He could do anything the way this motion is worded. I can't support this motion. If the motion is please proceed with putting together the budget that you told us you were going to do and do whatever research and work you need to do, I agree with Committee Member Terrio, we don't really have to say that, he is already supposed to do that, but if that's what this motion is intended to do, support the work that he is doing now then I would have it reworded so that it is very clear that we are not voting tonight to rift, that we are not voting tonight to sell property, that we are not voting for him to take any action on a budget because we haven't see a number and we haven't accepted a budget yet.

Committee Member Girard stated I don't disagree with what Committee Member Avard is saying, but I think the superintendent is also going to be constrained by the practical realities of not being able to close a high school, sell the School District's offices, relocate and do all of the other things that are on the plate. In the prior administration we heard over and over and over again we shouldn't be micromanaging the superintendent. Some of us were in the barrel quite often because we questioned a variety of things that were being brought forward. Now, some of the same people who raised objections over micromanagement are the same people who don't want to authorize the superintendent to do what they complained the last superintendent was not able to do. We have some very difficult decisions here. I don't think that Superintendent Vargas in February is going to come and start sending out pink slips. I think Superintendent Vargas is

going to come forward with a budget. I think that that budget, and the reason why I said assuming level funding is because the way the numbers are structured here, \$167 million is not a tax cap budget. We need to be sanguine about that. I think not only does this board need to understand what the impacts are, I think the aldermen need to understand the impacts. There is a lot of talk about what the aldermen need to understand. I think the best thing to do is authorize the superintendent to do what is necessary so that by the time the budget gets to the aldermen they know very well what the School District will look like if it is level funded. I know it sounds harsh, but the sooner we can have some understanding of what might happen and the sooner the aldermen understand that the superintendent is authorized to make it happen the more likely it is that we are going to get a budget resolution that could be more favorable to our situation.

Committee Member Georges stated we said that we would work in collaboration and that the superintendent is there working with us. When he comes with his suggestion we are here to look at that suggestion. We can accept or not. I don't think we can just give permission to say you can do it. I don't think that is the way, as a board, we can work with it. We are the board to make a decision. He comes with the situation, the proposition and we can say yes or not. We cannot say that we give him the freedom to do what he wants or any decision he can make. What are we working on? What are we doing?

Mayor Gatsas stated we had a superintendent that came forward last year before Dr. Vargas, and was it 12 or 14 high school teachers?

Ms. DeFrancis replied I believe it was 14.

Mayor Gatsas stated 14 high school teachers that weren't needed. She came to this board and asked this board if she could eliminate those positions. Asked this board and this board said no when the superintendent asked for it. There's a little more to it than that?

Committee Member Bergeron stated there is a little more to it than that.

Mayor Gatsas stated no, that's exactly what it was. If the superintendent is going to come forward and ask for something we can make every excuse in the world of why we are not going to do it.

Committee Member Georges stated I think that is the way we are supposed to work, the board works with the administration.

Mayor Gatsas stated so if the administration comes forward and asked for 14 layoffs this board can say no.

Committee Member Georges stated but we are supposed to look at if it is available or not. If they say 100 people we can say if we cannot go with 100 we can go with 50 or 60. We cannot say yes, do what you want.

Mayor Gatsas stated we couldn't go with 14 when the superintendent said we don't need those positions. It was very clear that it was said that way. Can you get the minutes of that meeting so that you can pass them out to this board and they can read them again?

Committee Member Georges stated the superintendent was on a board too. He knows what he is supposed to do when a superintendent was coming with a proposition before him.

Committee Member Van Houten stated the motion basically asks us to abdicate our responsibility to run this district as a board. It is not micromanagement. It is taking the responsibility for everything that is duly ours and putting it on the superintendent. It is patently unfair to him, for one, and it takes away from us the responsibility and what we have said we will uphold to our constituents, that we will handle that responsibility. I cannot accept this motion. It is not micromanagement. It is giving up everything that we stand for.

Mayor Gatsas stated kind of like talking about whether the position should be full time or part time as an athletic director since September 26th. I'm sure that that's what your constituents wanted to hear.

Committee Member Van Houten stated an entire budget for an entire year of a staff of whatever...

Committee Member Beaudry stated I just want to get clear in my head when Committee Member Girard says to get the superintendent to get to the tax cap number, from what I heard this evening, and correct me if I'm wrong, Ms. DeFrancis, we are looking at actually our tax cap number and that's if the \$1.1 million in revenues is made up. We are looking at \$165,989,585. You are saying that it was \$167 million that we need; \$165 million is what we have right now so you are looking at a \$2 million increase. If you take away the \$1 million that we owe for our revenues you are looking at roughly \$800,000 on the expense side that we can use. That would bring us to \$165,989,000. Is that what this motion would do, have the superintendent get to that number? What are you considering the tax cap number? I would like to have clarity on that?

Ms. DeFrancis replied again, as I talked about earlier, this board has always put together a tax cap budget just looking at the expenditure side, not taking into consideration the revenues. We fully understand that the City has to look at the revenue side. When we look at the \$167 million, that is the tax cap that is taking the \$165 million, adding the 1.2% to come out with an expenditure budget of \$167 million. We could possibly be level funded and get \$165 million if the City was to look at our revenues and say we can't give you \$165 million because you are \$1 million short on revenues, we might get \$164 million. We are unsure what the number will be, but if you are looking at it from an expenditure point of view it is the \$167 million. If you are looking at it from expenditures and revenues I guess the \$500,000 that is available potentially we could ask for that piece of it.

Committee Member Beaudry stated with all of that, that's one reason why I think that this juncture we are putting the cart before the horse where we don't even know what the mayor's number is going to be like. In my opinion, they are going to work off the mayor's numbers. Let's wait until at least February, see what's that happening. Again, I want to make a motion when I have an opportunity to have the aldermen give us a number by March 31. If they can give us that number then our decisions are going to be much easier. They are going to be tough

decisions, but they are going to be much easier to make because we are going to know what number they are going to give us. If they decide we are going to override the tax cap again and we are going to give you the \$6 million then I wouldn't say we keep the status quo, but at least we know that we don't have the rift employees or maybe if the superintendent can come in this time and give us the recognized people in the high schools that they talked about last time... That was one of the concerns that I had. They said they recognized, I believe, 14 or 16 positions in the high schools, but they wouldn't identify those positions. I wasn't willing to give a carte blanche okay to rift teachers when they might end up rifting elementary teachers and keep the 14 or 16 in the high schools. If they give me a recognized number and what those numbers represent then it would be up to me to decide whether that is conducive to the education in this city. Just to say we have 14 or 16 positions in the high school we don't need so just give me a blanket rift vote, I can't support that. I think these positions are going to have to be recognized and let us know what you are talking about. Obviously when you look at the high school numbers we have 3,100 less high school students than we did a decade ago. We did lose 140 teachers, but they weren't all high school. That is something that we didn't break down, how many of those teachers were actually high school teachers? I can tell you that in the middle schools and the elementary schools our numbers are high. I don't think we can sustain any higher numbers and think that our children are going to read at grade level by the third grade and do some of the initiatives that I support you on, Dr. Vargas, as far as our low income and minority students who need more because of just the dynamics of ELL and they need more support, not less support. I know I'm kind of ranting here, but this motion, I need clarity. That tax cap number could be everything that Ms. DeFrancis just stated, from \$164 million to \$167 million.

Committee Member Girard asked may I make a point of order about the motion, Your Honor? I specifically said assuming the budget was level funded at this year's number. That was in the motion.

Committee Member Beaudry asked so you are looking at \$165,173,000?

Committee Member Girard replied yes.

Committee Member Freeman stated I think that some of us have forgotten what Dr. Vargas did say. He said he wanted to develop a budget that would have the least impact on the quality of education for these children, the least impact on the personnel in the district, the least impact period. I'm willing to put my confidence in Dr. Vargas that he will be able to come up with a budget that everyone can work with that will have the least amount of impact. I don't think it is any secret that no matter what budget we come up with, there are going to be positions rift. I don't think it is going to be arbitrary on Dr. Vargas's part. He is not just going to be saying I think I'll rift that one, or that one. I do believe in his abilities to determine what will make the most sense. He has fixed a district much larger than ours with the least amount of impact. I would be perfectly willing to vote for this motion.

Committee Member Ambrogio stated I think I want to draw a distinction. With due respect to the people how have spoken, I really think there is a very big difference between talking about micromanaging when we are talking about small issues where all facts are on the table. I don't think it is micromanaging to ask to see a budget before we agree to the actions that are necessary to carry it out. I do have full confidence in the superintendent to bring forward budgets and explain to us what voting for that budget is going to mean. I think as Committee Member van Houten said a little while ago, I think by this motion, the way I am viewing this motion, would be abdicating our responsibility and simply saying whatever, I don't need to know what I'm voting for, I'm just voting for it. I can't do that at this point. I'm not saying that I won't support it when it comes forward, but I need to know what it is going to contain. I also believe that this group of people, as hard working as they are, they are not at a budget yet so if I were to ask a question, how many people, if I was agreeing to a budget, what is it going to contain in terms of reduction in force. They don't know the answer to that yet. How can I go out to the community and to my constituents if I can't say yes, I know exactly what this budget contains? I just don't think that's responsible. I'm not saying I won't do it because I recognize the financial situation we are in, but I think we need to be responsible board members and vote things in due time.

Committee Member Girard stated I appreciate the comments from Committee Member Ambrogi. Let me try to clarify. It seems that some are looking at this motion as an attempt to preapprove a budget. It certainly is not. Anybody who has paid attention to my time on this board knows that I am not one to give up the authority of this board and in fact have often fought to reclaim what I believe is the rightful authority of this board. Let me try to be a little more clear. In saying that Dr. Vargas is authorized to essential ensure that there are no sacred cows in the development of a budget I'm assuming, and if the assumption is not understood, I'm stating that I expect he is going to come before this board and present on the 13th, as he said he was going to, a budget. As with all matters that come before this board, we have the final authority to accept, amend or reject what he has put before us. It doesn't make sense to me that we would have him come forward with a budget and then, as the mayor has pointed out, do what we did last year to Dr. Livingston and not agree to the positions she said she could rift in the high schools because we didn't need the positions. That basically threw her budget into a tailspin. If there is any preapproval here we are having the discussion now about whether or not we are going to let the superintendent do what he thinks he needs to do. However, the stopgap on that, Committee Member, is that he still has to bring it to us for our approval. This is not preauthorization or preapproval of a budget so that none of us can go forward and say yes, we approve something that we don't know what the superintendent is going to do. A couple more comments: it has been said that our job as this board is to run the district. Gee, I have always been lectured that our job is to set policy and let the people we hire as our professional managers run the district within those policies. People can't have it both ways to suit whatever their political proclivity is at the time. As we have also been told by members of this board, some of whom have spoken tonight, we can change whatever vote we take at a future meeting if we don't like the outcome of the action that we took before. To act like we are casting something in stone and preapproving something that we haven't seen is certainly not the intent of my motion. It is to say that the superintendent should not spare any sacred cows and should do what he thinks is necessary. I agree with what Committee Member Freeman said, I take him at his word that whatever he is going to do is going to have the least possible impact on our students as possible. Based on what he has already presented tonight, with all due respect to prior administrations, I think we can all agree that they are undertaking a revenue department by department, function by function, position by position that is long overdue. It is likely to yield some fruit. Why would

we stand in the way of that by creating the uncertainty that says that the board may not approve this? I think we should tell him do what you need to, but we have the final say, Committee Member. We have the final say to approve what he brings forward, amend it or reject it.

Mayor Gatsas stated we are going to move the question. There is a motion and a second.

***Committee Member Girard** requested a roll call on the motion to authorize the superintendent to do whatever is necessary to meet a level funded budget. Committee Members Girard, Terrio, Langton, Freeman and Mayor Gatsas voted yea. Committee Members Connors, Beaudry, Avar, Van Houten, Ambrogi, Georges, Want, Bergeron, and Tessier voted nay. Committee Member Desrochers was absent. The motion failed.*

Committee Member Beaudry stated if I may, Mr. Chairman, I would like to move, due to the financial situation the district is facing we respectfully request that the aldermen present the district with its budget no later than March 31. If we can send a letter to them and if the board would authorize me to sign it, we will send it to the clerk on behalf of the board.

***Committee Member Beaudry** moved to send a letter to the Board of Mayor and Aldermen to respectfully request that the School District budget is received by March 31. The motion was duly seconded by **Committee Member Ambrogi**.*

Committee Member Girard stated I respect the intent of the vice chairman's motion, but I oppose it. Having been an alderman and a mayor's aide I understand what happens in the City budget process intimately, particularly in the months of May and June as revenues come forward. If we ask the aldermen for a budget by the end of March, we are leaving out all of April, all of May and half of June. Typically, if you look back you will find that if there is going to be an increase in the appropriation from that the mayor is forced to propose under the Charter and what the aldermen ultimately adopt, you will find that it doesn't come in March, not even close. I think, while I understand the intent, the potential is there to short sheet us on potential funding that may come from the aldermen and I think, frankly, the better course of action, is for us as a board to take the votes and cast the die that we need to cast to live within a tax cap budget so that

the aldermen understand exactly what that looks like, not the mess that we hand them, not the refusal to make the decisions, not dragging it out until the end of May or the beginning of June where they don't know what it is going to look like and there is this great big turmoil, confusion and everybody is upset over things that are unknown, I think the sooner we take the actions that we need to take in order to live within a tax cap budget, the more clear it is going to be to the aldermen as to exactly what that means to the School District and then the aldermen and the community and this board can do what is necessary to get them to perhaps increase the funding based on that. I think that we run a great risk of getting less money than we otherwise might if we follow the vice chairman's suggestion and have a budget to us by the end of March.

Committee Member Beaudry stated I do believe, if they give us a budget March 31st and in some miracle revenues go up or they make a different decision, they can make a supplemental budget and give it to us earlier to June 30.

Committee Member Girard stated no, they can't.

Committee Member Beaudry stated I believe they can. I believe it has happened in the past. We should know by March 31 what is going on with our budget. I understand what Committee Member Girard is saying. Yes, they have more foresight on revenue in April and May, but that doesn't help us when it comes to what we have to do on our end contractually with personnel. I personally am not going to give a blanket rift vote to anybody without knowing what our numbers are going to be. I just can't use teachers as pawns. That's what we will end up doing. I would hope that this motion passes and we can talk with the aldermen. If we have to get an opinion from the City solicitor, but I believe they have given supplemental budgets in the past.

Committee Member Terrio stated point of order, Your Honor. Could you clarify?

Mayor Gatsas replied no, there are no supplemental budgets that have ever been passed since I have been here.

Committee Member Beaudry stated no not you as mayor, but have there been supplemental budgets given?

Committee Member Girard replied in the prior Charter it was possible.

Mayor Gatsas stated the mayor must verify and the finance officer must certify any addition funds.

Committee Member Girard stated surplus revenues.

Mayor Gatsas stated yes, surplus revenues, correct.

Committee Member Georges stated for Committee Member Girard, dialogue will always be important. Something can be hard, something can be difficult, but we need to take the time to talk, to dialogue, to ask, to do something to make action. I stand for that. If the vice chair, Arthur Beaudry, says that he wants to ask to the aldermen I don't think it is a big deal. You cannot just go before people to make a decision. Let us try to do action. Let us try to do something. For the aldermen, let them decide themselves. Let us dialogue. Let us ask. Let us talk to them because they gave us the idea.

Committee Member Girard stated be careful what you ask for. You might just get it. That's my concern.

Committee Member Want stated I also appreciate what Vice Chairman Beaudry is trying to do here. I would love to have that number in March, but I have had many conversations with the vice chair of the aldermanic board and other aldermen on that board who say that if we pin them down to giving us a number early it will be lower, almost assuredly, than that we would get later if we wait until those revenues come in on the City side. I can only tell you what I have heard from the aldermen and they are concurring with what Committee Member Girard is saying. I'll be voting against this motion even though I understand its intent is well meant.

Committee Member Bergeron stated well said. Mayor, last year when the Association of Manchester Principals came before us and wanted to get involved in the budgeting process, and I know that's when we created the Joint Committee on Education, there were dates set out that perhaps if we did things at a certain date that would help with their staffing levels if they knew what their numbers were. Do you recall what those dates were as far as budget numbers when we were discussing that last budget season? I know that there was a lot of energy in the room to have that dialogue with us, which I know you are meeting with principals, but do you happen to recall what that date was? I have it in my notes somewhere, but I thought maybe that would be an important date to consider.

Mayor Gatsas responded I know they were talking about getting something before March 31. That is the number they were looking for. That's what they have advocated for.

Committee Member Bergeron stated I was just curious because I remember there being dates mentioned.

Committee Member Connors stated I was on the Joint Committee at the time when those were discussed. It definitely was going to be a problem for the aldermen to bring those numbers forward to us, but they were also looking at other districts that were able to do that. There are other cities that are able to do that. I just want to clarify that the motion that our vice chair made was to request that they give us. It is not a mandate. It is not a demand or anything. It is just politely asking them that we get that data ahead of time so we can prepare our budget.

Committee Member Girard stated not to belabor this, but under the Charter we do have a mandate. It is called the tax cap. We know what our budget is, at least initially, for all of the decisions that we need to make to meet the request of the principals and everybody else. If we know that we are working with a tax cap budget we should take the actions we need to enact a tax cap budget and if the aldermen give us more money than we can be in the happy business of addition and not the miserable business of subtraction, which is what this district has done year after year after year after year. It is about time, if we want a different result, we do something different.

Mayor Gatsas stated you keep looking at the red book. Did you find anything?

Committee Member Beaudry replied it states that we have to work with the Board of Mayor and Aldermen on a budget. It doesn't give specific dates. I was looking for a specific date. It does say that the Board of Mayor and Aldermen and the School Board shall work on a budget.

Mayor Gatsas stated tax cap budget.

Committee Member Beaudry stated it does mention tax cap.

Mayor Gatsas asked why would we just leave that out?

Committee Member Beaudry stated I just said we had to work on a budget. You already knew that.

Mayor Gatsas stated but sometimes people are watching and you failed to put it in there.

Committee Member Beaudry requested a roll call vote on the motion to send a letter to the Board of Mayor and Aldermen to respectfully request that the School District budget is received by March 31. Committee Members Beaudry, Avar, Van Houten, Ambrogi, Langton, Georges, Freeman, Bergeron, Tessier, and Connors voted yea. Committee Members Want, Girard, and Terrio voted nay. Mayor Gatsas abstained. Committee Member Desrochers was absent. The motion carried.

Mayor Gatsas asked Dr. Vargas, do you have anything else? I would hope that if you were going to get that carte blanche that you would probably even do redistricting because that is probably the first thing that would save you some money. Anything else?

Dr. Vargas replied no, I do not.

18. Board of School Committee Members' Communications.

No communications were received by board members. Any items to be discussed would be done under New Business.

On motion of Committee Member Girard, duly seconded by Committee Member Terrio, it was voted to recess the Board of School Committee meeting and convene as a Committee of the Whole on Finance.

20. Finance Committee Meeting

- a) Subcommittee on Finance Report(s)
 - a) Approval of the following financial reports:
 - a. Financial Update
 - b. Operating Statements for FY16
 - b) Approval of the Treasurer's Report.
- d) Approval of the manifest of authorized expenditures in the amount of \$13,996,434.99.
- e) Approval of the professional leaves.
- f) Approval of the grant report.
- g) Approval of the application for the Student Assistance Program for secondary schools.
- h) Approval of the Webster Elementary library renovation plan.

- i) Acceptance of the bequest in the amount of \$494,004 from the John G. Bolos 2000 Irrevocable Trust and transfer the funds to the Trustee of Trust Funds for the City of Manchester subject to legal review.
- j) Approval of the spring sports supplies and equipment RFP.
- k) Approval of the contract with Epiphany Learning for Parker Varney.

HAVING DULY READ THE FINANCE CONSENT AGENDA, ON MOTION OF COMMITTEE MEMBER GIRARD, DULY SECONDED BY COMMITTEE MEMBER BEAUDRY, IT WAS VOTED THAT THE FINANCE CONSENT AGENDA BE APPROVED.

- c) Approval of the City service billings in the amount of \$1,174,132.81.

Mayor Gatsas stated it is funny because I made the phone call to Facilities. Facilities came into your committee and told you what they were going to do, that they had to put an ADA accessible ramp over at the adult learning and a door. It was \$1,800 to put that in. They also told the board that repairing the fence was part of the agreement they had when they built McLaughlin because of the neighbors in the back. That was also told to this committee. The other one was the shrubs behind Southside. They were able a safety issue. They have no problem giving you whatever information you want. As I said tonight, we talked about an issue since September 26th and everyone forgets what they talk about.

Committee Member Girard stated when they came to committee they talked to us about a steel door. I don't recall a ramp. I could have missed that. My colleague on the committee says they did not. As to the other items, the question...

Mayor Gatsas interjected I'll ask Ms. DeFrancis. Did they tell you about a ramp that they need to make it ADA accessible?

Ms. DeFrancis replied the board had approved \$60,000 to go into that building over at 521 Maple Street. There was a list of things that had to be done and they did talk about the door at one point. I don't know if it was in the detail that explained the \$1,800, but they did explain or give us information on the \$1,800 once it was asked. The board had initially approved \$60,000 to upgrade that building, including ADA issues.

Committee Member Girard stated the item before us on the last committee agenda was an \$1,800 door, but we can pull the paperwork. The point of my pulling this, however, is not so much what they tell us after they have done it and the committee, I think, has addressed that, but my ongoing concern and the one that I was raising here is that for the maintenance work that they do on the grounds of the schools they don't tell us what they do. They tell us there is a guy out there for an hour in a F350 truck, but they don't tell us what the guy with the truck did. I have said that I will oppose these items until we know what we are paying for because we don't.

Committee Member Bergeron stated I think on all the services every lawn was mowed. I'm not sure if that is a winter thing. Maybe that is the type of thing. It is probably a recommended activity, but something like that, maybe its \$75 or something, but every lawn being mowed at this time of year, I just wasn't sure why that was on there. Was it last month? Things like that raised my eyebrow a little bit, something I don't know.

Committee Member Van Houten stated I reviewed the minutes from the Subcommittee on Finance just before I came and there were several things that struck me that I wasn't please with, but nonetheless, the chair of the committee and I'm reading from the minutes did not just say he would oppose it, "but I also told the business administrator that until we get that information I will not allow the City service billings on the agenda for Finance. I will hold them up. I'm done. I want my information." Committee Member Bergeron asked if that something he could do and the chair mentioned yes, it is, chairman's prerogative, one of the powers we have to determine what goes on the agenda. I'm not going to keep paying for something that I don't

know what I'm paying for. I think we have gone a little bit overboard in doing those kinds of things. We have an obligation to look at those bills and the bills that go with them. I'm a little concerned about that.

Mayor Gatsas asked can you see them on this agenda? You can see them all, can't you?

Committee Member Van Houten replied I can.

Mayor Gatsas stated so nobody stopped anything from being on the agenda. They are here. We are going to take a vote on them. They are before us.

Committee Member Terrio stated I wanted to address that, Your Honor. That is harsh, but I would say that Committee Member Girard is also on Building and Sites where the bills come and he has repeatedly made a point to ask for the detail. Unfortunately we haven't been getting the detail. I think it is exasperation on his part. I can attest that he has probably asked for this four, five or six time.

*On motion of **Committee Member Girard**, duly seconded by **Committee Member Beaudry**, it was voted to approve City service billings in the amount of \$1,174,132.81. The motion carried with Committee Member Girard voting in opposition.*

b) Other business

c) *On motion of **Committee Member Girard**, duly seconded by **Committee Member Beaudry**, it was voted to adjourn the Finance Committee meeting and reconvene as the Board of School Committee to accept the reports from the Finance Committee.*

21. Report(s) of the Committee on Finance, if available.

- a) Approval of the following financial reports:
 - a. Financial Update
 - b. Operating Statements for FY16
- b) Approval of the Treasurer's Report.
- c) Approval of the City service billings in the amount of \$1,174,132.81.
- d) Approval of the manifest of authorized expenditures in the amount of \$13,996,434.99.
- e) Approval of the professional leaves.
- f) Approval of the grant report.
- g) Approval of the application for the Student Assistance Program for secondary schools.
- h) Approval of the Webster Elementary library renovation plan.
- i) Acceptance of the bequest in the amount of \$494,004 from the John G. Bolos 2000 Irrevocable Trust and transfer the funds to the Trustee of Trust Funds for the City of Manchester subject to legal review.
- j) Approval of the spring sports supplies and equipment RFP.
- k) Approval of the contract with Epiphany Learning for Parker Varney.

*On motion of **Committee Member Girard**, duly seconded by **Committee Member Terrio**, it was voted to waive readings.*

*On motion of **Committee Member Girard**, duly seconded by **Committee Member Terrio**, it was voted to accept the reports of the Committee on Finance and adopt their recommendations. The motion carried with Committee Member Girard voting in opposition of item c, approval of the City service billings.*

22. Personnel Report.

RESIGNATIONS: NON-CERTIFIED STAFF

Beverly Toolin	Paraprofessional - Special Needs	Gossler	\$13.77
Sherry Demers	Paraprofessional - Special Needs	Smyth	\$12.30

NOMINATIONS: NON-CERTIFIED STAFF

Diane Phaneuf	Accounting Technician	MST	\$25.69
Raihanah Alsameai	Paraprofessional - Special Needs	Hallsville	\$11.77
Nathan Clegg	21st Century Club Assistant	Beech	\$8.00
Kimberly Nguyen	21st Century Club Assistant	McDonough	\$8.00

NOMINATIONS: BUILDING LEVEL INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERS

	BLIL, Science, Health & Physical		
Ellen Tourigny	Education	Central	\$2,621.71

*On motion of **Committee Member Georges**, duly seconded by **Committee Member Want**, it was voted to approve the personnel report.*

TABLED ITEMS

(A motion is in order to remove any item from the table.)

23. Report of the Committee of Coordination/Administration

To approve School District policy Administration 208: Residency Requirement.
(Note: Tabled 3/28/2016.)

This item remained on the table.

24. Report of the Subcommittee on Finance

To receive and file the RFP for Special Education Behavior Intervention Services.
(Note: Tabled 8/8/2016.)

This item remained on the table.

25. NEW BUSINESS

Mayor Gatsas stated I was over at MST on Saturday. They had an incredible open house. A lot of folks that came in were thrilled to be there. I know that not all the schools send students over during the week. I would like to find out who. I guess because there were not some letters signed or something that was signed to allow them to go in the eighth grades some kids weren't allowed to go because they didn't have signed documentation to be able to go. I would think that if we are opening up our doors to all the kids that anybody who wanted to go, got to go.

Committee Member Langton stated it might have been a permission slip from a parent.

Committee Member Connors stated I think it is a field trip permission slip. They have to be transported.

Mayor Gatsas stated I don't think it is a field trip as we know a field trip. How about if we send a letter home to all the parents that says we are having an open house and all students will be invited. There are a lot of kids that wanted to go to that that didn't go because they didn't have a permission slip and that doesn't make sense to me when we are trying to give educational opportunities out to students. I guess that's a discussion for another day.

Committee Member Langton stated Your Honor, perhaps it could be something that just becomes customary, it is something that is expected every year, that the eighth grade students from all of our middle schools would go over to MST to look at the programs so they could see for themselves what was offered.

Mayor Gatsas stated sure. I'll get back to you and have you make that motion. The other thing, talking to the students that were there, they were very excited. Last year we heard that we were at capacity level and then we heard that Memorial had 12 open rooms and we could increase our capacity by having students go over there and take some of their core courses. This year I understand we had room to accept 110 students. If we have another 100 that want to get in line then I would think that we would use Memorial. We had an agreement last year that Dr. Livingston was going to work out that Memorial could be used and the two principals talked that the classes would be available to do some core courses at Memorial. It is right across the street. I would think that that's something we would do if we have that many students that are looking to go to the Tom Brennan School of Technology. We must be just about ready to come forward with something like that so we can get a plaque on that building.

Committee Member Van Houten stated I would just like to refer to the superintendent for a moment. I did call over prior to the open house to see if we could do something to ameliorate the situation. I believe you said there was nothing, that permission slips had to happen. Is that correct?

Dr. Vargas replied actually, I didn't say that to you, no.

Committee Member Van Houten asked what did you say?

Dr. Vargas replied what we did, I asked Mr. Ryan to send a memo to the principal, which he did, which encouraged them to facilitate the process. It is disheartening to hear this challenge. This should not be a difficult thing. You heard one of your speakers tonight and it is clear that this is an area that you need students. Just recently I met a youngster from Zimbabwe who just came directly here from work and he was educated in South Africa and he is working for one of the new companies in the Boston area just because they cannot find people in the area of technology. I go back to the work of the district that we need to make sure that our kids are producing. They can do this kind of thing not just use the i-pad. That's important, know how to use your i-pad, but can you be part of the production component? That is important. I think that is one of the bright spots for this district, your STEAM program and other programs, not that it cannot improve, but if it is done well it could be an incredible force in here in this district.

Committee Member Van Houten stated you did say that you were going to have a memo sent out. I would just like to clarify the permission slip issue. Students do need to have permission slips to go from West to MST or from Parkside to MST?

Mr. Ryan replied I think it is more of an opt in type of situation. We wouldn't want to have all students leave their school without their parents being aware of it so the only way that we are able to discern whether or not the parent is permitting the student to leave school is to have a permission slip for opt in.

Committee Member Van Houten stated I absolutely agree with you. Erika Connors subbed for me on my radio show where we featured MST for an hour or so. I absolutely agree with you.

Mayor Gatsas stated it should be made easier. This is an educational opportunity. It should be made easier.

Committee Member Freeman asked is that a policy?

Mayor Gatsas replied I guess it is a policy.

Committee Member Avard stated this isn't actually new business, it is more like old business. We had talked about the course offerings from Granite State Driving School before. We had our attorney send them a letter saying you need to up your game and offer more classes. I was just on their website before the meeting started. I see that Alvirne has a class in February and one in April. Pelham has February and April. Salem has January and March. Windham has February, April, June and July and in the public classes in Derry he has a February, March, and two in May. In Salem he offers a January, February, April, May and June class. If you come to Manchester and you look and see what is offered at Central, there is currently a class in progress, nothing else booked. At West there is one class scheduled for starting in February, nothing else booked. At Memorial there is one class starting in June, nothing else booked. You can't tell me that this offers enough class space when there is a state limit of 30 kids per course.

Mayor Gatsas asked how about if we make this for a motion? How about if we ask him to come in here and you can ask him questions while he is right here?

Committee Member Avard replied no, I would actually move that we terminate the contract and replace him with another school because he has been told by our lawyer he needs to up it, he is not doing it. He is flaunting it in our face. He basically said it when he came here and asked for more money per student and we said no. He basically said I can't run the program in Manchester and that's what he is doing. He is punishing us and we need to either take legal action or shut down the contract and bring in another provider because the students are the ones losing out. Students are having to go to other schools outside, private industry, and pay a lot more and this is something that is just not right.

Mayor Gatsas asked do you want to make a motion to go for an injunction?

Committee Member Avard replied absolutely.

Committee Member Avard moved to seek an injunction against Granite State Driving School. The motion was duly seconded by **Committee Member Beaudry**.

Committee Member Beaudry stated this is one reason why I voted against privatization. This is what ends up happening. We threw the baby out with the bathwater. We had an individual that did something wrong and we ended up throwing the whole program out instead of taking care of the person that was creating the problem. We had very good instructors that were taking care of our kids for many, many years and we eliminated it because of one individual. I would like to see it, if we get rid of this guy we are playing right into his hand. That is exactly what he wants. He diminished the classes so badly now that we want to get rid of them and he will get out of it. That is why I support the injunction. If we are going to do anything, I want to get it back to our School District because we have people in our School District who were doing an excellent job who can take that program back over and hit the ground running.

Mayor Gatsas stated the discussion is on the injunction.

Committee Member Terrio stated I would like to see, for whatever the remainder of the contract is, whatever the difference is when we get the new vendor, for him to have to make the difference up between what his price was and what the new vendor wants.

Committee Member Girard stated talking about filing an injunction, usually an injunction, I'm not lawyer, but usually that stops someone from doing something.

Mayor Gatsas stated no, what that does is make him come forward and put the program in that we have asked for that he told us he was going to do with penalties right behind it.

Committee Member Girard stated my opinion is we should cut bait.

Mayor Gatsas called for a vote on the motion to seek an injunction against Granite State Driving School. The motion carried with Committee Member Girard voting in opposition.

Committee Member Beaudry stated I want to say a little bit about MST. I was there that morning and afternoon. I want to applaud the students and parents that showed up that day, but most importantly, also our teachers. It was pretty much unanimous, every teacher was there. That was a Saturday. They don't have to do this, but they did it. It was very well received and the teachers were really promoting that school exceptionally well. One thing that I had heard, Dr. Vargas, and I should have talked to you off line before this, but something about transportation, that the kids can't get to the school and that's why a lot of them or some of them aren't participating in the program because of transportation.

Mayor Gatsas stated it costs them \$8.25.

Committee Member Beaudry stated I wasn't clear as far as what they were talking about. Maybe we can look at what that problem is. For high school we don't transport and all our students pay for a voucher to take the bus to school, which is subsidized by the district. I think we subsidized that to the tune of \$13 a week, they pay \$8 and we pay \$13. We don't transport any of the high schools. That is one of the concerns that was raised by one of the instructors, something about busing the kids back and forth, they don't have the transportation. Again, that program is an exceptional program. Every time I go in that building I would have loved to be back in school in that environment. It is great for these kids. I'm hoping, to go along with what the mayor said, we don't have to push anybody out. If there are 100 kids on a waiting list and we can get those 100 students to get their core subject matter at Memorial and do their technical side at MST, we should be doing everything we can to accommodate these individuals. In my opinion, these are kids that want to go there and if they go into a regular high school I don't know if they are going to excel the way they would if they were at MST. We try to keep kids in school and not dropping out and that's a great opportunity to do that.

Committee Member Terrio stated recently a banner was found at Parkside that said "diversity equal white genocide" and someone reportedly found another banner which they threw away. First, I wish whoever did this would come forward and explain themselves. Secondly, and more importantly, there is going to be a community vigil to address this. I read the time and place at the vigil and now I can't remember.

Committee Member Ambrogi stated from four to six tomorrow.

Committee Member Girard stated at Rock Rimmon Park. I guess I'm going to bring up MST too. I would like to congratulate the school for the open house it did on Stanton Street. It was great talking to people there. I wanted to touch base on a couple of things. It is interesting to me that we are treating eighth graders going to MST to check out the high school operation as an opt in versus an opt out. It seems to me those of us who have tried for opt ins on testing and other things have been told how that's just not a good way to do it. Why we are applying a different standard to kids going to one of our own facilities than taking a test their parents may not want them to take blows my mind. I remember Dr. Livingston last year during the budget discussion saying it wasn't a matter of capacity that they couldn't expand MST, but it was a matter of staffing, that there wasn't the money in the budget to expand the staffing.

Mayor Gatsas stated it was space. They needed rooms.

Committee Member Girard stated they said they had the rooms at Memorial, but she said she didn't have the money in the budget.

Mayor Gatsas stated she had 14 high school teachers she could have moved over.

Committee Member Girard stated I was going to bring that up. I don't know exactly what subjects those 14 high school teachers were surplus to, but it would seem to me that if they were surplus in things like math and English and social studies that they would have been moved over to Memorial to eliminate that wait list for MST High so maybe that is an area that Dr. Vargas can look into as he is working with the budget to make sure that that list gets wiped out. Those were the items that I wanted to raise in response to Mr. Lehoux who came forward tonight about the capacity question and the other comments that were made. I do have one more thing about MST though. In various discussions I've had I've learned that one of our high schools, Memorial, was not allowing its sophomore students to go to the school to check out the CTE program. I find it concerning. I think all of our high schools should be actively promoting that CTE program.

Mayor Gatsas stated I discussed that today with the principal and he told me it was not so. He said he was going to get to the bottom.

Committee Member Girard stated I have different information, Your Honor.

Mayor Gatsas stated I'm just telling you that I talked to him today and he told me it wasn't so and he was going to get to the bottom of it.

Committee Member Girard stated perhaps he could produce a list of the students that went over to look at the school.

Committee Member Bergeron stated folks, you will have to bear with me a little bit please just because I have two weeks of pent up communications here.

Mayor Gatsas stated we had new business at the last meeting.

Committee Member Bergeron stated I don't know what happened. I asked at the end and apparently I missed it. My apologies. This is from last week. When I went to the McLaughlin STEAM open house I just happened to grab some assets here that I wanted you all to see. I know that they... This anti-bullying for example, there was a crew there that actually involved some of the kids that actually were bullied. They made a bunch of posters in the room, incorporating the four C's, communication, cooperation, creativity and critical thinking. I was pretty impressed with what they did. The posters there had a lot of passion. They had a lot of tables everywhere. I just had to give kudos to that group as well. Also, speaking of the four C's, this group right here, what they did, all the kids decided to draw a dog blind and have the other person walk them through it. Here's Mason's dog. She drew it with her eyes closed. That's Sarah. This is another one of Sarah's dog. Also, Becca. I thought they were pretty creative in what they did. Here is Kenzie's dog as well. That was kind of a neat team and I enjoyed stopping by their table. One of the things that really incorporated, I know that UNH helped Matthew and Ky. They had a marshmallow catapult, which I thought was very creative. They

had different catapults with mini-marshmallows. They incorporated a lot of engineering into that. It was really impressive. Antonio, Carter and Eli, the way that they did a Chinese Facebook cross curricular, they communicated back and forth. I thought that was pretty impressive as well. There was a group that was talking about the book *Wonder* and they were explaining to me about Wally and Daisy. I thought that they were so passionate about that book, they were explaining it like they wrote it. It was pretty impressive. Also, this is from Angel and it is all about making dots and connecting together. That's what they were trying to do there. I wanted to also say that I did go to one of the things for the Granite State Challenge which I believe started with 68 teams and I think it is down to the final two. I don't know where Central came in that. I couldn't find the data because they didn't fill in the actual chart. I was pretty impressed that two of our schools were involved in that. That's pretty big. There were celebrities that were actually touting that whole process. Someone mentioned the Central High School chamber choir performing at the inauguration. I also wanted to thank you, Dr. Vargas, for your letter that you sent to high school students talking about the FAFSA and how you made Southern New Hampshire students available in the library for assistance. I thought that was amazing. I thought that was great. Also, the Queen City invitational basketball tournament, I didn't get to talk about that. I just wanted to say that it was such a display of Manchester pride that we actually had a meeting after to debrief as to how we can widen it, market it more, because it is such a gem. It involves alumni. As a matter of fact, I think it is Brownstein that the gymnasium is named after a principal who was at Memorial. He was in the district forever. It is interesting because his nephew's son actually won one of the spirit awards that evening. I thought that was kind of interesting that he won it in the gymnasium that is named after his great uncle. That was pretty neat too. I just wanted to say that it was great meeting from West Jacob Burpee, and Gob and Edison Rodriguez and his mom. They just love the Manchester School District. They had such great things to say about it. They were so passionate. Talking about athletics, that was such an amazing display of so many students there from all the schools. It was just beautiful. The fact that there is a hockey tournament and there are so many tournaments there to have such a great turnout. From Memorial there was Emanuel Allesandro, Jake Santiago, Alvin Barbosa and also I wanted to say thank you to Nick Provencher and Mr. A, the boosters club, the refs and the Manchester PD. It was a great event. Central, I have to give Ansel Reyes credit. There were a couple of students who stayed around and looked for other

games and I asked why do you stay around and look at other games. He said I know some of the players and I always try to improve from other people. I thought that was a pretty impressive statement to make. That will be it for today.

Mayor Gatsas asked nothing left pent up?

Committee Member Bergeron replied well maybe one thing. I went to UNH, their 2016 New Hampshire social venture innovation challenge. I have had this discussion with a few people. I have some brochures here. What they did is they invite teams to go there, some of them are college grads, some of them are in grad school, some of them are students from UNH, other schools and they present their ideas to them. They started with 68 teams and they narrowed it down to 16. It was pretty impressive and then they present in front of these judges and then someone is selected and they actually win money to take their idea and put it to fruition. In third place in the school track, a Central High School student actually won. She is an alumna as of last year I believe. I think Mr. Ryan knew exactly who she was. Her company takes sporting equipment that people aren't using and actually working with non-profits give it to districts and folks that do need it. It was impressive. I was so enthused about this, I was meeting with Fena and a couple of people who were organizing it and they invited a couple of us back to do a debrief because this was the first year they had nine high school teams actually present as well and they ended up with three of them that were in the challenge itself. I witnessed some of the high school teams in there, but they would like to widen that. We had a discussion how to make the high school track. I just want to let you know. I met with Assistant Superintendent Ryan as to how we could do something like that. Just look forward to something like that coming. UNH will probably make this statewide. You heard it here first.

Dr. Christine Martin, Assistant Superintendent, stated Mr. Bergeron, I appreciate you mentioning the chamber choir that performed for the governor's inauguration, but it was the chamber choir from Manchester High School West.

Committee Member Avar stated this is not intended to pick on you, Committee Member, but there is something that you keep doing, and I have heard a lot of us do it, we have all been guilty, and it really is beginning to bother me when I hear there. If I have a board in my office that says thank you for referrals and it says Jim Smith and Mary Jones, that's a major violation of HIPAA law. I can't divulge people's names even if it is in thanks. I'm really concerned that we are bringing up student names here and naming student names, which might be a major violation of FERPA law. I've never fully read the FERPA laws so maybe there is an allowance for it, but can we pull back from naming all these student names here publicly on TV? When students start the school year, in the packet of paperwork they have, there is an approval sheet or an opt in permission for videoing and photographing. I think we have to be very careful what we are putting out there, whether we are taking pictures when we are in schools, whether we are doing video tapes of students, when we are talking about students' names. Many of us are in and out of these different events and in the buildings and stuff. We carry cameras around with us at all times. I think we have to be very careful that we are not violating our own policies by taking pictures, taking videos, naming names. Again, it is not picking on you, but that just brought it up because you named several names. I really don't want to hear that anymore because I think we could be getting ourselves in a lot of trouble. We are already in the midst of a lawsuit that involves naming a name. I don't want to see us going into any other ones.

Committee Member Want stated I did also want to give kudos to the McLaughlin STEAM open house. The young people did an awesome job. I had much the same experience that my colleague two doors down did. I was just amazing that the young people were able to communicate and they were able to be so articulate with me, an adult, who they didn't know and explain their projects and they were really amazing. I even had one young man who I was really thrilled to hear him say that he felt that that program has taught him how to teach himself, which I think is probably the highest compliment you can give any program, that you have taught a young person how to teach themselves. Again, my kudos and my appreciation to all the young people and the teachers at the entire STEAM program at McLaughlin. If I could just say something about MST, there is a young man that I know that goes there. He is a good friend of my son and I ran into him at the grocery store the other day. He is a junior now. I said what major did you decide to do and he said carpentry. He told me that he loves it and things that

MST is the best thing ever. I think we all know that it is an exceptional school. He told me he is making \$25 an hour now tiling. We already have some of our students who are learning skills that they are already out commanding an incredible wage for it. I'm looking forward to when we can support all of our schools to the same level that we support MST because it is an exceptional school and a real jewel of this district.

*On motion of **Committee Member Beaudry**, duly seconded by **Committee Member Terrio**, it was voted to go into non-public session under the provisions of RSA 91-A:3 II (j and l) for consideration of confidential, commercial or financial information; and for consideration of legal advice provided by legal counsel.*

A roll call was required on the motion. Committee Members Ambrogi, Langton, Georges, Want, Freeman, Bergeron, Tessier, Girard, Terrio, Beaudry, Avard, Van Houten, and Mayor Gatsas voted yea on the motion. Committee Members Connors and Desrochers were absent. The motion carried.

*On motion of **Committee Member Freeman**, duly seconded by **Committee Member Girard**, it was voted to call the meeting back to order.*

*On motion of **Committee Member Beaudry**, duly seconded by **Committee Member Terrio**, it was voted to seal the minutes of the non-public session.*

ADJOURNMENT

*There being no further business, on motion of **Committee Member Girard**, duly seconded by **Committee Member Freeman**, it was voted to adjourn at 10:35 p.m.*

A True Record. Attest.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Marc J. Leary". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Marc" and last name "Leary" clearly distinguishable.

Board of School Committee Clerk