

**BOARD OF ALDERMEN
BUDGET DELIBERATIONS SESSION
APRIL 24, 2019**

The Board of Aldermen resumed their budget deliberation session on Monday, April 24, 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
A. Giannattasio
J. Golden
F. Smith
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
J. Grant
D. German
M. Hardiman
A. Sutton

Chairman Vetro reconvened the budget proceedings in public session at 7:34 p.m.

Education Operations (p.94)

Susan Glennon, Chairman Board of Education thanked the Board for the opportunity to present their budget. She read from a prepared statement. Ms. Glennon stated the budget reflects a 1.89% increase that continues to support growth and the mission statement of the Milford Public Schools. She stated that young people today learn very differently and the budget moves in that direction. Ms. Glennon stated she feels the Board of Education developed a budget with sensitivity to taxpayers.

Anna Cutaia, Superintendent Board of Education, stated the budget represents the next level of work in the Milford Public Schools. She believes it balances fiscal responsibility and growth in learning. Dr. Cutaia provided a PowerPoint presentation highlighting budget priorities, budget assumptions and

system improvements. She stated that the budget of \$95,078,047 represents a 1.89% increase and that 80% of the budget goes to salaries and investments. Dr. Cutaia discussed the Chromebook 1:1 initiative for grades 5-9 with the hope to expand to grades 3-12 the following year. She also discussed other learning initiative planned for the coming years.

Ald. Vitali asked if there would be ownership of the Chromebooks distributed for grades 6-8 and if the student would keep the same Chromebook for 3 years. Dr. Cutaia stated they are the property of the school and assigned to the student. She also stated that it is expected they will have the same Chromebook for 4 to 5 years. Ald. Vitali asked about responsibility should the Chromebook be lost or broken. Dr. Cutaia stated with students in mind they purchase very strong Chromebooks. She also stated that they would be able to do in-house repairs and that parents would sign a contract for use. Ald. Vitali commented on the number of AP scholar students and that colleges today are not as enamored with AP classes. Dr. Cutaia stated she disagreed as she had served on the College Board and its mentality is to open upon AP to more students who can take the course and score higher. She also stated the Milford Public Schools is the second highest school in Connecticut for student taking AP courses.

Ald. Smith asked how Chromebooks will offset traditional learning such as textbooks. Dr. Cutaia stated there will always be books in the classroom and that Chromebooks will provide more online accessibility. Ald. Gaynor asked what safeguards would be in place to prevent cyber bullying. Dr. Cutaia stated there are filters and monitoring systems that have been upgraded due to this initiative. She also stated that parents will have monitoring capabilities and can sign up to receive notifications as to usage. Ald. Gaynor asked what jurisdiction the schools have to monitor one the Chromebooks are at home. Dr. Cutaia stated they monitoring is 24/7, there are lockdowns for certain types of sites and that access is only through Milford Public Schools not going out onto other sites.

Ald. Beatty commented on the reduction of pulling teachers from classroom time and asked how that is balance with professional development. Dr. Cutaia stated she been work with Dr. Fedigan and watching this very closely. She stated the teacher is the most important resource in the classroom and that they will be closely monitoring this as there needs to be a better balance. Ald. Beatty asked about the SRO program and whether parents and teachers are satisfied with the program. Dr. Cutaia stated she had misspoke earlier and an SRO is not being added to the Academy but that security is being added. She stated they know where the needs are on the campuses to make them safer. Ald. Beatty asked who are the benchmark schools to Milford. Dr. Cutaia stated Milford is a "D" with the ranges being A-I.

Ald. Vetro asked if with declining enrollment the Board of Education foresees closing of schools. Dr. Cutaia stated they have revisited the number of classroom teachers. She also stated that she heard very clearly that the Board of Education is not interested in closing schools because of the divide in the community.

Ald. Tranquili asked about the 1.2 million surpluses in the prior year budget and could it be used to offset the next year's budget. Jim Richetelli, Chief Operation Officer stated the budget is put together approximately 18 months before the end of the current fiscal year and they do their best to project based on best information available. Mr. Richetelli discussed the surplus and how salaries and retirements have an impact. He stated that the practice has been to put the funds back into the

physical plants, buildings and grounds, and by doing so this has been how the Board of Education has been able to keep up maintenance. Mr. Richetelli stated the list is long and nothing on the list is extravagant, but with the surplus it only scratches the surface. Ald. Tranquili asked why in some years fund were given back to the City. Mr. Richetelli stated that happened when the Mayor asked all departments to make cuts and find some give backs. Ald. Gaynor asked about air conditioning in the schools. Mr. Richetelli stated the cost to air condition all schools would astronomical. He stated that air conditions were put in one school where it was an extremely hot area. Mr. Richetelli commented that the cost at West Shore increased by 1/3 due to the new addition and air conditioning. He stated there are portable air conditioners at the schools that can be brought to the classrooms with students with special needs.

Ald. Fortunati asked what the schools have in place for mental health resources. Dr. Cutaia stated there is a full curriculum in the school system. She also stated the schools work closely with Milford Prevention Council that provides education opportunities. Dr. Cutaia stated that school counselors and SRO's also engage with the students. Ald. Fortunati asked if mental health is part of the formal education. Dr. Cutaia stated it is starting in the middle schools. She also stated they offer support to parents on how to work with young children. Ald. Golden asked why the self contained program is only offered at Foran when it used to also be at Law. Carol Swift, Director Pupil Personnel Services stated they looked at the schools and the numbers attending and based on location it was moved to Foran where majority of those attending were and by doing so was able to provide dedicated staff. She stated student from Law can attend at Foran provided they meet the criteria.

Ald. Veccharelli discussed increases and savings as presented by the Board of Education and thanked the Board of Education for presenting a responsible budget.

Ald. Smith asked about the reduction in substitute teachers. Mr. Richetelli explained by pulling teachers out of the classroom less it alleviates the need for substitutes.

Ald. Vitali stated Milford Prevention Council had offered a vapping workshop at Foran that was not well attended. He discussed how families were torn apart during the last redistricting. He stated he looked at the budget carefully and he believes the Board of Education needs to have a long range assessment. He stated school enrollment has been declining and he believes it will continue to decline.

Ald. Veccharelli and Ald. Golden made and seconded a motion to recess. Motion carried unanimously. The Board recessed at 8:56 p.m.

Chairman Vetro announced the Board would stand in recess until Wednesday, May 1, 2019.

Respectfully submitted,



Toni Jo Weeks

Recording Secretary