

**BOARD OF ALDERMEN  
BUDGET DELIBERATIONS SESSION  
APRIL 19, 2020**

The Board of Aldermen resumed virtual budget deliberation session regarding the Board of Finance's recommended budget for fiscal year 2021-2022, on Thursday, April 19, 2020 via ZOOM. Chairman Vetro called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. asking those present to join in saluting our flag and reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

1. Roll Call

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Board Members Present

E. Beatty  
C. Gaynor  
A. Giannattasio  
M. Hardiman  
G. Harla  
S. Marlow  
M. Parente  
F. Smith  
W. Smith  
A. Sutton  
J. Tranquilli  
P. Vetro  
R. Vitali  
W. Willis

Also Present

Mayor Benjamin G. Blake  
P. Erodicti, Finance Director  
K. Fortunati, City Clerk  
J. Rosen, Chief of Staff

Excused

J. Golden

Chairman Vetro welcomed everyone to the 2021-2022 budget deliberations. He stated tonight's meeting was the departmental portion of the budget process. Chairman Vetro reviewed the virtual meeting format.

Ald. Sutton and Ald. Giannattasio made and seconded a motion to come out of recess. Motion carried unanimously.

Recreation Department (p. 82)

Bill Garfield, Director, stated the department has done well with the pandemic and is looking forward to the summer season and activities again. He stated the budget remains status quo and the department will work to provide the best service possible.

Mayor Blake complimented Mr. Garfield on his work in his position as director. He stated programming was maintained in a difficult environment. Mayor Blake discussed enhancements that have taken place under the Recreation Department.

### **Golf Course (p. 112)**

Dan Worroll stated the golf course is up and running with a good amount of activity. He discussed new online payment and average rounds per day. He stated the budget remains the same as last year.

### **Community Development (p. 20)**

Julie Nash, Director, stated the budget is status quo. She stated has been a challenging year and the department has been keeping up with new information as it become available. Ms. Nash stated 20 new business have come to Milford. She discussed the hardship of businesses during the pandemic. Ald. Harla thank Julie Nash and the commission for the hard work this past year. He stated it was challenging and the rose to the occasion. Ald. Gaynor asked if the 20 new business was a net. Julie stated provided statistics for new business starts.

### **Fire Department (p. 51)**

Chief Doug Edo stated he worked hard with the Mayor and maintained a flat budget. He stated it is tough where it is contractual. Chief Edo stated \$11 million of the \$12 million budget comes from wages. He stated each year he is a little short and will go to Finance with transfer requests. Chief Edo discussed wage line item and ongoing negotiations. Ald. Beatty stated she is looking at the minutes from two years ago and the same discussion was the shortfall that occurs. She asked why it's not in the budget so people can actually see the needs. Chief Edo stated it is a need and discussed how in the past wages were not shown while in negotiation. Mayor Blake stated there have been several meetings about how to manage the overtime budget for the Fire Department. He stated he and the Chief will continue to fine tune hopefully eliminating the need for an end of year transfer. Ald. Vitali stated if the regular wages will be adjusted why recommendation from Mayor and Board of Finance to cut. Mayor Blake stated all departments are vigorously advocating for more and its his job to reign that in. He stated additional wage adjustments will be included in this budget. They are in the back under a separate account until the agreement is reached with the bargaining unit. Ald. Vitali asked if regular wages is what is needed to sustain the current wage amount and why would it be cut back. Mayor Blake stated the exact number is forwarded to the Board. He stated no adjustments are made to that line item. He stated there will be retirees with new employees hired at different rates Mayor Blake stated the amount that is uncertain is under other wage accounts that account for overtime. Mayor Blake stated there was a minor adjustment because there had been a request for an additional position for an IT person. Ald. Parente asked if there were any additional line items where there was a difference of opinion within the budget. Chief Edo stated there are no other accounts. Ald. Beatty asked if Chief Edo had capability to attend virtually and if not, why not. Chief Edo stated the computers will all replaced but they do not have microphones or cameras. Ald. Giannattasio asked if personal services account request increase is to make up for shortfall when wages increase, and staffing needs requires hiring. Chief Edo stated this account covers the bulk of hiring back when retirements and other vacancies occur. He stated the increase in the wage rate

does impact the account. Ald. Giannattasio if this is the first year an increase was requested. Chief Edo stated he has requested increases in the past. Ald. Giannattasio stated the wages is the biggest discrepancy and he is trying to understand why only ¾ of the request is being recommended. Chief Edo stated transfers are made within the accounts before he goes to the Finance Board. Ald. Giannattasio asked if the increase was requested due to anticipated wage increases. Chief Edo stated it does have an impact. Ald. Marlow asked if the overtime EMS will be supplemented by a special revenue account and how it is reflected. Mayor Blake stated that with EMS billing some of the monies collected go to the operation of the Fire Department to supplement EMS needs. Ald. Marlow asked if there are any vacancies in the department. Chief Edo stated currently there are 8 vacancies. Chairman Vetro thanked the Fire Department for all the work they have done throughout the Covid pandemic.

### **Lights, Hydrants, Water (p. 62)**

Chief Edo stated this is a place holder for paying the invoices. Ald. Marlow asked how the water charges are estimated. Chief Edo stated there is a formula for determining the charge. Mayor Blake stated it is a complex formula based on linear feet of fire service lines going to the hydrants. He stated the City has been advocating for the way the Regional Water Authority charges for fire hydrant service. Ald. Tranquilli asked if there are savings and if hydrant charges have increased in the past years and what was the total cost last year. Peter Erodici, Finance Director, stated the hydrant charges go up each year and the savings are in street lighting. He stated the budget was brought down as a result. Mr. Erodici provided a brief history of the account. Ald. Tranquilli asked if any additional lighting has been installed. Mayor Blake stated he believes that is the Light the Night program and they are taken as they come up. He discussed areas that were completed over the past year.

### **Emergency Management (p. 58)**

Chief Edo stated the budget is flat.

### **C-Med (p. 88)**

None

### **Milford Government Access Television (p. 16)**

Kara Flannery, Chairman, stated the pandemic the operations have focused on taking the virtual meetings and placing on the channel. She stated some meeting do stream live. Ms. Flannery stated services are being offered to community to have events where they cannot have in person. She stated budget is flat and hopes to be in person next year.

### **Open Space (p. 34)**

Jeremy Grant, Open Space Manager, stated this year has been tremendous for open space and people are taking advantage of the spaces. He stated the budget line is only one item. Mayor Blake stated that an event Jeremy is hosting is a tree give away at Eisenhower park. Ald. Marlow asked if new open space areas are being identified. Mr. Grant stated that new areas are always being sought and when they become available and trying to find ways to preserve natural environments.

### **Harbor Management (p. 110)**

Jim Donegan, Operations Director, stated last season ended strong. He stated looking forward to this season and focused on marketing and increasing revenue accounts. Mr. Donegan discussed online booking and interest in marina. He discussed enhancements being made to the marina and boat ramp. Mr. Donegan stated the budget remains the same. Ald. Harla thanked Mr. Donegan for the tremendous job and for making a great asset even better.

### **Boys and Girls Club (p. 92)**

Megan Altomare, Director, stated the City has been tremendous over the past year. She discussed efforts that were made for the clients over the past year during the pandemic. Ms. Altomare discussed reopening the club. She also discussed summer camp and working with the public schools. Ms. Altomare stated serving more children then ever before and provided a summary of expanded services. Chairman Vetro asked if there was an update on St. Gabriels school facility. Ms. Altomare stated not yet as the City is still working on the purchase.

### **Law Department (p. 24)**

Jonathan Berchem, City Attorney, stated the budget is status quo. He stated the town hall union contract is open similar to other union groups. Ald. Parente asked for range of salaries for City Attorneys and Assistant City Attorneys throughout the region. Mayor Blake stated the City Attorney is parttime and his position appears to be less.

### **Department of Permitting and Land Use (p. 27)**

Joseph Griffith, Director, stated adjustments were made in response to the pandemic without compromising service to the public. He stated technology has made interactions better. Mr. Griffith stated the permitting software changeover has been completed. He stated all permits are now being issued online. Mr. Griffith provided a brief summary of function of the department. He stated the budget is a \$9,000 increase and all operational expense are consolidated under DPLU. Chairman Vetro thanked DPLU for their hard work and the improvements over the years. Ald. Tranquilli asked if they department is able to keep up with inspections since there is one vacancy. Mr. Griffith stated they are posting for a fourth inspector. Ald. Gaynor asked how much was collected in permitting fees this year. Mr. Griffith stated as of the first three quarter fees collected are beyond \$1 million ahead of prior years. Ald. Gaynor asked about a state regulated plan of conservation and development consultant and if that is provided for in the budget. Mr. Griffith stated it is plus other accounts that will allow for the hiring of a consultant. He stated they are currently working beginning the search for a consultant. Mayor Blake stated that 10 years ago a portion of the consultant fees were provided by a

grant and a portion from the Chamber of Commerce. Ald. W. Smith stated permit fees were increased a few years ago. He asked if there were complaints or work not done because of the fee increase. Mr. Griffith stated he is not aware of any complaints and is unable to say whether someone chose not to complete work. He stated he believes our fee schedules are reasonable. Mayor Blake stated last fee adjustment some went up while others went down. He stated Milford's fees are still lower than surrounding towns. Ald. W. Smith asked if the new fees were helpful to the department to have the fees increased. Mr. Griffith stated the department budget is independent of the fees.

#### **Mayor's Office (p. 17)**

Mayor Blake stated his budget is status quo.

#### **General Expenses (p. 19)**

Mayor Blake stated the only new item is Food to Kids. He stated it is a relatively small contribution the City will be making. He provided a brief summary of how Food to Kids operated during the pandemic. He stated by having a relationship with the City it allows them to apply for grants. Ald. Vitali stated Food for Kids does a tremendous job and that he would like to see Milford Prevention amount increased. He asked if duplicating costs are for all City departments. Mayor Blake stated that copy machines were centralized for cost savings and the account also pays for printing of budget books, and tax bills. Ald. Vitali asked if it is inclusive of rentals and paper. Mayor Blake stated it does not include copy paper. He stated the number of budget books are being reduced each year. Ald. Vitali asked if it is necessary to print the books at each stage. Mayor Blake stated by Charter each must be printed. Peter Erodici stated the duplicating account provides for the large City copiers. He stated the lease agreements are part of the line item. He stated copy paper is spread out through the departments.

#### **Public Debt Service (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)**

None

**Education Audit Fees (p. 93)**

Ald. Beatty asked if evaluation of new programs come under this line item. Mayor Blake stated this is for a fiscal audit that is required.

**School Debt (p. 93)**

Ald. Parente asked if money that will be received through federal grants can be used to pay down debt. Mayor Blake stated some money may be used for new capital projects. He stated some improvement would be ventilation systems. Mayor Blake stated the guidelines are still be constructed. He stated he does not believe it can be used to pay down debt but could possibly be used for future projects.

**Employee Benefits – Non-Teaching (p. 93)**

None

**Education – Health Insurance Contribution (p. 94)**

None

Ald. Sutton and Ald. Beatty made and seconded a motion to recess. Motion carried unanimously. The Board recessed at 8:39 p.m.

Chairman Vetro announced the Board would stand in recess until Wednesday, April 21, 2021.

Respectfully submitted,



Toni Jo Weeks  
Recording Secretary