

**BOARD OF ALDERMEN
BUDGET DELIBERATIONS SESSION – FY 2015-2016
APRIL 23, 2015**

The Board of Aldermen held a budget deliberation session on Thursday, April 23, 2015 in the aldermanic chambers of City Hall. Chairman Vetro welcomed everyone to the meeting regarding the Board of Finance's recommended budget for FY2015/2016. He asked those present to join in saluting our flag and reciting the Pledge of allegiance.

1. Roll Call

Board Members Present

B. Anderson (8:52 p.m.)
M. Casey
D. German
A. Giannattasio
J. Golden
M. Hardiman
D. Kubek
S. Shaw
F. Smith
G. Stanford
N. Veccharelli
P. Vetro
R. Vitali

Also Present

Mayor Ben Blake
S. Fournier, Mayor's Asst.
J. Rohrig, City Clerk
P. Erodici, Finance Director

Excused

B. Bier
S. Fontana

Chairman Vetro announced they were out of recess at 7:07 p.m. and reconvened the Board in public session to continue hearing from the city departments and agencies.

4133 Probate Court – Probate Court Judge Streit-Kefalas was present for questions. Judge Streit-Kefalas stated her budget is \$518 less. Have always had a flat budget

Ald Vitali asked what Orange's portion of the budget was.

She explained it is based on per capital of each town. Milford is 75% of the budget and Orange is 25%.

Ald. Kubek commented it was refreshing to hear someone come in with a lower budget.

4122 Milford Prevention Council – Wendy Gibbons, Executive Director was present for questions/comments. She thanked the Board for the opportunity to come before them. Ms. Gibbons stated their mission is to reduce underage drinking. Spoke of the variety of programs they do. She also stated they do a lot of school visits and work closely with the Board of Education.

Ald. Shaw asked about the decrease and whether it was due to the survey

Ms. Gibbons stated they do a bi-annual survey which resulted in a savings.

4115 Registrar of Voters –Keri Rowland and Debra Fellenbaum were present for questions. Mrs. Rowland stated unlike most other departments they have two department heads. She stated when they became registrars their first goal was re-organization of their department which they feel they are now managing much better. Ms. Rowland spoke of the duties and responsibilities of their department.

Mrs. Fellenbaum thanked the Board for its support of recent on-line testimony regarding the proposed changes at the local level for registrars. She also reported they appointed 2 deputies Laura Fucci (Rowland) Joyce Marlow (Fellenbaum). She stated they all work together and do what is mandated by the State. She spoke of the required education training.

Ald. Shaw asked about seasonal temporary account, which was reduced to \$15,000.

Mrs. Rowland explained over the last few years they have been understaffed but they have worked together to make sure their work is done.

Ald. Vitali asked if they have resolved the issue with the Secretary of State.

Mrs. Fellenbaum stated the language is in the process of being changed, but that they are constantly defending what they do and are always on their toes.

Mrs. Rowland commented in Hartford their Board of Aldermen tried to remove the registrars, but failed. She reiterated what Ms. Fellenbaum stated that they are continuing working at their top level to best serve the city residents.

4129 City Clerk – Joanne Rohrig and Assistant City Clerk Bonnie Peloso were present for questions/comments. City Clerk Rohrig stated this is her first budget thanked her dedicated staff as well as Finance Director Peter Erodici. She stated their office is visited daily by hundreds. She went on to provide an overview of the work of the city clerk's office, referencing the handout provided to the aldermen. She also, spoke of the numerous community events they conduct throughout the year. She continued presentation from the handout. She also spoke regarding records and record retention. City Clerk Rohrig stated she is working on two projects, procurement of technology as well as working with the IT department to accomplish this which will enhance the department.

Ald. Stanford asked about line item 4980 0601 Security System which was reduced to \$0.

City Clerk Rohrig stated she was looking into putting in a security camera for the office. She stated she continues to work with the police department regarding security issues.

4112 Elections – City Clerk Rohrig and Registrars Rowland and Fellenbaum were present for questions/comments. City Clerk Rohrig explained they work directly with the registrar's office.

Mrs. Rowland stated there are a few areas where they have fallen behind. She spoke of the ballot boxes. She explained they are plastic, so there has been some damage to the boxes. She stated they are looking to replace them and make sure they are in compliance and that they have the number of boxes they are required to have.

Also, ballot memory cards are another expense. She mentioned Election Day registration where they had over 500 come to their office the day of the election for the gubernatorial election in November.

Mrs. Rowland explained they are looking into purchasing laptops which will keep the flow of getting voters registered. She also stated they are looking at a scanner to scan your license when you check-in to vote. She stated they are hoping to demo it in November.

4160 Housing Code Board of Appeals – Mayor Blake stated their budget is the same as previous year and is primarily for secretarial fees.

4146 Flood and Erosion Board - Mayor Blake stated this Board has been rejuvenated and they are at full strength with three engineers on that Board. He stated they are very active and pursuing numerous grant applications.

4147 Tree Commission – no one was present.

4156 Conservation Commission – Bill Poutry, Chairman was present for questions/comments. He stated essentially they are a land use board. He explained they make recommendations of sub-divisions and open space requisition and outreach for education. He stated their budget is simple, taken up mostly by secretarial fees.

4310 Police Department – Chief Mello provided the Board with a brief statement. He stated there is an increase in the wages due to the contractual obligations. He stated the budget represents no growth with the exception of five (5) body cameras and costs for storage; otherwise it is the same budget as last year with the same services provided. He spoke of the numerous training mandates that may be coming down the road. He stated based on history they have had a shortfall, which they expect again this year. Chief Mello expressed his hope the vacancies they have would overcome that shortage, but he didn't expect we will be able to do that next year. He also mentioned the combined dispatch system. Provided the background behind the police and fire dispatchers and the change in the infrastructure where the PSAP center which was combined into one center. He noted he serves as the PSAP director. He stated he mentioned it because they are in the final phase of the transfer and are realizing staffing efficiencies and cross train the dispatchers to do each other's jobs. He stated the fire dispatchers now be found in the police department salary schedule which increases their overall budget.

Chairman Vetro asked about line item 4151 0000 Professional & Other Sys. which was reduced to \$30,000.

Chief Mello stated part of that line item has to do with their computer system which is very sophisticated and complex. He stated they need an IT person and are looking for someone to fill this position (in light of the retirement of Todd Richards).

Ald. Stanford asked about line item 4944 0002 Personal Protective Equipment which was reduced to \$0 and line item 4944 0000 Police Safety Equipment.

Chief Mello stated that is for the divider cage in their vehicles. He explained the different platforms. He also stated in the past they were able to transfer equipment but because of the change over to the Taurus' they have had to purchase new equipment. Regarding police safety equipment, Chief Mello stated that is the console inside of the police vehicle. He stated there is an array of things that come out of that account, i.e. lighting for

police bikes, equipment for the canine, warning lights and strobes. We will likely have to reduce some items, but essentially that is what the request was based on.

Chairman Vetro asked about an account for the canines in addition to food.

Chief Mello stated that comes out of another account for veterinary, equipment, etc.

Ald. Kubek asked about line item 4944 0001 asked what that refers to.

Chief Mello explained the federal government purchased personal protective equipment after 911. He stated those items are in need of replacement.

Ald. Golden commended the department for the wonderful job they do. Also, regarding the SRO's he commented on the visibility of those officers in the high schools.

Chief Mello stated they have had a tremendous positive support for the SRO's.

Ald. German asked if police services in Milford was increasing or decreasing.

Chief Mello stated calls for service remains the same. He stated traffic stops are down, which is the same across the state. Otherwise in other areas they remain the same. He also referenced mandates which have increased their reporting of each incident.

Ald. Vitali commented about what has been going on around the country. He asked how that is impacting the Milford Police Department.

Chief Mello stated it is a complex question which they could spend hours on. He stated they continue to dissect what they do; of course the biggest concern being perception. He spoke about the use of the body cameras. He stated they continue to watch what goes on around the country and will put it in perspective.

Chairman Vetro commented on the distracted driving law and asked how that program was working out.

Chief Mello stated it is a federal grant program. He stated the numbers are high to date regarding cell phone texting and cell phone use.

Ald. Giannattasio asked about training noting they are in the red. He asked if additional training is expected because the force is so young.

Chief Mello stated they continue to train all the time. He also addressed staffing levels.

Ald. Smith asked about the three (3) dispatchers the department requested which was taken out of the budget.

Chief Mello explained years ago the police department used police officers for dispatching. The goal became to replace those officers with civilians. He stated they currently have four civilian police dispatchers, but still have at least one officer in the dispatch center each day.

4141 Board of Finance – Mr. Peter Erodici was present to answer questions. No questions.

4153 Park, Beach and Recreation Commission – Mr. Paul Piscitelli, Recreation Director was present for questions/comments. No questions.

4620 Recreation Department – Mr. Paul Piscitelli, Recreation Director was present for questions/comments. He stated his proposed budget shows a reduction over last year's budget. He credited his staff for their efforts to reduce but still provide services and programs to Milford residents.

Ald. German asked for an overview on activities in Milford.

Mr. Piscitelli stated the department is gearing up for summer activities, not only summer camp but cultural and educational programs that run during the summer. He stated youth sports are still popular, especially lacrosse and soccer. He stated there has been a slight decline in their youth softball and baseball program. Mr. Piscitelli stated winter sports just concluded. He stated they are at maximum capacity with regard to their basketball program and don't have any more space. He stated they are at the point where space concerns dictate how they run their programs.

4121 – Mayor's Office – Mayor Blake stated he was happy to answer any questions for the Board. He stated his budget is status quo, with a slight increase related to wage adjustments. He also pointed out Gas/propellants went down noting the vehicle he drives is a hybrid.

Ald. Stanford asked about the chairs in the Mayor's office and if it is true he has a broken chair.

Mayor Blake spoke about the history of the chairs in his office and in Milford.

4122 – General Expenses – Mayor Blake stated he would be happy to answer any questions the Board might have. No questions.

4142 Department of Permitting and Land Use – Mr. Joseph Griffith, Director was present for questions/comments. He distributed a packet to the Board and provided an overview. He spoke of the work in realigning themselves in the department with the elimination of the assistant city planner position and keeping the office running in various areas, i.e. coastal area manager, etc. He commended the efforts of the inspectors in the building department especially in light of a recent vacancy in the department. Spoke about the recent implementation of the Concierge position that assists residents when they come in to apply for various applications. Spoke of the department's implementation of technology and the ability to rapidly process permits. Continue with an explanation of the handout. Acknowledged the services of a retired building inspector, Lou Accampora, who had served as a per diem for the building department who recently passed away. Mr. Griffith stated his department is working well with the Fire Marshal's Office and the City Engineer. Spoke highly of these departments and their working relationship.

Chairman Vetro commented in the past he has been critical of the department, but with the new direction and leadership of the department there have been great strides made and the department has made good changes.

Ald. Veccharelli asked about revenues from the building department.

Mr. Griffith estimated revenues from the building department to date at \$503,000.

Ald. Shaw asked about the CRS rating and getting to a rating of 5.

Mayor Blake stated the City has its application which is still being reviewed by FEMA. He stated the hope is to get to 5. He stated Milford currently is at 9.

Mr. Griffith explained the process of attaining such a rating.

Ald. Shaw stated she wanted to publicly thank the department for all of their help to her personally and the residents that were impacted by storms Irene and Sandy.

Ald. German recalled last year there was an issue with the elimination of the assistant city planner.

Mr. Griffith stated other employees have assumed various responsibilities. He acknowledged the previous assistant city planner did a lot of work, but they have found ways to compensate.

Ald. Casey thanked Mr. Griffith for his efforts. Ald. Casey asked about doing permits on-line, but not all residents are aware.

Mr. Griffith explained residents can obtain electrical and plumbing permits on-line, as well as roofing and siding. He noted they are seeing a lot of solar paneling.

Ald. Casey asked if there is any education provided to city residents.

Mr. Griffith stated when he sees people waiting in the hallway; he will approach them and ask what they are looking to do. He stated the goal of the concierge is to help assist people and direct them in the proper department.

Ald. Veccharelli recalled the elimination of a position and the request for a building inspector position that was requested and not approved. He asked Mr. Griffith if he is still in need of an additional Building Inspector A position.

Mr. Griffith stated they are making it work. He spoke of the seasonal fluctuations during year. He stated their busiest time of year is coming up. Mr. Griffith explained how they are assigned and also desk work which can be done by outside consultants.

4144 Zoning Board of Appeals – Mr. Joseph Griffith, Director of Permitting and Land Use was present for questions/comments. No questions/comments.

4123 Community Development – Julie Nash was present for questions/comment. Mrs. Nash stated her budget is the same as last year. State spoke of the numerous projects they have been able to do with the resources they have. She also spoke of the number of relationships they have developed within and around the city and also with the manufacturers. Mrs. Nash stated they have also created a learning experience with the Board of Education. She stated they have also applied for numerous grants and that overall it has been a very successful year.

Ald. German asked what grants have come through and what is in the pipeline.

Mrs. Nash stated they have created a grant writing committee, also a grant portal so anyone who obtains a grant can follow that grant. She noted a chunk of the grants they received were storm related. She stated they are working on a STEEP grant right now, as well as a Kaboom grant. She also spoke of the two electrical charging grants going to DEEP next week. Mrs. Nash stated they continue to work with the downtown businesses regarding parking. She stated there are a number of departments that have a list of grants they are working on and that she would be happy to provide a list. Mrs. Nash also spoke of a social services grant.

Ald. Shaw asked Mrs. Nash to expand on the social services grant.

Mrs. Nash likened the social services program to 211, explaining it is essentially a map.

4155 Economic Development Commission – Julie Nash was present for questions/comment. No questions.

4610 Health Department – Deepa Joseph, Health Director was present for questions/comments.

Ms. Joseph stated although she has come before the Board before, this is her first time as health director. She spoke of the numerous services provided by the Health Department. She referred the Board to the handout, explaining the four (4) major divisions of the department. She provided the Board with an overview of the budget, major changes. She stated in the wages account there was a decrease due to the elimination of the deputy director position and the nursing director position which is now a 12 month position. She also explained the increase in the seasonal/temporary account which increase is due to a 19-hr seasonal temporary position and professional fees for the Community Medical Director position.

Ald. Anderson extended his congratulations to Ms. Deepa in her new position. He asked about grants the department has received and grants they continue to pursue.

Ms. Joseph spoke of the asthma grant which is a home assessment grant. She explained the department actually conducts a home visit with an environmental specialist. She stated they are also seeking additional funding on public health emergency management. Ms. Joseph stated there are a number of other grants funded through the state. She stated they are also looking for funding to help with their accreditation project.

(NOTE: Ald. Golden left at 8:59 p.m.)

Ald. German asked about the role of the school public health nursing and the 50,000 visits if they are in schools.

Ms. Joseph replied yes. She explained it is visits by children to the school nurse.

Ald. German asked if the health department has walk-ins at their office as well.

Ms. Joseph replied yes. She stated people come in for referrals for personal health care, social services and clinics.

Ald. Smith expressed appreciation of the summary of what the health department does. Regarding the salary of the director which he noted is less than the department/contractual salary, he asked if that was because she is not a medical doctor.

Ms. Joseph replied that was correct. She explained her hope is to delegate some of the responsibilities to the director of nursing when the job goes to the 12 month position.

Ald. Giannattasio asked about the stipend for Dr. Carlson, Community Medical Director. He stated it was his understanding that position was being paid out of the Board of Education's budget.

Ms. Joseph explained it is a shared position, with part of the money coming out of the Health Department's Misc. Professional Fees line item.

Ald. Giannattasio asked if it is a \$15,000 stipend.

Mayor Blake stated at the end of the year the Board of Education would reimburse the City for their portion of the costs.

Ald. Stanford stated she is a liaison to health department and thanked Ms. Joseph for the fantastic job she has done.

4821 Health Services (VNA) – Deepa Joseph, Health Director was present for questions/comments. She stated Mr. Quinn was unavailable this evening.

Ald. Vitali commented on the services of the VNA and the great job they do. He asked if the budget is for visits.

Ms. Joseph explained the funding is for the well child clinics held at the health department every Tuesday. She stated they are also working with them on the First Visit Program which is a program for first time parents. It was reduced because the program was not successful.

Mayor Blake added they also stated they do elderly welfare visits.

Ald. Giannattasio stated he had another question regarding the health department budget for misc professional fees. He pointed out the department requested \$19,600, but the Mayor and Board of Finance recommended \$34,600. He asked for an explanation as to the increase.

Mayor Blake stated the increase in that line item is for the medical health advisor and community health director which will be reimbursed at the end of the year by the Board of Education.

4998 Education Health Services/School Nurses – Deepa Joseph, Health Director was present for questions/comments. She stated this account is essentially the same. She stated there is a school nurse in every school and commented on the excellent job they do. Ms. Joseph and stated they also assist with public health emergencies and clinics.

Ald. Vitali asked about centralized health clinic in the high schools?

Ms. Joseph stated there was conversation and they looked for some grant funding which they did not find. She stated it is an area they will pursue again. She noted there is a school based health clinic which recently opened at Platt Technical.

Chairman Vetro thanked Ms. Joseph for the fantastic summary and offered his congratulations on her appointment as director.

Ald. German asked about the complicated issues in the schools and asked if that required any additional training.

Ms. Joseph stated the nurses do training throughout the year as well as professional development when there is a half day at school. She stated Dr. Carlson is very knowledgeable and has been a tremendous asset to the nurses.

4111 – Board of Aldermen

Ald. Vitali asked about line item 4774 0000 Postage and what the Board sends out for that amount.

Chairman Vetro deferred to the Board secretary

Ms. Kennedy explained there is a rare occasion when a mailing would need to go out either for the aldermen or from the aldermen. She stated for the most part everything is done by email and scanning.

Ald. Veccharelli and Ald. Anderson made and seconded a motion to recess at 9:18 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen A. Kennedy
Recording Secretary