

**BOARD OF ALDERMEN
SPECIAL MEETING
APRIL 30, 2008**

The Board of Aldermen of the City of Milford held a Special Meeting on Wednesday, April 30, 2008 in the aldermanic chambers of City Hall. Chairman B. Blake called the meeting to order at 7:27 p.m. welcoming everyone and asked those present to join in saluting our flag and reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

1. Roll Call

Board Members Present

B. Bier
J. Blacketter
B. Blake
V. Ditchkus, Jr.
A. Giannattasio (7:01 p.m.)
M. Hardiman
B. Lambert
S. Manning
R. Nunno
J. Patterson
J. Toohey
N. Veccharelli
P. Vetro
S. Willey

Also Present

Mayor J. Richetelli, Jr.
J. O'Connell, Mayor's Admin. Asst.
A. Jepson, City Clerk

New Business:

2. Consideration of an Ordinance appropriating \$3,715,559 for various public improvements and authorizing the issuance of \$3,715,559 bonds of the City to meet said appropriating and pending the issuance thereof the making of temporary borrowings for such purpose.

Chairman Blake deferred to Ald. Patterson.

Ald. Patterson reported the Ordinance Committee meet earlier this evening and voted unanimously to forward to the full Board of Aldermen a favorable recommendation in consideration of an Ordinance appropriating \$3,715,559 for various public improvements and authorizing the issuance of \$3,715,559 bonds of the City to meet said appropriations and pending the issuance thereof the making of temporary borrowings for such purpose and that he was making this in the form of a motion.

Ald. Lambert seconded the motion.

Chairman Patterson stated he would entertain a motion to waive the reading of the Ordinance in its entirety.

Ald. Vetro and Ald. Veccharelli made and seconded a motion to waive the reading of the Ordinance in its entirety. Motion carried unanimously.

Ald. Willey asked if someone could elaborate as to why the reductions were made and from where specifically.

Ald. Patterson explained Parsons and City Hall were reduced from \$550,000 to \$240,000 and the streetscape project was removed completely.

Ald. Willey asked the thought process as to why the brickwork, re-pointing, etc. would not be done.

Ald. Patterson responded it was discussed at the last meeting.

Ald. Willey stated he heard Mr. Kolwicz state at the last meeting that the work was necessary and that what he heard was to do it now or wait for the bricks to start falling out. Ald. Willey stated he was trying to understand why it is not being done and how it is in the best interest of the taxpayers not to do it.

Chairman Blake noted \$240,000 was for the stairs which were necessary and of an emergency nature and so that they would be in compliance with ADA requirement. He stated they believed the other things in that package such as furniture, etc could wait and that the re-pointing of the bricks could also wait.

Mayor Richetelli commented there was no furnishing in that bond authorization and that it was much needed carpeting that was requested. He explained the buildings are over 20 years old with the original carpeting, roofs and bricks that have not been re-pointed since the late 1940's or early 1950's. Mayor Richetelli stated it was his opinion and the opinion of the Public Works Director that this work is general maintenance that needs to be done. He continued if they wait the bricks will begin to fall and the carpeting will continue to unravel. He also spoke as to the number of people that travel through these buildings on a daily basis. He stated it was important for the citizens to know this is general maintenance that will not get done this year.

Ald. Blacketter stated she met with Mr. Moura from the Public Works Department and they went over the brickwork and maintenance requirements and that she asked for prioritization. She stated she received no response to that and was told money was needed as to be in compliance with the stair work. She stated she also asked about the general condition of the bricks and was told it is pretty good. She stated there should be some type of plan in place and they should analyze and outline to have a better idea as to the needs.

Mayor Richetelli responded a plan is contained in the 5-year Capital Improvement Plan. He explained over the course of 5 years they would be doing these buildings. He also pointed out, as an example there is water damage beginning in the ceilings.

Ald. Nunno commented he did not need a lecture regarding preventive maintenance. He stated he would like to know as to priority. He pointed out as an example at West Shore Middle School there is an area known as the "waterfall" because it continually leaks and that the roofs are long over due in the schools. He stated the buildings that our children attend should be higher on the priority list and asked where are priorities are.

Mayor Richetelli responded that Ald. Nunno knows full well that the Board of Education sets their maintenance priorities for the schools. He also stated the bond authorization requested contains half the amount of money than the school system. She continued on as to priorities in the city buildings.

Ald. Richetelli stated there have been plans out there regarding maintenance and that they are in the 5-year Capital Improvement Plan. He also commented this Board does not just advocate for the Board of Education or buildings. He also spoke as to deferred maintenance and what happened at Foran Towers when the work was put off for so long the bricks literally were falling off the building. He also pointed out at the previous meeting the Public Works Director provided answers as to why this work was needed and that information comes from the Public Works Director and not a subordinate. Ald. Ditchkus stated the work is preventive maintenance that will help the City in the long run adding that people are in and out of the Parson's Building on a daily basis. He questioned how we want people to see our City. He reiterated a plan is in place and that it would be a disservice to the City not to maintain our City buildings. He also commented that no one questioned any of the Board of Education projects, which were a great deal of money. He stated the Public Works Director pointed out the priorities and that we needed to move forward with the work otherwise it would be a bigger burden down the road.

Chairman Blake suggested the idea of having a committee akin to the Permanent School Facilities Building Committee and if they had something like that it may be a benefit to the City.

Ald. Vitali remarked they could continue to debate this but that the redundancy gets awkward. He stated the approach was responsible and pragmatic and that there are experts on the City side as well as the Board of Education that forward these matters to this Board. He also questioned why this Board would question the authority of the experts who have advised that repointing of the bricks is necessary. He went on to say this Board could pay for these repairs with today's dollars or in the future when it could be much more costly. He suggested the Board be pragmatic and reiterated there are experts in each of our City department and they have been told what needs to be done. He expressed his disappointment of this Ordinance.

Ald. Blacketter stated she wished to clarify that she did not ask to speak with a subordinate and that when she called the Public Works Director was not available. She stated she was looking for some response and clarification as to what the priorities were and what was critical for this year. She stated she received no response and it was difficult to ascertain the priorities.

Ald. Vitali stated they were given a very concise picture as to what needed to be done and that it was his recollection this Board was invited to see first hand where the most bothersome spots are.

Ald. Blacketter stated she set up an appointment with Public Works and it was Mr. Moura that took her on the roof to see some of these items.

Ald. Ditchkus commended Ald. Blacketter for doing that, but stated it was the Public Works Director that makes the final decision. He also spoke as to an earlier comment by the Chairman regarding the Permanent School Facilities Building Committee and noted there is a committee in place, it is the Public Works Committee and that anyone is welcome to any one of their meetings.

Ald. Bier stated the question he heard earlier was who decided to hold off "a bit" and asked what that meant, a year or two years or more. He also asked what they would do with next year's maintenance program and

commented they shouldn't be penny wise and dollar foolish and asked what this Board would not fund the maintenance program.

Ald. Veccharelli stated it was important to have a clear and concise picture and that it is the taxpayers they should be focusing on. He stated they are trying to bring spending under control and that cannot be done if this Board does not control spending. He spoke personally as to his own home and sometimes you just cannot afford to go out and do everything so you put it off. He stated what he is hearing is a difference of opinion. He also stated they needed to be respectful of the department heads and also to the taxpayers who need relief. Ald. Veccharelli stated this is bonding and that they bond and bond these projects and ultimately the City will pay. He stated no one is saying the work is never going to be done, but it will take time and that they are doing the work necessary for safety. He also pointed out that \$550,000 adds up. He stated it is this entire Board that will make the decision tonight and if it does not meet with someone's approval they can reject it and send it back. He reiterated it comes down to money and trying to save the City money, he suggested possibly revisiting this.

Ald. Toohey stated the main issue and concern of this Board is tax relief. She also acknowledged that Ald. Blacketter did what she should have done and that is research this. Ald. Toohey also pointed out there is a 5-year plan in place and based on that plan this Board bonds. She stated this is where they stand with regard to maintenance upgrades, which is a part of that plan. She stated she would be voting on this and commented the citizens pay taxes but it doesn't do any good if they are not safe. She also stated she agreed this Board needed to watch spending but the taxpayers also need to be safe and when there is a safety issue they need to be prudent.

Ald. Willey stated he wants to do what is the cheapest for the citizens, but do it responsibly. He commented if his roof leaks he fixes it. He also commented he wished the Board had considered interest rates which are very low right now and could be much higher next year or down the road, then the taxpayers could lose.

Mayor Richetelli stated he wished to follow up as to comments made. He stated he agreed with Ald. Willey that it is important to consider how the taxpayers will fare and that it may cost more later. He also spoke as to bond rates, which are as low as he can remember. He spoke as to a comment earlier regarding bonding and pointed out that the City's bond rating has gone down and is far below for a City this size. He stated the City has a very healthy AA bond rating and that bond indebtedness has gone down. Mayor Richetelli stated they continue to be consistent with what the bond agency and financial advisors tell them. He spoke of the importance of watching out for the taxpayer and that this bond is well thought out with the help of all the City's legal advisors, bond ratings, etc. He also commented we are spending more on our schools and less on public improvements.

Motion carried unanimously.

3. Ald. Vetro and Ald. Ditchkus made and seconded a motion to approve Consideration of Resolution Re: Cash Advance for Various Public Improvements. Motion carried unanimously.
4. Ald. Vetro and Ald. Patterson made and seconded a motion to approve the request of the Police Department for Waiver of Bid not to exceed \$34,000 for replacement of recording system.

Ald. Lambert commented in the past this Board has questioned Waiver of Bids, but when it is a question of safety she would be in favor of this waiver of bid.

Ald. Vetro stated he would be remiss if he did not say something as well. He stated after reading the emergency nature of this he would vote for this waiver of bid.

Motion carried unanimously.

Old Business:

Tabled Items

5. Ald. Vetro and Ald. Toohey made and seconded a motion to Remove from the Agenda as moot, an Ordinance appropriating \$4,275,000 for various public improvements and authorizing the issuance of \$4,275,000 bonds of the City to meet said appropriating and pending the issuance thereof the making of temporary borrowings for such purpose, tabled by the Board of Aldermen at its meeting of April 7, 2008. Motion carried unanimously.
6. Ald. Vetro and Ald. Patterson made and seconded a motion to Remove from the Agenda as moot, a Resolution Re: Cash Advance for various public improvements, tabled by the Board of Aldermen at its meeting of April 7, 2008. Motion carried unanimously.

Ald. Vetro and Ald. Patterson moved to adjourn at 7:17 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen K. Huber
Board Secretary