

**BOARD OF FINANCE  
BUDGET DELIBERATIONS - FY 2013/2014  
PRESENTATION OF BOARD OF EDUCATION'S PROPOSED BUDGET  
FEBRUARY 15, 2012**

The Milford Board of Finance held a budget deliberations session on Wednesday, February 13, 2013 in Conference Room B of the Parsons Complex. Chairman Lema reconvened the meeting at 6:42 p.m. announcing they were out of recess. He stated they were here tonight regarding the education operating budget.

Board Members Present

Brian A Lema, Chairman  
Scott Marlow  
Mickel Montano

Also Present

Mayor Benjamin G. Blake  
Dr. Elizabeth Feser, Supt. of Schools  
James Richetelli, Deputy Supt. of Operations  
Susan Kelleher, Director Pupil Personnel  
Tracy Casey, Chairman (BOE) (7:00 p.m.)

Excused: Joseph J. Fitzpatrick, Jr., Joseph Castignoli

Chairman Lema noted Mr. Fitzpatrick and Mr. Castignoli, were excused this evening. He acknowledged the Chairman of the Board of Education; Tracy Casey would arrive shortly, but that they would start by going through the budget, addressing questions as they arise. He stated they would continue page by page and address any questions as they arise.

Mr. Richetelli stated Roman numeral pages VII-XII were summary pages.

Mr. Marlow asked on Roman numeral p. VIII is there had been a change in some of the account. He also noted an increase for aides.

Mr. Richetelli acknowledged there is a change. He explained a portion of the increase is due to security measures built into the current budget.

Mr. Marlow also asked about the summer school program, which he stated appeared to be going down.

Dr. Feser stated there are 67 new programs. She stated going forward they found they didn't need as much staff as previously budgeted.

Mr. Marlow asked about the cafeteria aides.

Dr. Feser stated they are tied to teacher evaluations. She explained there are no cafeteria aides in the middle schools, therefore the building administrator is in the cafeteria three periods a day. She stated the extra monies are to free up the administrator.

Chairman Lema noted on p. XII there appeared to be a decrease in instructional supplies.

Dr. Feser explained they are finding less of a demand of traditional instructional supplies, but rather an increase in software, etc. She stated the nature of teaching is changing.

Mr. Marlow referred to p. IX regarding contracted services, if that was picked up in another account.

Ms. Kelleher stated they hired an additional behaviorist this year to help support those students with enhanced needs.

Mr. Marlow asked if it was just cost alone or better educationally.

Ms. Kelleher replied it is better educationally and that they are better able to integrate the student.

Mr. Marlow asked about teacher mini grants.

Dr. Feser explained there has not been the demand there has been in the past.

Ms. Montano referred to page XI regarding Tuition – Gifted & Other Magnet and questioned the large increase.

Mr. Richetelli explained in that account they budget for the gifted program (\$5,000). He stated the additional money is the Wintergreen Magnet School, which is tied in with ACES.

Mr. Marlow asked about the Vo-Ag Program and if enrollment is on the decrease.

Mr. Richetelli stated it is slightly lower. He also stated in the current fiscal year the Board of Education asked administration to look at transportation costs. He went on to explain how they looked at each bus run and explained they now have designated areas where they pick up the students. He stressed they are in correlation with local bus runs. He stated by doing so they have been able to reduce one bus.

(p. XI) Mr. Marlow as about the line item 5105 Other Magnet under Transportation.

Mr. Richetelli stated that line item is for the Discovery Magnet School, which has 10 slots for Milford students. He stated they have been paying transportation which is less than what the State reimburses them, so they are asking Milford to pay that difference.

Mayor Blake asked if there was any change in the amount of Title 1 monies that Milford would received.

Dr. Feser replied she did not know that answer right now. She stated she expected to learn in the spring what those numbers would be. Dr. Feser stated they are optimistically anticipating the same amount, but don't have a solid number as yet.

(p. XII) Chairman Lema asked if the \$450,000 non-lapsing education funds shows up as a fund somewhere else in the budget.

Mr. Richetelli stated the total under FY11-12 is expended. He stated it is treated as a one lump sum expenditure.

Chairman Lema asked if there are plans in this budget to use those monies.

Mr. Richetelli stated it was discussed to use those monies as capital expenditures.

(p. XII) Chairman Lema asked about line item 811 – Other Educational Support and noted a substantial increase.

Dr. Feser explained there are two drivers here. She stated the first is the Common Core State Standard (CCSS) where Connecticut has signed on, adding the standard is much higher. She stated these numbers reflect a significant amount of teacher development and other standards. Dr. Feser explained the other driver is teacher evaluations, which is tied to student performance. She stated it is mandatory to be in place by 2014. She reiterated it is a significant amount of teacher development where they will be rated and held to a higher standards.

Chairman Lema asked if there would be recurring costs.

Dr. Feser replied yes, but that they should be able to reduce it in the future, but that it would take some time.

Mr. Marlow asked if there would be a need for additional staffing with this new mandate.

Dr. Feser recalled the restructuring Milford did last year. She explained if those positions had not be implemented, it is likely they would have been required. She explained it is particularly needed in the elementary schools where the additional support is needed. She also stated with supervisors helping out it frees up the principal.

Mrs. Casey stated the Board has talked a lot about State requirements and testing. She stated the fundamental bottom line in it is good, adding it is already were they were heading and that Milford is way ahead of the curve.

(p. XII) Chairman Lema referred to line item 8201 Student Athletics and asked if that was due to the lacrosse program.

Mrs. Casey replied yes. She also stated there was some misinformation given and wanted it clarified that the Board also gave monies to the ice hockey program as well.

Mr. Richetelli added they Board agreed has planned for the head coach and are proposing to pay for the assistant coach.

Mrs. Casey stated with regard to the lacrosse program, the Board knew it was coming. She also commented the reality is a good portion of the hockey program is funded. She stated the coaches, transportation and partial ice team are funded through the Board of Education.

Chairman Lema asked if the dollars are primarily for coaching staff.

Mrs. Casey stated it is for coaches, transportation, athletic trainers and equipment.

Chairman Lema asked about enrollment and if they there was a trend with the numbers and what they expected.

Dr. Feser stated there has been a steady decline, but noted it is not just in Milford, but throughout the State. She stated that was part of the reason the Board of Education initiated the Long Range Planning Study.

Mrs. Casey added the Planning is ongoing, however, there have been hampered by a major hurricane, snowstorm, etc this past year. She stated she expects the results to have an impact in next year's budget. She also stated there is an audit that will be going on with respect to busing. She stated with the decrease in enrollment she is hoping for additional opportunities to decrease the transportation portion of the budget.

(p. 15) Chairman Lema asked about the jump in staff in 2010/2011 to the present and if that reflected those grant positions.

Dr. Feser replied yes.

Chairman Lema asked about expected retirements.

Mr. Richetelli explained they always budget for 15-20 each year and that they expect the number this year to be in that range.

Mr. Marlow asked about the reduction in the number of special education students. He asked if that enrollment was going down and if so, what staffing be cut.

Ms. Kelleher stated they are stagnant currently. She went on to explain the changed model of services and center models. She stated basically they are changing how they provide service. She also pointed out they are working side by side with regular teachers.

Mrs. Casey commented regarding the overall decrease in students. She stated it equates to a group reduction without a specific number attached.

(p. 11) 2000 Series – Benefits –

Mr. Marlow commented workers compensation has increased and asked if it was due to the audits.

Mr. Richetelli stated there was an 8% increase in workers compensation. He explained they are in the last year of a three year term.

Mayor Blake added the City is self-insured for workers compensation. He asked if the Board of Education looked into doing the same.

Mr. Richetelli replied he did not, but that his predecessor had done so and it was decided it was best to continue to stay with CIRMA.

(p. 16) 4000 Series – Facilities

Mayor Blake asked why the IT budget is doing down.

Mr. Richetelli stated they continue to bring a lot of things in-house. He explained part of it is licensing, which has gone down, as well as the cost of printers.

Mr. Marlow asked about the energy conservation services, basically the Board of Education was educating people as to how to do things.

Mr. Richetelli stated it is a very successful program savings a great deal of dollars.

Mr. Marlow asked if there would ever be a time that it would go away.

Mr. Richetelli explained it is a 4-year program, now called Synergistic. He stated they would like to continue the program, but have not made a final decision as yet. He stated since 2011 they have saved just under \$1,000,000.

Mr. Marlow asked if the company actually fixes items, such as fire alarm testing, sprinkler, etc.

Mr. Richetelli stated the specialists are on-site once a month.

(p. 23) 5000 Series – Transportation, Tuition and Other Support

Mr. Marlow commented some numbers in individual schools are going down, but in some schools it is up. He questioned why.

Mr. Richetelli explained the per pupil expenditure. He stated it is where the principal is seeking priorities for that year in their building. He also stated overall instructional supplies have changed.

Dr. Feser added office supplies; etc is down and has a lot to do with technology as well.

Mr. Richetelli stated he would get specific details from Mr. Cummings.

Ms. Montano noted the large shift at Pumpkin Delight School.

Mr. Richetelli explained it is the shift of monies from non-instructional to instructional supplies.

Mrs. Casey added it was her recollection this had to do with a parent program.

Chairman Lema asked if everything is now accessible on-line, i.e. grades, etc.

Mr. Richetelli replied yes.

(p. 38) 7000 Series – Equipment

Chairman Lema asked about line item 7310 Equipment for all schools.

Mr. Richetelli stated the bulk of that line item is Smartboards for the 4<sup>th</sup> grade.

Dr. Feser added driving that is a new math program, Investigations Math.

Mr. Richetelli also stated last year they did Smartboards for the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade.

Mr. Marlow noted the same amount is spent in the computer budget. He asked if that is a replacement cycle.

Dr. Feser replied yes. She explained when the high school computers are replaced they are able to move them down to the elementary level.

(p. 40) 8000 Series – All Other Educational Support

(p. 41) Mr. Marlow asked about 8200 Student Activities.

Mrs. Casey explained those are stipends. She also stated they added a debate club at the high schools as well as unified sports.

Ms. Kelleher added the unified sports program has blossomed.

(p. G1) Grants Detail

Mr. Marlow asked if entitlement grants would remain the same.

Dr. Feser stated they have not heard as yet. She stated most of the entitlement grants are Federal and that they have not received any indication.

Ms. Kelleher spoke of IDEA. She stated they have been warned there will be a possible reduction.

Dr. Feser spoke about the Family Resource program run by Ms. Peggy Kelly, which could be impacted.

Mr. Marlow asked how many families take advantage of the program.

Dr. Feser stated she did not have the numbers.

(p. A1) Appendix

Mayor Blake spoke regarding ECS funding. He stated the governor is proposing approximately \$600,000 additional monies which could offset other grants, but it is not firmly known at this point.

Chairman Lema asked the Board of Education if they wished to make any additional comment.

Mrs. Casey apologized for being late. She stated most of the comments she had planned to make have been addressed. She stated there has a lot of conversation about the amount of money Milford saves with regard to the Vo Ag Program in Trumbull. She stressed the Board of Education does not save that much money. She stated Milford is fortunate to have this opportunity for our kids. She stated 24 kids does not equate to a per student capita and that they numbers are only estimates. She stated there is a list of wonderful opportunities which is great but also concerning because of cost. Mrs. Casey stated Milford has a very good school system

and asked the Board's approval of the budget. She stated the Board continues to think of ways to cut costs, citing the audit currently ongoing. She also spoke of the SRO in our schools, which Chief Mello believes in strongly.

Mr. Marlow asked Dr. Feser if she could comment on the security issue.

Dr. Feser stated her along with Chief Mello and Mayor Blake have been in constant communications. She stated they are taking a measured approach, with many steps already taken. She went on to explain the role of a greeter at the elementary schools.

Mr. Richetelli stated in this budget there is an additional \$87,000 for security measures. She explained the quick link notification system, the addition of swipe entrances as well as additional cameras and classroom door locks. He stated going forward they are continuing with a measured approach. He also referenced the school safety working task group that meets weekly.

Mrs. Casey added what is most important is the philosophical aspect of what they want in our schools.

Being no further business to discuss, the Board recessed at 8:18 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen K. Huber  
Recording Secretary