

**BOARD OF FINANCE
PROPOSED BUDGET 2009-2010
FEBRUARY 11, 2009**

The Milford Board of Finance held a budget deliberations session on Wednesday, February 11, 2009 in Conference Room B of the Parsons Complex. Vice Chairman Lema reconvened the budget session at 6:38 p.m.

Board Members Present

Excused

Brian A Lema., Vice Chairman
Joseph M. Agro, Jr.
Joseph J. Fitzpatrick, Jr.
Paula Smith

Stephen J. Skudlarek, Jr. Chairman (illness)
Judy Doneiko, Finance Director (illness)

Vice Chairman Lema stated Chairman Skudlarek was sick and therefore unable to attend. He stated he would be serving as Chairman tonight. He proceeded to explain the format for the meeting. He asked each individual planning to speak on behalf of their budget to please state their name.

(4141) Board of Finance – no questions/no comments.

(4143) Board of Assessment Appeals – no representatives present. No questions/comments.

(4145) Pension Board – John O’Connell, Personnel Director, was present to answer any questions. No questions/comments.

(4146) Flood & Erosion Board – no representatives were present. No questions/comments.

(4151) Civil Service Commission – John O’Connell, Personnel Director was present. No questions/comments.

(4219) Personnel Department – John O’Connell, Personnel Director was present. Question was asked concerning line item 4131 0000 Medical & Dental and what that was. Mr. O’Connell explained it is for drug testing on the city side only. Question was asked regarding line item 4189 0000 Misc. Professional Fees & Svcs. Mr. O’Connell responded this is for miscellaneous filings such as fees for arbitration hearings. Mr. O’Connell was asked about line item 4151 0000 Pro/Spec Svcs. and explained this is the Employee Assistance Program that offers outside counseling for city employees. Mr. O’Connell was asked for an explanation of line item 4771 0000 Advertising. Mr. O’Connell explained they are required to advertise in the newspaper. He stated they do also use on-line advertising for recruiting. He was also asked about line item 4781 0000 Duplicating Costs. Mr. O’Connell responded his department has taken over notifications from the Finance Department.

(4156) Conservation Commission – no representative were present. No questions/comments.

(4147) Tree Commission – no representatives were present. No questions/comments.

(4157) Harbor Management Commission (Fund 36) – Raymond Swift, Operations Director was present. Mr. Agro asked if Mr. Swift could characterize how the marina has been impacted this year as compared to last year. Mr. Swift responded the previous fiscal year was outstanding and that he felt this year would be on par to last year. Mr. Fitzpatrick asked about slip reservations. Mr. Swift responded they are still getting the smaller and larger boats in. Mr. Agro asked about Debt Services Charge and the differences. Mr. Swift explained they just paid the last installment on the mooring field. Mr. Fitzpatrick asked about State Pilot funds. Mr. Swift responded they are always set at \$74,000 and that he is trying to figure out why the book was at \$64,000. He stated he believe it may be a typographical error. He also pointed out he still did not know what the State would do. Mr. Fitzpatrick asked about line item 4750 0000 Helix Mooring Maintenance and if that is a contract. Mr. Swift responded yes. Mr. Fitzpatrick asked about line item 4990 0560 De-Icer System. Mr. Swift responded it is little money spent to save a lot. He explained in detail keeping the perimeter clear.

(4817) Human Services Department – Lisa Diamond-Graham, Director was present. Ms. Smith asked if Ms. Diamond-Graham could provide an overview of the types of programs they offer. Ms. Diamond-Graham explained there are two sections to the agency, the Human Services side that provides outreach for clients, energy assistance, the rent rebate program, fuel services, etc. She stated the Youth Services section is the therapy component and that they offer family therapy, in-school programs, and prevention-based programs for youth and families, etc. She stated they recently moved to Gulf Street. Ms. Smith asked if they receive referrals and how they are received. Ms. Diamond-Graham responded yes and that they come from the police department and also a self referral. She stated there still are a number of other programs they offer such as Rent-A-Kid, Mayor's Youth Awards, etc. Mr. Fitzpatrick asked about the grant. Ms. Diamond-Graham responded they are 89% funded with DSS providing some and the State Department of Education. Ms. Smith asked if those numbers were confirmed for next year. Ms. Diamond-Graham responded they are waiting to hear from the State. She stated they are not a 501c-3 so they do not qualify for other grants.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked why they are not a 501c-3. Ms. Diamond-Graham provided a lengthy explanation. Mr. Agro, Jr. asked how many employees they have and if it can vary. Ms. Diamond-Graham responded they have 2 Full-time in Human Services and 2 Full-time in Youth and Family Services as well as a therapist part-time and part-time interns and seasonal temps, which can vary. Mr. Agro asked if they are all employed by the City of Milford. Ms. Diamond-Graham responded yes.

Mr. Agro, Jr. commented it is helpful to this Board to have an understanding of each of the departments especially in these difficult times. Ms. Diamond-Graham explained they are in the pension systems as well as health benefits and that they follow all the rules of the City and that for all intense purposes they are a City department.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked why they only receive \$37,000 from the State. Ms. Diamond-Graham responded it is the maximum they will pay. She went on to explain the Department of Social Services grant for Energy Assistance and Rent Rebate. Mr. Agro asked what their total budget is. Ms. Diamond-Graham responded it is what is shown. She also commented she does apply for other grants, but given the current economic constraints they are hard to come by. She also pointed out they only provide services to Milford residents.

There were no further questions/comments.

Mr. Swift (**Harbor Commission**) noted for the record the Debt Services shown in the budget book should have been eliminated. He stated it is a depreciation expense as shown on page 114. He noted the wrong line appears to have been eliminated and that it was a printing error.

(4819) Milford Progress – Mr. Jim Beard, Vice President and Mr. Glenn Beck were present for questions. Mr. Fitzpatrick asked how bad it would hurt this department if they were reduced. Mr. Beck responded they were reduced last year and certainly it would hurt. Mr. Fitzpatrick asked if they receive any grants. Mr. Beck responded they did not receive any State grants. He explained they receive money from businesses in town.

Mr. Beard went on to explain some of the history and how originally they used seed money to get this program started. He stated because of the City's help back they have had quite a bit of tangible results.

Mr. Beck stated when of their larger projects right now is signage.

Ms. Smith asked what their top three projects were.

Mr. Beck responded they are in the first stages of the signage study and they are in the second phase of the wayfinding study. He stated one of the bigger projects was the lamplight project downtown and of course the holiday season and the decorations they put up. Ms. Smith asked if the wave shuttle was at risk. Mr. Beck responded it was very successful last year.

(4158) Inland Wetlands Agency – Mary Rose Palumbo, Wetlands Enforcement Officer and Philip Fulco, Chairman were present. Mr. Agro commented concerning the permitting process and asked if there had been any talk of consolidating and if there were any possibilities of this department being merged into a different configuration. He stated his line of questioning was predicated on very dire times and that this Board is obligated during these times and this climate to look at all opportunities. Mr. Fulco stated this department is the enforcement arm for the State DEP and that basically the department carries out the laws of the DEP. He explained the Inland Wetlands Agency was set up to relieve the burden of the State to issue permits. He stated they are not a commission following local ordinances; they are required to follow State law. He also stated their training comes from the attorney general's office of the DEP. Mr. Agro spoke as to the recent Kimball report. He asked about the possibility of the sharing of administrative assistants and if this department could perhaps fit inside some other organization in an effort to reduce costs. Mrs. Palumbo responded the State DEP Commissioner has always been against the combining of agencies. Mrs. Palumbo explained without an Inland Wetlands Agency people would be waiting for the State DEP, which in turn could hold up permits. He also commented it would depend on the type of structure they would be working within.

Mr. Fulco added they would still have the same budgetary items. He stated for example you could not eliminate advertising, training or duplication. He stated the only thing perhaps you might be able to save a few dollars could be in secretarial fees when combining meetings.

Mrs. Palumbo added the office staff has been trained and that the secretary received her training certification through the State. She stated her secretary is able to stand in for her when needed. Mrs. Palumbo stated if the Inland Wetland Office were combined with another office, you would still have to make sure that person is State trained.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked about budget line item 4112 0000 Overtime. Mrs. Palumbo explained that account is for evening meetings she is required to attend as well as site walks, which are scheduled outside of office hours. Mr. Fitzpatrick asked about budget line item 4117 0000 Seasonal Temporary. Mrs. Palumbo explained they have had to have someone come in when both herself and her secretary were out. Ms. Smith asked if someone comes in when she is on vacation. Mrs. Palumbo responded one person can handle the work if it is for a short period of time, however, if both herself and the secretary are out then they have someone fill in. Mr. Fitzpatrick asked about budget line item 4771 0000 Advertising and asked what that is used for. Mrs. Palumbo responded by state law they are required to advertise all legal notices.

Mr. Agro asked for a characterization as to what is going on in the department currently. Mrs. Palumbo responded it has been slow through late summer and fall. She stated they have some smaller items working with some larger projects coming in, but in generally they are slightly slower.

(4818) – Milford Historic District – no representatives were present. No questions or comments.

(4820) – Milford Historic District II – Walter Ortoleva was present. Mr. Fitzpatrick asked how a reduction in the grant money would affect them. Mr. Ortoleva responded he believed they were reduced last year. He explained the operation of this district and any fees collected go toward secretarial fees for their meetings. He stated the only fees the Commission collects is on application fees.

(4159) Fowler Memorial Commission – Lee D’Amico was present. Mr. Fitzpatrick referred to budget line item 4168 0000 Secretarial Fees and asked why the increase. Mrs. D’Amico responded the Commission has been meeting more often. She stated they cut back on meetings, but because there is so much going on they felt they needed to resume regular meetings.

Mr. Lema asked if they charge a rental fee of the building. Mrs. D’Amico responded no, non-profit groups and veterans only use adding the building.

(4823) Milford Association of Patriotic Organizations – Mrs. L. D’Amico was present. She explained the grant is used for secretarial fees with the bulk of the grant going toward the purchase of flags for the veteran’s graves. She stated the fees for flag just keep going up each year.

(4822) Cemetery Association – Jim Beard was present. He explained they are responsible for the maintenance of the older section of the cemetery, although technically it is city property. He stated the Cemetery Association is charged with maintaining that area. He spoke as to the history of the property and shared some stories about the Milford Cemetery. He also noted they recently replaced the fence on Gulf Street.

(4813) Bridges Community Support – Barry Kasden, President & CEO and Clair Phelan, Chairperson, Bridges Board were present. Ms. Phelan reminded the Board that Bridges has served the community for 50 years and that they are the only licensed psychiatric facility here in Milford that serves over 5,000 Milford residents. She distributed brochures to the Board and read portions of the brochure as to the many programs Bridges provides to Milford residents as well as the surrounding towns of Orange and West Haven. She stated the biggest issue they are faced with is the State budget. In addition, she stated more and more residents are coming to them each year. She stated the City dollars are a very important part of their budget and thanked the Board for all they have done in the past.

Mr. Kasden as well thanked the City for they're past 50 years of support. He stated because of the economy, in the last 7 months they have received over 2,700 calls. He expressed his deep appreciation of the City dollars they receive. He stated they came in with a 2.5% over last year and the Mayor came back with a budget of \$380,000 and stated he would respectfully ask the Board that the Mayor's number remain unchanged. He stated for every dollar the city gives they only generate \$19 from the State.

Mr. Agro asked if they received any other grants. Mr. Kasden responded they received a federal grant this year and the Connecticut Health Foundation Grant. He stated the Town of Orange has received some funding, but they still struggle with the City of West Haven. Mr. Kasden also stated they do fundraising, with two major events a year. He stated the State is a major part of their funding and they are watching closely to see what they do. He stated they currently find they have a \$354,000 shortfall, which could mean the loss of 4-5 positions. Mr. Agro asked what portion of the monies the City funds. Mr. Kasden responded City monies fund 3.4% of their budget, which represents \$6.26 per citizen.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked if they provide transportation. Mr. Kasden responded they have 6 vehicles which the State funds. He stated they use the vehicles heavily to transport their clients.

Mr. Kasden commented the City amount is rather small, but it helps maintain the Milford client base. Mr. Kasden also noted they have frozen all management salaries and they have not filled several positions.

(4807) Regional Mental Health Board – Claire Phelan was present. She stated the Mayor kept this account the same as last year and that she would like to ask this Board to do the same. She explained they are separate from Bridges and that basically they act as a watchdog.

(4815) Veterans Graves – Tom Cody was present for questions. He gave the background of their unique function for graves located in Milford. He also spoke to the number of projects they have done and continue to do based on whatever funding is available, i.e. solar lighting of flagpoles.

There were not questions/comments.

(4816) Milford Flotilla 73 – Timothy Mulherin and Robert (?last name) were present. Mr. Mulherin stated they are a busy and active flotilla, adding they recorded over 70,000 hours last year in various missions. He spoke as to their involvement with the Oyster Festival, the Rape Crisis Center and various water patrols. He also commented they disseminate safety information to the general public. Mr. Mulherin stated they have not requested an increase in the last 5 years. He stated the small amount of money they generate is from the boating courses they offer. He also stated they receive no government funding. He also spoke of some recent upgrades around the building and a fence recently replaced.

Ms. Smith asked who does the maintenance on the building. Mr. Mulherin responded they do it.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked if the Coast Guard assists them with repairs. Mr. Mulherin responded no.

Robert added unless it is on a machine.

(4825) Beth El Shelter – Toni Dolan, Executive Director was present.

Ms. Smith asked what percentage of their operating budget comes from the City. Mrs. Dolan responded their overall budget is \$588,000 and 10% of that is from the City. She stated with the state of the economy they are seeing more and more calls. She stated they served 2,000 more meals in 2008 than the previous year.

Mr. Agro asked the total number of meals. Mrs. Dolan responded 17,000. She stated all non-profits are feeling the crunch. She stated she is still waiting to see what the legislature is going to do adding DSS is a major part of their budget. Mrs. Dolan also spoke as to fundraising and foundations that are giving less. She stated they have an active Development Committee that helps raise funds. She stated major repairs are up this year, along with fuel, insurance and health insurance. She stated they are working to try and bring their premiums down and that they cut costs wherever they can. Mrs. Dolan reported they have a new Case Manager for support management; otherwise their staff is the same as it always has. She asked the Board to please hold them to the Mayor's recommendation.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked about the building across the street. Mrs. Dolan replied there would be 2-1 bedroom units, 2-2 bedroom units and 1-3 bedroom unit. She stated one case manager would oversee the units. She explained in detail the overall work of that building.

(4111) Board of Aldermen – no representative was present. There were no questions/comments.

(4115) Registrar of Voters – Antoinette Carey and Sean Beirne were present for questions. Mrs. Carey spoke as to the number of unfunded mandates and the need for every piece of material that comes into their office and goes out. She also noted they are running short on postage this year. She stated every month there is a project that is required by the State. She also spoke as to the new voting machines.

Mr. Fitzpatrick what HAVC is? Mrs. Carey responded it stands for Help America Vote Act. She explained it is a federal program that was put into place a few years ago.

(4112) Elections – Alan Jepson, City Clerk was present for questions.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked about budget line item 4701 0000 Election Expenses which last year was \$68,500 and questioned why it is \$70,000 this year. Mr. Jepson explained the increase was due to the evolving election laws dealing with optical scanning. Mr. Jepson gave a brief overview of the work involved.

(4129) City Clerk – Alan Jepson, City Clerk was present.

Mr. Agro asked the City Clerk about any consolidation that he could foresee in his department to offset a cost savings. Mr. Jepson responded the number of employees in his office has never changed adding they are a very busy office with many distractions throughout the day from what is required in the normal day. Mr. Agro commented this Board would be remiss in their responsibilities if they did not have these discussions. Mr. Jepson commented they could do with fewer employees, but at what cost to the citizens as well as the impact.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked about budget line item 4775 0000 Indexing/Recording. Mr. Jepson explained every time there is a transaction; the result of that transaction has to be put on the land records. Mr. Fitzpatrick noted the

amount has been the same the last three years. Mr. Jepson explained that \$10,000 figure is the wise request of the mayor. Mr. Jepson stated he reviewed all of the accounts with the mayor and reduced where they could. He stated they could not change the advertising account, because they are required by law to do so. He also stated postage is a fixed cost adding he believed these were all legitimate expenditures. He noted they have used the historic documents funds whenever possible. Mr. Fitzpatrick asked about budget line item 4977 0190 Computer. Mr. Jepson explained the replacement process for computers mainly due to the heavy use.

Mr. Lema asked if there were any plans to have the land records on line. Mr. Jepson reminded the Board the city derives revenue from that account by someone coming into the office. He explained they charge for copies of various documents. Mr. Jepson added he is applying for a grant that could possibly motivate having a system set up that people could access a deed on line. Mr. Lema commented the office is very well run as well as being efficient and pleasant. He stated he believed ultimately the City would have to move into the direction of on-line services eventually.

Vice Chairman Lema announced a 5-minute recess. The Board recessed at 8:32 p.m. Vice Chairman Lema reconvened the Board in public session at 8:37 p.m.

(4142) Planning & Zoning Department – Mr. David Sulkis, City Planner was present.

Ms. Smith stated she wished to note for the record that her sister is the Zoning Enforcement Officer.

Mr. Agro welcomed Mr. Sulkis and thanked him for waiting. He asked Mr. Sulkis what he was looking at in growth. Mr. Sulkis responded typically things are slow this time of year. He also noted permits are off a little from last year. Mr. Agro asked if Mr. Sulkis could comment on some of the larger stuff. Mr. Sulkis replied there is always something in the “hopper”. Mr. Agro asked if the housing market is off. Mr. Sulkis responded yes and no. He explained there are not a lot of large parcels available for sub-divides, but there are some smaller areas. Mr. Agro asked about budget line item 4117 0000 Seasonal/Temporary noting previously it was at zero. Mr. Sulkis explained he has been asking for \$15,000-20,00 each year, as they need to digitalize their historical records. He stated they need to move forward and that he has been asking for the funding to do that for 5 years. He explained they have the records computerized, but they need to be able to access all records, therefore they need to have those older records digitalized as well.

Mr. Lema asked if they have the equipment to scan. Mr. Sulkis responded yes they have the equipment, but they never have been able to get the body for the work. He stated MIS has very slowly been scanning maps when they have time. Mr. Lema asked if the public would have access on line eventually. Mr. Sulkis responded yes, that was the intention.

Mr. Agro referred to the Kimball report that is out there and asked Mr. Sulkis about the possibility of any consolidation of departments and also implementing and expediting service in those service agencies. Mr. Sulkis responded yes and no. He stated there could be an improvement in customer service with technology adding it would be many departments and that it would come with a price tag well over \$300,000 just to do the technology side. He stated he would also need to make physical changes to the building. He gave an overview as to this thoughts regarding streamlining. Mr. Agro stated they would be compelled to have serious discussions regarding this issue based on what is going on right on in the economy. Mr. Sulkis commented they have been doing more with less for more than 20 years. He stated they are a very lean operation as compared to other municipalities that are the same size or smaller.

Ms. Smith asked about budget line item 4112 0000 Overtime. Mr. Sulkis responded that account is used for evening meetings. He explained he and members of his staff are required to staff evening meetings of the Boards.

Mr. Agro asked if he shares those meetings with his assistant. Mr. Sulkis responded yes explaining it can depend on the case being heard and also there are times when they are both required to be there.

Ms. Smith asked about budget line item 4771 0000 Advertising. Mr. Sulkis explained the agendas as well as action taken and regulation changes are required to be noticed.

(4144) Zoning Board of Appeals – David Sulkis, City Planner was present for questions.

Mr. Fitzpatrick referred to budget line item 4771 0000 Advertising stating the projected number is \$11,229, however the requested amount is \$13,500. Mr. Sulkis responded that figure was based on last year's number and that \$13,390 was expended last year. He explained the required advertising, which he expects, could go up. Mr. Sulkis also noted they are required by law to do the Plan of Conservation and Development every 10 year. He stated they are looking for funding beginning with next year's budget.

(4620) Recreation Department – Bill McCarthy, Director was present for questions. Mr. McCarthy commented they try to do as much electronically in their department as possible. He also noted they use virtual town hall and that they have been named second best in the state on their website. He continued with an explanation of how it works.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked about budget line item 4161 0000 Fee Paid Officials and asked if that is reimbursed. Mr. McCarthy explained that is an account where they pay for basketball officials and scorekeepers as well as softball officials if they show up at the field only to deem a game will not be played because of weather. Mr. Fitzpatrick asked what other programs go through the books. Mr. McCarthy explained the permit use of city fields to clubs/organizations such as Milford Elks, Lou Gerhig, Milford International, United Soccer, etc. He also explained budget line item 4708 9969 Stipends to Leagues & Clubs, which he explained they are phasing out 25% a year that's why the reduced number. Mr. Fitzpatrick asked about budget line item 4708 9670 Natatorium Reserve. Mr. McCarthy responded that account is for hiring lifeguards at the pool. He stated the Public Works Department does the maintenance on the pool.

Mr. Lema referred to page 89 asking about the Supervisors and what each of their job duties entails. Mr. McCarthy responded each of the supervisors is responsible for scheduling program staff and permit use of facilities. He explained each position is also responsible in a specific area and explained what each supervisor does. He noted he has had the same number of people on staff since 1970.

Mr. Agro asked if there was any way to consolidate and also asked if it would be detrimental if the Board were to cut something. He stated it is not what they are intending to do, but they are looking at every avenue. Mr. McCarthy responded they recently had a mandated minimum wage increase which will have to absorb into the budget, stating 90% of the budget is payroll. He stated if he were required to make modifications to staffing, unfortunately you would see it in services. Mr. Agro stated he needed to be fair in the line of questions they have asked throughout the evening.

Ms. Smith asked about budget line item 4755 0000 Day Camp Costs. Mr. McCarthy asked if she was referring to the Summer Playground Program (SPP) or Camp Happiness. Ms. Smith asked if the SPP was funded through seasonal temporary and also asked about supplies. She asked where this is shown in the budget. Mr. McCarthy explained it is an account set up about 10 years ago. He pointed out that busing also comes out of that account for Camp Happiness.

Mr. Lema asked about the skate park and whether it would be under the Recreation Department's jurisdiction this year. Mr. McCarthy responded yes and explained the City would not be leasing it to the YMCA. He stated there would be no money for staffing that and explained it would be a skate at your own risk with the appropriate signage posted.

(4153) Park, Beach & Recreation Commission – Bill McCarthy was present. No questions/comments.

Vice Chairman Lema recessed the Board at 9:34 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen K. Huber
Recording Secretary