

**BOARD OF ALDERMEN
BUDGET DELIBERATIONS SESSION
APRIL 17, 2017**

The Board of Aldermen resumed their budget deliberation session on Monday, April 17, 2017 in the aldermanic chambers of City Hall. He asked those present to join in saluting our flag and reciting the Pledge of Allegiance. He asked Tom Flowers, Chairman of the Veterans Ceremony and Parade Commission to lead the Pledge.

1. Roll Call

Board Members Present

B. Anderson
E. Beatty
B. Bevan
D. German
A. Giannattasio
J. Golden (7:22 p.m.)
M. Hardiman
S. Shaw
F. Smith
N. Veccharelli
P. Vetro
R. Vitali

Also Present

Mayor Benjamin G. Blake
P. Erodicti, Finance Director
S. Fournier, Mayor's Admin Asst.
J. Rohrig, City Clerk

Excused

B. Bier

Chairman Vetro reconvened the budget proceedings in public session at 7:07 p.m.

4159 Veterans Ceremony and Parade Commission – Tom Flowers, Chairman was present to answer questions/comments. Mr. Flowers announced the Memorial Day program. He stated they would be planting flags on 5/27, followed by the wreath laying ceremony on 5/28 at WWI monument. He stated at 12:00 the Commission would be a part of the Gold Star Club's Memorial Garden, with the parade to follow at 2:00 p.m.

Ald. Vitali thanked Mr. Flowers and the Commission for all the great work they do.

Chairman Vetro echoed Ald. Vitali's remarks.

Ald. Beatty expressed her appreciation of the Commission's service and thanked them for being a part of the Blue Star Committee, which she is a member of.

Mr. Flowers commented it's simply a labor of love for our veterans. He also stated it has been a wonderful marriage with the garden club.

4133 Probate Court – Chairman Vetro read an email received from Judge Streit Kefalas, stating she would be unable to attend.

Mayor Blake stated 2/3 of the cost of the operation is for the Probate Court located in the Town of Orange.

4825 Beth El Center – Toni Dolan, Executive Director, Ed Davies, Board Chairman and Suzanne Lyngas Board member were present for questions/comments.

Mr. Davies commented he understood these difficult times. He explained what Beth El does and what they provide to residents who often would not be able to exist. He stated they are seeing more and more people in need of assistance, meals and more. We have been creative in bringing resources to the Center and the Board works diligently with fundraising efforts.

Ms. Lyngaas thanked the Board for its commitment to Beth El. She stated there Board is dedicated to the work they do. She stated their budget was adopted in January 2017, but it is increasingly difficult to come up with budget numbers not knowing where their resources are coming from. She stated they will not know final numbers until the State has adopted its budget. We provide for the most vulnerable in our community. Social services agency is a critical component of their work. She asked the Board to partner with them so that those must needy will not fall through the safety net.

Ald. Bevan asked about the building located across from the main building.

Mrs. Dolan explained it is permanent supportive housing. She stated they work with a partner, a non-profit housing and explained the criteria to live there. Mrs. Dolan also stated there is a case manager on site to provide services.

Ald. Shaw asked the normally operating budget.

Mrs. Dolan stated it is approximately \$715,000 to \$730,000.

Ald. Shaw asked about cuts and in what areas they would be.

Mrs. Dolan stated they have discussed reducing the meals to only one a day, eliminating the no-freeze shelter and possibly eliminating a case manager and restructuring.

Ald. Shaw asked how much comes out of private donations and fundraising.

Mrs. Dolan referred to the handout.

Ald. Golden asked if the food is donated.

Mrs. Dolan stated they receive food services in several ways. One is the Connecticut Food Bank, also Shop Rite, Whole Foods and sometimes foods from local restaurants.

Ald. Golden asked how many people they take in for the no-freeze shelter.

Mrs. Dolan stated the capacity is 12.

Ald. Casey asked how much funding they have lost through the State and how much they have had to absorb.

Mrs. Dolan stated they receive less and less from DEMS, which pays for their case manager. She stated DOH asked for a "request for proposal" last year. She stated they received an increase, which was quickly taken away within months and now they receive even less than they originally received.

Ald. Vitali asked if they receive contributions from Costco.

Mrs. Dolan stated they receive some, but very little.

Ald. Veccharelli asked about the fundraising person that was hired a few years back. He asked what that individual's salary.

Mrs. Dolan stated they had attempted a part-time fundraising person who is no longer than.

Ald. Veccharelli asked if the people that reside in their housing if they were eligible for other housing.

Mrs. Dolan stated the key for meeting the criteria, adding one of the goals is for the individual to learn to become stable and that their issues are addressed. Mrs. Dolan pointed out the State is in full support of supported housing as compared to transitional housing. She stated the goal is to keep people who are vulnerable housed.

Ald. Grant asked about how many people use the meal program.

Mrs. Dolan stated they served over 25,000 meals last year. She stated their Board serves the dinners twice a month.

Ald. Grant asked if there are meals to go.

Mrs. Dolan stated they typically do not due to health safety. She stated there are packaged foods that are available.

Ald. Giannattasio asked if there is food for purchase.

Mrs. Dolan stated they purchased preparation type foods.

Ald. Giannattasio asked if they are short on volunteers.

Mrs. Dolan stated the evening meal requires a professional be present, otherwise they are very fortunate to have dedicated volunteers. It is the meals to go that they needed added help. It was a program that was a pilot program that was funded.

Ald. Giannattasio asked why the increase in the funding they requested.

Mrs. Dolan stated it is the cumulative effect of cuts that affects them.

4610 Health Department – Deepa Joseph, Director and Dr. Constance Young, Board Chairwoman were present for questions/comments. Ms. Joseph provided the Board with a handout and went on to explain the details of the handout.

Ald. Bevan asked about the role of the sanitarian.

Director Joseph stated they respond to complaint investigations, food inspections, etc.

Ald. Bevan asked about seasonal/temporary account and asked about the reduction.

Director Joseph explained the part time community health coordinator position. She stated they moved \$20,000 to line item 4189 0000 Misc. Professional Fees.

Ald. Grant asked about line item 4416 0000 Pest Control.

Director Joseph explained they work with various habitat services. She explained the comprehensive program that treats the breeding sites throughout the city.

Ald. Bevan asked when school nurses were taken out of the budget.

Director Joseph stated it was 7 or 8 years ago.

4821 Health Services (VNA) – Deepa Joseph, Director was present for questions/comments. She stated they no longer provide the well child examinations. She stated the budget is for the community medical advisor to provide the well child examinations.

Ald. Giannattasio asked if that is the stipend.

Director Joseph stated it is not, this is from the health services account and separate from the consulting fee. She stated the numbers are based on what they were charged by the VNA.

4998 Education Health Services/School Nurses – Deepa Joseph, Director was present for questions/comments.

No questions.

4817 Human Services Department - Director Joseph and Beth Simpson, Office Assistant were present for questions/comments. Director Joseph provided the Board with a handout which provided an overview of services, which she reviewed for the Board.

Ald. Shaw asked about possible cuts from the State as far as energy assistance.

Director Joseph stated it's just too early to know. She also explained they work with TEAM out of the Valley for outreach services for energy assistance.

Ald. Bevan asked about the bottom line.

Mr. Erodici stated they don't expect to get something back, however, if Human Services has any savings they are able to retain those dollars in their account for future use.

Ald. Giannattasio asked about the success of receiving grants.

Director Joseph explained years ago there were various funding sources. She stated many of those sources have gone away, so she has been pursuing various other sources.

Ald. Giannattasio asked the director position.

Director Joseph stated they no longer have a director. She stated the department has two outreach workers and two different coordinators as well as one part time employee.

Ald. Giannattasio asked if they realized any savings from staffing.

Director Joseph while there is no longer a full time director, there are part time employees.

Ald. Anderson asked about CDBG funds

Director Joseph stated rent/mortgage assistance, which is one time is offered. She explained the program.

Ald. Veccharelli asked how much of the budget goes to payroll.

Director Joseph asked if he was referring to the outreach workers.

Ald. Veccharelli asked for a breakdown of the payroll for each department.

Director Joseph stated she would be happy to provide that information.

4815 Veterans Graves

Mayor Blake stated this account has a minimal amount.

4816 Milford Flotila

No one was available.

4822 Cemetery Association

No one was available.

4210 Finance Department – Mr. Erodici, Finance Director was present, along with Ariane Swift, Accountant, Daniel Thomas, Assessor, Michael Antoinelli, Treasurer and Marianne Klinga, Tax for question/comments. Mr. Erodici stated the Purchasing Agent, Fred Bialka was unable to attend.

Mr. Erodici stated the department has concluded another business year especially with the implementation of various programs. He credited the work of Ariane Swift and each member of the Finance Department for their hard work and dedication and pointed out every effort was made to keep the budget flat. Mr. Erodici stated with the exception of contractual wage increases and also the revaluation account the budget is flat. He thanked the Board for their support and allowing the department to do their job.

No questions.

4143 Board of Assessment Appeals – Daniel K. Thomas, Assessor was present for questions/comments.

Ald. Anderson thanked Mr. Thomas for his work and the professional work done in-house with regard to assessments.

Ald. Vitali asked if the Board is extremely busy with appeals at this point.

Mr. Thomas stated it would depend on the definition of "extremely" busy. He spoke of the revaluation dating back to 2006 to current. He stated the average assessment has remained flat. He explained the process for residential revaluation.

Ald. Giannattasio asked the savings by conducting the reval in-house rather than going outside.

Mayor Blake stated it is similar to privatizing, however doing it in-house it is more hands on and the staff works with our residents, etc.

Ald. Giannattasio asked if it involves more overtime for the department.

Mayor Blake stated that is the factor for the assessment. He explained for difficult properties they have hired outside firms and those who file an appeal.

4141 Board of Assessment Appeals – Daniel K. Thomas, City Assessor was present for questions/comment.

No questions.

4115 Registrar of Voters – Registrars Keri Rowland and Debra Fellenbaum were present for questions/comments. Mrs. Rowland stated she would be remiss if she didn't recognize the four other staff members who do so much for the department. Additionally, she stated she would be remiss if she did not recognize all of the poll workers who provide their time. Mrs. Rowland stated she is proud of the job they do, not just for the department but for the community. She stated tightening the budget is always difficult when there are so many mandates that come down from the State.

Mrs. Fellenbaum commented with two department heads, it is double scrutiny. She also reported she and Mrs. Rowland have completed their courses for the State. She also thanked Ms. Bev Meltzer in their department who provides them with great assistance especially during budget time. Mrs. Fellenbaum explained the need for the fire proof filing cabinet. She explained the mandate from the State that registration cards are required to be housed in a fire proof cabinet.

Mayor Blake added that both registrars passed the first exam required by State legislation which requires all registrars to be certified.

Ald. Vitali asked about the fire proof cabinet and if it was in the budget.

Mrs. Fellenbaum stated it is not in the budget at this time. She stated they were trying to keep costs down. She stated it is something they will definitely be seeking next year.

Mrs. Rowland stated an additional 2,000 voters were added. She stated they were well into the budget process when they realized an additional cabinet was needed.

Ald. Anderson asked how they would address mailings.

Mrs. Rowland stated they would use the NCOA system which runs from January through May and requires a specific number of mailings.

Ald. Anderson asked about upcoming mandates.

Mrs. Rowland stated they were not aware of any others at this point, with the exception of early voting.

Ald. Bevan stated in budget positions there are only 4 positions listed, but it was stated there are 6.

Mrs. Rowland stated they have two seasonal temporary positions.

Ald. Giannattasio asked if their budget was flat otherwise.

Mrs. Rowland stated yes, their budget is flat.

Ald. Giannattasio asked about archive voter registration cards.

Mrs. Rowland stated they have over 35,000 cards to archive.

4112 Elections – Mrs. Joanne Rohrig, City Clerk, Mrs. Rowland and Mrs. Fellenbaum were present for questions/comments. Mrs. Rohrig stated it was too early to know how voting would affect the department.

Ald. Veccharelli asked the cost of a possible gobuntenial primary.

Mrs. Rowland stated the hope is they could stay within this budget.

4129 City Clerk – Joanne Rohrig, City Clerk was present for questions/comments. Mrs. Rohrig thanked the Board for the opportunity to address them. She stated this year would be challenging, with difficult decisions to be made. She explained the increase in index account which was offset by decreasing the advertising line item. She stated each year she has to go before the Board of Finance to request a transfer in line item 4778 0000 Indexing/Recording and so they decided to reduce the advertising account and transfer those funds to the Indexing/Recording line item.

Ald. Bevan asked about the request in line item 4980 0601 Security System. He asked the need since each year this line item is cut by both the Board of Finance and Board of Aldermen.

Mrs. Rohrig stated it is her wish to have security in the vault area and in the hallway as well. She stated she has been working with the Mayor, Public Works, Police Department and Omni. We are hoping are discussions will come to fruition.

Mayor Blake added a security upgrade is in the process for city clerk, assessors and tax office.

Ald. Grant asked the timeline on the security update.

Mayor Blake stated that information could be provided to the Board.

Ald. Shaw asked if there is a State or Federal law that prohibits someone from taking photographs.

Mrs. Rohrig stated they collect fees for the documents.

Ald. Giannattasio asked if there is any enforceable penalty.

Mrs. Rohrig expressed hope the advertising requirements might change coming down from the State.

4420 Public Works Office – Chris Saley, Public Works Director and Bill Mayers, Assistant Public Works Director were present for questions.

Ald. Bevan asked about the increase of the assistant director's increase.

Mr. Erodici stated there are a number of reasons for the increase. One is the step increase and the other reason is the non-rep increase. He explained the wages needed to be adjusted in accordance with the contract settlement.

Ald. Beatty asked about line item 4718 0000.

Director Saley explained they have opportunities to partner with other municipalities.

4421 Highway/Parks – Chris Saley, Public Works Director was present for questions.

Ald. Shaw asked about line item 4515 0000 Road & Drain Maintenance.

Director Saley explained it is for Catch basin repair.

Ald. Shaw asked about costs and if there is a priority list.

Director Saley stated the cost various depending on what work is needed. He stated they respond when called generally.

Ald. Bevan asked about line item 4521 0000 Asphalt.

Director Saley explained the account is used for general maintenance throughout the city. It can be pot hole repairs, equipment, etc.

Ald. Bevan asked about budgeted positions and if all positions are filled.

Director Saley stated throughout Public Works they are down approximately 20 positions.

Ald. Giannattasio asked if any of those 20 positions would come out of the budget.

Director Saley stated it would depend on what happens in Hartford. He credited his staff for the work they do in-house, i.e. Founders Walk, Gulf Street sidewalks. He stated these are huge projects they undertake but take a great deal of time pulling them away from other projects.

Chairman Vetro asked about 4113 0000 Snow Removal, 4534 0000 Sand

Director Saley stated they have gotten away from using sand and explained the process used.

Chairman Vetro asked about line item 4776 0001 cell Phones.

Director Saley stated that account is for the supervisors' use of cell phones.

Chairman Vetro asked about line item 4978 0314 Chainsaw.

Ald. Vitali asked about line item 4515 0000 Road & Drain Maintenance and the redacted amount.

Mayor Blake stated a lot of those monies were replaced through grants and other monies.

Mr. Erodici added that the \$200,000 was related to an MS4 component and catch basin cleaning.

Director Saley explained the MS4 requires that streets are swept within a specific timeframe. He reiterated what the Mayor stated; there are other monies available, through storm aid, etc.

Mayor Blake added the account is not actually been reduced, however, they have been resourceful and found other funding methods. He stated they continue to make great progress with replacement of catch basins. We are cataloging are catch basins so we know where they all are.

Ald. Vitali asked why \$200,000 was put in.

Director Saley stated the MS4 is a requirement and it was prudent to put into the budget.

Ald. Anderson rolling stock and how it would be funded. He stated there was a request for a truck that was not funded.

Director Saley stated they have worked with town aid and the opportunity to obtain a truck through this system.

Mayor Blake explained how the program has changed over the last 15 years. He stated the majority of trucks were purchased at the end of the fiscal year.

4423 Building Maintenance – Chris Saley, Public Works Director was present for questions.

No questions were asked.

4424 Engineering – Chris Saley, Public Works Director was present for questions.

No questions were asked.

4429 General Garage – Chris Saley, Public Works Director, was present for questions.

Ald. Grant asked about the Platt students that would be working in the garage and if that would reduce overtime.

Director Saley stated presently no overtime is being authorized. He stated that was not the intent of the program with Platt.

4431 Solid Waste – Chris Saley, Public Works Director was present for questions.

Ald. Vitali asked about the new one-armed bandit program and how it was working out.

Director Saley stated the program has been helpful and the staff has been very effective, however, it still will take some more time.

Ald. Giannattasio asked about line item 4709 0000 Condo Reimbursement if it would be less expensive to pickup instead of providing reimbursement.

Director Saley stated it is something they could look into.

Chairman Vetro asked about enforcement of bulk trash that is out weeks before pickup.

Director Saley stated he would like to the aldermen to enforce.

Mayor Blake stated those calls are treated as a blight action and referred to the health department.

Ald. Beatty added the bulk trash pickup out so early is problematic. She also spoke regarding concerns of the trucks getting down some of the smaller streets.

Ald. Anderson asked about Founders Walk and the completion of that project for the festivities that will occur at the end of May.

Director Saley stated they are in the process of moving the poles and getting UI in place. He stated it will be a tight line, very tight.

4426 Wastewater – Chris Saley, Public Works Director was present for questions.

Ald. Giannattasio asked about credits on the revenue side for nitrogen credits.

Mr. Erodici stated there are specific numbers, it is not a revenue line item, it actually goes into the debt services reserve funds and helps defray the sewer fund account.

Director Saley stated last year they received \$153,000. He stated although they had better results this year, the State adjusted the formula so it is looking more like the City will only receive approximately \$110,000.

Ald. Grant asked about electricity costs and reducing those costs.

Director Saley stated they are looking to move forward with the micro grid.

4154 Sewer Commission - Chris Saley, Public Works Director was present for questions.

No questions were asked.

Ald. Giannattasio and Ald. Golden made and seconded a motion to recess at 10:00 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen A. Kennedy
Recording Secretary