

**BOARD OF FINANCE
BUDGET DELIBERATIONS - PROPOSED BUDGET 2018-2019
MARCH 1, 2018**

The Milford Board of Finance held a budget deliberations session on Thursday, March 1, 2018 in Conference Room B of the Parsons Complex. Chairman Lema reconvened the budget session at 5:35 p.m.

Board Members Present

Brian A Lema, Chairman
Joseph Castignoli
Joseph Fitzpatrick
Lauren Secondi
Scott Moulton

Also Present

Peter Erodici, Finance Director
Benjamin G. Blake, Mayor
Betty Feser, Superintendent of Schools
Jeffrey Burt, Assistant Superintendent of Schools
James L. Richetelli, Jr, Chief Operations Officer

Chairman Lema stated tonight the Board would have its technical discussion on the proposed budgets for fiscal year 2018-2019

Mr. Fitzpatrick suggested having a general discussion rather than going page by page. Mr. Castignoli stated he would like to address certain areas within the Board of Education budget. Chairman stated he felt it would be best to address each series.

0010 4996 Education Operations

Mr. Castignoli asked which salaries are mandated by contract. Mr. Richitelli stated 1110 Administrators, 1111 Teachers, 1119 Coaches and Advisors, 1121 Secretarial, 1122 Custodian, 1124 Media Aides and 1125 Paraprofessionals. He further stated that many positions are non-contractual and the wages are established by the Board of Education.

Mr. Castignoli inquired about the addition of 2 positions for non-certified special education. Mr. Richetelli explained that the position of behaviorist is in the teachers union and must be a certified teacher. He further explained the difficulty of finding a certified behaviorist that is not a certified teacher. Mr. Richetelli stated that they have been contracting this out and funding it from pupil services.

Mr. Castignoli asked in regard to capital improvements if Class A and Class B are being put off. Mr. Richetelli responded that the principals and Pat Bradbury including only priority #1. The Board of Education asked for the cost of priority #2 and added that back into the budget. Mr. Richetelli further stated the Board realizes there me constraints on funding and would have to complete such work in another year if funding is not available.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked if behaviorist must be certified. Mr. Richetelli responded that of the three positions one is certified. Dr. Feser stated that the difficulty is that UConn is the first to offer a certification. Previously behaviorist was not connected to teachers and the only way to be certified was if a teacher went back to school to obtain certification. Mr. Fitzparick asked if teachers do go back for such certification. Dr. Feser stated they do, but then get hired by another district because of

the shortage. Mr. Fitzpatrick commented that if it is tied into the teacher contract, then the behaviorist is limited to the teacher's wage. Mr. Burt commented that the position had been posted for 12 months without any applicants. Mr. Fitzpatrick commented the Board may need to wait until there are enough qualified candidates.

Mr. Castignolis asked if 2 of the SRO's cover 3 schools. Mayor Blake commented that there is an SRO dedicated to each high school and other SRO's split time between Harborside, East Shore, West Shore and the Academy. By adding additional SRO's each middle school will have a dedicated SRO. He further stated this is at the forefront of school security. The Board of Education did a presentation laying out what SRO's do and the safety measures that have been implement over the years. Mayor Blake explained that the police had not included an SRO in their budget request, but at this point it looked as though they would not be adding a new dispatcher and that position would be moved to an SRO. Mr. Castignoli asked if there were any SRO's at the Academy. The Mayor responded the SRO's are in all 14 schools, but there are assigned SRO's at the high schools, middle schools and Academy.

Ms. Secondi stated the Board is not asking for much for the behaviorist. She further stated she works with behaviorists and their expertise is crucial. She believes the behaviorists are very necessary. Dr. Feser stated there is a shortage of behaviorists and the State does recommend one per school.

Mr. Fitzpatrick stated the closing of a school was recommended but the Board of Education decided not to do so. He feels it is irresponsible as all schools are not filled. He feels the Board did not take this into consideration and just took it for granted. The Board has a fiduciary responsibility to the City and he does not believe they are doing their part. He cannot approve any increases within their budget. Mayor Blake stated that the Board of Education has come in with a lean budget for the past 3 years. He noted the increase is under 2% for this budget.

Mr. Castignoli asked if the enrollment was down from last year. Dr. Fester stated it was and therefore less is projected in the budget. Mr. Fitzgerald asked for the per student cost. Mr. Richetelli stated it is \$20,574.

Chairman Leman asked for any comments on the following categories:

1000 Series – Salaries – None

2000 Series – Benefits

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked why the Education Reimbursement went from \$55,000 to \$80,000. Mr. Richetelli stated it was based on the projected for this budget year.

3000 Series – Contracted Services – None

4000 Series – Contracted Services – None

5000 Series – Transportation, Tuition and Other Support

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked if no student attended the Bridgeport Magnet Schools for 16/17 year. Mr. Richetelli stated students did attend but they did not charge tuition. State law now allows Bridgeport to charge for the students.

6000 Series – Educational Supplies - None

7000 Series – Equipment – None

8000 Series – All Other Educational Support – None

Grants Detail

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked who write the grants. Dr. Feser stated various staff depending on the grant. There is not a dedicated grant writer. Mr. Fitzpatrick asked how the staff finds out if there is a grant available. Dr. Feser stated that the State sends out notices and she in turn will forward the notice to appropriate staff.

Mr. Castignoli asked if the grants are netted toward expenditures. Mr. Richetelli stated they are not included in the operational budget. Mr. Burt provided an explanation of how the grants work and how they are accounted for. Dr. Feser stated that without grants the cost of special education would be astronomical.

Chairman Lema stated if there was not further discussion on the Board of Education budget the Board would now review the City budget.

General Fund Revenue

Page 4 - Mr. Fitzpatrick asked if the ECS was an estimated number. Mayor Blake stated it is a preliminary number from the legislature that was agreed to in October 2017. He further stated this includes reductions made by the Executive Branch in November 2017 which is approximately \$1,000,000 less than what was awarded. Chairman Lema stated the projected amount is \$3,000,000 less than last year. Mayor Blake stated it is the amount approved by the legislature and that we do not know the actual amount yet.

Page 5 – Mr. Fitzpatrick inquired about the State Municipal Stabilization grant. Mayor Blake explained the grant and that the revenue sharing grant has been replaced with the stabilization grant.

Page 6 – Mr. Fitzpatrick asked why the tuition from others does not have budgeted amount. Mr. Erodi explained that it is not guaranteed, although we do receive funds, and therefore an amount is not included.

Chairman Lema asked where the money from the Town of Orange Animal Control goes. Mr. Erodi explained the funds go into a dedicated revenue fund. Mayor Blake stated that the funds had recently been used to purchase a new vehicle and to provide enhancements to the dog park.

Chairman Lema asked if the City had plans to sell an real estate in the near future. Mayor Blake stated the City is preparing to work with developers for the River Street/High Street property. It is not known what direction the City will take at this time. It may be a sale, lease or other arrangement with a developer.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked if there were plans for projects on the Platt property. Mayor Blake stated the trees had been trimmed and buildings secured. He further stated that there has been communication with the golf course and arts council to utilize as an events location and expand the golf course.

General Fund

4111-4141 (Pages 14-26) – None

4142 (Page 27) – Mr. Erodici provided a handout.

4143-4193 (Pages 29-35) – None

4210 (Page 37) – Chairman Lema asked if all vacant positions have been filled. Mr. Erodici stated there is a vacant Clerk A position in the tax office. He further stated there has been a lot of turnover, but all positions in the Accounting division have been filled.

4215 (Page 39) – Mr. Fitzpatrick asked about the financial software. Mr. Erodici explained the MUNIS project.

4219 (Page 41) – None

4310 (Page 43) – Mr. Castignoi asked if the SRO is funded where will it appear in the budget. Mr. Erodici explained it would depend on the proposal. He further explained the possibility of taking a police officer position and turning it into a police officer/SRO and increasing public safety dispatch. Mr. Castignoli half of the SRO is paid by the Board of Education and the other half by the police department. He suggests saving along this lines and hiring a dispatcher. Mayor Blake explained that it all comes from taxpayer dollars it's only half is on the Board of Education side and the other half the City side. Chairman Leman stated he got the sense from the Police and Fire Chiefs that the dispatcher is necessary. He suggested handling the SRO as the Mayor had explained and to add a dispatcher. Mr. Castignoli asked how that would work. Mayor Blake explained that the police officer position would be changed to an SRO and a new dispatcher will take a sworn officer out of the dispatch center when numbers are low. Mr. Erodici clarified that it would mean hiring a dispatcher not a police officer/SRO. Mr. Castignoli if the police budget would need to be increased by \$59,298. Mr. Erodici stated it would not because the position would start at the minimum step. Chairman Lema asked Mr. Erodici to prepare an amendment to include a new dispatcher and change police officer to SRO.

4320-4340 (Pages 51-59) – None

4360 (Page 62) – Mr. Fitzpatrick asked if there was still a disagreement with the regional water authority. Mayor Blake stated a consultant reviewed and there was no change. We are paying a lot

to have water delivered to the hydrants. Mr. Fitzpatrick asked if this could be taken to Court. Mayor Blake stated we could not, it is policy.

4420-4429 (Page 75) – None

4431 (Page 77) – Mr. Fitzpatrick asked if one position was eliminated. Mayor Blake indicated recycling position had been eliminated as the recycling world had changed and our contract is expiring. He explained the changes and why the position was eliminated. Chairman Lema inquired as to the decrease in tipping fees. Mayor Blake explained why the fees have decreased. Mr. Fitzpatrick inquired about nitrogen credits. Mayor Blake explained they are show in the back of the budget book under expenses. Mr. Erodiçi explained they credits to into debt service per the Board of Aldermen to offset sewer debt services over time.

4503-4620 (Pages 78-83) – None

4701 (Page 84) – Mr. Fitzpatrick inquired as to the balance in post employee benefits. Mr. Erodiçi stated there is over \$6,000,000 in the OPEB trust.

4720 (Page 85) – None

4740 (Page 85) – Mr. Fitzpatrick asked if the Heart & Hypertension claims are past claims. Mr. Erodiçi explained they are claims that must be paid each year. Mayor Blake explained the Heart & Hypertension law and how it applies to employees hired prior to 10/1/96.

4790-4807 (Pages 86-88) – None

4811 (Page 88) – Mr. Fitzpatrick stated he would like to leave the amount at \$233,000.

4812-4827 (Pages 89-92) – None

4828 (Page 92) – Mr. Erodiçi provided a handout and explain the change in classification.

4992-4995 (Page 93) – None

4995 (Page 93) – Mr. Castignoli asked if these amounts were included in the total education budget. Mr. Erodiçi explained they are shown on page 13 in the front of the budget book. The Mayor commented that they are also shown as grants in the Appendix of the Board of Education budget book.

4996-4998 (Pages 94-95) – None

Sewer Fund

4154-4799 (Pages 98-106) – None

Enterprise Fund

4157-4121 (Pages 108-112) – None

Chairman Lema stated the Board would stand in recess until March 7, 2018. The Board recessed at 7:25 p.m

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Toni Jo Weeks", written over a horizontal line.

Toni Jo Weeks
Recording Secretary