

**BOARD OF ALDERMEN
BUDGET DELIBERATIONS SESSION
APRIL 22, 2019**

The Board of Aldermen resumed their budget deliberation session on Monday, April 22, 2019 in the aldermanic chambers of City Hall. Chairman Vetro welcomed everyone and asked those present to join in saluting our flag and reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

1. Roll Call

Board Members Present

E. Beatty
K. Fortunati
C. Gaynor
D. German
J. Grant
M. Hardiman (7:05)
F. Smith
A. Sutton
J. Tranquilli
N. Veccharelli
P. Vetro
R. Vitali

Also Present

Mayor Benjamin G. Blake
P. Erodici, Finance Director
J. Rohrig, City Clerk

Excused

B. Anderson
A. Giannattasio
J. Golden

Chairman Vetro reconvened the budget proceedings in public session at 7:00 p.m.

Probate Court (pg. 26) – Judge Beverly Streit-Kefalas state the budget request remained flat with the exception of a \$225 increase to digital photograph which is contractual. She discussed how the budget is funded through the State and municipal contributions. Judge Streit-Kefalas stated municipalities share in the budget based on population. She commented that Milford's portion is 75% of \$23,071 and Orange's portion is 25%. Ald. Smith asked if the budget is based on caseload. Judge Streit Kefalas stated the system does not track caseload that way and per statute it is per capita.

Council on Aging (pg. 87) – Janice Jackson, Executive Director read from a prepared statement providing statistics over the past fiscal year. Ald. Betty mentioned that Ms. Jackson would be retiring this June and thanked her for her many years of service. Mayor Blake also thanked Ms. Jackson for her many years of service. Ald. German asked Ms. Jackson to remind everyone as to what the membership fees cost. Mr. Jackson stated they fees at \$15 for Milford residents and \$30 for non-

residents. Ald. Vetro stated he has had the pleasure of working with Ms. Jackson as a liaison and congratulated her on a job well done. He stated she should be proud that Milford is considered one of the best senior centers.

Beth El Center (p. 92) – Jennifer Paradis, Executive Director provided and hand out and discussed statistics over the past year. She stated there has been an increase in the unsheltered and they are the most vulnerable. Ms. Paradis stated in 2018 the greater New Haven region saw an increase of 113% with an impact on encampments, visitors to soup kitchens, and no freeze shelters. She discussed the population of homeless individuals and that a major contributing factor is substance abuse and the lack of access to mental health treatment. Ms. Paradis commented that the Beth El Shelter is efficient and effective and the length of stays are lower than the state average. She stated the budget request has remained the same and represents approximately 12% of the operating budget however they do not know what to expect from the State budget and need is increasing. Ald. German asked if the average length of stay is 68 days. Ms. Paradis stated some stays can be longer but the goal is 30 days. Discussion ensued concerning national trends and the increase in homelessness. Ald. Gaynor thanked Ms. Paradis for her work and asked what the unsheltered population is in Milford. Mr. Paradis stated it is a fluctuating number, but currently around 50 people.

Health Department (p. 79) – Deepa Joseph, Health Director provided a handout and reviewed highlights of the Health Department over the past fiscal year. Ms. Joseph discussed the Health Department working toward accreditation. She stated the department began to seek accreditation in 2016 and they have just completed strategic planning and are now moving onto documentation collection. Ms. Joseph stated the public has expressed an interest in seeing more from the department especially in education and opiod prevention. Ms. Joseph stated the budget is flat, although at some point she will need to request additional funding for the accreditation fees. Ald. German asked Ms. Joseph to explain the information provided that 40% of school children have health conditions. Ms. Joseph stated this is a mix of students such as food allergies, tube feedings and asthma. Ald. Grant asked for a time line to complete accreditation. Ms. Joseph stated there is still a lot of gathering that must take place which requires updating and drafting many policies. She stated she hope within a year the department will be prepared to submit the application. Ald. Smith asked what the measles situation is in the City of Milford. Ms. Joseph stated the immunization rate in Milford Public Schools is 98%. Ald. German asked how to participate in the healthy houses program. Ms. Joseph stated it can be by request or referral.

Health Services (VNA) (p. 91)

None

Education Health (p. 95)

None

Human Services (p. 90) - Deepa Joseph, Health Director provided a handout and discussed the highlights over the past fiscal year. Ms. Joseph stated currently her are two outreach workers who coordinate services and provide referrals. She stated that under youth and family services they are partnering with Bridges to ensure that needs are being addressed. Ms. Joseph stated that schools

are seeing an increase in behavioral issues at the younger levels. Ald. Vitali asked if the birth to 5 year old children were more developmental and emotional issues. Ms. Joseph stated it is a little bit of both but more social / emotional and dealing with stress. Ald. Vitali stated this may be related to parental stress and issues and asked if the parents were receiving assistance. Ms. Joseph stated they do work to provide strategies on handle such situations.

Management Information Systems (MIS) (p. 39) – Adam Heller, Interim MIS Manager stated he is working on finalizing some large projects and will be working with the departments to better serve their needs. He stated there is no change to the budget request. Ald. German asked how staffing is in MIS. Mr. Heller stated they are a bit understaffed but he has been working with the Mayor and Finance Director. Mayor Blake complimented Mr. Heller on his coming to the City and stepping in to help complete the MUNIS project. He also stated that there are no new net positions, but positions have shifted due to the creation of a payroll division. Ald. Veccharelli asked why overtime decreased. Mr. Heller explained he expects the need for overtime to decrease once the payroll portion of MUNIS is implemented.

Department of Permitting and Land Use (p. 27) – Joseph Griffith, DPLU Director read from a prepared statement providing departmental highlights over the past fiscal year. He stated the budget has a \$2,300 decrease because operational expenses have been consolidated to have better control and realize efficiencies. Mr. Griffith stated that revenues are consistent with prior years. He discussed that the department will be looking for new permitting software as the current software will no longer be supported. Mr. Griffith also discussed that the Plan and Conservation and Development is required by state law to be updated in 2022 and that this is a lengthy process. Ald. Vetro complimented Mr. Griffith on how the department is now running. Ald. Vitali asked Mr. Griffith if he had pricing for a new software program. Mr. Griffith stated they have looked at a number of programs that range from \$70,000 to \$200,000 for implementation. Ald. Vitali asked why there was no funding requested for the wireless and blueprint accounts. Mr. Griffith explained the wireless is all now under cell phones and that account was carried over from when the divisions merged into DPLU. He also explained that there is not a need for blueprint as copies are provided by the applicants and should the department need a copy they can be made in the Engineering Department. Ald. Veccharelli asked what the anticipate revenue is for this year. Mr. Griffith stated it fluctuates but he expects it to be around 1.1 million. Ald. Veccharelli asked why computer software maintenance had been reduced to \$1. Mr. Griffith stated that once a new software vendors is selected he would bring that expense to the Board of Finance and Board of Aldermen for allocation.

Zoning Board of Appeals (p. 29)

None.

Finance Department (p.37) - Peter Erodici, Finance Director provided an overview of what the Finance Department has done over the past year. He discussed the tremendous undertaking of implementing MUNIS. Mr. Erodici discussed the reorganization and creation of a payroll division. He stated that the Finance budget is relatively flat. Ald. German asked where the City currently is with the MUNIS implementation. Mr. Erodici stated the financial system is 85% to 90% complete and that the HR/Payroll portion is expected to go live in July and that document enterprise portion will take place after HR/Payroll has been rolled out successfully.

Registrars (p. 15) – Debra Fellenbaum and Kerri Rowland, Registrars provided a brief presentation on the department. Ms. Rowland discussed what to expect with the coming budget and upcoming elections. She stated the request is very lean and that they do not know what to expect from early voting. Ms. Rowland discussed the tabulators and that they are coming to end of their useful life. She stated the Federal government provided funding to acquire the current tabulators but new ones would need to be funded by the City at a cost of approximately \$5,500 each. Ald. Gaynor asked if both types of tabulators could be run at the same time. Ms. Rowland stated she thought they could. Ald. Veccharelli asked if the budget will cover April elections. Ms. Rowland stated they took that into consideration when preparing the budget request.

Elections (p. 14) – Joanne Rohrig, City Clerk, stated they asked for \$130,000 because last year they needed an increase. During this fiscal year there is the municipal election and it is anticipated there will be a presidential primary in April of 2020. Ald. Smith asked how much time is spent keeping up on regulations. Ms. Rohrig provided stated they attend conferences when they are offered. She discussed the question of early voting and if it were to pass the possible financial impact. Ms. Rowland provided information on certification requirements and educational opportunities.

City Clerk (p. 22) – Joanne Rohrig, City Clerk state the budget request is flat and she asked for an increase in seasonal temporary. She discussed how she had to reduce hours to bring in seasonal help at \$11 an hour. Ms. Rohrig stated that should the minimum wage increase to \$15 there will not be sufficient funds to cover the increase and with 2 retirements in June she needs the office coverage.

Board of Assessment Appeals (p. 29)

None

Public Works Office (p. 63) – Chris Saley, Public Works Director stated he would be happy to answer any questions the board may have. Ald. Smith asked if the Assistant Public Works Director was Steve Johnson. Mr. Johnson stated he is currently acting and continues to be the Open Space and Natural Resource Agent. Mr. Veccharelli asked if there was an additional position in the budget. Mr. Saley stated there was the addition of a construction project manager to oversee construction projects.

Highway/Parks (p. 65-68) – Ald. Grant asked due to decrease in Recreation Upkeep and Ballfield Upkeep what would not be able to happen. Mr. Saley stated the fields are getting fatigued and he had hoped to do some major renovations. Ald. German asked if all positions are not filled and 2 were eliminated to address the renovations. Mr. Saley stated positions have been eliminated in other division and to continue to eliminate positions would not be in the best interest of the City.

Building Maintenance (p. 69-71)

None

Engineering Department (p. 72)

None

General Garage (p. 74) – Ald. Vitali asked why equipment and supply had been reduced. Mr. Saley stated they had exceeded budgeted amounts each year and the fleet is aging requiring more repair. Mr. Vitali asked if the amount reduced by the Mayor and Board of Finance would be sufficient. Mr. Saley stated they will do their best to work within the budget and there are opportunities to offset costs. Ald. Gaynor asked about the GPS line item. Mr. Saley stated they are working on selecting a vendor. Ald. Gaynor asked the benefit of GPS. Mr. Saley stated it provides valuable information on a vehicle such as location, maintenance, idling and other types of data. Ald. Vitali commented that the decrease to the account is significant. Mr. Saley stated they will have to make a determination as to which vehicles to install the GPS. Ald. Gaynor noted salaries have not increased. Mr. Saley stated they are contractual.

Solid Waste (p. 76) – Mr. Saley stated account 589950 will have challenges as costs have increased significantly. Mayor Blake discussed how he hopes to find saving opportunities with the operation of the transfer station. Ald. German asked why the amounts have increased when they should have decreased with the one arm bandits. Mr. Saley provided an explanation as to how some costs are contractual and costs due to covering time off and such. Ald. German asked why we continue to provide condominium reimbursement. Mr. Saley stated we reimburse actual or by City's formula whichever is lower.

Wastewater (p. 101-105) – Ald. Smith asked who is superintendent of wastewater. Mr. Saley stated Lindsey King.


Sewer Commission (p. 98)

None.

Ald. Veccharelli and Ald. Beatty made and seconded a motion to recess. Motion carried unanimously. The Board recessed at 9:35 p.m.

Chairman Vetro announced the Board would stand in recess until Monday, April 22, 2019.

Respectfully submitted,


Toni Jo Weeks
Recording Secretary