

**BOARD OF FINANCE
BUDGET HEARINGS - PROPOSED BUDGET FY 2024/2025
FEBRUARY 22, 2024**

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FEB 26 2024

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The Board of Finance held a virtual budget deliberations session on Thursday, February 22, 2024 via Zoom. Chairman Lema announced the Board was out of recess and reconvened the budget deliberations meeting in public session at 5:30 p.m.

Board Members Present:

Brian Lema, Chairman
Scott Moulton
Ray Arnold
Lauren Ranges
Meghan Smith

Also Present:

Mayor Anthony S. Giannattasio
Peter Erodici, Finance Director
Justin Rosen, Chief of Staff

Mr. Moulton and Ms. Ranges made and seconded a motion to reconvene. Motion carried unanimously.

(4410) Health Department (pg. 79)

Deepa Joseph, Health Director, gave a brief summary of the department's activities over the past year. She reviewed statistics for school nurses and reviewed different types of services provided by the nurses. Ms. Joseph stated the school nurses also serve as public health nurses at immunization clinics. She stated there is an increase in the number of vaccines being provided. Ms. Joseph discussed the request for an increase in overtime in both the Health Department and Nurse budgets. Ms. Joseph reviewed statistics for the environmental health division. She stated there has been an increase in temporary food permits. Ms. Joseph reviewed the Community Health Division and the request to reinstatement to a full-time position. She stated the work performed by the Community Health Coordinator has increased. Ms. Joseph reviewed health promotion and education within the community. Mr. Moulton asked if the \$74,000 of assistance is for energy assistance. Ms. Joseph stated it is part of Human Services and is for energy, housing, food and such. Mr. Moulton asked if the increase in wages is due to the request for overtime and Community Health Coordinator. Ms. Joseph stated that is correct. Mr. Moulton as if the a vacancy in the Community Health Coordinator position would drive the overtime. Ms. Joseph stated the bulk of the overtime is due to sanitarians and inspections for events. Ms. Ranges asked what the \$568,000 granted money is used for. Ms. Joseph discussed prevention education and programs that the grant funding provides. Chairman Lema stated he is concerned with adding positions given the requested increases across the board. He discussed the addition of the Deputy Health Director a few years ago. Ms. Joseph stated it is not a new position. She stated this position was cut to a part-time position and then a contract position. Ms. Joseph stated the work never went away and other positions were burdened with the work. She discussed the work and need for the position.

(4798) Education Health Services/School Nurses (pg. 95)

Ms. Joseph stated discussed the increase request under dental/medical. She stated this is to provide for a substitute nurse when a nurse is absent. Ms. Joseph discussed the difficulties in hiring substitute nurses at the current rate. She stated this is the average of surrounding districts. Ms. Joseph discussed the seasonal temporary line item. She stated this account provides for Health Clerks at the high schools and middle schools. Ms. Joseph stated the increase will allow for Health Clerks at the elementary schools. Ms. Joseph discussed increased costs for medical costs and vaccines. She stated the department will begin to bill for immunization services in the Fall. Mr. Moulton asked if the billing for immunization would be for students through the school system. Ms. Joseph stated it for adult immunization. She explanation currently individuals pay in cash and the billing system will allow for billing insurance companies.

(4417) Milford HSD Agency (pg. 90)

Ms. Joseph discussed activities during the prior fiscal year. She stated there was a 92% increase in the number of households served for utility assistance. Ms. Joseph discussed being an intake site for energy assistance and rent rebate. She discussed Milford Youth and Family Services and the community partnerships. Mr. Moulton asked what the driver for increase assistance request. Ms. Joseph stated grant funding has allowed us to provide assistance. She stated a number of residents are still in recovery from the pandemic.

(4119) Human Resources Department (pg. 41)

Tania Barnes, Human Resources Director, provided an overview of the department which included pension and retiree benefits. Ms. Barnes discussed request in seasonal temporary for the hiring of summer interns. She discussed the increase request for medical and professional fees for independent medical exams for employees seek a disability pension. Ms. Barnes discussed the costs associated with the medical exams. She stated the line item also covers pre-employment exams and other employee testing that is required. Ms. Barnes discussed professional development and the increased cost for training. She reviewed advertising and office supply costs. Ms. Arnold asked for an explanation of the Special Project Manager. Ms. Barnes discussed bringing in a part-time project manager under Mayor Smith. She discussed the increased responsibilities within the Human Resources Department. Ms. Barnes discussed the project manager role and providing backup for the HR Director.

(4593) Public Library (pg. 35)

Chris Angeli, Public Library Director, provided a summary of the services provided at the Milford Public Library. She stated the budget is flat with small increase request. Ms. Angeli discussed the electronic media account. She stated since Covid the demand for electronic media has increased. Ms. Angeli stated as of today the average wait period for a downloadable book is 119 days. She discussed shared electronic content. Ms. Angeli stated the book budget has not increased in 13 years. Ms. Ranges asked for an explanation for seasonal temporary. Ms. Angeli stated it covers the part-time staff. Chairman Lema asked if a downloaded ebook has a time limit for use. Ms. Angeli discussed purchasing electronic book leasing and the demand. She stated patrons have the content

for a certain period of time and then it automatically checks back in. Chairman Lema asked if there is option to purchase electronic content. Ms. Angeli stated there is no purchase option, it is only a lease.

(8112) Elections (pg. 14)

Karen Fortunati, City Clerk, stated it is going to be a very different role with early voting. She stated there are 3 ways to vote, absentee, early and polls. Ms. Fortunati stated there may be 3 elections, which includes primaries and general election. She stated this is the first year for early voting and the offices are trying to determine staffing and supplies. Kerri Rowland, Registrar, stated the April primary is in this year's fiscal budget and the state primary and general election will be next fiscal year. She discussed early voting and the significant hours of voting that must be provided. Ms. Rowland discussed staffing and providing ballots for each of the nine polling districts. Debra Fellenbaum, Registrar, discussed the budget preparation and thought that went into each line item. Ms. Rowland asked that funds be added back into the account in order to have funding for the primaries. Chairman Lema asked if a spreadsheet could be provided to the Finance Director for the Board to consider during the technical discussion. Mr. Moulton asked if the request is to fund the department request of \$208,000. Ms. Rowland confirmed the request is to fully fund the department request.

(4115) Registrar of Voters (pg. 15)

Ms. Rowland discussed implementation of early voting requiring extra hours of work for approximately 12 weeks and the need for an increase in overtime account. She discussed increased travel and conference requests due to the amount of training necessary due to early voting. Ms. Rowland discussed the stated requirement for fireproof filing cabinets. She asked that the department requests be added back by the Board.

(4129) City Clerk (pg. 22)

Karen Fortunati, City Clerk, stated the budget is the same with no increase requests. Mr. Moulton noted the budget is lower than last year. Ms. Fortunati reviewed restructuring the office staff.

(4401) Council on Aging (pg. 87)

Lenora Rodriguez, Director, stated the budget request is flat with no increase in requests. Ms. Rodriguez provided a brief summary of the center's operations. Mr. Moulton asked what percentage of the overall budget the City grant represents. Ms. Rodriguez stated it represents 85%.

(8103) Milford Arts Council (pg. 87)

Paige Miglio, Director, stated the Milford Arts Council continues to grow and provide services. She provided a brief summary of events. Ms. Miglio discussed scholarships and other programming. Mr. Moulton asked what percentage of the overall budget the City grant represents. Ms. Miglio stated it represents approximately 1/3 of the overall budget.

(8412) Transit District (pg. 89)

Henry Jadach, Director, discussed services provided by the Transit District. He stated there is an increase due to increased health and workers' compensation insurances. Mr. Jadach discussed new electric buses and stated they should be on the road in June. He stated the City support represents approximately 8% of the overall budget. Mr. Jadach stated the bulk of the funding comes from the Federal government. Ms. Ranges asked where the vehicles are stored. Mr. Jadach stated the facility is located on Research Drive. Mr. Moulton asked what percentage of the overall budget the City grant represents. Mr. Jadach stated it represents 8.33% of the overall operating budget.

(8425) Beth El Center (pg. 92)

Jennifer Paradis, Director, provided a brief summary of the services offered. She stated a larger homeless population is being served. Ms. Paradis discussed partnerships within the community and provided statistics on the number of individuals and families served. She stated the budget request represents 6% of the operating budget.

(8113) Bridges (pg. 89)

Jen Fiorillo, Director, stated the funding provided by the City helps to bridge the gap between services and insurance costs. She provided a brief summary of the services provided. Ms. Fiorillo discussed partnering with Milford Public Schools. She discussed other funding sources and the increasing number of requests for clinical services. Ms. Fiorello stated the City grant represents 2% of the total operating budget.

Mr. Moulton and Ms. Ranges made and seconded a motion to recess until Monday, February 26, 2023, at 5:30 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

Chairman Lema stated the Board would stand in recess until February 26, 2023. The Board recessed at 7:41 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Toni Jo Weeks
Recording Secretary