

**BOARD OF ALDERMEN
SPECIAL MEETING
APRIL 30, 2013**

The members of the Board of Aldermen attended the Board of Education's Committee of the Whole meeting, which took place on Tuesday, April 30, 2013 in the aldermanic chambers of City Hall. The meeting was called to order at 6:44 p.m., followed by the reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

1. Roll Call

Board Members Present

B. Anderson
A. Giannattasio
J. Golden
R. Nunno
S. Shaw
P. Smith
G. Stanford
N. Veccharelli
P. Vetro
R. Vitali

Also Present

Mayor Benjamin G. Blake
City Attorney, J. Berchem

Excused

B. Bier
R. Dickman
G. Gasper
D. German
F. Smith

Board of Education Chairwoman, Tracy Casey thanked the aldermen for attending. She also recognized Mayor Blake and thanked him for attending the meeting as well. She stated the focus of tonight's meeting concerned the potential School Resource Officers (SRO's) in the schools. She stated Dr. Feser along with Police Chief Mello proceeded with a presentation regarding SRO's.

Chief Mello thanked the Board of Education members and Board of Aldermen members for the opportunity to speak. He went on to explain the difference between police officers and SRO officers. He also commented he has tried to get SRO's for six of the eight years he has been the Chief of Police. He also pointed out there are various models out there concerning the SRO program.

The meeting continued with presentations from Dr. S. David Bernstein, president of Forensic Consultants, LLC. He is also a Clinical Forensic Psychologist and internationally recognized expert on School Threat Assessments and School Safety. Dr. Bernstein stressed that SRO's are not security guards, stating they bridge the gap between police officers and kids. He also stated a presence is needed in the middle school.

A presentation followed by Lt. Salvatore Nesci, Meriden Police Department, along with Officers Testa and Vaccola, SRO's from the Stratford Police Department and Officer M. DeVito from the Milford Police Department. Fran Thompson, Principal, Jonathan Law High School also asked the Boards for support of the SRO's and explained how they would impact everyday life at Jonathan Law High School. Comments were also heard from Wendy Gibbons, Program Director, Milford Prevention Council.

Chief Mello continued with an overview of the SRO program and training.

The Board recessed at 9:20 p.m.

The Board reconvened at 9:30 p.m. with a brief statement from Bill Richards, Chairman of the Milford Schools Safety and Security Committee. He explained how the Committee formed and their work which included review of the crisis manual. He stated the Committee was in support of SRO's in the schools.

Public Comment:

C. Limone – 90 Brooklawn Drive – stated she is a licensed clinical social worker and member of the National Association of Social Workers. She stated SRO something needed in Milford and that the overarching goal is safe schools, but that there is always more than one pathway to that solution. She spoke of the need for social workers in the schools, pointing there is only 1.5 social workers at Jonathan Law High School. She stated the social workers would tandem with SRO's. Ms. Limone continued speaking about the values of school social workers. She also stated as a taxpayer she would ask the Board consider funding additional resources for school social workers.

D. Rodriguez – 45 Eighth Street – Derby, stated she is employed by Milford Public Schools as a security officer at Foran High School. She stated she is in support of SRO's in the schools and that the security officers would be happy to have them assist them in their jobs.

C. Berni – 96 Centennial Drive – stated she is in support of the SRO program, but questioned where the money would come from. She also questioned the placement of SRO's, given there are 3 middle schools and 8 elementary schools. She also asked if these are new positions being created. Ms. Berni also stated these officers need to be knowledgeable in technology. She reiterated she was in support but did not want to see current programs impacted.

P. Staneski – 35 Point Lookout – commented this was a subject that came before the Board of Education when she sat in that seat almost 11 years ago. She stated there was a need 11 years ago and there still is. She pointed to the comments of Wendy Gibbons from Milford Prevention Council. She also spoke of the Drug Free Community Grant that they worked on with the police department. Ms. Staneski stated they are willing to write a plan to help with the financial support of the SRO's. She reiterated she understands the benefits of SROs' in the schools.

T. Beirne – 55 Bayshore Drive – stated he has been waiting all night to see who will pay the tab. He stated he feels the Board of Education should be billed for each officer.

D. Rubenstein- 38 Bayshore Drive – stated he is in support of the idea of SRO's and stated he hoped they would be approved.

Public comment ended at 9:55 p.m.

Being no further business to discuss, the Board of Aldermen adjourned at 10:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Kathleen K. Huber
Recording Secretary