

**BOARD OF ALDERMEN  
BUDGET DELIBERATIONS SESSION  
APRIL 8, 2010**

The Board of Aldermen held a budget deliberation session on Thursday, April 8, 2010 in the aldermanic chambers of City Hall. Chairman G. Smith called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. welcoming everyone to the public hearing for the proposed City and Education budgets for FY 2010-2011.

**1. Roll Call**

Board Members Present

B. Bevan  
B. Bier  
B. Blake  
D. German  
A. Giannattasio  
F. Goodrich  
M. Hardiman  
B. Joy, Jr.  
J. Patterson  
G. Smith  
P. Smith  
P. Staneski  
N. Veccharelli  
P. Vetro  
R. Vitali

Also Present

Mayor J. Richetelli, Jr.  
L. Bull DiLullo, Mayor's Admin. Asst.

Chairman Smith, reading from a statement, welcomed those present to the proposed city and education budgets for fiscal year 2010-2011. He stated the budget has been thoroughly reviewed and forwarded to this Board. He went on to thank the Board of Finance and spoke regarding this difficult year. He stated each speaker would be allowed 3-minutes and asked those speaking to please keep to the 3-minutes because of the number of people present tonight.

R. Smith – Sixth Avenue – stated he did not know the meeting was tonight until he received the Chairman's e-mail. He stated Chairman's e-mail spoke of the difficulties we are all feeling during these economic times. He stated if the Chairman and the Board truly feel that way they will work together and hold the line on taxes. He spoke of the leaders on the Board and their ability to do so. He also spoke of the prior Board who managed to protect our children in restoring the education fund as well as protecting the citizens of Milford in passing the first tax reduction in the City's history. He stated the previous Board led by then Chairman, Ben Blake took charge and got it done. He expressed his hope this Board would continue that downward trend and stated he felt this Board could and would take charge. He stated the budget is now in this Board's hands and asked their pledge to hold taxes.

T. Beirne – 55 Bayshore Drive – stated before closing schools, combining schools, etc. he would ask the Board to consider the recommendations of this group. Going page by page in the budget he pointed out where

reductions could come. He also spoke regarding the City's brokerage firm and stated it was time to make a change. With regard to the Board of Education budget he stated if they take a 10% reduction in contracted services it could save four teachers. He went on to comment regarding enrollment numbers and increased number of staff.

R. Frank – 44 Lexington Green – stated he is Chairman of the Milford Independent Group and that he is against any kind of tax increase. Reading from a prepared statement he spoke regarding issues such as transportation costs, excessive legal costs, expensive chairs, wasted report, i.e. KRIT, Eisenhower Park, outsourced tax collection, a land use czar, a blight czar and wasted bonuses, pay increases, etc. He also spoke of economic hardship and recalled a woman who after finding out she was going to be foreclosed committed suicide.

K. Munro – 4 Applewood Road – stated she is a first grade teacher at Live Oaks School and a product of the Milford School system. Reading from a prepared statement she spoke of the importance of keeping structure stable. She stated teachers are the basics and keep students healthy. She also stated increased class size would challenge our students. She also spoke of the dedication and enthusiasm of new teachers. She stated teaching in Milford has been a lifelong goal and working here has achieved that goal.

B. Bell – 24 Winthrop Court – stated she was not here tonight regarding the education budget and that she wished to limit her comments to the city side of the budget. She asked the Board to keep “big picture” things in mind and to think about making major changes about how the city does business. She stated the city does not keep adequate records to make informed decisions on the budget. She pointed out this is not unique to Milford.

G. Stanford – 32 Spice Bush Lane – stated she is a retired teacher and former member of the Board of Education. She stated there is a lot of chatter on the streets that we need to get back to the basics of education. She stated the basics have changed. There are iPods, computers, white boards, etc. She stated the second thing she has been hearing chatter about is that the Board of Education always comes up with the money and they will make due. She stated the Board of Education is always “patching up” the schools and that we have consistently failed to keep up with our schools. She stated while she did not want to see her taxes raised, education is a great equalizer. Finally, she stated there is talk the final number the Board of Education will receive has already been decided and that coming here tonight is futile. She stated she wants to believe this Board will look in the mirror and know they did the right thing by the kids of Milford.

K. Rose – 292 Naugatuck Avenue – stated she is a 26 year resident of Milford. She stated the Board of Aldermen under the leadership of Ben Blake kept taxes down and challenged this Board to do the same. She asked the Board to look at the budget as if it was their own. She stated she also wished to speak regarding the land czar and the assistant city attorney and proceeded to read the requirements for each position as posted in the newspaper. She noted no degree is required for someone to oversee three departments and receive a salary of \$95,000, where the assistant city attorney position requires various degrees and is paid more than \$15,000 less. She questioned the logic of this.

J. Kopp – no address given – stated he is very proud of the community he lives in. Reading from a prepared statement he asked the Board to look at the proposed cost of the high schools. He also spoke of the debate concerning one high school. He expressed concern where funds are squandered, i.e. ongoing legal fees. He stated he felt the city has been irresponsible in spending on legal fees and questioned why outside counsel is always hired. He stated he would like to see more accountability to the citizens for our legal expenses. He also asked for an open dialogue between parties. In closing he asked the Board to please re-think its strategy.

J. Berard – no address given – stated she is a Meadowside School parent. She stated the Board of Education budget presented was status quo to stay as is. She stated now that it has been cut by the Board of Finance there is the possibility it will lead to school closings, teacher cuts and larger class size. She stated not to make education a priority is not being fair to our children. She also spoke regarding the differences in education today as compared to 30-40 years ago. She asked the Board to look for cuts elsewhere. She stated everyone is tightening their budgets.

B. Ziegler – 224 Roses Mill Road – stated she has been in Milford about 10 years. She stated Milford is known for their quality education as well as their teacher to student ratio. She stated they could have moved, but stayed here in Milford because of the education.

A. Alderman – 63 Whalley Avenue – stated she is the proud mother of three children in the Milford Public Schools as well as a kindergarten teacher at Live Oaks School. Reading from a prepared statement spoke about what a day is like in her kindergarten class. She also spoke about the standards in education which have changed in all grades from when she went to school. She stated these changes are driven by State and Federal mandates. She asked the Board to please allow teachers to let the children achieve and grow.

M. Smith – 96 Gordon Road – spoke regarding RIT, a State mandated program. She went on to explain RTI. She stated their job in teaching is to follow the Federal standards. She stated if the education budget is cut it will be taking away from our children.

W. Fitzgerald – 12 Anderson Avenue – stated she is a parent of a Live Oaks child. She stated she moved to Milford seven years ago choosing the area because of the school system. She stated she is also a room helper in room K3 at Live Oaks. She stated while she commended and respected the positions of the Board of Aldermen, but stated they needed to know when to cut and when not to cut. She stated now was not the time to cut our school system.

L. McCord – 49 Timber Trail – stated she is part of the team at Live Oaks School. Reading from a prepared statement she spoke about teamwork and what all of the teachers do and how teamwork is successful.

S. Manning – 86 Kohary Drive – stated last year when she had the privilege of sitting on the Board they reviewed the budget line item by line item. She asked this Board to take that same thoughtful approach and not be motivated politically, but move through the budget fairly. She also noted under former Chairman Ben Blake the previous Board produced a budget which did not raise taxes.

T. Marquis – no address given – stated she was questioning allocation and encouraged the Board to look into everything. She asked about revenues and accounts over the last two years. She also stated it would be fiscally prudent for the Board to know how much the non-profits have. She stated the Oyster Festival never opens their books and questioned why the taxpayers should then have to fund them. She noted the Saint Patrick's Day parade is self-funded. She stated the Board should demand disclosure from all of these organizations.

D. Columbe – 89 Burnt Plains Road – stated she is a 33 year resident, a Milford teacher and had two children go through the Milford School district. She stated she did not want to see our schools go backward. She also commented people move to Milford because of the school system. She stated we need to continue to keep our children competitive.

M. Lynch – Greer Circle – stated she is in support of restoration of funds to the budget and support of her colleagues. She stated as a graduate of the school system she considers it to be a great one. She extended an open invitation to the Board to come to her classroom.

S. Feher – Housatonic Drive – stated she has two children in the school district, one who receives special education services. She stated \$2.2 million has already been cut from the budget with the potential for more to be cut. She stated she did not understand why parents have to come back year after year to defend the Board of Education's budget. She stated she was fully aware of the hard economic times, but asked when education became a hindrance.

M. Brown – Point Beach Drive – asked the Board to fully fund the education for the children. He stated in contrast to the education budget, the city side of the budget is filled with pages and pages of fat. He suggested cutting two clerks from the city clerk's office, cutting the director of the Department of Permitting and Land Use, cut the unfilled police positions this Board added back and eliminate grant funding to Milford Progress. He stated the group has nothing to show for those monies with the exception of the Wayfinder study and Sign study. He stated Milford needs to fully educate the children of Milford.

L. Fucci – 136 Welch's Point Road – questioned the cuts to the education budget and non cut to the city side of the budget. She stated the same reasons have been made for both budgets but she found it curious only the education side of the budget received a cut. She asked why only one of the proposed budgets was cut and the other not cut. She stated real people would be affected by the decision of this Board.

C. Smith – 235 Plains Road – stated she has heard many teachers ask the Board not to cut the education budget, but to make cuts elsewhere. She stated teachers are not the only ones suffering and that everyone in Milford is suffering. She asked what good the schools would be if people cannot afford to live here and what good the schools would be if the teachers continue to ask for more.

J. Mancini – 56 Broad Street – asked the Board to think about the severe impact the budget would have to the entire city. She stated it was important to keep as many teachers as possible. Reading from a prepared statement she spoke regarding the importance of education and making all members of our community life long members of the community. She stated it was this Board that has the power to maintain our excellent school system.

P. Ziegler – Roses Mill Road – stated the Board was faced with a hard decision. He stated he has a child at Live Oaks School and that he has learned more in one year than when he was at Saint Ann's. He asked the Board who would run Milford when we are all old and retired and answered – the children. If asked the Board members who had children in the school system and stating cutting the budget would cheat the children. He implored the Board not to cheat the children and their future by cutting this budget. He also stated those wearing pink tonight were the parents of the children here in Milford and that they stood together in solidarity. He asked the Board not to take away from the children.

D. Gugalimone – 76 Cooper Avenue – stated he has filmed these budget hearings for the last 4 years. Reading from a prepared statement he spoke regarding small towns and state bureaucrats. He also cited ECS numbers received from the State and those towns getting their fair share of those dollars. He encouraged everyone to review the ECS videotaped last year.

L. Mucciacciaro – 19 Primrose Street – stated she has two children in the system and is a teacher at Live Oaks School and was hired as part of a team. She stated a win in education is well educated compassionate players. She likened the budget to a game play stating you just could not keep changing the game plan. She stated as a taxpayer she would look at frivolous spending not cutting teachers.

C. Berni – 96 Centennial Drive – expressed concern with the budget process stating this public hearing is being held before the budget have even been presented to the Board and commented it was like putting the cart before the horse. She stated she is a product of the Milford education system and that she is very involved in the schools, in PTA and at the Board of Education meetings. She asked the Board to use common sense when looking at the budgets and suggested they look to get creative with taxes.

M. Fiore – 69 Beachwood Avenue – stated she did not plan on speaking tonight, but was moved tonight by the emotion. She stated her decision to come to Milford was the beautiful schools and that Milford was one of the 100 recognized communities. She stated Milford is a family environment, which is what makes it so special. She pleaded with the Board not to cut the education budget and to think of the children first.

J. Prisco – 11 Riverdale Road – stated he is against any tax increase. He stated this year will be a difficult year, but next year will be worse. He stated he read the report as to how much the Board of Education spent, adding that the taxpayers of Milford have a right to know what they spend their money on. He also commented about the amount of money spent on the superintendent situation. He reiterated the taxpayers need to know exactly what they spend and that he did not want an increase. He stated he was speaking on behalf of the citizens.

B. Lawless – 44 Court Street – stated left New York City solely because of the education system and came to Milford because of its reputation of putting children first. She stated how important it was to think outside the box with regard to the budget and spoke personally about her own business and how she was able to be creative with her own budget. She asked the Board to please take the children off the board and consider the long term effects. She stated education is permanent for all of us and asked the Board to think about the wide spread effects of the decisions they make concerning the budget.

S. Borer – 204 Anderson Avenue – he stated the Borough of Woodmont last year had a budget of \$166,000 and this year it is \$200,000. He stated the question is the Borough continues to receive a grant each year but he would like to know where that money goes. He asked again “where do those Woodmont dollars really go?”. He asked that someone look into this, stating people today are in a pinch and need to know where their tax dollars are going.

B. Bing – 93 Branca Court – stated he was not here tonight to support or not support the Board of Education budget, but that he was absolutely against any tax increase. He spoke about revenue that comes in and the State grants received in education. He stated he wanted to make sure this City went after every grant possible. He asked the Board to cut overtime in all departments and expressed his hope all agency heads were told to come in with a bare bones budget. He questioned some of the budgets he has looked at especially the overtime accounts which exceeded in some departments \$1,500,000.

J. Poffenberger – 50 Green Street – spoke concerning the cuts already made to the education budget. She stated she has four children in the school district and that she was here tonight to ask the Board to reinstate the \$2,300,000 cut from the budget. She stated she moved to Milford two years ago and that she will continue to

Speak up for our children's teachers. He also stated if a restructuring has to happen to let it happen. She continued speaking about the benefits of education and asked the Board to please consider the outcome to our children and our children's children.

M. Collins – 121 Lenox Avenue – stated he moved to Milford last year and has two children in the school system. He stated after he moved here last year he lost his job and that he had to make cuts in his own budget such as cutting cable and other things. He spoke regarding the proposed cuts. He spoke personally of his son he stated receives special needs services at Simon Lake and that they have been incredibly supportive and that his son is very much enjoying school. He reiterated he came to Milford because of his children and the education. He asked the Board to do their due diligence and take a lot of thought into the budget.

F. Reardon – 216 Baxter Lane – stated she is a concerned parent, teacher and taxpayer. She stated if the \$2,200,000 cuts go forward we will see our schools go backward. She asked the Board to please help people like her who are teachers to do what they do.

Ald. Patterson and Ald. Goodrich made and seconded a motion to recess at 8:17 p.m.

Chairman Smith stated budget deliberations would continue on Monday, April 19, 2010.

Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen K. Huber  
Recording Secretary