

**BOARD OF ALDERMEN
BUDGET DELIBERATIONS – FISCAL YEAR 2022-2023
MAY 16, 2022 – FINAL VOTE**

The Board of Aldermen resumed budget deliberation session regarding the Board of Finance's recommended budget for fiscal year 2022-2023, on Monday, May 16, 2022. Chairman Vetro called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m. asking those present to join in saluting our flag and reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

1. Roll Call

Board Members

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

Also Present

Mayor Benjamin G. Blake
P. Erodicti, Finance Director
K. Fortunati, City Clerk
J. Rosen, Chief of Staff

Excused:

E. Beatty

Chairman Vetro welcomed everyone to the 2022-2023 budget deliberations.

Ald. Giannattasio and Ald. Harla made and seconded a motion for the Board to come out of recess. Motion carried unanimously.

Chairman Vetro stated tonight was the final step in the budget process. He thanked the Mayor, Aldermen, Department Heads, Board of Finance, Dr. Cutaia and her staff for presenting a reasonable budget. Chairman Vetro spoke of the importance of finding balance and adopt a budget in the best interest of the City.

Ald. Harla and Ald. Willis made and seconded a motion to approve the revenue and expenditures for the 2022-2023 budget as recommended by the Board of Finance with the following technical corrections:

- (1) Page 6, General Services Revenue, Account 443711, Conveyance Tax, increase from \$1,400,000 to \$1,550,000, for a new subtotal of \$2,130,485; and
- (2) Page 6, Public Safety Revenue, Account 443722, Building Inspection Fees, increase from \$1,400,000 to \$1,550,000 for a new sub-total of \$2,941,110; and
- (3) Page 84, Employee Benefits, Account 529905 Pension: Fire/Police/General reduce from \$14,000,000 to \$13,849,017 and Account 529919 Self Insurance Contribution reduce from 15,572,557 to \$13,594,446 for a new department sub-total of \$33,955,781 and a department total of \$33,978,981; and
- (4) Page 94, Education Health Insurance Contribution, Account 52422, Contribution, Self Insurance Fund reduce from \$22,691,137 to \$21,047,603 for a new department total of \$21,047,603.

Ald. Giannattasio asked that the technical changes be explained by the Finance Director, Peter Erodici. Mr. Erodici stated the line items on page 6 stated growth in Grand List, construction, real estate transactions realized an increase was warranted. Ald. Giannattasio asked is \$150,000 is the anticipated increase. Mr. Erodici confirmed that is the projection. He stated a similar rationale was utilized for the building inspection fees. Ald. Giannattasio asked if the data was provided by the DPLU Director. Mr. Erodici stated it was from analyzing financial information in the accounts of the department. He stated the pension accounts are based on pension valuation from actuaries which allowed a decrease in pension contributions. Ald. Giannattasio asked what was in the report that warranted a decrease. Mr. Erodici stated there were many factors he provided a brief explanation of the key factors. Ald. Giannattasio asked the percentage of the funding. Mr. Erodici stated the funded status is about 82% with current valuation increased a little over 84%. Mr. Erodici explained the self insurance contribution goes along with contribution for education health and the accounts were allowed to be decreased because American Rescue Plan committee approved an allocation to help offset large increase affecting the budget this year. Ald. Giannattasio asked if this is a permitted use through the plan. Mr. Erodici stated extensive research was done and it was determined ARPA funds may be utilized to contribute to health insurance fund. Ald. Giannattasio asked if more money could have been used and how it was determined what would be used. Mr. Erodici discussed how the committee reviewed and determined funding to be provided to offset self insurance fund. Ald. Vitali asked why the projection of \$150 when such a positive growth. Mr. Erodici stated he was trying to be as conservative as possible and after looking at current accounts he felt there was room to increase and both were increased by \$150,000. Ald. German as if there is a reserve fund for health insurance and if so the balance. Mr. Erodici said any deficit mentioned is the operating accounts. The reserve fund is over \$1 million. Ald. German asked the total pension fund today versus last year. Mr. Erodici stated the pension fund market value is approximately \$346,000,000. He stated the present market value is \$435,000,000. Mayor Blake provided an explanation of how actuarial review is performed and that the prior year is looked at for projections.

Ald. Giannattasio asked if discussion would take place on the City side of the budget. Mayor Blake stated the motion pertains to the entire budget. Ald. Giannattasio asked if this is appropriate time for amendments. Mayor Blake stated the motion relates to the entire budget.

Ald. Giannattasio requested a 5-minute recess.

Board recessed at 7:27 p.m.

Board reconvened at 7:36 p.m.

Ald. Giannattasio stated based on Chief Mello's testimony and recent news articles it is clear crime is on the rise and the best way to fight crime is with additional police officers.

Ald. Giannattasio and Ald. Vitali made and seconded an amendment to add 4 police officer positions page 43-50.

Mr. Erodici provided the new totals for all portions of the budget that would be impacted by such an increase. Mayor Blake stated each department comes to the budget with a wish list and after discussion at both administrative level and Board of Finance the items are narrowed. He stated that initial proposals were removed and alternatives for funding. Mayor Blake discussed funding through ARPA for police body cameras. He discussed addition of social workers. Mayor Blake stated if new police officer positions were added per Chief Mello's testimony those positions would take approximately 2 years to fill. Ald. Vitali discussed incidents at beaches and road incidents with ATV and bikes. He discussed other incidents occurring in parking lots. Ald. Vitali stated that if we do not get to the point of adding positions then these items cannot be addressed. He stated he is in favor of the amendment. Ald. Giannattasio stated school buses had to be rerouted today because of a theft of catalytic converters at Durham. He stated the only way to remedy is to hire more officers and he feels strongly that its time to act. Ald. Giannattasio stated the police needs support and he is surprised it was not in the budget. He stated the best way to stop crime is to have a bigger appearance. Mayor Blake state the budget must be responsible. He discussed filling shifts at the police department and dispatchers. Mayor Blake discussed parking officers to address parking issues will free up police officers for more control. Ald. Giannattasio stated he is going by the recommendation of a renowned police chief who is respected throughout the state. Ald. Parente stated public safety is paramount and everyone wants citizens to feel safe. She asked Mayor Blake to elaborate on discussions with the police chief concerning positions. Mayor Blake stated the chief discussed the positions would take 2 years to come online. He discussed off duty assignments and making officers more available. Ald. Willis stated public safety is priority but he is not convinced adding positions will achieve goals and that it is reckless. Ald. Vitali stated he takes deference with explanations and there is an obligation as representative to keep citizens safe. He stated something needs to be done today to protect tomorrow. Ald. Moffitt stated he is not convinced 1 additional officer will make a significant difference. He stated there are positions that are not filled and adding new positions should not be considered until the vacancies are filled.

Amendment failed 8 against (Arciuolo, Harla, Moffitt, Mulrenan, Pacelli, Parente, Vetro, Willis), 5 in favor (Casey, German, Giannattasio, Marlow and Vitali) and 1 abstention (Broesder).

Ald. German discussed Board of Education budget increasing yet enrollment is declining. He stated his concern with increasing budget and feels it needs to be tighter.

Ald. Marlow asked Mr. Erodici for an explanation of the \$11 million noted in the annual report. Mr. Erodici stated the \$11 million is from the fund balance from prior budget with total unassigned fund

balance of \$20 million in general fund. Mr. Erodici discussed the total fund balance including \$11 million projection being close to audited financial statements.

Main motion carried 9 in favor (Arciuolo, Broesder, Harla, Moffitt, Mulrenan, Pacelli, Parente, Vetro, Willis) and 5 against (Casey, German, Giannattasio, Marlow and Vitali).

Chairman Vetro stated the Board would recess while the Finance Director finalized the numbers to arrive at the mill rate.

The Board recessed at 8:09 p.m.

Chairman Vetro reconvened the Board in public session at 8:17 p.m.

Ald. Harla and Ald. Broesder made and seconded a motion to approve AN ORDINANCE ESTABLISHING A BUDGET FOR THE CITY OF MILFORD FOR FISCAL YEAR 2022-2023, SETTING THE MILL RATE AND ESTABLISHING A DUE DATE IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROVISIONS OF THE CONNECTICUT GENERAL STATUTES AND THE CHARTER OF THE CITY OF MILFORD.

WHEREAS: The Board of Finance of the City of Milford has made estimates of the income and the amount of money necessary to appropriate for the expenses of the City of Milford for the fiscal year commencing July 1, 2022 and ending June 30, 2023, and has classified such expenses under appropriate headings, departments, and appropriations as more fully appears in the proposed Fiscal Budget submitted to the Board of Aldermen in accordance with Article VI, Section 2 of the Charter of the City of Milford; and,

WHEREAS: The Board of Aldermen, having met and conducted a public hearing, has considered said proposed fiscal budget and has made changes therein pursuant to Article VI, Section 3 of the Charter of the City of Milford; and,

WHEREAS: The Board of Aldermen, in its deliberation and voting on said budget, has estimated revenues for the 2022-2023 fiscal year in the amount of \$238,374,038 and authorized appropriations for the 2022-2023 fiscal year in the amount of \$238,374,038.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT AND IT IS HEREBY ORDAINED AND ENACTED BY THE BOARD OF ALDERMEN OF THE CITY OF MILFORD AS FOLLOWS:

That the proposed Fiscal Budget for the fiscal year commencing July 1, 2022 and ending June 30, 2023, as amended by the action of the Board of Aldermen pursuant to law, is hereby adopted and ordered to be filed with the City Clerk.

That taxes for the fiscal year commencing July 1, 2022 and ending June 30, 2023, at the rate of 26.65 mills upon the ratable estate within the limits of the City of Milford, are hereby laid and levied to meet the expenses of said budget. Said mill rate is set on the predication that it is estimated that \$425,500 of said levy will be granted for Elderly Exemptions (State of Connecticut), \$653,873 will be granted for a local tax relief program for the elderly, \$360,638 will be granted for a local tax relief program for Veterans and 97.85% of the resulting levy will be collected during the fiscal year

commencing July 1, 2022 and ending June 30, 2023. Said taxes shall be paid on the Grand List of October 1, 2021 and shall be due and payable on July 1, 2022, provided that if the taxes of any person shall exceed Two Hundred Dollars (\$200.00), the first installment thereof, but not less than one-half of the amount of such taxes shall be due and payable on the first day of July 2022 and the remainder due and payable on the first day of January 2023, but any taxpayer may pay the total amount of the tax for which he or she is liable at the time when the first installment shall become payable. Such tax rate shall apply to all districts of the City of Milford.

<u>TAXES TO BE RAISED</u>	<u>\$205,009,666</u>
<u>TOTAL APPROPRIATION</u>	<u>\$238,374,038</u>
<u>TOTAL REVENUE</u>	<u>\$238,374,038</u>

This Ordinance shall take effect in accordance with the Charter of the City of Milford.

Ald. Giannattasio stated it's been a pleasure going through the budget process. He stated his disappoint in the public safety amendment not passing. Ald. Giannattasio stated he loves Milford and his understanding that it comes down to taxes. Ald. Giannattasio stated he is unable to support the budget without the public safety amendment. He thanked Chairman for his hard work and dedication.

Mayor Blake thanked everyone for their time in preparing the budget. He believes the budget is very responsible and that keeps the mill rate down.

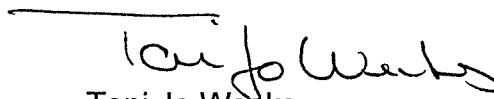
Ald. Vetro thanked the Board for their time and efforts in preparing a responsible budget. Ald. Harla echoed comments. He stated this was a difficult budget and many considerations need to be

Motion carried 9 in favor (Arciuolo, Broesder, Harla, Moffitt, Mulrenan, Pacelli, Parente, Vetro, Willis) and 5 against (Casey, German, Giannattasio, Marlow and Vitali).

Ald. Harla and Giannattasio made and seconded a motion to adjourn the budget deliberations for 2022-2023. Motion carried unanimously.

Budget deliberations for FY 2022-2023 adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,


Toni Jo Weeks
Recording Secretary