

**MINUTES**  
**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**  
**PUBLIC HEARING ON RECOMMENDED BUDGET FY 2009/2010**  
**MARCH 17, 2009 – 6:00 P.M.**  
**WADDELL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL AUDITORIUM**

**PRESENT:** Mayor Spadaccini, Deputy Mayor Peak, Secretary Pelletier, Directors Tweedie, Beckman, O'Neill, Kissmann, and Farina

**ALSO:** General Manager Shanley

**ABSENT:** Director Zingler

**Mayor Spadaccini** called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m. All in attendance participated in the Pledge of Allegiance, led by Mayor Spadaccini.

**General Manager Shanley** said that these are the most intense and difficult conditions he has faced in over twenty years. He explained that, legally, the Public Hearing is held so the Board of Directors can hear the public's reaction to the General Manager's proposed budget. He further explained that it is the responsibility of the Board of Directors to allocate funds to the Board of Education; however, it is the responsibility of the Board of Education to decide how to spend the money is appropriated. General Manager Shanley discussed the Governor's recommended budget and the projected deficit and explained that, although he thinks it is optimistic, he built his recommended budget on the assumption of a \$6 Billion deficit.

After reviewing the Board of Directors' priorities, Mr. Shanley reviewed his recommended budget. He proposes modest increases of 0.8% for Town operations and 1.0% for Education, with a total increase of 0.9%. Non-tax revenues are down by \$1.5 Million, which necessitates a tax increase of 2.5%. The mill rate will decrease 7.8%. Mr. Shanley's budget proposes the use of \$1.25 Million of the fund balance. Expenditure drivers include salary adjustments, health insurance, and pension fund contributions.

Efforts made to limit expenditures include bidding out health insurance and electricity suppliers, freezing positions, implementing new medical services billing practices, and restructuring health insurance benefits. He proposes to freeze positions in the Town Clerk and Assessor's offices, freeze four patrol officer positions, provide alternative service delivery in the Senior Center, reduce funding in non-core Police services, close two pools in the summer, eliminate the indoor swimming program, reduce the hours of Whiton Library, contract for meal services at the Senior Center, optimize bus service at the Senior Center, reduce the pavement program, reduce the streetlight budget, reduce discretionary training and personal development, reduce part-time staffing, and reduce the size of the town fleet. Mr. Shanley would also shift costs to non-tax support sources where appropriate, change the health insurance administrator for retirees, and realize accrued vacancy savings. There has been a voluntary salary freeze by department heads and some management staff.

**Mr. Shanley** proposes the addition of a Resource Office for Neighborhoods and Families, which would mean reassigning a Recreation Department employee and funding part-time administrative support services. He proposes additional money for Safety Net services, and would like to redirect funds from discretionary youth funding to the new Youth Commission and Resource Office for Neighborhoods & Families.

**Mr. Shanley** proposes decreasing the Debt Service budget. The Grand List is projected to grow only 0.1% and there will be a decrease in all sources of State aid. Town Clerk fees, building permits and interest earnings will all decrease as well.

The Fire Fund will see an expenditure increase of 4.4%, even with the proposed reduction of staffing of the night shift. This will result in a tax levy increase of 5%. Water and Sewer will see expenditure and rate increases and the Sanitation fund will have an increase in expenditures.

**Mayor Spadaccini** welcomed the public and said he looks forward to input from all citizens. This is a difficult time for the State and our community; the challenges are very real, but we can and will overcome them. We need to be calm, rational, and fiscally responsible. He worries about his neighbors dealing with job losses and foreclosures, and his older neighbors. The General Manager and all Department Heads have decided to forego a raise. Mayor Spadaccini gave up his stipend. The Town is in discussions with employee groups about concessions. He will not use concessions to fund raises for other groups. Mayor Spadaccini reminded everyone that many hands make light work. Taxes will still go up, there will be fewer services, and raises will not happen, but if a mentality of cooperation pervades we will get through these tough times just fine. He realizes that some decisions will be unpopular, but they will be made in recognition of the times we are in. He reminded the public of the option to petition for referendum.

**Jerry Abell**, 25 Butler Road, a Literacy Volunteer at Nathan Hale School, said that the last school in Town that needs to be shut down is Nathan Hale. The children in this school have special needs. The staff is fantastic and their empathy will be unmatched at any other school. Mr. Abell, speaking from 35 years of experience managing large groups, cautioned against putting budget needs on the backs of the people that do the work every day.

**Lew Kelley**, 146 Hamilton Drive, said he is looking to the Board of Directors to find a way to make sure Manchester does not shortchange the children; they are our future. He urged the Board to find money to make sure the school system does not deteriorate. Connecticut has the largest achievement gap in the country and Manchester is the number one Town cited for over identifying special education kids, especially kids of color. This means that extra money is coming into the budget. Mr. Kelley doesn't know how the school system will work without an Equity Department.

**Bruce Sheftel**, 24 Farm Drive, spoke about the Senior Center Food Program. He enjoys the meals currently being provided and does not like the idea of the meals coming from Hartford. He and several other Senior Center participants sampled a meal yesterday and it was unsatisfactory. If the Senior Center makes this change, he anticipates members leaving the Senior Center.

**Beverly and Richard Witham**, 10 Canterbury Street, said that Mr. Sheftel's comments represented their thoughts as well.

**Yolanda Rodriguez**, 38 Dougherty Street, said she is highly disturbed by the proposed education budget cuts. Each plan proposed eliminates the Equity Department and she wondered how anyone dared touch that department with 50% of the children in Manchester being children of color. Ms. Kearney is the only voice for Hispanics and African Americans. She spoke about a situation with her son and explained that the Board of Education did not have anyone capable of investigating her complaint. Ms. Kearney performed the investigation and put recommendations in place to protect her son. She urged the Board to keep Ms. Kearney as the Equity Supervisor.

**Lynn Wilson**, 12 Oakland Street, said she is appalled that cutting Whiton Library's hours, closing Nathan Hale School and two pools is even being considered. Whiton has unlimited parking close to the library, is close to Robertson School and Robertson Park, and has wonderful morning programs. She wondered why the Town would deprive the North end of the use of the library. If Nathan Hale School is closed, that will displace 300 students, in addition to the 180 new students from the new development on New State Road. Pools will give the children something constructive to do now that summer camp is too expensive. Ms. Wilson said that taxpayers will be hurt by these decisions.

**Sarah Edwards**, 329 Kennedy Road, urged the Board of Directors to fully fund the Board of Education budget. Nathan Hale School is the poorest school in Manchester.

**Sierra Edwards**, 329 Kennedy Road, said she does not want Nathan Hale School to close. If it is closed, more buses will need to be provided to transport students to their new schools. Many families in the community do not have a car and Nathan Hale is very convenient. She asked what would happen to the 50 staff members if the school closed.

**Dot Brindamour**, 6 Morse Road, said that Nathan Hale School should stay open. She said she thought the Town was receiving a grant for a place for children to go after school and now the Town will have to bus students there. Ms. Brindamour said that replacing the meals at the Senior Center with the meals from Hartford is questionable. She said the 50-65 year old group should be separated from the 65 and older seniors. The younger group can easily go to the Recreation Building.

**Lance Hocking**, 27 Grant Road, explained that his doctor suggesting he take up swimming for physical rehabilitation. He uses Waddell pool when it is open in the summer and uses the High School pool the rest of the year. This is a great benefit and he would hate to see it unavailable. Looking at Mr. Shanley's presentation, it seems senior citizens are taking a big hit. Senior citizens are becoming a larger part of our population.

**Jessica Moulton**, 35 Kenwood Drive, expressed concern about teachers having over 30 children in their classrooms. Her son has a 1-on-1 Para who, if lost, will force her family to go out of Town.

**Dorothy Amanatides**, 43 Edison Road, spoke on behalf of the Nathan Hale community. She read the definition of the word community and said that Nathan Hale's children are the foundation of the community. The staff arrives every day to lead, encourage, and support the children. Relationships are not built overnight. The school brings families together on many levels. She urged the Board to find other means to save the Town money.

**Melissa Dumont**, 9 Hendee Road, said that education is not a political issue. The fact that the Board of Education and the Board of Directors are separate and different boards is very unfortunate. She rarely sees a member of the Board of Directors present at a Board of Education meeting. Perhaps if they did attend, they would see how catastrophic a 1% increase would be to the children of Manchester. She said that while the Board of Directors does not dictate what is done with money allocated to the Board of Education, it does tie its hands with the meager amount allocated. Ms. Dumont thinks closing Nathan Hale School is a bad idea. Closing the pools is also a bad idea, especially after raising the rates for summer camp.

**Tom Alexander**, President of Manchester Education Association, spoke on behalf of Manchester's teachers. The Manager's budget proposal will set back the education system's progress. The Board of Education's budget alternatives risk teacher layoffs and increased class sizes. Closing an elementary school will affect all nine remaining elementary school as well as property values in Town. He asked the Board of Directors to support the Superintendent's proposal. The District cannot maintain its current level of education without funds.

**Michael Pohl**, 157 Brookfield Street, believes the cuts suggested will hurt the community and the school system. He expressed concerns about a statement made by Mayor Spadaccini that the Manager's budget is a good start. Mr. Pohl asked for a second opportunity to comment on the budget once the Majority's budget is released.

**Mel Siebold**, 107 Tracy Drive, is against cutting the swimming at the High School. He listed the many groups who make use of those pools and suggested getting the people involved together to discuss some options.

**Jenn DiMaso**, 131 Bolton Street, works for MELC which runs the before and after school program at Nathan Hale School. If the Board of Directors does not accept the Board of Education's budget, it will be a rocky road for these children. The requested 3.5% will maintain the current level of services. She pointed out that homebuyers pay attention to schools and services when deciding to purchase a home. She thinks that the message the General Manager's budget is sending is that education is not valued.

**Alice Obermeier**, 54 Somerset Drive, spoke on behalf of the Senior Center and concurs with what was said by other members. She tried one of the meals from CRT and it was terrible. The

food is cooked 4-6 hours before it is served. The Seniors have not been presented with an alternative, such as raising the lunch prices or increased membership fees.

**David Mauldin**, 500 Porter Street, is opposed to the proposal to reduce nighttime staffing in the Fire Department. Reducing staff will require the Department to shift firefighting tactics. In the last 30 years, all fatal fires occurred at night. In 1990, the Department had 15 firefighters per shift and there were 3,793 requests for service. In 2008, there were over 8,000 requests for service with only 16 firefighters per shift. At least one Company is on a call 23 hours out of the day. To keep 16 firefighters on each shift, the average taxpayer will see a tax increase of \$5.45 per year, or \$0.46 per month.

**Dennis Brenner**, 100 Hampton Drive, spoke about the economy and the \$6 Billion deficit in the State's budget, the layoffs, the 18 banks that have defaulted since January 1, 2009, the 67 homes in foreclosure in Manchester, and 1.5 million homes in foreclosure in this country. People don't like to see the brakes put on education spending, but the children need to know about budgets and how to adjust in tough times. Mr. Brenner said the Manager's proposed budget is a good budget and he supports a budget with no more than a 1% increase.

**Richard Blade**, 63 Glenwood Street, understands the economic situation but does not think the children should have to pay for it. He said people are looking for accountability and transparency. Education is for all kids, not just white or black. Manchester has the opportunity to lead the State into a great future.

**Michael Stebe**, 36 Clinton Street, noted that the Board of Education did not ask to increase its programming, just keep the current programs running; it asked to maintain services. Schools have made gains over the last couple years and those will disappear without the proper funding. Mr. Stebe is concerned with the proposed closing of Nathan Hale School as 90-95% of its students walk to school. He sees the Manager's budget tilting away from quality of life issues and listed the cut in hours at Whiton Library, closing 2 pools, defunding police positions, defunding non-essential police workers, and cutting the number of evening firefighters as examples.

**Grahame Slogesky**, 17 Cumberland Street, said she is opposed to portions of the General Manager's budget. She is alarmed that class sizes could get even bigger with the closing of Nathan Hale School. She is opposed to limiting Whiton Library's hours. She does not feel safe going to Mary Cheney Library because of the people that loiter there and the proposed hours of Whiton are all while she is at work. Ms. Slogesky is opposed to the discontinuation of indoor swimming lessons and closing the pools.

**Aaliyah Blade**, 63 Glenwood Street, works as a tutor at Washington Media Arts and is concerned about social justice. She appreciates the Manager's efforts with the budget, but is concerned there will not be enough strategic programs available. She expressed concern that the Board of Education's budget has a hidden agenda. Closing a school where 70% of the children are children of color is a concern, as is elimination of the Equity Coordinator. A significant

number of citizens will be affected by budget cuts, especially senior citizens and students of color. Ms. Blade stated that a budget based on property taxes is archaic.

**Lillian Vincent**, 65 Mountain Road, said there were 65 signatures in the suggestion box at the Senior Center regarding the lunch program. She said the proposed lunch program is awful and asked that things be kept as they are.

**Michele Althoff**, 465 Buckland Hills Drive, #26211, a new resident to Manchester, said that we are in economic times like we have never seen. She sees broken situations in the schools and in the community. She suggested taking another look at the budget with a “can do” attitude. Ms. Althoff said that no matter what these tough economic times bring, we will thrive.

**Peter Boucher**, 190 Porter Street, is against closing the indoor swim facilities. One of the things that enticed him to move to Manchester was the depth of the Recreation Department. He and his family are active users of the pools. He urged the Board not to eliminate this, rather look for ways to maintain the program. He welcomed the opportunity to assist the Town of Manchester to find ways to keep the pool open.

**Douglas Camp**, 125 Hampton Drive, has one child in school and two more who will be soon. He doesn't think one person in the room wants to see a school close. Mr. Camp read a flier that came home with his son that he thinks is misleading. He would like to know if the flyer was authorized for distribution like the rest of the flyers sent home from school. Mr. Camp said that a 1% increase is a good budget and appreciates all the work that has gone into making some tough decisions. The Board of Education is getting a \$1 Million increase and if that isn't good enough, it will have to make some tough decisions.

**Carolyn Edwards**, 41 Ferguson Road, said she hopes Nathan Hale School will stay open and that the Equity Department will remain intact.

**Tom Stringfellow**, 183 Hillstown Road, said he supports Mr. Pellegrini and his assistant with their CDBG efforts. He was disturbed by the comments made about Section 8 and fraud. Mr. Stringfellow hopes 2 more police cruisers are added; the Town needs more patrols. He would like to see the 16<sup>th</sup> overnight position kept in the Fire Department as well. Ms. Kearney's position in Central Office is vital. The Town is changing demographically and her position is vital in dealing with the issue of good education.

**Matthew Galligan**, 22 Packard Street, thanked those involved in working on the budget proposal. We are in much worse economic circumstances since he spoke in 2008. Wages have been lost to layoffs and frozen salaries. Although he enjoys swimming at Verplanck, the discomfort of not being able to swim in July is nothing compared to not being able to stretch a dollar further. People cannot afford to pay more taxes at this time.

**Kenneth Haginow**, 111 Olcott Street, said that his taxes have increased dramatically due to postponed revaluation. The hardest hit is the middle class; the Manchester resident that lives in the Cape Cod has born the brunt of the tax increases. He said it is time for the Town government

to live within its means. The largest portion of the Town budget is education. He said the High School graduation should be held at the High School.

**Joseph DePasqua**, 17 Castle Road, was upset to read in the newspaper about the possibility of closing Nathan Hale School. This, and closing the pools, will affect the poor in Manchester. He wondered if eliminating the Equity position is retribution from what happened in the fall. We cannot lose a person of color who is the moral conscience of this town.

**Jackie Madore**, 13 Centerfield Street, said that the recommended budget and the Board of Directors' priorities are askew. She cited several examples where the goals of the Board and the recommended budget do not meet. Most of the cuts affect the children of Manchester and Ms. Madore asked the Board to reconsider and fund the Board of Education, the pools, and the library.

**Curtisea Anderson**, 31 Ashworth Street, Nathan Hale PTA President, said she was happy to hear that the rest of the community believes in Nathan Hale School. She is disgusted and angry that so many people had to come out to speak about the budget. She understands times are hard, but education is not a gift. She chose to send her children to Nathan Hale because she thought they would be safe there.

**John Tsokalas**, 38 Gardner Street, spoke in support of staffing the Fire Department. Further restraints completely contradict the nationally recognized standards. The community determines through growth what it requires. Sometimes, as a result of bad weather, calls for service are stacked. Each call requires a minimum of three people. When there is a structure fire, all Companies are needed. Mr. Tsokalas asked the Board of Directors to reconsider reducing staffing in the Fire Department. The men and women of the Fire Department unselfishly continue to provide protection to Manchester.

**Bill Ogden**, 137 Branford Street, believes the threat of closing Nathan Hale School is nothing but subterfuge. He thinks the Board of Education has no intention of closing this school. It just hired a person for \$85,000 per year. People take home automobiles for personal use. Before the Town closes a pool, it should take cars away from people that work for the Town and live out of Town. Mr. Ogden said the Town spends \$35,000 to keep the kids away from the Library and all kinds of money at the Spruce Street Fire Station. He doesn't think the Board of Directors knows how many people the Fire House will hold. Mr. Ogden asked if anybody has figured out how much it would cost to bus Nathan Hale students to other schools. He admonished the community to stop taking about black and white and get to the facts.

**Mary LeRoux**, 50 Hemlock St., #1, does not think closing a school is the way to go. Children of this Town deserve better. If 30 children are going to be put in a classroom, we are denying children the opportunity they deserve. She spoke against closing Nathan Hale School and reducing the night staff at the Fire Department.

**Terry Werkhoven**, 88 Santina Drive, said that closing Nathan Hale School is not the way to address the issue of reducing the budget. A Board of Education member said that closing Nathan

Hale School will allow for full-day Kindergarten to be created. He is against creating another program by closing a school. Mr. Werkhoven agrees with moving High School graduation back to the High School. For 16 years, the Board of Education spent \$20,000 per year on graduation at another location. Mr. Werkhoven spoke about the leak in the roof at Bennet School and said that the manufacturer should resolve the conditions.

**Donna Donnelly**, 160 Saddlehill Road, spoke in favor of an increase in the proposed Board of Education budget. She would like to Town to make tough decisions where children come first.

**Gerry Guay**, 20 Jenny Cliff, said he believes the proposed budget is fair with the present state of the economy and suggested that even more cuts should be found. He noted that East Hartford adopted a 0% increase and asked why Manchester could not do the same. Mr. Guay believes that the Superintendent's suggestion to close Nathan Hale School is a scare tactic to energize teachers and parents to fight budget cuts. He appreciates that the Department Heads, the General Manager and the Superintendent agreed to forego pay raises. We can get through this tough time if everyone maintains a cooperative effort.

**Stephanie Knybel**, 138 Bobby Lane, would like to see the Fire Department staff remain stable. The fire trucks were a welcome sight in the early morning when her son had a seizure. The Board of Education has good teachers. The Superintendent suggested three plans for budget cuts, only one of which will close Nathan Hale School. She thinks it is shameful to think the Board of Education administration put the Equity position on the line for retaliation. Ms. Knybel thinks that bringing graduation back to the High School is a great thing. She is against reducing the hours at Whiton Library and against closing the two pools in the most needy areas. After listening to the Senior Citizens speak, she thinks the Senior Center needs to keep the food system it currently has.

**Scott Aiken**, 92 Laurel Street, thanked the Directors, the General Manager and the Department Heads. He feels like he is being hit over the head with the economy and hopes everyone remembers we are all in this together. He is tired of seeing partisan vendettas; they will not help either side. Hearing about closing a school was a "gut check" for him. The Superintendent says it will take \$1.34 Million to keep the school open. That is \$58.89 per year for the average taxpayer. If unions in Town will make concessions, he is willing to make sacrifices to keep the school open. Mr. Aiken said it is time for the Board of Education to do an efficiency study. He asked the Board of Directors not to cut off its nose to spite its face. Citizens are looking for pragmatism, transparency (especially from the Board of Education), open-mindedness, respectful debate, and the willingness to break rank.

**Marvourine Burgoyne**, 20 Leo J. Lane, has recently begun going to the Senior Center for the wide range of free programs. She spoke against cutting the hours at Whiton Library. She is concerned for her safety at Mary Cheney Library and thinks the parking situation there is difficult.

**David Dumaine**, 86 Tracy Drive, registered his complaint about the day chosen for this meeting. The priorities of the Board of Directors are not being served by reducing street lights, reducing

service to roads and infrastructure, closing schools, reducing hours at Whiton Library and closing public pools. The average taxpayer pays between \$4,500 and \$5,000 in taxes per year. A 1% increase would cost the average taxpayer just under \$1.00 per week. By increasing the budget by 1% we would allow for a better and safer community.

**Kelly Juleson**, 208 Main Street, thinks Manchester needs to prioritize its values, specifically with regard to children's education. She agrees graduation should take place at the High School and thanked the Superintendent for foregoing a raise. She hopes that administration will go to the unions for givebacks. Ms. Juleson believes that the position of residency advisor should not be cut because it ultimately saves money. The position of grant writer will pay for itself and bring in additional money.

**John Foley**, 52 Trebbe Drive, said it is obvious that the burden of budget cuts is falling to the young and old. It is irrational to close Nathan Hale School and because of changing demographics, cutting the Equity Supervisor position is equally stupid.

**Nikki Ortiz**, 196 Ferguson Road, is a Senior at Manchester High School. Although she is aware cuts need to be made, she believes eliminating the Equity Supervisor position is a mistake. Diane Kearney is a role model. She has seen a change in her peers and in herself after working with Ms. Kearney. Students finally have access to someone who shows them how to do things; this position should not be cut.

**Shelly Haslett**, 57 Lexington Drive, a Buckley School parent, has been touched by unemployment. She urged the Board of Directors to pass the Board of Education's recommended budget to maintain what we already have. When young families look to move into Town, they look at the school system. A disreputable school system will bring down property values. Ms. Haslett has seen many friends leave Manchester for greener pastures or enroll their children in Magnet Schools.

**Eric Heinrich**, 41 Brent Road, said that even though times are tough, we shouldn't jeopardize the safety of families. He asked how many cars are in the Town's fleet. Mr. Heinrich noted the \$54,000 saved in the pavement program, but said that deferred maintenance to the roads will cost more in the end. He attended the Board of Education meetings and said that three plans were suggested for budget cuts. Dr. Ouellette did not say she is closing Nathan Hale School; that is included in just one of the proposed plans. Mr. Heinrich knows many teachers who dig into their own pockets to support their classrooms. He would like to see the Board of Directors have a detailed discussion with Dr. Ouellette and the Board of Education about what needs to be done. In the long run, money invested in the children will only be helpful.

**Rhonda Philbert**, 785 Tolland Turnpike, works with Diane Kearney, has lived in Manchester for 15 years, and her children graduated from Manchester High School. The Town has become more diverse over the years and on the cutting edge when compared with other Towns. This is because of the support of the administration and the dedication of Diane Kearney. She does not want to see the Town take two steps back by eliminating Ms. Kearney's position. She asked the Board to find a way to eliminate closing Nathan Hale School and busing children to other

schools. She asked what would happen to a child that is sick and his or her parent cannot pick the child up because of lack of transportation. Ms. Philbert suggested that some actions may cause some to question the Town's commitment to people of color.

**Glenn Watts**, 82 Washington Street, spoke about his concern for cutting staffing of the Town's Fire Department. He lives in the Eighth Utilities District and relies on the advanced life support. He is concerned that with a cut in staffing there will be a backlash of health problems.

**Kathleen Grover**, 29 Otis Street, thanked those who are foregoing raises or reducing their salaries. She spends a lot of time at both Town libraries and is against reducing the hours at Whiton. Whiton serves a low income population that can walk to the library. It is the only library with sufficient parking close to the door. Ms. Grover presented statistics on the use of the Whiton Library. She mentioned that the computers are always in use there because many people still don't have access from home. Ms. Grover noted that the Assistant Library Director is a new position with a salary of \$60,000 and asked if this position is absolutely necessary. She suggested negotiating with the unions to reduce overtime and use part-time employees. She suggested making cuts by not buying high costs items or newer media versions. Ms. Grover is against closing the pools in the summer, especially with the cost of summer camp rising.

**Joe Reardon**, 84 Ashworth Street, would like no tax increase for next year. He heard about the pools, school, firemen, etc. He heard people call attention to the "horrid situation" we are in. Manchester cannot possibly do all of the things people are asking for. Mr. Reardon said it is up to the Board of Directors to stand its ground. The school isn't the Board of Director's problem, it is the Board of Education's problem. He urged the Board of Directors to be responsible Town leaders and do what is right for the Town and taxpayers.

**Joe Lawler**, 202 Autumn Street, said that the General Manager presented a bare bones budget and tonight we have heard the human points involved. He disagrees with changing the Senior Citizen's meals and closing the Town pools.

**Kim Marlow**, 62 Windermere Street, said she was surprised to hear about the possibility of closing Nathan Hale School. The staff and principal are phenomenal. She noted the parents speaking up in support of the school.

**Kristen Murphy**, 157 Bentley Drive, said there is no better place to spend the Town's money than on education. If money needs to be saved, don't make choices that will affect us for years to come. The School Bell presented a study that showed increased test scores in children who attended full-day Kindergarten. She said that nobody buys a house in a town with poor schools. She is willing to pay more taxes for a good education.

**Gwyneth Morrison**, 56 Peila Drive, said she chose to live in Manchester because she enjoyed the school system here and wants the same for her children. She does not agree with reducing the number of teachers in the school system. She was surprised when the Town chose to remodel Bennet School, but now is amazed at how it looks and functions and wished all schools could do the same. The Special Education and Gifted programs do not need to be cut. Children

thrive with paraprofessionals. She is willing to pay more taxes if it means her children get a proper education.

**Jenny Jimenez-Sullivan**, 93 Laurel Street, works at Nathan Hale School. It has been said tonight that the Town is not responsible for the school district, but she says it is responsible because the schools are in this Town and the Board of Directors holds the purse strings. She believes it is disgusting and appalling that Nathan Hale is being put on the chopping block. The school is the children's community. The children in this community deserve better. All the Board of Education is asking is to maintain its services.

**Debbie Streeter**, 25 Eastfield Street, has been a paraprofessional with the Board of Education for 20 years. She feels like she is being forced to beg for people's jobs. She hates to think of closing Nathan Hale School. Approximately 73% of the paraprofessionals and tutors are Manchester residents and are not paid a living wage. Last time people lost jobs, a lot of bumping occurred. In order to survive bumping, people just took whatever job they could just to have a job and it took two years for everything to settle down. This is disruptive to the children's education.

**Susan DiBella**, 193 Hilliard Street, said that in tough times people need government services more than ever to cover some of the things they cannot do any more. She would like to see the Whiton hours remain, as well as the pools. When people cannot afford to send their kids to camp, they will want to be able to use the pools and libraries; they will be looking for free or inexpensive services. She urged the Board to fund the education budget more fully.

**Charlene Christensen**, 140 Tanner Street, asked the Board to consider providing more money for the Board of Education. The amount it decides to spend will greatly affect many areas of Town. She wondered how closing a school will affect the neighborhood. If the children are bused to a different school, they won't get to know each other like they should. Neighborhoods feel small because people reach out to each other. Ms. Christensen said that closing the pools will affect positive youth development. If the youth has nowhere constructive to go, they will get creative in their entertainment. She would like to see the pools kept open and the libraries hours remain.

**Joe Bernard**, 28 Teresa Road, does not want to see the education budget cut. Some of the children in school now will be sitting on the Board of Directors someday. He said it is wrong to cut the education budget. Mr. Bernard said the yellow building at the north end of Town should be closed. The massage parlors and go-go dancers were chased out of Town and this business should be as well.

**Katherine Lappen** asked the Board to reconsider funding the Board of Education budget. She moved here solely for Manchester's school system. She has four boys and next year she will have one in every school system. She has a special needs child and by closing the indoor swimming facilities, her son will no longer be able to swim at night. By cutting Fire and Police personnel, the Board is cutting the children's safety.

**Dorothy Farrell**, 27 Hillcrest Road, said she noticed that budget cuts will affect the children and their education, the elderly, the Police and the Firefighters. Manchester citizens do not want new things, we just want to keep what we have. The Board of Directors really needs to look at the budget and take care of the children and elderly.

**Guiseppe Maoriello**, 30 Andor Road, moved to this country twelve years ago and chose to live in Manchester because it had the best school system. Now he sees the budget proposal and is upset and does not agree with it. The political problem has two sides, but the children are the ones paying the high price. He urged the Board to take care of the kids.

**Pamela Cranford** said the Town needs to keep the Senior Center fully operating and needs to keep the Equity Director position. She asked if anybody would support closing a school if it affected their own children. The children who go to Nathan Hale School are just as precious and no less important than children who go to other schools. Ms. Cranford said it is imperative that the Town does not try to balance the budget on the backs of the children. She said she is willing to pay for the needs of the children.

**Annette Odom**, 185 Pine Street, said that Diane's position is extremely crucial to the Town. This Town is becoming more and more diverse.

**Mary Angeli**, 65 White Street, moved back to Manchester about five years ago for the fire and police services. She asked that the Board not take away these services. The Board of Education knows what the students in Town need. Manchester should not be peddling backward in education. She does not support closing the pools.

**Susan Stepanski**, 680 Center Street, said the proposed Whiton Library hours are not beneficial for the school children that live in the area and suggested hours such as 3-8 or 3-9 p.m. during the school year. She was unaware of the dining situation of the Senior Citizens until this meeting but wondered why not find a local Culinary Arts program to prepare meals at the Senior Center. She noted the removal of funding for the pools and library and the additional funding for a Youth Commission office. She doesn't think replacing the pools and the library with this office will be helpful to active youngsters. She is disappointed to see after only one year at Bennet, the Consumer Science and Technical Education classes being eliminated.

**Dominic Cutaia** explained that when he and his wife were looking for a place to move to 20 years ago Manchester had a large amount of services, recreation programs, good ball fields, and neighborhood schools. They moved here because of the quality of life. Budget cuts will affect his quality of life.

**Taylor Claire-Kearney**, 16 Briarwood Drive, is a senior at Manchester High School and has been attending Manchester's public schools for seven years. She completely understands that the country is in a recession, but cuts need to be more strategic. The schools need more teachers and equity employees. Kids need as much guidance as possible. Without Claire-Kearney, almost 100 students would be affected. New teachers would not be as informed without her guidance. The cuts to the Board of Education budget are selfish.

**Mayor Spadaccini** thanked everyone for coming out and appreciates the comments made. All members of the Board of Directors are available by e-mail, phone, or letter. Suggestions can be made online on the Town's website as well.

**Director Beckman moved to adjourn and Director Tweedie seconded the motion. Eight members voted in favor.**

Adjournment: 10:26 p.m.

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**APPROVE:**

**ATTEST:**

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**Secretary, Manchester Board of Directors**