BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
DOWNTOWN MANCHESTER SPECIAL SERVICES DISTRICT

September 09, 2026
8 AM
Meeting held at Work_Space, 903 Main Street

MEMBERS PRESENT:	Glenn Gerhard, Chair Esther Jeffery, Vice Chair Nicholas DuBaldo, Secretary Sophia Dzialo Ryan Fagan Ken O'Hara
EX OFFICO MEMBERS PRESENT:	Gary Anderson, Director Planning and Development John Lautenbach, Faith Representative
ALSO PRESENT:	Richard Clark Adam DeLaura Constable Patrick (8:16) Kelly Ray Stacey Zackin
STAFF PRESENT:	Kate Sulick
MEMBERS ABSENT:	Tarek Ambia
EX OFFICIO MEMBERS ABSENT:	Millie Texidor – GMCC Representative
STAFF ABSENT:	None

Call to Order:

- Mr. Gerhard calls the meeting to order at 8:00 AM.

Roll Call:

- Mr. Gerhard noted those present and absent.

Minutes:

- Mr. Gerhard asks for clarification from Mr. Fagan about the $1500 in parking fees. Mr. Fagan explains that those are the fees the District incurs on each permit sale.

- A motion to approve the minutes of August 12, 2026 is made by Mr. Fagan, seconded by Mr. O’Hara. All approve.

Public Comment:

- Mr. Clark expresses that he is pleased to see the new running store.
- Ms. Sulick reports that she received concerns from constituents about the flooding in the parking lots, particularly behind Forest Wine & Liquor and the parking lot behind the Elks'. Mr. Fagan will ask for clarification from the town over the scope of the bonded drainage project. She also reports that the Elks' Club has made a request that we replace the mulch by their entryway with grass so make it easier for them to maintain. They would also like to install a memorial statue on the property as well. Mr. Anderson requests that they speak with Zoning about the memorial. Ms. Sulick has also received many contacts about the increase in the homeless population overnighting in the bus stops and Center Memorial Park; she has a meeting with the Town's homelessness coordinator tomorrow. Mr. O'Hara says that there is a definitive visibility problem and he understands how it can be unnerving for people who don't understand the situation. There is a perception that nothing is being done, though many of those individuals have access to help and resources and have chosen to not accept those offerings. Mr. O’Hara would like to ensure that the District can be compassionate with the application of resources to find an appropriate path to assist those individuals. Ms. Jeffery asks Mr. Anderson if the Town has a particular stance on the homelessness issue? Mr. Anderson says that Manchester will continue to be a place that has and and does offer resources to those individuals; he feels that the current housing crisis is exacerbating the issue. He agrees that this seems to be a new level of the problem and it's great that there is a meeting with the coordinator. He further notes that the offer of resources has been extended to many of those individuals, further steps may come down to what should or could be done after those resources have been refused. He believes that it's not just a Manchester problem, but feels that because we have those resources available, it does encourage those who need access to those resources to seek them out here. Ms. Sulick would like to remind the Board that the Faith Chair will be involved in the process to apply compassionate care. Ms. Sulick also expresses the concerns people have shared with her about the vape & smoke shops. Mr. Anderson says that there could be a separation distance applied through zoning but the language would have to be quite explicit. Mr. DuBaldo says that Manchester does have "prohibited uses" which used to cover businesses like tattoo parlors, and still covers some others; though some of those prohibited use restrictions have been lifted. Mr. Clark asks

for clarification of dispensaries and massage parlors. Mr. Anderson says that dispensaries are completely separate and regulated by the State. Mr. Gerhardt says that massage parlors are outside of the scope of our discussions today. Ms. Sulick asks if anyone has input on the American Flags not installed on the poles. Ms. Jeffery says that there are issues with weights and resistances on the poles, Mr. Anderson recommends speaking to DPW about that.

District Chair Report:

- Mr. Gerhardt is excited about the grand opening of the running store and all of the running clubs coming out for it. This weekend has the Book Fest and Monday is the opening of the library. He states that we also received the grant money for our remaining events. He recommends that we review the Town's employee handbook and other town districts' to create a draft of a board member conduct policy.

GMCC Report:

- None present

Planning & EDC Report:

- Mr. Anderson adds that there has been some intentional targeting about getting the running store down here and though it took time, he's very pleased about it. Mr. DeLaura says that the former Puerto Rican Deli Pan Soabo space may be changing tenants.

Faith Community Update:

- Pastor Lautenbach says that the faith community is working to address the issue of care for the individuals in need of housing and other assistance.

Biennial Election:

- Mr. Gerhardt says that the last candidate was not able to step into the role, so if there are any other property owners who are interested, to please have them get in contact with him.

Finance Committee:

- Mr. Gerhardt says that we received the Mayor's Grant and that Tierney's Funeral Home is sponsoring the Halloween event. Ms. Sulick says that the Town informed us that we finished up in the black regarding last year's finances.

Report of the District Chair:

- Nothing further at this time

Parking Report:

- Mr Fagan reports that we are awaiting feedback on the parking restructuring about lowering our annual costs. Ms. Sulick says they are attempting to have fees based on volume rather than a flate rate. Mr. O'Hara recommends setting a cap on the volume pricing to not exceed the exisiting costs. Mr. Gerhardt asks if there are any additional parking issues to worry about with the library. Constable Patrick says that the parking signage has not been installed yet. Ms. Sulick says that the library employees will have parking passes. Mr. DuBaldo recommends updating the map to show the new parking lot and ensure the lot is within the District boundaries. Constable Patrick says that there are places outside of the traditional Downtown parking lots where he enforces handicap spaces.

Marketing Update:

- Ms. Dzialo says that Book Fest is coming up this Saturday and there are more than 85 authors on the street. This past week or so, the applications for the Scarecrow Festival have come out and the incorporated donation link within the application will greatly help reduce the costs of sign production. She also states that Halloween Happenings is coming in October, with a new sponsor.

Maintenance & Beautification:

- Mr. O'Hara reports that the Downtown Cleanup is coming up on October 3 and he hopes that that will help inspire property owners to maintain their properties and areas. Ms. Dzialo says that there was a call-out for requests about locations to clean and volunteers.

Manager’s Report:

- Ms. Sulick reports that there is some merchandise planning and sampling over the next few weeks. Mr. O'Hara suggests that socks could work well at the running store and perhaps coffee mugs at the cafes. Ms. Sulick presented the branding plan to the Town Board of Directors and they were very receptive.

New Business:

- Mr. DuBaldo says that there is a Christmas Tree lighting meeting coming up. Constable Patrick says that he has met many new homeless folks in the past few weeks.

Public Comment:

- Ms. Ray would like to share that the GMCC First Responders and Veterans Luncheon will be held October 9 from 11-2. Mr. Clark says that the Army & Navy Club says that September 20 may be a decision date about the court case. He would be interested in having the police attend the meetings with more regularity. Ms. Zackin says that Work_Space is creating promotional brochures about the historic district and will have some displayed at the Connecticut building at the Big E. In October they will be painting glass at Audacity next month and hope for further collaborations with other businesses.

Adjourn

- There being no further business, a motion to adjourn the meeting is made by Ms. Jeffery at 8:53 AM, seconded by Ms. Dzialo. All approve.

Respectfully Submitted,

Nicholas DuBaldo, Secretary DMSSD

Recorder