

**BOARD OF FINANCE
BUDGET HEARINGS - PROPOSED BUDGET FY2015-2016
FEBRUARY 12, 2015**

The Milford Board of Finance held a budget deliberations session on Thursday, February 12, 2015 in Conference Room B of the Parsons Complex. Mr. Marlow announced the Board was out of recess and reconvened the budget deliberations meeting in public session at 6:31 p.m.

Board Members Present

Scott Marlow, Chairman
Joseph J. Fitzpatrick, Jr.
Mickel Montano

Also Present

Mayor Benjamin G. Blake
Peter Erodici, Finance Director

Excused: Brian Lema, Joseph Castignoli

Mr. Fitzpatrick and Ms. Montano made and seconded a motion to elect Mr. Marlow as Chairman Pro Temp in the absence of Chairman Lema and Vice Chairman Castignoli.

(4825) Beth El Shelter – Mrs. Toni Dolan, Executive Director was present along with Mr. Mike Williams, Board Secretary. Mrs. Dolan expressed her gratitude and the partnership they have had with the city over the years. She provided the Board with a handout which provided their overall operating budget. She stated they were projecting a deficit this year, mostly because of cuts from the State. She continued with an explanation of the handout. Mrs. Dolan stated this year they had to submit an application to the State for their funding request and were unsure at this point what they would receive.

Mr. Williams explained it is due to the State's realignment and basically they are reinventing the wheel.

Mr. Marlow asked who decides on the funding.

Mrs. Dolan stated it is the Department of Housing.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked if it is just for shelters or other housing.

Mrs. Dolan stated there are about 50 shelters. She continued with a review of the handout and the work they do at the shelter. She spoke of 211 system which is by referral. Mrs. Dolan stated number of beds is the same. She stated they are a 90 bed shelter. She cited the number of families and individuals that they serve. She stated they continue to maintain their population. Mrs. Dolan stated Beth El is also involved with the pan handling effort in the city called "Have a Heart, Give Smart." She stated their program staff has been out throughout the city with work ongoing. She also reported they continue with the no freeze shelter which has been full all winter.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked if there has been an increase in out of town individuals.

Mrs. Dolan replied no. She explained on really cold days they open early and when needed they provide those individuals that they cannot accommodate with money for transportation. She also stated the soup kitchen

serves two meals a day along with the some of the local churches. She reported they have expanded those services. Mrs. Dolan stated their revenue sources are diversified. She stated the state money means a great deal to them. Mrs. Dolan asked the Board to consider the same level of funding as last year and expressed her hope their budget would not be cut.

Mr. Marlow asked about corporate donations and noted it is less.

Mrs. Dolan stated it is one of her goals to expand in that area, but it is very competitive and basically the number in the handout represents a conservative amount.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked if they receive fees from anywhere else.

Mrs. Dolan stated no.

Mr. Marlow asked what challenges they face if they don't receive the funding they hope to receive from the State.

Mrs. Dolan stated it would likely result in program cuts.

Mr. Williams pointed out the State is trying to change the focus. He stated the program at the shelter is a 90 day program, which the state is looking to change. He stated they are always looking for opportunities for additional housing. He stated that of course is long-term.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked if that would require more staff.

Mr. Williams replied yes, but they could then apply for state and federal monies.

Mrs. Dolan stated their two challenges are sustainable employment and housing. She noted that is the cry of all the shelters.

(4610) Health Department – Mrs. Deepa Joseph, Health Director was present for questions/comments. She provided the Board with an overview of what they do at the Health Department. She reviewed the handout with the Board. She pointed out there are 4 divisions at the health department. She also spoke of the Environmental Health Division and gave a snap shot of what they do. She also spoke of the complaints they receive at the health department that are non-blight related.

Mr. Marlow asked what happens after an inspection occurs regarding a blight complaint.

Mrs. Joseph explained the process, the questions that must be answered and then it is assigned to an inspector. She stated for a blight inspection it is looked at from the curb and the inspector notes what they have seen and then issue a warning letter or an enforcement letter.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked if they receive any blight complaints from the fire department.

Mrs. Joseph replied not necessarily blight, but hoarding or public safety concerns.

Mayor Blake spoke of the Seaside program which is multiple agencies that work with a number of agencies. He also spoke of incidents where the City has had to step in and where demolition of a property is required.

Mr. Marlow asked what Healthy Homes is.

Mrs. Joseph explained it is a grant they received and allows them to go into a home and do a complete assessment. Sometimes they may have to issue an order or it may be education.

Mr. Marlow asked about the Deputy Director position.

Mrs. Joseph explained in discussions with the Mayor it was decided to compromise and bring the nurse administrator to a 12 month position from a 10 month position.

Mayor Blake explained this is one of the reorganizations in the budget this year. He stated they reevaluated the structure of this department and they were able to streamline the department,. He also spoke of the number of services the department provides.

Mr. Marlow asked about the grant amount and if it would remain the same.

Mrs. Joseph stated it is her hope it will remain the same, but they are also always looking for additional grants. She stated they are also looking into accreditation.

(4998) Education Health Services/School Nurses – Mrs. Deepa Joseph explained there is a full time nurse in each of the schools, including the parochial schools. She stated they also do immunization and a blood borne pathogens program.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked who reviews the student assessments.

Mrs. Joseph stated the school nurses review the paperwork that is completed prior to a child starting school. She stated measles is a required immunization in Connecticut. She stated they have a high compliance rate. She stated there are two ways to opt out; medical or religious.

Mayor Blake spoke of the community and school physician recently hired who will receive a \$15,000 stipend. He stated it is listed under misc. professional fees which were added to this account. He stated with this re-organization there was a significant savings.

(4821) Visiting Nurse Association – Mrs. Deepa Joseph and Mr. Collins, President and CEO of the VNA were present for questions/comments. He stated he was here tonight to thank the Board for its continued support. He stated he understands these are tough economic times. He spoke of their 110 years of existence in Milford. He stated they will continue their services in Milford. Spoke of the well child clinic. He stated they also serve 800-900 patients, approximately 133 or more come from Milford. He explained the subsidized care they provide for Milford's senior citizens. He stated the goal there is acute care so they don't have to go back into the hospital. He asked the Board to keep an open mind for the future.

(4826) Boys & Girls' Club – Mrs. Megan Altomare, Ms. Janice Fletcher, President and Mr. Thom Bach, Vice President were present to answer questions/comments. Mrs. Altomare provided the Board with a handout. She

stated a lot has been going on over the last year. She stated they were able to open a second facility last year which is housed at Simon Lake School. She stated they serve 350 kids a year, and are up 80% over last year. She stated they are looking to grow and continue to grow their middle and high school programs. She stated they offer 60 enrichment programs. Mrs. Altomare also stated they have partnered with the Norwalk Aquarium. She stated they also run a 6 week summer program (fee \$175). She stated their budget is up a little as they continue to grow as do their programs.

Ms. Montano if they are at maximum for the middle and high school program.

Mrs. Altomare stated they are at maximum for middle and high school students, but they have some room for elementary age children.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked how many employees they have.

Mrs. Altomare replied, two full time and 12 part time.

Mr. Marlow asked if they were guaranteed the grants they were seeking.

Mrs. Altomare stated not necessarily, but they are always looking for new grants.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked what “special event fund raising” is.

Mrs. Altomare stated they have an adult dodge ball tournament, their getaways galore event in May, and in June, cupcakes, cocktails and, to mention a few, as well as Pumpkins on the Pier. She stated they have a very dedicated board.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked about advertising these events.

Mr. Bach stated they make every effort to advertise locally.

Mrs. Altomare stated their budget represents a slight increase.

Mr. Bach encouraged the Board to come visit the club. He stated they would be very amazed at all they do..

(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.

Mr. Fitzpatrick noted an increase from FY13-14.

Mayor Blake explained that is the amount expended. He stated some years there can be extra meetings.

(4141) Board of Finance – Acting Chairman Marlow noted the budget is the same as the previous year.

(4146) Flood & Erosion Board – Mayor Blake stated Mr. Bach who was just this Board serves on the Flood & Erosion Control Board. Mayor Blake spoke of the 10 year hiatus of that board. He stated there are four engineers on that Board. He stated it is a board with a great deal of experience. Mayor Blake stated their

charge is to oversee the flood mitigation projects and flooding projects. He stated they also interviewed all of the engineering firms for the projects. He stated that Board is also looking at the City's CRS rating which lowers the city's flood insurance rates.

(4147) Tree Commission – Bryan Mancini was present. He stated they are asking for a \$100 increase. He stated they are looking to replenish their stock with they have pretty much depleted. He stated they also get five trees from the City. He stated they anticipate they may have more requests with the current UI tree trimming project.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked if the tree commission knows when the UI is going out. He also asked if UI asked for any input from the Tree Commission.

Mr. Mancini stated there was a hearing sometime ago. A brief discussion ensued regarding the tree trimming program.

Mr. Mancini stated the maps of where UI is conducting trimming is available on their website.

(4156) Conservation Commission – No questions.

(4159) Veterans, Ceremony & Parade Commission – Mr. Tom Flowers, Chair of the Committee was present for questions/comments. He stated their budget is very straight forward. They have a line item for secretarial fees and the majority of the budget is for flags and flowers for Memorial Day and wreaths for Memorial Day, 4th of July and Labor Day.

Mr. Marlow asked about their volunteers.

Mr. Flowers explained each of the veterans groups is assigned an area, and they also work with boy and girl scouts.

(4813) Bridges– Barbara (no last name given), President and Kathleen E. Sheehan, Chief Financial Officer were present. Barbara thanked the Board for all of their support which allows them to provide support to Milford citizens. She stated over 1,298 Milford residents receive service. She stated they do serve other localities such as West Haven and Orange, but Milford is a significant focus. She stated she forwarded to the Board a narrative statement as to what they do. She also pointed out they are facing significant cuts from the State.

Mr. Marlow asked their total budget.

Barbara replied \$13M. She stated the focus of the cuts would be on the adult services, such as addiction and some on the child side.

Ms. Sheehan mentioned they do receive some Medicare reimbursement.

Barbara stated they also provide child and family services in Ansonia, Derby, and Bethany to name a few.

Ms. Sheehan stated there are 22 in total and they are generally DCF referrals.

Barbara stated they receive a small amount of money from Orange and West Haven. She also stated they do a lot of education together.

Ms. Sheehan added they provide educational and case management for the elderly.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked about staff.

Barbara stated they have 164 employees, 31 part-time.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked if the work on the buildings have been completed.

Mrs. Sheehan explained the last of it was on the social club which was renovated inside/outside from a grant they received.

Barbara also stated they have an onsite pharmacy as well. She stated it has been very successful.

(4815) Veterans Grave Preservation Commission – Mr. Thomas Cody, Chairman, Mr. Tom Beirne, and a new member Richard Shea were present for questions/comments. Mr. Cody provided an overview of the work they do, which is the care and maintenance of the graves and monuments in Milford's 3 cemeteries. He stated their only source of revenue is the grant they receive from the City. He also reported work has been completed on all the flag poles and they restored one of the two flag poles in the center. Revolutionary War monument work is planned. He also stated he works alongside Mr. Beard from the Cemetery Association. He stated they will be putting new lights at all the flag poles, so they will be required to get a lift.

Mr. Marlow asked if they partner with the Public Works Department.

Mr. Cody replied yes.

Mr. Beirne told a story that occurred here in Milford.

Mr. Cody reported they did put a marker on the stone of the Unknown Soldier who's skull was found.

(4816) Milford Flotilla 73 - Mr. Paul Pronovost, Chairman and Vice Chairman were present for questions. Mr. Pronovost explained the organization of the Flotilla. He stated he expected this to be a busy year celebrating various anniversaries.

(4817) Human Services Department – Lisa Diamond Graham, Executive Director and Mrs. Beth Simpson, Secretary/Bookkeeper, newest member of the department were present for questions/comments. Ms. Diamond Graham explained the handout for each of the divisions. (Human Services and Youth and Family Services). She also spoke of their unique position in the City.

Mr. Marlow asked the total budget and other sources of funding

Ms. Diamond Graham stated they receive two State grants, one from the department of social services and one from the State Department of Education.

Ms. Simpson explained each of those grants and the amounts.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked about accountability to the state.

Ms. Diamond Graham explained they are accountable the agency where the grant was received.

Ms. Simpson added there is also a quarterly reporting which is done.

Mr. Marlow asked if they work with Bridges.

Ms. Diamond Graham stated they serve on many of the same boards. She explained they refer psychiatric evaluations for children to Bridges. She stated their biggest concern is there are just not enough services available to Milford families. She stated there is some overlap, but not a lot

Mr. Marlow asked about staffing

Ms. Diamond Graham stated there are 6.

Ms. Simpson stated there are 8 seasonal temps

Ms. Diamond Graham stated they also have a lot of interns, both graduate and undergraduate. She also mentioned one of the things her department is responsible for is the relocation program when a tenant is displaced from their housing. She stated her department is responsible for placing those tenants. She stated it is her department that pays for the housing. She works alongside the city attorney's office and health department.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked if that includes food.

Ms. Diamond Graham stated they do provide food referrals for the city, but they also try to find out why they are struggling and how they can provide assistance. She stated fire victims also come to them as well. She pointed out the Red Cross only provides assistance in the event of a fire for 2 days.

(4819) Milford Progress – Moved to February 17, 2015.

(4818) – Milford Historic District – no representatives were present. Mayor Blake stated the majority of budget is secretarial fees.

(4820) – Milford Historic District II – no representatives were present. No questions.

(4822) Cemetery Association – Mr. Jim Beard, member of the Board of Directors was present for questions. He explained they maintain the old part of the Milford cemetery. He also explained their form of income has changed. He stated he traditional means of funerals has changed and that there are more cremations now. Mr. Beard stated they now offer services the funeral home would normally do, due in part to the changes in tradition. He stated they do have a trust fund which is for perpetual care.

(4142) Department of Permitting & Land Use – Mr. Joseph Griffin, Director was present for questions/answers. Mr. Griffin provided the Board with a handout which provided a brief overview of their department (he cited the various departments he represents). He explained the staff, in building department is down one inspector. He also pointed out they are utilizing some seasonal temporary staff. He explained the contractual wage adjustment. He stated they are trying to maximize their seasonal/temporary account. He continued with an explanation of the graph handout. He stated it is during their busiest time, summer when they utilize this account. He stated when they are backed up with plan reviews they send them out. We try to get them out within 2 weeks, however, by statute they are allowed 30 days. He stated they have been successful with their on-line permitting, which he pointed out does not appear on the graph he provided the Board. He also spoke of the view permitting system.

Mr. Marlow asked if inspections are now scheduled on line.

Mr. Griffin stated they are tracked electronically with the schedule posted on line. He stated with fluctuating demands during the busy times we try to have qualified seasonal/temp available. He also spoke of a concierge person who helps individuals who are coming in for permits. She greets them and guides them to the proper department. She also has view permit available to her to input data for the inspectors. He also spoke of ECEGS which is administered to ISO. He spoke of the grading system and that they are working to get back in the grading system with a maximum score in both residential and commercial categories.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked about the secretarial positions.

Mr. Griffin explained each of the secretarial/clerk positions and where they are assigned.

(4144) Zoning Board of Appeals – Mr. Griffith was present for questions/comments. Mr. Griffin stated the budget is for the clerical staff represented at each meeting and the advertising for all applications, which is required.

(4219) Human Resources Department – Tania Barnes, Human Resources Director was present. She provided the Board with handout. She stated there are some changes to her budget. She stated she is looking to reorganize the department and streamline and consolidate the benefit services for active and retired personnel. She stated since the Pension Administrator left the office, she has decided to eliminate that position and consolidate it as the Human Resources Generalist position. She explained the current Administrative Assistant position would change to the Human Resources Generalist position. Ms. Barnes also commented she would like to seek an increase in salary.

Mayor Blake stated the Affordable Care Act is part of what is driving these changes. He stated the city has never had a benefits specialist before because those were previously handled by the finance director. He stated putting this task in the Human Resources Department is where most other municipalities have it.

Ms. Barnes also spoke of the new required reporting. She also stated over the last year they have taken on several new tasks, i.e. wellness committee. She also spoke of the eligibility audit recently done. With the audit there were over 112 dependents that were found to be ineligible.

Mr. Erodici stated the funds from the audit came out of the pension audit.

Ms. Barnes also stated they have updated position descriptions, a new employment application. They also now have automated clerical testing, which allows them to get high quality candidates. In cooperation with the city attorney's office she is working with labor contracts, disciplinary action, etc.. She has put into the budget a Human Resources Generalist which would elevate the current position of the administrative assistant. She also pointed out an increase in testing and maintenance software for testing.

Mr. Erodici stated he would have the technical corrections for the Board's technical vote.

(4145) Pension Board – Tania Barnes, Human Resources Director, was present to answer any questions. Ms. Barnes stated professional services and fees had increased slightly. She also stated she reduced the secretarial fees account, which would now be done by the Benefits specialist.

(4151) Civil Service Commission – Tania Barnes, Human Resources Director was present. Ms. Barnes stated this budget is flat. She stated if there is a need for secretarial services.

(4620) Recreation Department – Paul Piscitelli, Director was present for questions. Mr. Piscitelli stated his budget comes in lower than the previous year, but that it is getting slimmer and slimmer.

Mayor Blake stated the biggest increase is in the seasonal/temp account due to the increase of the minimum wage. He stated they have made some changes to hours for their seasonal temp, but they will have to look at that line item again, because of the minimum wage increase due in January.

Mr. Marlow asked about line item 4948 0000 Park Improvements

Mr. Piscitelli stated that account is for the playgrounds.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked about camp happiness, adaptive program and gardens programs.

Mr. Piscitelli explained the adaptive program is from the fees generated.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked about the truck the department has.

Mr. Piscitelli explained it comes out of the programming revenue. He stated the also enhanced the skate park and upgraded the basketball courts.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked about accountability for that account.

Mr. Erodici stated it is a separate special revenue fund which is overseen in his department. Capital assets, outlay.

(4153) Park, Beach & Recreation Commission – Paul Piscitelli, Director was present. Mr. Piscitelli stated this account is mainly for secretarial fees and trees.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked if he gets them from the Tree Commission.

Mr. Piscitelli stated they do work with them. He stated this amount should get them 4-5 trees.

(4157) Harbor Management Commission (Fund 36) – Ray Swift, Operations Director was present for questions/comments. Mr. Swift commented with the lower fuel prices he hopes to have an even more successful year. He stated they are in the black which is always their goal. He stated basically, the budget is the same.

Mr. Erodici explained the FICA line item covers seasonal temp employees.

Mayor Blake reminded the Board this budget lost the State PILOT program a few years ago which was eliminated by the State.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked about line item 4989 0559 De-Icer System.

Mr. Swift explained it relates to the bubbler system and helps protect the docks. He stated it is a 3/4 horse electrical motors.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked about the channel markers.

Mr. Swift stated they will be replacing them this year, current fiscal year.

(4112) Elections – Mrs. Keri Rowland and Mrs. Debra Fellenbaum, Registrars and Mrs. Joanne Rohrig, City Clerk was present for questions/comment. Mrs. Rowland explained the elections account and how it is used, i.e. voting system, ballots, etc. She stated one of her concerns is the potential for a municipal primary, municipal election and presidential. She also spoke about new legislation which allows you to register on Election Day.

Mr. Marlow asked if the budget reflects each of potential primaries.

Mrs. Rowland replied yes.

Mr. Marlow asked how often machines are serviced.

Mrs. Rowland stated every year. She explained they look at all parts adding she and Mrs. Fellenbaum have become very familiar with the equipment.

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

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked about the computers.

Mrs. Rowland stated they have had a discrepancy with their software. She explained with the funds they received last year they received 2 upgrades and with the monies requested this year they will be able to get the other 2 necessary upgrades.

Mr. Fitzpatrick pointed out the printing and binding account seemed to increase a lot.

Mrs. Rowland stated they had to send out postcards they had to send out residents to notify them where they vote. She explained there have been several changes in the Foran area. She also spoke of the mandatory redistricting, adding they are a very busy office.

(4129) City Clerk – Mrs. Joanne Rohrig, City Clerk and Mrs. Bonnie Peloso, Assistant City Clerk were present for questions/comment. Mrs. Rohrig stated they have stayed level and basically have a bare bones budget. Mrs. Rohrig stated she did ask for additional monies in her seasonal/temp account in light of the minimum wage increase. She stated with the increase in wages it was warranted for their seasonal/temp who has been with them a number of years. Mrs. Rohrig stated their department is the pulse of the City with hundreds of people coming through their office each day. She also stated they field a great deal of questions every day, i.e. for superior court and the Department of Motor Vehicles, on top of their own.

Mr. Marlow asked about the security system requested.

Mrs. Rohrig stated there was an issue with their records in the vault. She stated they were looking for cameras. She also stated they have been doing a lot of updating, keeping their office, office and computer friendly. We are also constantly scanning records.

Mrs. Peloso pointed out they are gaining revenue with their on-line services, especially with title searchers.

Mayor Blake spoke briefly about the position for an open space agent and asked the Board if they would like that individual to attend the next budget session.

The Board recessed at 9:23 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen A. Kennedy
Recording Secretary