

MINUTES
REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
MAY 13, 2008 – 7:00 P.M.
LINCOLN CENTER HEARING ROOM
FIRST MEETING OF THE MONTH

PRESENT: Mayor Spadaccini, Deputy Mayor Peak, Secretary Pelletier, Directors Tweedie, Beckman, Zingler, O'Neill, and Sheridan

ALSO: General Manager Shanley and Town Attorney Naab

ABSENT: Director Topping

1. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER.

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 p.m. All in attendance participated in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag, led by Mayor Spadaccini.

2. OPENING OF MEETING TO ELECTORS OR TAXPAYERS WHO WISH TO BE HEARD ON ANY SUBJECT WITHIN THE JURISDICTION OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS.

Carl Stafford, 71 Broad Street, announced the Board of Education Budget Workshop meetings. They will be held in the Freshman Wing of Manchester High School on May 15, May 21, and June 4, 2008 at 7:00 p.m.

Sarah Link, 28 Sterling Place, is concerned about her property deteriorating due to a drainage problem. The front lawn is now on a diagonal and there is a bad mosquito problem due to the constant puddle. She has written a letter to the Town regarding this issue. Mayor Spadaccini stated that he received her letter and forwarded it to the Director of Public Works, who will contact her.

Milt Perlman, 3 Sanford Road, stated that the student population is down 486 students from 2005 to April 1, 2008. The Town cannot continue to raise the budget year in and year out; people are not getting salary increases and some are even losing their jobs. Mr. Perlman has heard that taxes will be going up about 3% this year, but when he uses the tax estimator available on the Town's website, he has an increase of 8-9%. He thinks it will be even worse next year.

Bonnie Schuetz, 12 Conway Road, thanked the Fire and Police Departments for all of their hard work, especially in the last week and a half. She suggested conserving use of Town vehicles by sharing rides. Ms. Schuetz challenged women of Manchester to come to public meetings and speak.

Tom Stringfellow, 183 Hillstown Road, wished Mr. Sheridan and Mr. Topping well in their future endeavors. This is the 40th anniversary of the death of Dr. King who is remembered in a commemorative Life Magazine issue. Mr. Stringfellow noted that the women’s movement was started 160 years ago. He was disappointed in the newspaper coverage of the fighting at Manchester High School. Gangs are organized criminal groups involved in the sale of drugs and are not made up of just men of color.

Bill Ogden, 137 Branford Street, thanked the Republican party for following through on its promises by holding the line at a 3% tax increase. He believes there is still more room to cut spending. Mr. Ogden suggested ending the practice of allowing employees who live out of town to take their Town vehicles home. If a person chooses to live in another town, that is a choice and he or she should commute. Mr. Ogden would like to see a night crew added as Management Partners has suggested; there are many things that can be done overnight.

Joe Brooks, 601 Bush Hill Road, spoke about an officer’s ejection from the FBI Academy. He feels like he has been “spitting into the wind.” He is not attacking the entire Police Department, just officers who do not act professional. There are a lot of dedicated professional officers, but there are some who do not belong on the Police force. Mr. Brooks thanked Mr. Shanley for the time he spent with him, but stated he received a civics lesson, not answers to his questions.

Jamie Sterling, 33 Golway Street, recently became the PTA President at Robertson School and now knows a lot of background she didn’t know before. The PTA has to go to the parents to find money for things she thought the Town was doing. It is disturbing to see budget cuts when the schools need more help as it is. Ms. Sterling thinks Manchester should come together and make sure the children get what they need. Manchester has good teachers. She loves the Town and doesn’t want to see it fall apart.

3. PUBLIC HEARINGS.

A. Appropriation to Special Projects as follows:

1. Youth Service Bureau\$5,000
for summer camp scholarships to Manchester youth to be financed by a donation from the Mayor’s Program for Manchester Youth which is gratefully acknowledged and accepted.
2. Emergency Needs – Human Services\$1,000
to be financed by interest income from the Manchester Emergency Employment Account.
3. Human Services – Senior Center\$40,000
for purchase of a wheelchair accessible motor vehicle for services to elderly and/or disabled persons to be financed by a grant from the State of Connecticut Department of Transportation through Section 5310 of the Federal Transit Act, as amended.
4. Dial-A-Ride Operating Grant (7/01/07- 6/30/08).....\$53,631
to be financed by a State Matching Grant for Elderly and Disabled Demand Responsive Transportation Program.

5. FEMA Emergency Food and Shelter Program\$6,463
to be financed by a FEMA grant for emergency food and shelter.
6. Discovery Grant for Young Children\$10,000
to be financed by a grant from the William Casper Graustein Memorial
Fund to the Manchester School Readiness Council.
7. Manchester Dog Pound.....\$212
to be financed by a donations from The PEDIGREE Adoption Drive
Foundation (\$207) and Christine Murphy (\$5) which are gratefully
acknowledged and accepted.
8. Police Department – D.A.R.E. Program\$1,000
to be financed by a donation from the Wal-Mart Foundation which is
gratefully acknowledged and accepted.
9. Police Department – Donations\$5,000
for youth oriented and community based programs to be financed by a
donation from The Jonathan George Ellis Leukemia Foundation made in
memory of Randy Smith which is gratefully acknowledged and accepted.
10. Federal Asset Forfeiture Account\$3,006
for continuing narcotics investigations, equipment, and/or training to be
financed by proceeds from narcotics investigations.
11. Pride in Manchester Special Grants\$6,977
for Pride in Manchester Week activities to be financed by donations which
are gratefully acknowledged and accepted.
12. July 4th General Fund Revenue Account\$8,000
for the Town’s July 4th celebration to be financed by a donation from
the SBM Charitable Foundation, Inc. which is gratefully
acknowledged and accepted.
13. Human Services - Manchester Early Learning Center\$414,184
for child care programs to be financed by a grant from the State Department
of Social Services, and authorization for the General Manager to
enter into and amend an agreement with the Department of Social Services for
fiscal year 2008.

Mayor Spadaccini opened the floor for public comment at this time.

Bill Ogden, 137 Branford Street, noted the donation from the Mayor’s Program for Manchester Youth and asked Mayor Spadaccini if he is involved with this group. Mr. Spadaccini answered in the negative. Mr. Ogden asked why this group is still using a name involving the Mayor when the Mayor is not involved. He has asked repeatedly for an accounting of this organization and has received nothing.

Milt Perlman, 3 Sanford Road, stated that he tutored at YSB a couple years ago and it was always filled with kids. They are a great group but their space is negligible. Mr. Perlman suggested using the schools instead of searching for a place to fix up for YSB.

Tom Stringfellow, 183 Hillstown Road, supports the grant to YSB for summer camp, the Discovery Grant, Pride in Manchester, and the Early Learning Grant. He stated that DARE is important in the war on drugs and mentioned some drugs recently in the news.

Joe Brooks, 601 Bush Hill Road, stated that he was involved in the war against drugs and spoke about the hypocrisy involved in America's approach. He spoke about a picture he saw with a farmer tending to a crop of heroin, being guarded by a U.S. Marine. Allowing production and sale of that crop is as dangerous as a dirty bomb.

There being no further public comment the hearing on this item was closed.

Director Zingler, co-chair for Pride in Manchester, publicly thanked the many sponsors involved in that event. He also thanked SBM Charitable Foundation for its constant support of the Town of Manchester, specifically the July 4th Celebration.

Mayor Spadaccini recently attended a presentation about the Mayor's Program for Manchester Children and will provide Mr. Ogden with the information he received. The current Mayor does not have a direct role in this organization, but a couple former mayors do. Mr. Spadaccini has asked the organization to consider changing its name due to the controversy and confusion caused.

B. Appropriations to Education Special Projects as follows:

1. Manchester Head Start (period 3/1/08 to 2/28/09)\$10,526
for Training and Technical Assistance to be financed by a federal grant
for Enfield Head Start.
2. Manchester Head Start (period 3/1/08 to 2/28/09)\$11,870
for Training and Technical Assistance to be financed by a federal grant.
3. Manchester Head Start (period 3/1/08 to 2/28/09)\$759,652
for operation of Head Start program to be financed by a federal
grant for Enfield Head Start.
4. Manchester Head Start (period 3/1/08 to 2/28/09)\$911,486
for operation of Head Start program to be financed by a federal grant.
5. State Teachers Retirement Grant (FY 2008/09)\$771,780
to be financed by the Connecticut Teachers' Retirement Board to
subsidize health insurance premiums for retirees.
6. Medicaid Grant (FY 2008/09)\$209,575
to be financed by the Connecticut Department of Social Services for
Medicaid eligible Special Education and related services.
7. Summer School Program (FY 08/09)\$46,000
to be financed by tuition payments.

General Manager Shanley explained that Enfield and Manchester formed a consortium to reduce overhead. Funds for Enfield Head Start are funneled through Manchester, which administers the consortium.

Mayor Spadaccini opened the floor for public comment at this time.

Bonnie Schuetz, 12 Conway Road, said Manchester Head Start is an excellent program and has helped two of her daughters and one of her grandchildren. She remembers that her daughters learned but had fun too.

Tom Stringfellow, 183 Hillstown Road, supports the Head Start Program and believes it is a first rate program. He supports the Teacher's Retirement Grant and the summer school program.

There being no further public comment the hearing on this item was closed.

- C. Approval of program proposals submitted by community agencies and Town departments desiring to participate in the 2008 Connecticut Neighborhood Assistance Act.

Director Zingler stated that he will abstain from any discussion in this matter.

Mary Roche Cronin, Director of Human Services, explained that this is a Department of Revenue Services program that allows a tax deduction to businesses that donate to non-profits.

Mayor Spadaccini opened the floor for public comment at this time.

Tom Stringfellow, 183 Hillstown Road, supports this program. The State has run into funding problems and Social Services seems to be the first place to cut funds. He hopes the State continues to help businesses give back in a beneficial way.

There being no further public comment the hearing on this item was closed.

Deputy Mayor Peak asked if the amount requested is indicative of somebody already ready to give those funds.

Ms. Roche Cronin explained that this is an underutilized program; not a lot of funding is donated through this program.

4. CONSENT CALENDAR (with the addition of item 3.C).

- 3C. Approval of program proposals submitted by community agencies and Town departments desiring to participate in the 2008 Connecticut Neighborhood Assistance Act.

Six Voted in Favor
Spadaccini, Peak, Pelletier, Tweedie, Beckman, O'Neill
Zingler Abstained
(Sheridan out of the Room)

3A. Appropriation to Special Projects as follows:

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to be financed by tuition payments.
- 16A. Establish a building committee, authorize preparation of schematic drawings and
outline specifications and authorize the Superintendent to file an application
for School Construction Grant for the following projects:
 1. Martin Elementary School Roof & Library Cooling/Ventilation.
 2. Highland Park Elementary School Gym Roof.
 3. Highland Park Elementary School – Full Scope Renovation.
- 16B. Authorization for Scott Shanley, General Manager to enter into, execute and amend
any and all agreements on behalf of the Town of Manchester with the State of
Connecticut Office of Policy and Management for a grant for the purchase
of theatrical stage curtains for the Senior Center.
- 16C. Authorization for Scott Shanley, General Manager to enter into, execute and amend
any and all agreements on behalf of the Town of Manchester with the State of
Connecticut Department of Social Services for a grant enabling the Senior Center
to conduct a series of workshops entitled “Facilitating Cohort Integration and
Understanding through Group Discussion.”

Eight Voted in Favor

5. REPORTS.

A. Manager's Report.

General Manager Shanley reported the following:

- Beginning Thursday, May 15, from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. on Thursday evenings, the Planning Department will be open specifically for small business owners.
- The Town has a purchase and sale agreement for the property at 63 Linden Street, which will be the future location of YSB.
- The Charter Revision Commission is ready to present its findings to the Board of Directors. Mr. Shanley will work with Mayor Spadaccini and Director Zingler to set a meeting and public hearing date.

1. Spring/Summer Plans for Police Department activity, coordinated with Recreation and Youth Services (Police Chief James Berry).

Chief Berry addressed the recent unfortunate incident at the High School. It is a negative situation and unfortunate. The crime rate is steadily going down but sensationalized incidents such as that one negatively impact the public's views. Police responded quickly to that incident and arrests were made. There have been youth issues in "hot spots" and there continue to be multi-disciplinary team meetings, working proactively on issues involving the youth in Town. Because many of the incidents that happen with youth will happen going to and from school, the Police Department has been concentrating on safe avenues to and from schools.

Chief Berry explained the issue of gangs vs. groups in Town. There are groups with names in Town but they do not fit the State Statute definition of a gang. These groups do assault each other and cause trouble. The Manchester Police Department will not have anybody taking over the streets or the schools in Manchester. School should be a safe haven where people can learn without being assaulted. Chief Berry related some statistics which clearly tell that crime is down in Manchester. He stated that the Department is doing a great job despite the fact that it is short of help.

Captain Neiswanger noted that Manchester is not unique in the recent trouble at the High School and reminded the Board that nine students were recently arrested at RHAM. Weekly meetings are held with members of the Police Department, Youth Services Bureau, Board of Education and Recreation Department to deal with youth issues. PAL has boxing and karate programs and the Youth Outreach Workers are working from noon until 8:00 p.m., intervening with at-risk youth. This summer the three-on-three basketball program will begin again. The objective is to work with kids in a productive environment.

Chief Berry explained that by January 2010, 16 and 17 year olds will be treated as juveniles and that will have an impact on the Police Department because these individuals will need to be separated from adults. The intent is great, but it is an unfunded mandate from the State.

Deputy Mayor Peak thanked Chief Berry and Captain Neiswanger for cutting right to the chase and discussing the fight at the High School. He asked if there are examples of other communities like Manchester beginning to have trouble with gangs that may have made changes that work.

Chief Berry explained that Manchester is one of the safest cities in America. It is rated a 1 (1 being the best, 10 the worst) in violent crimes and property crimes. Manchester is about ten miles away from one of the most violent cities in America, Hartford. A lot of people in Manchester have family in Hartford, East Hartford, and Rockville/Vernon. Manchester is a leader in the way it deals with violent crimes. Other cities and towns look to Manchester; the Chief is asked for advice on a daily basis.

Secretary Pelletier stated that the solution to the overwhelming sense of fear is statistics. She stated we are dealing with a culture of children with a lot of anger and hostility who deal with it physically. That is why basketball and boxing are great solutions for some of the kids. Ms. Pelletier thinks more could be done to allow the youth to have a voice and hopes Manchester reaches a point where it has a youth council. She believes the Police Explorers are underutilized and hopes to formulate more programs where they are visible.

Director O'Neill related her experiences with "Working Together in April" working with youth. There are so many youth that do get engaged and are a pleasure to work with. She noted that a lot of people are moving to Manchester and that this community is the safest it has ever been. Ms. O'Neill said that the Police Department should be commended for a 57% reduction in crime.

Director Tweedie stated that the three-on-three program has been a tremendous success, so much so that it has outgrown itself. There has been some discussion about traveling and competing with other towns or even competing between neighborhoods. This is a great program and if it continues to grow, we have to look at how to grow with it.

Director Zingler commended the Chief and the Police force for the decrease in crime, for partnerships with PAL, DARE and for youth outreach. He is concerned that spring is here and there still is no extra space for YSB. He asked what is being planned to get kids off the streets and into safe activities this spring and summer. Mr. Zingler is concerned that an incident like what happened at the High School will occur at the mall.

Chief Berry explained that he recently met with parents of kids who have been acting out, using a mediation approach, and will continue that practice. One issue that concerns him is the influx of children from East Hartford and Hartford. Mall management is very supportive of Manchester Police Department and now has a policy that it can eject anybody displaying gang colors.

Scott Sprague, Director of Parks and Recreation, spoke about the summer camp and aquatics programs available this summer. “Hot areas” include Robertson, Nathan Hale, Charter Oak, and West Side, which are locations where children will be hanging out. The pool at the High School will be open and the park areas are available. Younger children are involved in soccer and little league.

Ms. Roche Cronin explained that the Outreach Worker at YSB will work to keep connections and the Teen Center is open until 6:30 now. Fliers have been sent out that list free or low cost summer programs that youth can participate in. Capital Workforce Partners has funded 45 spots for children at camp.

Director Zingler suggested taking laptops and printers to each school and promoting the Access Manchester cards.

Mayor Spadaccini commended the staff at the High School and Manchester Police for quickly apprehending the responsible parties and for the way the aftermath was handled at the High School. He also thanked the Judge and the Assistant State’s Attorney for asking for and granting a high bond, sending a message that this behavior will not be tolerated. Mr. Spadaccini is proud of recent actions of the Board of Directors such as funding the restoration of the East Side Rec programs in a tight budget year and the recently negotiated contract for the property at 63 Linden Street, providing a permanent home for YSB.

2. Discussion: space needs at the Senior Center (Mary Roche Cronin, Director of Human Services).

Ms. Roche Cronin explained that in the fall of 2004 the Senior Center and the Recreation Department formed a partnership to look at programming at the Senior Center. The changes have been very successful, with over 100 programs per year; three times the number of programs as prior to the partnership. As the Senior Center programs expand, space issues are created. Ms. Cronin described the challenges the Senior Center is facing in accommodating two generations of Seniors.

Secretary Pelletier believes a discussion needs to take place at the Senior Center explaining that there are currently school projects being funded and space needs at the library. The Senior Center has more programming now and it seems the response is the desire for even more. She suggested this may be a scheduling problem, more than a space problem.

Ms. Roche Cronin talked with the Advisory Board about conducting a survey on the needs and expectations at the Senior Center. The main problem is the lack of a hallway down the main portion of the building.

Director Zingler remarked that it is interesting to see the activities and needs at the Senior Center changing. There are a lot of projects on the horizon for Manchester, but the seniors are in their retirement years and he hopes we can provide activities for all seniors. He doesn't want anybody homebound. Mr. Zingler hopes there is a way to get a consultant on board and form a strategic plan.

Ms. Roche Cronin noted a grant item on this month's agenda that will facilitate a discussion between the two generations of seniors.

**B. QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS BY BOARD MEMBERS REGARDING
ITEMS ON THE AGENDA THAT MAY NEED ADDITIONAL
INFORMATION FOR THE NEXT MEETING.**

Director Zingler, referring to item 16.E, asked for a list of properties and how the \$250,000 will be spent.

6. RECESS TO SECOND WEEK.

The meeting was recessed until the May 20, 2008 second meeting of the month.

Pelletier/Tweedie

**Seven Voted in Favor
(Sheridan out of the Room)**

Recess: 9:40 p.m.

gem

APPROVED:

ATTEST:

Secretary, Manchester Board of Directors