

FINANCE CONTROL BOARD PUBLIC FORUM, September 20, 2007
Scibelli Hall, Springfield Technical Community College

Present: Present: Chairman Christopher Gabrieli, Mayor Charles V. Ryan, Robert Nunes, James Morton, City Council President Kateri Walsh, City Clerk Wayman Lee, Control Board Executive Director Steve Lisauskas.

[Meeting began with remarks by Steven F. Bradley, Chairman of the STCC board of trustees.]

Mayor Charles V. Ryan: Good evening everybody. It's wonderful to have you here, and to have a chance to have this dialogue with you. I just want to make a couple of remarks. That is, you may remember that it was, I believe, in late June of 2004, not even three and a half years ago, that the legislature, both houses unanimously voted to create the control board, gave it significant powers, gave it a three year term which could be extended, was extended recently. Really, it was the decision of Governor Patrick, and so it's been extended for another two years, so we're really looking at a five-year relationship, three of which are gone as we try and bring ourselves back to credibility and to stability and to success.

I am so grateful as a person who cares about not only the city, but government in general, for the contributions of the men and women who have really made this control board successful. And just recently, several months ago, Governor Patrick announced the appointment of Chris Gabrieli, Mayor Nunes (Robert Nunes) from Taunton—six-term mayor in Taunton—and then James Morton of Springfield. I'm here by virtue of my office as is Kateri Walsh, as president of the city council. And together, it really is a rather unique and just very, very productive relationship. I'm so proud really to have been associated with the former control board and this control board. Great work is being done.

One of the things that I think is a tremendous advance by the new board is much more reaching out to meet with the people, to not only hear what they have to say, but in a dialogue like to be able to respond, to answer questions. and the leader of this effort, really, is Chris Gabrieli, a man who really needs no introduction, one of the great men, in my opinion, of New England, made his reputation...made his money in the private sector and his reputation in the public sector, especially as an advocate of public education. And he's a, just a pleasure to be with. He stimulates us all to do better and his, just as Bob Nunes and James Morton, their willingness to come here as volunteers on their time and to try and help this city is a very, very profound and noble and generous act. And so, without further ado, I would like to call to the podium, and he will be our master of ceremonies for the rest of this program, Chris Gabrieli.

[Applause]

Finance Control Board Chairman Chris Gabrieli: Thank you very much, Mayor. I appreciate it, and thank you all for coming out this evening. This is a bit of an

experiment for us and for you, and we hope a worthy one. I think any chance that people who care as much as about Springfield as you must be here this evening to get a chance to talk to people like us who have the opportunity to try to make a difference for and with Springfield—it's got to be good. So, some of you I recognize from the speak-out at our events, including at our regularly scheduled control board meetings, and some of you are new faces, and that's good, too. One of the reasons we wanted to have this approach in the evening is, as I hope you all know, anybody is welcome, any citizen of Springfield, at come at regularly scheduled control board meetings at city hall, usually 12:30--they're posted in advance—to come during that half-hour and speak out and let us know (in units of up to three minutes) anything you think we ought to know.

In that setting--and that will continue, that opportunity—it's not a dialogue. We get to listen, but we really don't get to ask or to interact, and that's I think appropriate, considering the tight agenda we have. But that does limit things, and it is also in the middle of the day. So one of our goals was to say, "Let's all come out." This is technically a meeting, because it's anytime three of us run into each other on a street corner, we have technically a formal open meeting by legislation, so we have to avoid each other if we happen to see each other across the street. But, you know, it's technically a formal meeting of our organization, of our, you know, duties, but we're not going to vote on anything tonight. We're not going to go through any of that, we really just want to hear from you, to talk with you. We're as interested in your questions as in your comments. If you've got a comment, you don't have to pretend it's a question. You need to just make a comment, something you feel strongly about, we ought to know. If you've got a question, you know, we'd like very much to hear that, too.

I very much hope that all of the control board members end up participating a lot. Some of them have obviously get seen more publicly than others, but I think it's important that you realize this exists for the people as well as specific issues. The...there are no tight ground rules, except that our wonderful City Clerk—where are you, Wayman?—over there is going to pay attention, because in order to be fair to everybody, we do have a three minute limit. If we get...you know, we're not going to be as tight as we are at speak-out and stop you mid-sentence, but we do want to keep the conversation going. If we end up with more time left over after first round, you know, if we have a few extra minutes and somebody didn't finish up, we can always get a second bite at the apple, but we do want to make sure anybody who came and had something they want to say does get a chance to do it.

Mayor did a fine job of introductions, I notice this is a second or third term mayor, Mayor are you in your third term cumulatively, fourth? What I notice is how admirably you said "*six* term Mayor Bob Nunes," so you do know, though, all the people on. I won't go through the introductions again, just because I think you have a sense for us, So I'm going to just act as the m.c., but as often as possible, if you have someone you want to direct a question to, let me know. If you don't, I'm going to try to get most of the other control board members, you know, to participate and not just myself or the Mayor who, you know, sometimes get more of a chance to speak out than in this setting, so....

Why don't we get started? And I guess we have microphones at various places. There's one right up here, sir. Are you the first person willing to venture forth? And if you would introduce yourself if you're...you don't have to, but if you can, if you tell us your name and address so we just get to know, say hello....

Former City Councilor Morris Jones: My name is Morris Jones, Mo Jones to a lot of people. But I'm concerned because I'm a candidate for the city council. And, first of all, I don't understand that word "tax fee" on the taxes, on the fee for the trash. I think it is a *tax*. I think that's going to cause a lot of problems in the future. Then I look at the people that are paying the bills, the homeowners and the business people on the reclassification of the tax rate which is going to come up somewhere in March or April. I don't know *how* this city council that we got right now, with this kind of a setting that we have right now, can even look at these businesses and residents to increase their property taxes. The city of Springfield is going the other way.

I think you fellows stopped the bleeding; I can say that much. But I don't see the revenue coming from the home owners and the businesses as you might want them to come from. We're going to run a lot of businesses out of town, and we're going to see a lot of foreclosures, because people cannot with all those real estate scams that have happened in the Commonwealth and these taxes that these people are burdened with, I don't know how they can...in other words, another straw, I think, will break the camel's back.

And hopefully I'm speaking on behalf of the Mason Square community. We lost a beautiful library to an educator. And I don't understand that at all, and I hope that we can get together with the control board and find a way, because it's a moral issue. I mean our kids are three elementary schools, four day care centers. It's right in the heart of the city of Springfield. And I would say to the Mayor and to the new city council, "We need to get together and tell that board of directors up there, 'This is a moral question. Do we want our kids to get a good education or not?'" And that's what it is, and we need to address that very clearly. We need good leadership, so that we can go up there and a man to do that, because I just don't understand, Mr. Chairman, how we can sit here, all of us, and talk about "We want to do good things" and see a library....

There's four things in a community: school, a fire station, a church, and a library. And what you're going to do, you're going to see the change in Mason Square by removing that library. And you're going to find the schools are going to have real serious trouble trying to educate those youngsters. So please, again, if I get elected, if I get elected, I'm going to try to rally my colleagues on the council so we can go up there and sit down with those board of directors and tell them that this is something that we cannot allow in the city of Springfield. Thank you very much.

CG: Thank you. If I...did you want us to respond on those, or did you just want to sort of serve notice on these issues?

MJ: I would appreciate a response. Mr. Morton, did you know of this situation that tried to offer to Mr. Henry Thomas to buy that library?

James Morton: I did not know that, no.

MJ: Did you answer the question?

JM: I said no, I did not know that.

MJ: You didn't know? It was all over the community.

JM: Say it again?

MJ: All over the community that Henry Thomas was offered, offered, had an offer for the city to buy that library back.

JM: Oh, we did make an offer to Henry Thomas, yes.

MJ: Why didn't you make that public to the community?

JM: I was made...it was made public.

MJ: Where? In the newspaper?

JM: I believe so, yes.

MJ: What newspaper was it in?

JM: *The Republican*. During that time frame where we were looking at various different locations ...

MJ: You know if we keep on talking about citizen participation.... That's all I heard when I was growing up, citizen participation. *We did not* have that citizen participation in that library. That library was stolen from this community.

JM: Well, at, at, at the time that the controversy about the library first took place, we weren't involved. But subsequent to that time, we created the Mason Square library search committee.

MJ: What were you searching for? There's only one site at Mason Square for a library, and that's where it's at.

JM: Well, I understand that that is your position. And what we were trying to do is, notwithstanding all of the legal issues that were involved in the loss of the library....

MJ: Mr. Morton, I'm not cutting you off. [shouting] It's a moral issue! Look at, he might be legally right...

CG: Now, Mr. Jones, I'm going to...I'm going to...I just want to let him give you an answer.

MJ: ...as a lawyer, but we put confidence in your leadership, and you should have been a little more vocal and tell this community step-by-step what you were doing, and you didn't do it.

JM: OK, I understand that that's your opinion and, you're absolutely entitled to it, and I respect it. But in response what I would say is that for a period of at least four months, we met every two weeks looking at potential sites for the library. It was a very open and community engaged process. We had lots of disagreement, and over time, a recommendation was made to the Mayor regarding a new potential library.

We did, Mr. Jones, we did absolutely consider the possibility of going back to the old Mason Square library. We made a proposal to Henry Thomas and his board at the Urban League. That was rejected, out and out rejected, and so when it was rejected, we began to look earnestly at other sites. So, you know, I think we tried to do the best we could.

MJ: Was that in the paper?

JM: All of that was in the paper?

MJ: It was in the paper that Henry Thomas rejected that proposal?

JM: Well, yes it was, Mr. Jones. Yes.

MJ: [unintelligible]

JM: Understood. It's one of the most controversial issues that our community has every confronted is the Mason Square library and everybody has very strong opinions about it, and I think that there's still some work that needs to be done to address the issue and to create a full-service library in Mason Square. And [addressing Mo Jones] I am 100% in agreement with you about that need. I agree that it's a moral issue. I agree that we need a good full-service library in order for our community and our children to get what they need in terms of the basics.

Legally, legally, we could not or cannot force the Urban League to sell us back the current library. So we began to look at other sites, and we did as diligent a search as we possibly could. And I think we've made...the committee made a recommendation, and the Mayor is considering that recommendation and once that decision is made, we'll move forward and we'll create a wonderful library which will provide all the services that we need.

CG: Mr. Collins.

Springfield Education Association President Tim Collins: Good evening. My name is Tim Collins. I'm a lifelong resident of the city of Springfield and president of the Springfield Education Association. First, I want to thank you all for taking on this monumental task of helping us rebuild our hometown.

I do want to make you aware of a few things relative to the school department. During the crisis under the Romney-era control board, we went four years without a contract that led to the loss of 1350 of our 2660 teachers to surrounding communities where there are making \$8,000. to \$18,000. more. We hired 380 new teachers *this* year. The contract that we settled on, because we *had* to stop the bleeding is in the next years as it plays out once again has Springfield teachers some of the lowest paid teachers in Hampden County. And I'm very concerned about stabilizing our teacher corps. Kids in the city of Springfield deserve nothing less. We have the dubious distinction of having the highest percentage of teachers who are on waivers, who are deemed by the Department of Education, as not highly qualified. And we have to turn that situation around.

Just to give you an example, and I'll leave this with you. I'm not going to read all six years that I have here, but in FY 06, if you were to look at all the communities in Hampden County and add to them Boston, Fall River, Lawrence, Lowell, Lynn, and New Bedford, their contribution under Chapter 70 (there's a minimum contribution that you have to give) on average the contribution of all of those communities was 113.03% above that minimum contribution. In that same years [sic], Springfield's contribution was 95.9%--not even the minimum requirement.

I know we're facing physical [sic] troubles. You have *said* when you were appointed that education is a priority. Well, you put your money where your mouth is. If it's a priority, this situation has got to be rectified. I don't know where it's going to come from in the budget. We need to find ways to bring new revenue into the city. (I've made some suggestions in the past on how we can do that.)

Quite frankly, all the urban areas that have survived and thrived have done it with a partnership with the local government, the state government, the federal government and the flagship university. We've got an opportunity here now. There's at least two members of that board of trustees are going to be *very* interested in getting UMass-Amherst involved here and helping us create an economic engine. You know the problem in our schools with the poor performance on tests, the problem on our streets with violence: they're symptoms. They're symptoms of the major problem in this city and in this valley: the lack of living wage jobs. If we had living wage jobs, parents would not be working two or three jobs. They'd be able to spend quality time with their children. If we had living wage jobs, kids would not lose faith that putting in the effort that you need to put in to succeed in school would be worthwhile, because there were jobs out there available to them. All of those problems are problems symptomatic of the poor economy out here. And I know that's a major challenge, but I think it has to be a

major focus of your efforts, and I think we need to be working with Congressman Neal, Congressman Olver, the whole congressional delegation, the board of trustees of the University of Massachusetts. I know Deval Patrick has a unique interest, because as Springfield goes, so goes Western Massachusetts.

But I'm hopeful...and I apologize for not being there today...I know Charlie and Kateri know that I don't miss control board meetings. But I was in Boston testifying on House Bill 508 to give teachers binding arbitration so no other community ever has to face what we faced, four years without resolution. But I hope that you'll give the schools some special attention. We need to retain our teachers. The last five years, we have been the training ground for teachers in surrounding communities. We have one of the best professional development programs out there. We have a curriculum that's aligned with the frameworks better than anybody else's curriculum in the Commonwealth. And our teachers come in, and they learn these things; they learn different methods and strategies to deal with children. And when they become proficient, they leave.

Our contract has an opportunity to open it up two years from now. I'd like you to consider opening it up earlier than that. Let's take a look at teacher salaries in surrounding districts, not only surrounding districts. Every teacher contract in this Commonwealth gives their new teachers—I won't say young, because we have an awful lot of people who are making mid-career changes—not only a step raise each year, but a cost of living raise. All our teachers are getting is a step raise. So we may have made some gains in the signing of the contract, but we're starting to fall behind again. And if we want to keep quality people—and our children deserve nothing less—we need to consider reopening that contract and finding a way to provide a salary schedule that will keep teachers in the Springfield public schools.

Thank you for your time. I'd be happy to answer any questions.

CG: Did you have anyone that you wanted to respond to that, Mr. Collins?

TC: Anybody.

CG: Any of my colleagues have any particular...? Yes. President Walsh.

City Council President Kateri Walsh: I would like to ask Mr. Collins a question because you missed our meeting today, and a question came up and I heard you speak on it, the Expeditionary Learning School not having enough space. Is that something you're working on? Is that of concern or do you know where we are on that?

TC: It's a serious concern. It has enough space this year (a little cramped). They started out in a school that initially housed about 140 kids. Last year, they just had sixth grade and ninth grade (about 100 students each). They've taken over some additional space where Comcast used to be; they're borrowing some space from Van Sickle Middle School, because they added two new grades (they've got sixth and seventh, ninth and tenth). There will not be room for that to stay a school in that location, so I haven't seen

the district identify a space that would be sufficient. The whole plan of that school *is to be a community together*, sixth through twelfth. So, yeah, I am very concerned about it. Any other questions?

I do have a couple of suggestions for raising revenue. Quite frankly, I think we ought to look for some home rule legislation. Kateri, that would be your bailiwick because the control board can't do that. Constitutionally that falls with the city council and the mayor. I'd like to see if it's possible for us, because the control board announced a year ago that 75% of the two and three family homes in the city of Springfield that were purchased were purchased by people inside of 495. I've lived in the city all my life.

Absentee landlords lead to the deterioration of neighborhoods. They don't take care of the property. They don't care who lives in the property. You get two or three houses on the street, next thing you know, everybody's selling. I'd like to see if we could tax them at a different rate, and roll some of that money, keep it here in town, and roll some of that money into code enforcement so that these absentee landlords could be made to be responsible landlords and we could have some money to spend [unintelligible]

I also think, even though the governor was unsuccessful in getting it statewide, we ought to try, even if its only in the targeted entertainment district downtown, of getting the ability to add a percentage or two or three or four to the cost of a drink and the cost of a meal. There's somewhere between 50,000 and 100,000 25 to 35 year olds come into our downtown entertainment district every Thursday, Friday and Saturday night. It's untapped revenue. I don't think if you add a quarter to a drink or a dollar to a meal, they're going to stop coming. And we could use that revenue.

And I also would like to see you investigate the sludge digestion tank that's across the river. Years ago when I was a kid, that's the way they treated the sludge from the sewerage system, and you always saw a flame burning at the top of that tank. That gas, if that tank is usable, could be used and piped to produce electricity, and we could sell it to the electrical companies and help the city. [Applause]

So I think we need to think out of the box and I also think we need to reach out to the university, the federal government and the state government and see if we can find a way to create an economic engine, because our parents, our neighbors, need living wage jobs.

Thank you for your efforts, and you'll be seeing me.

Mayor Robert Nunes: [unintelligible]...additional revenue for the cit of Springfield and revenues in cities and towns all across the Commonwealth. As you know, Governor Patrick and Lt. Governor Murray have filed the Municipal Partnership Act. And, within that, act allows communities to impose at local option a 1% or 2% meals tax and 1% or 2% on the lodging tax which 75% of it would come back to the community. And also the governor has proposed closing the telecom loophole which would mean a significant

amount of dollars to the city of Springfield. Right now it's in the legislature, and I know that you'll come out and endorsed the Municipal Partnership Act, but it's important that everyone rally behind the governor and lieutenant governor and encourage the legislature to pass the remaining sections of the Partnership Act that's still in the legislature.

TC: I agree with you 100%. I was in Boston another day testifying at the hearing on that.

RN: Yes well, I remember seeing you there, appreciate that. Thank you.

CG: And if I could make a comment. Feel free to sit down. If I could make a comment. I would say I think that, as you know, the previous control board started off at a point of fiscal crisis. At this point in time and with a different administration with a different perspective on what kind of interaction it wants to have, this control board has come in on the understanding that, while the fiscal management issues remain important, and they remain one that we're, you know, the core of what we were sort of sworn in to do, the opportunity to try to work with this administration (and I emphasize that and the Commonwealth more broadly), recognizing that what Springfield has is what Springfield has. What can be brought in from the rest of the Commonwealth in support of Springfield's schools is a really crucial piece here. So we have been from the very beginning I think the nature of the people appointed, the nature of the governor's charge to us has been to work as much as we can, including on the issue of education where the governor has a broad readiness project effort as you know to look in the long term goals for Massachusetts and how to get there and how we can tie everywhere we can upside for Springfield to the ability of the state to help.

Now it's a challenge. The governor has run into certain challenges, as Bob Nunes brings out, in terms of the legislature and agreeing on some of those, but as you know their budget is not overwhelmingly available, but we strongly agree with you that one of our jobs is to do everything we can to make people on Beacon Hill understand the tight connections between what happens with decisions made on Beacon Hill and what the opportunities are for Springfield to build—I agree with you—the deep long-term underpinnings of success which on the economic development good jobs side and then on the strong education side and they're only on the public safety issue, so those are all three (you know that, too; I knew you'd agree with that), so I do just want to emphasize to you, you know, even though I'd love to sit here and tell you about all the things we've already delivered. I can't do that, but I can tell you that we spend a significant amount of our time trying hard to connect with the opportunity we think will flow from Beacon Hill over time to make sure that as much as possible they support where Springfield wants to go educationally, economically, budgetwise.

TC: Well, anything to do along those lines, I'd be more than willing to help you with it. Since you did mention the previous control board, I think you need to review some of the things they did: the pain to have people print their checks—what I'm hearing from our people payroll on the city side. I'm not sure if it's cost effective. It certainly doesn't give us the flexibility when mistakes are made to cut checks and see people aren't going two

weeks without their pay. The street sweepers, the custodians. I think we need to do an assessment of the privatization that was done and see if in fact it has accomplished what they thought it was going to accomplish. Thank you.

RN: [unintelligible] city personnel? So they did [unintelligible]

TC: That has been corrected, but I think you need to review *all* of what was done and make sure it was a good cost-effective measure, because it certainly was a toll in workers, my view is.

RN: Thank you.

Robert Brown, president of the Retired Police and Firefighters Association: Good evening. My name is Robert Brown. I'm president of the Retired Police and Firefighters Association of the city of Springfield. I'm past president of the Massachusetts Retired Police and Firefighters Association. I'm glad to see this forum take place like it is. A few...when they first opened up the finance control board, I myself and my secretary George Pelopolis stood up and asked for this type of forum, and we almost got locked up, but that's all right. I'm glad to see it happen. but I'm here, because basically over the years, our association has fought to try to make a better living for our retirement something this city has I just passed a bill a year ago last November given a bonus through veterans who served in the war fire department I was there this afternoon spoke to you about it, and I'd like to because I think they're important police and fire retirees along with some of the other retirees have never got a fair shake from the city. You talk about giving pay raises to other people. We haven't had an increase in our pension in over 30 years. Now I think that's terrible. The way to treat these...the people who made this city, who fought for the city, and who made it what it was and I think to treat them that way is not right. Now along comes this bonus, which is Chapter 57, beg your pardon, 157 and it has to do with two section, one section is to give \$300. bonus or up to \$300. bonus to retired police and fire fighter veterans and the second section is a...in other words, go back to the years that they retired from the job and getting pay up to the present time. I was at the retirement board with Colleen Trahan and she stated that your association, the financial control board, denied Section 2 and they restricted it so that we can never go back and get that Section 2. I was told that the first meeting I went...I go as much as I can...I, I, I go to about 80%, maybe 90% of the retirement board meetings. And when this bill was first passed in November, I went that following January to the retirement board and I asked them about the bill. And they looked into it came back in February, and they said, well, we're going to see about Section 1, but we're going to close down Section 2, because maybe you can go back in the following year and institute it we can try to get that. And I said, you know what that's like pulling teeth on an elephant. And the...so I find out now that the financial control board has totally done away with that Section 2 and that's, that's burns me. I, you know, how to treat your veterans, you know, isn't not a good thing. And on the other side, I [unintelligible] had handed showing that all the other cities and towns in this area passed both sections, Sections 1 and 2, shows that they know how to treat their veterans. Springfield, I don't know. I've lived here all my life [unintelligible] I've fought all these years to try to make

a better standard of living for the retire, and it's just falls on cold ears. And the give us a COLA, \$300. a year. It sounds like a lot, but when my real estate taxes go up \$400. a year, I'm taking one step forward and two steps backward. And that's the way it is with a lot of them. I been retired for many years. The older retirees, those that retired in the 60s and 70s and 80s and very poor retirement pay, pension. And these [unintelligible] I try to elevate their standard of living. I think many that don't left their house in five years, because they don't have the money. They don't [unintelligible] month to month. I'm lucky. Maybe next month, I won't be able to make it. And that's not right. I've denied my kids. I've denied my wife a better standard of living. I haven't, I've tried to fight for it, but the city has. And I think that's wrong. These men went out and they sacrificed, these men and women (beg your pardon) have gone out and sacrificed things to make this city better. And what do we get for it? You're lucky to be part of Springfield. That's what you get. They can spend money \$300,000. to ex-Police Chief Meara. For what? And you can't give \$500,000. so for [unintelligible] for the retirees and the veterans [unintelligible]. they're asking for millions of dollars now for upgrading the overtime...the I understand the chief, the commissioner, (whew) he is asking for a couple of new deputies going to increase the budget. You bring in people from out of town, give them good paying jobs, [unintelligible]. You find money when you want to find money, but when it comes down to the retirees of this city asking for a decent living, it just falls on cold ears. And I think that something's got to be done about that. I know you...I hear this awful sad story about how the city is restricted and this and that, but, boy, I'll tell you that when you want to find money, you can find it when it's for a project that you want to do: downtown Springfield, changing the lights down there. I don't know what you're doing that for. I thought the lights were all right down there, but you can find money to buy new lights. that white elephant we got down there, the civic center, it's cost the city, myself and every person that pays taxes beaucoup money to keep that thing going.

CG: You know, I think, I appreciate your comments earlier at the control board meeting and today. I don't know if you were there later on at the control board, one of the things I highlighted is, one of the things we've asked as new control board members is the staff... And I should have acknowledged our executive director is at the end of the table, Steve Lisauskas is here in case [unintelligible] some certain details in case some of don't know and make sure we follow up on the things we hear tonight. We will get, as members of this control board, because you brought it up earlier today, we will get some information, some of us are not particularly familiar with the particular issue you brought up. Some may be very familiar with it. We will get as a result of your bringing up some information on it. I don't want to...by saying that, I don't mean to say anything's going to happen. But I want to tell you that by bringing that issue up all of us, and again there may be individuals on this committee who want to speak to it, who know more about the issue than I do, but by bringing it up, I can assure you that it isn't just going to end tonight, that that goes away, we will learn about it and I will also tell you, and that as you know, and I want to emphasize this to all the folks that are here. I want to be direct. The problem is that when you take from folks input, you get a lot of input. Earlier today we were really getting highlighted how we should put the money n the police. Mr. Collins has done a fine job of talking about the need for education. You're doing a find job on [unintelligible] veterans and I think one of the challenges for anybody setting budgets is

always that challenge of the trade-offs. But I don't...I'm not passing any judgment. I'll say that. I've never been involved, you know, all the new members of this committee have not been involved in any previous budget. We'll be involved in the *next* budget of the city of Springfield. And the fact that you've brought out Section 2 of article...option 2 of what...will mean that we will all at least learn, because of your bringing it out what the issues are, what the cost will be and how [unintelligible] a sense for that. I don't know if any of my other colleagues want to speak to it.

I think speaking to the other trade-offs about what other things that have been done was probably not...probably going far afield.

BB: I beg your pardon, but what sticks in my craw is up until 1988, the city never paid into the retirement system. The state comes along and says "OK. You owe us money." They came to the city of Springfield saying "You owe us \$250million, unfunded liability." The money that's invested from the retirement money, the money that comes back in dividends like I was mentioning the \$20million there, goes back to pay off the unfunded liability. It doesn't help the vet- the retirees . It doesn't help them one bit, and that's the way it's been over the years. We won't get a *cent* from our investments, and I don't know if you invest money, which I imagine you do. You look like a very well-heeled person, but...

CG: Thank you. I rarely get positive comments on my looks, so I appreciate it. Give him an extra minute.

BB: When you get a dividend, it's for you. You do what you want to do. Not with the retirement board, and that bothers me over the years I've been arguing that fact, and I apologize to this board if I sound a little bit angry and bitter, but after 30 years a long time and I think that we due our due and for no other reason than we done our job and we expect a little respect from the city of Springfield.

CG: I do appreciate that.

BB: Thank you. [Applause]

CG: Is there any...anybody else have a comment they want to make to that? OK. Thank you very much.

BB: Thank you.

Leon Moultrie: Good evening.

CG: Oh great, sorry. The lights are in my eyes. I couldn't see you, sir.

LM: I know. I'm real small.

CG: My kind of small.

LM: Good evening. My name is Leon Moultrie. I live at 43 Ina Street. I have three children in the Springfield school system. And I'm here to talk about the Springfield school system as well as about several other issues. But first, I'd like to make a suggestion where we can help our eighth graders be better high school students. I'm proposing that each eighth grade student in Springfield's school system be evaluated to develop an educational profile. The educational profile should be used to educate the student toward their career choice path and skill development. The guidance staff for the Springfield school system should be responsible for interviewing each eighth student and notifying the student's parent/guardian about student's educational profile before students can select courses for their four years of high school. The profile shall contain the student's first eight years of being educated and grades evaluations. Any behavior problems that might have caused an educational delay and the students educational area of strength. The profile shall also contain educational resources the parent/guardian could access for the child's career path skill development. This would include colleges and training programs. I believe by developing an educational profile for each student, this would help focus their educational development and skill development as well as provide their parent/guardian with the tools to start researching college and skill training programs that could assist their child on their career path. That's my point one of my proposals.

The other thing that I'm real focusing on is: What is the process that we will establish to hire a new superintendent? I'd like you to start looking at how you're going to do that.

The other thing that we talked about is already revenue stream. And I know a lot of people talk about that. But we've done a lot of things in this city to reduce our revenue stream. So we don't need to look at just the bad deals that was made by this control board. We need to look at the history of how we've gotten, why we don't have more revenue stream. We've sold off some of our very valuable revenue stream. And the other question, the other part of revenue stream, is that every time we have property up for bid, especially in development areas, what we should also consider is: Does it make more sense to not just sell that property, go into partnership with the developer where we become the first payee? You know. We give away a lot of property under the sake of development and not really getting the return, because we give them so much tax write off you don't get anything back. And whoever you get here (UMass, Baystate Medical Center, any number of them) they should make sure that they are at least going to give the city some money *first* before we give them tax dollars.

The other thing that I think is important is that we, we were talking about youth. We need to put some effort into reinvigorating our recreational programs in the city in terms of dollars, using those dollars smartly. We have a lot of people that do a lot of volunteer work with children, but a lot of time when it comes to putting those children on the basketball court, the football field or tennis court or whatever, the cost is so exuberant that the program can't run. You have the volunteer, but you don't have the dollars. Well, years ago, the city used to help to try to off-set some of that. So first, if you look at doing some of those things, it could help some of our children off the street.

The other thing is we always hear in the city of Springfield, especially in the educational system and in the city as a general city council everybody else the control board included that we want *parent* involvement. And what I've always told people we *have* parent involvement. The question is, you have parent *engagement*. And in order to get anybody involved in anything, you need to *define* what exactly are *you* talking about. Because when I say we have 100% parental involvement, I say that because from day one when a child was born, whether they're a good parent or a bad parent, someone got that child to the hospital, to the appointment until the first grade. And get them home every night and make sure they get something in their stomach.. So we do have parent involvement. The question is, we don't define what the school system mean, what the city of Springfield means, and we'll be talking about parent involvement and never getting any results and never getting any better result in our academic performance.

Finally, we need to consider long-term job *incentives*. One of the programs that we just had city of Springfield, Springfield just took back control of the towing program. You have an auto body repair mechanic program at Putnam. One of the things you could do, you could enlist the students who are in those programs to go over to that dump area for cars that are totaled, and they can become strip [unintelligible], stripping those cars down, labeling those parts and then selling those parts to all the many different auto body places needs those parts. Because when CJ's had them, or Roy Towing had them, that's exactly what they did. And then you take the strip metal and then sell it to Joseph Freeman so you won't lose one piece of the car in the process. And we'd be employing our students in the city at a very early age, giving them ability to be able to go out and get employment.

So it's all about not only thinking outside the box, but making sure that we first employ people in the city of Springfield. The federal building is going to be open up. The question I ask everybody along with all these other projects that happen is: Do we have a covenant? In most cities, I traveled through nine states this past summer with my Boy Scout troop and any time there was a job development, at least 30% of the jobs were guaranteed to the occupants of that city, at *least* 30%. In the city of Springfield, you don't have to guarantee nothing but a "hi" and a "bye." Thank you.

CG: Thank you.

Unknown person: Hello.

Second unknown person: Over here.

Unknown person: Hello

CG: Before you start, let me just see about something. Any comments or questions any of my other control board members want to engage with previous...? Yes, Mr. Morton.

JM: You refer to "the city sold off revenue streams." What are the revenue streams?

LM: You had...we owned that Bondi Island and in our water treatment plant. We sold that off, and now someone else controls that. And if you can see, our water bill is now about, oh, 2000% higher. I used to pay about maybe \$400. a year. I pay \$800. a year now for water bill. So somebody is making a lot of money on it. It didn't save me any money.

JM: Thank you.

SL: If I might provide some clarification on the increase in water and sewer bills there. Across the country, the federal government is placing a number of requirements on various water and sewer entities (the water and sewer authority for Springfield is no different) to eliminate combined sewerage overflow. So actually there are a number of federal environmental mandates that are really driving up some costs. And that's something that they're ramping up to now. With all this feedback, we're going to obviously get back to you, and we'll talk to the water and sewer folks to see what's led to their increase. but just for some context about what you've been seeing and what you're going to be seeing coming up with regard to your rate, there are a bunch of federal mandates that they're operating under that's really crunching up rate-wise.

LM: Well, I understand that, but the problem still exists that I'm sure they're for profit and I'm

SL: [shakes head]

LM: Yes, they do make money. They pay high salaries to their executives. And we can determine how...what's the difference in pay since they took over vs. how many before we had any privatized operation and what would have been the cost we didn't went that route. Because we're into new technology, and Springfield has taken very little opportunity to exercise the technology improvement in terms of making things more efficiency and by making things more streamlined that the public can access without using necessary people, but using their own people skills in order to be able to improve the quality of life without depending on someone else to do it.

CG: Over here next and then to you, sir.

Ronald Brown: Hello. My name is Ronald Brown. I'm a lifelong member of the city of Springfield. I'm a former elected neighborhood councilor, 1997-2001. I'm also a retired United States superintendent for rangers Massachusetts. I worked all around Massachusetts. I've seen a lot.. I've seen a lot. I know a lot of people. And one of my frustrations as a neighborhood councilor is that the city does not take the neighborhoods seriously. We have a lot of problems with the neighborhood. Although one of my dreams, dreams as a neighborhood councilor was to see the housing stock restored. Springfield is "the city of homes," was a beautiful city. It still is. It still can come back. One of my frustrations as a neighborhood councilor is that the city hall doesn't seem to be interested in fulfilling our dreams. take us seriously. They give us a lot of lip service, promises and hardly anything gets...nothing's getting done. And then, you know, when

election time comes around, they want you to vote for the same leadership that has basically been assessed as poor.

Now, I left the council in frustration. (I did get some things done. I see the housing stock is being restored in Old Hill, but I left the council to complete my masters degree at Cambridge College. I'm a management major. And as a part of my graduate thesis, I wrote a paper on globalization. And a section of my thesis deals with local government. And what I'm proposing, what I'm recommending to you, control board, that in order for to strengthen Springfield, this to strengthen Springfield—what this meeting is all about,

You want to know what the recommendation is to strengthen Springfield? Well, you can strengthen Springfield by taking the people in the neighborhoods seriously, not giving them any lip service, telling them that you're going to support them and do what is necessary to get the job done. I'm not here to spin my wheels. I'm getting older. I'm retired now, and I'm very frustrated with the lack of support that you get from city hall and the lack of support, basically, that you get from governor's office as well. So instead of carrying on like this, I've prepared recommendations for you in writing. Would you like to accept these recommendations?

CG: Certainly.

RB: And that concludes my time here.

CG: Thank you. Appreciate you're preparing them. Any comment from any of my fellow members? Sir.

Stephen Dean: Good evening. My name is Dr. Stephen Dean. I'm a 40 year resident of Springfield, and I'm a taxpayer in Springfield and will be impacted by the decisions you make. First, I want to give a compliment to this board. This city needs the expertise that comes from the state with the \$52million trust fund that was the part of the agreement. I'm exceptionally interested in Chris Gabrieli. I've seen him in the debate and he's a wonderful person. but I'm here to speak just briefly tonight about our city council. Now many people said, and it was just suggested that the council has a bad reputation. I support this government, the local government our city council. They're our only elected officials that have done business with the city. They might have done it badly. they might use some of the \$2million that the control board has for a budget to hire an expert for management to do the work of the people after your work is done, but I'm hoping that this city doesn't forget that our local government is important to us. It's interesting that I'm standing here just about 200' away from where George Washington in 1775 stood when he looked at the horizon of Springfield, and said "What a great place to build the first armory of the United States. So the stores that George Washington put were put here right on these grounds. Interestingly, he was on his way to Boston to take command of the continental army. The continental army had the slogan along with the politicians then "No taxation without representation." This control board, I applaud you, but I also yearn that the control board incorporate, consult with, and work together with our city

council who are our true representatives of our city. I'm concerned also about the \$30million developmental fund. Some of the detractors of the committee, Paul Nicholai attorney, (I'm sure that the Mayor knows him well.) is concerned about the spending habits. He's been sending letters out. I wish that the control board would invite him on a one-to-one basis in front of the media to discuss his views. He knows more about the business of the city than I do, and I'm not going to speak to that. But I think that the important thing for me to reiterate again tonight is that our local government is an important part of our city. Every city and town has a local form of government. I don't want to see the \$30million spent by this control board to improve the city, as justifiable as it is, to be not with the will and direction and support of the public through their representatives, their city council.

I just did a movie about Springfield in support of the many generations who came to Springfield. They raised their families here. They invented here. The Duryea family, the Carnegie family, the Barney family, all contributing to the city and leaving behind the legacy of their history, their heritage, their inventions that made the city great. And I believe that our city can rise up again with the help of the control board and, finally, with the release of the control board into the hands of our duly elected representatives, our city council. Thank you very much.

CG: Anybody want to...

Lois Smith: I came from a city where I moved 15 years ago that was a desert dump site, literally a desert dump site. It had no redeeming qualities. It didn't have any of the amenities that I'm going to tell you are presently there. That would be just in part a Barnes and Noble, a Borders, a winery (the largest in California), an Imax theatre, a PGA golf course, a Newt Robinson two 18 hole golf course, a scientific medi-corridor that has the most outstanding work in this...in all of the United States. There was no live theatre; it's there now. There were bad areas, and there were reconstruction areas. And we didn't have Ann Taylor, Home Goods, 5-star restaurants, and no Hyatt Hotel, no major malls. It's all there now. It's all there. And this city, according to my [unintelligible] is one of the fastest growing cities in the United States. And it is the sixth safest city, according to the FBI, per population for over 100,000. It has about 200,000--it's very close to Springfield in that aspect.

We need to start looking for answers further away than right around in the cities locally and shifting around what's happening here. We need to be looking far away and see what works. OK now. I'm getting geriatric, so you have to bear with me here.

I want to talk, I want to change things around talk about the situation that I think is key to making this city work. I think that when we're looking at rehab centers and incarceration and another \$1million for the police—which, by the way, I think we do need (and I do think it's a short-term need)—but however, OK, none of those things are the genesis of the problem that we are seeing. We're seeing that more than 90% of the crime that happens here is drug-related. And I want to talk about why that is happening in schools. First off, I want to say that Dr. Burke is contracted by your board, and at the

previous financial control board, they authorized a \$25,000. study called SQI /Jordan Johnson and that study gave Dr. Burke two points out of ten in terms of his proficiency while the school committee gave him eight points out of ten. So here's the deal: Dr. Burke has a pattern of giving jobs to each member of the committee or their relatives. so as you would expect in your wildest dreams that he controls the school committee vote. OK? So he not only controls the vote for anything he wants in the schools, but, worst of all, when that committee goes to replace Dr. Burke, they're going to want somebody from within who will carry on the tradition of giving out cushy jobs that Dr. Burke has handed out. so we can't expect that committee to vote any way but in favor of Dr. Burke's recommendations, because their jobs depend on it. And I hope that this bigger world view will prevail.

We hear parents come in and I heard a lady talk this morning. She talked about a specific school. I think Expeditionary, but I'm not...I'm working on looking at elementary schools predominantly, so I'm not that familiar with it, but she talked about that specific school. And I have talked about the SABIS school and made some investigation into the SABIS schools here, and people say, "Oh, you know, this has to happen or that has to happen on a school-by-school basis." And the problem in this community with the schools has been that there is no continuity. One school has dance, another school has guitar, another school has art, another school has this or that or something.... Some have playgrounds, some have not. Everything is different for every school. If we have something good that's happening like now we know uniforms work, make it a school policy that is mandated throughout the district. Just do it. OK? For meantime, I am asking, because I firmly believe that the drugs we're seeing on the street, methamphetamines, begin in school...

CG: Ms. Smith, coming up, I'm going to ask you to come towards a wrap-up.

LS: OK, well, the wrap-up is in simplicity that we need to have an independent selection committee appointed that can look into all of the things that are happening in the school district and to see that these kids are getting exercise. Mr. Paulin spoke on the radio the other morning and said that we had an extended period of time given to the schools, but there was no plan for how to spend that time. and I will tell you that the children in our schools get 40 minutes a week according to pupil progression plan to exercise or have recess: 40 minutes during the entire week which means these kids are going to misbehave, are going to be given drugs to keep them in their seats and keep them happy. And we have to change that or we'll never change the crime situation. So I'm sorry to ramble, but I wanted to make these points, because I think they're key to what's happening in the city. Thank you for hearing me.

CG: Thank you very much. Sir, I believe you're next.

Albert Weiss: I'm next. I believe I'm next. My name is Albert Weiss. I've been in the city in one form or other on and off for the last 30, 35 years. I came here for a job. I was born in the Bronx. I attended a small school that was full of lead-based paint, fairly shabby, did fairly well in school, ended up in New England after I got thrown out of my

first high school for fighting. I graduated from Providence College in 1972 with a bachelor's degree in bio pre-med with a minor in finance. I've taken on a number of challenges in my life and including post-graduate education in finance, certain areas of medical arena. And particularly, one of the things that in Springfield here be here for a job, I felt almost an obligation to reinvest in the city. Because I had made some money in the city in the area of finance. I had a couple kids in the school system. One of them went on to join the military and served with honor. And I have another daughter who went through the Springfield school system. I have now a 15 year old son. I've been married over 40 years to the same woman, and we've tried to tough it out in this town. I've invested in virtually every region of this town, so I can talk to you from a hands on experience.

I'm not wearing a suit today. I wore a suit for a number of years. I come in front of you today as a guy that's going to leave here, go by one of my properties and pick up paper, because you have people that are not owners of the building. Many of them live...have been cobbled in various fashions, either from drug rehab programs or other social services that are readily available in this city. And they don't care. They really don't care because they weren't born here. They came here, because they could get a free ride. And that's the difference between myself, some of the people sitting at this podium, and George Washington who stood here many years ago and said Springfield was a nice town; we should set up a munitions factory. Well, the industrial base is long since declined. And it's left behind certain problems. This hall we're in right now, although it's a hall of education, many of the people that have come through this hall have left this city. They've taken what we've given them and they've gone off to other places and made their fortunes there. Problem we have in this town right now is there's more people taking than giving. And it's very simple economic situation. Now, has the state short-changed us as Mr. Ryan has said, that Mayor Ryan had said (I might have heard him say that two, three years ago)? Yes, we're being short-changed based on population. Has the city itself created some of its problems? The city has a long history of political nepotism, corruption, and a soft under belly of corruption that really even exists to this day. It's not so prevalent as it was a couple years ago, but it...it does exist.

Now some people had mentioned their concern about their property taxes. some people are concerned about absentee landlords. Some people want to tax the businesses downtown. I'll just bring up a fact. I...I'm a customer of the businesses downtown, [unintelligible] stop by occasionally and buy a beer now and then. (Right now, I'm in the twilight of my beer-drinking career.) And I will say that a beer downtown costs you about \$5.25 now. You can leave the bartended a buck. That brings you over to \$7.25, whatever it's going to be. You're not going to leave there without giving the guy at least a buck. The net result is restaurants and bars are closing downtown. You're in the process of losing some of your cornerstone eating establishments in the city, because they're being taxed out of the city. There are other issues with regard to crime and so on and so forth, but one just has to drive down Main Street to see the blight that's taken place. I invested...oh, let's say nearly my life savings in some of these apartments in the city. Some of them are held in trust, some of them we own, my wife and I, personally. I went in front of the city council 12 months ago, August '06, and I told them, "You're

repaving going into Six Corners. Some of the drainage system there hasn't been changed since the 1800s. You've got it all dug up. Straighten out the drainage problems you're creating out there or you're going to have bigger problems." They just fell on deaf ears. I got accolades, I left the room, I had calls from certain city councilors, but nothing happened. They paved over it. This is the end result. Can I approach the bench? [hands a paper to CG] When I say "Can I approach the bench?" because I basically practice law not. I joined the Mass bar. I've been in Housing Court more than 225 times. I've evicted the gangs you're so worried about in the street. I've thrown people out that were drug-riddled only to see them coddled by these various agencies and then put back into the system. And what happens is until you turn around and have accountability for these people that have their hands out and beg you to be helped, you're never going to change them. For example, I...I saw this lovely woman Adele [sic] on Channel 17 or whatever it is on the cable talking to somebody who'd just made a major investment on Pearl Street. Condominiums, going to sell them for \$100,000. I happen to own the building two doors down. It was built in 1991; I've never been able to turn a profit on that building. The shelter on Worthington Street was destroyed based on what took place precipitated from that shelter. Unbeknownst to me, another 125 units is being proposed. I wasn't even invited to the meeting. I filed an appeal with the clerk's office, you know, the Friends of the Homeless. We want to stop this process until it can be studied further. We don't need any additional homeless shelters in the city of Springfield. May I approach the bench? [hands a paper to CG]

CG: Yes, and I will...I do have to warn you on time.

AW: I'll need those papers back; those are originals. What I'll say to you is I'm finally getting my building under control. Defecation, sexual intercourse, out...overt drug activity was prevalent in that neighborhood for years, less than a block from the police station. [shouting] I was in touch with every chief of police in the last decade...or two to turn around and have them to try to control crime in their immediate neighborhood, and they couldn't do it. When I ran into these characters (the police) at the Blue Eagle Restaurant, I, I used it as an opportunity to lobby them further. Could we get some help? I mean we're not in Six Corners; we're right in your immediate neighborhood. Never happened. You know why? Most of the police weren't required to live in the city. As soon as the police and firemen made enough money, what did they do? Moved out of town. How do I know about it? Well, I turn on the tube the other day. Some guy's living in Hampden; they got him in cuffs; he's a local cop. OK. We can talk about these things. Sewer and Water Department...

CG: I do need to ask you to come to your conclusion, Mr. Weiss.

AW: There's several other issues. Code enforcement [hands another paper go CG]. This apartment was built in 1991, turned over to a tenant with a statement of condition signed. In less than one month, because she couldn't come up with the rent, she trashed the apartment, calls up code enforcement and they come out a two, three page document (Venetian blinds astray, a light bulb missing, smoke detector missing). You could create a code violation in about 15 seconds, and that's basically the way your code enforcement

department works is you hire all these people, and they don't know what they're doing, they drive around in city cars, they come out, they write up ridiculous things. You go in and correct them, and you go to Housing Court and evict the tenant. They get an extra month or two when they do this. Code enforcement department in this city has gone so far as to write up a pile of leaves, and it's written out there at \$3.00 a gallon of gasoline in a \$20,000. car to do it. And they've never owned a piece of property or been at risk.

Now let me tell you, your evaluation process is flawed. Mayor Ryan asked Ritchie Allen on screen "How're we doing on evaluation vs. ...vs. ...taxes?" In other words, what are the values of the property right now? Let me tell you, you've got everything valued high. I got a 26 unit apartment building at 119 Ashton Street, you've got the thing valued at \$1.8million, *\$1.8million*. \$100,000. with raw sewerage being pouring in because you didn't oversee a project or listen to me last August. And you want me to rent those places, maintain the code, and listen to this type of stuff where the landlords are at fault when, basically, you've got a broken system. And until you guys get out of your suits and start picking up papers in the street, it's not going to change. And that's all I have to say for right now. My name's Albert Weiss, and if you want to get a-hold of me, I'm on the net, I'll give you my cell phone, I'm around. Thank you.

CG: Thank you, Mr. Weiss. Is that Ms. Maki?

Sue Cravens(?): I'd like to defer to this gentleman in the front row first, the little boy with the red hair.

CG: Before you start, young man, how many more people are hoping to make a comment? One, two...All right. I'm going to have to be.... Well, since there haven't been lines, it's been a little unclear, so I'm going to be a little tighter on the three minute limits. Yes, sir, young man.

Alex Agnitti: Hello. My name is Alex Agnitti. I go to the Expeditionary School, and I have a comment. I just want to say that...

CG: Can you speak right into the microphone?

AA: Oh, sorry.

CG: We're proud of you coming out tonight, so speak right in the microphone so we can hear you.

AA: I just want to say that I think that we should have a unified campus, the high school and the middle school together, because I think it helps, because you get to see more people not just in your grade, you know, and I have a lot of friends in the tenth grade, and I think it's a good thing to have inter-grade relationships, contact. Well OK. Thank you.

CG: Thank you very much. [Applause]

JM: What do you think about uniforms?

AA: [unintelligible]

JM: Why do you think it's a good idea?

AA: There's nothing really bad about it, you know, so....

JM: [unintelligible] How do your classmates feel about uniforms, or how do your classmates feel about a unified school?

AA: Well, most of my classmates want the unified school. And some of them like the uniform and some of them don't.

JM: Well, thank you.

CG: Thank you.

David Gaby: I have two points that I'll try to cover briefly. My first point...the gentleman here earlier made the comment that I don't think was well-understood that the city has been against neighborhoods. I appreciate Councilor Walsh's comment about the consideration that neighborhoods are given, to neighborhood councils, are given with input on special permits before the city council, but I think that's a little bit different. What we've had since...we had a community development director named Jack Benoit who was, I felt, very capable. He served until about 1985, and ever since he left (he was from the Indian Orchard section)...ever since he left, we've had a city government and a community development department, and I'm not sure they've shared this with the mayors; I'm not sure that it's well-understood, but they have been taking over functions... If a neighborhood starts to do something, they figure out how to take over that function. If anyone has an idea, they figure out how to suppress that person or that group. It's so different than, say, different from Boston where the city of Boston systematically supports community development corporations in Jamaica Plain and Somerville [sic] and all ...not Somerville, but all throughout metropolitan Boston, CDCs are doing all kinds of positive things. In Springfield, we can't support one. It's because we have a...well, there's properties to be sold, let's have the city do that as a dream homes program. And it's been stifling. Not that there are people...I'm not suggestion that people are bad in their intent, but the idea of centralizing and controlling everything in one central place, keeping many people out. And all of those people who are being kept out by the centralization are people who have ideas, energy, relationships with more people so that we can market better. That's my first point.

My second point is that there's two things that are effecting Springfield long-term things, and I know Mayor Ryan's been here long enough to see the whole tawdry show, but there's two things that we've suffered through that those of you who are not from here might not be aware of. The first is a very, very traumatic racial balance program. We took a city which was majority white, mostly suburban, mostly owner-occupied, and

we had five imbalanced schools what we called—my father was in the NAACP and I grew up learning about the virtues of integration. I went to Tapley myself, which was one of the imbalanced schools. But we had five imbalanced grammar schools or elementary schools. We had a mandate from the state which created...from 1973 on, created busing. Not only are there \$50million or \$60million in unreimbursed transportation expenses which I'm sure you've probably all heard about. (The state said, "We're going to authorize transportation reimbursement," but somehow it didn't get here.) But besides that, family after family has moved out of town, felt displaced, had been pushed out of the school system, so that you now have a situation where, as some people have said in your earlier meetings, there's been an exodus. The people that are here feel like they're the ones that are left. The second thing that's happening: during that same period of time, we've had a massive increase in the kind of population that the previous speaker (previous to the young man from the Expeditionary School) was talking about where you have...well, let's put it the former planning director, Dave Moriarty, characterized it triple the rate, three times the rate of subsidized housing in Springfield as there is in any comparable city in New England. So that whereas under HUD law since 1968, you're not supposed to concentrate assisted housing. In Springfield, we have project piled upon project piled on top of project. And that creates a kind of a situation where you have a disempowered population, a population that has to worry about "Can I make not enough money to qualify for welfare? I can't get a job because I'll be off food stamps. I'll lose my medical." You have that kind of population throughout the inner neighborhoods. And it's been another influence creating a regional migration.

My point from all that is not just to give you the history lesson of why Springfield's a little bit different—that's maybe something you can take back to Boston: it's not the same. We've had triple the rate of subsidized housing impaction, and we've had a racial balance system that's not like any other. But we're in a relatively small metropolitan area. It's easy to move to East Longmeadow. We, we've had thousands of homes built in all of these surrounding neighborhoods of East Longmeadow, Agawam and so forth as a result of what's happened in Springfield. And I would suggest, as our...as you're getting to the next, the second stage of the control board, and we're not just dealing with the immediate crisis, that we need to start thinking about some of these things regionally, that somehow we have to recover from the busing plan. And somehow we have to redistribute our housing or rethink our housing program so that we're not the first place everybody thinks of putting a homeless shelter.

Those homeless people come from all over not just here.

CG: Thank you.

DG: They're not the first place somebody thinks of a family housing project, but this is what's happening, so I just leave that as a point and I'd be happy to... Thank you.

CG: Thank you very much. I think this lady has been waiting a bit.

Indian Orchard Citizens Council President Sue Craven: Good evening, members of the control board, Mayor Ryan. My name is Sue Craven. I'm the president of the Indian Orchards Citizens Council. I thank you for holding an evening meeting, because I'm never able to attend the daytime meeting, because of my job and everything. I will be as quick as I can be. As a resident of Springfield all my life, I hold a concern for all the neighborhoods, but Indian Orchard is heart and soul. I've lived in the same home my whole life. I'd like to thank Mayor Ryan and the city council and whoever for all the good things we've been seeing in neighborhood the past two to three years and for what's coming down the road in the future. We have taken a pond in Indian Orchard and through the state and the state, city's help, we were able to turn it over into an open space park which will be officially opened next summer. And I *commend* this administration for that because we've been losing too much of our open spaces throughout the city. Our roads are being repaved, and unfortunately everybody's water and sewer bill is going up because of the Chicopee River. Indian Orchard's portion of the combined sewer overflow project is \$35million. With this money being spent by us because it's federally mandated and the federal government didn't give us any money to do the project which I feel bad for the three cities in our Western Mass area, I'm asking the control board and the Mayor, seeing that we're investing all this money into cleaning up the Chicopee River that we do really work hard to move forward on the proposed river walk project in Indian Orchard on the banks of the Chicopee River. ConEdison donated the land between the two waterfalls in Indian Orchard to the city. This river walk, I believe and a lot of other people believe, is going to help revitalize the Indian Orchard neighborhood another step forward.

We're a very unique neighborhood. And people sometimes laugh about us, because we're forgotten or we're in that northeast corner. People think we're our own little town. I was reading *Business West* last night, and I had to laugh, because in a couple of the areas where they list real estate and transactions and things of that nature, they put Indian Orchard as separate from Springfield. What does that tell us? That this is a neighborhood of Springfield that people don't even realize *is* Springfield.

I invite the control board to please, not, not necessarily as a whole, but as individuals, come out to the neighborhoods and meet all your neighborhood leaders. There is a great group of people that volunteer a lot of time, a lot of energy, hoping to make the city a better place to live overall. I love doing this stuff. It makes me feel good. I know I have a board of directors that loves doing things, having community things happen in the neighborhood. You need to come back out to the neighborhoods and meet with us, talk with us, get our ideas. neighborhood put a lot of tax money into the city's coffers and we need to make sure that we are all involved in this process. Sometimes we're kind of left out a little bit. (Just want to take a look here....)

The only thing I would ask right now of the control board and the Mayor is Chapman Valve, otherwise known as the Crane Company or visa versa, left our neighborhood over 25 years ago. The factories have been demolished. there's two more buildings to come down. Are there any plans for developing the 55 acres which is probably one of the biggest acreages left in the city. The city currently owns, I think

between 15 and 18 acres; the rest have been privately purchased. This is going to be a big investment for this neighborhood and also for the city. It's a big parcel, and I feel that it's very important for both the city and the neighborhood. And lastly, happy birthday, Mayor Ryan, belatedly.

CG: Thank you very much.

Jesse: Hello. My name is Jesse, and I'm a student at the Renaissance School, also known as the Expeditionary Learning School. I have two things to say. Is that a) besides a unified campus, we need a campus, period, because we are a good school and we're really squished in beside VanSickle, and...we really...just we need a building...that's basic. Also about unified campus, like Alex said earlier, it's...we're...people have said that it would be hard to get a building for a school that's six through twelve and keep it unified, but there's only 100 students, 110 tops in each grade, so when we're fully grown six through twelve, we'll only be tops 750, 800 students. And like Central High School has I don't know at least 1000 or 2000 students and they're only four grades....2100, so yeah. And unified campus is good, like Alex said, a lot of the middle school students have friends in high school, and they're mentors to us and they can help us with our school work if we need help. So yeah, like I said, we need a campus and we need a unified campus, because we're a good school and it should stay. Yeah.

RN: Thank you.

CG: Yes absolutely. Councilor Walsh, you had a question?

KW: Jesse [unintelligible] What is it that you like about the school, because some of us are not familiar with what...?

J: Well what I like about the school is that we are really like a family. It's much smaller. Everybody knows everybody. Students are very involved in it. Like when we expanded two grades this year, there was a little board for each new teacher that needed hired, and I helped, we in-...the *students* interviewed the new teachers for the positions that were open and helped make the decision on who to hire. I helped hire the social studies teacher, Ms. Parchesko, and she turned out great...[laughter] (because I helped hire her, of course, she'd be great). And also it...like I said, it's, it's...we feel more together, more laid back.

There's not a lot of stress and the uniforms help a lot. A lot of people don't...like in the beginning last year, a lot of people...there was a lot of resistance from students, and now that it's mandatory, there's not. There's...everybody wears uniforms this year and it takes...it's better...nobody makes fun of anybody and it's cheaper and...any other questions?

CG: Thank you.

Alan Agnitti: Good evening. My name is Alan Agnitti and I live at 161 Longhill Street. Most of my comments really have to do with education. First I'd just like to commend

Mayor Ryan and the control board for the advances that were made, and I have great hopes for this control board also in the upcoming years. First of all in terms of safety at the schools, I would just like to mention a project that I've been trying to get the city's attention for for a long time: Sumner Avenue Elementary School has their emergency drills and half the student body walks towards the corner of Longhill and Sumner Ave. It's a very narrow corner there. The school, the SETM team has brought that to the attention of various public officials. Mayor Ryan has been there. He's very familiar with the corner. We're still waiting for that to be done. What is the problem with Al Chwalek at DPW? Why can't this basic sidewalk enlargement take place? It's been years we've been asking for it.

There's a real problem with the playground situation at Sumner Ave. Elementary School. While there the management team, brought it to the city's attention that there's basically an unused part of the parking lot at Friendly's next door that could be taken in one way or another. We tried negotiating with Friendly's; it fell through. That piece of land is very available and that should be taken by the city as means to extend the playground for that school which is...which has one of the smallest land sizes, land lot sizes, in the city in terms of elementary schools. There's no place for these kids to play. It's an easy solution, other than right now we're talking probably have to find funds to take the property, but I don't think it would be a huge amount. It would do a huge amount of good. In terms of the Expeditionary Learning School, Renaissance School where my child Alex goes to school, I also would like to speak in support of having a unified campus for reasons they mentioned. My wife and various teachers at the Expeditionary Learning Center have traveled the country, they've visited schools where they have a unified campus for the middle and high schools. that's the way the EL, the expeditionary model works. That's the way it should be in this city. And I know you're going to have parents saying "Well, we don't want to send..." who will be arguing the other side for one reason or another. But this is *not* a situation where you should let groups of parents on one side sway you. Let's look at the model as it has been *working* throughout the country. And it is a unified campus that works. that should be a priority for this board is to find and get the city to find this unified campus.

And couple other points about education: I would just back up with calls for saying the city really has to stand behind its teachers. As a parent, as a member of the school SETUM team, I've seen a lot of excellent teachers leave because of their frustration with the fact that their hard efforts were not being rewarded. You read the newspaper and you never get any sense of what kind of contribution the teachers are making in this city. In fact, one of the former control board members actually called the teachers of this city "rapacious," a slur that was never commented on or criticized by anybody in the paper or in the city government. And when you have the hard-working teachers of this city being called rapacious, and nobody says anything, *I* as a teacher would feel "I'm abandoned by the people I'm working for."

Finally, this again echoes some of the previous comments, we need a new superintendent, a superintendent that's committed to this school, a superintendent that takes the Expeditionary Learning model, looks around the city, looks around the country

for other models of education that work and tries to get them put in place here. The current administration at the school department is really just a bunch of mediocrities. Mr. Burke should go; he's been a waste of time. He's been a great disappointment to me who had some hopes for him. He's just letting the system, the status quo go. And anyone who looks at the system, the fact that you have so many students enrolled in high school and such a small number actually graduate from high school.... There are so many indications that our system, school system isn't working. And you get nothing from Superintendent Burke except for hot air. And you get nothing from the school committee except [throw up his hands] pats on the back for Superintendent Burke. If you speak to teachers, if you speak to parents, you'll see that there's a great deal of dissatisfaction at the way central administration has been running this school department. And it's...and I really hope...and one of my great hopes for this control board is that you will step up and use whatever powers you have to make sure there is a real good selection process put in place right away to get us a new superintendent for next year. Thank you very much. [Applause]

CG: Looking at the clock, what I'm going to do is take two more of these, call the evening done, and some of us can stay behind if someone hasn't had a chance and wants to let us know that, but I do want to respect your time and everybody else's. So we got two more. Can you raise...hold on just a second...can you raise your hand if you still want to go? I see one lady here, two...all right...now I see four, right? No, I think it...one, two, three, four, five. OK.

Susan Maki: Thank you. My name is Susan Maki. I'm a resident of the city of Springfield and have been all my life. I spoke to you at noontime today.

And I'm here because I do have some questions that I hope [unintelligible] get some answers to. I think it's a testament to the Springfield school system, especially the Renaissance school to have so many people here tonight speaking about the same issue. We are very, very concerned about what is going to happen in September to this brand new school that needs to be given the chance to succeed and be a pilot for the rest of the city of Springfield and possibly statewide to overhaul education. My grandson is sitting right over here; at three years old, he was a student at the Zanetti Montessori School, and we had great hopes for that school, and it's still doing wonderful things, but because of the teacher exodus—we spent all this money training these teachers, giving them masters degrees. They worked very hard for and also certificates in Montessori education, and I would really like to know how many of them are still in our system, because I know a lot of them left. It ended up at the Zanetti School that there were not Montessori-trained teachers. That program was working. The MCAS scores were going up. And because we didn't have a contract for our teachers, those teachers left. They went somewhere where they were going to be appreciated. That is a huge, colossal waste of our money. Trained people, and you let them go.

Please don't let this happen to the Renaissance School. You have a phenomenal staff, an unbelievable principal. There is energy. There is enthusiasm. The kids at that school care about their school, about their education. They like each other. Last year, I

think there was one fight at that school, and it was two girls arguing in the girls' room over a boyfriend and it was quickly resolved. This is a very different approach to education, and these kids need to stay together. Please don't split them up. I would love to hear about that parcel of land in Indian Orchard that the city owns, because maybe that's where this school can be built. Even in the short term, please don't come back and tell us "Well, we've got a long range plan, but we're going to split the middle school up for a year or two and then we're going to put you back together." I will not believe you, because I believed you before, and this is my grandson. This isn't even my parent [sic], but I care about this school.

Something has to change. And we know that it's education that changes the quality of life in the city. If we don't have good education, we cannot keep good, tax-paying citizens, we can't provide educated workers for our businesses. We will have crime and devastation in our city. We've got to change it. Please, please give this Renaissance School your utmost priority. And if you can lobby our governor, please, please ask him to consider, if we have to have casinos, why isn't any of the money going to be earmarked for education? I can't believe that *none* of it is going to go towards education. I want my taxes lowered, and I my streets and bridges safe, but I want to live in a safe city with educated children. Thank you. And, and, and my question is: Do you have a plan for September? Who is working on this issue to make sure that we can take in two more grades at the Renaissance School and all of this staff and all of the children will be together? Who's working on it?

CG: Mr. Morton.

JM: I don't know that we as a...excuse me...I don't know that we as a body have selected one of us to work on this issue, but I was at the Renaissance School last Friday for a presentation and I believe in the mission of the Renaissance School, and I will take this on as my personal responsibility to... [Applause]

SM: Thank you so much!

JM: But what I'm taking on is to examine the school, examine its mission and to work through the control board to see what can be done about finding a location. I'm not making promises, but I will make the promise that I will explore it to the best of my abilities.

I might also add that the pattern of bringing in great programs and then having those programs dissipate over a very short period of time is a pattern that we've seen before. You mentioned the Montessori School; we also have the International Baccalaureate program where we trained international baccalaureate teachers and created a phenomenal program with kids going to college all over the country, and we've seen it lose its steam in recent years and so this is a pattern that I think we have to stop. Small schools like the Renaissance School work, and we need to make sure that those opportunities exist for our children, so I'll personally take on this initiative.

SM: Thank you so much. [Applause]

Donna Seymour: Good evening. My name is Donna Seymour. I am a native and also a taxpaying resident of Springfield. I, too, would like to see the schools change in this respect. They are bringing food into the schools, am I not correct? I would like to see it go back to when I went to school and hiring cooks and having a staff and give these kids a decent meal, because a lot of these kids don't have meals, and the stuff they're bringing in for the kids, it's not good for their bodies. Also, I was at the polls Tuesday and...at Duggan, and the kids were in uniforms and they looked beautiful. And I recommend all the schools for uniforms. Their attitudes are different. I don't know about any other schools, but, their attitudes are different. Great kids, but they just need a little attention. And with the prices of things going up, it would be economically and financially able for everyone to have uniforms, OK?

And I also have a concern about those...there was an article in the paper last Friday about the cell phone policy, the usage of the cell phone. Now we're spending a lot of money...the paper stated eleven five for the August bill for the city, and approximately \$138,000. a year to pay for cell phone use. Now what did the city, the employees do when there were no cell phones? Why are we spending this type of money for cell phone usage? Just about everyone has their own cell phone, and there are phones in the departments. What do we need to spend all this money for for cell phone usage? Thank you. Can someone address that?

RN: [turns to SL] the policy and look at past bills?

CG: I said two, but people are moving gracefully quickly enough that I think we can get to everybody.

School Committee woman Antonette Pepe: I know and I'll be very quick.

CG: And I *know* we can count on you.

AP: Yes, definitely.

CG: Good to see you tonight.

AP: Thank you. Thank you all very much. I think that this is wonderful. If I may have a suggestion: we do have professional development building which is beautiful, our Sci Tech, 400 parking places. It would be a lot easier for the people of Springfield to go there, maybe, next time, if you do this like this again. I think it's wonderful.

I just want to give you some positives. When I first come onto the school committee, I went up to Putnam School, and I found \$400,000. worth of equipment that wasn't wired, so all these kids that had to learn a skill trade didn't have the equipment that they needed in certain shops. I called the Mayor. The Mayor talked to the control board, and they hired an electrician. Today those kids are using that equipment.

The second thing is, they gave us \$3million in books, this control board, which we haven't had in *years*. (I worked in the system. I made more copies, and I never want to see another copier machine for the rest of my life when I worked in the schools.)

White Street School: absolute shambles. I wouldn't have treated a dog in the nurse's station. The control board saw it, fixed it up. OK? Then they had 750 homeless students. I went to Mr. Puccia, and I said, "We need book bags for our students that are homeless. We need supplies. They have to go to school with some dignity." He went back, you all discussed it (the other control board) and we got it. They spent \$30,000. doing that for our homeless kids, and we made sure that nobody was embarrassed and received what they needed to start school off. We spent \$12million in renovations in our schools, just renovating them, *since this control board* took over, \$12million. This year, I couldn't tell you how many buildings have been painted, how beautiful some of our schools look.

But I have to tell you have I been happy with everything that the control board has done? No. I will tell you this: I'm very disappointed in Edu-clean.

This year, the...under the tutelage of Pat Sullivan and his crew, I cannot tell you the phenomenal job...the Mayor...they don't say no when we need him. We needed to take down a school. I went to the Mayor, I said, "This school is costing us, is going to cost us \$800,000.to renovate." The Mayor listened, down went the building, the addition to Walsh School. So we...this control board has done so much for the public schools that people don't know about, and this is what I want people to know, that there're other things.

But Edu-clean isn't getting it done. Our kids are going into classrooms that are filthy, the bathrooms are deplorable. The drinking fountains, I wouldn't let a pet drink out of. They just lied to me on another school, said they shampooed a rug and they never did. Now the teachers have to wait until December. They're getting the job done too darn late. They're not getting it done in time for the teachers to open up the classrooms which they need.

And one other thing I want to talk to you all about: we have some of the largest class sizes I have ever seen. I've been walking through our schools now for four years. I've argued over Central High School 'til I'm blue in the face. I am telling you now when you get kids that are in the advanced placement and they're able to graduate, don't congratulate the superintendent, don't congratulate the principal, you'd better be congratulating these teachers and these schools. May God be my witness: 30 to 35, 37 kids . Elementary level. We need teachers. We need technology. We have to lower the class sizes, please. Make it more educationally safe for our children to get a better education. Thank you all so much.

And by the way, my...two of my staunchest supporters Lois and Alan... The superintendent doesn't own me. By all means, don't include me with the rest of the school committee. I speak for myself, and I speak for the students, and I owe that man

nothing. If you got rid of him tomorrow morning, I would say “God bless you all.” Thank you.

Frank Buntin: Good evening. Some of the speakers I agree with many of the things they said. But I want to say that I taught in Springfield 40 years ago, and I got drummed out of the system and I went to United States government and worked for the United States Department of HUD and the United States Department of Education. I saw many things. And I was awarded the best office in the country from HUD and the same from United States of Education [sic]. And if I had to bring my staff in here to judge the city of Springfield on their housing and education, they’ get a 0. I mean look at the housing, for example. The Section 8 housing talks about diverting the neighborhoods; it doesn’t happen that way. Look at the schools, educational schools. That lady just said it about the...the large classes. I taught for a week last week at Central High School, and the classes I had were 30, 35 kids. And then she talked about the money that you guys gave them, well this teacher came up to me and said, “Well, yeah, we bought some books. I bought 65 books,” she said, “But I have 110 students. What happens to the other kids?” But you should really take a look at those things, and, as far as the Renaissance School is concerned, that should be the star and bellwether of the Springfield school system. My kid’s over there, and I’ve told them I expect them to make him ready to go to Harvard or Yale. Now I have three other kids who went through the school system. One went to Brown. One went to Tufts. And now I got another one at Tufts. And all children in the Springfield school system should have the opportunity to grow, and it’s not happening. Look at the academic gap between black and white students and it’s terrible; it’s not closing. But these people came from the school spoke, you have to have leadership, and leadership is not coming from the school committee or the superintendent. Thank you very much.

CG: Thank you.

Stephanie Murchison –Brown: Hi. My name is Stephanie Murchison-Brown. It’s just two things that I’d like to speak on. One thing I’d like to speak about the crime and the solutions that have been put in place. Recently, I heard on and now I’m just waiting for them to show up So they don’t police my neighborhood. One time I used to see a police officer walking my neighborhood. I don’t see it any more. I used to see a car go by, a police car go by now and then. Now I see it never. I see them parked on the line, borderline of Longmeadow and Springfield when I go to work out at the work fitness, and I wonder why I don’t see them in my neighborhood. I been in my neighborhood for over 35 years, the house that I grew up in, and I see...we’re owners. My mother was owners. We had neighbors: Italian, French lady, different people on the streets who were around there. I’ve seen that people have moved away and the houses have turned into rentals. I’ve seen that. I’ve also seen that my daughter’s friends get shot on a porch, hear about her getting shot on a porch, and knowing it wasn’t her, because she was in Boston. And I heard that to see my daughter cry and in the *Boston Herald* obituary her face is there, plastered there. And I walked up to Governor Deval asking him to help on this. And I see other shootings, but I don’t see police. I see after the fact. I see people trying to close down houses and move people away, trying to move us all out of there. I see

that, but I don't see any solutions. I see gangs. I see people in gangs. I know that student are in gangs, children are in gangs, but I don't see internships for them, people out there on the streets working to get them into some kind of placement. I don't see that. I know there's gang initiative funds out there, but I don't see the initiative. What initiative are you giving these children? There's no internships. If you take that money, oh, millions of dollars and decide to give a kid a job on the corner instead of a job selling drugs, then maybe there'll be a change. But I don't see that; I see it all going into administration.

And I teach and I teach in Holyoke. And I used to teach in Springfield, but Springfield was not accepting of me, because I changed over my career. I didn't have anyone who'd want to help me, give me a opportunity, so I have to go to outside. Now, I'm a certified teacher, professional in mathematics, and I teach mathematics in Holyoke, because they didn't wanted me here. And we don't have enough minority teachers in here and people sticking up for minority teachers.

And the last thing is my daughter goes to Renaissance, and I also had a daughter previously in another school system, and I had to sue the state, go to President Clinton for my first daughter. That's how I got into that...the school system, because it didn't give me her services, and she was deaf. five years of her life and she had cognitive learning problem. I had to go to the United States government to bring it all down to tell...to say, that time was Negroni, was in violation of her, her rights to have special services. They be terminated, and that's how I got into it. And a lot of kids rights are being terminated, being thrown away, and they're mostly minorities. That's all I have to say.

RN: Thank you. Today the control board voted to transfer \$1million into the police overtime budget, and part of that motion was that that \$1million be used for police patrols. We do not want it to be, you know, for overtime in the station. The commissioner was directed to spend all of that \$1million on additional police patrols. We'll be getting a monthly report from the commissioner and from the executive director of the control board. I can assure you that I will be looking at it closely, and I know the...my colleagues on this board will also be looking at it.

SM-B: The point that I want to make, the \$1million should have went to those kids on the street giving them interns and jobs, giving them skills where they have opportunities. Some of them are hopeless. I work in the school system all the time, and I see the kids have no hope, they have no desire, no dreams. They think they can't do anything. They live in positions in...and situations out of their control, trying to be adults when they're not. So that \$1million should have gone to someone to try to get a welding position. Got all this t MCDI to be welders and programs and stuff, but you haven't no kids in there.

CG: Thank you. Mr. Lisauskas.

SL: [unintelligible]...look into that if you'll just like to know what neighborhood you live in so...

SM-B: I live in the Upper Hill neighborhood. I have a prostitution across the street I've called several times about it. They sell drugs several times and everything. They know I'm calling to the point...and then when I call, they want to know my name and my address, and then one time, I stopped giving my name and my address, because one time when there was one across the street from me before, instead of going across the street to them, they came to my door, knocked on me and said "What's your problem?" So then, you want people to give your name, I started using my cell phone, because they coming up to me. I got, once he leaves, I got to live there that night. So that's why but...this point in time, there's too many killings on here...there's too many...our children die and simply just wishing people move away is not going to do it.

CG: Thank you. I want to thank everybody for coming here this evening, and I want to tell you, you know, there's nothing like putting the human face and the emotion as well on so many cases behind the things we hear about. You know, you wish you could solve every problem walking out the door. I can't promise that, but I can tell you we heard a lot. I think it's very valuable for us. I hope you felt it was very valuable for you. And we will continue to have these community forums from time to time over the course of our remaining tenure, so this is not the last time, but the first time. Thank you very much.

[Applause]