

**BOARD OF FINANCE
BUDGET DELIBERATIONS - PROPOSED BUDGET 2009-2010
FEBRUARY 23, 2009**

The Milford Board of Finance held a budget deliberations session on Wednesday, February 23, 2009 in Conference Room B of the Parsons Complex. Vice Chairman Lema reconvened the session at 7:02 p.m.

Board Members Present

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

Also Present

Mayor James L. Richetelli, Jr.
Judy Doneiko, Finance Director

Excused

Stephen J. Skudlarek, Jr. (business)

Vice Chairman Lema noted for the record that Chairman Skudlarek had a work conflict this evening and was unable to be here. He asked each individual planning to speak on behalf of their budget to please state their name.

(4803) Fine Arts Council – Bill Meddick, Director and Donna Corey, President of the Fine Arts Council were present. Ms. Corey stated he past years they have come and just talked. She stated this year they brought homework. She gave a written statement to each Board member. She stated they were presenting a “bare-bones” conservative budget noting they have had to layoff three employees. She also noted they eliminated a program that has always sustained a loss. Ms. Corey also commented a great deal of their expenses is related to building operations, i.e. repairs and maintenance; and of course the ever increasing cost of utilities. She expressed her concern of their being able to stretch their funds to make it to year-end. She also stated they would be doing some alternative fundraising and are energizing their Board. She also spoke of the excellent reputation the art council has in the State.

Mr. Meddick spoke as to such items as a compressor and elevator repairs, which were large items that require large amount of monies. He stated they are trying to learn through all of this and hope to get through the year.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked how much they receive from the State. Mr. Medick responded \$11,000, but it was cut to \$7,000 but they are unsure what they actually will receive this year. Ms. Corey added they are being more aggressive going out for their ad book.

Mr. Agro commented things are dramatically different and asked each of the department heads tonight not to be offended by the Board’s questions this evening. He stated they Board is attempting to craft a philosophy they can adopt to forward numbers to the Board of Aldermen for next month.

Mr. Meddick commented they generate \$203,000 in revenue, which is about one-third. He also noted attendance at their activities has been higher this year. He stated people are looking locally for entertainment instead of going to New York.

(4805) C-Med – Vice Chairman Lema stated it was his understanding this is based on a per capita figure.

Mayor Richetelli added the population is also calculated in as well as the number of calls per year. He stated C-Med is able to talk to the area hospitals to route ambulances, which the local dispatch cannot do. He stated it is the opinion of the fire chief this service is invaluable. He also stated the area towns all pay a set formula amount.

(4807) Regional Mental Health – Vice Chairman Lema noted this was discussed last week with Claire Phelan.

(4801) Council on Aging – Janice Jackson, Director, Mary Allen, Clerk were present. Ms. Jackson distributed a handout to the Board members. She stated the Milford Senior Center has been recognized in a US News & World Report as one of the best places for a senior to retire to.

Mr. Agro asked the total income overall budget and operation. Ms. Allen responded \$1,500,000. She stated they also raise money from their consignment shop as well as their dues. Mr. Agro asked the amount of dues. Ms. Jackson responded \$8.00. She stated they have 3,500 members. Mr. Agro asked if the center is still busy. Ms. Allen responded yes. She stated they are very busy with rides, which is the transportation they provide for doctor's visits, etc.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked how many employees they have. Ms. Jackson responded 25 part-time and 12 full-time with 17 teachers. Mr. Fitzpatrick asked how many vehicles they own. Ms. Jackson responded 14. She stated they have 7 drivers, which is included in the number of employees. Mr. Fitzpatrick asked about the teaching budget. Ms. Allen explained their teachers are paid for each class they teach, i.e. yoga, crafts, line dancing, etc. She stated the amount if \$50.00. Mr. Fitzpatrick asked about benefits costs. Ms. Allen replied they project it to be about \$342,000. Mr. Fitzpatrick asked if they receive pension and health benefits. Ms. Allen replied yes. Mr. Fitzpatrick asked if there is any overtime. Ms. Allen responded no. Mr. Fitzpatrick asked if they came under the City.

Ms. Doneiko responded they are a 501C-3 corporation, so they are not part of the City.

Ms. Smith asked about maintenance on the buildings. Ms. Jackson explained it is done through the City.

Ms. Doneiko added they City holds the property insurance and the center holds the liability insurance.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked if they had looked at other towns regarding membership fees. Ms. Jackson responded they have. Mr. Fitzpatrick asked the last time the membership fees were increased. Ms. Jackson replied it was about 7 years ago. She stated they are looking at a possible increase.

Ms. Smith asked if the center is open to both citizens and non-residents. Ms. Jackson responded it is open to anyone over age 55 years, but you need to be a resident of Milford

(4133) Probate Court – no representative was present. Mr. Lema noted their budget was lower than last year and that basically it is for supplies.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked if this is self-sustaining or if it should be.

Mayor Richetelli explained most of what the City covers is required by law. He stated the City pays only the basics.

Mr. Agro spoke as to the talk of consolidation in the State and if Milford was in that mix.

Mayor Richetelli stated he spoke with Judge Kelafas concerning this. He stated Milford is a very busy office and it benefits the citizens of Milford. He added it is good having that office here in Milford.

(4131) Law Department – Winthrop S. Smith, III, City Attorney was present. Attorney Smith commented in the six weeks he has been the City Attorney he has been impressed with the operation of the office and its personnel. He stated he also has had discussions with the former City Attorney, Marilyn Lipton and that he commended her for the year of work in that department. He stated he is happily impressed with the operation of the office and the expenses. He stated the budget this year came in \$1,000 less than what the Board of Aldermen approved last year.

Mr. Agro asked Attorney Smith if he had any ideas for consolidation that could make this Board's decision easier. Attorney Smith spoke as to the contracts he has been working on, stating it is more policy in most of the contracts he has looked at. He stated if they are reduced then the contractual amount is reduced. He explained his review of these contracts.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked about budget line items 4122 0000 Other Legal Fees and 4189 0000 Misc. Professional Fees and Svc. and asked if this is for outside counsel. Attorney Smith responded yes, as well as for other items. He stated the correct description should say consultants.

Ms. Doneiko added it covers legal fees, actuarial fees, sheriff's fees as well as for pension consultant. She stated the City Attorney's Office negotiates these contracts that is why it is in the city attorney budget.

Mayor Richetelli added the budget line for Other Legal Fees is for attorney and miscellaneous fees in support of the legal office. He stated it also covers appraisals.

Attorney Smith added environmental is another area that comes to mind.

(4131) Ethics Commission – no representative was present.

Mayor Richetelli explained the budget was much higher in the past because it was a new commission and they did not know what to expect. He stated there has only been one case that went past the probable cause, which was about \$15,000-16,000.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked about budget line item 4712 0000 Training Expenses. Mayor Richetelli explained the Ethics Commission holds ethics training for the department heads in the City. He explained those training costs come out of this account as well as customer service training.

(4193) Public Library – Mrs. Jean Tsang and Ms. Mary Tinti from the library board were present. Mrs. Tsang also recognized Ald. Rosen, recently appointed as liaison to the library board. Mrs. Tsang reported the library

is up 10% in circulation this year. She stated they are operating on 6-10 people and that there seasonal temporary budget covers all part time employees and includes students that shelve books. State stated the seasonal temporary account also covers nights and weekends.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked about budget line item 4783 0000 Office Supplies & Expenses. Mrs. Tsang explained the supplies are for the printers for people who print from the Internet. She stated they pay for the cartridges and paper.

Ms. Smith asked about budget line item 4796 0000 Computer Software & Maintenance. Mrs. Tsang explained it is a stand-alone system and that the fee for the system includes the back up Dynex System. Ms. Smith asked about budget line item 4789 0100 Information Services. Mrs. Tsang responded it is for hardware and software in bibliographical. She state the Cablevision bill also comes out of this account and that the wireless is also on that account.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked about budget line item 4977 0099 Computer, other. Mrs. Tsang responded the amount also includes a monitor, keyboard, etc. Mr. Fitzpatrick asked about budget line item 4977 0190 Computer. Mrs. Tsang explained is this part of the replacement schedule for all computers.

Mr. Agro stated throughout the budget meetings they have asked a general question concerning the possibilities of consolidation. He asked if there was any other forms of consolidation or consideration of reduction at the library. Mrs. Tsang responded the library budget has been under funded for many years. She stated people want more from a library but they just can't provide it. She stated they rely on grants, Friends of the Library, etc. She continued speaking as to services. She also added the library is at times under funded and she often works the desk when they are short-staffed.

Mr. Lema asked about budget line item 4980 0170 Microfilm. Mrs. Tsang responded they still receive the Milford Mirror and New Haven Register, which is on microfilm. Mr. Lema asked about the Revenue side and asked about the non-resident fee of \$15.00. Mrs. Tsang explained the State of Connecticut reimburses them. She explained how the card works and where it is available. She stated this is for people who may rent or currently reside at the homeless shelters. Mr. Lema asked where the money goes. Mrs. Tsang responded they have purchased different items, such as DVD's and MP3 player, etc. Mr. Lema asked the total portion of the budget. Mrs. Tsang explained the breakdown of what the Friends of the Library pays for such as movies, movie machine. She stated they have also bought 2 LCDs for the Passport Office.

Mr. Agro commented it was his understanding Friends of the Library raises in the neighborhood of \$20,000, and asked if they are at liberty to spend as they wish. Mrs. Tsang responded yes.

(4123) Community Development – Bob Gregory, Director was present.

Ms. Smith asked if he could describe 2-3 big projects the department is proud of. Mr. Gregory spoke of the positive affect the purchase of the Showcase Cinemas would have as well as the purchase of Milford Plaza by another developer. He stated they look forward to working with that new owner in developing the shopping center. Mr. Gregory stated another positive area is the energy things happening. He explained the NRG program, the fuel cell plant, just as a few. He stated another positive was the re-location of Hasler, a postage meter company to Milford. He stated they closed their California operation and relocated their employees to Milford and Texas. He spoke of the completion of the retail projects over the last few years that included the

expansion of the Connecticut Post Mall, the Jai Alai project, Milford Marketplace and Milford Crossing. He also stated Wholefoods is still on target to come to Milford. Ms. Smith asked if they are seeing more requests for support with grant writing. Mr. Gregory replied they do some grant writing, citing Devon Center as well as FEMA grants, Block grants, etc.

Mr. Lema asked if there is any funding left for the Point Beach area with the FEMA grants. Mr. Gregory responded they filed two grant applications under the program that FEMA runs.

(4155) Economic Development – Bob Gregory was present. No questions.

(4812) Transit District – no one was present.

(4610) Health Department – Dr. McBride was present along with Ernie Judson, Vice Chairman of the Health Commission. Dr. McBride spoke as to the economic spirit of the times when public health increases. He stated they are seeing environmental demands, food preparation, industry, housing, as well as a lot of people in single family homes that have needs that aren't apparent unless someone were to enter the dwelling, i.e. fire department. He also noted with the stresses of job pressure parents tend to send ill children to school. He stated when times are tough the need for public health services goes up.

Ms. Smith commented she has worked first hand with the sanitarians and that they are very strict, but do a great job, adding she recognizes the difficulty of the job.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked about budget line item 4416 0000 Pest Control and asked if that is contractual. Dr. McBride explained the details of the spraying they do for the killing of mosquito larva.

Mr. Lema asked about budget line item 4978 0709 Generator. Mr. Judson responded they have been very aggressive with their grant writer, but they have been unable to get any funds in the form of federal grants. He stated all health departments have been asked to join in as first responders thus the need.

Mr. Agro commented as to the proximity of the health department location to the fire department. Mr. Judson stated to keep their office going they would need a separate generator. He spoke as to the need to keep the central air going which puts a big demand on the generator. He also noted it would be incompatible to tap in with the fire department.

(4997) Education Health Services/School Nurses – Dr. McBride was present for questions.

Mr. Agro commented many years ago when he was on this Board there were discussions as to the importance of having a school nurse in every school. He asked where they stood currently with school nurses. Dr. McBride replied there is a school nurse in every school, public and parochial. He stated the schools have excellent records because of nursing assessment. Mr. Agro asked about the dental hygienist position. Dr. McBride explained the screening that takes place in the 5th grades and lower. He stated it is for prevention and that they also provide sealant work as well. Dr. McBride stated it is a great program because so many children don't get these services.

Ms. Smith asked about budget line item 4117 0000 Seasonal/Temporary and what type of services this was for. Dr. McBride explained it is used for the clerks that help the nurses with paperwork. He stated they are at the

high schools and one middle school. Ms. Smith asked about budget line item 4131 0000 Medical & Dental. Dr. McBride explained it is the dental consultant to the dental hygienist.

(4821) Visiting Nurse Association – Dr. McBride was present for questions. Dr. McBride stated this account is up. He explained they do not charge for immunizations. He also stated the demand for services is up adding the demand will grow next year because people may not be able to afford them.

(4340) Animal Control – Rick George, Animal Control Officer was present. Mr. George gave the Board a quick overview of the department. He stated 911, Katrina, etc. changed the face of how the community deals with animals in an emergency, and that they too are first responders. He explained how they are trying to accumulate equipment in the event of an emergency. He also spoke as to the number of licensed and unlicensed dogs, which is possibly equal.

Mr. Agro asked if they are at full staff. Mr. George responded yes, that within the last month they filled a position that had been vacant.

Ms. Smith asked about overtime and when it occurs. Mr. George explained when the kennel is closed the animals still need to be fed, kennels cleaned, etc. He also pointed out that when the economy worsens the number of cases they have increases. He explained situations such as someone who is being evicted and must give up an animal or someone who has lost a job and just can't afford to have their animals any longer.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked about the two temporary shelters. Mr. George explained they are similar to a tent and able to sustain winds up to 80 mph. He also stated they are portable. He stated this request is found in budget line item 4720 0033 and understand this just was not the time for it.

Mr. Lema asked the total budget and how much they bring in grants and donations. Mr. George responded nothing in grants. He stated they have an open fund for funding for the building. He stated they are looking for storage. Mr. George also explained they receive general donations for food which is earmarked for the animals.

Ms. Doneiko noted that account is less than \$1,000.

(4310) Police Department – Chief Keith Mello and Deputy Chief Steven Fournier were present. Chief Mello stated he felt it was appropriate to talk about what was not in the budget. He spoke as to the cost of not being able to meet legal mandates that have been put into effect. He also spoke as to the need to purchase a fingerprinting system, and that they don't have facilities for a juvenile detainee, although they are not the only department not to have this. He stated they put in for in-car video system at a cost of \$6,000 per car, a police boat, which is used as a dive platform. He also addressed the overtime account that is now depleted, the uniform account now depleted and that there are new officers that don't have summer uniforms. He stated he needed to mention these things because he believes the budget is already under funded.

Mr. Agro commented it was refreshing the department had taken such a detailed look at the budget. He stated what is glaring in the budget is a new police office. He stated they have been adding an officer for the last two years. He asked how many officers they would have if this new addition goes through. Chief Mello responded by addressing the growth in Milford, the increase in calls, reports, training, forensic demands, etc. He stated in 1980 they had 110 officers and two years ago they had 109. He stated currently they are at 111. Chief Mello stated the demands on law enforcement also increase with the economic times.

Mr. Lema stated it was his recollection last year the department asked for an officer as well. Chief Mello responded yes, and that request was funded.

Mayor Richetelli commented himself and the Board of Aldermen, through their vote, made a commitment to add a police officer per year for 4 years.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked about budget line item 4971 0214 Police Cruisers. Chief Mello responded with the increase of officers comes an increase of beats. He explained the front line cars operate 24/7. Chief Mello stated they are on a replacement cycle every 3 years. He also noted with the replacement of a cruiser comes the change over of the interior equipment. Mr. Fitzpatrick asked how many cars they would purchase with the amount budgeted. Chief Mello responded that amount should give them between 9 and 10 cars, depending on the variables, i.e. trade-in, etc. Mr. Fitzpatrick asked how many front line cars they have. Chief Mello replied 16.

Mr. Lema asked about budget line item 4331 0000 Gas & Other Propellants and asked how they arrived at this figures. Chief Mello commented gas has come down although they anticipate an increase. He explained the private duty account they now have. He stated there is a 20% surcharge on the money that is used to offset costs.

Ms. Doneiko addressed workers compensation, insurance liability regarding the necessary benefits which also comes out of that money the Chief referenced.

Chief Mello explained the program they began. He also spoke as to the older cars not being used when an officer is worker a private duty assignment.

Mr. Lema asked the Chief if he knew how that figure was arrived at in the budget, asking if there was a formula. Chief Mello responded it is based at \$2.05 or \$2.25 per gallon.

(4350) Building Inspection Department – Thomas Raucci, Chief Building Inspector was present. He stated he would be happy to answer any questions.

Mr. Agro spoke as to the tenure of the questions explaining it is what the Board has asked throughout the budget inquiries. He stated it is part of their job and a part of this process and that no offense was intended. He asked Mr. Raucci what his department was currently seeing and also about the growth of the department on the revenue side of things.

Mr. Raucci responded he ran the number for the first 6 months of the year and permits are only off 6%, adding the nature and complexity also vary. He spoke of the large retail grown in the past two years which has curtailed somewhat, but stated they are still seeing home improvement permits, etc.

Mr. Agro asked if there was anything big commercially coming up. Mr. Raucci replied the Plains Road project would be a large project. Mr. Agro commented it was his understanding that was still with Planning and Zoning. Mr. Agro stated the question he has asked all regards the report that has come out and asked Mr. Raucci if he could foresee anyway of streamlining or consolidating of departments in an effort to have money.

Mr. Raucci responded each of the departments is all so very different with varying rules. He noted there were some good things that came out of the report, but there were a number of deficiencies in the report.

Mr. Lema asked Mr. Raucci if there was anything in his budget that would affect the implementation of some of the issues addressed. He pointed out there were some items that were zeroed out in the budget.

Ms. Doneiko noted those items were a duplication of services through the bonding Ordinance last year.

Mr. Agro pointed out interfacing between the departments would be valuable.

Ms. Doneiko spoke with regard to the fuels and stated they bid out for fuel through the purchasing agent. Brief discussion as to fuel purchases.

Vice Chairman Lema recessed the Board at 9:16 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen K. Huber
Recording Secretary