

**BOARD OF FINANCE
BUDGET DELIBERATIONS - PROPOSED BUDGET FY 2016-2017
FEBRUARY 11, 2016**

The Milford Board of Finance held a budget deliberations session on Thursday, February 11, 2016 in Conference Room B of the Parsons Complex. Chairman Lema reconvened the meeting in public session at 6:32 p.m.

Board Members Present

Brian Lema, Chairman
Joseph Castignoli
Joseph J. Fitzpatrick, Jr.
Mikel Montano
Lauren Secondi

Also Present

Mayor Benjamin G. Blake
Peter Erodici, Finance Director

Chairman Lema stated from Tuesday's agenda there was a misunderstanding as to the hearing night.

(4159) Veterans Ceremony - Tom Flowers, Chairman was present for questions/comments. He stated their major expenses are flags for veteran's graves.

Mr. Castignoli asked who pays for the stone at the graves.

Mr. Flowers stated the VA gives the next of kin an allowance for the purpose of purchasing the stone.

(4210) Finance Department – Peter Erodici, Finance Director, Ariane Swift, Accountant, Daniel Thomas, Assessor and Sue Taft, Tax Office were present.

Mr. Erodici stated the department has been very busy due to the number of vacancies. He also referenced the numerous State and federal mandates the department must address on a daily basis. He also pointed out a slight increase in the revaluation line item in light of the revaluation coming up. He thanked the Board for the support and Mayor Blake for funding the Accountant I position. Mr. Erodici announced they had hired an individual who comes from the firm of Blum Shapiro and that he looked forward to having her with the department and getting her trained. He also thanked each of his department heads for their hard work and dedication.

Mr. Castignoli asked about the projected overtime figure which is much higher.

Mr. Erodici explained they have been making administrative transfers due to the vacancies in assessor and tax, so overtime has been higher.

Mayor Blake added it was due to the absences in each of the departments.

Mr. Castignoli asked if those figures would change and the positions be filled.

Mr. Erodici stated he was confident the positions would be filled.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked why the projections weren't less because of the vacancies.

Mr. Erodici explained the norm has been to project the full amount.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked about revaluation operations. He asked if that amount is carried every year when evaluations are only done every few years.

Mr. Erodici stated that line item has been funded at a relatively lower number so it would not be a huge increase in one year.

Mr. Thomas added if it is not spent it rolls over to the next year.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked why the decrease to \$45,000 in that line item.

Mayor Blake stated he and Mr. Thomas has extensive conversation regarding the amount and they agreed to be more conservative.

Mr. Thomas stated the bulk of the work is done in the upcoming year, which is overtime. He stated they are very efficient. He also pointed out Milford does in-house assessment which is a great savings. He stated they were down one deputy for some time which set them back.

(4143) Board of Assessment Appeals – Mr. Thomas stated the increase is due to the anticipated number of hearings. He stated they budget approximately 2/3 of what they had. He stated the market has been flat so they did not anticipate a large amount.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked about the seasonal/temporary work.

Mr. Thomas stated they have a clerk who comes in and does the data work. He stated it is additional clerical work.

(4215) Management Information Systems (MIS) – Jean Lasczak, MIS Coordinator was present. She stated the budget is the same with the exception of the two accounts that change each year, office upkeep and software and maintenance which supports the infrastructure of city's system.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked if those figures are contractual.

Ms. Lasczak replied yes. She also pointed out they have a laundry list of products that they support from other departments.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked if other department would then carry that support.

Ms. Lasczak stated the city clerk has their own system, which is the COTT System.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked if the Board of Education is separate.

Ms. Lasczak replied yes.

Mr. Castignoli asked about the PC Lan Coordinator position.

Ms. Lasczak stated they are still in contract negotiations. She stated the number is reflective of their current salary.

Mayor Blake stated there was a request to classify that job, but the union has not moved on that as yet.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked about the computer hardware.

Ms. Lasczak stated that was for the virtualization they had hoped to do. She stated it is the seed money for that. She stated they are looking for an alternative means of funding.

(4116) MGAT - Al May, Chairman. He stated the proposed budget is the same as the past year. He stated the only increase is in secretarial fees so they can have a secretary at their meetings.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked if it is a Milford committee.

Mr. May replied yes.

Chairman Lema asked about the ZBA having their meetings covered.

Mr. May added it is basically month to month due to costs.

Chairman Lema asked the cost of a typical meeting.

Mr. May stated it varies due to the length of the meetings, set up of equipment, etc.

(4121) Mayor's Office – Mayor stated it is a relatively status quo budget, except for step increases or contractual wage increases.

(4122) General Expenses – Mayor Blake there is an increase in professional fees and services to allow for a grant's coordinator position. That position was vacated; however we kept the line item open with the \$1. He stated what they sorely need at this point is a grant's coordinator to administer the number of grants the city has received. Currently the individual departments administer their own grants. He stated they will be hiring a seasonal/temporary for the storm related grants. He stated that is why the increase.

(4121) Golf Course (Fund 18) – Dan Worroll stated he was here tonight for Dick Austin, Chairman, who was unavailable. He stated the budget is basically the same as last year. He also commented the golf course is doing very well and in great shape. Mr. Worroll also spoke of the upgrades at the course, i.e. maintenance shed. He also stated they would be purchasing two additional carts.

(4819) Milford Progress - Scott Moulton was present for questions/comments.

Chairman Lema stated he would excuse himself from this account and turned the meeting over to Mr. Fitzpatrick.

John Knuff, President, newly installed was present for questions/comments. Mr. Knuff stated every dime they spend is for infrastructure upgrades in the City.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked where their funding comes from.

Mr. Knuff stated their funding comes strictly from the city.

Chairman Lema resumed his seat.

(0010 4162) Open Space - Steve Johnson, Open Space and Natural Resource Agent was present for questions/comments.

No questions.

(4320) Fire Department – Chief Douglas Edo was present for questions/comments. He stated the budget is essentially the same as last year, although they did flip some accounts, otherwise it is the same.

Chairman Lema asked if there was any cost savings as a result of the consolidation of the fire stations.

Chief Edo replied at this point no. He stated heating and electrical is more than anticipated, so basically it is a wash.

Chairman Lema asked about the Seemans Lane property.

Chief Edo stated they have officially taken over ownership of that building.

Mayor Blake added there were specific things as to repurposing the building specifically that it has to remain as emergency preparedness.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked about the increase in line item 4114 0000 Holidays and if it was contractual.

Chief Edo replied yes.

Mr. Castignoli stated the projections varied from last year's projections.

Mr. Erodici stated it was likely a conservative projection number.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked how the overtime numbers are arrived at.

Chief Edo stated it is based on historical data.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked about open positions.

Chief Edo stated there are three (3) open positions.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked if those positions would be filled.

Chief Edo stated they would be running an exam for fire inspector.

Mr. Castignoli asked about 4116 000 Vacation & Relief and the other overtime accounts.

Chief Edo explained the various overtime accounts.

(4331) Civil Preparedness – Chief Douglas Edo was present for questions/comments.

Chairman Lema asked about the increase in fuel and electricity and if that was due to the Seemans Lane acquisition.

Chief Edo replied yes.

(4805) CMED - Chief Douglas Edo was present for question for questions/comments.

Chairman Lema asked if this was being phased out in New Haven.

Chief Edo stated there is a significant difference and they expect that number could go down.

(4360) Lighting, Hydrants, Water – Chief Douglas Edo was present for questions/comments. Chief Edo explained this account pays the bills.

(4310) Police Department – Chief Keith Mello was present for questions/comments. He stated there are no new programs in the budget. He pointed out a lot of their funding for special projects and training came out of federal seized assets. He pointed out as of mid-January they have zero training dollars available, which is not surprising since their projections historically have been accurate.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked about line item 4977 0142

Chief Mello stated that account is for their computers, laptops, etc.

Mr. Castignoli asked about 4796 0000 Software & Maintenance

Chief Mello stated they do all of their own maintenance. He stated those costs are fixed.

Mayor Blake stated he anticipated an increase next year in the communications system.

Chief Mello also pointed out they absorbed the fire department's CAD system and radio costs, which has added to their budget.

Chairman Lema asked about cruisers.

Chief Mello stated explained the additional costs since they switchover from the Crown Victoria's. He went on to explain the replacement cycle for their vehicles.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked how many vehicles they anticipated from that account.

Chief Mello stated he was hoping for 8 cruisers.

(4420) Public Works Office - Chris Saley, Public Works Director was present for questions/comments.

No questions.

(4421) Highway/Parks Division – Chris Saley, Public Works Director was present for questions/comments.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked if all positions were filled.

Mr. Saley replied no. He spoke of the process and explained they are currently updating a number of job descriptions. He stated in this department they are down two positions, ten positions throughout the entire public works department.

(4423) Building Maintenance – Chris Saley, Public Works Director was present for questions/comments.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked about line item 4444 0000 Heating Fuel

Mr. Saley explained they go out to bid for their energy contracts. He stated last year, it seemed like a good number because no one could have predicted oil prices would be so low the next year. He also explained the public works department took over the Simon Lake School building which was a tremendous increase in this line item.

Mayor Blake added that the Board of Education contributes 25% at the end of the year which goes to the general fund.

Mr. Saley stated they will be doing energy upgrades to the Margaret Egan Center.

(4424) Engineering – Chris Saley, Public Works Director was present for questions/comments.

Mr. Saley commented the new engineer is working out well and doing a lot of in-house design work.

(4429) General Garage – Chris Saley, Public Works Director was present for questions/comments.

Mr. Saley stated in this account they have spent over \$80,000 in parts alone.

(4431) Solid Waste Operations – Chris Saley, Public Works Director was present for questions/comments.

Mayor Blake stated there was a request from the Public Works Director regarding the foreman position, to change that job description.

Mr. Saley explained the opportunity to change over the descriptions while the position was vacant. He also spoke of the salary which should be comparable.

Chairman Lema asked that the director make that request formally.

(4426) Wastewater – Chris Saley, Public Works Director was present for questions/comments.

Mr. Castignoli asked about line item 4214 9916 Blue Cross: Grant Premium

Mr. Erodici stated that is the healthcare contribution. He stated the number is a projection.

Mr. Saley spoke of the work of the Interim Wastewater Superintendent and the savings in nitrogen credits due to his work.

Chairman Lema asked about the revenue/expenditure for Nitrogen Credits.

Mayor Blake referred to p. 103, line item 4741 0001.

Mr. Erodici stated there is not a revenue line and explained the money goes into the debt service account.

(4154) Sewer Commission (Fund 12) – Chris Saley, Public Works Director was present for questions/comments.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked about the Sewer Administrative Services

Mayor Blake explained this at one time was a three person department. He explained the administrator is paid from this account and engineering and does work in both departments.

(4503) Public Debt Service

Mayor Blake commented the good news is the city will be going out for a bond refunding in the next few weeks for approximately \$15M in refunding.

Mr. Erodici explained it is refinancing bonds that have come due and they are refunded at a lower rate.

(4994) School Debt Service

No questions.

(4995) Employee benefits, Non-teaching – no questions.

(4710) Employee Benefits, General

Chairman Lema asked if Milford is comparable to other towns with its OPEB account.

Mr. Erodici stated Milford is one of the best.

Mayor Blake added Milford is second in the State with the OPEB trust.

Mr. Erodici stated this is for the city side only and does not include the Board of Education.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked why the line item 4211 9905 was under the individual departments.

Mr. Erodici stated it is attributed to financial accounting reporting.

(4720) Insurance and Bonds

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked about line item 4825 0000 Workers Compensation.

Mr. Erodici explained they look at all the accounts, projected claims and the administrator comes up with the number.

(4740) Claims & Refunds

Chairman Lema asked how that number is arrived at 4840 0000 Heart and Hypertension Claims

Mr. Erodici stated it is through his department, the Risk Manager and based on the number of claims they anticipate settling. Unused funds are returned to the general fund.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked who falls into that category.

Mayor Blake stated it is police and fire personnel prior to 1996.

(4790) Benefit & Salary Reserve

Mr. Erodici stated this is the amount because the contracts have not settled.

Mr. Castignoli asked what departments.

Mr. Erodici stated all bargaining units are currently open.

(4799) Unallocated Contingency – no questions.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked if this is city clerk.

Mayor Blake stated over the last several years the bulk of monies have gone to the elections account.

(4993) Education Audit – no questions.

(4997) Education Health Insurance Contribution

Mr. Fitzpatrick pointed out account has gone down.

Mr. Erodici stated the last two years have been good years.

Mayor Blake added the eligibility audit helped reduce that number

Mr. Castignoli and Ms. Montano moved to recess at 8:30 p.m.

Chairman Lema stated the Board would stand in recess until next Wednesday.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen A. Kennedy
Recording Secretary