

**BOARD OF ALDERMEN
BUDGET DELIBERATIONS SESSION
MAY 1, 2019**

The Board of Aldermen resumed their budget deliberation session on Wednesday, May 1, 2019 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
K. Fortunati
C. Gaynor
D. German (7:05)
A. Giannattasio (7:10)
J. Golden
F. Smith (7:10)
J. Tranquilli
N. Veccharelli
P. Vetro
R. Vitali

Also Present

Mayor Benjamin G. Blake
P. Erodici, Finance Director
J. Rohrig, City Clerk
J. Rosen, Chief of Staff

Excused

B. Anderson
J. Grant

Chairman Vetro reconvened the budget proceedings in public session at 7:00 p.m.

Human Resources (p. 41)

Tania Barnes, Human Resources Director, provided a brief overview of the department's accomplishments during the current fiscal year such as recruiting, health and wellness and collective bargaining. She discussed the department's responsibility for the second phase of MUNIS which includes payroll and human resources. Ms. Barnes stated that all collective bargaining agreements have been finalized. She stated the department is also responsible for and attended many grievances, MPP's, unemployment and CHRO hearings. Ms. Barnes stated that the department received the platinum award for health and wellness. She stated this is the 5th year for the annual health and wellness fair and that the fitness center is now open at Parsons for all employees to use at no charge. Ms. Barnes stated that her budget is neutral. She explained there is an increase under medical & dental due to the cost of independent medical exam for service connected disabilities. She stated that the exams cost between \$1,000 and \$1,500 and that there were 4 exams this year. Ms. Barnes also stated there is an increase under miscellaneous professional fees and services. She

stated that the State arbitration fee increased from \$25 to \$200. Ms. Barnes passed out and discussed an organization chart for the department. She stated that she is requesting the addition of an entry level human resources assistant that will provide clerical support to the director, HR generalist and benefits specialist. Ald. Beatty asked if the addition of the human resources assistant would help with the backlog in hiring. Ms. Barnes stated it would be a great addition that would support the entire department. Ald. Vitali asked what the minimum salary was for the human resources assistant position. Ms. Barnes stated it would be \$39,227. Ald. Vitali asked if there was an existing scope of work or job description available. Ms. Barnes stated it was in draft form but she would be happy to provide. Ald. Vitali asked if work could be shared amongst the staff. Ms. Barnes explained that work that was in other departments has now moved to human resources increasing the workload. Ald. Vitali asked the purpose of account 534712, training. Ms. Barnes stated that was for continuing education for staff, including certifications. Ald. German asked with MUNIS providing efficiencies would it be possible to reduce staff. Ms. Barnes discussed staff reductions in MIS and Finance. She also stated the staff is still necessary to manage the data. Peter Erodici, Finance Director clarified that there is not a reduction in work, which has been disjointed for several years and is now being reallocated. He stated the work has evolved over the years and has become more complex. Ald. Vitali asked if the Human Resources Assistant will be a supervisory position. Ms. Barnes stated it is a clerical position.

Pension & Retirement Board (p. 30)

Ald. German asked for a status on interviewing for an investment advisor. Mayor Blake stated the RFQ was posted and the Board is currently in the interview phase. Ms. Barnes stated the first round of interviews have been completed and the Board now has the opportunity to present additional questions in writing. She also stated the Board may decide to invite 2 finalists to return for additional interviews.

Civil Service (p. 31)

None.

Bridges Community Healthcare, Inc. (p. 89)

John Dixon, CEO, thanked the Board for their support. He stated that Bridges has been an active member of the community for 62 years and has touched the lives of over 9,000 through prevention and treatment. Mr. Dixon provided a brief history of the services provided by Bridges. He discussed the new mobile treatment van and that it is bringing services to the people. Mr. Dixon stated that next year could be challenging not knowing what to expect with the State budget. He stated they are looking at care services and how to do better and be better partners with other City agencies. Ald. Vitali asked about regionalization. Mr. Dixon stated Bridges provides mental health for Milford, Orange and West Haven. Ald. Vitali asked how the legalization of marijuana would affect services. Mr. Dixon stated that Bridges partners with Milford Public Schools and Milford Prevention Council. He stated they have seen a rise of products in schools with kids becoming addicted at an early age. Mr. Dixon discussed how Bridges would work with other agencies in an attempt to offset addiction. Ald. Fortunati asked when the mobile van is parked. Mr. Dixon stated it is in Milford one day a week at the Beth El Shelter. Ald. Gaynor asked for an update on the Room 4 program. Mr. Dixon stated it

continued to function and provide statistics. He stated if provided programming and life skill focused on kids.

Regional Mental Healthcare, Inc. (p. 88)

None.

Fire Department (p. 51)

Doug Edo, Fire Chief stated the overall budget is flat. He reviewed increase and decreased within the capital outlay and operational budget. Chief Edo stated that he requested additional funds in education stipends due to contractual obligations. He stated that 95% of the fire department budget is contractual. Chief Edo reviewed how the wages have change over the past several years and how each year was budgeted. He stated that although these expenses are contractual they are not being added to the budget. Chief Edo stated the increase has been an average of 2.5% each year. He discussed how other wage accounts are impacted when firefighters are out of work. Chief Edo stated the contractual wage accounts need to be increased. Mayor Blake discussed a recent agreement that will impact staffing and that an updated budget page will be provided prior to voting. Chief Edo stated the repair shop recently closed through negotiation. He discussed how manpower was reduced and redistributed. Ald. Beatty asked if the EMS Equipment account was sufficient to cover expenses as it was cut \$20,000. Dan Wassmer, Battalion Chief, stated that a percentage of the EMS revenue is used to cover some expenses allowing for the line item to be reduced. Ald. German asked the number currently out on sick or injury leave. Chief Edo stated currently 7 members are out of work. Ald. German asked why workers compensation was not part of the budget. Chief Edo stated the fire department budget is not responsible for workers compensation. Mr. Erodici provided an explanation of how workers compensation is charged. Ald. Veccharelli reviewed the various decrease and increases and impact to budget. He noted that the contractual wages do not correlate to other wage accounts, have remained the same for several years and wonder why this has not been addressed by the Mayor and Board of Finance. Ald. Veccharelli further stated that revenue from EMS billing was to be put into the department to purchase necessary equipment and supplies and that it should not be earmarked for wages. Chief Edo stated that a portion of the billing revenue is returned to the department and it has been used for equipment and supplies. Ald. Veccharelli stated that he did not feel wages should come from Fund 76. Gary Baker, Assistant Chief, stated that the stipends were negotiated and the line item is short for what must be paid out. Ald. Tranquilli asked if there is contractual manning per shift. Chief Edo said it is required. Ald. Tranquilli asking if the department will be hiring for unfilled positions. Chief Edo currently there are 4 positions, 2 open and 2 individuals in recruit school. He also commented that there are upcoming retirements creating additional openings. Chief Edo stated the next hire will be in August when the State again runs the academy. Ald. German asked if the numbers would increase due to contractual requirements. Mayor Blake stated should be a slight reduction due to adjustments made within the department. Ald. Vitali asked if outsourcing truck repair was cost effective. Chief Edo stated they have been doing so anyways and it is cost effective in the long run. He also stated that the truck have become advanced and require specialized service that staff is not qualified to provide. Ald. Giannattasio asked what percentage of EMS billing goes back to the department. Chief Edo stated the City gets most of the revenue with 25% capped at \$500,000 going back to the department.

Light, Hydrants, Water (p. 62)

Ald. Vitali asked how many hydrants and lights are in the City. Chief Edo stated there are 1,750 hydrants. He also stated the public works should have the figure for lightings. Ald. Tranquilli stated that lighting was cut by \$100,000 last year and that with LED's the City should have realized a savings. He asked why an increase in this budget. Mayor Blake stated that last year's amount was an estimate not based on a fully year. He stated that although there was a savings funds had to be transferred to cover expenses. Ald. Tranquilli asked if the City owns or rents the lights. Mayor Blake stated they are rented with the exception of the decorative light pole such as those on Broad Street. Ald. Tranquilli asked how much has been spent to date. Mr. Erodici stated fiscal year to date \$477,760.

Emergency Management (p. 58)

None.

C-Med (p. 88)

None.

Historic District Commission (p. 92)

None.

Historic District II (p. 91)

None.

Milford Progress, Inc. (p. 91)

Ald. German asked who maintains the new planters downtown. Mayor Blake stated it is a combined effort between Milford Progress and public works. Ald. Vitali stated he is disappointed in the planters. He also asked if the planters in front of Founder's Walk could be moved closer to the curb cut so people do not attempt to turn. Mayor Blake stated he would advise Milford Progress but there could be issues with sight line and ADA.

Public Debt (p. 78)

None.

Employee Benefits (p. 84)

None.

Insurance and Bonds (p. 85)

None.

Claims and Refunds (p. 85)

None.

Benefit and Salary Reserve (p. 106)

None.

Private School Textbook (p. 93)

Ald. Veccharelli asked if there has been a savings with some private schools closing. Mayor Blake stated it has not increased even with inflation. He also stated that while schools may have closed students transferred to other private schools.

Unallocated Contingency (p. 86)

None

Education Audit Fees (p. 93)

Ald. Smith asked why this is not part of the education budget. Mr. Erodici explained that the City auditors also provide services for the Board of Education and that he needs to allocate a portion of the expense to the Board of Education.

School Debt (p. 93)

None.

Employee Benefits – Non-Teaching (p. 93)

Mayor Blake stated that due to the uncertainty of the State budget and how it will impact municipalities concerning teacher pensions a placeholder was included in the budget. Ald. Veccharelli asked if that could be 1.5 million. Mayor Blake stated it could possibly approach that amount with the lost ECS funding and contribution by the City it could approach \$700,000. Ald. Vitali stated it is base don't he salaries within the municipality. Mayor Blake stated that under the Governor's budget municipalities are all paying different amounts and will not know the actual impact until adopted in Hartford.


Education – Health Insurance Contributions (p. 94)

Ald. Vitali commented on all education costs on the city side and the cost per student when added to the education budget.

Ald. Giannattasio Ald. Gaynor made and seconded a motion to recess. Motion carried unanimously.
The Board recessed at 9:00 p.m.

Chairman Vetro announced the Board would stand in recess until Wednesday, May 8, 2019.

Respectfully submitted,


Toni Jo Weeks
Recording Secretary