

**BOARD OF FINANCE
BUDGET DELIBERATIONS - PROPOSED BUDGET 2011-2012
FEBRUARY 28, 2011**

The Milford Board of Finance held a budget deliberations session on Monday, February 28, 2011 in Conference Room B of the Parsons Complex. Chairman Lema reconvened the session at 6:34 p.m.

Board Members Present

Brian A Lema, Chairman
Joseph M. Agro, Jr.
Joseph J. Fitzpatrick, Jr.
Paul Beckwith
Scott Marlow

Also Present

Mayor James L. Richetelli, Jr.
Judy Doneiko, Finance Director

Chairman Lema stated he would entertain a motion to re-order the agenda and bring forward the Law Department and Ethics Commission, at the request of the City Attorney, who had a conflict with the time.

Mr. Marlow and Mr. Agro made and seconded a motion to reorder the agenda and bring forward department 4131 Law Department, followed by 4132 Ethics Commission. Motion carried unanimously.

(4131) Law Department – Winthrop S. Smith, III, City Attorney and Toni Jo Weeks, Paralegal were present.

Mr. Agro asked the general volume in the office.

Attorney Smith replied there is more going on now. He also pointed out they came in at budget, the same as last year. Attorney Smith stated there may be some pressure in their budget with regard to line item 4122 0000 Other Legal Fees and line item 4189 0000 Misc. Professional Fees & Svcs. He went on to explain how the City Attorney position has changed and impacted these two accounts when the position went to a part-time position.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked if negotiations were part of the Law Department.

Attorney Smith responded yes.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked if there had been any negotiations.

Attorney Smith replied they are coming up now.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked about line item 4977 0115 Law Books and asked if this is a flat fee.

Attorney Smith stated the account primarily pays for on-line services. He explained the nature of law books has changed and that there is also a lot of electronics now.

(4131) Ethics Commission – Winthrop S. Smith, III, City Attorney was present. He stated the budget is the same this year. He also noted there is one action pending.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked about line item 4712 0000 Training Expenses.

Attorney Smith stated there are new positions on the Commission each year and they need to be trained.

(4805) C-Med – Ms. Doneiko explained the calculation is based on population.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked if the City is just assessed that amount.

Ms. Doneiko responded yes. She explained system is a sharing of information with fire and medical services.

(4807) Regional Mental Health – Vice Chairman Lema noted this was discussed last week with Claire Phelan.

(4801) Council on Aging – Janice Jackson, Director and Mary Allen Herma, Clerk were present. Ms. Jackson stated they have 12 full time employees, 25 part time employees and 13 teachers for a total of 50 employees.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked what kind of classes they offer.

Ms. Jackson stated they have a number of personal development classes such as yoga, etc. She stated a membership at the senior center costs \$10.00, which allows them to participate in any classes offered.

Ms. Herma added they are asking for donations as well.

Mr. Agro asked how many members the senior center has.

Mr. Jackson replied 3,500.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked why the members don't pay for classes. He stated it was his feeling the senior center should charge nominal fees for classes.

Ms. Jackson stated her employees pay 5% towards their share of health costs.

Ms. Herma noted for the record that they do receive about \$4,000 in donations.

Ms. Jackson stated in October 2010 they increased their membership fees from \$8.00 to \$10.00.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked if part-time employees have medical insurance.

Ms. Jackson stated only if they work over 30 hours.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked how many employees that applied to.

Ms. Herman responded two.

Mr. Agro asked what other revenue they receive besides the 3,500 members.

Ms. Jackson stated they receive a grant from the United Way in the amount of \$28,000. She also stated there is a community development block grant in the amount of \$20,000 and they also do a small amount of fund raising events and have a consignment shop.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked about salaries.

Ms. Herman responded their salaries for next year are \$900,000 for next year's payroll expenses. He stated their work is basically people, social workers and staff.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked why the \$26,000 increase in healthcare.

Ms. Jackson stated healthcare is up \$30,000, but they do have a 5% share. She also noted there is a big increase in workers compensation.

Mr. Marlow asked if they have a lot of claims.

Ms. Jackson responded they do have some falls.

(4133) Probate Court – Judge Beverly Streit Keflas was present. She spoke regarding the recent merger of the two towns, Milford and Orange. She stated the \$18,030 takes into account Orange and Milford's budget. She stated by statute Orange is expected to pay their share and that basically it is a per capita division.

Mr. Agro asked about the consolidation and if the split represented a true assessment.

Judge Streit Keflas explained the 25/75 split between the two towns. She stated at this point it was difficult to predict if the numbers were realistic.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked if there were any costs under contract that they had to absorb.

Judge Streit Keflas replied no.

(4157) Harbor Management – Ray Swift, Harbor Director was present. He stated they are in good shape. He thanked the Mayor, Board of Aldermen and Board of Finance for their role in securing funding for the dredging funds.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked about marina fees and if they were up or down.

Mr. Swift stated at the end of the season, he believed they would be ahead.

Mr. Agro asked if they were optimistic about the upcoming year.

Mr. Swift responded yes.

Chairman Lema asked about the State PILOT and that it was his recollection it was eliminated.

Mr. Swift explained that last year they ended up with a one half split. He stated the year 2010/2011 they received 60%. He stated they were anticipating 60 again, but there was not guarantee.

Mayor Richetelli interjected stating the State was eliminating the tax exemption refund, but that it would not be until 2013.

(4803) Fine Arts Council – Bill Meddick, Director and Dolores Hannon, President were present. Mr. Meddick stated they are very busy and are seeing full houses at all of their events. He also stated they have a great volunteer base.

Mrs. Hannon stated the Board is new and they are revamping the whole mission of the Board. She also stated they are trying to get additional support and are looking to pull in diversity in Milford. Mrs. Hannon stated another mission is to get more youth involved and have students sit on the board.

Mr. Agro asked about membership numbers.

Mrs. Hannon stated they have about 400 members. She stated they are actively looking to grow their membership.

Mr. Agro is they charge a fee when someone uses the building.

Mr. Meddick responded yes. He stated it is a small fee, but it depends on the group or organization.

(4193) Public Library – Mrs. Jean Tsang, Library Director and Donna (no last name stated) were present for questions/comments. Mrs. Tsang reported circulation is up 7%. She stated they are not looking for any new positions. She stated through the State they were able to go wireless.

Mr. Marlow asked what they attributed towards their busy days.

Mrs. Tsang replied it seems to be about money. She stated with the economy, people come to the library to use the computers, internet, rent DVD and in some cases just to see other people. She stated they are seeing more and more elderly people as well as many young families.

Chairman Lema asked about line item 4117 00000.

Mrs. Tsang stated they have 16 full time workers and they are open over 50 hours a week. She stated they are open three nights until 8:30 p.m. and on Saturdays until 5:00 p.m. She also stated when they do outreach in the community they need coverage on the desk. Mrs. Tsang stated they do not like to leave anyone alone on the desk. She stated their part time workers do not receive medical benefits, paid holidays, etc. She stated there are 6 or 7 with regular houses, plus a large number of high school students. She also announced they now have downloadable books. Mrs. Tsang stated they have museum passes funded through the Friends of the Library and they also have one new line item 4980 0177 – Electronic Media in the amount of \$1,500.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked about line item 4789 0000 Information Services.

Ms. Tsang explained it is for maintenance for hardware for the ILS. She stated they are linked into the City, but they use a separate system.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked about ILLS and who they use.

Mrs. Tsang explained they are stand alone and store their information off, which means they use less services.

Mr. Marlow asked about line item 4980 0165 Books.

Mrs. Tsang explained that account is used to replenish books. She stated if we see a book is on hold more than 5 times, they will purchase another copy of that book. Mrs. Tsang stated she was pleased to announce the library would have a display window at the mall during the month of March.

(4812) Transit District – Henry Jadach was present for questions/comments. Mr. Jadach spoke about the coastal link, which is the most popular service. He stated the buses are running earlier and sometimes will have a late run.

Mr. Agro asked about ridership.

Mr. Jadach stated it is good.

Mr. Marlow asked if they own or lease the buses.

Mr. Jadach replied yes and stated they are basically title buses. He went on to explain how they were purchased. He stated their department is facing all the same hurdles of other departments, increased workers compensation, medical insurance, etc. He state they have done very well over the last two years on budgets, but fuel is a real concern. He stated the money the city gives them is well used and also serves as a good bargaining tool for State grants.

Mr. Agro asked the total operating budget and the number of employees.

Mr. Jadach stated they have 39 employees and their operating budget is \$5,200,000. He stated they will be receiving \$2,000,000 in capital. He also stated they will, finally, opening a hub at the mall. He also spoke about vehicle replacement through their capital plan as well as some much needed work to their building.

Mr. Agro asked if they fuel on-site.

Mr. Jadach stated they buy through spot buy or contract.

(4610) Health Department – Dr. McBride was present. Dr. McBride stated his department is very busy with the blight Ordinance and that the nurses on the school side are doing school nursing which is a heavy burden. He stated they are confronted with problems they have not had to consider in years. Dr. McBride stated Milford is leading in preparedness. He stated they have public health planning and coordinate services in the community. He stated his budget is pretty flat, much like last year. He also stated they juggle a great deal of grants.

Mr. Beckwith asked about line item 4117 0000 Seasonal Temporary. He also asked how much overtime they have due to the blight Ordinance.

Dr. McBride stated the daytime staff works on the blight. He stated the overtime comes from emergencies, ie. fires, etc.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked about the negative in line item 4732 0000 Medical supplies/expense.

Ms. Doneiko stated that is the account they receive reimbursement.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked about line item 4416 0000 Pest Control.

Ms. Doneiko stated that account has remained constant since 199.

Chairman Lema asked if the overtime was for a specific task.

Dr. McBride stated there is some overtime on communicable disease as well as troubled housing, blighted properties and hoarding.

Mr. Marlow asked about reimbursement for inspections fees at the oyster festival and other fairs.

Chairman Lema interjected regarding the blight Ordinance and stated they are allowed to levy fines. He asked if the city has collected any.

Mayor Richetelli stated they have not collected any fines because they have not had to go down that road as yet. He stated the Health Department has done a great job resolving issues before they get out of hand.

Dr. McBride added the \$100 a day fine seems to be somewhat of a deterrent.

(4997) Education Health Services/School Nurses – Dr. McBride was present for questions.

Mr. Agro asked who assigns and determines the need and necessity for where a nurse will go.

Dr. McBride stated the high schools gets two nurses and the middle schools get 1 ½ nurses.

Mr. Agro asked if that included parochial schools.

Dr. McBride responded yes.

Mr. Agro asked if they lost one nurse position due to the closing of a school last year.

Dr. McBride responded yes.

Mr. Agro asked about the dental hygienist position.

Dr. McBride stated that position remains. He stated they are very fortunate to have the nurses they have, especially with the mainstream of cases they have had in the schools. He stated they have a wonderful caliber of nurses. He also stated the challenges within schools regarding to prevention is growing.

Mr. Beckwith asked about line item 4117 Seasonal/Temporary and how it is used.

Dr. McBride stated that account is used for substitute school nurses and the three clerks they have come out of that account.

Mr. Beckwith asked about line item 4712 0000 educational bonus.

Ms. Doneiko responded it is contractual.

(4821) Visiting Nurse Association – Dr. McBride and Robert Grestini were present for questions. Dr. McBride stated over the last few years they have had much more services, i.e. administration, school physicals, immunizations, baby care, etc. He stated they do a very good job and have been very active.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked about the operating budget.

Mr. Grestini responded \$16,000,000.

Dr. McBride stated the VNA only does well children.

Mr. Marlow asked how it is determined the percentage of this grant.

Dr. McBride stated it has been a flat grant actually somewhat lower.

(4340) Animal Control – Rick George, Animal Control Officer was present. Mr. George stated they are bare bones. He stated the seasonal temporary account is for their volunteer coordinator. He pointed out a security system has been installed. Regarding line item 4978 0703, Mr. George explained they do their own maintenance. He stated they are requesting a new mower because they have over 1 acre of land and their current mower has been out of service. With regard to line item 4977 0190 Computer, Mr. George stated they swap out a computer every year.

Mr. Beckwith asked if they pay a maintenance fee for security.

Mr. George replied no, that they have in-house maintenance.

Mr. Beckwith asked why Public Works does not maintain the property.

Mayor Richetelli stated Public Works has been strapped and would be overloaded taking on another acre of land with all of the parks they already maintain.

Mr. George pointed out; the maintenance is included in the job description of the Assistant Animal Control Officer.

(4310) Police Department – Chief Keith Mello and Deputy Chief Steven Fournier were present. Chief Mello commented they have had to make a lot of tough decisions. He addressed mandates the department must adhere to and referred to gas masks in particular. He stated that particular mandate came after September 11th. Chief Mello stated the departments gas masks are nearly 7 years old; therefore, very shortly they will not be in compliance. He stated in preparing this year's budget he went back 10 years. He stated in some areas they are operating with less than they had 10 years ago.

Mr. Agro asked how the force is affected if they are operating with less and also asked about overtime.

Chief Mello stated they hired three additional officers, but they never supported them in the budget. He stated they have to find surplus from other areas to transfer. He stated overtime is related to investigations, major crimes, storms, as well as the DARE program, special enforcement and other community work. He stated 60% of vacancies have to be hired back and pointed out there are generally 10 vacancies a day. Chief Mello stated they have already trimmed \$500,000 from their budget. He stated they are unique because they don't only impact the citizens of Milford, they impact everybody. He went on to talk about the promise made to add one officer a year for five year.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked about vacancies.

Chief Mello stated they are at full staff, with 10 in the academy who will graduate in April.

Mr. Beckwith asked if they covered retirements.

Chief Mello responded no. He stated they did not anticipate any retirements.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked the cost of training a new officer for certification.

Chief Mello explained they don't pay anything for the academy, but they pay \$3,400 for uniforms and \$1,500 for testing. He also stated they are paid during training.

Mr. Marlow asked about line item 4971 0214 Police Cruisers and how many they would get.

Chief Mello replied, it would be around 7. He went on to explain the replacement cycle with cruisers. He also stated after this year, they will not be able to purchase Crown Victoria's. Chief Mello also addressed the seasonal/temporary account. He stated they have whittled this account down. He stated they will need to hire a part time dispatcher. He stated they currently have only 5, where they should have 8.

Chairman Lema asked about line item 4944 0218 and 4944 0217.

Chief Mello stated that was part of their earlier reduction.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked about vests and if everyone gets one.

Chief Mello replied yes. He stated the line item in the budget is for new officers. He explained vests are good for 5 years and after that the fibers start to break down.

Chairman Lema asked how many canines the department has.

Chief Mello replied 4.

Mr. Beckwith asked the total overtime cost for the Oyster Festival.

Chief Mello stated they would be discussing that next week. He stated he would like to see volunteers at these posts.

Mr. Beckwith asked about the reduction of crossing guards.

Chief Mello explained his request is for all crossing guards coming to work. He stated when a crossing guard does not report they have to assign a police officer to the post.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked why workers compensation is zero.

Ms. Doneiko explained the departments pay one third of the cost for everyone except police and fire. She went on to explain the contractual language.

Chairman Lema asked about line item 4998 0005 Traffic Counter.

Chief Mello stated they have been putting this off for years. He explained they currently do this manually.

Mr. Beckwith asked about line item 4977 0190 Computer and if they were on a replacement schedule.

Chief Mello stated they are on a 7 year rotation with PC and 6 years with laptops.

Chairman Lema thanked Chief Mello and Deputy Chief Fournier for their time.

Mr. Agro expressed concern over certain aspects of the budget and clarification as to funding from Harford for the ECS funding, which it looks may be resolved. He stated there were major issues to look at such as the manufacturers' issues, building inspection, with regard to fees and then benefits on the Board of Education side which are up. Mr. Agro asked the Mayor to revisit the budget before this Board's technical discussion.

Mr. Beckwith echoed the comments of Mr. Agro, stating he had many of the same concerns. He stated he too would ask the Mayor to look at the budget. He stated if this were a business they would be looking at payroll and benefits. Mr. Beckwith stated he did not take this lightly mainly because of the results that could occur.

Mr. Marlow agreed this would be a very tough budget. He stated this Board was not empowered to go into someone's budget and make decisions. He stated it would be up to the Mayor and the departments to make recommendations where further cuts could be made.

Mr. Agro also spoke regarding the increase in debt service and other items out of this Board's control.

Mayor Richetelli concurred with the comments of the Board members and that it was difficult with the fluctuating numbers coming out of Hartford. He stated the proposals made by the governor are just that, proposals and that there is no real consensus. Mayor Richetelli also stated the governor proposed a number of new revenue streams, none of which have been tested. He stated where this Board will be in 1-2 weeks when they make their final vote is really a best guesstimate. He recommended the Board take a conservative approach.

Mr. Agro recognizing he would be the 900 lb gorilla in the room asked about OPEB. He stated basically they have had the same philosophical argument. He stated he would like some more input from the Mayor.

Mayor Richetelli stated there are less people on the City staff than they had 10 and 20 years ago. He stated this City provides good, decent services to the people of Milford. He stated there are tough choices to be made and pointed out reductions in staff could mean reduction of services.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked if the Engineering position was still in the process of being filled.

Mayor Richetelli responded yes. He stated they just completed the interview process. A brief discussion ensued.

Mr. Beckwith and Mr. Fitzpatrick made and seconded a motion to recess at 9:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen K. Huber
Recording Secretary