

**BOARD OF ALDERMEN  
BUDGET DELIBERATIONS SESSION  
APRIL 9, 2012**

The Board of Aldermen resumed their budget deliberation session on Monday, April 9, 2012 in the aldermanic chambers of City Hall. Chairman Vetro welcomed everyone to the meeting regarding the budget deliberations session for fiscal year 2011-2012. He asked those present to join in saluting our flag and reciting the Pledge of allegiance.

**1. Roll Call**

Board Members Present

G. Gasper  
D. German  
A. Giannattasio  
J. Golden  
R. Nunno  
S. Shaw  
F. Smith (7:10 p.m.)  
G. Stanford  
N. Veccharelli  
P. Vetro  
R. Vitali

Also Present

Mayor Benjamin G. Blake  
L. Stock, City Clerk  
P. Erodi, Finance Director  
S. Fournier, Mayor's Admin. Asst.

Excused

B. Anderson  
B. Bier  
R. Dickman  
P. Smith

Ald. Veccharelli and Ald. Golden made and seconded a motion to come out of recess at 7:07 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

Chairman Vetro stated the Board would begin meeting with the department heads tonight. He stated the first department would be MGAT.

**4116 Milford Gov't Access TV** – Mike Manente, Chairman was present. He stated those meetings that have been taped to date, a total of 75. He reported they replaced 2 DVD's, 2 hard case recorders and a video switch. He stated they also outfitted the Board of Education room with a system similar to that in this room. He also stated they remained live during Hurricane Irene on Channel 79.

Ald. Shaw asked if the scheduled mentioned is the type of schedule that they will have going forward. She asked if they do other recordings.

Mr. Manente stated they would like to do more meetings. He stated they have done Park, Beach and Recreation and Zoning Board of Appeals. He stated their main focus is the Board of Education, Board of Aldermen and Planning and Zoning, but with extra money they could do other meetings.

Ald. Golden asked if they have tried to get on other cable networks such as U-Verse.

Mr. Manente explained they don't air them which they don't. He stated getting funding from them would take a change in the law. He went on to explain the history and relationship with them.

Ald. Vitali asked the cost per production.

Mr. Manente stated they don't gauge that number. He stated they do bulletin boards, studios and change equipment, but that they don't tally those numbers. Mr. Manente stated in fiscal year 2010-2011 they burned through 1070 hours and in fiscal year 2011-2012 it was 1500 hours. He stated basically they watch the bottom line.

Ald. Vitali asked how they watch the bottom line if they don't know the cost per production. He asked if they pay the line man.

Mr. Manente replied yes, that his hourly rate is \$15.00 per hours. He stated they don't figure cost into each meeting.

He also pointed out line item 4168 0000 was reduced and those monies put into line item 4749 0000.

Ald. Vitali asked how often they have meetings.

Mr. Manente replied, once a month.

Ald. Vitali asked how secretarial fees are paid.

M. Manente stated they do not pay secretarial fees. He explained they take their own minutes, but if they needed to pay for secretarial fees they could take it account of the special equipment account.

**4146 Tree Commission** – Bryan Mancini, Chairman was present. Mr. Mancini extended an invite to all the aldermen to attend a special tree planting ceremony next to the cannon at the Chamber of Commerce building.

Ald. German asked about line item 4432 0000 trees/shrubs and there those generally go.

Mr. Mancini stated that \$500 gets them about 3-4 trees per year. He stated they also receive price reductions from Milford Trees, Inc. He stated with the original \$750 they requested, they had hoped to get 5 trees.

**4156 Conservation Commission** – No one was present.

Mayor Blake stated if anyone had any questions, to get them to him.

Ald. Vitali asked why there such diversity in secretarial fees throughout the various Boards and Commissions.

Mayor Blake stated for most it is \$50, but that meeting schedules varied with each.

Ald. Vitali asked if he was saying we did not know the number of meetings.

Mayor Blake stated he would assume 12, but could not be sure.

**4210 Finance Department** – Mr. Peter Erodici, Finance Director, Mrs. Judy Haley, Tax Collector and Mr. Daniel Thomas, Assessor were present. Mr. Erodici introduced Mrs. Haley and Mr. Thomas. He stated for the past 3 years their budget has gone down. He stated this year the budget is relatively flat and that they have worked hard with the Mayor to reduce it nearly 2%.

No questions were asked.

**4143 Board of Assessment Appeals** – Mr. Daniel Thomas was present.

Ald. Vitali asked about line item 4170 0000 Other Renumeration.

Mr. Thomas explained the members are reimbursed for their time during appeals. He stated the sessions are generally 2-3 hours.

**4193 Public Library** – Jean Tsang, Linda Wanosky, Chairman of the Library Board and Peter Vita were present. Mrs. Tsang stated she is stymied as to what to present to the Board. She stated in the past she would write about what the library has done, present a PowerPoint, and give handouts and more. She continued by reading a prepared statement regarding the activities of the library, she also spoke of the cost of books, rebinding, and supplies and processing, printing supplies and computer software and upkeep. She also spoke of the cost of books, rebinding, supplies, processing, printing, supplies, computer software and upkeep. Mrs. Tsang also stated there is a fee for the barracuda filter on the computers. She stated last year they also lost a full time position and that they only have 15 full time positions. She stated they have and continue to be fiscally responsible, but this year they are looking additional monies for their electronic books, e-books. She stated their budget is tight, but that it was their hope to be able to offer downloadable audio books. She stated being able to do this brings a virtual library to the citizens of Milford 24/7.

Ald. Stanford asked how much fine money the library brings in.

Mrs. Tsang responded about \$30,000 per year.

Ald. Stanford asked the cost of the e-books.

Mrs. Tsang state the cost would be \$6,500-8,000, depending on what is in the collection. She stated it is \$3,000 for the software and \$3,500 for the basic core collection.

Ald. Stanford asked if that amount if in the proposed budget.

Mayor Blake stated he has a meeting scheduled with Mrs. Tsang in the next few weeks to see if they can accomplish these funds.

Mrs. Tsang stated her concern with the funding of the library. She stated the budget was set last year for many of these accounts, but that she will need to do transfers to finish out the year.

Ald. Giannattasio asked if the budget would be amended in light of an upcoming meeting and the eBooks not being included at this point.

Mayor Blake responded yes. He stated there would be a meeting with the Finance Director and the library director to see where they can find these funds. He stated they would also look to see if there is an alternative method.

Ald. Shaw asked the anticipated hours of the library based on this budget.

Mrs. Tsang stated they are closed Friday mornings, but would reopen a full day. She stated as a community she finds they tend to slow down in the summer and that it makes more sense to be open Monday through Friday.

Mayor Blake pointed out there is additional funding for seasonal temporary in this budget.

Mrs. Tsang stated the extra monies in the seasonal temporary account only cover the person they lost last year that was full time. She stated they have spent almost all of the \$90,000 in seasonal/temporary.

Ald. Vitali stated he applauded the library's attempts to offer e-Books, stating he fully understands. He also commented there is a learning curve to see how it will work and also there is the need for training to make it successful. He stated he did not see why it could not happen within this budget and possibly from the \$30,000 in fines the library takes in.

Ald. F. Smith stated he is the liaison to the Library Board. He spoke of how Milford compares as a municipal library as compared to neighboring towns with similar population.

Mrs. Tsang stated Connecticut Public Library statistics rate Milford very poorly compared to other cities the same size. She pointed out all of the surrounding towns have e-Books funded, i.e. Orange, Stratford, West Haven. She also stated it was important to note that planning for the budget begins in October.

Ald. F. Smith commented the Milford Public Library is conspicuously behind as compared with other cities. He also commended the heroic efforts of Mrs. Tsang as well as the work of the Library Board and tremendous efforts of the Friends of the Library.

Mrs. Tsang explained the Friends of the Library support them wherever needed. She stated the cost to join the Friends of the Library is \$5.00 per year. She stated they have paid for such items as art prints, computers, museum passes, etc.

Ald. Veccharelli asked about the Passport Program noting its success.

Mrs. Tsang stated it really is a mixed bag. She stated when the economy dropped off, so did that office. She explained they have an agreement with that office that monies from that office would not be used for basic library funding. She stated it really is monies you can't count on because of the economy.

Ald. Veccharelli asked about much income the Passport Office generates in a year.

Mrs. Tsang stated she did not have the amount with her. She stated it is her understanding that office sustains itself and that they pay for their own supplies. She stated expenses last year were \$9,600, which included line items for the office itself.

Ald. Veccharelli asked if there was a line item for eBooks in this budget.

Mrs. Tsang stated it is in expenses. She explained the magazine data base was increased to \$16,000 to include that cost, but that line item was reduced.

Ald. Veccharelli asked about Saturday hours and if Mrs. Tsang could share some data with the Board regarding numbers on a Saturday.

Mrs. Tsang stated their statistics show the busiest days are Mondays and Fridays and of course rainy days. She stated with regard to hours, she does not make that decision, that the Library Board dictates that.

Ald. Nunno commented if this Board were to increase line item 4796 0001 that would satisfy the request for the eBooks.

Mrs. Tsang responded yes.

**4620 Recreation Department** – Paul Piscitelli, Director and Dan Worroll, Chairman was present.

Mr. Worroll pointed out the Milford Recreation Department has taken the lead in adaptive programs. He also stated the Walnut Beach area is 99.9% handicap accessible. Mr. Worroll also spoke of the bench program, which he explained is a dedication program. He also spoke of the numerous programs the Recreation Department offers and that they are in the top 5 in the State for programming.

Mr. Piscitelli stated the budget represents a 2.6% decrease over last year's budget. He stated working within these parameters will be a challenge, but that they would make every effort. He stated within the office they are attempting to implement an on-line registration system. He stated they are at capacity in many of their programs. He stated he is in support of and is eager to improve and expand the department.

Ald. Shaw asked about line item 4117 0000 Seasonal/Temporary.

Mr. Piscitelli stated this line item supports the backbone of the Recreation Department, i.e. the Summer Recreation Program, Camp Happiness, water staff and keeping the building open. He stated they have over 200 seasonal staff. He stated they also needed to keep in mind the State of Connecticut is looking to increase the minimum wage which will impact these numbers. He stated he was not sure he would be able to operate with that number next year. He also stated there is another wage increase proposed for July 2014.

Ald. Shaw asked about recreation fees for programs.

Mr. Piscitelli explained there are league fees for softball, etc.

Ald. Shaw asked about the natatorium and if that is for use of the pool.

Mr. Piscitelli stated line item 4117 0001 Natatorium Seas/Temp is for life guards and instructors. He stated line item 4708 9670 is used to purchase equipment for those programs and also for general maintenance.

Ald. Vitali commented the programs offered by the Recreation Department are fantastic and applauded the efforts of Mr. Piscitelli. He asked about the boardwalk at Walnut Beach and some of the repairs needed and if that was through FEMA or this budget.

Mr. Piscitelli explained on the State side it is being handled by DEEP. He stated the repairs from Storm Irene, which included one staircase and some railings.

Ald. Vitali also commented about the mismatched trek decking which is where the graffiti was.

Mr. Piscitelli stated the boardwalk was a State project.

Mayor Blake stated with regard to the graffiti they have actively been on site to view the damage. He also stated they are trying to stay on top of it and deal with it as expeditiously as possible.

Chairman Vetro commented he recently attended a meeting and it was explained the department recently went through an enormous task of classifying ball fields.

Mr. Piscitelli stated they recently did an inventory of their fields under the direction of the Park, Beach & Recreation Commission. He stated they are working with GIS to put street addressed on all of their projects. Mr. Piscitelli stated it helped them to see what is out there and what the department can offer.

Ald. Giannattasio asked about investing in facilities.

Mr. Piscitelli stated they need to improve and expand their facilities in order to incorporate and improve programs. He stated their facilities are all multipurpose use and that they are trying to be creative as to what they can put and where.

Ald. Veccharelli asked if there are any plans for improvement to the Caswell Park area and what is on the drawing board.

Mr. Piscitelli stated there is nothing on the table at this time.

**4153 Park, Beach and Recreation Commission** – Daniel Worroll, Jr. Chairman and Paul Piscitelli, Recreation Director were present.

Mr. Worroll stated the budget is essentially for secretarial fees for 12 meetings @ \$50 per month.

Ald. Vitali stated he wished to confirm they met through the summer months.

Mr. Worroll responded yes.

**4115 Registrar of Voters** - Mrs. Antoinette Carey and Mrs. Debra Fellenbaum were present.

Mrs. Carey read a statement as to the workings of the department. She also pointed out they are a part time office, but that their seasonal/temporary staff is very important to the function of their office. She also addressed the April conference they attend each year.

Ald. Shaw asked about line item 4117 0000 Seasonal/Temporary and how many people that works out to.

Mrs. Carey responded 2, 1 Democrat and 1 Republican.

Ald. Stanford spoke of a new bill being proposed for absentee voting and if it passes if it would create a problem for the department.

Mrs. Carey stated there are many things that come down from the Secretary of State that they are mandated to do and some they don't.

Ald. Stanford asked if it would cost more money.

Mrs. Carey stated the machines they had years ago had minimal problems, but now they cost more and they have less to do with them. She stated what it means is more staff, more ballot.

Chairman Vetro thanked Mrs. Carey for the fantastic job she and her staff do. He stated he has been to that department many times asking questions and that he appreciates all that they do.

**4123 Community Development** – Robert Gregory, Director was present. He presented an update on the hazard mitigation grant. He stated they filed the grant electronically a week ago and sent a hard copy today. He stated they also had 22 grants today and one late submission as well. He stated another responsibility of this department is the Hazard Mitigation Plan, which he stated expires in August of this year.

Ald. Veccharelli asked how this department helps the City in trying to get businesses to relocate here and take up vacant space.

Mr. Gregory explained the data base they use as well as the web site. He stated they have the ability to plug in various parameters.

Ald. F. Smith commented on the stellar reputation of bringing buyer/seller together. He asked what incentives are offered to attract people to Milford.

Mr. Gregory stated the first thing everyone always asks is “what tax incentives do you have?” He stated as far as tax breaks go, the philosophy has always been that they don't reward the new guy on the block. He stated Milford is able to maintain a stable tax base which is why people want to come here. He also added it is a safe community, with good schools and easy access to I-95, Waterbury, the shoreline, etc. He also stated Milford is a great place to live and work.

**4155 Economic Development Commission** – Robert Gregory was present.

No questions.

Ald. Vitali commented it was his recollection that 2-3 years ago the Board of Aldermen did away with the contractual wage adjustment and yet it is in this budget. He asked if going forward with the budget and looking at the budgeted positions if this is something that was reversed and asked when.

Mayor Blake responded the Board did away with the wage adjustment for the non-representatives. He stated it has not changed for those in a collective bargaining unit.

Ald. Vitali stated he thought they were all taken out.

Mayor Blake stated there are some non-representatives who are now members of a collective bargaining unit.

Mr. Erodici added the Board of Aldermen did eliminate the contractual wage adjustment for all non-representatives. He stated where you see contradictions; those former non-representatives are now part of a bargaining unit.

Chairman Vetro stated the Board would take a 5-minute recess. The Board recessed at 8:45 p.m.

Chairman Vetro reconvened the Board in public session at 8:53 p.m.

**4142 Department of Permitting and Land Use** – Jocelyn Mathiasen was present. She stated the department is comprised of the Planning & Zoning, Inland Wetlands and Building Departments and explained the function of each. She also stated this department is the gatekeeper for plan reviews for the fire and health departments and basically as a filter. Reading from a prepared statement she spoke of the goal of bringing the departments together and improving customer service. She stated they have made significant change, adding the process has changed and the customer's experience has changed. Ms. Mathiasen stated the departments are on-line through view permit and that you can apply for permits on-line. She stated a significant number of permits are now applied for on line. She continued reading stating the department continues to improve and expand what they are doing.

Ald. German asked if View Permit is available to residents.

Ms. Mathiasen stated you can apply through View Permit to do some basic research.

Ald. Shaw asked if they were expecting an increase on the number of permits going thought.

Ms. Mathiasen replied yes. She stated they were expecting an increase in the number of building permits, but that it was too early to tell the amount.

Ald. Shaw asked the wait time when a plan is reviewed.

Ms. Mathiasen stated the list of pending permits is posted every day. She stated there are approximately 20 projects currently. She also commented they expected a lot of complicated reviews forthcoming.

Ald. Shaw asked if there is a Zoning Enforcement Officer in place.

Ms. Mathiasen stated they had interviewed 7 candidates and they are in the process of making a final list.

Ald. Vitali asked about the possibility of using Pay Pal.



Ms. Mathiasen stated the City does not use Pay Pal. She went on to explain the process for permit fees.

Ald. Vitali asked if she could expand upon her comment as being the “gatekeeper for plan reviews.”

Ms. Mathiasen explained they get the sign off and approval from the fire and building departments. She stated it is the building department that actually issues the permit.

Ald. F. Smith commented on the recent organization of this department. He asked if this department serves basically as an umbrella for all of these departments.

Ms. Mathiasen explained how the departments were combined to one single department and role of her position.

Ald. Golden asked about the line item for junk car removal.

Ms. Mathiasen explained the line item provides a budget to remove a junk car where there may have been a number of complaints. She stated the Zoning Enforcement Officer is charged with that enforcement.

Ald. Veccharelli asked about line item 4797 0000. He stated he has asked about this every year and has been told there was an inability to find someone to remove the vehicles and that it was a very expensive procedure, with a lot of paperwork. He stated the last he knew the City did not have anyone to remove junk vehicles and therefore they did not remove junk cars. He stated he felt there should be a shared responsibility with these cars and their removal and that enforcement is not impossible. He also asked about line item 4791 0000 and the request for two vehicles and none were recommended.

Ms. Mathiasen stated the chief building inspector responds to fire cars, i.e. car v. building, and also responds on weekend to various calls. She stated they had requested a four wheel vehicle because he is on call 24/7. She stated the other request was simply the fleet vehicles which are much older vehicles. She stated their vehicles are all older and they were looking to replace. She also pointed out these vehicles are used throughout the City all day long.

**4144 Zoning Board of Appeals** – Jocelyn Mathiasen, Director DPLU. She stated the entire advertising budget has been depleted. She went on to explain the mandates for advertising.

Ald. Shaw stated she thought where the City was advertising had changed.

Ms. Mathiasen stated there has been talk to advertise in the Milford Mirror, but because of print deadlines to advertise, it could not be done. The was due mostly in part because the paper only comes out once a week.

**4145 Flood and Erosion Board** – no questions.

**4219 Personnel Department** – John O’Connell, Personnel Director was present. He stated it has been a busy year hiring middle and professional level workers, which required advertising. He stated they have been the busiest with the bargaining unit contract and also with the RFP for health insurance.

Ald. Veccharelli asked about line item 4112 0000 Overtime.

Mr. O'Connell explained it is for the pension administrator who attends night meetings as well as other meetings. He also stated some of that overtime is for his administrative assistant who may at times receive overtime for a meeting, etc.

Ald. Vitali asked if the personnel in his office were salary or per diem.

Mr. O'Connell stated they are hourly people who also are part of a bargaining unit.

**4145 Pension Board** – John O'Connell was present. – Mr. O'Connell stated this budget is mostly for secretarial fees and fees for audits. He stated they get that figure directly from the Finance Department.

**4151 Civil Service Commission** – John O'Connell was present. He stated this account is for secretarial fees for when the Commission meets.

**4131 Law Department** – Jonathan D. Berchem, City Attorney. He stated it was an honor and privilege to be before the Board and that he has enjoyed the last several months. Attorney Berchem stated he has an excellent staff and is blessed to work alongside them, adding they do a great job attending to the residents of this City.

Ald. Stanford questioned the difference of salary between the City Attorney and the Assistant City Attorney who appears to earn more.

Attorney Berchem explained the City Attorney position is a part-time position. He stated in the past the City Attorney position was full time until the retirement of former City Attorney Lipton. He stated he is part-time.

Ald. Veccharelli asked Attorney Berchem if he can do the job in a part time capacity.

Attorney Berchem stated he works in excess of the 24 hours the position calls for, but noted the City is being well served.

Mayor Blake commented he is very confident the City Attorney has worked in excess of 72 hours in his first month, adding the City does get its value.

Ald. Veccharelli stated he would like to have the position be full time and that there would be funds available to put in that line item.

Ald. Vitali questioned what the Board of Finance increased the budget by a few thousand dollars.

Mayor Blake explained there were members of the City Attorney's Office that became part of a bargaining unit recently.

Ald. Vitali asked for an explanation as to the 5 FTE positions and what work is still being outsourced.

Attorney Berchem stated one of the first things he addressed when he became City Attorney was outside counsel fees. He explained his predecessor utilized outside counsel for all labor work, which he stated was historically done in-house and went outside in 2008. He stated this is a change he hopes to make and have the Assistant City Attorney do the labor negotiations in house.

Ald. Vitali asked if there was a projection of the time for this happening.

Attorney Berchem stated it would likely happen in the next few years. He also stated from this account comes expert witness fees and appraisers for land use cases.

Ald. Vitali commented on the number of support staff and asked the role of the paralegal position.

Attorney Berchem stated she handles everything and that basically she is the conduit of the office.

Ald. Vitali asked about law books.

Attorney Berchem responded they are very much needed. He also pointed out that particular line item also encompasses on-line legal research.

Ald. Vitali asked if it is hard copy.

Attorney Berchem replied it is both. He stated they have reduced each year the amount of hard cover books they receive. He also stated they are currently negotiating with two sources to get the best price.

Ald. F. Smith asked about outside counsel and asked about line item 4189 0000 Other Legal Fees.

Attorney Berchem stated he has not retained outside counsel since he took over.

Chairman Vetro thanked Attorney Berchem for all of his hard work since coming on board.

**4132 Ethics Commission** – Jonathan D. Berchem, City Attorney. No questions.

**4740 Claims and Refunds** – no questions.

**4129 City Clerk** – Mrs. Linda Stock was present for questions/comments. Mrs. Stock distributed to each of the aldermen a print out with explanation of the accounts were a shortfall has occurred or is expected. She went on to explain the details of the handout.

Ald. Nunno commented regarding the numbers on the handout and those of the Board of Finance recommendation.

Mrs. Stock stated the handout includes last year's figures.

Ald. Nunno asked if there are other companies out there.

Mrs. Stock responded yes, but they have found that Cott is the best they have used. She went on to explain the type of training that Cott has provided and continues to provide.

Ald. Golden asked how to access the land records on-line.

Mrs. Stock responded through the City's website ([www.ci.milford.ct.us](http://www.ci.milford.ct.us)).

Ald. F. Smith stated for clarification that the handout was to show the shortfalls for this year. He also commended the City Clerk's office, stating the staff has always been helpful any time he has been there. He also noted how the office has been modernized over the last few years.

Ald. Veccharelli asked about line item 4799 0197 asked if there would be any savings if they were to get it this year as compared to next year.

Mrs. Stock stated she believed it would be the fees for MIS that would likely go up. She stated they have been holding that figure for them. She stated it is a benefit for their office, which in turn benefits the citizens.

**4112 Elections** – Mrs. Linda Stock was present for questions/comments. She stated they are paying everyone that worked at the elections. She also noted with a primary this year, they would need extra money and pointed out it is the same amount of money as an election. Mrs. Stock stated she wished to address a question brought up earlier tonight by Ald. Stanford regarding absentee ballots and the position of the City Clerk's Association. She stated it is a horrendous process for those absentee ballots.

**4141 Board of Finance** – no questions/comments.

**4121 Mayor's Office** – Mayor Blake stated it has been a fantastically exciting 5 months. He stated he would be happy to answer any questions of the Board.

Ald. F. Smith asked about the discrepancy between department requests and the recommendation of the Mayor.

Mayor Blake explained the department requests came out before he took the position and then some other information changed between the initial request and the Mayor's budget.

Ald. Giannattasio asked about the contractual wage adjustment for his office. He asked if that was for just one person.

Mayor Blake responded yes. He stated one member of his office became a member of a bargaining unit.

**4122 General Expenses** – Mayor Blake stated he would be happy to answer any questions.

Ald. Shaw asked about line item 4773 0003 Burnt Plains Road.

Mayor Blake stated this is a 10 year plan with payments of \$30,000 per year. He stated the City is in the third year.

Mr. Erodici added there is no pre-payment penalty.

**4111 Board of Aldermen** – no questions.

Ald. Veccharelli and Ald. Golden made and seconded a motion to recess at 10:02 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen K. Huber  
Recording Secretary