

**BOARD OF ALDERMEN
MEETING
DECEMBER 7, 2020**

The Board of Aldermen of the City of Milford held a meeting on Monday, December 7, 2020 via video / teleconference Zoom meeting. Chairman Vetro called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. Chairman Vetro asked those present to join in saluting our flag and reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

1. Roll Call

Board Members Present

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

Also Present

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

Excused

M. Hardiman

Chairman Vetro welcomed everyone to the Board of Aldermen regular meeting. He reviewed how the meeting will be conducted via Zoom and guidelines to be followed. He further stated a recording of the meeting will be available on the City's website.

2. Public Statements

Public statements are limited to the legislative function of the Board of Aldermen. He stated only residents; taxpayers or electors may address the Board. The time limit granted to each speaker shall be three (3) minutes. He asked each speaker to adhere to the three-minute limit.

None

3. Consideration of the Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Board of Aldermen held on November 9, 2020.

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Milford City Clerk

Ald. Sutton and Ald. Golden made and seconded a motion to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting held on November 9, 2020. Motion carried unanimously.

4. Consideration of the Minutes of the Special Meeting.

None.

5. Chairman's Report and Communications.

Wished everyone a happy holiday and stated his hope for a better and healthier new year.

6. Mayor's Report and Recommendations:

Mayor Blake asked the Board for their consideration and action on items 8a through 8g. He stated his hope for everyone to enjoy the spirit of the season and being creative to find new ways to celebrate. Mayor Blake stated he was happy to announce another refunding resulting in another \$1.4 million savings for the city.

7. Unfinished Business

None.

8. New Business (from Mayor's Report Items 8a-8g)

(8a) Ald. Sutton and Ald. Golden made and seconded a motion to approve the appointment of (R) Steven DuBrow, 15 Rose Street, as a member of the Pension and Retirement, to fill the present vacancy (term expiring 12/31/20). Motion carried unanimously.

(8b) Ald. Sutton and Ald. Golden made and seconded a motion to approve the City to accept the 2020 Small Town Economic Assistance Program (STEAP) award in the amount of \$128,205.00 from the State of Connecticut for enhancements to the Veterans Memorial Auditorium and to authorize the Mayor, Public Works Director and Finance Director to take all steps necessary, including signing all documents to effectuate said grant.

Ald. Marlow stated he read about and understands the STEAP grant but asked for clarification on the City's match of \$125,000. Mayor Blake explained how the City qualifies for the STEAP grant. He stated the City is receive the most that will be awarded to municipalities in 2020. Mayor Blake stated it is estimated the project will be a little over \$200,000 and the City will use the STEAP grant together with previously bonded money for the project. Ald. Marlow stated he feels this is a great project and the update is long overdue. Ald. Giannattasio stated that based on scope of work he feels the cost will be over \$200,000 especially if there are abatement issues. He asked for an explanation of the where the City funds are coming from and if there is a cap on the project amount. Mayor Blake stated the estimates received are \$5 to \$7 a square foot although it has not gone out to bid it is expected the total project will come in between \$200,000 and \$300,000.

Motion carried unanimously.

(8c) Ald. Sutton and Ald. Golden made and seconded a motion to approve a Resolution Re: Cash Advance for the State of Connecticut's STEAP award. Motion carried unanimously.

(8d) Ald. Sutton and Ald. Golden made and seconded a motion to approve Memorandum of Agreement for the DPH Public Health Preparedness Program by and between Chesprocott Health District and Milford Health Department 2020-2024 and to authorize the Mayor and Health Director to take all steps necessary to effectuate said agreement.

Ald. Marlow asked if the Health Department was adequately staffed or required adjusting due to the added Covid responsibilities. Deepa Joseph, Health Director, stated this grant has been in place for the past 16 years. She stated there is a change on how the grant is funded. Ms. Joseph explained the State's decision to use a regional health district as a pass through for funding. Ald. Giannattasio asked how the City benefits from the program. Ms. Joseph explained the funds are used to plan and prepare for public emergencies. Ald. Giannattasio asked if the funding had been consistent through the years. Ms. Joseph stated it had been twice as much when the City first began to receive the grant but because the planning has been done the amount has decreased. Ald. F. Smith asked if the grant is used solely for preparing and planning and not activation. Ms. Joseph stated this year the program may be used for planning, preparing and activation.

Motion carried unanimously.

(8e) Ald. Sutton and Ald. Golden made and seconded a motion to approve an Affiliation Agreement between Milford Health Department and Fairfield University for Clinical Practicum and to authorize the Mayor and Health Director to take all steps necessary to effectuate said agreement.

Ald. Giannattasio asked how many students participate at one time. Ms. Joseph stated this is a new program with Fairfield University. She further stated that only 1 student will participate in the Spring due to Covid and space concerns. Ald. Giannattasio asked what the student's responsibilities will be. Ms. Joseph stated the student will be working remotely and onsite and will be utilized to assist with clerical and administrative duties in regard to mass vaccination and contact tracing. Ald. Marlow asked if this program will continue year to year. Ms. Joseph stated in the past there have been programs with Southern and Yale and the department sees the value in participating in such programs and will continue to participate in the future. Mayor Blake similar programs have been in place with Human Services Department, Fairfield University and Sacred Heart. Ald. Vitali asked who is responsible for supervision. Ms. Joseph stated the students are supervised through the Health Department and academic advisor. She further stated the Community Health Coordinator is responsible for oversight and to ensure tasks are being completed correctly.

Motion carried unanimously.

(8f) Ald. Sutton and Ald. Golden made and seconded a motion to approve Allocation Transfer No. 3 (Revaluation Expenses).

Ald. Giannattasio noted that the Assessor position has not yet been filled and asked if the City is paying more for the reevaluation due to the vacancy. Mayor Blake stated the position has been posted and it is difficult finding an individual with the appropriate expertise. He stated that we were fortunate that the former Assessor

had commercial experience and that the majority of municipalities hire outside consultants. Mayor Blake stated the funding will be coming from the project account and not the fund balance. Ald. Giannattasio asked how much extra it is costing the City without the Assessor having commercial experience. Mayor Blake stated it is not necessarily costing more as the position is vacant. He stated is more of a reallocation of resources. Mayor Blake stated once the project is closed out an evaluation can be done but he believe it will be similar in cost.

Motion carried unanimously.

(8g) Ald. Sutton and Ald. Golden made and seconded a motion to approve, per the recommendation of the Planning & Zoning Board dated November 17, 2020, the Capital Improvement Plan for the years 2020-2025.

Ald. Giannattasio stated a lot had been spent on curbs and sidewalks in the past and was inquiring why it still appears in the Capital Improvement Plan. He stated he understands sidewalks make the City more walkable and safer, but it has come to his attention that property owners are being notified they are responsible to maintain the sidewalk where it is deemed to be unsafe. He asked why property owners are being notified when funds are being allocated. Mayor Blake stated there is a long-standing ordinance that makes property owners responsible for maintaining sidewalks, curbs and gutters. He stated that when the City receives a complaint about a sidewalk they inspect and send a notice to the property owner to correct. Mayor Blake stated that if the defect is caused by the City, such as a City tree, the City will address and replace the sidewalk but once installed the property owner is responsible. Ald. Giannattasio asked if the property owner does not repair the sidewalk does the City do so and then lien the property. Mayor Blake stated that is correct. Ald. Giannattasio asked who determines if a sidewalk is unsafe. Mayor Blake stated the Engineering Department conducts inspections and make the determination.

Ald. Vitali stated he will be abstaining from voting on the Capital Improvement Plan as his agenda did not arrive on time and he did not have an opportunity to review.

Ald. W. Smith stated he previously discussed the new police station and his belief that it was underpriced in the Capital Improvement Plan. He stated he cannot support the Plan without a realistic dollar amount. Ald. W. Smith stated his belief that the \$10 million allocated for a recreation center should be allocated to the police department. He further stated that last year a long-range plan for education had been discussed and there is no commitment for such a plan. Ald. W. Smith stated that because these items have not been addressed, he cannot support the Plan. Mayor Blake stated the Capital Improvement Plan is merely a planning tool and the vast majority in the Plan will not happen. He stated that many of the items are included in the event a grant become available requiring such item be part of a Capital Improvement Plan. Mayor Blake stated the Plan is very conservative. Mayor Blake stated \$30 million is listed for the police station but whether the current station is enhanced or a new station is constructed it will be revisited by the Board. He stated noting is being funded and the Plan is just a planning tool that ma make the City eligible for a grant.

Ald. Marlow asked what schools have had the security upgrades completed. Mayor Blake stated it is a multi-year roll out and he will get the exact numbers. Ald. Marlow asked if there will be additional abatement projects at the schools. Mayor Blake stated the majority of schools were constructed 50-60 years ago and as hazardous materials are found they continue to be abated.

Ald. Tranquilli stated he is concerned that if someone slips and falls on a residential sidewalk that the City goes after the property owner for reimbursement. Jonathan Berchem, City Attorney, stated municipalities are permitted to shift the burden for maintenance and liability for snow and ice to the adjacent property owner. Attorney Berchem explained that statutes and the City's responsibilities.

Ald. Giannattasio stated the City purchased the property for a new police station and spent money on a design. He further stated that Ald. W. Smith raises a good point and asked at what time the dollar amount will be revisited and amended to reflect current costs. Mayor Blake stated the amount is a placeholder for what the City can afford. He further stated his opinion that the City cannot afford the new station at this time and to do so would significantly increase taxes. Ald. Giannattasio stated the amount should be increased by \$5 million and asked if the Board could amend the Capital Improvement Plan. Mayor Blake stated an amendment could be offered.

Ald. Giannattasio and Ald. W. Smith made and seconded a motion to amend the Capital Improvement Plan, Police Headquarter Rebuild by increasing the total dollar amount to \$35 million.

Ald. Giannattasio asked what the impact of raising the Plan by \$5 million. Mayor Blake stated he does believe there would be an impact as the Plan is a planning tool. Ald. Sutton stated his understanding that the City is not bound by the dollar amount in the Plan, that it could be higher or lower. Mayor Blake stated that was correct, and any funding of a project would come to the Board of approval.

Ald. F. Smith asked if this is just a planning tool what is the significance of increased by \$5 million, why not increase to \$50 million. Ald. Giannattasio stated the \$5 million increase is a starting point and that he did not want to be too heavy handed. He stated he would like to see some progress toward a more realistic number.

Ald. Vitali stated he heard both renovations to existing facility and building new. Mayor Blake stated some enhancements have been made and continue to be made to the existing facility. He further stated that any significant improvements or new construction would be addressed by the Building Committee. Ald. Vitali stated if renovations continue new construction would be a moot point.

Motion on the amended carried 10 in favor (Gaynor, Giannattasio, Marlow, Parente, F. Smith, W. Smith, Sutton, Tranquilli, Vitali and Willis) and 4 against (Beatty, Golden, Harla and Vetro).

Ald. Vitali noted that although he abstained from voting on the main motion, he did have an opinion as to the amendment and therefore would vote.

Motion on the main motion, as amended, carried 13 in favor (Beatty, Gaynor, Giannattasio, Golden, Harla, Marlow, Parente, F. Smith, W. Smith, Sutton, Tranquilli, Vetro, and Willis) and 1 abstention (Vitali).

9. New Business not on the Agenda which may be introduced by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of those present and voting.

None.

10. Budget Memo Transfers

None.

11. Refunds

a. Ald. Sutton and Ald. Golden made and seconded a motion to approve Refunds in the amount of \$25,200.04 Motion carried unanimously.

12. Report of Standing Committees:

a. Ordinance Committee –

Ald. F. Smith and Ald. Giannattasio made and seconded a motion to forward to the full Board of Aldermen with a favorable recommendation an Ordinance Amending an Ordinance Establishing Compensation of City Officials and Employees in the Service of the City of Milford (Registrars).

Ald. F. Smith stated the Ordinance Committee met earlier and this ordinance is guided by state statute requiring salary adjustments for elected officials must be approved prior to new term which starts in January for the Registrars. He further stated that the salary adjustment typically follows the percentage increases as provided by collective bargaining agreements.

Motion carried unanimously.

- b. Public Safety and Welfare Committee – no report.
- c. Public Works Committee – no report.
- d. Claims Committee – no report
- e. Rules Committee – no report.
- f. Personnel Committee – no report.

13. Report of Special Committees:

Mr. Giannattasio stated that Ald. Marlow will be serving as liason to Library Board, Inland Wetlands Agency and MGAT replacing former Ald. Jeremy Grant.

- a. Liaison Sub-Committee – Board of Education – no report.
- b. Liaison Sub-Committee – Flood & Erosion Board – no report.
- c. Liaison Sub-Committee – Park, Beach & Recreation Comm. – no report
- d. Liaison Sub-Committee – Planning & Zoning Board – no report.
- e. Liaison Sub-Committee – Sewer Commission – no report.
- f. Liaison Sub-Committee – Harbor Management Commission – no report.
- g. Liaison – Council on Aging – no report.
- h. Liaison Sub-Committee – Library Board – no report.
- i. Liaison Sub-Committee – Veterans Ceremony & Parade Commission – no report
- j. Liaison Sub-Committee – Fine Arts – no report
- k. Liaison Sub-Committee – Milford Redevelopment & Housing Partnership – no report.

- l. Liaison - Golf Course Commission – no report.
- m. Liaison - Inland Wetlands Agency – no report.
- n. Liaison Board of Health – no report.
- o. Liaison – Human Services Commission – no report.
- p. Liaison Sub-Committee - Pension & Retirement Board – no report
- q. Liaison Sub-Committee – Milford Government Access Television (MGAT) – no report.
- r. Liaison – Economic Development Commission – no report.
- s. Liaison Sub-Committee – Milford Arts Council – no report.
- t. Liaison Sub-Committee – Milford Progress, Inc.
- u. Liaison Sub-Committee – Fire Commission
- v. Liaison Sub-Committee – Police Commission
- w. Permanent School Facilities Building Committee

14. Executive Session. A two-thirds (2/3) vote of those present and voting is required for any item to be considered in executive session. A two-thirds (2/3) vote of those present and voting is required to go into executive session.

The Chairman shall announce, in public session, those items to be covered in executive session and call for a vote to enter executive session. If a two-thirds (2/3) vote, to enter executive session, is obtained, the hall shall be cleared and executive session declared.

Chairman Vetro recognized Ald. Grant. Ald. Grant stated this would be his final Board meeting as he has accepted a position with the City as the Open Space & Sustainability Agent. He stated it has been a pleasure serving on the Board of Aldermen and looks forward to continuing to work with them in his new position. Ald. F. Smith congratulated Ald. Grant on his new position. He further stated that Walnut Beach will be holding its annual holiday gala at the end of this year and information may be found on the Walnut Beach website. Ald. Giannattasio congratulated Ald. Grant on his new position and thanked him for his service to the Board of Aldermen.

Being no further business to discuss, Ald. Giannattasio and Ald. Harla made and seconded a motion to adjourn. Motion carried unanimously.

The Board adjourned at 9:29 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Toni Jo Weeks
Recording Secretary