

**BOARD OF FINANCE
BUDGET HEARINGS - PROPOSED BUDGET FY2014-2015
FEBRUARY 10, 2014**

The Milford Board of Finance held a budget deliberations session on Monday, February 10, 2014 in Conference Room B of the Parsons Complex. Chairman Lema reconvened the budget deliberations in public session at 6:31 p.m.

Board Members Present

Brian Lema, Chairman
Scott Marlow, Vice Chairman
Joseph J. Fitzpatrick, Jr.
Mickel Montano
Joseph Castignoli

Also Present

Mayor Benjamin G. Blake
Peter Erodici, Finance Director

Chairman Lema welcomed everyone and explained the process for budget deliberations. He stated representatives are asked to substantiate their budget request if they so wish and that the Board would answer questions.

(4825) Beth El Shelter – Ms. Toni Dolan, Executive Director was present along with Mr. Mike Williams. Mrs. Dolan stated she was grateful for the support of the Board and the ongoing partnership with the City. She stated her handout represented their operating budget for 2014. She also stated the City of Milford's grant represents 10% of their total budget. She also spoke of the efforts of their fundraising and development committees and their volunteers. Mrs. Dolan stated they make every effort to be conservative wherever they can. She stated they will be installing new energy efficient windows. She also stated their staff remains the same. She stated the facility remains the same; they are a 34 bed facility and a 90 day program. He also stated they have had a lot of incidents of having to turn people away. Mrs. Dolan stated although they have asked for the same amount they cannot continue with that amount. She stated the soup kitchen has seen an increase in those they serve by more than 1,000. She also they have also seen an increase in their food program. Mrs. Dolan asked the Board not to cut their request.

Mr. Williams addressed the homeless issue in Milford. He stated in every town there are unsheltered people that have to be brought in on extremely cold nights, especially like nights we have recently seen. He stated they have been able to do that by putting cots in the dining area. Mr. Williams stated they are having discussions to come up with a plan to deal with this issue, pointing out it is a great responsibility and one that they are not funded for. He stated they were not asking for additional money, but simply wanted to Board to be aware of the issue.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked if the unsheltered people they have brought in are Milford residents.

Mr. Williams responded yes, for the most part.

Mr. Marlow asked how long they are able to stay.

Mrs. Dolan stated in the “no freeze” shelter they can only stay overnight because they need to set up for the next day.

(4826) Boys & Girls’ Club – Mrs. Megan Altomare was present for questions/comments. She thanked the Board to allow the Boys & Girls Club to be a part of the budget. She stated they have made some drastic changes specifically to their program, which they have expanded. Mrs. Altomare stated they now have a full time summer program. She stated they have 217 kids, which is up from last year. She also stated they are excited to be moving into Simon Lake very shortly. She stated their next focus will be on the Common Core Standard (CCS). She also stated they have increased their programs from 30 to over 60. She referenced her handout tonight which she stated included their annual report.

Mr. Marlow asked how much of Simon Lake they would take over.

Mrs. Altomare stated they would be in the new section, media center, the room next to the media center and across. She stated it is about 6,000 square feet.

Mr. Marlow asked if her budget accounted for that additional space.

Mrs. Altomare responded yes. She went on to explain the fundraising they do, which includes Pumpkins on the Pier, dodge ball tournament and more. She also stated the money they receive from the City is very important to their budget and how they serve the kids.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked about membership dues and if everyone pays.

Mrs. Altomare stated about 50% of the kids are on scholarship. She stated their rates are \$50 for the school year and \$75 for the full year, which includes summer.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked if the summer program was new.

Mrs. Altomare responded yes, that it opened last summer.

(4111) Board of Aldermen – Mayor Blake stated the budget is the same as last year.

(4141) Board of Finance – Chairman Lema noted the budget is the same as the previous year.

(4146) Flood & Erosion Board – Mayor Blake pointed out the increase in this budget over last year. He explained this Board has been dormant for about 10 years, being formed after storm Beth. He stated with storms such as Irene and Sandy the Board has a very strong charge as to what they wish to accomplish, i.e. drainage projects, etc.

(4147) Tree Commission – Bryan Mancini was present. He stated the Commission is made up of all volunteers and that since he has been Chairman they have planted over 35 trees. He stated some of those trees have grown too large or have come down.

Mr. Castignoli referenced line item 4432 0000 Trees/Shrubs and asked about the significant increase.

Mr. Mancini stated their stock is down and they are in need of doing replacements. He stated they are working with Park, Recreation and Beach regarding the trees on the green. He stated the cost per tree is \$125-150 per tree.

Mr. Marlow asked who is involved with where the trees are planted.

Mr. Mancini stated there is an arboretum/master plan in place which they follow.

Mr. Marlow asked who does the planting.

Mr. Mancini stated they have a group of volunteers who help, except for the big stuff, which the Public Works Department helps them with.

Mayor Blake spoke of the outreach from United Illuminating.

Mr. Mancini commented that is something the Commission has been monitoring.

(4156) Conservation Commission – Bill Poutry, Chairman and Steve Johnson, Vice Chairman were present for questions. Mr. Poutry provided the Commission with an overview of the Commission's work. He also stated they oversee issues regarding open space and advocate and monitor acquisition of open space. He stated most of the funding in their budget is for secretarial fees. He also stated they have one request which is to move the monies from line item 4783 0000 Office Supplies & Expenses to 4712 0000 Training Expenses. He stated they are requesting this due to the changes in technology.

(4813) Bridges– Barry Kasden, President and CEO, Bill Sidway (sp) Bridges Board and Kathleen E. Sheehan, Chief Financial Officer were present. Mr. Sidway stated the Chairman of the Board of Directors, Michelle Lemere was unable to attend, but sent her regards. He stated Bridges appreciates the partnership they have had with the City for the last 57 years. He also stated they are very fortunate to have a very active Board. Mr. Sidway spoke of the thousands of clients seen at Bridges, with the need for services is great and getting greater. Mr. Sidway stated they were seeking the Board's help and expressed his hope the Board would help them to help service the people in Milford who are in need of services. He introduced Bridges Chief Financial Officer, Kathleen Sheehan and deferred to Mr. Kasden for additional comment.

Mr. Kasden stated he was pleased to be here. He stated it has been a difficult year for them, but they were able to open their new building, which he stated is fully operational. He stated it coincides with a time when requests for services are growing. Mr. Kasden asked the Board to consider his original request in the amount of \$372,750. He stated just last year they saw 8,363 people from the region of which 5,500 were Milford residents. He also noted that their rates have not increased in over 4 years. He stated 77% of services are for Milford residents and that making cuts to the budget would mean people would not be able to come in. Mr. Kasden stated in the past he has spoke of cuts from the State of Connecticut and that this year it looks like cuts are coming. He stated the additional \$22,000 he is looking for in the budget means so much to Milford residents. He stated 750-800 plus people enter their facility each week. He also spoke of numerous security measures that have been implemented in the building. He stated this year he is very fearful of State cuts coming down. He stated he hoped this Board could see their way towards the additional dollars. Mr. Kasden thanked the Board for their time and their help over the years. He announced that he would be retiring at the end of June.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked about reimbursement in accordance with the Affordable Care Act (ACA).

Mr. Kasden stated it doesn't help them unless rates change.

(4815) Veterans Grave Preservation Commission – Mr. Tom Cody was present for questions/comment. Mr. Cody updated the Board on some of the work. He stated they created a walkway around the revolutionary war monument, plantings they have done, and solar lights which light up the flags. He also spoke of the damaged area that they were able to rectify with the help of the Cemetery Association.

(4816) Milford Flotilla 73 - Mr. Paul Pronovost was present for questions. He stated his handout explained what they do at the Flotilla. He thanked the Board for fully funding the grant last year and stated they were asking for the same this year. He also stated they are all members of the auxiliary and spoke of their solid working relationship with Mr. Swift and those at the landing.

(4817) Human Services Department – Lisa Diamond Graham, Executive Director was present for questions/comments. She stated the increase she asked for is a mandate for their fringe benefits costs. She went on to explain the grant she receives from the City. She stated basically they are a city department, but funded by a grant. She explained her department follows everything a city department does, i.e. U2 wage schedule, salary, step increases, etc. Ms. Diamond Graham stated she received \$37,337 from the State Department of Education and \$12,272 from DSS, both of which are used for salaries only. She stated the City will eventually have to make a decision as to services they provide to Milford residents.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked the number of employees in the department.

Ms. Diamond Graham stated there are 6 full time employees (2 FT Youth and Family, 2 FT Human Services, an Executive Director and Secretary). She stated they also have clinical interns.

Mr. Castignoli asked what the increase amount requested represents.

Ms. Diamond Graham stated it is for items such as insurance costs, etc.

Mr. Erodici explained the department buys into the City's healthcare insurance.

Mr. Castignoli asked if the increased amount was due to an increase in the insurance.

Mr. Erodici replied yes.

Ms. Diamond Graham stated the increase is the exact amount.

Mr. Erodici stated it includes items such as workers compensation, FICA, medicare, etc. He explained originally the Finance Department billed this department for each individual employee.

Chairman Lema asked Ms. Diamond Graham to provide the Board with a breakdown of staff and salaries.

Ms. Diamond Graham stated she could do that. She stated at some point the city would need to address this issue and that eventually a decision would need to be made as to whether or not they are a department or not.

(4819) Milford Progress – Tina DiNapoles, President and John Knuff, Vice President were present for questions. Ms. DiNapoles stated they look forward to completing the plans of conservation and development.

(4818) – Milford Historic District – no representatives were present. No questions or comments.

(4820) – Milford Historic District II – no representatives were present.

(4822) Cemetery Association – Mr. Jim Beard, member of the Board of Directors was present for questions. He spoke regarding the restoration work that took place. He also stated \$10,000 is to be sued for preservation work. He also stated a committee called ‘Friends of Milford Cemetery’ has been created. He explained how they work hand and hand with the historical walks. Mr. Beard stated they are in the process of applying to get designation making Milford Cemetery as a historical cemetery, which would allow them to seek grant monies.

Mayor Blake stated the Department of Veterans Service is able to re-create monuments as they originally were.

(4142) Department of Permitting & Land Use – Mr. Joseph Griffin, Director was present for questions/answers. He stated the department is comprised of the Planning and Zoning, Inland Wetlands and Building Departments. He stated there are 13 full time positions and there is one temporary clerical position, with no seasonal temporary help at this time. He stated during the fall there were 2 seasonal temporary building inspectors. Mr. Griffith stated the goal is to make sure they are using the “box of tools” they were given and to be effective and efficient. He also stated they are working within the guidelines of the KRIT report. He stated they are responsible to the permitting needs of the City.

Mr. Marlow asked about applications.

Mr. Griffith stated they are even with last year, although he expects them to go up in the spring.

Mr. Marlow asked about an automated system for Milford at some point, where basically you would never talk to someone.

Mr. Griffith stated he did not see it without educating the public, adding he did not think it would be efficient enough.

Mayor Blake added there are some mechanical permits that can be applied for and paid for online.

Mr. Marlow asked the length of time for a plan review.

Mr. Griffith stated by law it is 30 days. He stated unfortunately that does not get the applicant or the department where they want to be. He stated they make every effort to look at plans and if something is missing they are able to send it back to the applicant for the corrective action.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked about the overtime account and what it entails.

Mr. Griffith explained there is pre-authorized overtime for the Chief Building Inspector when he is called out to fire scenes, or overtime past the regular work day. He went on to explain how they are trying to standardize the process.

Mayor Blake also pointed out there was overtime this past year due to the number of applications due to Storm Sands.

Mr. Castignoli asked about the car in the budget and if it was replacing an existing vehicle.

Mr. Griffith stated it was replacing an older vehicle.

Mayor Blake spoke of the vehicle acquisition program and that it may be able to come from that program.

Mr. Castignoli asked Mayor Blake if it was his recommendation that the vehicle come from the Vehicle Acquisition Program.

Mayor Blake replied yes.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked about seasonal temporary account.

Mr. Griffith stated that is for the interim building officials that were hired this past fall.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked about the two unfilled positions.

Mr. Griffith stated they are unfilled.

Mr. Erodicti explained Mr. Griffith's predecessor had requested those positions.

Chairman Lema asked about the need for an Open Space Coordinator and if that position would fall within this department.

Mayor Blake stated that is a standalone position, although it is more someone who works closely with Inland Wetlands Agency.

(4144) Zoning Board of Appeals – Mr. Griffith was present for questions/comments. Mr. Griffith stated the biggest change to the budget was the reduction of the advertising account which they were able to accomplish by using local newspapers.

(4219) Personnel Department – Tania Barnes, Personnel Director was present. Mrs. Barnes stated it is a flat budget with the exception of staffing. She stated the Risk Manager position has been moved to the Law Department; otherwise everything else is the same. She also noted overtime has been reduced and that she did not see the need for any additional monies in that account. She stated advertising is one area where the expense is still high due to the charges by the newspapers.

(4145) Pension Board – Tania Barnes, Personnel Director, was present to answer any questions.

(4151) Civil Service Commission – Tania Barnes, Personnel Director was present.

(4620) Recreation Department – Paul Piscitelli, Director was present for questions. Mr. Piscitelli stated his budget is down as it has been for the last few years. He explained the overall budget is down about 2% as a result of the computer system they now have which is up and running. He stated everything is now down on-line. He also addressed the subject of minimum wage pointing out it has increased from \$8.25 to \$8.70 which is about a 5% increase. He stated the Recreation Department has over 200 seasonal temporary employees, most of which are hired for the summer playground program. He stated he would need additional money or he will need to make some drastic changes to the department's programs. He stated it is his understanding that Governor Malloy wants to increase the minimum wage even more. Mr. Piscitelli stated if that happens it will be devastating to their programs if they are to maintain them. He also pointed out he makes no increase to his seasonal temporary employees, no matter how long they have worked as seasonal temporary employees. He asked the Board to support the \$340,000.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked about line item 4975 0451 Recreation Equipment.

Mr. Piscitelli stated it is for their playgrounds and explained they try to replace equipment once a year.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked if the Recreation Department has a reserve account, if they had to use it.

Mr. Erodici replied yes.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked how much.

Mr. Erodici stated he did not have the exact amount, but it was several thousand dollars.

Mr. Castignoli asked about line item 4441 0000 Holiday.

Mr. Piscitelli explained the Recreation Department spent additional monies for the lighting of the trees on the green this year.

(4153) Park, Beach & Recreation Commission – Paul Piscitelli, Director was present. He stated the Commission funded the trees on the green. He stated the cost per tree is approximately \$150. He stated this Commission was happy to help plant the trees to keep with the arboretum plan.

(4157) Harbor Management Commission (Fund 36) – Ray Swift, Operations Director and Jim Beard were present for questions/comments. Mr. Swift stated they were looking forward to the season. He stated reservations are coming in. He also stated they recently completed dredging. Mr. Swift stated he did not anticipate any other major changes.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked about line item 4990 0539 Channel Markers.

Mr. Swift stated they have re-used them for a long time and that it was time to change them.

Mr. Beard commented regarding the PILOT funds they lost last year as well as large increases in insurance costs for the patio area. He stated there have been a lot of claims for falls. Mr. Beard stated he did not feel the marina should insure the public part of the marina. He stated the patio really needs to be re-done if they want to keep it safe.

Mr. Swift explained the work they recently completed on the patio. He stated it will last for awhile, but it certainly will not eliminate every trip and fall. He stated they continue to do more with less, but they are at a point where there is just nothing left to eliminate.

Mr. Beard added Milford Harbor is a huge asset to Milford.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked if the liability comes out of the self-insurance.

Mr. Erodici stated the city is now fully insured now with CIRMA and that the marina pays into it.

(4112) Elections – Mrs. Bonnie Peloso and Ms. Suzanne Paul, Assistant City Clerks were present for questions/comment. Ms. Paul stated there is the possibility of two primaries this year, plus an election.

(4129) City Clerk – Mrs. Bonnie Peloso and Ms. Suzanne Paul, Assistant City Clerks were present for questions/comment. Ms. Paul stated in this fiscal year they are just about out of money. She stated currently they do not have any money in 4784 0000 Printing and Binding. Also, line item 4156 0000 Vitals – they don't have enough money to cover their bills. She explained that account pays for the books, i.e. birth records, marriage, etc.

Mrs. Peloso explained the increase in their land record book in an effort to garner some savings.

Ms. Paul referred to line item 4778 0000 Indexing/Recording and stated they will run out of money by April. She also stated line items 4783 0000 Office Supplies & Expenses and 4775 0000 Office Equipment Upkeep will also run out of money shortly. She explained they do all the printing for the Board of Aldermen, i.e. special envelopes, agendas, etc. Ms. Paul stated they expect to run short in their overtime account as she and Mrs. Peloso are covering the Board of Aldermen meetings.

(4115) Registrar of Voters – Mrs. Keri Rowland and Mrs. Debra Fellenbaum, Deputy Registrar were present for questions/comments. Mrs. Rowland stated she was here tonight on behalf of Mrs. Antoinette Carey, who will be retiring in early March. She stated they have a simple budget and don't ask for more than they need.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked about line item 4718 0000 Travel & Conferences.

Mrs. Rowland explained with the change in state statutes and new date change and on-line registration there is a lot of training. She stated it is important all of the registrars attend these trainings. She stated this line item covers all four of them to attend training in the fall and the spring. Mrs. Rowland also pointed out they are required by state statute to receive four hours of training per year.

Mr. Castignoli asked about line item 4796 0000 Computer Software & Maintenance where the department requested \$1,200 and the mayor recommended \$0.

Mrs. Rowland stated they are running different versions of windows in their office. She stated they would all like to be on the same version for efficiency. She stated that funding was moved to line item 4784 0000 Printing and Binding.

Chairman Lema thanked everyone for coming out. He stated the Board would stand in recess until Wednesday, February 12, 2014. He stated he would be unable to attend, but Vice Chairman Marlow would run the meeting.

Mayor Blake stated he would be in attendance early in the evening, but would need to leave for the official celebration of Milford's 375th with a reenactment at City Hall.

The Board recessed at 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen K. Huber
Recording Secretary