

**BOARD OF FINANCE
BUDGET DELIBERATIONS - PROPOSED BUDGET 2015-2016
FEBRUARY 23, 2015**

The Milford Board of Finance held a budget deliberations session on Monday, February 23, 2015 in Conference Room B of the Parsons Complex. Chairman Lema reconvened the budget session at 6:36 p.m.

Board Members Present

Brian A Lema, Chairman
Joseph J. Fitzpatrick, Jr.
Scott Marlow
Mickel Montano
Joseph Castignoli

Also Present

Mayor Benjamin G. Blake
Peter Erodici, Finance Director

Chairman Lema stated Judge Streit-Kefalas had a conflict and requested to be heard at the beginning of the meeting.

Mayor Blake also asked the Board's consideration in re-ordering the agenda and moving the Law Department up in the agenda after Probate Court.

Chairman Lema stated he would entertain a motion to re-order the agenda and bring forward account 4133 Probate Court, followed by account 4131 and account 4132. .

Mr. Fitzpatrick and Mr. Marlow made and seconded a motion to re-order the agenda and bring forward account 4133 – Probate Court, followed by account 4131 – Law Department and account 4132 – Ethics Commission. Motion carried unanimously.

(4133) Probate Court – Judge Beverly Streit Kefalas was present for questions/comments. Judge Streit Kefalas stated her budget is a flat request from last year. She spoke of unknown such as postage, etc. She also reminded the Board this budget reflects Milford's portion only. She explained the statute regarding the sharing of the two towns, Milford and Orange and the allocation of Orange's budget. She stated each year they have had a slight increase in that account which they have accrued and they will purchase a laser fiche.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked if the governor's budget cuts would affect the probate court budget.

Judge Streit Kefalas replied no.

(4131) Law Department – City Attorney Jonathan D. Berchem was present for questions/comments.

Chairman Lema stated he would recuse himself from this department and the Ethics Commission and turned the meeting over to Vice Chairman Castignoli.

Attorney Berchem thanked the Board for accommodating him. He stated his budget is identical to last year other than contractual wage adjustments.

Mr. Castignoli asked if there are wage adjustments.

Mayor Blake explained the contract for the City Hall Employee's Union expired June 30, 2014. He stated the adjustment is in the salary reserve account.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked if the paralegal position and legal administrative positions were full time or part time.

Attorney Berchem stated those positions are all full time. He stated he is part-time time, with a full time assistant city attorney and a part-time trial counsel.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked about the risk manager position.

Attorney Berchem stated she procures the city's insurance as well as oversee worker's compensation and various other matters concerning the city's insurance.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked if that is a legal position.

Attorney Berchem stated he works with her on a day to day basis. He explained her position was originally in the Finance Department's budget; however she worked out of the Personnel Department. He stated because of the daily workload it only made sense to move her to the law department, which was accomplished last year.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked about law books.

Attorney Berchem stated it is the updating of their law books and various publications which keep them up to date. He stated they have successfully been able to negotiate this line item down over the last few years. There also books, catalogues that we receive on a regular basis.

(4131) Ethics Commission – City Attorney Jonathan D. Berchem was present for questions/comments. No questions.

(4310) Police Department – Chief Keith Mello was present for questions/comments. Chief Mello stated this year's budget reflects the contractual wage adjustment in the contracts. He stated there is no new growth and that his budget maintains the current operation of the department.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked about overtime which he noted is up \$15,000,

Chief Mello stated it is actually higher than that and pointed out compared to other towns the same size as Milford, overtime is actually less.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked how many canines the department has.

Chief Mello stated four.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked about line item 4112 9905 Stipend, K-9 Homecare.

Chief Mello explained it is set by federal law that they have to pay the handler a stipend.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked about line item 4791 0000 Tests and Evaluations which he stated is up \$4,000.

Chief Mello explained they have testing every other year for various positions and that testing costs are up. He stated it is for testing booklets, etc.

Mr. Castignoli asked about line item 4150 0000 Contractual Services and asked what that account is used for.

Chief Mello stated that is the maintenance of their computer network. He explained their computer system is maintained by their officers, two of which have recently retired. He stated it is a very sophisticated system and they do get some assistance from MIS when needed.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked about the dispatchers 4 police and 8 fire. He stated it was his understanding there would be a consolidation.

Chief Mello stated they previously laid off one dispatcher. He explained while they are housed in the same building the dispatchers are not cross-trained to do each other's work. He stated he has had discussions regarding this with the Mayor.

Mayor Blake stated when the consolidation of the fire/police dispatchers took place, the fire dispatchers were moved to the police department as the central location. He stated at some point they will have discussions with the two unions.

Chief Mello added they share the same space.

Mayor Blake also pointed out they received additional funding from the State for the consolidation.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked how many are on duty.

Chief Mello stated there are two police dispatchers and two fire dispatchers on duty each day, so basically there are always four on duty. He stated in the future they may be able to reduce the number; however, they will have to have discussions with the two unions.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked about CMED.

Mayor Blake explained that is the link between the fire rescue and the hospital.

Chairman Lema asked about the SRO's. He stated the Board of Education in their budget asked for two additional SRO's. He asked if it was reflected in the police budget.

Chief Mello replied no, they did not have it in their budget.

Mayor Blake stated he has discussed this with Chief Mello but due to the numbers it just wasn't something that they could put into their budget.

Chairman Lema asked if those officers assigned to the schools are put back on patrol when school is not in session. He asked if they are primarily assigned to the downtown area.

Chief Mello stated the downtown area is one of the areas they are assigned to. He stated they are generally assigned to areas where they have had problems. He also stated the SRO's are involved in the safety planning with the schools.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked if they have special training.

Chief Mello yes

Chairman Lema asked how they are assigned.

Chief Mello stated two are assigned at the two high schools and the other two rotate between the other schools and the Academy.

(4340) Animal Control – Scott Ellington, Acting Animal Control Officer was present for questions/comments.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked about line item 4117 0000 Seasonal/Temporary.

Mr. Ellington stated they work with Chapel Haven, Bridges to give the special needs students' opportunities for job work.

Mr. Castignoli asked about rabies control.

Mr. Ellington explained that is the feral control cat program. This helps control the cat population.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked if they do that with other animals.

Mr. Marlow asked about the vehicle the department requested.

Mr. Ellington stated he has a vehicle that has completely died and the other has been repaired by the Public Works Department, but it is on its last leg.

Mayor Blake stated they are looking at alternatives to purchase another vehicle so it does not come out of the taxpayer monies.

Mr. Castignoli asked how many vehicles the department has.

Mr. Ellington replied three. He stated he has one vehicle and the two assistants each have a vehicle. He commented his vehicle cannot handle more than one animal.

(4801) Council on Aging – Janice Jackson, Director and Mary Allen Herma were present. Ms. Jackson distributed their February bulletin and their program pamphlet of services. She stated they have six full time employees and twenty-nine part-time employees along with eight instructors. She stated the Mayor has recommended the \$12,000 increase they requested. She spoke of their request for new meals on wheels vehicle. She stated they also applied for a grant to offset the costs. Reading from a prepared statement she provided the Board with the number of meals provided, rides, etc.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked about the number of rides they provide.

Ms. Jackson explained they transport people to medical appointments. She stated when they cannot provide a ride; they refer the individual to the transit district.

Mr. Fitzpatrick suggested they defer to the transit district for rides.

Ms. Jackson pointed out they only transport in Milford during the week. She also stated they follow the school schedule with regard to weather and closings.

Ms. Herman stated they transport those individuals with vans/buses, so it is more than one person at a time.

Ms. Jackson stated they are always looking for ways to reduce costs. When possible they will replace a teacher with a volunteer. She also stated they instituted a by-weekly payroll system which was a savings. She also stated they no longer mail out reminders to their members to pay their dues.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked how many members they have and how they keep track of who has paid.

Ms. Jackson stated there are 2,000 members.

Mr. Fitzpatrick questioned if it was possible people are using the services and not paying.

Ms. Jackson stated they sign in when they come in and have to show their identification card. She also stated a member with an IT background has volunteered their time to help with their website. She continued reading from a prepared report regarding comparison costs over the last three years. She also provided the numbers who participated in classes. She also reported they still use their donation box which continues to be successful. Ms. Jackson stated they are also open on Sundays and sell hot dogs which have been profitable. She reported their consignment shop that raised over \$8,000.

Mr. Castignoli asked about the workers compensation rate.

Ms. Jackson stated 2014 stated it was 0.16.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked if meal prices have gone up.

Ms. Jackson stated it costs \$3.00 for a meal. She stated they also offer a la cart prices. She stated there is a menu in the bulletin which also shows the costs for meals and other items.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked if they receive donations from the local supermarkets.

Ms. Jackson replied yes. She stated they also have the food bank. She stated in the summertime the community gardens donate to them as well.

(4803) Fine Arts Council – Paige Miglio, Executive Director was present. She stated last year they had a lot of building issues, i.e. water in the basement. She stated they have done a lot of work both inside and outside and received assistance from the Transit District. She stated they have never had a line item for building work, which they now added to their budget and have added \$10,000 to that line item. She also stated for the first time in their history they had some vandalism. Ms. Miglio stated they just added a facilities director and also someone for their books.

(4812) Transit District – Henry Jadach, Executive Director was present for questions/comments. Mr. Jadach stated they have a local fixed bus route service, and their coastal link, van service, service for seniors, and they operate the train station. He stated their budget is funded 80% by the State and 20% by the City. He stated they just finished an upgrade of one of their hubs at the mall. He stated it has been a long process. He stated the budget is the same as last year. He stated it is a significant amount of money but it puts Milford in a good position with regard to transportation.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked how many transports per year.

Mr. Jadach stated 60,000 rides per year. He explained someone will do a program at the senior center and then have a medical appointment and need a ride. He stated there is also the occasion when someone may be there and not feel well and need a ride home. Mr. Jadach stated they work very well with the senior center. He also stated they transport a lot of people for dialysis services. He stated there are now two locations in Milford which has been helpful.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked the fares.

Mr. Jadach stated their rates are fixed \$1.50 for the bus and vans are \$2.00. He explained how they are subsidized.

Mr. Jadach asked if offer student passes.

Mr. Jadach stated no. He explained they have 10-day passes and all day passes and 31-day pass as well as an elderly rate, which is discounted slightly.

(4807) Regional Mental Health – Mayor Blake stated it is a fixed cost.

Chairman Lema stated he believed it is .6 per capita.

(4193) Public Library – Christine Angeli, Library Director was present for questions/comments. Ms. Angeli stated her budget is flat offsetting line items where she could. She stated it will be tight but they will make it work. She stated they are a very busy library. She cited the number of programs offered at the library. She stated they have extensive computer use, over 18,000 and an overwhelming number of visits to the library. She stated the largest increase in the budget is to the seasonal/temp and software accounts which she has been able to offset in other areas.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked how many computers the library has.

Ms. Angeli stated they have 18, which is due to a donation from the Board of Education of their used computers.

Mr. Castignoli asked if a person has to make an appointment to reserve a computer.

Ms. Angeli stated a person can use a computer for an hour, but they can extend it.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked if computer use is reserved for Milford residents

Ms. Angeli stated they do not ask for identification.

Mr. Castignoli asked if they have WiFi at the library

Ms. Angeli replied yes, through Nutmeg.

(4123) Community Development – Julie Nash, Community Development Director was present for questions/comments. Mrs. Nash stated the budget request is the same as last year. She stated they were able to trim some expenses.

(4155) Economic Development – Julie Nash, Community Development Director was present for questions/comments. No questions.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked about MGAT

Mr. Erodici stated it was his understanding they usually don't come before this Board.

Mr. Fitzpatrick commented regarding the audio of some of the meetings and that he has heard from the public that you cannot always hear when people are speaking.

Mayor Blake explained areas such as city hall, the Board of Education meeting room and some of the schools, there is a live feed.

Chairman Lema stated they are now done with meeting with the department heads. He stated the Board would next meet on Wednesday, February 25th for their technical meeting. He stated they will go through the budget and if the Board wishes to make any changes.

Mayor Blake also stated if there any adjustments, Mr. Erodici could provide those figures for the Board.

Being no further business the Board recessed at 7:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen A. Kennedy
Recording Secretary