

BOARD OF FINANCE BUDGET DELIBERATIONS
MAYOR'S RECOMMENDED BUDGET 2008-2009
FEBRUARY 13, 2008

The Board of Finance held a budget deliberation session on Wednesday, February 13, 2008 in Conference Room B of the Parsons Complex. Vice Chairman Bergami convened the session at 7:00 p.m.

Board Members Present

J. Agro
S. Bergami
J. Fitzpatrick
B. Lema

Also Present

Mayor James L. Richetelli, Jr.

Not Present

S. Skudlarek (due to illness)

Vice Chairman Bergami noted that there would be a slight change in the schedule for tonight. Departments 4142 Planning & Zoning and 4144 Zoning Board of Appeals would be heard first since the City Planner, David Sulkis, had another meeting to attend. He then asked that any and all individuals planning to speak on behalf of their budget to please give their name.

Department 4142 – Planning & Zoning – David Sulkis, City Planner, was present. Mr. Sulkis said that the budget has a minimal increase for the coming fiscal year. He added that he had asked for a new zoning enforcement officer, but was turned down by the Mayor.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked why under the Operational Expenses accounts, as of December 31, 2007, a total of only \$8,219 was spent when the projected amount of Operational Expenses was \$30,900. He asked if Mr. Sulkis was anticipating spending the remaining \$22,000. Mr. Sulkis replied that at the end of Fiscal Year 06/07 his department had spent almost \$26,000 on operational expenses. He said that the wild card in those expenses is always advertising and that it is a function of the kinds of applications that come before Planning & Zoning. He added that it is also a function of the Board. He noted it is their decision if they want to redo the regulations and advertise. He said that previous to his joining the City four years ago advertising (which he added is the biggest line item under Operational Expenses) was cut back significantly and then they had to advertise and the money had to be made up. Mr. Sulkis said that based on last year they spent \$8,392 in advertising and if they were in that same ballpark this year, that would be great, but if they were to go over, at least they have the room to go over.

Mr. Agro asked Mr. Sulkis to characterize the present activity in his office relative to what the Board of Finance might consider in their budget deliberations concerning permit activity for the revenue side and also what is expected for the grand list. Mr. Sulkis responded that this time of year things always slow down. He said there are a handful of applicants that have large projects, which are not at the point where they can be publicly divulged, and that by the end of the next fiscal year they could be approved and in some instances online. He also said that his office always has a steady, daily workload of small projects such as people making adjustments to houses or businesses. He added that the big decrease over the past several years has been in subdivision activity and commented that is a function of both the market and also there being less land available. Mr. Agro asked if there was anything terribly alarming and Mr. Sulkis replied that there was not. Mr. Sulkis said that for this fiscal year they are projecting slightly less of the regular revenue.

There were no other questions/comments.

Department 4144 – Zoning Board of Appeals – David Sulkis, City Planner, was present. Mr. Sulkis commented that this budget is very minimal and that the big ticket item is advertising followed by postage and office supplies. He said this is due to the manpower for the Zoning Board of Appeals being the Planning & Zoning Department. Mr. Fitzpatrick asked if the advertising budgets for those two departments ever overlap. Mr. Sulkis replied that they do not.

There were no other questions/comments.

Vice Chairman Bergami noted that they would now return to the original agenda.

Department 4141 – Board of Finance – no questions/comments.

Department 4143 – Board of Assessment Appeals – no representatives were present. Mr. Fitzpatrick asked why the Seasonal/Temporary amount was going up. The Mayor said that in a revaluation year there are two alternates, in non-assessment years there are not two alternates, just three members. There is a possibility that they might need another person and that would be a seasonal temporary. He added that it all depends on the number of appeals that the Board has at a particular time.

There were no other questions/comments.

Department 4145 – Pension Board – John Boland, Personnel Director, was present to answer any questions. Mr. Fitzpatrick asked if the Professional Services/Audit Fees were a contractual obligation. Mr. Boland said that contractual fees are part of the audit fees that Judy Doneiko, the Finance Director, has broken out and put into their budget.

There were no other questions/comments.

Department 4146 – Flood & Erosion Board – no representatives were present. There were no questions/comments.

Department 4151 – Civil Service Commission – John Boland, Personnel Director, was present to answer any questions.

There were no questions/comments.

Department 4219 – Personnel – John Boland, Personnel Director, was present. He commented that the Operational Expenses were about the same as last year. He explained that the difference in the Personnel column is the addition of a Benefits Coordinator. He said that Judy Doneiko, the Finance Director, is interested in transferring the benefits operation from her office to the Personnel office. Mayor Richetelli explained that the City does not have a Benefits Coordinator and has never had one. He said that when an employee has a question on their benefits, they have to go to an employee in the Finance Department. He noted that for a city of our size, or a business of our size, the Finance Director and he agree that there is a need for a Benefits Coordinator to make sure that any benefits an employee has are clearly communicated to them.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked if this individual would also be involved with the Board of Education. Mayor Richetelli said that the Board of Education has their own Benefits Coordinator. Mr. Fitzpatrick then asked if anyone knew what the salary was for the Board of Education person. The Mayor replied that he did not. Mr. Fitzpatrick asked if he could find out the answer. The Mayor replied that he could.

Mr. Lema said that he would like a little more information about what a City employee does now when they have a benefit question. He asked if they contact the provider or if they go to the Finance Office. The Mayor responded that they go to the Finance Office.

Mr. Agro asked if there was enough of a workload for this new full-time position to be created even though it is currently being handled on a part-time basis by a Finance employee. Mayor Richetelli replied that the Finance Director has told him there is enough work.

Vice Chairman Bergami asked if this was a negotiated item in the contract or just a request by the Finance Director. The Mayor replied that it was a request by the Finance Director and added that the unions have requested it.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked if this individual would be involved in negotiations. The Mayor replied that all negotiations are handled by the City Attorney's office and our consultants. Mr. Fitzpatrick then asked what background the individual would need to have. The Mayor said that there is no job description yet, just a request.

There were no further questions/comments.

Department 4620 – Recreation Department – Bill McCarthy, Director, was present. Mr. Fitzpatrick asked why the Seasonal/Temporary account had gone up \$10,000. Mr. McCarthy replied that every year he tries to keep the 200 kids he has coming back by giving them a 2.2% raise. He said that accounts for \$6,000. The other money he needs is for Gulf Beach. He said there needs to be a parking attendant down there when the beach is open. His guess is that it will cost about \$2,800. He said he thinks he can get by with the \$10,000 increase instead of the \$15,000 he requested. He had wanted to give the lifeguards a raise.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked if the individual working in the Gulf Beach parking lot itself would be collecting fees. Mr. McCarthy replied yes. Mr. Fitzpatrick then asked if he knew what he paid for income coming out of the parking lot. Mr. McCarthy replied that last year they collected \$13,900 of which 1/3 came out of Gulf Beach. He said that was enough money to justify the person's existence collecting the fees. He added that he was going to cut back the parking attendant at Gulf Beach to just weekends so that it won't cost as much.

Mr. Fitzpatrick then asked about account 4161 000 Fee Paid Officials. He asked how much we get reimbursed. Mr. McCarthy said that these Fee Paid Officials amounts in the budget represent the cost for him to run our girl's and boy's basketball leagues.

There were no further questions/comments.

Department 4153 – Park and Recreation Commission – Bill McCarthy, Director, was present on behalf of Dan Worroll, Chairman of Parks, Beach and Recreation Commission.

There were no questions/comments.

Department 4156 – Conservation Commission – no representatives were present. There were no questions/comments.

Department 4147 – Tree Commission – no representatives were present. Mr. Fitzpatrick asked if it were true that if the City takes down a tree, they replace it. The Mayor said it is the City's goal to replace it and added that it was done by Public Works. Mr. Fitzpatrick then asked what the Tree Commission does. The Mayor explained that the Tree Commission is over and above what Public Works does. The Tree Commission does new plantings where there were no plantings before. Vice Chairman Bergami asked if the Tree Commission reviews new projects. The Mayor replied that they do.

There were no further questions/comments.

Department 4157 – Harbor Management Commission – Raymond Swift, Operations Director, was present. The Mayor let the Board of Finance members know that the Harbor Management Commission comes under the Enterprise Fund and that everything

that is taken in is paid for through this account. He said that last year the Marina Enterprise Fund did an excellent job and made a profit. He added that a lot of the profit depends on the weather and that there were not a lot of rainouts on the weekends in the past year. He also added that a lot of the success has to do with the management of the Marina.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked why account 4823 0000 General & Auto Liability increased. The Mayor explained that those numbers are set by the City's third-party administrator and the Finance Director and is based upon claims. The City is self insured and the Harbor Enterprise Fund pays into our self-insurance fund. He said there were a number of "slip and falls" in prior years and that the numbers are based on those prior experiences, which account for the increase. He said that if there were no claims next year, then the number would go down. The Mayor went on to say that the Marina is a victim of being self insured. He added that being self insured overall helps the groups that pay into it; i.e., the Board of Education, City, Senior Center, Harbor Management Commission and Borough of Woodmont, but sometimes in the case of smaller groups they probably could get cheaper insurance on the outside. He stressed that the entire fund benefits the City overall, but doesn't necessarily benefit the smaller groups. Mr. Bergami asked if the City has a cap on that. The Mayor replied that we have a stop loss policy on anything over \$250,000.

Mr. Agro asked if the \$24,000 charge is experienced in particular to the Harbor. He asked if the Marina, or another small department, had a really terrible experience, if they could conceivably end up with a \$200,000 liability for expenditure of insurance. The Mayor said that it is a possibility. He added that overall, however, it is a benefit to the City to be in the self-insurance fund. He said we could not have a self-insurance fund without the Board of Education, but that if the Marina opted out, we could still have the self-insurance fund.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked if the Marina Commission has an option to opt out of the self-insurance fund. The Mayor replied that legally they do.

There were no further questions/comments.

Department 4817 – Human Resources Development (HRD) – Lisa Diamond-Graham, Director, was present. She said that her department is now known as the Milford Department of Human Services. The Mayor added that for the record the name was officially changed by an ordinance that was approved by the Board of Aldermen a couple of weeks ago. He said that the name better reflects the function of the department. He added that the department name would be changed in next year's budget.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked if the department receives other grants. Ms. Diamond-Graham replied that they get a grant from DSS – State of Connecticut and an HRD Grant and Youth Network Grant. She added that the grants are very minimal and it is not

guaranteed that they will get them. The DSS grant is for \$11,000 and the State Department of Education grant is \$35,000. She said that those have annually been cut.

Mr. Fitzpatrick then asked what the agency does. Ms. Diamond-Graham responded that there are two sections to the agency – the Human Service section provides outreach for clients, they run the energy assistance program, the rent rebate program and all the social service outreach for clients. The Youth Service portion of the agency has a therapy component where they provide therapy both at the Parsons Complex and in the school system, and they provide prevention-based programs for youth and their families.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked if any of their programs overlap with BRIDGES. Ms. Diamond-Graham replied that they don't overlap, but they run some similar programs and serve on some boards together. Mr. Fitzpatrick asked if any of BRIDGES funding is used for their agency. Ms. Diamond-Graham replied no. She said some of the funding sources are similar, but that they do not share funding. She added that many of the therapy referrals that they get are from BRIDGES because BRIDGES has a waiting list and the Milford Department of Human Services does not have a waiting list. Mr. Fitzgerald asked if the clients were residents of Milford. Ms. Diamond-Graham said that they only provide services to residents of Milford.

Ms. Diamond-Graham added that they lost FEMA funding in the amount of \$8,000-\$9,000 in the last month due to FEMA changing the way they are taking applications. She said that for the past 25 years United Way was the fiduciary agency for it and FEMA no longer has United Way do that. They are also asking that the agencies they provide funding for have supplemental funding for the programs. She said that unless we can prove that we have supplemental funding out of the agency that is allocated for the same purposes that FEMA fund, they will not provide funding.

The Mayor added that he has discussed this with Congresswoman DeLauro and Senator Lieberman and that there would be more follow-up discussions.

There were no further questions/comments.

Department 4819 – Milford Progress – Lynda Smith-Tellier, President of Milford Progress, and Cathy Alagno, President of the Milford Chamber of Commerce, were present. Ms. Smith-Tellier said that Milford Progress is the official downtown development agency. She said they are currently working on stage two of the signage study. She explained that phase two is the wayfinding which will then lead to the implementation of the signage. They anticipate this will cost approximately \$3,500 so they are asking for \$20,000 from the City to help with those costs.

Mr. Fitzgerald asked if the State will pay anything towards these signs. Ms. Smith-Tellier said that they are working with Jim Amann's office for the fabrication and implementation of the installation of the study once it's complete. They are also looking at other funding sources but do not have any that have been committed.

Mr. Lema asked if the signage is for public streets or for private buildings or both. Ms. Smith-Tellier replied that it is public signage that would be specified by neighborhoods. She gave an example of a sign in Woodmont that might say "Borough of Woodmont – City of Milford" and then there would be directional signage to Downtown, Route 1, the Duckpond, City Hall and other areas where people coming into the community can get to easily. It was added that phase one is the actual signage regulations which are currently in the City Attorney's office for review.

There were no further questions/comments.

Department 4158 – Inland/Wetlands Agency – Mary Rose Palumbo, Wetlands Enforcement Officer, was present. Mr. Agro asked if there has been any recent activity in the last year in that office or anything different in the last year or two. Ms. Palumbo replied that the office has been slower in the last year or two. She said there have been a lot of smaller projects such as house additions. She added that as David Sulkis, City Planner, had mentioned earlier there may be several larger projects coming up in the next year or two.

There were no further questions/comments.

Department 4818 – Milford Historic District – no representatives were present. Mr. Agro asked for some clarification on the two historic districts in the budget. Mayor Richetelli said that the amounts requested were identical. He explained that last year was the first year for Historic District II and that they needed more money in order to get started, for instance, ordering stationery and supplies. This year's request is just for secretarial fees. Mr. Lema asked if the Historic Districts are two distinct entities. The Mayor replied that they are. Mr. Fitzpatrick asked why secretarial fees were being paid. The Mayor responded that the FOI requirements include taking meeting minutes and posting agendas.

There were no further questions/comments.

Department 4820 – Milford Historic District II – no representatives were present. No questions or comments.

Department 4159 – Fowler Memorial Commission – no representatives were present. There were no questions or comments.

Department 4823 – Milford Association of Patriotic Organizations – no representatives were present. Mr. Lema asked if this organization provides flags for the graves. The Mayor replied that they do not. He said that they are a blanket agency for all of the veterans' organizations and oversee the parades and the ceremonies.

There were no further questions/comments.

Department 4822 – Cemetery Association – no representatives were present. There were no questions or comments.

Department 4815 – Veterans Grave Preservation Commission – Tom Cody, President, was present. Mr. Lema asked if this organization provides the flags for the graves. Mr. Cody replied that they used to do it but that the function was taken over by the Milford Association of Patriotic Organizations (MAPO).

There were no further questions/comments.

Department 4816 – Milford Flotilla 73 – John Godfrey, Flotilla Hoist Commander, and Timothy Mulherin were present. Mr. Agro asked what their overall budget is. Mr. Godfrey said their budget is about \$30,000 most of which is used for building maintenance, ground maintenance, new gravel and sidewalks.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked if homeland security were part of their function. Mr. Godfrey replied that it was not and then a short discussion ensued.

There were no further questions/comments.

Department 4825 – (CPAC) Homeless Shelter – Toni Dolan, Executive Director of the Beth-El Shelter, and Bob Herema, President of the Board, were present. Ms. Dolan gave the Board of Finance members a hand out explaining their programs. She then gave a quick overview. She said they were recently allowed to increase their bed capacity at the shelter from 32 to 34. Mr. Fitzpatrick asked if only adults were in the shelter. Ms. Dolan said there are men, women and families staying at the shelter on two separate sides of the building. She added that there can be a total of 34 people at all times in the building and that it is at capacity most of the time. She said their objective is to move people out and to get them back into the community. Mr. Agro asked if there were maximum stay limits. Ms. Dolan said that the limit is 90 days, but sometimes with families they need a little more time.

Mr. Agro then noted that the City's grant may be \$65,000 and asked what their total budget is. Ms. Dolan replied that this year's budget is \$577,075. She said that the City's portion is very critical. She added that the biggest income they have is from DSS at \$171,000 and said they also get money from United Way and FEMA.

A discussion then ensued about the property across the street that they sold, which will be supporting housing, and what a good partnership it will be.

There were no further questions/comments.

Department 4111 – Board of Aldermen - no representatives were present. Mr. Fitzpatrick asked why there was an increase in the Secretarial Fees. The Mayor responded that there has been an increase in the number of special committees that the Board of Aldermen have created which require the taking of minutes.

Mr. Fitzgerald then asked who uses the computer that is listed in this budget. The Mayor replied that there is a shared secretary that the Board of Aldermen uses half of the time and the Legal Department uses half of the time. She uses the computer.

Department 4112 – Elections – no representatives were present. There were no questions or comments.

Department 4115 – Registrar of Voters – RoseMary Scarpa, Republican Registrar of Voters, and Antoinette Carey, Democratic Registrar of Voters, were present. They said they have been very busy with new voters and people changing their affiliations due to both the presidential primaries and the municipal elections. They added that this means extra postage and man hours were used. A discussion then ensued about the new ballots and the changes by the Secretary of State which now require them to print everything from an e-mail. This means that much more paper is now being used. Then another discussion took place about audits. Ms. Scarpa added that due to a change in the rules by the Secretary of State, many duties that used to be a function of the City Clerk's office have been switched to the Registrars' Office.

Both Registrars ended by saying that they need to increase their postage and office supplies account.

There were no further questions/comments.

Department 4129 – City Clerk – no representatives were present. *Mr. Agro asked if this department could be rescheduled to another night.*

Department 4121 – Mayor's Office – Vice Chairman Bergami commented that the Mayor presented his budget and then cut his own budget. Mayor Richetelli responded by saying that his budget reflects what he thinks he really needs, but the requests that he's making are what he thinks the City can afford. Mr. Agro then commented about what a modest approach the Mayor is taking, but added that due to the size of the City he is running, he should ask for something if he needs it. The Mayor assured Mr. Agro that everything that needs to be done would be done.

There were no further questions/comments.

Department 4122 – General Expenses – Mr. Lema commented on account 4998 9956 400th Celebration, saying he had never noticed this before. The Mayor said this account is based on the prior 350th celebration. He noted how big the celebration was and how there was not enough money to fund it. The Board of Aldermen had to be asked for money and then the City tried to reimburse them through donations from the business community. After this happened, there was a proposal to the Board of Aldermen to put \$2,000 aside every year for the 400th anniversary. Mr. Lema asked if there was a special fund set up for this or if it was just a line item. The Mayor said that there is a Fund 40 account which accumulates each year. Mr. Lema then asked if the Board of

Finance could get a spreadsheet or breakdown of this Fund 40 account. The Mayor asked the recording secretary to ask the Finance Director for this information.

There were no further questions/comments.

Department 4121 – Golf Course (Fund 18) – No representatives were present. The Mayor explained that this is an enterprise fund just like the Marina. Whatever money they take in, they then expend and have to cover. Mr. Agro asked about the Depreciation account. The Mayor said that is a question for the Finance Director.

There were no further questions/comments.

Department 4811 – Borough of Woodmont – No representatives were present.

Mr. Bergami asked if the Borough of Woodmont and the Golf Course could be rescheduled.

The session recessed at 8:32 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Marianne Winters-Croffy".

Marianne Winters-Croffy
Recording Secretary