

A regular meeting of the Board of Aldermen was held Tuesday, February 22, 2022, at 7:30 p.m. in the aldermanic chamber and via Zoom teleconference which meeting link can be found on the agenda and on the City's website calendar.

President Lori Wilshire presided; Deputy City Clerk Allison Waite recorded.

Prayer was offered by Deputy City Clerk Allison Waite; Alderman-at-Large Melbourne Moran, Jr. led in the Pledge to the Flag.

Let's start the meeting by taking a roll call attendance. If you are participating via Zoom, please state your presence, reason for not attending the meeting in person, and whether there is anyone in the room with you during this meeting, which is required under the Right-To-Know Law.

The roll call was taken with 14 members of the Board of Aldermen present: Alderman O'Brien, Alderman Sullivan, Alderman Klee, Alderman Moran, Alderman Lopez, Alderman Jette, Alderman Clemons, Alderman Comeau, Alderman Dowd, Alderman Gouveia, Alderman Cathey, Alderman Thibeault, Alderwoman Timmons, Alderman Wilshire.

Alderwoman Kelly was recorded absent.

President Wilshire

Alderwoman Kelly is still out of town due to a death in the family. So we don't have to do roll call votes tonight.

Mayor James W. Donchess, Corporation Counsel Steve Bolton, were also in attendance.

REMARKS BY THE MAYOR

Mayor Donchess

Yes, Madam President. First, I wanted to just give you my periodic update on COVID. In terms of the Nashua statistics, the State has not updated things since Friday. So this was Friday. I expect the numbers are better now than they were but they certainly have improved. The numbers for Nashua are 403 new cases per 100,000 over the last 14 days. That's one of the metrics. The other is a 14% positivity rate. Most importantly maybe, the hospitals report a significant decline in hospitalizations. As of today there were 12 people hospitalized for COVID between the two hospitals. That number during the peak of a month or six weeks ago was in the 60s and even at 70. So now it's down to 12. So that's a considerable improvement. It seems there's another variant but things seem to be getting better and we expect that they will for the next several weeks.

Madam President, I wanted to mention and give my condolences to the family of Bill Marcoux who some of you I'm sure knew. He passed away recently. His history in Nashua was very long and deep. He was a good friend of mine. He retired and moved to Florida but he was on the Board of Aldermen Ward 6. Alderman Comeau he lived in your neighborhood. He represented Ward 6 for quite a while. He was a County Commissioner. He was also an expert in antiques and in glass particularly. Interestingly, he was recognized as a Fellow of the Corning Museum of Glass because of his very extensive knowledge regarding Tiffany glass and other antique objects. His sister Nancy survives in here in Nashua. She lives up on Chester Street and I just find his passing very, very sad.

I went Madam President to an opening of a Montessori School at St. Philip's Church - Upstone Montessori School, which will be opening this coming fall. It's founded by a guy named Austin Matte and he gave me and others a tour and there were a number of families that went there. So that will be another preschool option for kids. I think they take children beginning at age three.

If anyone wishes to join me, there will be the raising of the Dominican flag at 10 a.m. on Saturday to celebrate Dominican independence. A number of our citizens of Dominican origin will be there and this is something we've tried to do in the past usually annually. It is always at least nice to see those people as they come back usually every year.

Finally, I wanted to mention the accomplishment of Aldermen O'Brien and our legislative delegation in the legislature. So as you've heard many times, the State in law committed to paying 35% of city pension costs that went on for decades. Then they changed the law and stop paying. That's how they got Nashua and all the other cities and towns into the pension system. Now 35 percent is a lot of money. For us, it's like \$10 million a year that the State was supposed to provide us and is not. So Alderman O'Brien for a number of sessions now has been seeking to promote a Bill that it would

lease restore a small part of this contribution. There have been four floor fights in the past always very close. This time, the Bill is for a 7 ½ percent reimbursement not 35%. That's only 7 ½ but still, that would be a couple of million dollars for us. It would make begin to make good on the State's commitment. He can give you the details of a very back and forth struggle, but it passed the House ultimately and now goes on to the Senate. A word of caution, it would have to pass the Senate and it would have to be funded. So I'm sure Alderman O'Brien will be at all of those hearings but I want to thank him and our legislative delegation for at least trying to do everything they can to help us with the property tax burden that our hardworking taxpayers do bear here in Nashua. That concludes my remarks Madam President.

RESPONSE TO REMARKS OF THE MAYOR

Alderman O'Brien

I just would like to say thank you Mr. Mayor for the kudos. I would really like to thank the Nashua delegation who is behind me on this 100% and stepping up. I did get a lot of compliments from other people for both sides of the aisle. Many of them do like what we do - work two jobs town selectman as well as being State Reps. They said points we brought home were true. It is true property tax relief type of bill and let's keep our fingers crossed. It will go to Finance, and then to the Senate, and pass the Governor, and we'll be hopefully on our way. So let's keep our fingers crossed again. Thank you.

RECOGNITION PERIOD – None

READING MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

There being no objection, President Wilshire declared the minutes of the Board of Aldermen meeting of January 25, 2022 be accepted, placed on file, and the reading suspended.

COMMUNICATIONS REQUIRING ONLY PROCEDURAL ACTIONS AND WRITTEN REPORTS FROM LIAISONS

From: Donna Graham, Legislative Affairs Manager
Re: Communications Received from the Public

From: Alderman Patricia Klee
Re: Nashua Arts Commission Liaison Report

From: Tim Cummings, Economic Development Director
Re: Proposal to Extend Outdoor Dining

There being no objection, President Wilshire accepted the communications and placed them on file.

Alderman Comeau

I have an objection to the communication from Director Cummings.

President Wilshire

Okay.

Alderman Comeau

Thank you. In his outdoor dining proposal, what I'm objecting to is quote, "we waited for some time to see if interested parties would offer anything as an alternative but to date, no alternative has arose." Just from the volume of e-mails that I've seen and that statement don't seem to jive with what statement he's making in that proposal. That is my objection to that proposal.

President Wilshire

Okay.

Period for public comment relative to items expected to be acted upon this evening. Now, it's on the agenda. It's on the agenda for a first reading only but the mask mandate will likely come before us this evening for a second reading. So I

will allow public comment on that during this public comment period. As usual, you have three minutes and name and address for the record. The only person I have signed up right now is Paula Johnson. I'll give some leeway to people in the audience who didn't know we might be taking this up.

PERIOD FOR PUBLIC COMMENT RELATIVE TO ITEMS EXPECTED TO BE ACTED UPON THIS EVENING

Paula Johnson

Good evening. My name is Paula Johnson. I'm a member of the Board of Education but I'm just speaking here on behalf of myself. I just wanted everybody to know that in case you didn't know I'm elected here, you know. I really like this. I feel like I can conduct an orchestra here with this and you don't have to hold your papers and falling like you used to have. I'm going to talk about two things. The first one, I'm going to talk about rescinding the face covering and I hope you had the first and second reading. We finally got that passed last night on the Board of Education. I pushed, and I pushed, and I pushed. The Alderman from Ward 8 and the Alderman from Ward 7 was there last night and we finally got the masks off our children and they can breathe again. You know - fresh air and breath work is good. It's good for the soul, and is good for the mind, and is good in the classroom, and hopefully, our students now will be learning even better because they'll have oxygen to the brain.

The second thing that I want to talk about is O-22-002. Since we have all this electronic devices, we don't need to be in a chamber anymore. We can conduct meetings from the home and that's wrong. If somebody needs to be here because it says here, if the Vice-Chair or somebody needs to conduct the meeting it can be done through Zoom. Am I correct on this? I think that's wrong. You need to be the body sitting there. We did before and that's how you connect with the residents of the city. You are elect like I am to be part of the community. You're elected to represent and that is cold piece of equipment here. (inaudible) what it was like the people when we had a Zoom because the COVID. We couldn't be face to face with people and I thought to myself felt it was the worst thing in the world. The meetings went on forever because everybody had to vote. You had to go around and have a voice vote and it never ended. You need to be over there to conduct the meeting. Like the conductor in an orchestra, you have to be present. So I would hope that you would vote this down and make sure that who's ever going to be chairing the meeting has to be here live. Thank you.

Donna Graham, Legislative Affairs Manager

Miss Johnson, excuse me, can I have your address please?

Paula Johnson

Sure - 15 Westborn Drive. I still live in Nashua. I have to be elected.

Tony Storace

Good evening. Tony Storace, Chairman of the Board of Health. I live at 17 Cameron Drive. Mr. Mayor, President Wilshire, Attorney Bolton, and the Aldermen we meet again but I have good news. Some of the data that affect all the data that Mayor Donchess talked to you about was correct and I have even more data. We've been waiting all day for the State to update things but Monday was a holiday so they were a little bit slow on it.

The community transmission rate is substantial. We all know that, but the case rates are going down and that's an important part of it. So I can tell you, statistically, in June of last year we had 11 cases, or 100,000. In August, it went up to 330. October it was 340. On November it was 1,198 and December went to 1,925. January we met at the end of December and in January went to 3,065. By the end of January, it was starting to come down to 2,446 and as of the 16th, it's down to 87. So, you know, whether you believe or not the masks work. We really do believe it and what our goal was to reduce the chances have overrunning the hospitals, which we accomplished. We didn't have to transport any patients who need an ICU beds out of State because that would be the closest hospital so that's good. We instead in essence slowed down the hospital admissions. For people who were in the hospital were people who needed ICU were mostly people who weren't vaccinated. Those of us that know that people have had COVID but have what we call "a soft landing" had vaccines. So the vaccines themselves really didn't stop you from getting it, but actually helped prevent you from getting a really bad case of it. It also gave us time to vaccinate more people and from a public health standpoint, it gave us a chance to educate people. All of us what was going on because I told you back then,

Donna Graham, Legislative Affairs Manager

30 seconds

Tony Storace

We were writing the book on that. So I can tell you from the Board of Health standpoint, we're happy. If you want to rescind it, we'll leave it up to the Board of Aldermen to make that decision. I think you should take a bow. I know there was a lot of pressure, but we achieve the goals that we came out to do. Thank you.

Laurie Ortolano

Laurie Orlando, 41 Berkeley Street. Just a couple things. I want to thank Alderman Moran for bringing forth this motion to consider lifting it tonight. I know that citizens appreciate it no matter what happens. It's very representative, I think, of where the public stands and how they feel about you know moving this on. So I appreciate what you did.

Mayor Donchess I did send you an e-mail and I asked if you would address what you're doing with City Hall if this mandate is lifted, I think it's important that we know that. I talked to Alderwoman Timmons today and she was going to address it here at the meeting for me. I didn't know masks would be allowed to be discussed so I'm bringing it up. But I would like it to be clearly understood by us that you're on board in lifting this in City Hall. I think it's been pretty ridiculous that all your staff is behind this thick glass not really wearing masks and moving around and the citizens come in pretty light flow, pretty light group of people coming in and we're all forced to wear masks and no matter what amount of time we spend in the building. I don't think its representative of what's going on anymore, and I think it needs to be lifted, and I'm concerned that you stuck in solidarity with what the schools were doing when you flip this mask thing back into City Hall in September and not out in the public. So please support your community fully and make certain you make it clear tonight what you're doing with the masks.

I do disagree with Dr. Storace. I don't know that he's correct that the masks worked. Yippee, we know it. I don't think we really know that with the data. I think masks work too. They do work but I think the amount in what you get from a mask based on what I've read doesn't benefit or way out with what's really going on. I don't know how Dr. Storace can say that Nashua having a mask ordinance with a dozen towns surround us that service the hospitals not having an ordinance really made the difference of keeping the hospital load low. I just don't know how you can say that. I mean I really want something more definitive than the number went down. What would Dr. Storace say if we didn't have the mask mandate, and the numbers went down that way? Oh, the masks weren't needed. But we don't know. It's not the experiment we're running. I don't like data used this way and I don't think we're being consistent and reasonable with how we review our data. I was a big advocate last night and I spoke at my first Board of Education meeting to get these masks off the kids. I think the Nashua School Board...

Donna Graham, Legislative Affairs Manager

30 seconds

Laurie Ortolano

...made some really bad mistakes and parents who want choice in education have to leave this district. This is not the place to educate your kids. Thank you.

Laura Colquhoun

Laura Colquhoun, 30 Greenwood drive. I'm asking the Board of Aldermen to vote against this ordinance 22-002 that allows an alderman participating in meetings to video teleconferencing to be the presiding officer and conduct the meeting. To allow the aldermen to use video teleconferencing to be the presiding officer and conduct the meeting is totally unacceptable. This is no way to conduct business for the City of Nashua. It would be a tremendous disservice to the Nashua residents if you allow this ordinance to go through. Part of the responsibility to the Nashua residents is to be physically have the Board of Aldermen attend all meetings.

I'm also asking the Board to lift the mask mandate. Please let the Nashua residents get back to living and stop putting fear in everybody's lives. I thank you.

Beth Scaer

Beth Scaer, 111 East Hobart Street. I wanted to say thanks to Alderman Moran for proposing this removing the mask ordinance or rescinding it. I'm glad to hear that you're considering voting on it tonight and I hope you do rescind it. I think it's been very bad for businesses in Nashua. I hear from so many people who are avoiding shopping in the city because of it. And in the same topic, I wanted to thank the Board of Ed. members that voted to lift the masks mandate on the kids -

Sandra Ziehm, Paula Johnson, Jessica Brown, and Christina Darling. I'm just over the moon happy for those kids and the parents that have been dealing with this. Thank you.

Alicen Hogan

Hi. My name is Alicen Hogan from 7 Hardy Street, Nashua, New Hampshire. I wasn't planning on speaking today. I'm actually here because I've emailed my Ward 4 Alderman as well as all six Aldermen-at-Large, including the President and Vice-President. I have left voicemails for my Alderman and all of the Aldermen-at-Large, including the Vice-President and the President and I have received no response back. I have recently moved back from Maryland and I was trying to get acquainted with my representation here back in Nashua.

President Wilshire

Are you here to speak on something we're going to be acting upon?

Alicen Hogan

Absolutely. So this whole can I call in, can I dial in? So I feel that that would be a detriment because the demonstrated behavior is that after two weeks of trying to reach out to my representation, this is the only way that I know I can reach out to you. I am here physically to talk with you because I know you're here. If I were not able to do this, I would have to wait another three weeks before I got a response from my Ward 4 Alderman, before I got a response back from any of the Aldermen-at-Large including the President and the Vice-President. That to me seems odd. Nashua and New Hampshire especially has been a very representative government of the people, by the people, for the people. So having this in person requirement to me seems essential. So hopefully, I'm looking for Tom Lopez. Hi. Excellent. Hopefully we can connect and I can speak with you directly after the meeting so we can discuss some of the things that are going on in Nashua and get reacquainted and all of the Aldermen-at-Large when I was growing up here, we only had one Alderman-at-Large and one Vice-President. Now we have I believe six Aldermen-at-Large is that correct and no one was able to get back to me in two weeks. So this is why I think it's very important for you to have an in person presence so that your constituency can at least connect with you, can talk with you, can sit down and see you and have a discussion because that's important. That's where we're at right now is that maybe we don't see things eye to eye but that's okay. We need to understand each other as people and to discuss things openly. So thank you very much. I hope that that helps shed some light on things. Thank you.

Lou Juris

Good evening. Lou Juris here - 56 Haines Street. I'm commenting on the masking. I believe we should keep it until March 1st as the rates go down. Like the doctor said, just keep the masks on as much as possible until March 1st and I believe that transmission rates will continue to go down from that point. I also think that the school system may be was a little too premature. Until the middle of March would have been better in my opinion. I know that other jurisdictions around the country are dropping some things right now but they may have been ahead of us in terms of rates of infection for 100,000 people. This is a very good place to educate your children. In my class from the early 80s, there's one sitting judge. There's also people who are doctors. There are those who have done quite well in finance, and real estate, and also in medicine. So this is a very good place to raise your children and we have to continue to fund properly our public schools. The shade that's being thrown by those on the School Board about having doubts, I believe, is wrong. If that's the case, then they shouldn't be on the School Board. I'd like to say I'm a big supporter and I think we have a good school system and I want to support our teachers. The contract that's up now should be, hopefully will be coming soon and we can move beyond these contract blocks. We have a new superintendent coming on board and we can get beyond and can agree on salaries, and back our teachers up, and continue to move forward, and to graduate high numbers of students who hopefully return to the community, and be here and raise their kids here, and maybe come on these boards and continue to make Nashua a progressive, and a great place to live, and to be educated, and to thrive. I want to thank you for your time and good evening to you all.

Sonia Prince

Hi. Sonia Prince, 49 Tufts Drive. Can you hear me?

President Wilshire

Yes.

Sonia Prince

So I am concerned about the masks as well. I'm not a scientist, I'm not a doctor, I'm not a genealogists, I don't work for the Health Department but I do think we should listen to the professionals. Masks do work. I love people who have opinions about that. There are facts and then there's opinions. So I do hope you take the positivity rate into consideration. I don't know that at the city level will be as bad as at the school level. I really think the schools dropped the ball on that and not listening to the Board of Health is just beyond ridiculous in my opinion. But listen to the professionals, listen to what they have to say. There is a new variant out there and it's more transmissible than the first Omicron strain. So we still don't know what's happening with that. When the kids come back from school vacation, it could affect the entire city because it can affect their parents, their grandparents, people go to work, from being with their kids, and so on. So I am concerned about the next two weeks after school vacation. I do hope the positivity rates keep coming down.

The nice weather is coming and we should be able to start opening windows and people won't be gathering indoors hopefully as much. So that should bring everything down and bring a little bit of normalcy after the wave kind of thing like we had last summer that would be wonderful. So I wish the best for everyone and everybody stay safe and I hope that you listen to the health professionals and kind of follow their guidance and prevention. Wearing a mask is not a big deal. There's just so much drama and it usually starts with the adults. So if you talk to the kids at the high school, they don't care about the mask. It's not a big deal. So anyway, have a great day. Thank you so much.

Karen Bill

Karen Bill, 95 Parnell Place here in Nashua. Thanks for the opportunity to talk about the masks because I know that it may be acted on tonight. I think that if the Board of Health was so concerned about the situation in Nashua, this gentleman would have put his foot down and said keep the masks on because of this, this, and this. Doctors will tell you that some masks are better than others. The N95s are better than these. These let in too much air, they say you know twirl it around your ears 14 times, and then you'll be calling the ambulance because I won't be able to breathe. A lot of air gets in and out.

I applaud the Board of Education for resending the masks for kids. I think it's great. Teacher friends have told me it's very hard to read kids to understand who's getting it and who's not getting it with a mask on. Facial expression is a big part of society. I can't even imagine being a deaf child in school and you know what happens with them. I think it's greatly affected businesses in Nashua. It's affected some of the decisions I have made about shopping in Nashua. Hey, I'll go out to lunch in Hudson and while I'm over there I can do my grocery shopping and it's none of - I'm happy to say I was going to say it's not anybody's business if I'm vaccinate or not but I am fully vaccinated. I got my booster. I'm healthy. I've never got it. If I've been exposed to people who knows, maybe we've all been exposed to people with COVID and some have gotten it some have not. But I am ready to ditch the mask in Nashua and I think it's time. And again, if it was such a concern the Board of Health would have made a really strong statement. It's time. They have put that on you to make the decision and I hope you make the right one and say let's get rid of the masks. Thank you very much.

Brady Owens

Brady Owens, 16 Danbury Road. I want to say I did not know about the Board of Education. That's wonderful news. I'm glad that our children can breathe freely. I have a four year old daughter started pre K and I will say, you know, I put her in private school for the simple fact I would never put a mask on my child. So but that's really good to hear some good news tonight.

Concerning the mask mandate here in Nashua, you probably guessed I'm definitely opposed to it. I haven't worn one, you know, and luckily a lot of businesses I've been to don't care about it. Even some businesses not even wearing themselves, which is great. You know, say what you want about it, I don't believe anybody's freedom should ever be taken away for any emergency whatsoever. You know, you start here. Where does it end? It's a slippery slope.

But thank you for letting me speak tonight. I want to thank Board of Aldermen for also allowing us to speak again tonight. I hope that continues for all city business from now on. Something else I learned this afternoon regarding some of the or just now the other testimony. I'd definitely say that I am (inaudible) the other issues brought up with Aldermen being required to be there in person and definitely for the people that's administering the council meetings. So it sounds like a very good idea. You know a lot of us have jobs and stuff and yeah we have to be there for those jobs. We can't always be remote. So I definitely echo those thoughts as well. Thank you for the time. Have a good afternoon.

President Wilshire

Thank you. Is there anyone else in the audience? Come on up to the microphone.

Andrea Pearce

Hi, good evening. My name is Andrea Pearce. I'm the owner resident at 14 Curtis Drive here in Nashua. I just want to speak briefly on the mask mandate. I'm an executive officer in the entertainment industry in Massachusetts for which the Governor has recently rescinded the mask mandate for the State. Certain municipalities have rescinded theirs. Some have some haven't. Some of the venues that I operate are over 1,000 person capacity and I will share with you that nobody wears masks. We're required to make them wear them in to get in the building but as soon as they get in, they throw them in the trash. I have about 5,000 people a week between 3,000 and 5,000 people a week coming through my venues because we are fully opened - whether it's a concert, whether it's a nightclub night, or it's a corporate event. Nobody is wearing masks. They have seem to have gotten over that fact with the numbers reduced in Mass., for numbers reduced here in New Hampshire. Everybody seems to be on that same, you know, path of wanting to have the mask mandates removed. So I think with that information, the boards should reconsider rescinding again and, you know, following in line with what the people really want and what they're showing by their actions in the time right now. Thank you.

President Wilshire

Is there anyone else in the chamber that wishes to speak? I don't see anyone else on Zoom. So we're gonna move on.

Julie Sage

Oh, I would like to speak.

President Wilshire

Your name and address for the record, please.

Julie Sage

My name is Julie Sage. I live at 38 Deerwood Drive. So I am a student at Nashua High School North. I am a senior and yeah I want to speak about behalf of masks on all the student body because there is actually a lot of those multiple students went to the School Board and told them that they wanted masks and the School Board did not listen. There's currently a lot of students actually panicking within school about the mask mandate being even optional because they're scared that their family is now going to catch COVID, give it to their family, and the family is going to die.

So I would like to talk a bit about what COVID can cause and why people are so scared. So it does cause brain damage. COVID causes six of the protein precursors for Alzheimer's disease and because these six of the protein precursors are being increased by COVID when people catch them. COVID patients have actually been shown to have more of these 14 precursors than even Alzheimer's patients. Four year olds are getting early onset Alzheimer's which before used to be 60 year olds. There is another protein called CCL11 which is built up when COVID causes inflammation in the brain. This protein is caused with concussions, CTE - which is known to be one with football head trauma, different things like that, and even patients in chemotherapy get this and when they have an increase of this protein, they get something called "chemo brain". It's a very bad thing.

Also if COVID itself ends up in the brain, it causes neurons to merge and die off which also means it also can attack neurons anywhere in the body, which can lead to many forms of neuropathy, such as uncontrollable muscle twitching, constant burning sensations, etc. There's also a lot of lung damage because it is a respiratory disease and the scarring caused by COVID that can be seen in X-rays don't entirely heal and we haven't had enough time to actually find out if it ever heals. Many of those people that have that scarring are experiencing depletion of oxygen compared to healthy individuals and this is even seen in people who are asymptomatic and didn't even know that they ever got COVID. Those who had more symptoms with COVID have it even worse.

Also, even in kids as young as 11 blood clots were forming in their lungs after they already recovered from COVID.

Donna Graham, Legislative Affairs Manager

30 seconds

Julie Sage

They had to be put on blood thinners immediately or they will die. There's also a lot of heart damage and clots and these clots go all across the body and it just makes everything worse. There's testicular damage, sudden heart failure. You can just suddenly die from the clots that are being formed and I can keep going because the (inaudible) receptor with the COVID virus actually attacks is within every system in your body. It also is reactivating other viruses that are causing a lot of other issues. Okay, thank you for your time.

President Wilshire

Thank you. Is there anyone else in the chamber?

Alicen Hogan

Alicen Hogan, 7 Hardy Street, Nashua, New Hampshire

President Wilshire

You've already spoken once?

Alicen Hogan

I have spoken once but not on that issue.

President Wilshire

Okay. I'm going to have to ask you not to. If you've already spoken once, that's your time limit.

Alicen Hogan

Understood.

President Wilshire

Thank you.

Alicen Hogan

That is the fear that is encapsulates the young (inaudible) and in our schools.

President Wilshire

I said you're done. Thank you.

Alicen Hogan

That is what is being taught. Be careful because we have to get out of that fear. We have to get out of that fear.

COMMUNICATIONS REQUIRING FINAL APPROVAL - None

PETITIONS - None

NOMINATIONS, APPOINTMENTS AND ELECTIONS - None

REPORTS OF COMMITTEE

Committee on Infrastructure..... 01/26/2022

There being no objection, President Wilshire declared the report of the January 26, 2022 Committee on Infrastructure be accepted and placed on file.

Finance Committee 02/02/2022

There being no objection, President Wilshire declared the report of the February 2, 2022 Finance Committee be accepted and placed on file.

Personnel/Administrative Affairs Committee 02/07/2022

There being no objection, President Wilshire declared the report of the February 7, 2022 Personnel/Administrative Affairs Committee be accepted and placed on file.

CONFIRMATION OF BOARD OF ALDERMEN AND MAYOR’S APPOINTMENTS

Auditorium Commission

There being no objection, President Wilshire confirmed the re-appointment of Paul LaFlamme, 28 Lutheran Drive, Nashua, to the Auditorium Commission with a term to expire December 31, 2024.

Oath of Office will be administered at a later date.

Conservation Commission

There being no objection, President Wilshire confirmed the new appointment of Maureen Bourque, 37 Jennifer Drive, Nashua; and the reappointments of Jedidiah Crook, 52 King Street, Nashua; Sherry Dutzy, 18 Swart Terrace, Nashua; Gloria McCarthy, 65 Musket Drive, Nashua; and Brandon Pierotti, 14 Lochmere Lane, Nashua, to the Conservation Commission all with terms to expire December 31, 2024.

Oath of Office administered by Corporation Counsel to Maureen Bourque and Jedidiah Crook.

Conway Ice Arena Commission

There being no objection, President Wilshire confirmed the new appointment of Cheryl Lindner, Nashua, to the Conway Ice Arena Commission with an indefinite term.

Oath of Office will be administered at a later date.

Cultural Connections

There being no objection, President Wilshire confirmed the new appointment of Shanta Bist, 4 Cobble Hill Road, Nashua, to Cultural Connections with a term to expire February 28, 2023.

Oath of Office will be administered at a later date.

Mine Falls Park Advisory Committee

There being no objection, President Wilshire confirmed the re-appointments of Richard Gillespie, 15 Spencer Drive, Nashua, with a term to expire December 31, 2024 and Stacey Vignault, 6 New Hampshire Avenue, Nashua, with a term to expire January 31, 2024 to the Mine Falls Park Advisory Committee.

Oath of Office will be administered at a later date.

BPW Retirement System Trustees Committee
Business & Industrial Development Authority
Tax Increment Financing District

There being no objection, President Wilshire confirmed the new appointment of John Griffin, Tyngsborough, MA, to the BPW Retirement System Trustees Committee, Business & Industrial Development Authority, Tax Increment Financing District, with indefinite terms.

Oath of Office will be administered at a later date.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS – RESOLUTIONS

R-22-003

Endorsers: Mayor Jim Donchess
Alderman-at-Large Michael B. O'Brien, Sr.
Alderman Patricia Klee
Alderman-at-Large Melbourne Moran, Jr.
Alderman-at-Large Shoshanna Kelly
Alderman Derek Thibeault
Alderman John Sullivan
Alderman-at-Large Lori Wilshire

**RELATIVE TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF UP TO \$150,000 FROM THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS,
AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ("ARP") FUNDS INTO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GRANT ACTIVITY "GRANTS TO
LOCAL ARTS AGENCIES"**

Given its second reading;

MOTION BY ALDERMAN KLEE FOR FINAL PASSAGE OF R-22-003ON THE QUESTIONAlderman Klee

Thank you. This is actually one of the first grants that has been accepted by the Arts Commission. It's quite exciting to get this. We're only one of 61. Basically, unique places that receive this type of grant and I think it says a lot for our arts and the art commission here in the City of Nashua. Thank you.

President Wilshire

Motion is for final passage of Resolution 22-003. Further discussion on that motion?

Alderman Cathey

Just had a clarifying question. In the Resolution it says, "The Mayor is authorized to enter into any grant agreement or other document necessary to further the purposes hereof." What does that actually entail as far as what agreements the Mayor could be authorized to get into?

President Wilshire

The Mayor could comment on it I believe.

Mayor Donchess

Well I haven't seen the documentation on this one, but usually it's just comply with the terms of the grant.

Alderman Cathey

Okay, thank you.

MOTION CARRIED

Resolution R-22-003 declared duly adopted.

R-22-004

Endorsers: Mayor Jim Donchess
Alderman-at-Large Michael B. O'Brien, Sr.
Alderman Patricia Klee
Alderman-at-Large Melbourne Moran, Jr.
Alderman Thomas Lopez
Alderman-at-Large Shoshanna Kelly
Alderman Alex Comeau
Alderman Richard A. Dowd

Alderman Tyler Gouveia
Alderman John Cathey
Alderman Derek Thibeault
Alderwoman-at-Large Gloria Timmons
Alderman-at-Large Lori Wilshire

RELATIVE TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF \$40,000 FROM THE STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE, DEPARTMENT OF SAFETY "STATE HOMELAND SECURITY GRANT PROGRAM" INTO POLICE GRANT ACTIVITY "2021 BOMB DETECTION TECHNOLOGY EQUIPMENT"

Given its second reading;

**MOTION BY ALDERMAN LOPEZ FOR FINAL PASSAGE OF R-22-004
MOTION CARRIED**

Resolution R-22-004 declared duly adopted.

R-22-005

Endorsers: Mayor Jim Donchess
Alderman-at-Large Michael B. O'Brien, Sr.
Alderman Patricia Klee
Alderman-at-Large Melbourne Moran, Jr.
Alderman Thomas Lopez
Alderwoman-at-Large Shoshanna Kelly
Alderman Richard A. Dowd
Alderman Derek Thibeault
Alderwoman-at-Large Gloria Timmons
Alderman-at-Large Lori Wilshire

AUTHORIZING THE FILING OF APPLICATIONS AND EXECUTION OF GRANT AGREEMENTS WITH THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION FOR GRANTS UNDER THE URBAN MASS TRANSPORTATION ACT OF 1964, AS AMENDED, FOR FISCAL YEARS 2023 AND 2024

Given its second reading;

**MOTION BY ALDERMAN MORAN FOR FINAL PASSAGE OF R-22-005
MOTION CARRIED**

Resolution R-22-005 declared duly adopted.

R-22-006

Endorsers: Mayor Jim Donchess
Alderman-at-Large Michael B. O'Brien, Sr.
Alderman Patricia Klee
Alderman-at-Large Melbourne Moran, Jr.
Alderman Thomas Lopez
Alderwoman-at-Large Shoshanna Kelly
Alderman Richard A. Dowd
Alderman Tyler Gouveia
Alderman Derek Thibeault
Alderwoman-at-Large Gloria Timmons
Alderman-at-Large Lori Wilshire

RELATIVE TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF AN ADDITIONAL \$377,873.50 FROM THE STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE, DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES INTO TRANSIT GRANT ACTIVITY "FEDERAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY ("FTA") OPERATING GRANT"

Given its second reading;

**MOTION BY ALDERMAN TIMMONS FOR FINAL PASSAGE OF R-22-006
MOTION CARRIED**

Resolution R-22-006 declared duly adopted.

R-22-007

Endorsers: Mayor Jim Donchess
Alderman-at-Large Michael B. O'Brien, Sr.
Alderman Patricia Klee
Alderman-at-Large Melbourne Moran, Jr.
Alderman Thomas Lopez
Alderwoman-at-Large Shoshanna Kelly
Alderman Alex Comeau
Alderman Richard A. Dowd
Alderman Tyler Gouveia
Alderman Derek Thibeault
Alderwoman-at-Large Gloria Timmons
Alderman-at-Large Lori Wilshire

RELATIVE TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF \$98,250 FROM THE STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE, DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES INTO POLICE GRANT ACTIVITY "FY2022 COVID-19 VACCINATION AID GRANT"

Given its second reading;

**MOTION BY ALDERMAN LOPEZ FOR FINAL PASSAGE OF R-22-007
MOTION CARRIED**

Resolution R-22-007 declared duly adopted.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS – ORDINANCES**O-22-001**

Endorsers: Alderman-at-Large Lori Wilshire
Alderman-at-Large Michael B. O'Brien, Sr.
Alderman-at-Large Melbourne Moran, Jr.
Alderwoman-at-Large Shoshanna Kelly
Alderman Alex Comeau
Alderman Tyler Gouveia
Alderman Derek Thibeault
Alderwoman-at-Large Gloria Timmons
Alderman Richard A. Dowd

DISSOLVING THE SUBSTANDARD LIVING CONDITIONS ALDERMANIC SPECIAL COMMITTEE

Given its second reading;

MOTION BY ALDERMAN O'BRIEN FOR FINAL PASSAGE OF O-22-001ON THE QUESTIONAlderman O'Brien

Thank you, Madam President. I was one of the first members to serve with my fellow Ward 9 Alderman Siegel on this particular committee. It was formed because we had a particular problem and one of the camping living areas within the city. That eventually did get resolved but in looking at the whole context, many of the things that can be done within the domain of Substandard Living Conditions Committee can be done by other committees. So at this time, I think it's a little bit archaic and I urge you to support me in eliminating this committee. Thank you.

Alderman Lopez

Yeah, it's fun to comment that I also served on the committee. I believe other than the initial issue presenting, there wasn't actually any legislation that was forwarded to that committee for the following two terms. This does not mean that all housing in Nashua is perfect and that renters are experiencing any kind of utopia. There are a lot of city departments where it helps to inform the public or educate them as to what's available with Code Enforcement or Public Health and the different city services that are available. And it is on occasion apparent that there are some gaps where city interventions on behalf of its citizens are not effective.

So what was happening in some of those committee meetings, though, was in presenting it and then bringing information forward departments were able to course correct are able to upgrade. They did things like creating the landlord lists or in

cases of emergency so that we knew which tenants were being displaced from whatever was taking place. There were a number of good things that came out of that committee but as President Wilshire pointed out, its role is more appropriately situated with the Human Affairs Committee. So we will be as a committee continuing to tackle some of the issues that Substandard Living Conditions was looking at and one of the things we'll try to work to do is make sure that the public knows that they are struggling with issues of housing quality and housing standard that we can look at them in that forum.

MOTION CARRIED

Ordinance O-22-001 declared duly adopted.

O-22-002

Endorsers: Alderwoman-at-Large Shoshanna Kelly
Alderman-at-Large Ben Clemons
Alderwoman-at-Large Gloria Timmons

ALLOWING ALDERMEN PARTICIPATING IN MEETINGS THROUGH VIDEO TELECONFERENCING TO BE THE PRESIDING OFFICER AND CONDUCT THE MEETING

Given its second reading;

MOTION BY ALDERMAN CLEMONS TO TABLE

A viva voce roll call was taken which resulted as follows:

Yea: Alderman Sullivan, Alderman Klee, Alderman Lopez, Alderman Jette,
Alderman Clemons, Alderman Thibeault, Alderwoman Timmons 7

Nay: Alderman O'Brien, Alderman Moran, Alderman Comeau, Alderman Dowd,
Alderman Gouveia, Alderman Cathey, Alderman Wilshire 7

MOTION FAILED

MOTION FOR FINAL PASSAGE OF O-22-002

ON THE QUESTION

President Wilshire

Can I interrupt you for one second? No one actually made a motion.

MOTION BY ALDERMAN O'BRIEN FOR FINAL PASSAGE OF O-22-002

ON THE QUESTION

Alderman Comeau

Thank you. No problem. I was present at the committee meeting where we discussed this and if my memory serves correctly, there were I believe five additional Aldermen that participated in that meeting. It seemed that we had fairly overwhelming support for this ordinance. I do have respect for my colleague that isn't here but I don't think that there's a whole lot of testimony that we could add tonight that's going to change the outcome of that vote. So that's why I would support moving this forward and voting on it tonight. Thank you.

Alderman Thibeault

Thank you, Madam President. I just want to say one thing. A bunch of people spoke on this tonight. I just want to make it clear, this does not make it so Aldermen can't use Zoom. It's specifically for being chairman of a committee. So I just wanted to make that clear that it's not getting rid of Zoom for Aldermen to use in times that they need it but it's there for committee. So it's a little different than what people were kind of talking about. Thank you.

Alderman Klee

Thank you, Madam Chair and thank you for allowing me to speak. I attended a meeting where I sat in that seat to kind of

help a Chair that was not here. Through the meeting, it was cumbersome. I don't think it was as productive as it would have been if the Chair had been here. The Vice-Chair was at the meeting and I really think the Vice Chair is the person who should have sat in at that meeting and not me kind of coaching, and helping, and so on. I am not for this type of thing. Truthfully, I'd like to see Zoom gone but, you know, that's just my opinion. The bottom line is, I think the Chairs have got to be here to conduct the meeting. I think someone referred to them as being, you know, the leader of an orchestra. They don't see what's happening in the audience. They don't see what's happening in the horseshoe and it's a detriment. So I believe the Chair at a minimum has to be here. So thank you very much.

Alderman Lopez

Yeah, I just wanted to comment on the public comment made earlier. I want to apologize to Miss Hogan regarding her e-mail. Her e-mail has a username which looked like a random collection of letters at first glance but in reviewing it, I realize it's actually an anagram of her name. When I had seen it go by, it looked like it was one username and then a different person signing it which can look like it might be a hack. So I erroneously concluded that I shouldn't answer it and would just wait for more. I appreciate her coming in person in order to make sure that she put her face to her name. I agreed that that's why if you're chairing a meeting, it's important to be in person in the chamber managing it. I think there's going to be situations that will happen here in the chamber that a Chair really needs to be able to take note of and be able to respond to where having that limited by the technical capabilities of any teleconferencing software is problematic. Cameras not necessarily pointing in the right direction. You're not getting the whole sense of what's going on. It is challenging enough to Chair a meeting and have Zoom as well. Doing it the other way around, I understand Alderman Klee struggled with that. She did not struggle with regular clerking the other night. So I think it's just a testament that some things are times better spent focusing on who's in the room with us not necessarily trying to Chair a meeting.

Alderman Comeau

I requested a roll call vote please.

President Wilshire

Yes. Further discussion on the motion?

Alderman Jette

I just want to clarify something. I was confused by Alderman Comeau said that he attended the meeting and there was substantial support for this. Did you really mean to say "support"? This ordinance is proposing that a member who was not here was participating by Zoom can Chair the meeting? Are you in support of that?

Alderman Comeau

Thank you for the correction. Alderman Jette is correct. I meant opposition to the ordinance. Thank you.

Alderman Jette

Okay.

Alderman Lopez

If I might clarify in the committee, there was overwhelming objection by the members in the room, I guess, present but the committee members themselves supported a recommendation for final passage.

Alderman Jette

If I could clarify. I watched the meeting and I understood that there were three members of the committee there. One of the members of the committee said that he was voting in favor of it because he thought the full Board should have an opportunity to vote, but also said that he would probably vote against it. I think he was under the impression that the committee had to vote in favor of it in order for it to come before us. But actually if the committee had voted against it, it still would have come before us. So I just want to clarify that although the committee vote was in favor, it is kind of questionable whether – and the Alderman in question can speak for himself.

Alderman Comeau

That would be correct Madam President. That would be correct. I did think it would die in committee and I wanted to get the full Board to discuss it. I didn't realize till today that that's how a denial happened. So I'm learning every day but I'm glad it's here to be discussed either way. So I get.

Alderman Sullivan

Thank you, Madam President. That's what I was going to ask you what we were voting on.

President Wilshire

That's what we're voting on for final passage. So if you want the Chair of a committee to be able to Zoom in and Chair the committee, you'll vote yes. If you don't think they should, you'll vote no. Okay. Done with discussion on this? Would the Clerk call the roll?

Alderman O'Brien

Question. Did you have that backwards?

President Wilshire

No. If you're in favor of them chairing a committee from home, you'll vote yes. If you're not in favor of that, you'll vote no.

Alderman O'Brien

Thank you, Madam President.

President Wilshire

You're welcome. Madam Clerk?

A viva voce roll call was taken which resulted as follows:

Yea:	Alderman Clemons	1
Nay:	Alderman O'Brien, Alderman Sullivan, Alderman Klee, Alderman Moran, Alderman Lopez, Alderman Jette, Alderman Comeau, Alderman Dowd, Alderman Gouveia, Alderman Cathey, Alderman Thibeault, Alderwoman Timmons, Alderman Wilshire	13

MOTION FAILED**MOTION BY ALDERMAN O'BRIEN FOR INDEFINITE POSTPONEMENT OF O-22-002**ON THE QUESTIONAlderman Cathey

Legislative inquiry?

President Wilshire

Yes.

Alderman Cathey

Why do we need to make it indefinitely if we voted it down?

President Wilshire

We did vote it down but it could come back up in this term. That's not really the reason. Okay.

Steve Bolton, Corporation Counsel

Until a motion passes, you have not done anything. It's still in possession of the Board. It could be amended. Maybe an appropriate amendment would change the result. It could be tabled and maybe something would happen that would change the result. It could be sent back to committee. Any of those motions could be made. A motion that was made is to indefinitely postpone which would do away with the issue and it would no longer be before the Board.

Alderman Cathey

So unless it's a yes and it passes, it's effectively still alive and kicking?

Steve Bolton, Corporation Counsel

Yes. Thank you.

Alderman Clemons

Thank you. You know I spoke to - so I co-sponsored this legislation with Alderwoman Kelly. I was actually the original Alderman who put the amendment in to disallow an alderman to participate or the Chair from afar, if you will. At that time, it was over the telephone. So I actually put that that legislation in effect. That was my amendment back in I want to say 2010 or 2011. I'm always one to remain open to new ideas. I'm glad that we had the discussion here. I think it was worthwhile to hear what the other Aldermen had to say and what the public had to say on it. For me, to be honest with you, there's I don't really have a strong feeling one way or the other on this but I wanted to at least thank everybody for a good debate. I think it was a worthwhile conversation to have. So thank you.

President Wilshire

Motion is for indefinite postponement. No further discussion.

MOTION CARRIED

Ordinance O-22-002 declared indefinitely postponed.

NEW BUSINESS – RESOLUTIONS**R-22-011**

Endorsers: Mayor Jim Donchess
Alderman-at-Large Michael B. O'Brien, Sr.
Alderman Patricia Klee
Alderman-at-Large Melbourne Moran, Jr.
Alderman Thomas Lopez
Alderman Richard A. Dowd
Alderman Derek Thibeault
Alderwoman-at-Large Gloria Timmons

RELATIVE TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF \$69,564 FROM THE STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE, DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION INTO TRANSIT GRANT ACTIVITY "FEDERAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY ("FTA") OPERATING GRANT"

Given its first reading; Assigned to the HUMAN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE by President Wilshire

R-22-012

Endorsers: Mayor Jim Donchess
Alderman-at-Large Michael B. O'Brien, Sr.
Alderman Patricia Klee
Alderman-at-Large Melbourne Moran, Jr.
Alderman-at-Large Ben Clemons
Alderman Richard A. Dowd

Alderman Tyler Gouveia
Alderman Derek Thibeault
Alderman-at-Large Gloria Timmons
Alderman-at-Large Lori Wilshire

RELATIVE TO THE ACCEPTANCE OF \$75,850 FROM THE STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE, DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES, EXOTIC SPECIES PROGRAM AND AUTHORIZING THE TRANSFER OF MATCHING FUNDS

Given its first reading; Assigned to the HUMAN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE by President Wilshire

R-22-013

Endorsers: Mayor Jim Donchess
Alderman-at-Large Michael B. O'Brien, Sr.
Alderman John Sullivan
Alderman Patricia Klee
Alderman-at-Large Melbourne Moran, Jr.
Alderman Thomas Lopez
Alderman Alex Comeau
Alderman Richard A. Dowd
Alderman Tyler Gouveia
Alderman John Cathey
Alderman Derek Thibeault
Alderman-at-Large Lori Wilshire

AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR AND CITY TREASURER TO ISSUE BONDS NOT TO EXCEED SIX MILLION TWO HUNDRED EIGHT THOUSAND THREE HUNDRED TWENTY-FIVE DOLLARS (\$6,208,325) FOR THE CITY'S SEWER INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM AND SEWER STRUCTURES

Given its first reading; Assigned to the BUDGET REVIEW COMMITTEE, BOARD OF PUBLIC WORKS, and schedule a SPECIAL BOARD OF ALDERMAN PUBLIC HEARING on Monday, March 28, 2022 at 7:00 p.m. in the Aldermanic Chamber by President Wilshire

NEW BUSINESS – ORDINANCES

O-22-006

Endorsers: Alderman-at-Large Melbourne Moran, Jr.
Alderman-at-Large Michael B. O'Brien, Sr.
Alderman John Sullivan
Alderman Alex Comeau
Alderman Tyler Gouveia
Alderman John Cathey

RESCINDING THE FACE COVERING ORDINANCE PRIOR TO FEBRUARY 28, 2022

MOTION BY ALDERMAN CATHEY TO SUSPEND THE RULES FOR A SECOND READING OF O-22-006

ON THE QUESTION

Alderman Thibeault

So I got a few things to say about this in general. You know, I'm going to get snickered at this but I do believe masks work even if it's 30%, 40%. Each mask obviously has a different range of health depending on how good they are. I really respect what the Board of Health says. Despite what I saw on Facebook today or I heard on Facebook somebody told me that was on Facebook that a member it said that the Board of Health doesn't care about white people, which I thought was a strange comment to say. I don't believe that at all and makes me even believe more strongly in the Board of Health. They're not trying to do any citizens the wrong way. They care.

I went to the Board of Ed last night and a lot of the people were there to obviously go against the mask mandate. One person that was there said, you know Director Bagley – actually you just called her Bobbie Bagley - but Director Bagley didn't mention how many kids have died since the masked mandate. Well you know why he said because no kid has died. Isn't that what we're trying to save? So if a kid dies, then it's okay to wear masks? Isn't that what we're trying to prevent by wearing masks? And you know one person said, well kids they're just not getting it as badly as adults. True, facts but isn't the whole point so they don't bring it back home and giving to their parents, or giving it to their elderly grandparents. It's not necessarily kids dying, it's making sure the other adults aren't dying, right? We don't want anybody

dying.

The other thing, too, that really upset me last night is, you know, people that show up at these meetings and they don't want masks, they can't be respectful to the people that are talking. We saw it tonight. Ms. Sage was talking - a high school student. There was laughter in the chamber - laughter. It's a kid! These people come up here whether it's here or last night and they say, well we care about the kids. We want them not to be masked because we care about the kids. But when a kid that doesn't agree with them talks, they laugh.

Last night, two high school students spoke one on the Board of Ed. who was a student representative and one in the crowd. Both spoke eloquently, probably way better than I can speak, and they were for masks - high school students for masks. Okay. There was snickers in the crowd. Okay. You know when one spoke, he spoke for about 10 minutes, somebody yelled out. You spoke too long. You spoke for 10 minutes. He's on the Board. He can speak as long as he wants. He has no time limit and both kids afterwards were not happy. They should have the respect to speak. So when I see these people do this, it doesn't give me a whole lot of respect for them and I don't take their opinion when they come up here and they pretend that they know the facts better than the doctors that I should believe what they're saying.

To wait one more week, six days, you know, I honestly I didn't think it was a big deal. And I've been thinking about this all day. I thought about it a lot last night after the Board of Ed. meeting because it was a real important topic last night. People made great points on both sides but at the end of the day, six days, and I'm going to go with I think you know - let me do this. So anecdotally, right, you can put up all the facts you want. People can come up here and say I read this journal and I read this journal. Both sides can come up with facts. So it's hard for me to go by that. But if I go anecdotally, since I've been wearing a mask for two years since COVID started, I have been sick once - not one cold, nothing. Again, that's just me. Everybody else has different immune systems. I was sick all the time before. Not all the time but I get a cold every year just like everybody else. So for me and my family, my father, we haven't got sick. So for me it worked. It doesn't mean it's for everybody and in six days, it's not going to be for anybody that doesn't want it. So that's it. Thank you.

President Wilshire

The motion is to suspend the rules to allow for a second reading.

Alderman O'Brien

Thank you, Madam President. As we go through these subsequent motions here, I'd like to give you something to ponder and to think about. The past Board and this Board. This was a true profile and courage when you look at it. We were faced with some really tough decisions. Now I come to remember in my history that there was a court case that went all the way to the Supreme Court, Jacobson vs. State of Massachusetts, where that basically said that the State and political subdivisions can make up laws to try to protect the many. It says Americans, you know, it's not an infringement on your rights that you give up a little bit for the public good and the public safety. Heck if you look at the history, they locked away and isolated Mary Melon aka Typhoid Mary to keep her from infecting the population.

So at this particular juncture, none of us here were doctors and yet we had to rely on what we had and fortunately we had in-house experts with Director Bagley and the Board of Health which brought us information that we could disseminate, answered our questions, and tried to make an educated decision. Now where's the profile from (inaudible), it wasn't popular - not too many of the people. If they wanted to choose to walk the tight wire without a safety net, that's their choice. They are Americans but that's not something that's within our purview of luxury. We have to look at the city at large and make a decision that is best for all - everybody and that was tough. So I'd like to recognize the Board of Health for this and I would like to recognize the past Board and this Board for those tough decisions that you guys came up with in trying to protect the best way that we could. Did we get it right 100% but we tried and I think that we did it.

Now as far as if you use a fountain pen like I use, the ink won't be dry on this and within six days. I'm not going to hang my hat on six days. But I really would like to thank everybody here that supported this particular mandate. You did your job. You protected the citizens as best as we possibly could and I think members of the Board of Health and the Boards are to be commended. Thank you. Thank you, Madam President.

Alderman Lopez

So the specific motion before us is for a second reading in order to be able to have the conversation and vote on this tonight. If we don't give this a second reading, it's pretty worthless because it will be referred to a committee, probably the Board of Health, and then it would expire. The mandate that it's trying to rescind would expire before it was actually heard. In the Board of Health meeting two months ago, in January, it was necessary for them to make a quick decision on

– actually I think it was two months ago - may have an emergency meeting maybe in between, it was necessary to make an emergency decision in the moment because if they waited until they were sure of how long we should extend the mask mandate, that would have expired. So the original mandate was supposed to expire in January, they had a meeting, they were talking about the numbers, and they took a risk. They had to make a decision about what would be happening in a fairly unknown case with regards to letting the mask mandate expire in February. They were reluctant to do it because they weren't 100% sure where the numbers would be that the numbers were really going down. That was really time to remove this but they were conscious of the public opinions and the impact that it had on the public as they were equally concerned about the messaging we were sending to hospital staff and to healthcare workers.

So this is very similar to that in the situation, there isn't an emergency other than if we don't deliberately make a decision to remove it tonight, we will not be able to make a deliberate decision to remove it until it is rescinded automatically, and it dies its natural death. But we're in a different situation than when we originally extended this for the extra month. So in deciding whether or not you're going to allow for the second reading, you're really just determining whether or not we're going to give this issue another look. That takes courage to because we could get it wrong. There could be a huge surge in COVID for all we know over the next week. It is going to be vacation week and there's going to be more kids around. The School Board did make its decision for its mandate to for its masking to expire, or at least the optional, as of the 28th. So there's risk either way.

What I will say is I am greatly reassured by Dr. Storace's testimony because I have respect for the Board of Health. I was their liaison for two years and I take that role very seriously. I worked very hard to make sure that they knew they had an audience here with the Board of Aldermen. We would listen to them. In the original masking discussions that we had, we didn't always invite them up to the table to share their opinion, to advise us, and to perform their roles. They weren't under the impression that that was an option and there's still a little bit of tension between the two bodies trying to figure out when does an Alderman speak? When does a doctor get to speak? That's a problem when you have a public health issue. So I want to make sure that it's understood that the Board of Health has our respect and that we are not contradicting them or overriding them. These mandates were made on their recommendation and they did take courage as Alderman O'Brien said, but we weren't the originators of that courage. We needed the doctors to come forward and tell us what their beliefs were based on their studying and their knowledge.

So I have a lot of respect for the Board of Health. I, myself, introduced legislation relevant to the Board of Health's structure and in finding out that they didn't support that, they didn't endorse it, and they didn't agree with it, I retracted it because it's important that we work together especially in a crisis and it's important that we ensure that all voices feel like they have the ability to be heard and when to qualify voice, you need to recognize that. These are doctors we confirmed and President Wilshire appointed based on their service, their qualifications, their history. They meet every month to closely monitor and vet public health issues that we mostly concern ourselves with only when they are a problem. So they do a lot of good work and they put a lot of time in. I want to be very clear, at least on behalf of myself, that I respect their opinions and I respect what they brought forward.

I also want to say that I respect the student who spoke tonight Sage for sharing her thoughts. The amount of qualified information she was able to provide and the way she was able to advocate, I think any healthcare organization to be taking a look at her. We have a shortage of people. We have a shortage of people with a passion and I think maybe we have some students with more insight into health care and value than any generation before. So I respect both voices. I would just like to say that if we do not make this motion for the second reading, we won't have the further discussion and I think there's value on both sides.

Alderman Clemons

Thank you. So relative to the motion that's before us, my question through you Madam President is to the Mayor. Because as we know, all legislation either has to pass seven days or have the Mayor's signature in order to become law and whereas there's only six days to the end of the month, my question is if we go through this process and pass this tonight, hypothetically, would the Mayor sign it tomorrow?

Mayor Donchess

Well my custom is usually to sign legislation the next day, which I would do in this case.

Alderman Clemons

Thank you.

Alderman Jette

Thank you, Madam President. So I came here tonight with the full intention of opposing this but after hearing Dr. Storace talk, I'm not gonna fall on my sword. If I understood him correctly, he said if we want to resend this, you know, he didn't seem to be that much opposed to it. So as far as the motion to allow for a second reading, I will vote in favor of that and plan on discussing it further.

President Wilshire

Okay, why don't we take up the motion for a second reading.

MOTION CARRIED**O-22-006**

Endorsers: Alderman-at-Large Melbourne Moran, Jr.
Alderman-at-Large Michael B. O'Brien, Sr.
Alderman John Sullivan
Alderman Alex Comeau
Alderman Tyler Gouveia
Alderman John Cathey

RESCINDING THE FACE COVERING ORDINANCE PRIOR TO FEBRUARY 28, 2022

Given its second reading,

Alderman Moran

Thank you so much, Madam President. First, yes, I want to echo...

President Wilshire

Did you want to make a motion or?

Alderman Moran

I'm sorry. I'm so sorry. Looking for want to talking about it.

MOTION BY ALDERMAN MORAN FOR FINAL PASSAGE OF O-22-006, BY ROLL CALLON THE QUESTIONSAlderman Moran

That's what I was trying to do. You can tell how passionate I am about this. So I want to echo my colleague's statements – Alderman Lopez regarding the Board of Health. I greatly appreciate and respect their decisions and the curves they've taken their public citizens who've taken this voluntary role and they really have been under the microscope by the public in some cases very, very harshly. I do appreciate Dr. Storace's comments today about where we are with cases in the city and we've dropped down to 87 was the number that was given. He's also quoted saying masks have accomplished their goal and he did not have a firm stance on whether or not to continue the mask mandate.

I particularly brought this motion forward for a couple of reasons. Many of you know that I do work in the mental health field. That's a very strong passion of mine and I believe wholeheartedly that we need to signal that the emergency phase of the pandemic is over for the City of Nashua. We don't know what will come forward in the future with other variants, but we have the option to act on that then. At this current juncture, we do not get numbers from any agency, the Board of Health or the State, regarding how many people have committed suicide. How many people are in treatment for depression because of the pandemic? How many people are seeking who will not leave their homes because they've become agoraphobic and they have been bombarded with information from qualified information, misinformation, and then just common sense information that they get from their peers that may not be well vetted. We, as a body, I believe have the duty to signal that things are getting better. There are vaccines. There are antiviral medications. Soon children or five will be able to get vaccinated. One of the main things that we can do is allow people to have a choice in whether or not they're gonna wear a mask or not. I wholeheartedly believe in masks. I supported the last mandate. My father had died of COVID. My mother will not take off a mask, but she also will not get vaccinated. She's made her choice. I can tell

you that, at this point, we need to allow at this point, we have educated the population the best that we can and it is time to allow them to have a choice on what they're going to wear, and if they're going to get vaccinated, and how they live their lives.

Alderman Klee

Thank you, Madam President. First, I'd like to kind of set the record straight. A comment was made that Massachusetts had lifted their mask mandate and in fact, they have but it's not effective until 2/28/2022. Just trying to set the record straight on that.

I, too, came into here with the feeling that I would support the Board of Health. We were only looking at five to six days but based on Dr. Storace's comments and to see the drastic reduction of numbers down to 87, I do have to remind everybody that we are still in a substantial community transmission rate and not just here in Nashua but the entire State is in that type of thing. When I supported the mask mandate, it was not to aggravate anybody. It was not to take away anybody's freedoms but it was to help those that were more vulnerable. I had a lot of constituents who spoke to me about the fact that they couldn't leave their homes for fear of the virus. Some people can say, oh, it's fake, and it's fraud, and it's so on but it's a real issue. They were afraid to go to the grocery store. When we put the mask mandate in, they felt comfortable going to the grocery store. Yes, there were some people that didn't wear masks because, you know, gosh darn it they just weren't going to wear a mask. But it gave those people that feeling of more freedom. We talked about taking away people's rights. What about their rights? Their rights to go out, their rights to be able to have somewhat of a normal life too. I spoke to people who came to the city because we had a mask mandate. We keep talking about all the people that aren't coming to our stores. Well, Nashua was unique because we had a mask mandate so it brought those people who didn't want to shop where everybody else was.

So this mask mandate was necessary. I understand wanting to lift it at this point. There's so much anger and so much nastiness and we've all felt it. We have to have protection at times. We have people yelling and screaming, not talking to us, but yelling and screaming. There's no reason for this. There's no reason for the nastiness. If we can't have a conversation, then perhaps you shouldn't need to talk. But I think at this point, I will be supporting lifting it but I did come in with the mindset of that what is five or six more days? But after hearing Dr. Storace and seeing those numbers drastically drop from January of 3,065 to the end to 2,246 to 87. That gives me a really good feeling and I think that masks have worked. I think that perhaps we can start to ease off out of our masks. Thank you.

Alderman Dowd

I've been mulling this over all day long. They were originally they were - my concerns were what the position of the Board of Health was and we've heard that tonight. The other was the Board of Ed. passed a motion to suspend the masks as of the 28th of February to dovetail with us. My concern will be now somebody is going to want to call a special Board of Education meeting to change theirs to tomorrow or whatever. But I think at this point, people that don't want to wear masks are never gonna wear masks, you know. The people that do want to wear masks, will continue wearing masks. After hearing the Board of Health, I'm going to support this.

Alderman Comeau

Thank you, Madam President. I'm looking to get a little bit of clarification and this is going to be some alphabet soup. So I apologize, but if I'm not mistaken this is the sixth ordinance related to face coverings in the city. The first two were from 2020 and then last year we passed O-21-065 to rescind the previous two. During the passage of that ordinance, there was an amendment to add the paragraph onto the end that gave City Hall and other non-education buildings special dispensation to make their own rules, notwithstanding the previous ordinances. That ordinance O-21-065 was never codified into the city code and it actually doesn't exist as a COVID emergency order either because it was really just to rescind the previous two. So I can't find it anywhere.

But my question is since O-22-003 in paragraph two mentions government buildings. Does rescinding O-22-003 supersede the paragraph that was amended into O-21-065 that gave City Hall its own set of rules or will rescinding this ordinance mean that the mandate is rescinded in government buildings as well.

President Wilshire

I would have to defer to the attorney.

Steve Bolton, Corporation Counsel

I have no opinion on that as I sit here now.

Alderman Comeau

If I could, I'd like to make a motion to amend O-22-006 to include language to specifically remove that paragraph and say that City Hall and other non-educational government buildings should follow the same rules as the rest of public buildings in the city. So if there's no citywide mandate, there should be no mandate within non-educational government buildings.

MOTION BY ALDERMAN COMEAU TO AMEND BY ADDING THE FOLLOWING LANGUAGE: THAT CITY HALL AND OTHER NON-EDUCATIONAL GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS SHOULD FOLLOW THE SAME RULES AS THE REST OF PUBLIC BUILDINGS IN THE CITY. SO IF THERE'S NO CITYWIDE MANDATE, THERE SHOULD BE NO MANDATE WITHIN NON-EDUCATIONAL GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS

President Wilshire

Okay. That's a motion. Motion is to amend. Discussion on the amendment?

ON THE QUESTIONAlderman Jette

So, I may not be very articulate about this because this comes as a surprise, but I don't have that in front of me either. I guess I would think that the – in my own opinion - is that dealing with that aspect of it without a vetting by the appropriate committee doing it tonight, you know, without any warning, I wouldn't be opposed to. I think that the motion to having a second reading of resending the existing ordinance was passed because of the existing ordinance is going to expire in a few days anyway. I think a lot of people probably voted to allow a second reading because with that in mind.

The ordinance that you're referring that gave the Mayor, I believe, the authority to require masks in city buildings gave the Mayor the authority to do that as he judged the situation in consultation with the Board of Health to protect not only the public but city employees. I would be reluctant to tonight take that authority away and expose our city employees to a Coronavirus which is still very much a threat to us without a full discussion on that issue. So I would oppose your motion on that basis.

Alderman Clemons

Thank you, Madam President. I don't disagree necessarily with the sentiment of what Alderman Comeau is trying to do. It's probably legislation that I would support. However, I disagree with the process. To me, the process is a very important part of what we do here. I tend to believe that personally that when you want to rescind legislation or rescind things that we have done in the past that you should bring forth legislation like Alderman Moran has done with what's before us. It should be vetted whether that's either at a committee or if it's a second reading like we're doing tonight if it's something that, you know, should come up, but there really should be something in writing and it should be something that we can all review and really look at, understand, know what the consequences are.

Now I think in relative terms to this versus some other thing, you know, I think the consequences are much less. However, I would not want to set the precedent of just doing something - and I also don't want to disrespect you either Alderman Comeau because I don't think you're doing this just on a whim either. But I personally would like to see something proposed and go through the channels - the proper channels. Again it's not because I disagree with the sentiment behind the or the rationale behind what you're trying to do. Something I like I said, I probably sign on to it but because of the way how I feel we should be doing business, I won't support that amendment this evening.

Alderman Comeau

Thank you, Madam President. If I could just add on to what Alderman Clemons was just talking about. The initial language that I was referring to was added via amendment to legislation that was brought forward in a Special Board of Aldermen meeting that the rules were suspended to move to a second reading. So I fail to see how the situation is any different to remove that language than the situation that brought it forward in the first place.

I also don't understand why people inside City Hall are at greater risk than people anywhere else in the city. If we're talking about the numbers being low enough that the Board of Health has no strong objections to lifting the mandate, then

I don't understand why that wouldn't also apply in the other handful of buildings that it doesn't already apply to.

Alderman Klee

Thank you, Madam President. We talk all the time about that we should lift them in the mandate, which I think probably will happen this evening. We also say that every business should have the right to decide for themselves if they want to have this mandate. The Mayor is kind of the manager and he's responsible for all the employees here. There's a lot of traffic that comes through City Hall. I think that it should be his right to decide how to protect his employees to make sure that employees are here, to make sure that they aren't put in harm's way, and I appreciate him wanting to do that.

I think that we should not vote for that change. If you want to bring it forward in a separate one, we can have a discussion. We can read it, we can have more discussion on it. As I pointed out, I don't think this is the way to do it. I think we should have a clean bill here as to whether or not to lift the mandate six days early. I don't think we should be muddying the waters just because people are saying, I don't want to wear a mask in City Hall. It was put there for the protection of the employees and it was put there for the protection of the citizens. If the citizens don't want to be protected, then that's fine. They wear a mask. They don't wear a mask somewhere else. If the SURF were to say you have to wear a mask and you don't want to go there, fine you don't want to go there. You do have to come to City Hall I understand for different things. I don't think it's that much to ask for people to wear a mask to protect the employees here. Thank you very much.

Alderman Moran

At this moment, I don't think I would be able to support that amendment simply because I do feel that the Mayor is in charge of this building and that is what he was elected to do is to manage the people in this building. I think that authority should remain with him at the time. I definitely would consider looking at a motion in the future.

Alderman Sullivan

Thank you, Madam President. Question. If when the mask mandate expires on the 28th, does that apply to City Hall? Or will it be extended after that, if needed?

President Wilshire

I don't have that answer.

Steve Bolton, Corporation Counsel

I don't think it applies to City Hall. The Mayor would be free to have other requirements for City Hall. The library would be free to have other requirements for the library. (inaudible) department for fire stations. Police Department for the police station. Private businesses for their own private business.

Alderman Sullivan

Thank you. As a follow up Madam President. Thank you. I would support this because it's the people's house and the library is a public building. I think it's common sense. It keeps it in sync with the rest of the city and I would support that.

Alderman Lopez

So I would point out that there are some places that are still going to be mask mandated regardless such as the bus. It's dictated by federal guidelines. I would have to agree with what's been said previously. I don't think it's a good idea to try to verbally construct an amendment that could become very, very tricky particularly the definition of government buildings. The actions that the School Board has taken with regard to this mandate now ending the 28th but if we pass this tonight amended, then they didn't have the authority to do that. I think the complexities are a quagmire. With respect to public buildings being the people's house, I agree with Alderman Klee that not everybody feels safe in the middle of a pandemic going to certain places without a mask. I think we should be looking to ensure that people who are not feeling threatened by wearing masks but find them inconvenient or not being put on the same pedestal as people who feel like they might have autoimmune diseases, or health conditions, or lost loved ones that still wear a mask because ultimately the masks - it was referenced earlier that they have different percentages of effects.

I would look at instead of just a gross percentage if you look at the different studies that were released on masks and the different impacts that they have, it's also exposure time. Some masks will give you up to 25 hours of standing within four

feet of people. Some will give you like, two hours in terms of accumulating the viral load that ultimately means your body is most likely to contract COVID. So with variables like that, I don't think it's a given that COVID has disappeared just because our hospital rates are down. I think it's still a pandemic and we're still at substantial transmission levels. We may see some increase over the next couple of weeks because people are going on vacation, they're going to be traveling more, and because we're lifting his mask mandate. I don't know which one is going to have a bigger impact. I know people's opinions vary and we aren't running a focus group or a specific study in Nashua to justify these things clinically. The best we can do is look at best practices elsewhere. I would say for public buildings where people need to use them, there are foundational access right for everybody. We should make sure that we're protecting people during a pandemic.

Steve Bolton, Corporation Counsel

Yeah, I'm concerned based upon some of the subsequent discussion that I didn't make myself clear in my previous response. The Board of Aldermen cannot make rules for the schools, cannot make rules for the library, cannot make rules for the police station, the fire station. So whether you pass anything tonight, the library can still have rules adopted by the Library Trustees. Fire stations by the Board of Fire Commissioners. Police Department by the Board of Police Commissioners and the school buildings by the Board of Education. So I don't think that should enter into your consideration. They can make their own rules for their buildings.

Alderman Thibeault

Yeah, I mean I agree. I mean, it's the people's house, but it's still a place of employment for people. So I feel that, you know, the Mayor's the CEO of this business and he's got to protect the employees that are under his watch. If we're letting the Fire Department because we can't do that make their decisions, and library, and any other private business then I think we should let him do that the same thing and maybe he will decide that, you know, tomorrow is the right way or next weeks the right way. I think we should let him do that.

Alderman Comeau

Can I ask the Mayor a question through the Chair?

President Wilshire

Yes.

Alderman Comeau

Mayor Donchess have you considered the possibility of changing the face covering restrictions within City Hall? If not, what kind of metrics and numbers would you need to see in order to consider reconsidering the mandate?

Mayor Donchess

Well I haven't looked back to all the history of the legislation as you were recounting before, but my recollection is we did remove the mask mandate in City Hall for a period of time and then re-instituted it.

I first want to get the input of city employees and actually we have a meeting scheduled later in the week to kind of see how people feel. I don't have a definite answer and I think I would come up with an answer sometime in the near future.

Alderman Comeau

Given the temperature of the room here, I'd like to rescind my motion to amend.

President Wilshire

Okay, so be it. Then the motion is for final passage.

MOTION BY ALDERMAN MORAN FOR FINAL PASSAGE OF O-22-006, BY ROLL CALL

Alderman Jette

So on the motion that's now before us which is to pass this rescission of the mask mandate. As I said before, I came to this meeting fully expecting to support the mask mandate because I thought that's what the Board of Health was their

position. At the last meeting that I saw, they talked about the fact that the mask mandate was going to expire on February 28. So I didn't think there was any reason to accelerate that.

I wanted to say I watched the Board of Education meeting. I was very impressed by the three high school students who spoke. They were very articulate. I wish I could be as articulate. The student who spoke tonight, similarly she was very impressive. But I want to say that the conversation and the public should know that what we're talking about here is a mandate. I don't think and I'll ask whether or not you would allow the Board of Health to speak on this issue. I don't think the Board of Health is saying that the pandemic is over and that people should stop wearing masks that they don't need to wear masks. The Mayor said tonight the rate of transmission was down to 14%. I think on Friday the last number I saw was still around 17%. The recommended level at which people should - the level at which community transmission is that where people should wear masks and indoor public spaces is 8%. So we're still in a - it's called substantial. In the State of New Hampshire calls it substantial.

In the CDC where we're at a high rate of transmission anything above 10% is the high rate. 8% would be substantial and below 8% is the level at which the CDC says and others have said that, you know, people can feel that it's safe to not have to wear a mask. So even if we vote to eliminate the mask mandate that just means that the law requiring people to wear masks will be rescinded. I think the recommendation by the Board of Health is still if you want to protect yourself while the rate of community transmission is above 8%, certainly above 10%, 14% where it is now. If you want to protect yourself, you should continue to wear a mask.

President Wilshire

If you'd like, I can ask Dr. Storace to address that.

Alderman Jette

That would be fine. Thank you.

Tony Storace

Currently the rate is 14.8 percent and you're correct. Ideally, we'd like it to be 5%. If you rescind the mask wearing, the Board of Health will step forward and say that we highly recommend everybody continue to wear masks. Okay. My job today was really show you the rates were coming down because the last time I was here, I was the one telling you the rates were going up. If you go on to the New Hampshire website and look at the COVID numbers in the graph, and the graph like I told you last time was shooting up and now it's shooting back down. So we're definitely going in the right direction. Is it perfect? No. I mean, there's no question. It's not perfect.

What we were basically saying to you is we're close to the end of the legislation not of the pandemic. No one said that we're out of the pandemic. The pandemic is still out there. Would I advise you if I was advising about masks, wear masks. There's no question about it. We were hoping to extend this to the end of the month because we're going into March and people start to go outside. We know that this is a viral disease, respiratory disease and what happens in the fall when we all know inside, we start seeing the flu. We start seeing the common cold. We're going to be able to get outside and that's going to help a lot. If you look at the graphs prior to Omicron, in which I gave you the first statistic was in June, it was way down. It was 11 or something like that. It's progressively gone up and then skyrocketed through December.

Basically what we're saying is yes we're in a better position. Are we going to go and die on this hill for six days? I don't think that's the case here but I would tell you, it's not safe. I will tell you the reason why those numbers went up was because of the holidays. You can wear the mask all day long and be protected but then when you get a group of people, especially those that are outside your bubble, sometimes there is even some of your family, that's where we started to see the disease start to grow, cross pollinate because of people. We have Thanksgiving. We have Christmas, and the other holidays, religious holidays, and now from the CDC we're looking for is a blip from Superbowl weekend. So we'll probably see a little bit of an uptick there. So I would wear a mask. I will tell you (inaudible) for the sake of the public. If we want to mandate it, that's your arena not mine. Did that help?

Alderman Jette

Could I follow up?

President Wilshire

Yes.

Alderman Jette

So we're simple people. Okay. So we're asking you a simple question. Would you prefer that we continue the mask mandate until the end of the month as originally provided for in the ordinance?

Tony Storace

Yes. It would make our day.

Alderman Jette

Okay. Thank you for clarify that.

Alderwoman Timmons

Well thank you for your information because I did have a conversation with Director Bagley today and I am the liaison for the Health Department on one of her input and she said exactly what you just said that we should keep the mandate until the 28th. So that's my stand as well and it's for all the reasons everybody talked about in here.

I'm sorry, I did have two deaths this week and they were COVID related. Okay. That you could call it fear all you want. It's the truth. It's the facts, it's what it is. Masks do work. I know that for a fact. My kids work in the hospital. They were masks all day long because they have to protect their patients. Masks work. So all the stuff that people say on masks don't work. They don't do this. They don't do that. That's a bunch of garbage.

Secondly what happened at the Board of Education last night, I hate to say this, but take you away from what you're seeing now, these students that spoke last night were traumatized because he got heckled and I got a message from him at 11 o'clock and said that the parents heckled him. A kid because he was pro mask. That's a shame. This kid right here was elegant on the way she speaks much better than I course but she was elegant. She got heckled. People we got to stop that. We got to stop attacking people that don't agree with you. If you don't agree with that particular person, just respect their opinion like I respect your opinion. I don't attack you. And that is I don't attack you on Facebook. I don't attack you anywhere. Your opinion is your opinion and just that's what it is. You are not the professionals. You're not the doctors. You're not the healthcare workers. You're just what I have – opinion but my opinion means a little bit more because I was elected. And by the way, I was elected by the masses and the masses said keep demanding. That's all I have to say.

Tony Storace

Just add to that, I didn't bring the statistic last time was up here but 140 people died in Nashua.

Alderwoman Timmons

Thank you.

Alderman Thibeault

Just two quick comments and it's not a question I'm sorry, Dr. Storace. So just looking at the screen up there. Someone put he's a dentist. I don't care. He's the Chairman of the Board of Health. The Board of Health has other types of specialties. We have a pediatrician here. They're made up of multiple specialties. He's representing them. He comes and delivers the facts or the facts as of the Board of Health. Believe it or don't believe it but to demean someone like that, that's what Gloria is talking about.

The other thing I want to say is, you know, I'm going to stick with my original that, again, I've been going back and forth all day but I'm going to still vote to go till the 28th. I'm going to do that for a really the principle because my principle was that we have the mandate to the 28th. That's the original thing I voted for. I'm going to speak for the kids in high school and other than want the mask mandate but can't vote out here, and the seniors, and people who have e-mailed me that want to keep it. It's not just the people that don't want it that have e-mailed me. We get plenty of e-mails from people that do want it and unfortunately they just don't come out to these meetings. I'm going to stick with principle and I'm going to continue to vote that way that I said earlier.

Alderman Clemons

Thank you, Madam President. I agreed with the previous two speakers in the sense of I think it is terrible that some of the public has really put a bad taste in people's mouth. I said this after the last meeting in December when we passed the mask mandate to begin with. Some of the things that were said about some of the Aldermen for voting for the mandate - you know no one wakes up - none of us in this room wake up one day and say how can I tick off half the city. It just doesn't happen. We come here and we're elected. We do the best job that we think we can do and every two and four years we stand up for election or re-election and we say how did I do? And that's when people can express their ultimate opinion. But the attacks to say that, you know, people don't appreciate or just terrible things. I'm not even going to repeat them.

My whole thing is I have voted no on the mask mandate in the past. I will continue that stance. I do not believe in mandates. I do believe in masks. I agree with the Board of Health that wearing a mask is the right thing to do I think when you're in public. Do I do it all the time? No but then again I don't follow my doctor's advice. My wife will tell you I probably maybe follow the advice of my doctor 25% of the time. So I will vote to rescind the mask ordinance but it is not because I disrespect the Board of Health. It is just not because I agree with people who are slinging mud essentially online and in other places. I think that's behavior that's inappropriate. It is not political discourse that is right for our country and I think we need to really write the track on that. I hope we can do so you know maybe tonight and moving forward. I think we've done a good job. I think this group has done a good job and I hope we can continue to do that.

Alderman Dowd

I think everybody's expressed their opinion. I'm not going to make a motion to move the question, but I think we ought to vote on this.

Alderman Gouveia

Yeah, I have to agree with Alderman Clemons and what he said. I'm just not for a mandate. I don't think this question and nobody here is saying you're debating do masks work or not. The fact is, is can the city mandate us to wear masks? I'll be voting no. I'm just not for mandate. I'll be voting yes.

Alderman Klee

Thank you, Madam President. Earlier, I said that based on the numbers and the information given from the Board of Health that I would vote for the rescinding of this. After hearing from Dr. Storace again, I'm going to vote against it because I believe that maybe we should go those extra few days. I think it is important. As it was pointed out, those who won't wear are just not going to wear but it also gives those who want to wear them and have a little anxiety about going to the grocery store know that the majority of the people there will have masks on because of this mandate. I think it's important.

The Governor who lifted the statewide mandate gave permission to all the municipalities to do what was best for their people. This body at one point voted for what the way they wanted. I think it's been a great discussion. I've seen things back and forth. We've been listening to each other. I think it's wonderful. At this time, I am going to vote against it. So thank you.

Alderman Cathey

Thank you, Madam President. I have to agree with my colleagues about mandates in general but also I believe Alderman Clemons mentioned something about political discourse. In that light, Alderman Moran reached out to me about this ordinance and I appreciated that he wanted to reach out and try and get this ordinance passed. I even spoke to him and said, I think this would be a good faith gesture to the city. To me, it's not about six days. Aldermen in this chamber said, if the numbers come down, we will change our minds and the numbers came down. Now you have a chance to vote proactively to stop something for rescinded instead of just sitting around and waiting for it to expire. So I think that says more about us as a Board being proactive and making a move on something that we saw the data and we feel like it's the right time to move. So to me, it's not about the six days. It's about the gesture to the public about passing this ordinance. So obviously, I'd be voting in favor. Thank you.

Alderman Sullivan

Thank you, Madam President. A yes vote is to resend it. A no vote is to keep it, correct.

President Wilshire

Correct.

Alderman Sullivan

Thank you.

A viva voce roll call was taken which resulted as follows:

Yea: Alderman O'Brien, Alderman Sullivan, Alderman Moran,
Alderman Lopez, Alderman Clemons, Alderman Comeau,
Alderman Dowd, Alderman Gouveia, Alderman Cathey, 9

Nay: Alderman Klee, Alderman Jette, Alderman Thibeault,
Alderwoman Timmons, Alderman Wilshire 5

MOTION CARRIED**O-22-007**

Endorsers: Alderman-at-Large Ben Clemons
Alderman Patricia Klee
Alderman-at-Large Melbourne Moran, Jr.
Alderman Thomas Lopez
Alderman Alex Comeau
Alderman Richard A. Dowd
Alderman Tyler Gouveia
Alderman John Cathey
Alderman Derek Thibeault
Alderman-at-Large Lori Wilshire

EXTENDING THE HOURS OF ON-PREMISES SALES OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES TO 2 A.M. FOR CHARITABLE GAMING FACILITIES

Given its first reading; Assigned to the PERSONNEL/ADMINISTRATIVE AFFAIRS COMMITTEE by President Wilshire

O-22-008

Endorsers: Mayor Jim Donchess
Alderman-at-Large Michael B. O'Brien, Sr.
Alderman Patricia Klee
Alderman-at-Large Melbourne Moran, Jr.
Alderman Thomas Lopez
Alderman-at-Large Ben Clemons
Alderman Derek Thibeault
Alderwoman-at-Large Gloria Timmons
Alderman-at-Large Lori Wilshire

RELATIVE TO SEASONAL ROAD CLOSURES AND ELIMINATION OF CERTAIN ON-STREET PARKING FOR EXTENDED OUTDOOR DINING AND OTHER NON-VEHICULAR USE

Given its first reading; Assigned to the COMMITTEE ON INFRASTRUCTURE AND PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE by President Wilshire

O-22-009

Endorsers: Mayor Jim Donchess
Alderman-at-Large Michael B. O'Brien, Sr.
Alderman-at-Large Melbourne Moran, Jr.
Alderman Alex Comeau
Alderman John Cathey
Alderman Derek Thibeault
Alderwoman-at-Large Gloria Timmons

RAISING THE LANDFILL DISPOSAL FEE FOR CONSTRUCTION AND DEMOLITION DEBRIS FROM \$90 PER TON TO \$300 PER TON

Given its first reading; Assigned to the FINANCE COMMITTEE by President Wilshire

PERIOD FOR GENERAL PUBLIC COMMENTLaurie Ortolano

Laurie Orlando, 41 Berkeley Street. I want to address the barriers. On December 8th when we had an Infrastructure Committee meeting, Director Cummings said that he was happy to facilitate a working group and it would be a public meeting where it would be publicly noticed. Alderman O'Brien stated, "It's my intention probably, maybe to have it as a full committee but I'm willing to appoint committee members. I would encourage that it's open to members of the public, the stakeholders. We've got to have the stakeholders. We got to have you people at the meeting to really tell us. To come to the Aldermen meeting like this is really not the kind of place it's putting the horse - the horse got out of the barn a bit. So off we go on the ninth with we're going to get this committee done and it's an urgent thing on the eighth. On the ninth, I wrote a question. I asked O'Brien you know, what's going on? How does this committee really get appointed? I was told after January 9th when the board is sworn in will do with it. And then he said, "As stated earlier, it's a work in progress with a keen eye on the calendar for a solution that stated with an eye on the calendar. I assure you it is a project of high priority and it will be done." I looked on the calendar. It was never posted.

On January 12th, I wrote an e-mail to Alderman O'Brien and Cummings requesting an update and had a committee been selected, and general questions on the format, and I worded as a Right to Know. I never got a response but I did learn last week that on the 11th Cummings received an e-mail from Marylou Blaisdell that informed him of an upcoming meeting on the 14th - two days later with the DIC to discuss the barrier issue. Nobody was told. I was never told through that Right to Know. This meeting was never posted on the digital city calendar.

On January 26, we had an Infrastructure meeting. Barriers went out on the agenda. It was very strange, weird. I spoke at the end. I was the only member of the public there. At the end, I said I'm confused with this is an emergency. What's going on? Alderman O'Brien waited till the very last comments and said there's an organization that's been around probably since the inception of Main Street and we're relying on them for citizen input. He went on to say we need stakeholders and I might have a few names I can give you. I feel it was very deceptive not to state who that group was. You didn't even say it was a public group. I didn't know who you were talking about. I've never been to a DIC meeting. The last set of minutes online are from April of 2021 and there has never been a committee report...

Donna Graham, Legislative Affairs Manager

30 seconds

Laurie Ortolano

...submitted to the Board of Aldermen since last year. This goes on and on with deception and Right to Knows. I was tasked by people in this city to try and tell them when something was happening. I did everything I could to do that and I got duped because nothing was posted. I'm very disappointed at the underhanded nature. We gave you about \$50 million to improve the downtown with an art center, with a walkway, with School Street project, and now we're hearing...

Donna Graham, Legislative Affairs Manager

Your time is up.

Laurie Ortolano

...if we don't give you the sidewalks, it's not good enough. I think we gave you enough. Thank you.

Michael O'Connor

It's Michael O'Connor, 42 Berkeley Street. Thank you. Good evening. My comment is on the method being used to advance the extended outdoor dining proposal offered by Mr. Cummings. His letter to the Committee of Infrastructure, a Chairman in your in your agenda, states and I quote, "We waited for some time to see if interested parties would offer anything as an alternative but to date no alternative arose." This assertion is striking and Mr. Cummings lack of mentioned when and how could interested parties have been able to submit their input. Many citizens voiced their concerns at the Committee on Infrastructure meeting referred to on December 8th. From those minutes, you could notice not only alternative suggestions but an emerging voice for compromise. Hence, what was then proposed was tabled. You should know in those minutes both Chairman O'Brien and Mr. Cummings stated that in January there will be a working group formed and the motion would be brought back.

In the minutes from the only Infrastructure Committee meeting since that December meeting, Alderman Comeau stated that he received constituents' communications asking how they submit their comments. I'll read an excerpt from Chairman O'Brien's immediate response to Alderman Comeau. It was, and I quote, "I can answer that. There is an organization that has been around probably since the inception of Main Street and we're relying on them for citizen input. That way we can have stakeholders of Main Street." Citizens who are more expert on the inner workings of city government than I advised me that that organization who which Chairman O'Brien refers is the Downtown Improvement Committee. As can be seen on the city's agenda center, that committee has no announced meetings since last April. Other sources have suggested there actually has been at least one unannounced meeting, a recent meeting of the committee in which the barrier proposal may have been discussed. If true, maybe this unannounced meeting was the only time for citizen input. I've requested of Mr. Cummings, both in e-mail and my voicemail, for minutes of any meeting since that last one recorded on the agenda center. However, he has not responded. Mr. Cummings states in his letter to you Chairman O'Brien that his proposal represents the consensus of the administration. No doubt. To date, what other input has been recognized.

Donna Graham, Legislative Affairs Manager

30 seconds

Michael O'Connor

He may believe that he has the best consensus proposal, but it is only the consensus of input available to him. Surely the public comments attached to tonight's agenda should convince you the board that there are responsible stakeholders and citizens have alternative input that should be considered.

In closing, Board of Aldermen I asked you is there a working group? If so, will its meetings be announced on the agenda center and open to the public? Thank you.

Mike Ortolano

Hi. Mike Ortolano, 41 Berkeley Street. I appreciate a lot of the commentary that I heard. Kind of sounds a little bit like, you know, righteous indignation that the chamber has when, you know, students and others are being demeaned. I think that that's a good thing. The only thing that I would like to ask the chamber is that, you know, at the last meeting I observed a communication that I think fell into the category of either knowingly or unknowingly hitting hard at a community member, which amazingly enough happened to be my wife. But you know, it kind of opened up by suspending of the rules and of course, you hear a lot of that. You guys suspend the rules a lot. This whole discussion, you know, over the six days of this masked mandate which is kind of the grand scheme of things kind of nothing. I get it. It's nice to show good faith. You said he dropped the thing if the numbers look good but in reality when you suspend the rules and then you allow an employee of the city to, you know, to basically state that a member of community has been reported to the Police Department and there's an ongoing investigation from Corporate Counsel advising that you can no longer talk about it. It really reeks of an opportunity missed for, you know, for somebody on the Board to call point of order, to shut down discussion when it's inappropriate. Some of this stuff of righteous indignation really should cut both ways both to the people that you like and other people that maybe you don't like that much, whatever the case. So I think the suspending of the rules, I mean it really is something that has its place but I think it's very casually used by this Board.

The other thing is I wanted to communicate that I do not agree with maintaining barriers on Main Street. I feel that the process being used there is very similar to the process that was used to try to change the structure of the Police Commission. It was very closed. It wasn't open. It wasn't a process that allowed...

Donna Graham, Legislative Affairs Manager

30 seconds

Mike Ortolano

...interaction with the community. It's being driven by Mayor, and a team of people, and it needs to be open if there's going to be any consensus. Thanks,

Paula Johnson

Good evening again. Paula Johnson, 15 Westborn Drive. Member of the Board of Education, but I'm speaking on behalf of myself. I'd like to thank the members of the Board for rescinding this mask because I made a comment last night, I guess, but I guess it happen what I said last night happened tonight. Thank you very much. Because the people like me who have

a disability don't have to walk around and show our letter anymore to say I've got a disability and I can't wear a mask under number six of the ordinance and a mandate is not law. If you would like me to read it, I just looked it up in my phone. Mandates are not laws. So I'd like to say thank you.

The other thing I'd like to say is that for \$5 million, you don't debate anything like this. You just spend \$5 million like that but on a mask we debate. You were killing the horse. You're beating the horse to death basically but that's not what I want to talk about here right now.

Back in March - excuse me, December 17, 2021 and December 28, 2021, Alderman Wilshire you got a letter from Sue Lovering, City Clerk, talking about three aldermen, and I know one of them was sick, missed three regular meetings. They have to pay back their stipend. And what happened was on Alderman Kelly, there was a motion to table. Now if you remember Alderman Wilshire when we were on the Board together, we had an Alderman that didn't show up most of the time and we wrote that. I wrote that ordinance and its NRO 5-6. It basically says if in any quarter, and then it got amended later on, if in any quarter any member of the Board of Aldermen is recorded absent at three or more regular meetings of the Board, the City Clerk shall transmit a communication stating to the fact that the Board of Aldermen and the stipend for that quarter shall be withheld. That did not happen. So I don't care. They don't have to repay back the money. I mean other than former Alderman Laws was out May 12, May 26, and June 3rd. I understand former Alderman Skip Cleaver was ill. That was accepted and then Alderman Kelly was out three times. This basically states that you can't be out in a quarter. Good cause shall include - because I wrote this with...

Donna Graham, Legislative Affairs Manager

30 seconds

Paula Johnson

...Attorney Clarke on this whole thing and I think Ms. Graham you were up in the office at that time that for maternity, health, and other things adoption. So I am as a public citizen, and also elected, and if I was out, I would have to give back my money. Whatever the stipend was for that time period, we need to get it back or Alderman Kelly doesn't get her stipend check. Enough, is enough, is enough here.

Donna Graham, Legislative Affairs Manager

Time.

Paula Johnson

I mean and it shouldn't be. It should not be like this ever.

President Wilshire

Your time is up Mrs. Johnson.

Paula Johnson

Excuse me? A Freudian slip there.

President Wilshire

Yeah.

Paula Johnson

I still retain the title if I want to and "honorable" I guess and "Representative" because I went up the scale like that. Some people might not like it, but it is what it is.

President Wilshire

Okay. We need to get on to the next.

Paula Johnson

Oh, there was just one of the thing I had to say. Just give me this one second.

President Wilshire

I have other people waiting to speak. Your time is up.

Paula Johnson

Okay. Alderman Klee - \$250 more for the veteran's tax that was voted on.

Karen Bill

Karen Bill, 95 Parnell Place, Nashua. Alderman Sullivan thank you for objecting to accepting whatever the committee minutes were earlier. I'm speaking against the continuation of the downtown barrier project. The citizens of Nashua have been voicing their concerns about this for months. Perhaps today is the day that you actually hear us. It's not only about the businesses downtown. Residents have the right to walk on the sidewalk and have enough room between outside dining tables and the street. Last week I sent an email to Tim Cummings asking for meeting notes of the Downtown Improvement Committee. The first three e-mails were ignored. In e-mail number four, I stated my request in a Right to Know law. Imagine having to do this in this city to a city official to get an answer to an e-mail – a Right to Know law. His five word reply to me asking about information about the minutes, who was on the committee, the meetings. "I have no such record." Are you kidding me? Such disregard, such disrespect. Do you think if President Wilshire had asked this, she would have received the same curt, dismissive message? Is there not a code of conduct that states that you must reply to a resident within a certain amount of time in a professional and polite manner? If not, obviously there should be.

Having run a nonprofit in this city myself, many organizations have that as part of their operating procedures. Maybe it's time for the city to follow suit. Mr. Cummings has a dismissive tone. These e-mails were not responded to. It's unfathomable to think that you could just be dismissed without saying "Right to Know". Not even Dear Miss Bill, nothing.

Discussions about the barriers on Main Street have resulted in the Nashua Fire Rescue voicing concerns about response times. Nashua Police unable to pull people over on Main Street due to lack of room to do so. They have to wait until the car pulls on to a side street or travels further up Main Street.

Donna Graham, Legislative Affairs Manager

30 seconds.

Karen Bill

This is directly from a Police Commission meeting. Imagine the heightened anxiety on both parties. The cost - so what are we supposed to do, right? I think it's time these barriers go. The cost to install and remove are somewhere around \$60,000 per year. Lost revenue parking about as much. So what do we do with the barriers since we're not going to use them all? Sell them? We bought them. We don't need them anymore. Let's make some money back. Let's sell them.

Donna Graham, Legislative Affairs Manager

Time is up.

Karen Bill

Why not everything else is going up.

President Wilshire

Your time is up Ms. Bill.

Karen Bill

So I ask when do I get the information.

Beth Scaer

Beth Scaer, 111 East Hobart Street. Thank you to the Alderman who voted to remove the mask to rescind the mask ordinance and I want to especially thank Alderman Moran for bringing up the mental health issues. You know, I think we'll find out how serious how many people are severely affected by mental health problems and how many people we have and will lose to suicide because of all the restrictions, and shut downs, and the fear (inaudible).

Also, I'm just very concerned that Alderman O'Brien brought up the case of Typhoid Mary who was imprisoned for 20 years because she would have Typhoid because she was ill. I don't think that's the kind of example of public policy that people want to be, you know, held up as a good example.

I'm very concerned that Alderman Timmons said that her opinion is more important than ours. She was elected to represent us not to lord her opinion over us, so I really hope she rethinks that belief. Thank you.

Sonia Prince

Hi. Sonia Prince, 29 Tufts Drive. I'm a little disappointed about the mask order but I thought you guys were gonna pass it anyway but especially after the Board of Health specifically said they were worried about a spike after the Super Bowl and the word about spikes after vacation. That was a little bit surprising. But, oh well. I do wish that you would listen to the Board of Health. They are the medical professionals and the epidemiologist not us.

As for the complaint about the contractor last meeting, I'm very happy about the transparency. I'd rather know and not know. So if there is a problem and a contractor is suspicious of somebody calling in, best to get that investigated and get it out of the way. It looks like it was investigated so I'm glad that you're more transparent, unlike the Board of Education last night who apparently voted on a Superintendent. When the meeting was like two to three hours long, they went into non-public so everybody left after the second public the comment and then they came back out and voted because they were too afraid to do it in front of the public. So that was pretty embarrassing I thought. So thank you for being more transparent that they are.

As for the masks, well this summer, I went to a Board of Aldermen meeting and there was a former police officer and a former firefighter who weren't obeying the rules with the mask. So it was uncomfortable. I'm immunocompromised so there is no option for me to go back there. So at least you have Zoom. Unlike the Board of Ed., I have zero voice there because I can't go to the meetings because they don't enforce the masks there. Last night, there were people not wearing masks and the Chair said, "Oh could you just like move away from the people with masks?" So what's the point of having a mask order if you're not going to enforce it in that room? So people don't have a voice at the Board of Ed. meeting, which is disappointing and kind of offensive. It should be like that. They should have an option to call in. Three of the board members had to call in so why can't the people call in. I think that was unfair.

As for outdoor dining, I loved the outdoor dining. Last summer and the summer before, the downtown was vibrant. I spoke to a few business owners who own restaurants done and that I know and they loved the extra seating. They said it saved them because times were hard and having more seating outside - and people like to be...

Donna Graham, Legislative Affairs Manager

30 seconds

Sonia Prince

So that's all I have. Thank you very much and, again, I'm disappointed but it is what it is and I hope that there's no spikes coming up because then you'll have to put it back and that will make it look kind of silly. So I hope things go well as expected and I hope the positivity rate keeps going down. Thank you.

Brady Owens

Brady Owens, 16 Danbury Road, Nashua, New Hampshire. Speaking on regarding the downtown barriers. I'm definitely not for the barriers. I know at least two businesses in downtown pretty very well. One's a restaurant and one's not. The one that is not a restaurant definitely does not like the barriers because it just blocks his way. Traffic was very horrible with all the barriers as many people have already talked about. And I just did just now a quick scan through the agenda for this meeting, which oddly never comes up in the Board of Aldermen meeting. There's a lot of data on the agenda and there's a lot of people contacting the city about the agenda. There are many business owners that have voiced their opinion against the barriers. There were a few restaurants that it really helped and it served a purpose for the time. But as we saw this past year once indoor dining returned and everything, the amount of usage of those outdoor seating, there were one or two restaurants

that really used it a lot. But even some of the other restaurants such as Martha's, which always had a lot outdoor dining, you know, their current outdoor dining they have is typically more than adequate. We're the kind of people that go out and like to eat outdoors. We often noticed, you know, even before the barriers were put up and COVID started, there was always plenty of outdoor dining for the people that wanted to sit outside, not everybody wants to sit outside, you know, they believe it's hot. I was born raised in the south to me it never gets really hot up here. So we always sat outside and there's never been a lack of seating outside at normal times. So I'm definitely not for keeping the barriers up. That's concludes my statement. So thank you for tonight.

President Wilshire

Thank you. Just so you know, there's a sign-up sheet next time if you come that you have to sign up for public comment period. It's usually on the back table. Okay. We'll allow it this time. Thank you.

Alicen Hogan

No worries. I thank you very much. I would like to thank the Honorable Tom Lopez for his response reference the miscommunication and I look forward to having a discussion with you further. I'd like to thank the Honorable Moran for the points that you brought up in regards to mental health.

I would like to clarify with the two other members that took exception to the sound that I made when Sage was speaking. Grief is expressed in a couple of different ways. What you heard was a bark of extreme frustration because I have had a 12 year old family friend shoot himself and kill himself because of the fear of going back to school with COVID going on. Okay. That is the mental health value that's going on right now. So to hear that level of fear in the voice of Sage and other students that are currently in our schools, they need guidance. They need help in understanding the statistics that they are reading. The statistics that she was commenting on were absolutely true for the first variant of COVID when it first hit. But this virus has evolved as viruses do and we have gone through Delta, and we have gone through Omicron - two phases of Omicron. And at present, those symptoms are stuffy nose, fever, sore throat, cough, and what not but not the level that she thinks they still are at. And that's serious. That's having a negative effect on not just our children but other people and that's why we need to have open conversations that discuss the most relevant information and where we are at right now. Because it matters. Open dialogue matters. Facts do change, signs do change. We all were trying to do the best we possibly could when this thing hit because we didn't know. No one knew. It could have been the zombie apocalypse and you guys did the best you could. But we owe it to ourselves and we owe it to our children to not let them continue to spiral downward in an echo chamber of fear that is fed through algorithms where they are locked in their tick tock, and their Facebook, and they aren't having conversations...

Donna Graham, Legislative Affairs Manager

30 in seconds

Alicen Hogan

...with people who have lived a little bit longer, who have seen a little bit more. I tell you as a veteran, holy smokes, the risk I had to take to convince my young airman to go into an air traffic control tower in the middle of a war zone because it was a target where they were going to get more than shot at, that's risk. That's real risk. That's more than .0099 bla, bla, bla, but they did it.

Donna Graham, Legislative Affairs Manager

Times up.

Alicen Hogan

Thank you.

Donna Graham, Legislative Affairs Manager

Excuse me, Ma'am. Can you give your name and address please?

Alicen Hogan

I'm sorry. Alicen Hogan, 7 Hardy Street in Nashua, New Hampshire.

Donna Graham, Legislative Affairs Manager

Thank you.

Alicen Hogan

Thank you.

REMARKS BY THE MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF ALDERMEN

Alderwoman Timmons

Thank you President Wilshire. The last speaker spoke about the heckling. I didn't know who did it because I wasn't looking over there. That's number one. So I just know that they were being heckled. I don't look over there. I don't care who have over there.

Secondly, I like to clarify something. When I say my opinion, it wasn't - and I think the person heard it wrong. I didn't say my opinion was more better than her opinion is that my opinion count. And so to the masses that do not come to the Board. Their opinions count as well. I get a lot of e-mails from people that refuse to come to the Board meetings because of certain people that's here at the Board meeting also that will not wear a mask. So that's what I get from the majority of the people that write me and that's all I have to say.

Alderman Thibeault

Yeah I got a few things to say as always. So I just, you know, as far as Miss Sage goes when she spoke, I hope she's still on and I hope she heard that because obviously if you can hear the laughing on the phone you don't have the background any more than we do. So hopefully she heard that. Obviously, you know, I'm sorry for that loss. It's awful. I (inaudible) with Alderman Moran too. I know mental health has been a serious problem. It was a serious problem before and it's even probably more so now. So I get that.

To Miss Johnson, I guess we got a little thing going back two nights in a row here. But last night she said we were definitely rescinding the order tonight. When a high school student corrected her just to say it wasn't definite. She said get your facts straight. So when I spoke, I said you know, you don't have a crystal ball but I guess I was wrong. She does have a crystal ball. We did rescind it. She's got one on me so there you go.

I'm glad masks are gone honestly. Like I said, I was still gonna vote my principle and I'm still gonna vote the way that I felt for the children of the schools, and my constituents in Ward 8, and with the Board of Health. But at the end of the day, I'm hoping that the masks going way, obviously it doesn't sound like it with whole barrier issue, but I'm hoping with the mask issue that we do get some of the nastiness in general on both sides of the coin to go away because it's just, you know, it's not pleasant for anybody. It's not so much me. I don't care what people say about me or to me, it's more about people who can't defend themselves. My vote is never going to be or should never be to try to do a good faith effort. It's going to be what I think is right for my constituents or what I hear. If I don't agree with Alderman Cathey or I don't agree with Alderman Moran or Alderman Klee, that's okay. It doesn't make me stop getting along with all three of them at the end of the day. I'm gonna go with what I think is right for my constituents based on the information I have.

And one last thing, I just want to end on a good note. Nashua High School student Anthony Fernandez won the wrestling title within the last couple of weeks, I think. He was mentioned at the Board of Education last night. I met his father at the Great Gobbler during Thanksgiving Day and a lot of good ideas about schools. I just want to congratulate Anthony for a great job. I know he's going on to school to wrestle in college, so congratulations to Anthony.

Alderman Cathey

I'd first like to congratulate Chief Rhodes on his retirement and thank him for his many years of service to the city. I didn't get to know them very well but I did meet him before I became an Alderman. According to his service record, he obviously served the city very well and sacrificed for the city and we appreciate what he's done. Congratulations to, I guess, Chief Buxton, who will be sworn in in the coming weeks.

I'd also like to thank the Nashua Police Department. I did a ride along I believe it was last week and that was awesome. I'd like to thank Chief Rourke, Captain Faye, Captain Bolton, and then Sergeants Goodridge and Jones who I got to ride with. Very happy with the job that they do. They are really professional, really, really good at what they do and I'm happy

to have them on the streets. I really appreciate them inviting me into the station, giving me a tour, and answering a myriad of questions because I tend to be quite inquisitive.

I think the BOE runs the meeting pretty well. I know Alderman Thibeault was there last night and people were asked to put their masks back on. Obviously, it's hard to control a meeting with like 50 people in the audience. It's difficult. We have a meeting around the meeting was already running along at that point. So you know, we take what we can and we do our best. So I wouldn't harp on the Board too much about that. They're trying to do the best they can through a tumultuous season.

I learned this past week about the downtown Infrastructure Committee apparently having meetings in January and in February without that information being on the city website. Apparently, information was posted on the bulletin boards and City Hall. That information to my knowledge, and that can be corrected, and that's fine can't be confirmed. Regardless of it could, the city is now in a pattern or behavior where the citizens look to the website to look up the agendas, to look at what's going on with the city. I'd be hard pressed to find a lot of people who drive down to City Hall to look at a bulletin board to see when there's a meeting. I would doubt that anyone does that. I believe that it would be disingenuous to say, oh we posted on the bulletin board. That's not fair especially considering that they are dealing with an issue that, let's say at the very least is 50/50. It's controversial to say the least. There's a lot of public input and so I believe we need to go above and beyond to bring this matter to the public, especially if we're going to be voting on it for three years. It's a big deal whether you agree or disagree. This is sort of like a relationship that we have to have with the city because there are going to be some winners and there's gonna be some losers, depending on what side you're on how you feel about it. And so it would behoove us to do everything we can to make sure as much of the public has an opportunity to speak at Downtown Improvement Committee meetings, or other committee meetings, or even here at the Board, which obviously they get a chance to do that. But prior input before it gets to us I believe paramount.

I think moving forward, no I don't know what happened. I can't, you know, I can't ascribe intent to that would be unfair. That would be wrong but moving forward, we have to do a better job of figuring out when these meetings are, making sure they're posted, and making sure the public knows. I have constituents call. They ask me when the meetings are and I need to be able to tell them. If I say look on the website and it's not there, that's a problem. That's not fair to them. So moving forward, I think we need to do a better job of informing the public about this barrier issue and making sure that they have all the input that they can get regarding that issue.

And then finally the last meeting we had regarding the situation with Ms. Ortolano in my mind is unacceptable. There's no need. Having that communication in the meeting was unnecessary, in my opinion. Also, it could have said "a citizen". It didn't have to say anyone's name. It could have just been brought to our attention. It wasn't something we were dealing with. It wasn't an ordinance. It wasn't a resolution. It was just information and not information we needed to know that night, number one.

Number two - to openly accused a citizen, that could be my mother, if you decided to visit from New Jersey, a sister, my neighbor up there, and I hope that this Board would want to be like alright let's discuss this into nonpublic because this is not appropriate for public conversation. That at least that's my hope and to accuse a citizen of a crime of which there was no proof, and that was verified later with the police report which is in the packet from a city employee, how can we have a good relationship with the citizens? How can we say we have their best interests at heart? How can we say that we represent them when we have members who work here accusing them of a crime without proof? It's just unacceptable and I hope in the future the Board would act differently in those situations, or I don't know all the procedural things yet. I'm still learning and so maybe that'll come with time but in the future, it's got to go down differently and I believe, in my opinion, that the city owes Miss Ortolano an apology for that act because it wasn't right. Thank you.

Alderman Gouveia

Thank you, Madam President. I'd like to echo what Alderman Cathey said about the situation with Mrs. Ortolano. I feel it should have been done on a non-public session and I'll leave that at that.

On a lighter note, I wish everybody a happy Tuesday 2-22-22. Saw the very festive door by the HR Department on my walk up here this evening. I wanted to thank everybody also for speaking tonight either for or against any of the - well mostly for the mask mandate. It's a very divisive topic. It's one both sides are very passionate about and I think it just goes to show and I think our Board here has done great with good civil discourse which has been a real positive thing for the City of Nashua. Thank you.

Alderman Dowd

A couple things related to Zoom. We passed tonight that you can't Chair a meeting through Zoom. We rescinded the

mask ordinance and hopefully at some point in the not too distant future, you won't have to wear a mask at City Hall. At that point, I think the Board needs to consider us eliminating Zoom entirely unless an Alderman is ill or something and can't attend. But as far as anybody else, they should be here in person.

The other thing is there were questions about Zoom for the Board of Education. There is no capability at Nashua High North for Zoom and it's about 30 plus \$30,000 to put it in. I can tell you the Board of Ed. is not going to spend valuable money out of their education budget to put that in. Especially where it's probably going to be going away soon. So it's not because they're trying to avoid public input, it's because they don't have the capability and it's very costly.

Also last night, the television broadcast of the Board of Ed meeting was horrible. It got so bad I just recorded most of it because every five seconds I was cutting out. That is not good. I don't know what they need to fix it but somebody needs to look into that and quickly probably. That's all.

Alderman Comeau

Thank you, Madam President. I had a couple items but they're real quick. I just wanted to give Alderman Thibeault some more details. Anthony Fernandez did just finished first on Saturday in the district. He was one of six students from Nashua South that placed. There was a first, a second, two thirds, and three fourths, including my son, and helped Nashua South finish third in the entire tournament. So those six wrestlers are all moving on to meet champions this coming Saturday. So congratulations, all them.

The two things I'd like to discuss - most of this has already been touched upon so I'll try not to repeat too much. The first thing is the situation that happened two weeks ago with Ms. Ortolano. I agree that I don't think that that was the appropriate way to handle that. RSA 91-A allows us to go into non-public for a number of reasons and one of them is specifically, you know, matters that would adversely affect the reputation of a member of the public. So that's a situation where I would hope in the future where we go into a non-public session.

Additionally, I think that the whole thing was premature. Somebody else mentioned that that wasn't information we needed that night. That could have gone through the normal process without the suspension of rules to add it immediately to the packet. It seems after the fact that it's pretty certain that somebody jumped the gun when you have the Nashua Police basically saying that the things that were alleged by Director Kleiner didn't actually happen and that the gentleman from the company in question did say that Ms. Ortolano never identified yourself as a city employee. So it seems like that was just one big misunderstanding that the entire thing could have been avoided and her reputation probably could have been preserved a little bit. So I do agree that she's owed an apology not just from the Board but also from Director Kleiner.

The second thing I'd like to discuss, which has also been mentioned, is the situation with the barriers and the Downtown Improvement Committee. I have a number of constituents who have been in contact with me for the last several months expressing their desire to be involved in the discussion in any committee that's been formed. We did talk in January after the Committee of Infrastructure about forming a committee and we were told that a committee would be formed and we would find out later the details about that. Since then, I've had people e-mailing me nonstop asking me when it's going to be on an agenda, when will we be able to talk about it, and I've been telling them there's nothing coming up. There's nothing on any agenda. Trust me I'm on the Infrastructure Committee. If we were talking about it, I'd know and now come to find out that we've been talking about it all along. There was a Downtown Improvement Committee meeting in January. There was a Downtown Improvement Committee meeting in February. There's no minutes available online. There was no public notice that these meetings were taking place. We know as a body that there is an opposition voice. How loud that voice is subject to debate. That could be 50%. It could be 10%. It could be 90% but we do know that there's not 100% support for the barriers.

So I really strongly feel that the process that was used was deceptive. It was used to keep people out of the meetings that were going to be loud, dissension voices. People were intentionally not told when these meetings were going to take place because their participation was not welcome. And then for Director Cummings to say that they waited for alternative solutions and none were presented was not surprised that no one presented because no one was given an opportunity to present anything. So I would hope going forward that we have a lot more transparency around an issue that is specifically so divisive. We know there is opposition. We owe it to the public to hear all of their voices and give them the compromise that was promised in December and that was promised again in January. There is no compromise if we only allow one side to attend the meeting and we don't allow the other side to give their opinions. Thank you.

Alderman Clemons

Thank you, Madam President. So just to address the issue with that's been brought up about the Downtown

Improvement Committee. I'm the liaison to that committee and the meeting in January I did not attend probably because it wasn't on the calendar online like everybody else. I actually and for some reason my e-mail was off the distribution list for the committee members even though I'm the liaison. So there is a huge mix up there to begin with. I think it might have had something to do with the term changeover from the last Board to the new Board. I don't disagree that, you know, that a mistake was made where it should have been put on the calendar. I agree with that.

I've been assured and reassured that all committee meetings and everything will be on that calendar moving forward, people are going to check, double check that type of thing. I don't think that anything was done intentionally because I know the people involved in this, at least on the committee. They're volunteers. They're hardworking volunteers. They're not out to hide anything from people. They're just there to do their job. They look at things that come before them. They give their opinion on what comes before them and sometimes they advise the Board of Aldermen on different things depending on what it is that comes before downtown.

In addition to that, they recommend different projects and things that have to do with the downtown. And of course, everything that they maybe say yes, you know, we would want to do that, or no, or whatever, anything that's going to come forward has to be approved by this body anyway. They have no real authority as to approving a plan, or not approving a plan, or anything of that nature. So the real decision for anything like that is made here. That's not to discount, however, the fact that public participation is important and I always encourage public participation and I'm disappointed that that happened. That some people feel that they weren't able to go because it wasn't posted on the city calendar. So I have been reassured that that will not happen in the future and I think that moving forward, I think for all committees, I think we should have a much more transparency I think and I think we'll do that. I think that's going to happen because the people demand it when the people want it and it's the right thing to do. Not only that, but it's also the law. So but I, again, I don't think anything was intentional and I firmly believe that.

Alderman Jette

Thank you, Madam President. So we've rescinded the ordinance requiring wearing of masks. I just want to acknowledge all of the e-mails that I got on this issue. I know that there are people that are very passionate about the number one that they shouldn't be told that they have to wear a mask. It's a violation of their personal freedom. I understand that they think that.

Secondly, a lot of people feel that the Coronavirus certainly was never a threat and is certainly not a threat now. I know there are people who believe that and also that there are people that don't believe the masks work. In fact, not only do they not work, they think that they're detrimental to their health. I understand that those people believe that and I respect their belief. Alright, don't believe. I believe that masks are a useful tool along with the other things that have been recommended. So even though we've eliminated the mask mandate - the ordinance requiring masks - the recommendation - and I know there are people out there who believe as I do that the Coronavirus is a serious threat and continues to be such. Even though our numbers have gone down, they are still according to the State table, we're still in a substantial risk of community transmission. According to the CDC table, we're in a high level. The State level of substantial. There is no higher level. That's the top. If it's above 10%, you're in that substantial level as far as the State is concerned and we're at almost 15% the doctor said.

The CDC has if it's above 10%, that's the highest level. If it's above 8%, it's substantial. So they say that if it's above 8%, it's not safe to be in indoor spaces with people that are not part of your family group and that you should wear a mask. So we've done away with the ordinance so people are free to choose but I hope that most of us will choose to number one get vaccinated and we've learned that vaccination does not it provides increased protection, but it's not absolute protection. You continue to watch your distance with people that you're not familiar with. That you stay away from them. That you wash your hands and that you wear a mask in indoor public spaces until the numbers continue to go down until they reach a safe level. So I know a lot of people disagree with me on that and I respect their opinion. I hope that you will respect mine and acknowledge, or I hope you understand that, you know, my vote tonight was I was doing what I thought was the best for the interest of the public at large based upon I think what is acknowledged to be the consensus of the medical experts out there.

On the barriers, I've also received a lot of e-mails about that. I'm on the Infrastructure Committee. The Infrastructure Committee in December what was said before is accurate. There was a meeting - our meeting in December. There was a group of downtown business owners, professionals, retail people and restaurants and the message they gave us was, they want to come up with a compromise plan that is agreeable to everyone that doesn't hurt one business and doesn't favor one type of business over another. We acknowledge that and we said that we were going to allow input, seek public input, and come up with a plan that hopefully people will agree upon. I'm hoping that that the downtown businesses that we give them a place to meet, that they can give us some input, and that they can come up with a plan that they all agree upon. I mean what we're doing is we're trying to help downtown businesses. That's the reason that we came up with this

outdoor dining plan was to help the downtown businesses because of the COVID restrictions did not allow indoor dining. So to help save the restaurants, we came up with this plan for increasing the outdoor dining by the use of the barriers. The retail people downtown and the professional people all went along with that because they're all looking out for each other. In our December meeting, that's the feeling I got that these people they all know each other. They're all friends. They're not trying to hurt each other. I was hoping that they would have an opportunity to come up with a plan. So hopefully that will that will still happen.

The introduction of this proposed ordinance that has come before us tonight has been referred to the Infrastructure Committee. We haven't met as a new Infrastructure Committee yet. We haven't looked at it regarding that issue. I've talked to the Mayor and Director Cummings saying why are you pushing this forward? What happened to the committee that was supposed to come up with an agreed upon plan. They said that this was just to stop the ball or get the ball rolling just to start the conversation. Director Cummings has said in his memo, the language that you pointed out is a mystery to me what he meant by that as far as no one coming up with a plan. But also in the memo he says, this is the start of the conversation. He says, and I take him at his word, and the Mayor because the Mayor says the same thing. I take him at his word that they're looking for, you know, a plan that's going to be agreed upon by all the downtown businesses that will be a benefit to everyone downtown. So thank you.

Alderman Lopez

As mentioned a couple of times, mental health acuity and particularly suicide. So I thought this would be a good time to mention that Nashua has a mobile crisis response team. Their number is 1-833-710-6477. If you are watching this and you are struggling, you do feel unsafe, you know somebody who's feeling unsafe, and they're struggling, please have them talk to somebody have them reach out. Mobile crisis is available 24/7. They're there to listen. One of the nice things about them is they're not quite as intimidating as calling 911. You can engage mobile crisis. You're going to get a master's level clinician. That person will assess over the phone and, if necessary, they'll come and meet you. We're talking about a therapist in a minivan not like flashing lights or anything. When you're feeling unsafe, and you're feeling in crisis, and you're feeling overwhelmed, a lot of people push away too dramatic a solution. They don't want to comment 911. Either force somebody else or for themselves. This is at least a step before that. There's other alternatives but ultimately if you're struggling, you should seek help. If there's a crisis and somebody is in danger, then you definitely should call 911 but if it's a mental health crisis, then there's the opportunity to maybe forestall that. Don't hesitate to call mobile crisis.

The rhetoric that we've been seeing is as much a problem as the physical sensation of mask wearing. Children are being overwhelmed because they're being told many different things. They're being asked to side on many different issues. While the adults don't exactly know what side they're on yet or don't have a consensus on their facts and information and often the conversation breaks down into tribalism where my side versus your side is going to win. We'll do whatever we need to. We'll use whatever tactics we want and that's communication breaking down. It has not made last couple of years any better for anybody, hasn't improved the conversation either.

I want to echo the statements made that we should be forming a steering committee or a working group of some kind to oversee the development of the downtown project - the outdoor dining and extended seating. As was pointed out, I understood the presentation or the proposal that Director Cummings the first I saw was last Friday. I am the alternate liaison for the Downtown Improvement Committee. I finally went to my first meeting and of course, it turns out to be a controversial one. But it was an initial presentation. As far as I'm concerned, no action can be taken without legislative support and it's not appropriate to present anything as final before the Board has even seen it whether it's a vote on whether we're going to rescind the mask ordinance or whether it's the detailed workings of where we're going to allow 15 minute parking versus, you know, outdoor dining and all that kind of stuff. It's you have to start somewhere. You have to have at least a rough framework.

I don't think Director Cummings is wrong in that I have not seen anybody present a map with different plans or anything like that and ultimately, it does have to start somewhere and that really starts tonight. I think with this referrals to the committee, we can vet it further. As far as I know, there's no plan to introduce it any earlier than May, which is a relief because I think St. Patrick's Day last year was a little bit of a bust. But that means we have to do our job as Aldermen and we have to actually vet this issue. We have to listen to public comment. The public has to have equal access to that comment too. It needs to be on formal meetings, the committee meetings, the aldermanic meetings. They have to have the representation in the form of their local Ward Aldermen, their at-large Aldermen. If we as Aldermen are stepping on each other's toes and trying to support the causes we believe are true, or encourage certain people to speak their voice by giving them special access to information, we need to look at our roles because we're not going to improve the situation. We're going to increase the tribalism.

At the end of the day, this is not a battle to fight. Both the retail and the restaurant industries are necessary to Nashua's downtown. You need businesses operating until 5 pm. You need businesses operating after 5 pm. Either side being a problem is a problem for both sides. So we need to figure out how to use our space. We need to figure out how to share our space. We do have to take into account the safety considerations in the strategic planning that Fire and DPW are gonna require and that means we're going to have to have some open dialogue. There's going to have to be a lot of work done on this. So I'm looking forward to that part of this. I am not encouraged by all of the, I guess, prebaked opinions before people have really gotten to see what we can do, how we can change, what everybody side is. I'm seeing words thrown around like "I'm feeling discriminated against", or "I'm feeling that there's underhanded planning going on", and all of this stuff which is extremely premature. Everybody does have a voice. Everybody does have their representatives. If your constituents call you and they have an opinion you don't like, you do still have to talk to them, and you just have to accept that.

So it's a challenge doing that but it's going to be important because this year is very important for our downtown particularly because we don't have Great American Downtown running huge events as we always have. We don't have a solid history of restaurants that have always been there and are doing the same thing. We have a lot of new restaurants that don't necessarily know the lay of the land and we have a pretty vulnerable downtown. So I encourage everybody to focus on the goal here and it's a shared goal. We want downtown to thrive. We don't want to just subscribe to our opinions of what a thriving downtown looks like because when we focus only on our side versus the other persons, we're only going to get half of the view.

With respect to what Alderman Jette said about masking, I want to encourage that as well. Masking is very important. As a health care professional, I know that. I was working in the ER for much of last year and the year before in the height of the epidemic and was fine. I practiced the mitigation measures of practicing social distancing. I am anticipating going to on a trip to Honduras this weekend and I say anticipating because if I'm COVID positive, I'm not going regardless of whether that country tests or not, I can't expose a population that has limited health care. So that's a decision I have to make. When I'm in country, there's no mandate making me wear a mask there but I'm gonna wear a mask any time I'm indoors unless I'm literally stuffing a hamburger in my mouth, which actually came up over the weekend. If it's feasible to protect people around me by keeping my distance or my facial covering intact, I'm going to do that. So I encourage anybody who is willing to do it as a matter of conscience to do that. Regardless of the stigma or the finger pointing if you believe it's the right thing to do, then do it on behalf of other people.

Finally with regard to the comments that were made two weeks prior, I don't recall Director Kleiner making accusations about a member of the public. I believe she read a statement from a vendor who expressed concerns about that. I think that was important information for us to know because as Aldermen if we try to contact that vendor ourselves, we need to know why they're saying no and why they're suddenly circling the wagon and why they're asking us for identifying information. There are some things that we need to know. Should it have been read in public? I don't think it was that urgent. I think it should have been sent as a communication. The use of non-public session is a little bit debatable because in my opinion, and I'm not a lawyer, but I feel like if we have a non-public session about a member of the public, that member of the public may have a right to attend that. They may have a right to bring representation and that becomes very complicated. So I would prefer that we handle situations like that with a little more deliberation and foresight.

I would also encourage members of the public to remember that when they're talking about city staff members week, after week, after week and they're criticizing their work, they're criticizing their effort, they're criticizing their performance, those can be construed as personal attacks too and the staff don't like it. There is a long history over the past several years of staff being identified, shamed, called out in public meetings, and I don't like it. I don't like the public comment can be used to attack somebody who's just paid to work here and is trying to do what they can.

At times specific Aldermen have been called out, and identified, and described unflatteringly. I believe the Mayor was perhaps referenced a couple of times as well. At least we can choose that. We're elected to fulfill that role and we know we're going to get knocked around a little bit. So I recognize the sensitivity towards members of the public and the rights that they have, I ask that the public recognize the rights to privacy that our employees have. I believe I just heard an employee being chased out of this meeting who did not wish to speak to somebody and I really would appreciate it if everybody could focus on what their roles are, and what their boundaries are, and try to restore that décor because we don't want to be fighting over how the city is run. That turns it into a war zone. We want to be working collaboratively over what possibilities and what opportunities our city can achieve. Thank you.

Alderman Moran

Thank you, Madam President. One - I want to continue to encourage people to voluntarily wear masks. I do think it's the right thing to do. I think at this point, like I said earlier, you've been educated enough. It's your choice to do so now.

I want to echo what my colleagues have said. When I did reach out to Alderman Cathey regarding this ordinance, 1) because he's a decent guy I presumed; 2) he's my neighbor. We both live in Ward 7. If you come to Ward 7 and you've heard another member of the public from Ward 7 Beth Scaer speak, we have radically different opinions. We hardly ever agree on anything but you can come down my street when I'm running for election and you can see my sign next to someone else's sign that's not relatable to me. You would say "wow", why is that person's sign on that lawn? I can tell you why - because I have conversations with my neighbors. When a nor'easter hits, we shovel each other out. We talk about our kids. We go to football parties together. These are things that neighbors do. These are things that citizens do together. Like what Alderman Lopez was saying, tribalism will destroy us. It will destroy this country. It will destroy the city. We have to be able to reach across the aisle. We have to have an olive branch to each other. We have to live our lives like Americans. Discourse is great. Personal attack is not. I'm prepared for personal attack. I got elected. City staff, they're just doing their job.

I think, at least for me, you'll see more of this throughout my four years here. Who knows if I'm going past that but I think whatever happened in the previous boards, whatever grievances there are, you gotta let it go. I'll tell you what I tell my patients. You let this stuff stew in your brain, it starts to smell. What do you have to do with junk that's running in your brain, you got to take it out just like take out the trash. You got to hit the reset button. You have to move forward. We have to move the City of Nashua forward. We cannot get stuck in turf wars. It's the best thing to do for everyone.

We talked a little bit about mental health. You know when Governor Sununu said shut down the State, he called for healthcare workers to volunteer. I volunteer for DBAR - the disaster response for crisis clinicians to respond throughout the State for the mental health needs. It truly is a major part of this pandemic that is overlooked. Some people will say this is rhetoric from a certain side that you're aligning with but it's true. I've had so many patients kill themselves. That's just me and my small agency here in Nashua. We don't get the numbers from the State. Why don't we get the numbers from the State? I can tell you why because I've learned this working in the city. It brings down property values. That's what the response I've gotten from the State several times. There are so many people be in treatment for depression right now - kids and adults. I have a waiting list of over 300 people to come to my practice. The Mental Health Center has a six to eight month waitlist. The majority of those people waiting right now due to COVID isolation and other COVID factors and we already had a pandemic of mental health and addiction prior to this.

We have to address those secondary concerns. I do respect everyone on the Board of Health but there's one type of doctor that's not on that Board of Health - a psychiatrist. If there was, we'd be able to hear this perspective more. I'm literally an expert in mental health. My colleague, Tom, is an expert in mental health. We disagree on certain things but what we're saying is true. This is happening in the city and it has to be talked about. The crisis team, I used to run it. I was the Clinical Director. Call them. Call them when you're struggling.

We passed the mask. Hoping to keep that in the past.

The barriers - they're coming to the Infrastructure and the Planning and Economic Development Committee through a joint committee that both Alderman O'Brien and I will Co-Chair. I promise you we will shine the light of day on all your concerns. We will take input and I hope city staff that come have a pencil and paper and that they can respond appropriately talking about steering committees and such.

I also would like to congratulate Chief Rhodes on his retirement. Talk about a class act. I worked with him with the Safe Station Program to move the crisis there. He really did put in his dues. He is going to be a very missed and valued figure in the city.

The Downtown Improvement Committee. I would just ask that everything is posted publicly so everyone can have their input. I think that's all I have.

Oh, yes. There was a conversation about that communication from Ms. Kleiner. I would say my comments regarding that particular meeting were about the vendor. I don't know who hashes out who's impersonating who. That's not my job. That's not something the Board does but the vendor admitted that they were duped. We have to have processes in place so citizen's information isn't readily shared. We've already been duped with a cyber-hack with a vendor. Let's just make sure that vendors know who they're talking to and who the point of contact is.

Alderman Klee

Thank you, Madam Chair and I have to say I feel honored to have to my right here two very good mental health practitioners. I know I've gone to Alderman Lopez when I've had constituents that have had need and so on and he's helped me and such.

I, too, would like to congratulate Chief Rhodes on his retirement. He is also one of my constituents and I have called on him many times as I do with so many other of our leaders in the city, so he will be missed.

I'm not going to talk about the mask mandate. I think we beat that horse dead and buried.

But I do want to address something. One of the people that spoke as she left, she pointed to me and said tax credit \$250. I'm not really sure what she was talking about other than the fact that in the State House I'm on Municipal and County. Today there were a number of bills that came in front of my committee and the executive to increase exemptions, and credits, and so on. I'd kind of like to just address that a little bit. Originally, they were voted to pass and then we did reconsideration and we (inaudible) them, which is the same thing here what we - so they basically recommend to kill those Bills. The reason for doing that is that the State refers to it as "lost taxes". Those are taxes that go from one group of people. They don't pay them and they get spread amongst another group of people who don't follow into these qualified groups of elderly, disabled, deaf, blind or veterans. The State has \$57,711,862 2020 of what they call "loss taxes". Nashua has \$4,844,546 in what we call "loss taxes", meaning that that shift that tax burden has been shifted to the groups that don't fall within these categories. That's quite a bit and if you look through the entire State, Nashua is number one in what is called "loss taxes", meaning that we shift the burden from one group. It doesn't affect our pot of gold as I would call it. It's not affecting the budget for Nashua. It's affecting the taxpayers.

I think the comment that was thrown out \$250 may have been in reference to the veteran's tax credit. We give \$500. \$750 is the max at this point that can be given. If Nashua was to increase theirs, we have 2,729 veterans that are getting the tax credit. That would be an additional \$682,250, which would bring us right up to \$5.5 million in what is called "lost taxes". Before we would just take that up and into consideration. We need to know what these numbers are and so on. I don't know if that's what the citizen was referencing but I thought I would address it seeing that it's fresh and new from my committee today. And having said that, I'm done.

Alderman Sullivan

Thank you, Madam President. A few comments. First off, I would like to thank the great residents of Ward 9 they came out on Saturday morning – 9 am to 11 am to talk and be heard by the developer who bought Camp Doucette. They're going to put 94 condominiums up there. And all those folks came out on a Saturday in February, listened, asked questions, and brought up their concerns. So I just want to say, you know, I say this all the time. As citizens, we have a duty to stay informed of what's going on in our city. So a shout out to the Ward 9ers that came out to talk about that.

Second regarding the situation that happened a couple of weeks ago. Unfortunately, we cannot unring the bell. Everything had happened is in the public record. I think it's fair to say now to also put in the public record that the police did conduct their investigation and found that there was no wrongdoing. I know that that has been said many times around the horseshoe. I just wanted to echo it one last time that I just think that that's fair. As a new Alderman, I will keep my head on a swivel and make sure that, you know, we kind of maybe pump the brakes next time.

On masks - I was happy the way it went tonight. I think it's time that we start to turn the page. I said that a month ago. I still believe it today. If I walk into a business be it Market Basket or wherever and they asked me to put a mask on, I'll do it because I respect the rights of a private business to do what they want.

I think that as far as the tribalism that we've had over the last almost two years now and since yesterday was Presidents Day, I'll echo the words of Abe Lincoln – "A house divided against itself cannot stand" and I fear that this pandemic has done many things. I just hope that we start healing, and we start moving forward, and that we don't go backwards, and we don't have peaks, and valleys, and whatnot. I hope that we can move forward and I hope tonight as a Board we wrote that chapter.

Finally some congratulations. First of all, Chief Rhodes thank you for your service. Second of all, Deputy Chief Buxton, a Ward 9 resident, I look forward to working with him as Nashua's new Fire Chief. Also in the realm of high school athletics here in the city, Nashua's own Tom Cassidy was named Cross Country Coach of the Year by the State of New Hampshire. He's a Bishop Guertin cross country coach. He's coached at Elm Street. He's coached for Nashua PAL. Now he's at BG and his great assistant Mike Dunham has helped him along the way in his career. So congratulations to Tom Cassidy. And then also same school, congratulations to the BG girls basketball team. They won the State title on Sunday.

Alderman O'Brien

Thank you, Madam President. Keep the comments brief because it is a late hour. Kind of comically we put one thing to

bed but just like the movies, remember the Jaws series? Just when you thought it was good to get one the water, they come out with Jaws 2. Okay.

Well we put the masks to bed and now we're going to run right into the barriers. No pun intended. I did hear the public speak. I got every single e-mail. I read every single e-mail. I've even seen some things on Facebook. Believe it or not at the age of 67, I do look at Facebook mostly see what the grandkids look like. But the thing is one thing I'd have seen is a lot of friction and lack of fact. I thank Alderman Clemons for pointing out that the Downtown Improvement Committee is an advisory committee where Infrastructure and PEDC, the committee that is going to, is called "a policy committee". They will determine what to do. But what are they got to determine? I think we need to have something in front of us. How is somebody going to eat dinner on an empty plate? I would like to see a steak, and mashed potatoes, and a good vegetable.

Working with Tim Cummings, who I think is unfortunately being misrepresented and mistreated with this. He is our downtown representative to boast of the downtown. He's doing his job but plans were made up. True. Some Aldermen said we never heard anything. You got the same e-mails I did. Nothing came in. So we have, believe it or not, in the City of Nashua we have traffic engineers and people that do the studies for us. This is how this packet came out.

Now, we've heard testimony in the past. One gentleman who is somewhat leading the charge brought up compromise. The word "compromise". Well, we'll see if that's a legitimate discussion because I think compromises have been made. If we look at this presentation, so therefore folks if you want to decide which book you want to read between the facts and the fiction, it's a perfect segway into the committee meetings but I'll hold until that particular section. I will give the dates on when the barriers, and I put it on one night, is going to be discussed. And then we're gonna hear from all those people that say that they want to speak. So the end result is the same. No magic. You got to keep in mind when we took this office, we all took an oath. We're different than other people on the other side of the rail. We can't misrepresent the facts. It's not worth it. So we put a good thing together because you've got to remember if somebody says, Oh, I'm losing business. Well somebody else is telling me, I'm losing business too. How do you decide? Good Solomon had difficulty in cutting the baby in half. So we're gonna have to listen. I'm going to have an open mind as we read through this and we'll see where it basically goes.

I would like to end on that and just say congratulation to Chief Rhodes. I remember when he was a Private and I was a Company Officer. It was good to see him and wish him the best of luck. But somebody else is retiring and that is Deputy Chief Glen MacDonald. I served as Deputy Chief and I'd like to recognize him because the Deputy Chiefs are the nuts and bolts. They're the ones out there working nights, weekends, holidays, Christmases, all the rest of it. I did it for 15 years, every single fire, and Glen has done a good job and good service to the city. So I wish him the best of luck in his retirement and as well to Chief Rhodes and congratulations to Chief Buxton.

President Wilshire

Thank you. So I just want to let my colleagues know, the public know that regarding the situation that happens, I heard what you had to say, and I'm hoping that doesn't repeat, and I'll do my part. So I just want to make it clear to everyone that I heard you.

So tonight I would like to offer my condolences to the family of Adam Gureckis, Jr. Adam's father was a Ward 7 Alderman for many, many years. Really, really super guy and his son - the apple didn't fall far from the tree. Adam Gureckis was a high school athlete, really good at basketball. I think he played all the sports, but he will be missed.

Also Bill Marcoux. I went to school with Bill Marcoux. In fact, he and I were top in our sixth grade class. He was one point ahead of me and I remember feeling I gotta do something about that. He was a great guy, really great guy and he served on the Board of the Housing Authority for a number of years too. He will definitely be missed.

Also I want to thank Chief Rhodes for his service to the city. He's done a great job here and he leaves a legacy. My congratulations to Steve Buxton for taking over the role of Chief. I think it's well deserved. That's all I have.

Committee announcements:

Alderman Dowd

Thursday, 7 o'clock, Joint Special School Building Committee at Nashua High North. It should be a fairly light agenda.

The other thing is that Alderman Sullivan went on a tour of Fairgrounds Middle School. That was the first one completed in the middle school project and we've set that up for three o'clock on Thursday. If any other Alderman would like to join

us, feel free to show up at 3 o'clock at Fairgrounds and it's only for Aldermen at this point. I got the Harvey Construction and the Principal are going to provide the tour.

President Wilshire

Other committee announcements?

Alderman O'Brien

Thank you, Madam Chair. Tomorrow night, February 23rd, at 7 pm right here in the aldermanic chamber will be the Infrastructure Committee meeting. If you think we're going to discuss barriers, I hate to disappoint you. They're not on the agenda. Okay.

So with that in mind because barriers needs to be discussed, we're going to have a second meeting of the Infrastructure and joint PEDC Committee and that's going to be held tentatively right now, I think, in the chamber. We're gonna have to discuss whether I don't know what the potential of people attending, so we're going to need to hone in on that. So I'll give that fair warning. But anyway, that's going to be March 9th at 7pm and the presentation will be formally made for all those to digest and come up with the opinion. I encourage you all to come. That would probably would limit some of the debate as the information is presented when we get into the full chamber. So you're all welcome. So thank you, Madam President.

Alderwoman Timmons

Thank you President Wilshire. Tomorrow morning at nine o'clock. I know I'm gonna be sleeping as soon as I get out of here but we have a meeting at the Cultural Connection tomorrow in Room 208. I invite the Aldermen to come to that meeting to see somebody that don't look like you or me. Okay. It's important to know the city and know all your constituents. So tomorrow morning, the Cultural Connection. Please visit that one. I know some of you guys work but I'll be here.

Alderman Dowd

The Budget Committee is going to start as soon as the Mayor has had an opportunity to meet with all the department heads and we actually have a budget to talk about. There will be approximately 10 meetings with no more than three wrap up sessions. Usually get done in one. When those go out, I usually let the department heads see if they're available first and then I sent it out to the Aldermen so that they have an opportunity to put it in their schedules. It's very difficult. Donna and I are trying to squeeze these meetings in. We don't have a start date yet and we have an end date of July 1st. So we'll let you know.

Alderman O'Brien

Madam President through you to the question of Alderman Dowd. I have on my calendar February 28th budget. Am I mistaken?

Alderman Dowd

That's a regular budget, yeah.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION BY ALDERMAN O'BRIEN THAT THE FEBRUARY 22, 2022, MEETING OF THE BOARD OF ALDERMEN BE ADJOURNED

MOTION CARRIED

The meeting was declared adjourned at 10:59 p.m.

Attest: Allison Waite, Deputy City Clerk