

BOARD OF ALDERMEN
BUDGET DELIBERATIONS SESSION – FY 2011-2012
APRIL 7, 2011

The Board of Aldermen held a budget deliberation session on Thursday, April 7, 2011 in the aldermanic chambers of City Hall. Chairman G. Smith called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. welcoming everyone to the public hearing for the proposed City and Education budgets for FY 2011-2012.

1. Roll Call

Board Members Present

B. Bier (7:18 p.m.)
D. German (7:30 p.m.)
A. Giannattasio
F. Goodrich
M. Hardiman
B. Joy, Jr.
J. Patterson
G. Smith
P. Smith
P. Staneski
N. Veccharelli
P. Vetro
R. Vitali

Also Present

Mayor J. Richetelli, Jr.
L. Bull DiLullo, Mayor's Admin. Asst.
P. Erodict, Acting Finance Director

Excused

B. Bevan
B. Blake

Chairman Smith stated the proposed budget has been thoroughly reviewed by the Board of Finance and produced this recommended budget. He went on to thank the Board of Finance and the Mayor and spoke regarding this difficult year. He stated each speaker would be allowed 3-minutes and asked those speaking to please keep to the 3-minutes because of the number of people present tonight. He reminded those present that the Board was precluded from answering questions.

Mayor Richetelli stated a letter was dropped off to his office today from Glenn J. Behrle, President of the Milford Employees Association, Local 3322 AFSCME, who was unable to attend the meeting but asked that the letter be included as part of the record.

Chairman Smith stated they would start with the City side of the budget and asked if anyone wished to speak regarding the City portion of the budget.

K. Scarinzi – no address given – stated she is a Registered Professional Nurse and President of their union and currently a nurse at Jonathan Law High School. She stated she was speaking tonight on behalf of all the school nurses. Reading from a prepared statement she spoke of a school nurse's day and asked the Board to reinstate the school nurse in the budget.

A. Petrahai – 32 Orient Avenue – stated he is a taxpayer and voter since 1965. Speaking personally, he stated he received a letter that his pension amount had been reduced. He stated it was time to cut spending and it was

up to the Board to do it. He also spoke regarding the proposal to add to full time athletic directors. He asked the Board to use their heads and reminded them these are tough times. He reiterated they needed to cut spending.

S. Canfield – 43 Atwater Street – spoke personally regarding an emergency situation concerning her daughter. Reading from a prepared statement she spoke of the care her daughter received from the school nurses. She also spoke of how crucial nursing care is in the schools.

M. Whelan – 65 Indian Hill Road – stated she is co-President of the Calf Pen Meadow School PTA and also works as a sanitarian in another town. She stated she was here tonight to ask the Board not to cut the sanitarian position. She went on to speak regarding the numerous duties of a sanitarian.

T. Mustakos – 31 Pearl Hill Street – stated she is a resident and also an employee of the Health Department. She spoke regarding the importance of sanitarians for the City. She continued reading from a prepared statement as to the benefits of a sanitarian. She asked the Board to keep the sanitarian position to protect health and safety of the people of Milford.

L. Darling – 54 Winthrop Court – stated she too is an employee of the Health Department and was speaking tonight to ask the Board to keep the sanitarian position. She went on to speak of the responsibilities and role of a sanitarian. She asked the Board to please reconsider eliminating the position.

J. Cagginello – 17 Westminster Court – stated she was speaking in opposition to the reduction of a public health school nurse. She went on to speak of the numerous duties and responsibilities of a school nurse. She also pointed out not all duties are for the kids, but there are also times when there is a call for school personnel.

D. Joseph – 1008 West River Street – stated she is a 7 year resident of the City. She expressed her concern regarding the proposed elimination of the sanitarian position. She stated she was here tonight as a resident and taxpayer and mother. Reading from a prepared statement she spoke of the importance the sanitarian plays in the city. She implored the Board to keep the position.

B. Grive – no address given – stated he has been a sanitarian for 20 years at the health department. He stated when he first came to the health department there were five sanitarians and that number was reduced to four and now they were looking to reduce it further. He went on to speak about the many duties of a sanitarian.

D. Wandelea – 90 Sassacus Drive – read a letter from Joseph and Margaret DiBiase, parents who were unable to attend tonight's meeting. The letter was in support of keeping the school nurse position.

P. Joslin – 7 Warren Street – stated he was pleased to see the budget was down to 4% from 7%. He stated he has had to adjust his own budget at home. Reading from a prepared statement he spoke of the financial difficulties everyone is experiencing, citing unemployment and the State's \$3.4 billion dollar deficit. He also spoke of the importance of being good leaders and addressing these problems.

J. Gullo – 49 Bayshore Drive – spoke of the many foreclosures here in Milford, including one right on his own street. Reading from a prepared statement he spoke of the many problems with the budget. He also read the definition of the word "budget". He reminded the Board who voted for them.

T. Beirne – 55 Bayshore Drive – stated he came before the Board last year with a group of well respected individuals that included teachers, accountants, etc. and that the group presented a proposal that could cut \$1.2 million from the budget. He stated he never heard from the Board, so he concluded the Board just wasn't listening.

J. Gossage – 33 Apple Hill Drive - spoke regarding the federal funds the Board of Education will not be receiving and asked the Board to please look at the full amount requested by the Board of Education.

S. Jocelyn – no address given – stated she came before the Board sometime ago regarding the proposal for recycling. She went on about her work in the homeless shelter. She asked the Board not to eliminate the school nurse position. She also asked there not be a tax increase. She asked the Board to look for intelligent ways to cut and stretch what can be stretched.

J. Prisco – 11 Riverdale Road – stated he has been coming to these meetings for many, many years. He asked the Board not to raise taxes and to please think of the citizens of Milford and the senior citizens.

K. Rose – 292 Naugatuck Avenue – stated she is the State Representative for the 118th district. She stated \$5,000 was cut from the Boys & Girls Club budget and asked that it be reinstated. She went on to speak of their work and the services they provide to the children. She stated the other issue she was speaking on tonight concerned the school nurses. She asked the Board to reconsider the \$5,000 cut and the school nurse position.

E. Judson – 27 Sylvan Court – asked the Board to reconsider the positions of the school nurse and the sanitarian.

G. Stanford – 32 Spice Bush Lane – stated she is a retired Milford teacher. She spoke of the numerous cuts that would occur if the Board of Education budget remains as recommended by the Board of Finance. She also expressed concern with where the ECS money will go when it comes back. She stated it should go back to education, not the general budget.

J. Cabua – 47 Knobb Hill Road – spoke regarding the Board of Education budget. She asked the Board to it is right and give kids a chance.

On the education side of the budget:

R. Silver – asked again why the budget is divided into a city side and an education side. Reading from a prepared statement she spoke regarding the Board of Education and stated there is not a lot of wiggle room in the budget. She expressed concern at how the Board of Finance arrived at their figures. She implored the Board to reinstate the \$1.9 million.

J. Tereskiewicz – 22 Strathmore Avenue – stated she wished to yield her time to a group of students from ECA for a special song. (Note: several students sang a song to the melody of "Blown In the Wind", with words they wrote to save the ECA program).

C. Dumais – 21 Hilldale Court – stated he is a high school principal in another town. He stated he understands budgets and the value of education. He stated he supports investing in the future of Milford's children.

C. Berni – 96 Centennial Drive – stated every child is entitled to a free and appropriate education. She stated each year the talk is about keeping taxes down, but every year her taxes have gone up and education suffers. She stated they need to get smarter on how monies are spent and that citizens were looking to the Board to help with this.

D. Dotson – 69 Wayne Road – stated she is a product of the Milford School System and asked the Board to reinstate the \$1.9 million.

J. Federico – 14 Breakneck Drive – reminded the Board this is an election year and to keep that in mind when they vote, because as a taxpayer she would in November. She asked the Board to restore the money cut by the Board of Finance and if ECS monies come back to the City it should go to the Board of Education. Reading from a prepared statement she remarked everyone knows how the vote is going to go, that it would be a 10-5 vote.

M. Kaminski – 141 Cinnamon Road – stated he was here tonight for a few reasons. He stated his wife is a teacher in Milford and they have two kids. He stated he was scared for both sides. He also stated he is a business owner, owner of Milford Radio and that they would be having a conversation with the public. He stated it was important they make a difference for our children.

L. Sylvester – 76 Barbara Drive – stated she has been a resident since 1986. She stated she has two students in the Milford School District, a freshmen and a senior. She urged the Board to support the arts in our schools and the humanities. Reading from a prepared statement she spoke about the music program and how personally it has had a profound impact on her daughter.

K. Haley – 715 New Haven Avenue – stated she is a media aid at Foran. She asked the Board to reinstate the Board of Education budget and remarked “who will be there for the children” if positions are eliminated.

L. Biagioni – 73 Sentinel Hill Road – Read a prepared statement regarding challenging times in education. She asked that the monies be restored to the Board of Education budget, adding the budget is lean and responsible. She went on to speak about the whole child/whole program approach.

L. Katz – 294 West Main Street – stated these are difficult times. She stated last year the parents and children made drastic changes. She stated the superintendent this year proposed a modest budget. She stated if the cuts by the Finance Board remain, again there will be drastic changes. Reading from a prepared statement she spoke regarding the quality of instruction which will decrease. She also stated if the ECS money is restored it must go to fund education. She asked the Board to either restore the \$1.5 million or pledge it will go to the Board of Education budget.

R. Borer – 204 Anderson Avenue – stated she moved here 23 years ago and that she raised 5 children. She also stated she works in the school system as a media aide. She stated the Board would be making a big mistake if they don't restore the money.

K. Lowenberg – no address given – stated according to the governor's proposed budget, Milford should receive \$1.5 of the \$1.9 that was cut. She stated the money should be used for education. She stated elected officials have said if the money comes back it will go to the City budget and not the Board of Education budget. She pleaded with the Board to please return the monies to education.

K. Elson – 55 Cardinal Drive – stated Milford has lost its edge in education. She stated the money reduced by the Board of Education must be reinstated. She also spoke regarding teacher salaries and commented it was binding arbitration that brought those salaries and that Milford has to honor them and live them. She asked that the students not suffer because of them.

L. Massey – no address given – stated she has attended many Board of Education meetings trying to learn more about the process. She stated they lost teachers last year and are at risk this year of losing more than 28 more teachers this year. She stated it is our teachers that make our kids work harder and that we could not afford to lose them. Reading from a prepared statement, she cited all the possible scenarios of the monies are not restored.

A. Sastry – 30 Cornfield Road – spoke in support of the gifted and enrichment program at Harborside and went on to read a statement in support of this program. She asked the Board to please preserve the gifted program.

R. Arnold – 50 Herbert Street – stated he is a part of the ECA program and went on to explain the program and those who attend it. He stated he himself is a part of the theatre program. He also pointed out Milford has the highest number of attendees at the school after New Haven. He asked the Board not to cut funding for the ECA program.

P. Cornelio – 16 Andrews Avenue – stated he is a senior at Jonathan Law and participates in the theatre program at ECA. He went on to explain what a day is like for him at ECA. He also spoke of his love for the arts and how it has enriched his life.

J. Farren – 3 Kenwood Road – stated she was also speaking on behalf of the ECA program. She stated it is one of the most important parts of her life and that she is very fortunate to be a part of it. She also spoke regarding the benefits she has received from ECA.

The Board took a 5-minute recess at 9:04 p.m. Chairman G. Smith reconvened the Board in public session at 9:15 p.m.

A. Sorensen – 22 Strathmore Avenue – stated he is a student in the ECA visual arts program. He expressed great concern if they lose this program. He went on to speak of the benefits of the program.

M. Gomes – 120 West Avenue – stated she is in her second year in the ECA dance program. She stated they are family and that because of the ECA program she has learned so many life lessons. She asked the Board to not take this from them.

P. Sanchez – 208 Pond Point Avenue – spoke regarding the ECA program. She stated the program works so well because they all want to be there. Reading from a prepared statement regarding the benefits of the ECA program she spoke of it as a place for growth and learning.

C. Walker – 116 Todd Drive – stated he is a musician at ECA and that it was always his dream to attend the program. He stated he plays the guitar and went on to speak personally about being admitted to the program and how it has helped him.

L. Lynch – 110 Wepawaug Drive – stated he also attends ECA. He asked the Board to support the ECA program and not make cuts to the program. He stated he is a senior and will be graduating, but it is his hope the program will continue for other students. He stated the ECA program is a fantastic opportunity.

P. Walker – 112 Todd Drive – spoke regarding the ECA program and the poise of the students who have spoken tonight. She commented when the budget gets tight it seems the first thing that gets cut is the arts. She stated without the arts we wouldn't have a vibrant community. She stated these students will come back and enrich our town.

R. Sorensen – 22 Strathmore Avenue – stated he is an artist and art educator. Reading from a prepared statement he spoke of the benefits of an arts program.

C. Alling – 29 Rivercliff Drive – commented work ethic is important and in her house education is important. She asked the Board what message is being sent to our children if every year the Board of Education budget is cut.

J. Kupson – 140 Platt Lane – asked the Board to reinstate funds to the Board of Education budget. He stated a \$1.9 million dollar cut would lessen the education experience, increase class size, reduce sports, fine arts and class trips and impact how we shape our children. He encouraged the Board to reinstate the funds.

C. Prete – 293 Woodruff Road – stated she has been a lifelong business owner and an active in the Milford community. She went on to speak about her own education here in Milford and classroom size. She urged the Board to keep the Board of Education budget as is and re-instate those dollars cut.

C. Betz – 17 Eastern Parkway – stated she was here regarding the Board of Education budget. She asked the Board to please restore the funds that were cut. She stated on the city side of the budget she asked why the insurance does not go out to bid. She begged the Board not to cut from the kids.

T. Simoncek – 61 Governors Avenue – stated the Board needed to reinstate the Board of Education fully, stated there is no magic solution to the cuts. Reading from a prepared statement she spoke of potential results of a budget that is not fully supported. She also stated if ECS monies are to go to education.

K. Selugga – 156 Clark Hill Road – stated he moved here 8 years ago and never had any regrets until recently when he read about the \$1.9 million dollar cut to the Board of Education budget. He asked the Board to give the Board of Education what they are asking for.

J. Poffenberger – 50 Green Street – stated she has four children in the school system, in grades kindergarten, second, fourth and sixth next year. Reading from a prepared statement she told a story about what her son is learning in history and compared it with the budget process. She asked the Board to make the right choice to restore the money the Board of Finance cut.

K. Bonetti – 157 Seaside Avenue – thanked the Board for enduring this very long evening. She stated she is a life-long resident with three children in the public school system. Reading from a prepared statement she asked the Board to make sure the ECS money goes to the Board of Education, citing the many benefits.

L. Fucci – 136 Welches Point Road – stated public education is not a business and expected to make a profit. Reading from a prepared statement she spoke of the ECS funding and requested the Board of Education allocated ESC funding go to the Board of Education only.

P. Mulhall – 49 Crescent Drive – stated she is a taxpayer, parent and teacher and last year they took it on the chin. She stated a school was closed and there was a realignment of the district. She stated they have taken enough and that it was time for the city side to do its share. She stated the ECS money is for what it says it stands for in the title, education. She stated if the budget is not restored, band aids are put everywhere. She stated it was time to put values in our children and that it was time to restore the budget.

N. Blair – 80 Hickory Avenue – stated he is upset he has to be here after all those meetings last year. He stated it was the mayor that said they needed to cut to the core and essential services. He stated now 28 teachers are being cut.

Chairman G. Smith thanked everyone and encouraged all present to come to the budget hearing when the Board of Education presents their budget to the Board of Aldermen.

Ald. Vetro and Ald. Patterson made and seconded a motion to recess at 9:58 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen K. Huber
Recording Secretary