

**BOARD OF FINANCE
PUBLIC HEARING – MAYOR’S PROPOSED BUDGET 2014-2015 and
BOARD OF EDUCATION PROPOSED BUDGET 2014-2015
FEBRUARY 5, 2014**

The Board of Finance held a Public Hearing on Wednesday, February 5, 2014 regarding the Mayor’s Proposed Budget Fiscal Year 2014-2015 and Board of Education Proposed Budget Fiscal Year 2014-2015. The meeting was held in the aldermanic chambers of City Hall. Chairman Lema called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m.

Board Members Present

Brian Lema, Chairman
Joseph Fitzpatrick
Scott Marlow
Mikel Montano
Joseph Castignoli

Also Present

Mayor Benjamin G. Blake
Peter Erodici, Finance Director

Chairman Lema welcomed the members of the public to speak on the Mayor’s Proposed Budget and the Board of Education Budget for Fiscal year 2014-2015. He stated they would they would hear comment on the Mayor’s budget first. He noted the Mayor’s proposed budget would then continue to Monday, February 10, 2014 when they will begin deliberations with the city departments.

Speakers regarding the Mayor’s Proposed 2014-2015 Budget:

B. Poutry – 25 Willow Street – stated he is the Chairman of the Conservation Commission. He stated he wished to speak regarding the open space agent position. He stated funding for that position was renewed at the Board of Aldermen meeting on Monday. He stated it has always been clear that the city has done a great job acquiring open space and that this position was added to maintain that open space. Mr. Poutry stated he was asking the Board to consider making this position a permanent, full time position instead of the seasonal temporary position it currently is. He went on to highlight the number of accomplishments of the current open space agent, Mr. Johnson. He also spoke of the necessity of continuity of the work each year and also the ability to obtain grant funding for the city. He urged the Board to make this a permanent full time position.

M. Mauro – 1080 West River Street – stated she is the Vice Chairman of the Conservation Commission and has worked on many other committees in the city. She stated she was here in support of the open space agent position being a full time permanent position. She went on to speak of the Plan of Conservation and Commission which addresses the importance of acquiring open space (2002) and the Plan in 2012 which necessitates the need for an open space agent. She continued by reading a portion of the plan. Ms. Mauro encouraged the Board to make this a permanent full time position adding it would be a long term benefit to the community.

V. Piselli – 361 Meadowside Road – stated he is a land management agent in another town and here tonight to advocate making the open space agent a permanent position. He spoke of the current open space agent’s work and the partnership with the city he has developed. He stressed the importance of bringing a community together. He stated there are three main reasons; 1) environmentally, 2) socially; and 3) economically. He urged the Board to make this position permanent.

S. Glennon – 99 Carlson Drive – echoed the sentiments of prior speakers regarding the open space agent. She spoke of community and involvement of families/children. She encouraged the Board to change this position from a temporary seasonal position to a permanent position.

R. Harrison – 46 Oregon Avenue North – stated he is a part of the Mayor's Open Space Advisory Committee. He stated the value of Mr. Johnson's work far exceeds what he is paid. He stated Milford needs to come into the modern day, noting surrounding communities are so far ahead of us.

B. Milton – 32 Elm Street – stated she serves on the Mayor's Open Space Advisory Committee and is a part of a group of environmentalists. She stated Milford has one of the finest, but he really is not a part of a department. Reading from a prepared statement she spoke of what the open space agent has done, how he has saved the city money and the relationships he has formed with city departments. She also spoke of the green infrastructure which must be closely managed. She stated Milford depends on a natural resource agent and urged the Board to write the open space agent into the budget.

B. Bell – 24 Winthrop Court – asked the Board to put this position into the budget. She pointed out the city has various other agents, why not a natural resource agent. She stated every city needs someone responsible for its natural resources.

Being no other speakers for the Mayor's proposed budget, Chairman Lema reminded those present that budget deliberations for the Mayor's proposed budget would continue to Monday, February 10, 2014, when the Board would begin hearing from its city departments.

Speakers regarding the Board of Education Proposed 2014-2015 Budget:

Chairman Lema asked if there were any speakers who wished to speak regarding the Board of Education proposed budget.

T. Jargodinski – 27 Berkley Terrace – reading from a prepared statement spoke of the lack of responsibility of the Board of Education. He spoke of the number of tax dollars being spent; however, Milford has some of the lowest achievement numbers compared to other towns. He cited some of the academic numbers. He stated it was time for the Board of Finance to do its job and stop the massive waste of taxpayer dollars.

Chairman Lema stated discussions on the Board of Education budget would continue on February 20, 2014 when the Board of Education would make its presentation to the Board of Finance.

Being no further speakers, the Board recessed at 7:34 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen K. Huber
Recording Secretary