

**BOARD OF FINANCE
BUDGET HEARINGS - PROPOSED BUDGET FY2016-2017
FEBRUARY 9, 2016**

The Milford Board of Finance held a budget deliberations session on Tuesday, February 9, 2016 in Conference Room B of the Parsons Complex. Chairman Lema announced the Board was out of recess and reconvened the budget deliberations meeting in public session at 6:32 6 p.m. At this point we will go through each of the departments in budget.

Board Members Present

Brian Lema, Chairman
Joseph J. Fitzpatrick, Jr.
Mickel Montano
Joseph Castignoli (6:46 p.m.)
Lauren Secondi

Also Present

Mayor Benjamin G. Blake
Peter Erodici, Finance Director

(4825) Beth El Shelter – Mrs. Toni Dolan, Executive Director, Attorney Max Case and Ed Davies, Chairman of the Board were present to answer questions/comments. Mrs. Dolan stated she wished to express their gratitude to the city for the support and ongoing partnership over the years to serve those in need in Milford. Reading from a prepared statement, Mrs. Dolan spoke of the projected deficit. She stated they continue to respond on a daily basis to those in need involving homelessness. She spoke of the no freeze shelter which requires additional staffing hours, the number of meals they serve during the week and much more. Mrs. Dolan stated their revenue services are diversified. She stated the city's grant represents 11% of their funding. She stated they also rely on local civic organizations, churches and fundraising. Mrs. Dolan stated they are requesting the same level of funding as last year and respectfully requested that the current funding remain the same, stressing that government funding is not assured.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked about no freeze shelter.

Mrs. Dolan explained it is a mandate from the governor's office. She stated the maximum is 12. If they are full, they have to pay to have them transported to an overflow shelter, usually New Haven or Bridgeport.

(4112) Elections – Mrs. Keri Rowland, Mrs. Debra Fellenbaum, Registrars and Joanne Rohrig, City Clerk were present for questions/comment.

City Clerk Rohrig stated costs are up slightly from last year. She also pointed out there is a presidential election this year. She deferred to Keri Rowland and Debra Fellenbaum for their presentation.

Mrs. Rowland stated with the presidential election there is an additional polling place as compared to a municipal election. She explained the programming of the machines to handle reading the ballots. She also spoke regarding Election Day registration which has been as much as 600 people. She stated they have the option of registering on-line which is sent to their computer. Mrs. Rowland

stated during that increased activity they are required to add additional personnel, that being the primary reason why they were asking for more money this year. She also spoke of the individuals that check people in at the polls and noted it is their responsibility to keep the lines moving.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked who makes that ruling.

Mrs. Rowland stated it is not a law or statute, but it is been strongly recommended by the Secretary of State.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked the cost of the additional checkers.

Mrs. Rowland stated a few hundred dollars.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked who does the programming.

Mrs. Fellenbaum explained for coding it is \$3,000, there is also maintenance of the voting machines, which previously was paid for by the state. She added it is all broken down.

Mrs. Rowland added the maintenance of the machine is \$8,000.

Mr. Fitzpatrick referenced previous budgets where the numbers were less.

Mayor Blake stated there were years when transfers had to be done.

Mr. Erodici referred the Board to p. 86 of the budget book. He stated higher numbers are reflective of the transfer that was done.

Mr. Fitzpatrick stated numbers seemed high.

Mrs. Rowland stated each year is different adding there could have been a primary as well, which there is likely to be this year.

Mrs. Rohrig spoke of the people that register to vote on the day of an election.

(4115) Registrar of Voters – Mrs. Keri Rowland and Mrs. Debra Fellenbaum, Deputy Registrar were present for questions/comments.

Mrs. Rowland spoke regarding the seasonal temporary account. She spoke of the recent announcement by the Secretary of State that when someone registers a motor vehicle they would also be registered to vote. She stated this is a proposal by the Secretary of State and went on to explain the process, which impacts the work of their department. She stated her concern is that everything done through another agency requires added processes in their office.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked why the increase in conference fees.

Mrs. Rowland explained the increase is due to mandated classes by the Secretary of State for all registrars. She stated the course is \$200, plus travel.

(4129) City Clerk – Mrs. Joanne Rohrig, City Clerk was present for questions/comment.

Mrs. Rohrig stated their budget is cut and dry, basically the same as last year. She stated concerning indexing and recording (4778 0000), that is what they do all day long. Regarding the COTT System, she stated she asked for \$16,000 and was cut to \$12,050.

Chairman Lema asked about conveyance taxes.

Mayor Blake stated the amount is about the same with the mall and Great River Country Club yielding a good amount.

Mrs. Rohrig stated she asked about a security system (4980 0601) for the fault with the amount requested being \$11,200 and that she was reduced to \$0. She stated they have a problem with people taking photographs of documents, which is a loss of potential revenue for the city.

Chairman Lema asked about documents resourced on-line and if there has been an increase.

Mrs. Rohrig stated a small amount.

(4610) Health Department – Ms. Deepa Joseph, Health Director was present for questions/comments. Ms. Joseph referred to the handout which she explained shows the services they provide on a regular basis. She stated on average they have approximately 600 encounters regarding the community health division at the counter or telephone calls received. She stated community health also manages their grant funding. Ms. Joseph also spoke of the Milford Parent Leadership Training Institute (PLTI), Emergency Preparedness Program and Asthma/Putting on AIRS. She went on to explain each program in depth. She continued with an explanation of the handout regarding their Environmental Health Division.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked about treatment of mosquito services and if Milford planned on doing more.

Ms. Joseph stated at this point, nothing as yet because the species that have been identified are not in the United States, but they will continue to monitor. Ms. Joseph continued with a snap shot of the School/Public Health Nursing Division and referred to the chart in the handout. She pointed out there is a lot more happening in the school nurse offices during a school day and the complexities of the role of the school nurse. She also addressed the many issues the school nurses are involved with and the role of the school nurse on the numerous teams, i.e. School Crisis Team, Concussion Management, School Incident Management Team and much more. She stated their budget is fairly flat. She pointed out the decrease in Miscellaneous Professional Fees.

(4998) Education Health Services/School Nurses – Ms. Deepa Joseph was present for questions/comments.

Mayor Blake stated last year they reduced the budget amount in half due to reduced services.

(4821) Visiting Nurse Association – Ms. Deepa Joseph was present for questions/comments.

(4826) Boys & Girls' Club – Mrs. Megan Altomare was present to answer questions/comments.

Mrs. Altomare provided the Board with a handout explaining their services. She stated they have been very busy overall and pointed out they offer over 60 programs. She also spoke regarding the summer program of 125 children and a waiting list each summer. Mrs. Altomare stated they try each year to get additional grants. She stated their original request was for more money so that they could serve more children.

Chairman Lema asked the total budget.

Mrs. Altomare stated it is \$395,425. She stated this year it is over \$400,000. She expressed the appreciation of the city for their commitment to the club.

Chairman Lema asked the amount of the deficit.

Mrs. Altomare stated \$3,000.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked for a listing of their grant monies.

Mrs. Altomare stated she would provide that information to the Board.

Mr. Castignoli asked why the request for an additional \$30,000.

Mrs. Altomare stated they would like to serve more children, primarily due to the number they have on their wait list.

(4111) Board of Aldermen – Mayor Blake stated the budget is the same as last year and that it reflects secretarial fees for various aldermanic meetings, public works, etc.

(4141) Board of Finance – Mayor Blake noted the budget is the same as the previous year and provides secretarial fees.

(4146) Flood & Erosion Board – Chairman Lema stated the budget is flat.

(4147) Tree Commission – no one was present. Chairman Lema pointed out the budget is the same as last year.

(4156) Conservation Commission – Steve Johnson and Maureen Mauro DeSanties, Chair were present for questions/comments. Mr. stated it has been a very busy year with active commissioners doing a lot on their own, including workshops. He stated they have collaborated with the Milford Garden Club, Treat Farm and the Milford Board of Education to purchase the city's cone flower for Mother's Day. He stated he also provided testimony on the Silver Sands proposed development last year. Mr. Johnson stated they continue to monitor the city's open space areas. He stated they are

seeking an allocation of their fees and have requested secretarial fees and allocating those funds to training expenses.

(4162) Open Space - Steve Johnson, Open Space Agent was present for questions/comments. He thanked the Board for the support for this position. He explained he has focused on maintaining what undeveloped open space the city has as well as being a resource for the city. He stated he also is actively seeking grants to benefit the city and recently secured a grant for work in the Beaverbrook area. Mr. Johnson stated he was able to secure a grant from CIRCA for a dune restoration project and that they are in the process of working on three (3) large grants, NRCS grant, a STEEP grant and a CDBG grant for the construction of the Beaverbrook. He stated his role is connecting with the community and reaching out to the residents and working with various scout groups and high school.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked what pending grants they have at this point.

Mr. Johnson stated there are a lot of grants focused around coastal resiliency, such as the planning of coastal resiliency, a number of grants the city is applying for and a ten town grant, which includes Milford.

Mayor Blake stated Mr. Johnson has been involved in several CDGB grants, Wildemere Beach, Pelham Avenue, Gulf Beach and Crescent Beach. He stated there are also storm Sandy monies through the federal government.

(4813) Bridges - Barbara DiMauro, President and Kathleen E. Sheehan, Chief Financial Officer were present. Ms. DiMauro went on to summarize their year. She stated they have served upwards of 1,000 Milford residents. She also stated they have implemented a number of reductions due to proposed cuts from the State. Ms. DiMauro stated they also continue to seek new opportunities. She stated this weekend a new teen club would be opening, funded by Mental Health. She stated they are always seeking new services to provide to children who have had a traumatic event. She stated their hope is to partner with Beth El, Health Department and Milford Public Schools. She stated this year they were requesting an additional \$10,000 in funding. She stated \$360,000 would bring them to where they were in 2008.

Mrs. Sheehan stated they have been very focused on a federal grant and if they were to get it, it would make a huge difference in serving young children who experience a trauma.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked how many people they serve from Orange.

Ms. DiMauro stated it is approximately 250, possibly more. She stated they also serve West Haven. She pointed out most of the children's programs focus on Milford, but they also serve some towns in the Valley.

Mrs. Sheehan added those programs are funded by DCF.

Ms. DiMauro stated they receive a small block grant from West Haven for aging. She reiterated the children's programs are fully funded. She referenced the handout.

Mr. Castignoli asked the reason for the increases in many of the line items.

Mrs. Sheehan stated it is a crossover of some of the accounts.

Mr. Castignoli asked for a detailed breakdown for each of the items.

Mrs. Sheehan stated she would be happy to email.

(4815) Veterans Grave Preservation Commission – Mr. Thomas Cody, Chairman was present for questions/comments. Mr. Cody spoke of the projects they have done over the past year. He stated they oversee the flag pole and flags, solar lights. He stated in the spring they do planting, mulch, etc. Mr. Cody stated over the last few years they have created a brick walk with a ceremony to commemorate the work. Mr. Cody also reported they created a circle at the Gulf Street cemetery. He stated they do some work in conjunction with the Cemetery Association.

Chairman Lema recognized the work of the Veterans Graves Preservation and praised their work.

(4816) Milford Flotilla 73 - Ralph Vuolo, Jr. and Francine Vallillo were present for questions/comments. Mr. Vuolo spoke regarding the work they do with the Milford Public Schools. He thanked the Board for their support over the years.

Chairman Lema expressed appreciation of their work.

(4817) Human Services Department – Christie Roache, LMFT, Interim Director and Beth Simpson, Administrative Assistant were present for question/comments. She provided the Board with a pamphlet and continued with an overview of the work of the department. Ms. Roche then went over their operating budget, included in the packet.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked about energy assistance.

Ms. Roche stated they have over 700 applications.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked if they are all Milford residents.

Ms. Roche replied yes.

(4818) – Milford Historic District – No questions

(4820) – Milford Historic District II – No questions.

(4822) Cemetery Association – Mr. Jim Beard, member of the Board of Directors was present for questions. He stated they have seen the best of times and the worst of times, but they continue on and appreciate the partnership with the City. He reported on the purchase of the Aldo property on West River Street, which is Milford's future.

(4142) Department of Permitting & Land Use – Mr. Joseph Griffin, Director was present for questions/answers. He stated he oversees the Inland Wetlands, Planning and Zoning and Building Inspection Departments. He distributed a handout to the Board, which he proceeded to explain. He pointed out the reductions in the department. He stated during very busy times, especially the summer months they hire retired building inspectors. He stated this past year they initiated the concierge position. He explained that person basically assists someone coming in to obtain a permit and helps enter the data, which essentially reduces wait times. He stated he was looking to make that position a full time position in this budget.

Mayor Blake stated this is the only adjustment in personnel for this budget. He stated it is not a new position, but an overall shift with those monies coming from the seasonal temporary account.

Mr. Fitzpatrick pointed out there would be additional costs as far as benefits.

Mr. Griffin continued with an explanation of the handout. He stated the chief building inspector retired and that position is being filled as an interim by another building inspector in the department. Fortunately, it has occurred during the winter months, so they have not fallen behind. Mr. Griffin stated they have defined the duties of the concierge/receptionist, however, if the position becomes full-time, and those duties would increase and create efficiencies in each of the departments. He also stated they continue to emphasize their customer service efforts.

Mayor Blake stated this is one of the departments that have come around in the last 10 years. He stated the change has been a very positive one for the city.

(4144) Zoning Board of Appeals – Mr. Griffith was present for questions/comments. Chairman Lema stated he did receive correspondence from the Zoning Board of Appeals that they would ask this Board to fund their request in full due to statutory requirements.

Mayor Blake added the funding was also requested to include MGAT services.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked about the increase in advertising costs.

Mr. Griffin stated it is likely based on the volume of appeals coming in.

(4219) Human Resources Department – Tania Barnes, Human Resources Director was present for questions/comments. She stated last year she had requested an organizational restructuring of her department which has been a huge benefit, especially for the city's retirees as it is now a one-stop shop with one point of contact. She also reported the department transitioned the life insurance and Medicare reporting to the Human Resources Department. Mrs. Barnes stated her department has also taken some new initiatives through their wellness committee which was put together just over a year ago. She stated they have conducted lunch and learn programs, educational services, health and wellness fair. She stated they have also partnered with the fire department to provide CPR training. Mrs. Barnes stated they have been very busy filling key positions in the city. She stated in-house they have created some in-house testing for essential functions of various jobs. Overall, she stated the budget is flat. She spoke of increases in other medical, which is used for CDL testing. She also pointed out advertising costs are up.

(4145) Pension Board – Tania Barnes, Human Resources Director, was present to answer any questions. She stated the budget is flat from last year. She noted the reduction of secretarial fees for meetings.

(4151) Civil Service Commission – Tania Barnes, Human Resources Director was present. No questions.

(4157) Harbor Management Commission (Fund 36) – Ray Swift, Operations Director was present for questions/comments. He stated the budget was basically the same as last year. He stated this year would be the second year for fireworks, which was a big night for Milford.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked about any increases.

Mr. Swift stated he put in a request for patio furniture, which is at least 15 years old. He also stated they are looking at getting the patio refurbished. He stated it is a project that has been deferred.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked about the tree/shrub upgrades and if public works assists with that.

Mr. Swift stated they do it in-house unless they need heavy equipment. He stated it is mostly landscaping and it is done by their seasonal help.

Mr. Beard commented with the loss of the PILOT fund where they lost over \$70,000, which cost them two full time employees. He stated they survived due to the diligence of Mr. Swift.

Mr. Fitzpatrick and Ms. Montano moved to recess until February 11, 2016. Motion carried unanimously.

The Board recessed at 9:23 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen A. Kennedy
Recording Secretary