

**BOARD OF ALDERMEN
BUDGET DELIBERATIONS SESSION
APRIL 24, 2018**

The Board of Aldermen resumed their budget deliberation session on Tuesday, April 24, 2018 in the aldermanic chambers of City Hall. Chairman Vetro welcomed everyone and asked those present to join in saluting our flag and reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

1. Roll Call

Board Members Present

E. Beatty
B. Bevan
D. German
A. Giannattasio
J. Grant
M. Hardiman
S. Shaw
F. Smith
N. Veccharelli
P. Vetro
R. Vitali

Also Present

Mayor Benjamin G. Blake
P. Erodici, Finance Director
S. Fournier, Mayor's Admin Asst.
J. Rohrig, City Clerk

Excused

A. Anderson
B. Bier
M. Casey
J. Golden

Chairman Vetro reconvened the budget proceedings in public session at 7:03 p.m.

4827 Literacy Volunteers of So. CT – no one was present.

4157 Harbor Commission – Ray Swift , Harbormaster was present for questions/comments. He stated they are looking forward to a new season.

Ald. German asked Mr. Swift to expand on new happenings this year.

Mr. Swift grant from the State's port authority which will allow them a new deck. He pointed out the current wood is over twenty years old. He explained the Harbor Commission recently accepted the bid and they are getting ready to move forward. He stated the hope is to complete the marina before memorial. He also stated the patio that was completed nearly two years ago is holding up quite well.

Ald. Grant asked about marinas.com.

Mr. Swift stated it is free and they do get reservations from it periodically. He stated Docwell is one of the larger ones, with a good reputation.

4828 Milford Preservation Commission – Mayor Blake stated this Commission is similar to the historic district commissions.

No questions.

4131 Law Department – City Attorney Jonathan Berchem was present for questions/comments. He stated his budget is essentially the same as it has been the last few years.

Ald. Anderson asked about the request for 4990 0501 Furniture, Fixtures & Equipment - what was the department looking for.

Attorney Berchem explained the department has been looking for a desk for trial counsel who has no drawers to the desk.

Ald. Veccharelli asked what the cost would be for a desk.

Attorney Berchem stated he did not have an idea of cost, adding the department is mindful of the budget.

Ald. Giannattasio asked if the department could live with the cut.

Attorney Berchem stated there is a net increase in the department of \$10,000. He explained last year there was a cut in 4122 0000 and 4189 0000 – those line items were cut \$2,500 last year. He also pointed out the contractual wage increases and also the decrease in the risk manager budget position that was reduced to Step 1, as opposed to top step.

Ald. Giannattasio asked if the

Attorney Berchem stated there has been a greater expectation over the last few years where they have had increased costs for experts, environmental studies, to name a few.

Attorney Giannattasio asked if legal fees had increased over the years.

Attorney Berchem stated in the private field for attorneys fees are more than in the municipal field. Same holds true for engineers, etc.

Ald. Beatty asked about increases in training and conferences which she did not see in the budget.

Attorney Berchem spoke of training. He stated there are a lot of groups, private law firms that provide training, conferences, etc at no cost. He stated no additional monies has been requested because we have been able to send our staff when necessary.

Ald. Vitali asked about Capital Outlays and asked about the recycling of equipment and possibly a desk. He also asked about law books.

Attorney Berchem explained the books are both on-line and for books themselves. He stated the computers are ongoing replacement.

Ald. Vitali asked about the risk manager position.

Attorney Berchem stated the paralegal has been the acting risk manager. In addition, he stated he has assumed more of a role with various workers compensation matters.

Ald. Vitali asked about the recommendation regarding CIGNA and Anthem.

Attorney Berchem explained the RFQ, the process and stated some additional information would be forthcoming.

Ald. Smith asked if the law books were actual bound books.

Attorney Berchem explained the books they actually receive.

Ald. Smith asked about 4122 0000 Other Legal Fes and 4189 0000.

Attorney Berchem explained it is not just attorneys but for professional consultants, appraisals, environmental assessments, marshal fees, blight foreclosure fees, filing fees in the various courts, and more.

Ald. Smith asked about legal services involving the school.

Attorney Berchem stated the school district is completely separate.

Ald. Smith commended the work of the Law Department and the support, thoughtfulness and response he receives from the staff.

Attorney Berchem thanked Ald. Smith for the comments, adding the work of Debra, Matthew and his staff, Toni, Kathy and Valerie is beyond commendable.

4132 Ethics Commission – City Attorney Jonathan Berchem was present for questions/comments.

No questions.

4340 Animal Control – Scott Ellingson, Animal Control Officer was present for questions/comments. He stated his budget is status quo.

Ald. Veccharelli asked about the two trailers adjacent to the building.

Mr. Ellingson stated the two trailers belong to the state for their construction at the park.

Ald. German asked about the arrangement with the Town of Orange.

Mr. Ellingson stated the agreement is the same as it has been over the years.

Ald. Grant asked if they are working with the state to make sure there is no detriment to the animals.

Mr. Ellingson stated there have been no issues.

Ald. Giannattasio asked about the \$75,000 fee and if Milford still fuels in Orange.

Mr. Ellingson reiterated the agreement is the same and that they still fuel one vehicle in Orange.

4803 Milford Arts Council – Paige Migliaro, Executive Director was present for questions/comments. Ms. Migliaro reported renovations have been completed and the project came in under budget. She continued with an explanation of the handout. She pointed out an uptick of out-of-town attendees, which is wonderful. She reported they have a new marketing director that has worked out quite well. She addressed the increase they requested is to help grow and expand. She spoke of the music program and a grant they received from Subway that helped them with their handouts, flyers, etc. Programming has also increased. She stated the additional monies requested are for increased hours for staff. She explained how they divide the assignments. Social media exposure has exploded.

Ald. German asked about the economic impact to Milford when people come for shows.

Ms. Migliaro referred the Board to the handout. She also explained the partnership they have with the downtown businesses.

Ald. Smith expressed his admiration of the work Paige has done along with the staff and what they have done for the arts and their importance in Milford. He asked about the Firehouse Gallery and an overview.

Ms. Migliaro stated the firehouse gallery opened in 2004. She stated it has an apartment above. She stated there are 8 themed shows every year. She explained the gallery is run by volunteers, so if they do not have volunteers available unfortunately they do not open. She stated the focus right now is the outside of the building.

4812 Transit District - Henry Jadach was present for questions/comments. He stated he is thankful for the support the city gives. He stated with the budget difficulties the state is having it could put some difficulties on transit and what they do.

Ald. Vitali asked about the bike storage units and if they are being utilized.

Mr. Jadach stated they are being used, not to their full capacity at this point.

Ald. Anderson asked if the proposed cuts will affect the bus shelters.

Mr. Jadach stated there will be a shelter in front of Stop & Shop. He spoke of some of the other locations.

Ald. Anderson asked about the shelter on South Broad.

Mr. Jadach stated the shelter is over 35 years old and their age is beginning to show. He stated there is federal money, but it would depend on what the State does.

Ald. German asked the overall budget for transit

Mr. Jadach stated they have a \$2.1M operating budget.

Ald. German asked the number of passengers

Mr. Jadach explained the various routes as well as the fixed and Milford to Norwalk which is roughly 300,000 and other 50,000.

Ald. German asked about advertising revenue.

Mr. Jadach stated it is approximately \$40,000.

4811 Borough of Woodmont –Mr. Ed Bonessi, Borough Warden was present for questions/comments.

No questions.

44201 Public Works Office Chris Saley, Public Works Director and Steve Johnson, Interim Assistant Public Works Director was present for questions/comments.

Ald. Giannattasio asked how many people are in the office.

Director Saley stated there are 5 positions

Ald. Giannattasio asked about other positions to be filled.

Director Saley stated they did just fill the administrative assistant position.

Ald. Vitali asked about the budget positions numbers and if the cuts were due to step adjustments.

Mr. Erodici stated at the time the BOF approved the budget those positions were vacant.

Ald. Giannattasio asked if any other positions were vacant.

Director Saley stated the positions currently in the budget are filled.

Ald. Veccharelli asked about the assistant director position and when that might be filled.

Director Saley stated the hope was to fill that position in the next 6 months. He stated he is trying to fill custodians, maintainers, etc. first. He also stated when the city had a hiring freeze; those positions were not filled, which is what human resources have been working on.

Ald. Smith asked if Mr. Johnson is still open space manager.

Mr. Johnson replied yes.

Director Saley added there is a lot of synergy with both the positions, and that Mr. Johnson has taken a leadership role and been an asset to the grant work, paperwork, etc.

Ald. Vitali asked if there were any consideration to melding the two positions and taking the one-man department/position into the public works department.

Director Saley spoke of the defined open space position and the amount of hours.

Ald. Vitali stated he would like to see a job description for both positions adding it would be a good fit.

Director Saley stated he would disagree with having one position since it would be unlikely one person would put in the number of hours Mr. Johnson puts in as open space manager.

Ald. Giannattasio asked Mr. Johnson his intention if he planned to go back to the open space manager position or seek the assist director of public works position.

Mr. Johnson stated he works proactively with public works. He also spoke of the learning curve. At some point they will need to take a step back and make sure it is a good fit.

Ald. Giannattasio spoke of the past disagreement of how the open space manager position was originally set up. He stated when the position was created the intent at that time was to put it into the public works office.

Ald. Beatty asked for clarification when the position was created. She stated she understood the synergy and spoke of personnel matters and how positions are created within departments. She stated it has been her understanding the city was in need of a full time open space manager position.

Ald. Smith asked if there is a distinction of having two separate offices noting open space has certain autonomy.

Mr. Johnson spoke of the working relationship he has developed with Director Saley in his work with open space and the public works department. He spoke of revisiting goals of the position, adding it has been a positive experience and meeting the needs of the city.

Mayor Blake stated the two departments work seamlessly, support each other, helping each other out, effectively a team effort. There are no individual goals, only the goals of the city.

Ald. Giannattasio stated essentially Mr. Johnson has two bosses, although the intent is good. He also stated the disagreement was always with how the position was funded.

4421 Highway/Parks – Chris Saley, Public Works Director and Steve Johnson were present for questions/comments. Director Saley recognized the hard work of Mr. Tomasco and Mr. Hunt and the amount of work in the divisions of Highway/Parks. He stated he is proud of the both of them and the work of the individuals who work under them, adding the City is fortunate to have both men.

Ald. Vitali asked about major projects going on in the city, such as the pickle ball court and water park.

Director Saley stated they are behind, but they are cautiously looking at mid-June. He stated he is working with many city departments. Preliminary work has begun on the pickle ball court.

Ald. Vitali also asked about the dredging projects. He commented they have added so much aesthetically to the city. He asked if they are complete at this time.

Director Saley explained the scope of work for each of the three locations and the details in the completion of the projects.

Ald. Giannattasio asked if all the positions were filled.

Director Saley stated there are four positions that are vacant. He stated they are looking at critical positions in public works to get filled. He stated the department works very, very hard to fulfill the needs in the city.

Ald. Veccharelli asked about 4989 0000 Miscellaneous Equipment and 4465 0000 Beach Areas Upkeep. He asked about the grills that have been removed but had been there for cooking.

Director Saley stated he is not aware that his department had taken any down.

Ald. Veccharelli asked what those account are utilized for. He also asked when the grills would be put back.

4423 Building Maintenance – Chris Saley, Public Works Director and Steve Johnson were present for questions/comments.

Ald. Giannattasio asked how many custodial positions are open in this department.

Director Saley stated there are 5 custodians and 1 night custodians.

Ald. German asked about outsourcing custodians.

Director Saley stated there are pluses and minuses, but the goal is to get people back into their positions.

Ald. German asked about line item 4442 0000 Electricity.

Director Saley stated it is for all city buildings, pool, Egan Center, SimonLake. These additional buildings add to costs.

Ald. Veccharelli stated sometime ago he asked the Public Works Committee to clean out the concession stand/bathrooms at Washington Field, instead of as storage for the Public Works Department. He asked if this could be revisited.

Director Saley stated it is an area that they could look at.

Ald. Vitali asked about the old Milford Diner structure and what could be done with that building.

Mayor Blake stated he has been in touch with the owner of that site. It is eminent that the building will be removed, however, unsure if an exact date. He also pointed out the building is privately owned.

4424 Engineering – Chris Saley, Public Works Director and Steven Johnson, Interim Assistant Public Works Director were available for questions/comments.

Ald. Giannattasio asked the number of open position.

Director Saley stated the engineering technician position is open. The intent is to fill that position, with the possibility of an adjustment to the job description.

4429 General Garage – Chris Saley, Public Works Director and Steve Johnson, Interim Assistant Public Works Director were available for questions/comments.

Ald. Vitali asked if all positions are filled in this department.

Director Saley stated the mechanics position was just filled.

Ald. Grant asked about the increase in the software budget 4977 0138

Director Saley stated the increase was due in part to the number of computers the department has and the age of the computer, as well as the GPS program.

4431 Solid Waste – Chris Saley, Public Works Director and Steve Johnson, Interim Public Works Director were present for questions.

Ald. German asked about 4709 0000 Condo Reimbursement

Mayor Blake explained it is condominiums over 3 units and that there is an Ordinance that sets up a formula for either reimbursement or garbage pickup. In order for a condo to apply, the hauler must be registered with the city and their flow must be calculated with the city's municipal solid waste.

Ald. Anderson asked about the transfer station and the operations there, the provider, anything new.

Director Saley stated they anticipate going out to bid for another provider when the contract expires. He spoke of the potential for additional comp posting, expansion in the area recently acquired, the textile program. He also spoke about the single-stream pick up which has not had the success they had hoped for. He stated it is very challenging.

Ald. Giannattasio asked about the budgeted positions – truck driver positions.

Director Saley stated there are 22 drivers, however, there is one position being eliminated.

Ald. Fortunati asked when the textile recycling program would begin.

Director Saley stated in the next few weeks, with notification going out to the homeowner.

Ald. Veccharelli asked about line item 4790 9950 City Waste Removal Costs.

Director Saley stated it is the cost of pick up, cost of tipping fee, along with the two bulk pickups.

Ald. Veccharelli asked if the stickers given out by the tax office and pd are required to enter the transfer station.

Director Saley explained they typically ask for a driver's license.

Ald. Grant asked about single-stream recycling and having businesses be a part of it.

Director Saley replied yes, however, it is challenging due to the commodity market. It has not been actively looked at, but it is something that can be brought to the Public Works Committee.

Ald. Giannattasio asked if the cost of the single-stream recycling could possibly go up.

Director Saley stated he was cautiously optimistic but that they would have a good opportunity when the city goes out to bid.

4426 Wastewater - Chris Saley, Public Works Director and Steve Johnson, Interim Assistant Public Works Director were present for questions/comments.

Ald. Anderson asked about septic system inspections and level of interface with the public works office.

Director Saley stated if it is connected to the city septic or there has been a failure. Work well with health department and engineering in a seamless fashion.

Ald. German asked about line item 4218 9916 Dental: Grant Premium.

Mr. Erodici explained the line item is the contribution portions the Wastewater employees to pay in for the cost of dental insurance. It is charged to this department because the sewer user fee which is separate from city costs.

Ald. Giannattasio asked about 4741 0001 Nitrogen Credits.

Mayor Blake explained the account is kept open in the event of expenditures. Goes into the sewer fund where the pay office the clean water loans.

Ald. Giannattasio asked the number of open positions.

Director Saley stated there are 8 positions and they are working with human resources to fill those positions.

Ald. Vitali asked why there are no step adjustments in Wastewater.

Mr. Erodici stated in many instances there are internal transfers from within the department.

Director Saley stated these are high technical positions that they are attempting to fill and the wages are just not competitive.

Ald. Veccharelli asked about line item 4442 0000 Electricity - \$20,000 reduction

Director Saley stated the number was brought down to the historical amount.

Ald. Veccharelli asked about the new fuel cell and if it would be natural gas.

Director Saley replied yes.

Ald. Veccharelli spoke of the bi-products of the digesters and creating fuels sources.

Director Saley spoke of the challenging technology with the methane. He stated there has been some rethinking of the use of the methane.

Ald. Veccharelli - asked about line item 4977 0190 Computer

Director Saley explained it is not a simple computer, technical to the department

4154 Sewer Commission – Chris Saley, Public Works Director and Steve Johnson, Interim Assistant Public Works Director were present for questions/comments.

Ald. Anderson asked about septic system inspections and level of interface with the public works office.

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4141 Board of Finance – No questions.

4121 Mayor's Office

Mayor Blake stated it is a relatively flat budget.

Ald. Veccharelli asked the comparison the salary of the mayor of Milford, compared to other municipalities.

Mayor Blake stated he did not have that before him, but it is the satisfaction of the residents that concerns him more.

4122 General Expenses

No questions.

4111 Board of Aldermen

Ald. Grant commented for the record serving as an alderman is a volunteer position, although there is a budget line.

Ald. Veccharelli echoed Ald. Grant's comments. He also complimented the good people in government, especially the mayor's position and thanked the mayor for his leadership.

Mayor Blake expressed his appreciation of all the hard work of each of the aldermen and the volunteers of the many boards and commissions.

Ald. Vitali thanked the Mayor for the allocation to Milford Prevention Council contained in the general expense account. He also announced Drug Take Back Day would be held April 28, 2018.

Ald. Anderson and Ald. Veccharelli made and seconded a motion to recess. Motion carried unanimously. The Board recessed at 9:42 p.m.

Chairman Vetro announced the Board would stand in recess until Monday, May 15, 2017.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen A. Kennedy
Recording Secretary