

## SPECIAL BUDGET REVIEW COMMITTEE

APRIL 11, 2022

A meeting of the Budget Review Committee was held Monday, April 11, 2022, at 7:45 p.m. in the Aldermanic Chamber and via Zoom which meeting link can be found on the agenda.

Alderman Richard A. Dowd, Chairman, presided.

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.

Members of Committee present:           Alderman Richard A. Dowd, Chairman  
Alderman-at-Large Michael B. O'Brien, Sr.  
Alderman John Cathey  
Alderman Ernest Jette  
Alderman-at-Large Shoshanna Kelly  
Alderman John Sullivan (via Zoom)  
Alderman-at-Large Lori Wilshire

Also in Attendance:                       Alderman Patricia Klee  
Alderman-at-Large Ben Clemons  
Alderman Derek Thibeault  
Alderman Thomas Lopez  
John Griffin, CFO/Treasurer/Tax Collector  
Daniel Donovan, CFO, Nashua School District

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### ROLL CALL

#### Chairman Dowd

We do have one person on Zoom so Motions will be my roll call. Public Comment, is there anyone who would like to speak in Public Comment on what's on the agenda?

### PUBLIC COMMENT

#### Amy McKay

Good evening. My name is Amy McKay at 5 Bennington Road. I'm the President of Nashua Theater Guild and I'm here tonight representing several arts organizations and you'll hear from them tonight.

#### Chairman Dowd

I don't want to stop you but this public comment period is only for things on the agenda. That's not on our agenda this evening.

#### Amy McKay

So addressing this issue tonight, we're speaking about the account for Court Street Theater. We are in favor of forming this account. We have heard lots of feedback about this, so let me just give you five seconds of who we are. We are your local community theater for the past 62 years. We reside mostly in Court Street Theater. We also use several other buildings in the area. We have been engaging with many different people actually, I believe Alderman Dowd you've been part of Actor Singers in the past. We have lots of other community engagements where we pull people from several of the different communities around into Nashua.

In the past there has been a previous account and this was before I came to Nashua. I've only been a resident for about 6 years, but the story has gone that 10-15 years ago there was a fund set up for Court Street Theater where every time a theater organization came and rented out the building, they would give a certain amount. Let's call it \$200 - I don't know what the amount was - every time they did a show with the idea that that money would go straight back into revitalizing the building. The building has always needed a little bit of extra love throughout the years and the thought continued and this process continued for I believe 10 years. When it came to needing the repairs for the building - the carpet being worn,

obviously we know there were no sprinklers at the time, the roof leaking, the wallpaper coming off the wall and many other things, exposed subfloor, etc. - the money wasn't there. The explanation was that the money had gone back into the General Fund and unfortunately there was no more money for the theater. You can imagine people who have donated with the idea that the money would go to a certain organization and a certain building felt very frustrated about this.

At the time, and as I said I wasn't there, but the arts community was very frustrated with this and they were frustrated with the City. So to explain having a specific fund for this would not only allow them to donate specifically for recarpeting the lobby or whatever other things the building needs, as you know, many things, that would really help the community not only to donate specifically...

Alderman O'Brien

30 seconds

Amy McKay

...but also to give them something to rally against. I know that we have invested a lot into the building recently. We've regraded the sculpture yard and added many sculptures. We've done the roof. We've done the sprinklers. We still have a lot more to do and we would really appreciate your help because I know you guys have our interest at heart. So thank you very much for hearing us tonight.

Chairman Dowd

Any other Public Comment? Seeing none.

COMMUNICATIONS - None

UNFINISHED BUSINESS - None

NEW BUSINESS – RESOLUTIONS - None

NEW BUSINESS – ORDINANCES - None

Chairman Dowd

I would like to if there's no objection, move to address R-22-022 and come back and see if you want to take R-22-008 off the table. No objection.

**R-22-022**

Endorsers: Alderman-at-Large Lori Wilshire  
Alderman Patricia Klee  
Alderman Richard A. Dowd  
Alderman Derek Thibeault  
Alderman Thomas Lopez

**APPROVING THE COST ITEMS OF A COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE NASHUA BOARD OF EDUCATION AND THE NASHUA TEACHERS' UNION, LOCAL 1044, AFT, AFL-CIO FROM SEPTEMBER 1, 2021 THROUGH AUGUST 31, 2025 AND AUTHORIZING A RELATED TRANSFER AND SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATION**

**MOTION BY ALDERMAN O'BRIEN TO RECOMMEND FINAL PASSAGE, BY ROLL CALL**

ON THE QUESTION

Alderman Kelly

Thank you. I am going to start off by saying I am going to support this. I think it has been a long-time coming and that the negotiating team has done their due diligence in bringing something forward that is fair for the City.

I had a couple of questions and am disappointed that the Mayor has left. One of the things he said in his comments was that we've had this issue where people come here, they start their career here, and they leave. So I was sort of interested

in how we bumped up first year pay but the middle of the road doesn't seem like it's really competitive so it is really going to solve that problem of people coming here and then leaving for other greener pastures?

Chairman Dowd

You can address that question, but remember we can't renegotiate the contract.

Alderwoman Kelly

I know. I'm just asking because I think it's something that we have talked about for a long time in the City. I agree with you. We need to pass this, but I'm just asking for future reference.

Chairman Dowd

Daniel do you want to shed some light on that question?

Dan Donovan, CFO Nashua School District

Well I guess if the teacher let's say had taught here for eight or nine years and was leaving to make more money in another district in the area, if that opportunity still exists, then that person may still do that. Like I said, this contract the starting point and ending points are fine. I don't think anyone is not coming for the start or leaving for the top but like I said with 24 steps, you may get in Hollis let's say if they have 16 steps, you may get there quicker, you will get there quicker. So would they still leave? Possibly.

Chairman Dowd

Any other questions or concerns?

Alderwoman Kelly

I'm good. Thank you for indulging me.

Alderman Sullivan

Thank you Mr. Chairman. This may help with Alderwoman Kelly's question. I did an analysis of three levels of teachers. As a new teacher, year one versus year four of the contract and they get a 7.4% increase. The middle year teachers look to get about an 11.4% bump in pay over the four years and a veteran teacher falls into more of the first year teacher in 7% salary increase over the four years. So it seems as though teachers that have been here for a while seem to get a higher salary increase. That's based on my math from what I can tell from the steps. I hope that helps clarify it from my analysis of the contract.

Chairman Dowd

Thank you Alderman Sullivan.

Alderman Cathey

Thank you Mr. Chair. Before I ask this question, I just want to state that I grew up in a single parent home and my mom was a teacher for a very long time so my life very much depended on teachers' contracts being approved. My question would be when I have constituents sort of ask questions about teachers' salaries, and budgets, and the education budget some of them are frustrating and it's an area that I'm not super familiar with. So I guess the question I want to know is over the concessions that were made with this contract that we may not know about because we weren't in the room that might be helpful to sort of give context and round out this contract negotiation.

Chairman Dowd

Mr. Donovan within the confines of what you can say based on the things that happened in negotiations that may not be non-public you can answer the question.

Dan Donovan, CFO Nashua School District

Well the main concession was the insurance. As far as dollars and cents, that was probably the only concession. There were other items in the agreement that were non-financial but to be honest with you, this contract really was about the salary grid and the insurance. We spent most of our time in those areas.

The other contracts that I've been involved with had a lot more language about other things. So there are a few things in there. There is the ability for teachers to use some of the tuition funding to take individual training courses as opposed to taking a course at a college towards a degree. There was some changing in the planning time, which I'm not an expert on so I don't want to speak to it very much. So there were a few other things. If you look at the contract itself, the red line contract, you'll notice there aren't a significant amount of changes.

Alderman Cathey

Can I have a follow up question? Was the healthcare plan change well received right out of the gate or was that more tricky?

Dan Donovan, CFO Nashua School District

Well received by the Union?

Alderman Cathey

Yes.

Dan Donovan, CFO Nashua School District

They would probably have to answer that question.

Alderman Cathey

I was just curious if it took a lot of back and forth for that change. I feel like what I heard is all positives. I wasn't sure if that was one of the easier things to get through rather than just financial salary negotiations.

Dan Donovan, CFO Nashua School District

Well we didn't have a lot of flexibility with it. Keep in mind that the City does all the planning for the medical plans so it was here's the plan. Here's how we hope to change it.

Chairman Dowd

I think all the unions have recognized that accepting the new health insurance is a win/win for both sides and if you notice the Patrolman's Contract - I believe you all got it - they also agreed to the healthcare changes.

And the other thing, I've been involved in numerous teacher negotiations as a lot of people in the audience know and we used to start with a list from the Union that was 20-30 items, and the Board of Education would have another list of items, and then they'd see how many things matched up and needs to work their way down. I think in this negotiation from what I understand from the outside, not being privy to any of it, that there were probably less things discussed.

Alderman Cathey

Thank you.

Alderman Lopez

To that previous point, I can't imagine it was easy to talk about how to manage healthcare during a pandemic which is when this contract was (inaudible) let alone more conscious of healthcare, and healthcare costs, and all that kind of stuff. So I appreciate the teachers' union and the teachers in it being flexible enough to look at the situation and understand that the City does have its priorities while also recognizing that education is the city's priority. We talk about the impact that paying teachers might have on tax revenue. We also have to talk about the impact that a quality education has on property values. We keep getting cited as #1, #2 or whatever best in different scores and they always consider what your

education, what your school systems are, and that's not easy to do in the State of NH. We have a very unique funding mechanism for education.

To the point earlier where Alderman Kelly was pointing out that how do we keep teachers in the intermediate? I would imagine that the initial goal would be to try to attract teachers in the first place as they're starting to begin their careers, but there are a lot of teachers who may refer to it as a career rather than a job. I take it one step further and say for many teachers it's a calling where they're not just in it for the money. They're not just in it for the identity of being a teacher. They want to educate and they want to inspire kids and that's where they draw their satisfaction to get up every morning. That's who they want to be and people like that will make a lot of concessions in some areas. They won't in others. So knowing as Chairman Dowd pointed out, we can't exactly renegotiate the contract that has been cooking for two years now in the Chamber. We should be mindful as Aldermen that burn out comes from a lot of different directions and part of that is making sure that people who feel they have a calling and are generally trying to teach the children and connect with them need the resources to do that. We need to make sure that our schools are being maintained. We need to make sure we have adequate staff and that's as challenging as it's ever has been. Coming back out of the pandemic, a lot of people reevaluated their careers, a lot of people took different paths, a lot of opportunities opened and in a very unfortunate way because COVID-19 was not without cost. But people found other things to do, other callings, and if we want to get people to educate our next generation, we need to attract them when they're coming out of school and they're looking for a place to connect.

But then we need to keep them by supporting teachers in more ways than just the every couple of years contract rates in the context of healthcare issues and the city budget. We need to be supportive of our teachers. We need to be understanding as politicians particularly that they know their craft, and they are in it all day every day where as we may kind of visit the school periodically depending on whether we have kids in it, or tune in to what's going on. From the ears of a child, we have to be supportive of teachers. We have to be supportive of our educators. I think that is as helpful as the contract negotiations. As was stated in public comment, this is going to keep the conversation going. It's going to keep our teachers coming back and make us a little more competitive but as Aldermen, we really have to look at how we budget for the school ourselves in a context of a State that won't. Either we have good schools because we make them a priority or we don't because nobody else will do it for us. Thank you.

#### Alderman Jette

Thank you Mr. Chairman. So I've long been under the impression that our teachers are not well paid and I appreciate the Mayor's pointing out that we rank 77<sup>th</sup> in average teachers' pay in New Hampshire. I agree with the Mayor that probably the most important asset that the City has is a good school system and that doesn't depend on the buildings. No offense to you Chairman of the Joint School Building Committee, but it depends on the people who are the teachers. The people who are teaching our kids.

I know the Teachers' Union and the School Board has spent a long time negotiating this and I applaud them for coming to a resolution. So I'm going to support the teachers and the School Board by voting in favor of this, but I do have a question if I could. I don't know if anyone can answer this, but if the full Board adopts this, where will that put us in this rankings? We are 77<sup>th</sup> now. Where will we be after? I know it's a moving target but does anyone know where this will put us in the future?

#### Chairman Dowd

I'm not sure anybody has calculated that.

#### Alderman Cathey

The Mayor said in his thing 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup>, right?

#### Chairman Dowd

No, no, not even close.

#### Dan Donovan, CFO Nashua School District

It's a difficult calculation. I mean the calculation isn't difficult but for example, one of the districts that is way up high is New Castle. They have seven teachers. So when you take this, you really should take apart the very small districts and take a look at it but as Alderman Jette said, it is an ever moving target. We did actually take a look and said if in year three

everything else stayed the same somewhere else, we would have moved to I think 32<sup>nd</sup> or something. But other districts are changing at the same time. It's a difficult number to calculate. You have to do it at any given time, but each year that can change.

Chairman Dowd

One thing I noticed that every other major city in New Hampshire is above us. Anyone other questions?

Alderman Thibeault

Thank you Mr. Chairman. I would agree that we would have to probably do that by cities as opposed to doing it by every district in the State.

I have a few comments. I'm not part of this Committee, but I'll be voting on this tomorrow night. I've come to Board of Education meetings and I have spoken at both the Board of Education and here about this contract being settled. It took way too long. There is a war on public education. There's a war on teachers in public education and not paying them the going rate, it does not help our situation in the City. It's important to have good teachers. We have good teachers in this City and we need to keep them. There's too many people speaking out against public education as a bad thing and it's not. It's the best thing. I've gone through all the public education. My kids have gone through public education and are still going through it. I will be supporting this because it's important and it took too long. I would reject this if I could make it better to be honest, but we don't have the time to do that. I know Mr. Marcoux does not want to hear that. So I will be supporting it, but the grade levels - I've been in a lot of businesses. The grade levels are way too many. It's crazy to me, but we have to keep good teachers. Huge supporter of our public education and I wish people would stop trying to attack it and try to tear it down in this country, and in this State, and thank you for the teachers. They do a great job and thank you for the Union for getting this done and the BOE even though I chastised them a couple times. Thank you for finally negotiating to this point and like I said, I'll be supporting it.

Alderman Wilshire

Thank you. I will be supporting this contract. I think it's so important to take care of the teachers and keep the teachers we have and attract good, young teachers. I know that I was reading an article the other day about how private industry is trying to attract teachers because of their skills. They're organized. All those things that it takes to be teacher, private industry is going after teachers right. They want them. So we've got to do better. We've always got to do better and for that reason I'll be supporting his contract.

Alderman Klee

Yes, I was one of the ones that shushed you. Don't give them any ideas. We need these teachers to stay with us.

And to Alderman Thibeault's point and even to I believe it was Alderman Cathey. First off when I look at this chart of where the standings are, and I think to maybe Alderman Jette's point too, Manchester is at 69 and Concord is at 9. So we're still far below two of the major cities that kind of surround us as being the number two in the State. We're still far below them and when I look at what the base salary is of somebody starting and knowing that maybe they're young. They're out of college, that's still a low salary when you consider how much it costs to live in Nashua. Even at the low end of it. More than likely every teacher, if they don't have a second salary coming in, will have to have a second job. I want our teachers to be bright eyed and bushy tailed for those students who are going to test them to their limits and knowing that they possibly have to have a second job just so they can live in this City or even in the surrounding cities breaks my heart. I think this is a good contract.

To Alderman Thibeault's point, yes I'd like to see it better but I would never ask you to renegotiate. Tomorrow I will be voting in favor of it. Thank you.

Chairman Dowd

Any other questions? Alderman Clemons?

Alderman Clemons

Thank you. Just a brief point. My wife is a teacher in Windham, NH. My father was a teacher for years. I come from a long background of people in the education business and I call it a business because the product is our future. It's

important that we understand that in order to have a future that's worth looking forward to, we need to invest in that product and that's our students and we need to do it via our teachers. So for all those reasons, I will be supporting the contract. I am very happy that the School Board and the Union were able to come to an agreement and I will be supporting this tomorrow.

Alderman O'Brien

Thank you Mr. Chairman. I would just like to give a point of clarity. Unfortunately, I won't be able to vote for this. I'll have to abstain and the reason is my daughter is a school nurse. Now the thing is she is quite an independent young lady, does not live at home, has no financial ties to me. The only thing I get off of her is maybe a birthday card, a Father's Day card, maybe a tie and a shirt, and of course something for Christmas too. But also the joy of my grandchildren. But because of that, I cannot vote.

If I could vote, boy would I because I'll tell you why. I had the pleasure of serving seven years - wasn't it Gary as a substitute teacher at Fairgrounds Middle School. I got a whopping \$60/day. You couldn't have so much fun for that amount of money but I'll tell you the lessons that I learned from the kids, the lesson I learned from the teachers. I used to say, "let's educate before we have to incarcerate". It's great when we put everybody through Harvard, but I don't think everybody is going to Harvard. We can have dedicated teachers and we have them. I've seen teachers bring stuff in from their own pocket into the classroom to decorate classrooms, to do certain things to make an environment that is healthy for learning. That doesn't come from the City budget.

So therefore unfortunately I'm going to have to abstain. Education is big in my family. I'm sure (*inaudible*) knows my wife Diane who worked with special needs children for 18 years. Therefore unfortunately I can't, but I'll move on from that, but if I could, I would and I urge you all to do so. Thank you.

Chairman Dowd

Any other?

Alderman Wilshire

Just one thing. One of the speakers got up and said I worked for the School District for 54 years and I make \$80,000. I'm sorry.

Chairman Dowd

If there aren't any other questions, let's call the roll please.

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

Yea: Alderman Wilshire, Alderman Sullivan, Alderwoman Kelly, Alderman Jette, Alderman Cathey, Alderman Dowd	6
Nay:	0
Abstained: Alderman O'Brien	1

**MOTION CARRIED**

**MOTION BY ALDERMAN O'BRIEN TO REMOVE FROM THE TABLE R-22-008, BY ROLL CALL**

ON THE QUESTION

Alderman O'Brien

I think I'll yield and let's take it off the table and then we can have discussion.

Chairman Dowd

It's really not debatable.

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

Yea: Alderman Wilshire, Alderman Sullivan, Alderwoman Kelly, Alderman Jette, Alderman Cathey, Alderman O'Brien, Alderman Dowd	7
Nay:	0

## **MOTION CARRIED**

### **R-22-008**

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

### **ESTABLISHING AN EXPENDABLE TRUST FUND FOR 14 COURT STREET EXPENSES, FUNDED BY APPROPRIATIONS**

## **MOTION BY ALDERMAN O'BRIEN TO RECOMMEND FINAL PASSAGE, BY ROLL CALL**

### ON THE QUESTION

#### Alderman Dowd

Just so you know when you're not a member of the Committee, you can ask a member of the Committee to make a motion.

#### Alderman Clemons

Thank you so much. First off I want to thank the public and the Committee for being patient with me. This has been tried to come up two times and the last two times that it has tried to come up, I've had family emergencies that one was unfortunately a death in the family. So I appreciate the patience of the Committee, and of the public, and I appreciate the Chairman taking this up this evening as well.

With that said when this came back to Committee because there was some questions and when it was originally brought forward, I had not had the opportunity to speak. Again that was one of those emergency personal things. I wanted to kind of just go through why I brought this legislation forward. So what this intends to do is to create a trust fund for Court Street. The building itself receives several different forms of income that come into it. It receives rent, it receives money from taxes, and it receives money from events. So there are three types of revenue stream that come through that building. What the expendable trust fund would do is two main things and then there's one ancillary thing.

The two main things, number one, is that it will put the funds - all of those funds coming from various sources -into one account. That account will make more transparent where everything is coming and going. Number two, the account won't lapse from year to year, which is an important aspect because when we're planning to do projects, and you're planning to do maintenance, and different things on the building, you want to be able to have the flexibility of being able to say, "We have a project on the horizon. We know what the income is in the building. We know what this project is projected to cost in the next one or two years and we can put aside the money to do so." It's also important, and as some of the members on this Committee know and some will find out, we don't want a process which happens now where we come the end of the year all of a sudden we have legislation or we have stuff coming up well you've to get this into the budget because it's coming to the end of the year, and we want to spend the money that we have type thing, or we're escrowing money. This will enable us to have an account and an accounting mechanism for that building to take care of that building. The third ancillary thing, just let me get to that, is that if there was people who wanted to donate money to the building in particular, they would be able to do so through this account. So that being said, the idea of the trust fund is really accountability and the ability to leverage income that we've received from the various sources from year to year without it lapsing back into the general fund. So the nice thing about this is all the money that would be appropriated into this building through this

fund, unless it's from a private donation outside, would have to be appropriated by this Board. Anything that would be expended out of that account would have to be, unless it was under the \$10,000 threshold, it would come to Finance Committee and have to be vetted that way if you were spending money out of this account. So this really is more transparent than what we have in place now. I know that it has been said that the building runs a deficit and that may be true. What we might end up seeing in this account for several years is all the money going in and all the money going out. At the end of the year or whenever the money is spent, it being a zero and us having to make up that difference. That I think is a conversation for a different day as far as that particular problem or I think it's a side issue because I think the main issue that I'm trying to address here is the accountability and the ability for us to be able to have a fund where the money can carryover from year to year.

So those were the main reasons why I proposed this and I'm happy to answer any questions or listen to the debate, but I know there were some questions on that and so I appreciate the opportunity to finally clarify those publicly.

#### Alderman O'Brien

Thank you. I would like to make a statement not so much a question, but I couldn't agree with Alderman Clemons more. The Court Street Theater is an asset to this community. A valuable asset. The building itself – just a little history I think I said it before - served as the fire station at one particular time and then repurposed and past boards added on Streeter Theater. This is used by a segment of our community that may be productions. Yes we are the building performing art center but some of the children and everything else may not be able to afford to perform there. So they need a venue that is adequate and this is an adequate venue. Those of us that have gone over the years - my daughters used to take Irish Step Dancing within that facility at the McGonagle School of Step Dancing. That's a little plug for you Brenda.

But anyways, the thing is looking at the facility over the years whatever we are doing as far as financing, we are letting that building down. It is time to have some more modern thought with this and I think what Alderman Clemons has proposed is a very well thought, because we were heading in the wrong direction. You look at the courtyard, you look at the interior, the structure. There was problems with the plumbing and everything else like that. We really need to change the course. I think this will be transparent. People will be to do comparatively to look at our investment with this. So therefore I am full support of this measure. Thank you.

#### Alderman Lopez

To the Chair and if she's interested, I wanted to ask if we could invite Director Kleiner up in if there are any questions about this site or how this might be run, if needed?

#### Chairman Dowd

Miss Kleiner?

#### Alderman Lopez

And then I just wanted to comment. I want to express my appreciation to Alderman Clemons for leadership in helping this get developed and helping with issues that have emerged on site. I know he has had a lot of challenges recently in terms of personal family issues and he still made it a priority to be in the loop and in touch. I think it's very, very important to the community, the theater community, the Ward 4 community the role that the Court Street Theater plays. I think we've seen as a City that lack of accountability and hands off oversight costs us not just a facilities presentation, and sustainability, and its appearance but it's literally costs us in the past where we've tried to allow non-profit organizations to manage it and they dissolved and we lost resources that we could have otherwise used.

For myself, I know one of the first issues I tackled in becoming Alderman was the conversations around the performing arts center. As we create the Nashua Center for the Arts, which is meant to be more of an event-based format and more of an economic anchor, how do we do that while balancing the needs of the community theater and the role that it plays in our neighborhoods. It was always assured that Court Street would be a major part of that and we would be putting the appropriate resources into maintaining our community theater as much as we did our economic attraction and our anchor destinations. So I have been pleased to see the Mayor taking steps to do that whether it was the development office identifying grant money, and trying to make infrastructure improvements, whether it was innovative strategies to economic development office to rent out space that was previously generating no revenue and attracting no attention.

That site has really been coming alive since I've become Alderman and that's saying a lot considering the impact that the pandemic had on the theater community. So I applaud Alderman Clemons for bringing this forward. I appreciate all the

work that's being done to create a sustainability plan. I think this is a very important effort that when we're done with this, all the work is really going to come from the community organizations that are organizing performances, that are engaging the public, that are marketing, and are adding to the culture, and the livelihood, and the economic success of our downtown. We just need to make sure that we are holding ourselves accountable politically. We're making sure that there is continuity of care for this building, and the facilities, and that we're not abandoning or neglecting it. Thank you.

#### Alderman Kelly

Thank you. I was eager to sign on as a supporter of this piece of legislation. This building is directly behind my building. I drive by it almost every day. It really is quite a gem for the City and over the years it has needed maintenance that has been falling behind, etc., so I think this is a really important piece of legislation to make sure that we keep this working order. There are a lot of really incredible community arts, community organizations that work right out of there - Symphony New Hampshire, which I was on the Board of and I've seen what it's like to try to schedule a concert in the City. There have been implications that maybe they don't need us anymore, but if each one of the theaters in our City are very busy and the organizations which use them use them at a very high utilization. So the Symphony is not going to suddenly be going to the Nashua Center for the Arts and the Peacock Players are not going to be going to the Nashua Center for the Arts. They are fully booking the theaters that we have. If you haven't been able to go and see a Peacock Players show, they're incredible and I really encourage you to do so.

Thank you for bringing this forward Alderman Clemons. It's important for us as a City as we're continuing to say that arts is an important thing for us.

#### Alderman Thibeault

Thank you, Chairman. So, again, I also thank Alderman Clemons for bringing this forward. As I mentioned before when I was a kid, it was a children's museum and I wish it still was to a certain extent. I love that building. Liquid Therapy does a great job in there and the theaters as well. You know I said on school stuff but I feel there is a war on arts in this City too right and I don't mean it to be hyperbole, but you know because people think we have the PAC that the Keefe should go or Court Street should go. They're three different venues that are all very important to the City. To flourish in the City, you need culture. You need restaurants. You need businesses. You need arts and theater and all the different things that make people happy to go out and see and do. Especially after COVID, this is exactly what we should do.

There are rumors out there that people are going to try to sell Court Street. I would not be on board with that at all. I've heard Aldermen in this horseshoe say, "we'll bulldoze the Keefe". Again, I'm not on board with that. We need arts in this City. If this gets – well it will get to the Board, I will whole heartedly support it. I think to your point Alderman Clemons, we go that way where people can donate which is great. That's the part I was missing last time that people can actually donate to this trust fund and it stays there. It doesn't go away like the speaker was talking about earlier, it stays there and we can use it. So if someone wanted to give a million dollars or something, we'd take that right and we would stay in there and use it that way. We'd probably take \$100,000 if anybody is listening, but it stays in there. It's used for the purposes of the theater but then like you said, then it's the organization's goal to try to make money off it, right. I think better promotion, now that we're out of COVID, yeah people can go to these things. I think better promotion of the things that are down there.

Now we don't have a paper, a real newspaper, so it's harder to see what is going on. I remember the papers from when I was a kid. This is going on at Court Street. There's all the movie theaters. We don't have that now so we have to look for it. I think we have to do a better job getting that out there once there are things that are out there. Thank you very much.

#### Alderman Sullivan

Thank you very much Mr. Chairman. I'm going to make some comments here and then maybe ask a follow up question and I need to be clear. I don't support this and it has nothing to do with local arts and it has nothing to do with any of that. It's all about - I just heard and I listened about accountability, and this, that, and the other thing. Did you know that we have three expendable trust funds right now all specific to downtown? The Downtown Improvements Expendable Trust Fund, the City Buildings Expendable Trust Fund, and the Downtown Redevelopment Initiative Trust Fund. All have money in them. I don't know how much they have right now but from what I'm seeing here as a timestamp, it's hundreds of thousands of dollars right now. When I say that's the timestamp, I don't know what the current balances are now. If we set up yet another, this would be a fourth trust fund for downtown improvements, that would then allow us to have to fund it and that would be a dollar that we wouldn't put into these other trust funds specifically set aside for downtown buildings. We're just going to have all these dollars and all these trust funds that either we do or we don't. I would argue that we should fund the trust funds that we have, and prioritize, and hold ourselves accountable to make

sure that Court Street Theater is acceptable for the people that use it.

My other question is about the finance. From what I understand, and please correct me if I'm wrong, but if we decide to take \$100,000 out of one of the trust funds that I just mentioned that would not need to go through the Finance Committee, correct? That is my question, my comment, my question. Thanks.

Chairman Dowd

Mr. Griffin can you explain that there is some restriction on these?

John Griffin, CFO/Treasurer/Tax Collector

Yes, Mr. Chairman. John Griffin, CFO/Treasurer/Tax Collector. My role here is to kind of help the process. Just trying to remember Alderman Sullivan's Expendable Trust Funds but let me give it a shot. The City Buildings Expendable Trust Fund funded by appropriations that was put in I believe maybe 2011-2012. The Downtown Initiatives Trust Fund if you recall, we sold a piece of property to Southern NH Medical parking lot. I believe it was about \$300,000. That's what's in that fund. My understanding from Mr. Cummings who we worked with at that time and the Mayor was that, that is not for buildings. That's for downtown initiatives, but there's probably a better description that I can come up with.

The other trust fund - Downtown Improvement Committee, is that what I heard? That has been around for a while. As you may recall, a few years ago Alderman Clemons came in with a proposal to fund that at a \$100,000 per year but because of the pandemic. We couldn't get over that \$728,000 hurdle for parking - both meters and leases. So those are the three.

The other thing that I'd like to mention, I don't have the resolution in front of me, but I think this resolution was to create an expendable trust fund for 14 Court Street through appropriations, but that's not the end of the world because as one of the individuals that got up and spoke about this, the idea was to capture as Alderman Clemons said the revenue coming in. It's in a few places. You've got rental income, you've got taxable income and the thought was as we described a few months ago was we kind of captured that. Let's say that number was \$100,000 or whatever, we could offer that as a proposal and then you as the Board of Aldermen would say it's not all or nothing. It could be nothing, it could be half, it could be something but you're building that trust fund to be used specifically for 14 Court Street. As Director Kleiner will add, the City Buildings Expendable Trust Fund is tough to fund and there are a lot of needs that you all know. So this would be a case where you'd really direct the monies into the expendable trust fund. No other building has that and this one seems to need assistance more than others.

But for people who want to donate, we have to work on how that should work. You have to accept the donations if it's over a certain amount, but you can't fund an expendable trust fund. It doesn't lapse with appropriations and donations together. So I just wanted to help the process there. So hopefully that answers some of the questions.

Alderman Clemons

Thank you. So my bottom line here is this right. The money that's coming in to Court Street should stay in Court Street and that is what this does. I don't know how you can be less or more accountable than that. Furthermore, this requires an act every time of this entire Board in order to fund it. So we will create this account and then during the budget process the Mayor will tally the amount of money that came into that building, and out I guess at this point, but what came into that building and say okay we have I don't know \$100,000 that came in, let's just say to use a round number, and that is all the money that came from rent, it came from property taxes, came from fees, all that. We're going to keep that and we're going to put it into this fund. If there is an expense that we have to, this would be the place where we would go to you know if there was a leak in the roof, if there was carpet that needed to be replaced, if there was maintenance that needed to be done this is the fund that we would go to fund that. So it's all the money coming in and then all the money going out back into Court Street. It could not be more accountable because every single Aldermen here gets a vote on how much money goes into that. So we will get a report come budget time that says the Mayor is proposing this amount to put in here because that's the total number of receipts. Maybe the Mayor will say the total number of receipts was \$100,000, but I only want to put \$50,000 in there. I don't know, maybe that's what he'd do.

The point is that the accountability will be there and that's the idea. Not doing this is the opposite, not doing this is not being transparent. If we don't do this, then we're telling the people who rent from us at Court Street and who pay fees and things like that well we're going to take your money and it might be spent somewhere else. If we do this, we're telling them we're at least going to keep the money that you're paying in this building. I think that you cannot be more accountable than that. I think we owe it to the people who pay us money every month to do that for them. So that's why I came up with this and I hope that I can get your support.

Chairman Dowd

Just to expand Mr. Griffin, expendable trust funds have specific ways to have money input into them and have only specific reasons and authorizations on how they can be expended. So just because we have even a million dollars in an expendable trust fund if it's only designed to be used for certain purpose, we can't change that purpose. We can't take it out and pave streets with it or something. That's what expendable trust funds have limitations on.

Alderman Klee

Thank you, Chairman Dowd. I had written down a question when Mr. Griffin was speaking and that was the question I think that Alderman Clemons had mentioned that at the end of every year we decide and we chose how much of that money goes into and it could be based on the fact that we've had to pay all these other extra things and we're only going to put a percentage of it into the account or as Mr. Griffin said, zero into the account. Each year, whatever Board is here, will make that decision and for that reason alone I think it's a good idea. I've heard a lot of people say much to what my colleagues here have said well we've got the Keefe, and we've got the new performing arts center why do we need this? So I did a little bit of homework and I looked at Concord and they've the Capital Center and The Chubb Theater and they are both doing very well. In Manchester even after COVID, they're coming back with the Palace and the Rex. I looked at Portsmouth and Portsmouth has The Music Hall, the Seacoast Repertory Theater, the Black Box which is The West End Studio, and 3S Art Space. I've been to every one of these and I can tell you they are all different. They have a different feel and vibe. 3S Art Space if you ever get a chance, go there. It is definitely very unique. The Music Hall I've been there for a lot of the things that they have during the summer and so on. It brings people to here and these particular things all happen to be in the downtown area which is where the heart of the City is. So I think spending the money that way - it broke my heart to hear someone say that money was going in there and it just got lapsed into the general fund. That we shouldn't be doing. If I owned two apartment buildings and I take all the money from one apartment building and only take care of the other apartment building, those people that are renting from me in the first apartment building are not going to stay and they're not going to be happy when they see the other building is being taken care of and they are being ignored. So to Alderman Clemons point, I see the transparency in this and I think it's a good idea. Thank you for bringing this forward.

Alderman Cathey

Thank you Mr. Chair. I do have a few comments and then I have some questions for Mr. Griffin. Based on the report that we've seen based on the last three years, we've spent \$689,000 on this building and we've got \$88,000 in revenue. When this first came to our desk, and I don't know if this was Alderman Clemons' part of his original point, somebody said they wanted to make the building revenue neutral. While in theory I don't think that's the worst idea, I think we're a long way away from that. If we look at the average, we're losing close to \$48,000 a year on the building revenue to what we're spending and we can only put in what the revenues are. So year over year, we're going to be really far away from where we need to be. It's an older building. As it ages, it will be more expensive to fix. As an Alderman, I look at all the angles. All the options to me have to be on the table and so the question is, is it really an asset? If it is, I think we need to do more. If it's not an asset, then we need to dump it. Those are the things that we have to balance. I think that if we're really going to take care of it, if that's the goal, that's the desire, and I think that's a good desire if it's a valuable space, we should take care of it. However, I don't think this is the best way to do it.

I'm imagining a scenario where we set up a trust fund, and then we don't fund it, and we don't get a lot of donations into that fund, and then the people who have counted on us as Aldermen say hey we set up this fund, we're definitely taking care of your building, and then we definitely don't take care of the building. That's not really going to be a great place to be in. I'd rather have a definitive plan. If we want to save this building, we need to have a definitive plan to save this building and fix it the way it needs to be fixed. I mean that can't be done overnight obviously budgets and all that, but this trust fund with the amount of money we can put in it every year I think it's not going to cover what we need to. I think we're just going to go round and round the wheel.

To that point, I wanted to know if the downtown has a TIF, why couldn't the Court Street be part of that because that is essentially what we're doing. We're taking the revenue that we're getting and we're just putting it back into the building. Could we not then do the same thing?

Chairman Dowd

Mr. Griffin?

John Griffin, CFO/Treasurer/Tax Collector

Mr. Chairman if I may, I'll speak to the TIF and then pass the baton to Miss Kleiner she spends a lot of time in this building. What you're trying to do with the TIF is take advantage of the potential assessments going up in the area where you have the TIF and use it in the TIF. I'm not quite sure if the Library and the 14 Court Street are in the TIF. I think we looked at that but we decided not to. So and the expansion of the TIF to include it, I think we already looked at that and didn't go forward. But the TIF is designed to capture incremental tax revenue through growth to pay for things in the TIF.

Alderman Cathey

Follow up? You probably spent a lot of time on numbers and budgets. Is there a different way to get to the goal than establishing this trust fund? While I understand we're trying to get started with progress and moving forward, but could we do it differently budgetarily?

John Griffin, CFO/Treasurer/Tax Collector

That's why I'm going to turn it over to Director Kleiner because she's really taking care of this building, and the progression of it, and everything around it so thank you.

Kim Kleiner, Administrative Services Director

Thank you. Kim Kleiner. So I've heard a lot tonight. First, I want to go to a point that CFO Griffin brought up and that's the City Building Fund. City Building Fund is for our government buildings, mainly City Hall but it can be used for others. It's definitely not the fund to make repairs out of Court Street, although in the past we have been forced to because we've had emergency repairs. It's not the right fund for it. You have enough issues in this building that could go wrong that we need all the money we can get and as CFO Griffin said, it's an area where we don't put in enough each budget cycle. So that does have a specific purpose. The Mayor is agent to expend but having said that, anything over \$25,000 goes to the Finance Committee. So ultimately it comes to you folks.

When we talk about Court Street, I think looking at the past few years you've got a special situation. We had COVID. We shut the building down virtually, shut down. So you didn't have revenue coming into that building for well over a year and we did have some major capital expenses. We had to put a roof on it. There was no alternative there. We had to deal with the life safety issues. Again, that's something that should have been done years ago. We are now looking at, and I want to thank the groups that have come forward, we are working with them. We're meeting. We're talking. They've been talking to people about donations. They have a group out there. We're working with a couple residents that have stepped forward to look at new and innovative ways. This is the first time that we've really seen this active communication about how we fix this problem.

Now in the past five months when I came to you in October, I would have told you that the revenue was 40% of the expenses. Five months, 47 now, we're working on this. We are working on making this really revenue neutral. It's going to take a little bit of time, but we just started. I mean really last summer was the first time we really started putting all the groups together, meeting, talking, and seeing how we can help them, and they can help us. So I'm asking - I think Alderman Clemons has the exact idea of how this should work. We need to put this in an account. We need to be held accountable to the tenants that have put their money into this and we'll bring projects forward. You'll know about them. You'll know how much is being spent out of the fund and you'll ultimately have control over what does into the fund. I'm asking lots of people to donate as well.

Chairman Dowd

Do you have follow-up Alderman Cathey?

Alderman Cathey

Yes, Mr. Griffin, if I may. Earlier you mentioned the unassigned fund balance. Is that something that we could look at for help since it's unassigned?

John Griffin, CFO/Treasurer/Tax Collector

Well Mr. Chairman, the unassigned fund balance we target that number and that's looked upon favorably because as we grow the budget, the metric is the percentage of that number. 31.7 is the percentage of the budget. We've tried to keep it at a low 11.4%. The assigned is for future liabilities. That's to if we get as Alderman O'Brien would say, we get hit every other year with significant increases of pension cost. It was designed for that. We fortunately haven't had to use that, but as your colleague Alderman Jette kind of found out at the Capital Improvement Committee, we have like \$355 million worth of

bonafide projects. \$9.7 million isn't going to cover that right, so we tried to be judicious.

The other thing that when Mayor Donchess came on board, we took a ride in to see our financial advisors and what you find is savings accounts for cities of our size are looked upon very favorably. So what I mean by that is you grow systematically the unassigned. They look at that assigned fund balance for future liabilities is a very positive thing. You've got to be careful as to what you use for that. Now any of these projects, the problem with an aging building that needs infrastructure, the renters are kind of assuming they have a building that is going to go in there and be safe, and operational, and so forth. So their rent is to pay the rent of a building that is operational. So why we'd have to dip into the city building fund for kind of a municipal building that is combined with outside activity is we needed to do the things that Director Kleiner said - roof, suppression systems, etc.

I think this approach is to try to get the identification of rent, taxes, and fees to pay for a lot of the operational costs. It's not designed, although as you mentioned, I don't think it's going to be designed where it's going to have half a million in there in 3 or 4 years. It's going to have 100, spend 80, 100, spend 80 or something like that.

Through the appropriation process, you're going to know the numbers. I think Alderman Clemons who is kind of the author of the Downtown Improvement Committee coupled with some of the other things he has done. We're looking at it on a calendar basis so we know what the numbers are and then we appropriate it in May and June. So if you look at the historical record and then come in and appropriate it and that's how I would recommend we do this. So that's a little bit about the financing of it.

#### Chairman Dowd

I have other people in the que. I have Alderman Jette, Alderman Clemons, Alderman Lopez, and Alderman Kelly. Are you all set?

#### Alderman Cathey

I'll ask later.

#### Alderman Jette

Thank you Mr. Chairman. So when we first started talking about this, unfortunately Alderman Clemons wasn't here. I'm glad that he's had an opportunity to come and tell us what he was thinking when he proposed this. I don't know if you have reviewed the minutes of those previous meetings or looked at the replay, but I'm the one who expressed some misgivings about this.

The reason for my misgivings was that I support this building. I support the arts. My misgiving was that I couldn't understand how this was going to do anything to help this building. One of the previous meetings, I kind of simplified my understanding of it by saying this expendable trust fund is like a piggy bank with a lock on it and we create the piggy bank. We haven't put anything in it yet. So each year through the budget process we're going to decide how much money to put into it. Once we put that money in, it stays there until it's used on this building.

When I heard people say that the tenants - tonight was the first time I heard about previous money disappearing. I wasn't aware of that. My understanding is, and I think its common knowledge, we spend far more money on this building than we receive in revenue. My understanding also could be wrong but my understanding also is that the tenants are not paying market rent. They're paying less than market rent, which I have no problem with the artists, and the actors, singers, the Peacock Players, the people in the arts that were trying to encourage and subsidize I have no problem with charging them less than market rate. It's a little insulting to me for them to say hey we're giving you \$100 a month, where is it? Look at the money we spent on the roof, look at the money we spent on the sprinkler system, all this other thing. I think it's clear we are spending more money on this building than we're getting - so the tenants their money is being used in that building.

The question is what's the long-term support of this building? One of the things that attracted me was when it was said well somebody comes along and - well I guess we'll already having groups that are starting to fundraise which I think is great, but those fund raisers, the people donating that money, they want to make sure that it's going to a place and it's going to stay there and be used for this building. Then I hear tonight CFO Griffin saying well donations have to be handled differently. They can't be part of this same Expendable Trust Fund. I want to support his building. Alderman Clemons I want to support his idea. Director Kleiner is saying this is the way to go. CFO Griffin seems to be saying the thing. I'm kind of willing to buy the piggy bank and hopefully we'll put some money into it and it will achieve its long-term goal. I want to make sure people are clear that every year - I think at a previous meeting CFO Griffin also said that this rent and whatever revenue is being generated in this building, that's going to go into the general fund to begin with and we're gonna have to vote as to how much money we're going to put in this expendable trust fund each year. I want to make sure people are clear about that and I think Alderman Clemons has been very clear about that as well.

But these donations, that's another vehicle that's going to have to be created to accept those donations and make sure they are used for this building. As we create this, I want people to understand what it's doing and what it's not doing. So I guess I'm willing to support the idea of buying the piggy bank and we'll deal with how much money to put in it later, but this is just the first step.

Chairman Dowd

Just for clarification Mr. Griffin. The library has expendable trust funds that people have donated millions of dollars to that are sitting in there. Why can't donations go into this expendable trust fund?

John Griffin, CFO/Treasurer/Tax Collector

Mr. Chairman, John Griffin. What I was going to suggest and we kind of were in Morse Code Alderman Clemons and I. We're trying to turn donations into revenue. You folks accept it. We put it in the expendable trust fund. You can have an expendable trust fund for the same purpose funded by donations. You just can't put them together. So my guess on the library is they're very unique, specific trust funds for perpetual care and other things you can do with them – restrictions – but we can add to an expendable trust fund funded by donations if the activity is significant. I don't know if it was somebody coming in and saying here's a \$100 or whatever. If there's like a capital campaign, that's a whole different thing.

Chairman Dowd

By the way, there are quite a few expendable trust funds that I have asked Mr. Griffin if we can sit down and look at the ones that we can probably do away with. It will have to be by legislation. Some haven't been used in decades and we want to clear up that account, so we're going to be working on that pre-budget.

Alderman Clemons

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. Yeah I was mistaken in saying that the donations could come in. I think what I was under the impression was exactly what the CFO said which is if there was a capital campaign, we could accept as a resolution money and then appropriate it into the account and it's basically a two-step process. In any case, I appreciate what my colleague Alderman Jette said because this and what I wanted to get back to you was this is a first step. So I am under no grand illusion that the majority of the money if it not all of the money that goes in July 1<sup>st</sup> and it will probably likely go out. Then when we come around and we're looking at the balance at the next budget, there's \$1,000 in there or something.

But the point is, is that you'll be able to see where all the money went and have the discussion of what's going on, and what the plan is, and every budget season this Budget Committee and the Board of Aldermen can look at the totality of the receipts that came in between January 1<sup>st</sup> and December 31<sup>st</sup> of the previous year and say okay these are all the receipts that we received. They total \$100,000. The Mayor will put into his budget - I propose to put \$100,000 in there. Or maybe the Mayor will say, we got \$100,000 but we spent \$25,000 of that so I'm going to put in \$75,000. Something to that degree, right, and this committee will have that opportunity to discuss that through the budget process and then once that happens, we'll create the budget and the money will go in the account. Again, it's a transparent process the entire way when money goes in, when money goes out.

As far as the – you have the - because the funds don't lapse, you have the opportunity there for somebody like Miss Kleiner to say we're going to set aside 20% of that to save for the future, to try to get us to that point where we can manage this to become a fund that is a break even account. However they do it and maybe it will be never be that way because we're dealing with 50% of the building or even actually more than that. I would say three quarters of that building is really dealing with non-profits. The other 25% is Liquid Therapy which is a for-profit and they bring in about 50% probably of the revenue that comes in there if not more. So kind of relying on them as an income generator to kind of offset but for the non-profits in a way.

But the point of the matter is that we can't create a plan unless we have a vehicle or vessel to do so with that money and that's sort of what this does. So I appreciate who my colleague to the left of me just said because it is, it's the start of a piggy bank and how we fill it is going to be for further discussion of this Committee, and this Board, and future boards. So I think with that said, again, it was never my intention to think that all of a sudden all our problems would be solved. No this is the start of a very long process.

Chairman Dowd

So we have Alderman Lopez and Alderman Kelly. Do you have something new to add? I prefer to move this along.

Alderman Lopez?

Alderman Lopez

I just want to bring up we've been talking about fund raising and what we can do with the funding, but particularly having a special revenue fund to demonstrate what we do with our money and good faith. It's probably important not just to the private donors who may or may not be willing to sponsor a cause, or a charity, and have to be moved to that decision but there is money set aside for arts in New Hampshire. There are different organizations that have already set aside with a plan and it becomes a competition among proposals. It's a pretty important part of any proposal for the City of Nashua or any partner that we have to be able to say and we have consistency. We maintain the building. We have a plan. We don't pull out of the emergency fund when we really have to. We have a plan for maintaining things so we don't hit emergencies. We meet here in this building, in this room, and it takes a while to get fixed.

I know President Wilshire specifically made it a crusade to get the Aldermanic Chamber updated after however many years of not doing it. This is an older building too or at least half of it is and then there is a newer side to it. So it's a challenge using the city buildings fund to keep City Hall in decent serviceable condition. Then it's logical that Court Street Theater will be forgotten and it consistently has been by previous administrations.

To Alderman Jette's point, this administration did fix the roof and did fix the sprinklers after many, many years of other administrations choosing not to do that. So by creating a special revenue fund and the accountability that goes with it, we are showing to people who could potentially contribute and help support in other ways that we're serious and we're going to maintain the site and at the same time we are creating for ourselves the opportunity to be strategic about it, which I don't think we've had or been able to do up to this point.

Alderman Clemons mentioned that the Liquid Therapy is still a pretty new venture and its private money going in. We really haven't been tapping the non-profit sectors or the charitable causes for that building at all in a formal way, but we haven't really deserved it because you can't ask somebody to donate their money to support a building that you won't even keep the roof working on.

Then finally to Alderman Cathey's suggestion about the TIF, the TIF has specifically designated areas and the TIF does best when areas are planning on being developed in a new way that will increase the amount of tax revenue and then that tax revenue can support TIF items. That neighborhood, we could charge more taxes to our own library I guess. The restaurants nearby - the Foreign Legion, I don't think they need more of a burden put on them. It's not an easy neighborhood to look for the regional areas around them to improve their property values in order to fund it. We could do a TIF idea within the building which is basically what the special revenue fund says. The better the building is doing, the more vendors we can get, the more artists we can rent to, the more we can use that giant theater that we still have yet to figure out what to do exactly with, the more we can make that building work, be sustainable, and thrive. So I think they are interconnected and I think transparency is essential for this project, but part of that is making sure that we are keeping track of where money comes from and we're setting at least a ritualistic obligation for us to consider Court Street Theater on an annual basis.

Alderwoman Kelly

I was going to say something similar but I was just going to repeat that this idea of having it come up during the discussion. I know that Alderman Cathey has not gone through budget season, but there's 360+ pages in the budget and this is a very tiny community theater. So allowing them to have us look at it in a very transparent way is going to allow them talk to us about what is going on in a way that hasn't happened before. I think it's really important.

The other piece I was going to say was around being revenue neutral. I know Miss Kleiner said she would like to see us get there. I'd love to see us get there too, but the fact of the matter is right now we're putting our money where our values are. We've said we want to support Liquid Therapy and let them have lower than market rate rent to get up and going. We're going to allow the Symphony to be in there. We're going to bring in artist studios and let them pay less than market rate to be. So all of those things are us saying this is what we value and now that we have some sprinkler systems and a whole big theater that we can use without the Fire Department staying up until 3:00 in the morning, we can start to turn that corner in terms of making this revenue neutral.

Chairman Dowd

Alderman Sullivan? And by the way Alderman Lopez, the new part of this building is not that new.

Alderman Sullivan

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. As we head into everything, I always ask myself what happens if we do nothing. Unfortunately, I didn't get the answer to my question tonight. I think what I'd like to see, with all due respect to Alderman Clemons say that this is the first step. To me, I'd rather see the first step be a comprehensive plan by Director Kleiner on how we get this building in better shape, revenue neutral so we feel confident that it's safe and it actually is by the definition an asset to the City. Something that at least doesn't lose money for us. I'd like to see that plan first and then if we want to appropriate money into a trust fund, that's fine but otherwise we're just creating something we don't know how much we need to put in it, we don't know this, we don't know that. I'd rather have a plan first on how we get back to normal, back to revenue neutral, and then we can do other actions as needed. Thanks.

Chairman Dowd

Passing this doesn't preclude doing the long-term plan. You have to do short-term things and long-term things. Alderman Cathey did you have something to add?

Alderman Cathey

Just a question actually for clarification. Are donations being worked on right now?

Alderman Clemons

No, not that I'm aware of.

Alderman Cathey

I was just curious because I was like if there were, where would those go that would be a question. Long term if the building does become revenue-neutral, do we plan on having market rates or will it always be subsidized rates for rentals or do we not know?

Kim Kleiner, Administrative Services Director

Director Kleiner. So a lot of our conversations, and as someone stated earlier, I think Alderwoman Kelly has been that the building was in bad shape and bad disarray and so was the theater. Our groups are only able to raise so much money using facilities in that type of shape. So yes as the facility and the space can hold more, and they can generate more revenue, then we can look at can we increase those rates.

As Alderwoman Kelly said, it was important to us to have Liquid Therapy in there and to create a situation where they could thrive. That contract and that lease ends next year and then they start paying some market rent. We brought in the new lease for the small room - what someone has call a "closet" and that has a lease attached to it and an increase in taxes. So we just did that. We're looking at how we utilize other space.

One of the things I want to say is when we look at the Court Street and we shared with you some of our expenses, we're estimating the value of the maintenance men that we send to Court Street. So that's what you're seeing offset some of that revenue. When we do that here or in the budgets, we don't estimate their value of those personnel to City Hall, to Public Health, to the Performing Arts Center. So that is just an estimate. I want to be careful about when you look at that expense, right? I think that we are trying to be very transparent in what it could possibly cost, but that's not necessarily exactly what it costs. So as we start to look at a long-term plan and even a short-term plan, we're going to look at the revenue. We're going to look at the expenses and how both need to be brought into an adjustment.

Alderman Cathey

One small quick question. What would it cost to make a plan for the building?

Kim Kleiner, Administrative Services Director

Kim Kleiner. I think we could look at a consultant I think but what we've done so far is we've put together this group. We have a resident who is very familiar in project management that's working with us for the first time. We've also have had a property condition report done on the building so we're pretty sure of what the expenses and the repairs are that are needed. I'm not sure that I would suggest going to a paid consultant as of yet. I would give this group under the leadership of this resident who has stepped forward to assist a little bit of time.

Chairman Dowd

All set? I'd like to point out a few things and making notes as I was going along. Not in any particular order but first of all, the fire station if we hadn't added on to it, we'd probably be set-up for a historic district building. It was the main fire station back as far as when they had horses and the horses used to be up in Greeley Park and we're still using those buildings at least for another few months. I'm not going to make any comments about you in them.

Alderman O'Brien

I do the horses.

Chairman Dowd

So I mean that building goes a long way back in Nashua history and it is kind of an important building.

Years ago when we first started talking about the Performing Arts Center and the Middle School, as part of the plans for Elm Street was an addition onto the auditorium to make Elm Street auditorium more usable for events. That is still on the drawing board and we're trying to figure out what to do with Elm Street as a whole but at the time, Alderman McCarthy and I had a discussion about Court Street. The Performing Arts Center was never going to be in a position to have the people from Court Street use that facility for a number of reasons, which I'm not going to get into. We talked about the fact that if the Board of Aldermen wanted to spend the money building the small theater at Elm Street to go along with the larger theater where these younger people performed. They don't need that large auditorium, the younger kids I'm talking about - Junior Actor Singers, Peacock Players. I can tell you from experience because my daughter has been in Actor Singers and they're all over 40 now, so it was a while ago. I can tell you from personal experience that people that performed at Court Street went on to professional careers in singing, in musicians, in actors on Hollywood, and they are doing that today. They all got their start on Court Street. That's as important as our high schools where we've had people to on to be professional athletes - Greg Landry who I went to school with was quarterback for the Lions. Kole Ayi and others that have gone on to play professional football. Others have gone on to play successful college basketball. This is in the arts. These young kids gets a start at doing things. My granddaughter now started with Actor Singers who performed in many shows before the pandemic at Court Street and now she's singing solos as part of the music program at Pennichuck Middle School. She wants to become a professional singer, actor, dancer, or whatever. So I think that it's very important and I think that unless in the long-term plan we decide we're going to build a small theater when we do everything at Elm Street which is a) doesn't happen overnight, and b) is an expense as you can well imagine. I think that we need to maintain Court Street for the youth of Nashua.

Now I've heard people say we haven't had any performances in the last two years. The building was closed and trust me the kids who were part of the Actor Singers were home moping. They want to be in the shows and they're just starting to have their new shows now. So I think we owe it to the youth of Nashua to preserve this theater. Is this expendable trust the overall answer to the whole question? No but it is a way to sort of earmark money for this project. Some of these other expendable trust funds that were mentioned were earmarked for specific areas and you can start taking money from this one to put in that one because the legislation doesn't allow it. I'm in favor of passing this and if there is not further discussion, I'd like to call the question.

**MOTION BY ALDERMAN O'BRIEN TO RECOMMEND FINAL PASSAGE, BY ROLL CALL**

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

Yea: Alderman Wilshire, Alderwoman Kelly, Alderman Jette, Alderman O'Brien Alderman Dowd	5
Nay: Alderman Sullivan, Alderman Cathey,	2

**MOTION CARRIED**

GENERAL DISCUSSION - None

PUBLIC COMMENT

Jenn Morton

My name is Jenn Morton. I'm actually a resident of Amherst but I am Secretary of the Board of Peacock Players. I'd like to really thank you for supporting the children of Nashua with this vote to establish this fund. We are looking forward to being in Court Street for a long. Peacock Players has been in that building since we were incorporated in 2003. We do benefit from the lower rent. As a non-profit, it's really the only way we have survived through the years especially for the past two years of the pandemic. So we really appreciate the City's confidence and support of the children of Nashua. So thank you very much!

Chairman Dowd

Thank you. Anyone else for public comment?

Amy McKay

Amy McKay, 5 Bennington Road. On behalf of Nashua Theater Guild, we'd like to thank you. We'd like to thank Alderman Clemons and Alderman Lopez for helping and continuing to work with us. We'd like to thank all the Aldermen for voting yes. Thank you very much. It really means a lot to us and we will continue to work on this building to improve it to continue to bring the community into Nashua from surrounding areas. So thank you.

Chairman Dowd

Anyone else? Seeing no one else. Remarks by Alderman?

REMARKS BY THE ALDERMEN

Alderman Cathey

Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am no stranger to the arts. I actually did theater well into my adult life and actually worked on feature films in LA. So my vote had nothing to do with arts and more to do with – I don't think, in my opinion, my personal opinion, this solves the problem that we need to solve. I'd like to see it solved a different way and so that's why I voted no. I definitely support the arts and I hope that the kids have a place to go. I just don't know if this trust fund does what we need it to. Thank you.

Alderwoman Kelly

Thank you. I just want to thank the Committee. We did a lot of good for the youth of Nashua tonight passing both the Teachers' contract and this expendable trust fund.

I actually just missed my final bite of the apple in terms of the teacher contract and I wanted to bring up Mrs. McCurk's comments and how strongly they resonated with me. She really talked about I've been here this many years. I have two advanced degrees and I'm barely going to make \$80,000. I don't like to talk about big national policies but I think for a long time we've allowed that to happen. Teachers having a passion, or having a calling - and all due respect to you Alderman Lopez - but saying that's a reason that we can pay them less money is just not okay. They are investing in our future as educators and it's really important that we show that. I know that's a long way coming. It's going to be slow steps, but I just wanted to say that because I think it's really important. So thank you.

Oh so the Energy Environment Committee is having our sustainability town hall tomorrow evening 5:30. It is in honor of Earth Day but also just an update from Doria Brown as well as a few of our department heads in terms of the things that we've been doing as a City. So please come. We'll go here and then we'll be here for our meeting.

Alderman Thibeault

Thank you Mr. Chairman. Alderwoman-at-Large Kelly reminded me of something I wanted to say about the teachers. I was at a BOE meeting a month ago and one of the parents turned around and told the teachers, you're a teacher. You're supposed to be getting less money than everybody else. That's the wrong thing to think. It's the wrong way to be and that's what I meant when I said war on teachers, parents trying to take control of what teachers do. What they do is something that parents can't do otherwise we'd all be home schooling. They go to school for it. I trust the public teachers with my children. I do. Private schools are great too, but at the end of the day a lot of our kids are in public schools. I think it's important that we supported them and I'm glad that we did tonight.

Chairman Dowd

I have always been a proponent that teachers are underpaid. We've always had to work within the constraints of what we have for a budget and what we can afford but the teachers have always definitely been underpaid. I have two daughters that are teachers. My sister was a teacher, my brother was a Principal of St. Thomas Aquinas in Dover and a teacher, and I can go back even further in the family. They're all associated with education or teachers. So you know I think the teachers deserve this increase and it's very important that we support education. It adds so much to the City and everything from real estate values to having our students learn, and go out, and become productive citizens beyond the halls of Nashua. So I'm glad we took the actions we did tonight.

ADJOURNMENT

**MOTION BY ALDERMAN O'BRIEN TO ADJOURN, BY ROLL CALL**

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

Yea: Alderman Wilshire, Alderman Sullivan, Alderwoman Kelly, Alderman Jette  
Alderman Cathey, Alderman O'Brien, Alderman Dowd 7

Nay: 0

**MOTION CARRIED**

The meeting was declared closed at 9:28 p.m.

Alderman Michael B. O'Brien, Sr.,  
Committee Clerk