

**BOARD OF ALDERMEN
BUDGET DELIBERATIONS SESSION
APRIL 27, 2023**

The Board of Aldermen resumed its budget deliberation session regarding the Board of Finance's recommended budget for fiscal year 2023-2024, on Thursday, April 27, 2023, at City Hall Auditorium, 110 River Street, Milford. Chairman Vetro called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. asking those present to join in saluting our flag and reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

1. Roll Call

Board Members

M. Arciuolo
E. Beatty
B. Broesder
M. Casey
D. German
A. Giannattasio
S. Marlow
H. Mulrenan
J. Moffitt
R. Pacelli
M. Parente
P. Vetro
R. Vitali
W. Willis

Also Present

Benjamin G. Blake, Mayor
Peter Erodici, Finance Director

Excused:

G. Harla

Chairman Vetro welcomed everyone to the 2023-2024 budget deliberations. He stated tonight's meeting was the education operations portion of the budget process.

Ald. Giannattasio and Ald. Vitali made and seconded a motion to come out of recess. Motion carried unanimously.

Transit District (p. 89)

Henry Jadach, Director discussed transit services provided to the community. Ald. German asked how many individuals use the transit system. Mr. Jadach stated there is an average of 23,000 trips monthly. Ald. Parente asked for an update on electric buses. Mr. Jadach discussed the State mandate required electric buses by 2025. He discussed facility upgrades that would be necessary to charge electric

vehicles. Ald. Willis asked how long a trip from Devon to Post Mall takes and if there is room for improvement. Mr. Jadach stated it is a 15-to-20-minute trip depending on where the bus is picked up. Ald. Broesder asked about collaboration with other Transit District and fiscal savings by combining services. Mr. Jadach stated it would create efficiencies in reporting and paperwork but would not necessarily be a savings. Ald. Marlow asked how purchase and upgrades for electric buses will be funded. Mr. Jadach stated funding would be through Federal and State.

Harbor Management and Marina (p. 110)

James Donegan, Operations Director, stated last year was a great season and improvements continue at the harbor. He reviewed projects and enhancements that have been completed. Mr. Donegan stated last year there were over 1500 nights booked at the marina. He stated this season is on track for a great year and all moorings are full. Mr. Donegan discussed working with the Army Corp of Engineers regarding dredging the harbor. He stated the budget is similar to last year with a few minor adjustments. Ald. German asked total revenues from last year and what is expected this year. Mr. Donegan stated last year revenue totaled \$343,394, an increase over the past 2 years. He stated at least that or better is expected this year. Ald. German asked average cost per night. Mr. Donegan stated the dockage is per foot at the marina. Ald. Vitali asked for an overview of expenditures over the next few years. Mr. Donegan discussed infrastructure from 1990 needing improvement. He discussed improving restrooms, mooring fields, and dock work. Ald. Vitali asked what the consequences and benefits of dredging are. Mr. Donegan stated dredging was almost 40 years ago and the entrance channel has been done periodically as it filled in. Ald. Vitali asked how dredging impacts the City financially. Mr. Donegan stated the funding for dredging stated it is covered through Transportation and Infrastructure bill. He stated it will require work in the mooring field, but that amount is unknown. Mr. Donegan stated it will go out to bid and once the results are received will have a better understanding. Discussion ensued concerning dredging and funding. Ald. Arciuolo how steady the pricing for dockage has been and if there will increase. Mr. Donegan discussed the dockage being transient and the rates set by the Harbor Commission. He stated the fees were increased slightly each year. Ald. Beatty asked if grants are private. Mr. Donegan stated he was referring to government grants. Ald. Parente asked for an update of the resiliency project in the ARPA project. Mr. Donegan discussed completing the walkway and immediate area around the marina and the small boat storage at the boat ramp. He stated it was difficult to keep up with demand. Mr. Donegan stated electricity and water being added to one dock and improvements to the kayak launching area still planned. Ald. German asked what represents other sources of income. Mr. Donegan discussed concession lease and winter boat storage by Milford Boat Works. Ald. Broesder asked about the environmental and economic impacts of dredging. Mr. Donegan stated the environmental impact is strictly regulated by the Army Corp of Engineers. He stated the economic area of the harbor is great. Mr. Donegan stated the economic condition of the harbor is in great shape. He discussed recreational and commercial uses of the harbor.

Probate Court (p. 26)

Hon. Benjamin Gettinger, Probate Judge, stated funding is mostly from the State and request this year is slightly increased due to costs of materials. Ald. Vitali asked why requested \$33,000 was decreased. Judge Gettinger stated they were looking to update desks and chairs. Ald. Giannattasio asked if there would be an opportunity to tour the court to see the condition the furniture. Judge Gettinger invited Board members to stop by for a tour.

Golf Course (p. 112)

Daniel Worroll, Financial Secretary, stated the golf course is doing very well and people were playing in January and February. He stated the volume is increasing. Mr. Worroll discussed work that has been completed at the golf course. He stated the budget is the same as the past few years. Ald. Marlow asked if usage fees will increase. Mr. Worroll stated they have increased slightly over the past few years. He stated fees are the responsibility of the management company with approval of the golf commission. Mr. Worroll stated he feels the fees are reasonable and comparable with other community courses. Ald. Marlow asked if there are any projects planned. Mr. Worroll discussed installing a small pavilion for golf outings. He discussed purchasing more golf carts. Ald. German asked total revenue for golf course. Mr. Worroll stated roughly \$136,072 in total. Ald. Broesder asked if there is a difference in revenue since the pandemic. Mr. Worroll stated there was a rush to play golf after the pandemic. He stated last year there were 33,000 rounds of golf and pandemic year there were 35,000. Discussion ensued concerning the number of players.

Animal Control (p. 59)

Scott Ellingson, Animal Control Officer, stated the budget is the same except seasonal temp due to minimum wage increase and electricity. Ald. Beatty asked the status of HVAC upgrades. Mr. Ellingson stated public works was working on a quote. He stated central air is in the office and the kennels are open air and air conditioning would be difficult. Discussion ensued concerning HVAC. Chairman Vetro asked how many calls were made in Orange compared to Milford. Mr. Ellingson stated there were approximately 30 calls in Orange and 100 in Milford each month. Discussion ensued concerning animal rescues and wildlife. Ald. Broesder asked what animals rabies line items pertain to. Mr. Ellingson stated it is the catch and release program for feral cats. Also, for animals that may require rabies testing.

Information Technology (p.39)

Adam Heller, IT Manager, stated the department continues to provide support and consulting services to all City departments. He stated all equipment has been consolidated. Mr. Heller discussed line-item changes that centralized equipment purchases, including cellphones. Ald. German asked where the City stands with cyber security. Mr. Heller discussed multi-factor identification and other safeguards. Ald. Parente asked if there are needs not reflected in the budget. Mr. Heller stated more centralization of IT services moving away from desktop services. He stated this will impact the roles and responsibilities of staff. Ald. Vitali asked for an explanation of department increase by Board of Finance. Mr. Heller stated it was contractual wage increases. Ald. Arciuolo asked software maintenance line-item if for licensing or a one-time expenditure. Mr. Heller discussed computer systems and licensing. He stated the City is moving more toward cloud based and hosted software. Discussion ensued concerning software maintenance expenses. Ald. German asked for an explanation of professional fees. Mr. Heller stated provides professional support for complex network server maintenance and security. Ald. Beatty asked about training expenses. Mr. Heller discussed training for new applications and the ability to maintain services. Discussion ensued concerning training. Ald. Broesder asked about

cost savings by consolidating IT services. Mr. Heller stated by consolidating it allowed for standardizing equipment. He discussed reduction in support time.

Health Department (p. 79)

Deepa Joseph, Health & Human Services Director, provided a handout sharing accomplishments from the past fiscal year. She provided an overview of the handout. Ms. Joseph discussed the public health nurses and immunization clinics. She discussed community health division and monitoring. Ms. Joseph stated budgets are utilized to support community programs. She discussed services due to pandemic. Ms. Joseph discussed work done by Human Services and Youth and Family Services. She stated the budget is flat with the exception of the contractual wage increases. Ald. German asked if all positions are currently filled. Ms. Joseph stated they are at the Health Department. Ald. Parente asked for an update of the facility needs study with ARPA funding. Ms. Joseph stated the Health Department is challenged with space and through ARPA funding was requested to obtain a needs study to determine departmental needs. Ald. Arciuolo how the Health Department estimates how many vaccines to order. Mr. Joseph stated estimates are based on what the department sees in the prior year. Discussion ensued concerning vaccinations and affects.

Education Health Services/School Nurses (p. 95)

Ald. German asked if all positions are filled. Ms. Joseph stated there is one vacancy. She discussed challenges in filling the nursing positions. She stated the increase in budget is due to contractual wage increases. Discussion ensued concerning challenges for nurses. Ald. Marlow asked for an explanation of the increase to education bonuses. Ms. Joseph discussed contractual changes to stipends.

Human Services Department (p. 90)

Chairman Vetro complimented on the work of the department in keeping the City safe. Ald. Parente asked if there are significant differences in the needs of youths and families post-Covid. Ms. Joseph stated requests for emergency assistance have increased.

Milford Government Access Television (p. 16)

Kara Flannery, Chairman, stated there are 2 channels – education and government. She discussed meetings covered during the year. Ms. Flannery discussed adding community events. She discussed transition in equipment. Ms. Flannery discussed the ability to record and stream live. Chairman Vetro confirmed all technical and wiring issues have been resolved. Ms. Flannery confirmed they have been resolved. Ald. Vetro asked if programming is edited. Ms. Flannery stated the old system required coding and editing and now that is not necessary. She discussed setting up programming. Ald. Marlow asked what the decrease on the cable line-item will mean. Ms. Flannery discussed the MGAT team putting together a request and the choice to bring in forward in the budget. Ald. Vitali asked which meeting is the most popular. Ms. Flannery stated it is the Law-Foran football games.

Finance Department (p. 37)

Peter Erodici, Finance Director, discussed the offices that make up the Finance Department. He discussed assisting all City departments. Mr. Erodici stated the past audit took longer due to many additional grants. He stated every year the governmental accounting board requires new standards. Mr. Erodici discussed the 22/23 audit and new standards that must be met. He discussed Finance Department staffing and their focus. Mr. Erodici stated the budget is flat except for contractual wage adjustments. Ald. Vitali for an explanation of propellants for vehicle upkeep, Mr. Erodici stated that is for the Assessor's office to perform property assessments. Ald. German asked if all positions are filled. Mr. Erodici stated there are 2 Clerk A vacancies. Ald. German asked if the department is actively looking. Mr. Erodici stated the tax office is actively looking, but the other position is on pause due to the hiring freeze. Ald. Beatty discussed fiscal controls. Mr. Erodici discussed spending control memos traditionally being issued at the end of the fiscal year approaches. Discussion ensued concerning fiscal controls and contractual wage increases. Ald. Parente asked if any projects that are being put on hold due to fiscal controls. Mr. Erodici stated he is not aware of any projects placed on hold. Ald. Giannattasio asked if there is an indication on the amount of state reimbursement. Mr. Erodici stated preliminary amounts were received and are reflected, but no hard numbers have been received. Ald. Giannattasio asked if there are reserved dates for voting on the budget. Mayor Blake stated there are 6 days reserved. He stated typically wait to see what state funding will be received to better reflect in the budget.

Milford Arts Council (p. 87)

Paige Miglio, Director, provided and discussed a handout. She discussed budget income and expenses. Ms. Miglio discussed the handout and increased expenses. She discussed events supported and offered by the MAC. Ms. Miglio discussed collaborative events and MAC produced events and exhibits. Ald. German asked annual membership fee and how to join. Ms. Miglio discussed membership tiers. She stated everyone can sign up for emails without a fee.

Bridges Community Healthcare, Inc. (p. 89)

Jennifer Fiorello, Director, read from a prepared statement. She discussed services provided by Bridges Community Healthcare. Ms. Fiorello provided information and statistics for the services provided. She discussed the increase in costs due to inflation. Ald. Vitali asked regarding state funding increase. Ms. Fiorello stated an increase was received that allowed for staff salary increases. Ald. Vitali asked why positions are not being filled. Mr. Fiorello discussed teams that are down in clinical staff and the difficulty of filling those positions. Discussion ensued concerning staffing.

Council on Aging (p. 87)

None

Beth El Center (p. 92)

Jennifer Paradis, Director, provided and reviewed a handout. She stated housing, homelessness and hunger are top priorities for discussion. She discussed providing tools to the community outside of shelter and food services. Ms. Paradis discussed preventative services and diversion programs. She

discussed the outreach and engagement program. Ms. Paradis provided statistics on numbers served. She discussed the shelter and housing programs. Ms. Paradis stated a nominal increase is being requested due to increased costs in supporting individuals and families. Ald. German asked how people can get involved if they would like to volunteer. Ms. Paradis stated anyone wishing to volunteer can complete an application that can be found on the website. Ald. German asked if expansion of the building is being considered. Mr. Paradis stated expansion is needed but does not believe it will be in the current location. Ald. Parente asked anticipated needs to prepare for increased homelessness. Ms. Paradis discussed affordable housing being a significant homelessness driver. Discussion ensued concerning ARPA funding being utilized for front end services. Ald. Vitali asked what geographical area is represented. Ms. Paradis stated 65% are from the Milford area. Ald. Parente asked for an explanation of the no-freeze program. Ms. Paradis provided a summary on staffing and needs for the program.

City Clerk (p.22)

Karen Fortunati, City Clerk, stated things are very good in the Clerk's office due to support for request for new records management software. She stated the program has exceeded expectations with efficiency and ease of use. Ald. German asked if all positions are currently filled. Ms. Fortunati stated there will be 2 vacancies due to recent staff retirements and resignations.

Registrar of Voters (p. 15) **Elections (p. 14)**

Kerri Rowland, Registrar, provided a handout concerning early voting. Ms. Rowland discussed tabulators coming to the end of their life cycle. She discussed state bonding for purchasing tabulators. Mr. Rowland discussed the poll work appreciation event on May 31st in City Hall. Discussion ensued concerning costs of early voting.

Law Department (p. 24)

Jonathan Berchem, City Attorney, stated the budget remains flat except for contractual wage increases. Ald. Vitali asked if there is a Risk Manager at this point. Atty. Berchem stated Risk Manager position is filled with the paralegal position being open. He reviewed the departmental positions. Atty. Berchem discussed departmental growth over the past 10 years being relatively flat.

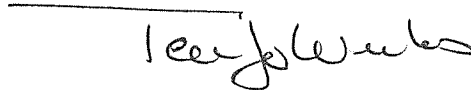
Public Works Office (p. 63) **Highway/Parks (p. 65)** **Building Maintenance (p. 69)** **Engineering Department (p. 72)** **General Garage (p. 74)** **Solid Waste (p. 76)** **Wastewater (p. 101)** **Sewer Commission (p. 98)**

Chris Saley, Public Works Director, stated he is available for questions. Ald. German asked how many positions are currently vacant. Mr. Saley stated 25 positions are currently unfilled. He stated in the time he has been with the City the average vacancy has been 22 positions. Ald. Beatty stated public works plays a critical role in public safety. She stated public works is key to the administrations mission of a beautiful City. Ald. Beatty discussed vacancies and requests to fill positions. Ald. Giannattasio asked for an update on solid waste and increasing dump fees and projection moving forward. Mr. Saley discussed issues with solid waste and recycling. He discussed significant increases in recycling fees. He discussed the need for additional staffing to meet the demands. Ald. Giannattasio asked for an estimate of one bulk pickup. Mr. Saley stated bulk pickup results in approximately 18,000 tons in the Spring and 8,000 tons in the Fall at a cost of approximately \$400,000. Ald. Giannattasio asked if it would meet the deficit if eliminated. Mr. Saley stated it would help but would not eliminate the deficit entirely. Ald. Vetro asked about savings for snow removal this year. Mr. Saley discussed snow removal funding being used for highway equipment. He stated equipment with high use, high demand results in a lot of wear and tear. Ald. Mulrenan stated some communities have residents request pickup and pay a fee. Mr. Saley stated it would not be his decision and he agrees that a fee would be a good alternative and should be discussed further. Ald. Beatty asked if the new hiring freeze has impacted positions being filled. Mr. Saley stated that when positions are filled, someone then retires, and it creates new vacancies. Ald. Beatty asked if the HVAC work at animal control is an example of how the department is being stretched. Mr. Saley discussed long term plans and projects completed by public works. Ald. Willis asked how bulk pickup would work administratively. Mr. Saley stated such a program would need to be assessed to determine how best to revise the program. Mayor Blake stated the program as presently run is one of the most popular. Ald. Marlow asked on average how much the City is saving rather than going out to bid for major contracts. Mr. Saley provided an example of the Lisman Landing Pavilion. He stated the savings were approximately \$185,000. He estimated 50% savings overall for projects completed by public works. Ald. Marlow asked if the amount of apartment development taking place impact the wastewater system. Mr. Saley stated the Sewer Commission will be conducting a study and will most likely do pipe lining and hopefully reduce the amount of I&E coming into the system. Ald. Giannattasio asked priorities for the department. Mr. Saley stated equipment account 8 under garage and solid waste. He stated solid waste will continue to go up significantly. Ald. German asked how much funding and road paving will take place this year. Mr. Saley stated he believes the funding this year is \$2 million and coordination with the gas company performing work needs to be better. Discussion ensued concerning funding. Ald. German asked if there are major projects that have been deferred due to lack of funding or staffing. Mr. Saley stated through ARPA funding generators at pump stations are being replaced. He discussed other work at various pump stations. Mr. Saley discussed issues and volume of usage. Ald. Parente asked for clarification of LOCIP funding. Mayor Blake stated the most recent grants are designated for roadwork such as paving, sidewalk repair or work within the municipal right of way, including equipment. Ald. Parente asked for an explanation for the ARPA project manager and project manager in the budget book. Mr. Saley stated the ARPA position remains open. Discussion ensued concerning LOCIP funding. Ald. Parente asked if there are staffing positions in wastewater that should be filled. Mr. Saley discussed salaries and their impact on hiring. Ald. German asked if any new trucks are being purchased. Mayor Blake stated the Board approved funding for an automated truck.

Mayor Blake state this would be his last meeting before the Board. He thanked the Board for their work and stated it has been his pleasure to work beside them for the past 12 years. Ald. Giannattasio wished Mayor the best in his future endeavors.

Ald. Vitali and Ald. Arciuolo made and seconded a motion to recess. Motion carried unanimously.
The Board recessed at 11:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Toni Jo Weeks", written over a horizontal line.

Toni Jo Weeks
Recording Secretary