

BOARD OF FINANCE
PUBLIC HEARING MAYOR'S RECOMMENDED BUDGET 2008-2009
FEBRUARY 6, 2008

The Milford Board of Finance held a public hearing on the proposed 2008-2009 Mayor's Recommended Budget on Wednesday, February 6, 2008, in the aldermanic chambers of City Hall. Chairman Skudlarek called the hearing to order at 7:10 p.m.

Roll call was taken.

Board Members Present

S. Skudlarek
J. Agro, Jr.
S. Bergami
J. Fitzpatrick
B. Lema

Also Present

Mayor James L. Richetelli, Jr.

Mr. Bergami read the official notice for the public hearing. Chairman Skudlarek then introduced the Board of Finance members to the audience.

Chairman Skudlarek took the opportunity to review the established ground rules for the hearing noting that each speaker would be given three minutes to comment, and prior to addressing the Board, speakers must provide their names and addresses. He asked that only Milford residents and taxpayers speak. He explained that the Board would first welcome comments on the Mayor's Proposed budget and following that on the education budget. He reminded all speakers that this will not be a question and answer format and hoped all speakers will be given the proper respect and the opportunity to share their comments.

Mayor's Recommended 2008-2009 Budget

Steve Borer – 204 Anderson Avenue – referred to the Borough of Woodmont budget. He said that the budget request is \$190,000 and that the Mayor approved \$180,000. He questioned why the Borough needs all that money and asked how the money in the budget is to be used. He felt there should be more oversight of how the money is spent and added that the money should be better tracked. He said that the public isn't informed about what is funded from that account and that much of the decisions are made in executive session. He pleaded with the Board of Finance to get a better handle on this account.

Joseph J. Prisco – 11 Riverdale Road – said that he's against the Mayor's budget and that there should be no tax increase. He said that people can't afford to live in Milford any longer and that he's worried about the younger people being able to afford living here. He commented that the Board of Finance did nothing last year to hold the line on taxes.

Board of Education Proposed 2008-2009 Budget

Patricia Mulhall – 49 Crescent Drive – asked that the Board of Education budget be funded as presented. She said that there are good reasons behind every line item in the budget. She added that she is a Milford taxpayer, parent and teacher. She said that besides the education expenses in the budget that there are also capital improvements that need to be done; i.e., painting and maintenance in the schools. She asked that the budget be passed as presented.

Chairman Skudlarek then commented that the Board of Finance does not have line item control of the education budget. They approve the budget as a whole.

Catherine Lally – 51 Pelham Street – spoke in support of the budget. She said she's lived in Milford for 40 years. She noted that today's school budget increases are due to salary increases, increases in health benefit costs and utility costs. She also noted that Federal and State funding to the towns have been cut back. She said that we owe it to the youth of Milford to not even eliminate one program and that we need to provide the best quality and competitive education that we can.

Susan Glennon – 99 Carlson Drive – said that the vast majority of the budget increases are fixed costs such as salaries. She said that Milford is short changed in State funding. She noted that the State legislature is moving towards making students take more credits in order to graduate. If passed, there would be more mandates and the funding to support them would be unknown. She said that teachers are doing their jobs but cannot keep up with the demands.

Darcy Ellis – 11 Tyler Road – asked the Board of Finance to look at the budget carefully and to keep in mind that constant mandates are coming along which require additional funding. She said that we must comply with the mandates, yet the State is offering no funds. She said that teachers are working hard even with the large class sizes. She noted that 20 kindergarten students in one class is too large a class. She asked for the Board of Finance to look kindly at the Board of Education budget.

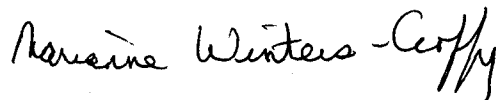
Greta Stanford – 32 Spicebush Lane – said that the current budget increase of 6.39%, proposed by Superintendent of Schools Harvey Polansky, was appalling when she first looked at it. Later she realized that every line item was necessary and urged the Board of Finance to scrutinize every detail of every account. She stated that 87% of the increases are due to contractual and mandated obligations, as well as rising utility costs. She likened the increases to a household where we see our bills increase every year. She said that Milford is now 45th in the State in terms of wealth, whereas they used to be 169. She added that Milford is no longer the blue collar town that it used to be and, due to this, it has lost funding. She said that added staff is needed to meet the career and college placement needs in the high schools. She added there is one counselor for 250 students. She urged the Board of Finance to accept the proposed budget.

Joseph J. Prisco – 11 Riverdale Road – said he has some opposition to the Board of Education budget even though his own children went through the Milford school system years ago, and he now has great grandchildren going into the schools. He said he's lived in Milford since 1954 and has never seen the taxes go down. He said it's time to help the senior citizens. He noted that the recent increase in his veteran's pension is going to pay the tax increases. He asked the Board of Finance to have some accountability of the budget. He said that they did not do their homework last year and that they just passed the budgets.

Thomas Beirne – 55 Bayshore Drive – said that he was speaking more to the people sitting behind him than to the Board of Finance members in front of him. He asked them to get better control of our tax dollars. He noted that every dollar we make until May 12 of each year goes towards paying taxes. He urged the audience to use their e-mails, their phones and their typewrites – he added if anyone even has a typewriter nowadays – to contact their legislators.

Being no other speakers, Mr. Bergami and Mr. Agro made and seconded a motion to adjourn. The Board recessed at 7:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marianne Winters-Croffy". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Marianne Winters-Croffy
Recording Secretary