

BOARD OF FINANCE

PUBLIC HEARING – MAYOR’S PROPOSED BUDGET 2009-2010/BOARD OF EDUCATION PROPOSED BUDGET 2009-2010

FEBRUARY 4, 2009

The Milford Board of Finance held a Public Hearing on the 2009-2010 Mayor’s Proposed Budget and 2009-2010 Milford Board of Education Proposed Budget on Wednesday, February 4, 2009 in the aldermanic chambers of City Hall. Chairman Skudlarek, Jr. called the hearing to order at 7:06 p.m.

Board Members Present

Stephen J. Skudlarek, Jr., Chairman
Joseph Agro, Jr.
Joseph J. Fitzpatrick, Jr.
Brian A. Lema
Paula Smith

Chairman Skudlarek, Jr. stated Mr. Lema would to serving as acting Vice Chairman and deferred to him for the reading of the legal notice.

Mr. Lema read the legal notice for this public hearing dated January 20, 2009.

Chairman Skudlarek, Jr. introduced the Board of Finance members and proceeded to go over the ground rules for hearing noting each speaker would be given three minutes to comment. He asked those addressing the Board provide their name and address for the record. He stated only Milford residents and taxpayers could speak. He explained the Board would first welcome comments on the Mayor’s proposed budget followed by the Board of Education proposed budget. Chairman Skudlarek, Jr. also pointed out this was not a question and answer format and commented all speakers would be given the proper respect and the opportunity to share their comments.

On the Mayor’s Proposed 2009-2010 Budget:

S. Borer – 204 Anderson Avenue – referred to account # 4811 – Borough of Woodmont (p. 94) commenting things seem to be improving with their accountability. He expressed his hope there would be an understanding as to why we give them this money and stated he would like to see a list of the projects that are not completed provided. He also commented regarding a major shift in the insurance. He stated under self-insurance they were accountable for such things as the jetty and keeping areas clear.

Chairman Skudlarek, Jr. asked Mr. Borer if he could specify.

Mr. Borer responded he was referring to keeping the streets “snow free”. He also spoke as to the shortcomings that have been identified but improvements still have not been made even though they have been given money for those projects. He spoke as to the fund reserves and stated things should be getting done.

J. Prisco – 11 Riverdale Road – stated he was against the Mayor’s proposed budget stating it should be lower with these economic times. He asked for assistance for the senior citizens commenting it just isn’t any better.

On the Board of Education Proposed 2009-2010 Budget:

P. Mulhall – 49 Crescent Drive – commented this is another budget year and that she comes every year. She stated she is a teacher in the district and also has two children at John F. Kennedy elementary school. She stated the Board of Finance should fully fund this budget stating the Board of Education did their due diligence. She stated there were over 85 questions asked during BOE budget sessions that they responded to. She stated as a taxpayer she understood they would have to sacrifice, but she did not want it to be people. Referencing NCLB, which she stated, is far from perfect, she commented in Milford no child is being left behind.

R. Silver – 55 Governors Avenue – expressed her hope the Board would support the budget as presented. She spoke as to how the budget was crafted by administrators, teachers, custodians and many others, who provided thorough input and that it was done with the current economic times in mind. She stated it is sound and prudent as presented.

K. O'Neil – 25 Victory Drive – read from a prepared statement regarding the budget commenting it was not in any way irresponsible and that Dr. Polansky was looking for the resources to maintain the current quality of education in the district. She stated the budget cannot be cut. She continued reading speaking to the difficult economic times and also the needs of the children. She also stated this budget does not propose to increase or add, but simply maintain.

J. Glass – 37 Shelter Cove Road - stated she is a registered voter, taxpayer, educator and parent of two children. Reading from a prepared statement she stated she is cognizant of these difficult times and congratulated the Board of Education for their careful decisions. As she continued reading she explained one of the reasons for moving to Milford was for the excellent school. She also addressed what the components of a good school are such as class size, administrators, programs, etc. She implored the Board not to touch any programs or services.

C. Betz – 17 Eastern Parkway – congratulated the Board of Education for the fantastic job they did with this budget and asked the Board to support the budget as is. She spoke as to the services provided to our children and also commented parents should not have to come back here to the Board of Aldermen to have funds restored. She asked the Board to please leave the budget as is.

T. Acri – 88 Lenox Avenue – stated he is a resident, educator and parent and that he was here tonight to support the budget as presented. He stated any cuts would mean staff. He spoke as to the family type atmosphere they have at West Shore Middle School and how they support each other. He also praised the work of the media center specialists and proclaimed them as unsung heroes who are there every day.

C. Hiza – 40 Captains Walk – stated he is a 15 year resident of this City and was concerned with the school system. He stated they moved here because they perceived Milford to be an excellent system and found out it is. He referred to a family member who is an educator at a private school and commented Milford can be and is as good as any private school. He stated the need to continue to concentrate on the education of our children. He stated he had two appeals to make to the Board, first to appeal to their sense of right and wrong and moral sense; and second to appeal to their wallet. He stated the basis of home property values is the school system. He stated we also had a choice of what we do with education dollars, putting the child first. He also commented as to the great responsibility the Board has in their decisions, commenting he is an airline pilot and that he is

only responsible for 100 people, whereas this Board is responsible for thousands. He asked the Board to make the right decision stating they would make the final affect on our children.

M. Taylor – 340 Wolf Harbor Road – stated he came tonight, but was contemplating not saying anything. He stated he comes here year after year. He stated tonight he wished to speak personally regarding his daughter, a senior in high school who had expressed a desire to become a teacher because of her science teachers. He stated he has seen what the Milford education system has done for his children adding you can't improve unless your requests are granted.

K. Jackson – 18 Barton Road – spoke as to the cuts in media aide positions. She stated if these positions were cut the kids would suffer. She went on to explain her role as a media aide in the school system and the rapport she has with the children.

D. Ellis – 11 Tyler Road – stated she is a parent of three children in the school system and that she wished to speak on behalf of the Board of Education budget. She asked the Board to approve the budget as submitted stating they have done a very good job at paining down what it could have been. She also spoke as to the impact of job cuts and layoffs and asked the Board to consider the children and employees of Milford as they carefully go through this budget session.

M. Olsson – 112 Hilltop Circle – stated she was speaking as an advocate for our children and implored the Board to take a deep thought when they look over the entire budget. She continued reading from a prepared statement speaking as to the importance of investing in our children's' future.

K. Huber – 277 Roses Mill Road - stated she was speaking as a parent, taxpayer and also representing Milford Council of PTAs as its President. She acknowledged the difficult times and stated she did not envy the task ahead for the Board. She asked the Board to take the time to look everything over before deciding on the budget. She asked the Board the last time anyone of them had visited our schools and extended an invitation to the Board to come and visit the schools stating she or any one of the many parent leaders would be happy to give a tour of the buildings. She also commented each of the schools although they are "cookie cutters" architecturally, have their own charm and personality.

S. Reed – 415 Milford Point Road – stated she is President of the Simon Lake PTA. She thanked the Board for the opportunity to speak before them this evening and also echoed the comments of the previous speaker to come and visit our schools and that she would be more than happy to give any Board member a tour of Simon Lake. She also referenced the Budget Guide and the section she referred to the goals of the Board of Education. She stressed the importance of needing to stay where we are in our reading, writing and math goals. She also spoke as to staff and class size and the children who have classes with 23 students or more that include a paraprofessional. She reiterated how important it is to keep our children at goal or better.

E. McRanor (child) – Sunnyside Court – stated she is a second grade student at Orange Avenue School who asked the Board to spare her teachers. She talked about how big her class was last year and how much better it is this year because they're so many less children. She asked the Board if they needed to lay off teachers to lay off the teachers in the older grades.

C. Bellamy – 49 Sunnyside Court – followed up her daughter speaking about possible teacher cuts and layoffs and how it would impact class size, which make a big difference for many children. She also spoke as to the importance of maintaining the current level of services. She asked the Board to please consider the budget as is.

P. Bagdasarian – 27 Thompson Street – spoke as to when she moved her 10 years ago and the assurances her husband made to her in the decision to move to Milford. She spoke personally concerning her own child and the services she has received. She commented teachers would rather sacrifice their raises than lose their jobs.

E. Doyle – 14 Andover Drive – stated she is a media specialist at Harborside Middle School. She expressed her concern with cuts that have already been made to this budget. She stated she was concerned with the reduction in media positions in the high school and spoke as to the many tasks of a media aid. She stated any further cuts would impact the children and stressed the importance of keeping the students of Milford top notch.

M. Walter – 45 Harvest Lane – stated she is a media aid at Jonathan Law and that she has been in Milford for 14 years. She reiterated the comments of the previous speaker and how important these positions are especially to students and equipment. She commented how many times a child will turn to the media aid for assistance when they can't go to a teacher.

J. Federico – 14 Breakneck Lane – stated she was speaking as a citizen, parent and taxpayer and pleaded with the Board to fully fund the Board of Education budget. She spoke as a parent and the interaction with teachers and how hard they work. She stated in hard times they needed to stick it out and reiterated her plea to the Board to keep teachers and support the budget as is.

Chairman Skudlarek, Jr. stated the Board would stand in recess until next Wednesday, February 11, 2009. The Board recessed at 7:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen K. Huber
Recording Secretary