

BOARD OF FINANCE

BUDGET HEARINGS - PROPOSED BUDGET FY2020-2021 FEBRUARY 19, 2020

The Board of Finance held a budget deliberations session on Monday, February 19, 2020 in Conference Room B of the Parsons Complex. Chairman Lema announced the Board was out of recess and reconvened the budget deliberations meeting in public session at 5:30 p.m.

Board Members Present

Brian Lema
Scott Moulton
Lauren Ranges
Joseph Fitzpatrick
Ray Arnold

Also Present

Benjamin G. Blake, Mayor
Peter Erodici

Chairman Lema welcomed everyone and stated tonight the Board of Education would be presenting their budget. Chairman Lema provided a brief explanation as to how the Board of Education budget would be reviewed.

Susan Glennon, Chairman Board of Education thanked the Board for the opportunity to share the Board of Education Budget. She Read from a prepared statement. Ms. Glennon stated the Board of Education has worked hard over the past two years and believes they are presenting an exciting budget that honors their vision statement. She further stated that program areas have not been evaluate din quite some time, elementary science is behind the times and social and emotional issues provide challenges to learning. Ms. Glennon stated the Milford continues to receive accolades as the place to be and that kindergarten enrollment was higher than expected. She stated that the Board of Education took great care when preparing the budget and that a strong budget benefits the entire community.

Dr. Anna Cutaia, Superintendent Board of Education, thank the Board for an opportunity to present the Board of Education budget this evening. She provided a PowerPoint presentation. Dr. Cutaia reviewed the history of redistricting of K-2 and 3-5 and back to K-5. She also provided information on future projections. Dr. Cutaia stated that space utilization and age of the school buildings do not allow for school closures. She stated that the budget represents responses she received to the previous redistricting and recent feedback. Dr. Cutaia stated that the budget request represents a 3.109% increase. She further stated that 78% of the budget is human capital with the balance representing operating costs.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Chairman Lema asked why there was an increase in transportation. James Richetelli, Chief Operations Officer, explained there is a 3% contractual increase. He also stated an additional bus was added this past year. Mr. Richetelli explained that over the past 6 years a total of 8 buses have been eliminated and this year there was a need to add one back. He also explained that special education transportation can be a driver as transportation must be tailored to the child's specific needs.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked if all salaries are contractual. Mr. Richetelli stated all but the 56 positions have union representation. Mr. Fitzpatrick asked how administrator salaries are determined. Mr. Richetelli stated they are contractual based on union representation.

Mr. Arnold asked why there was a large bump in non-certified salaries. Mr. Richetelli explained that 2 behaviorist positions had been moved from the Certified Teachers-Special Education (1111) to Non-Certified Assts-Special Ed (OT/PT, Behaviorist) (1129). He further explained that it was difficult to find someone with dual certification. Mr. Fitzpatrick asked how many vacancies for behaviorists. Mr. Richetelli stated the positions are currently filled. Carol Swift, Pupil Personnel Director, stated it had been difficult to fill the position when dual certification was required. She further explained that since moving the positions to non-certified they were then able to fill the positions.

Mr. Arnold asked for an explanation of the increase in Non-Certified Assts-IT/Maint/BusOff/Other Ops (1129). Mr. Richetelli explained that accounted for the 15 Media Aide positions that were being reduced and being replaced on this line item with 8 IT Aides. Mr. Fitzpatrick asked if the 8 IT Aides were non-certified positions. Dr. Cutaia stated they are non-certified. She provided a brief summary of the IT Aide job responsibilities and explained how it is a more effective way to provide technologies to students.

Chairman Lema asked if any working agreements were currently in negotiations. Mr. Richetelli provided a summary of contracts settled and still in negotiations. Chairman Lema asked if the assumptions were a comfortable number. Mr. Richetelli stated they are comfortable numbers.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked for the increase in BC/BS over 65 (2006). Mr. Richetelli stated this account is for retirees only and the growing number of retirees. He also stated the number is prepared with guidance from City's insurance consultant and based on actual experience. Mr. Fitzpatrick asked health insurance is bid every year. Mr. Richetelli stated health insurance is the City's plan and that it was put out to bid a few years ago. Mayor Blake stated health costs have increased significantly and that costs are based on experience.

Mr. Arnold asked for an explanation of Security Services (3305). Mr. Richetelli stated this account is for the upkeep of all security systems and to maintain licenses. He also stated it provides for updates or enhancements to the systems as necessary.

Chairman Lema asked if the solar panels are helping to reduce the cost of electricity. Mr. Richetelli stated the solar company is leasing the roof and that power is purchased for solar

provider at a reduced rate. He further stated that he believes the overall savings to be approximately 5%. Chairman Lema ask if Emergency Conservation Services (4104) are contracted. Mr. Richetelli stated this account supports energy saving efforts such as LED lighting. He further stated that this year they request is 0.

Mr. Arnold asked why Fuel Oil (4103) is 0. Mr. Richetelli stated that only the two high schools were dual fuel and the oil tanks are in the process of being removed.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked Contracted Maintenance (4200) has increased. Mr. Richetelli this provides for all system improvements and maintenance. He further stated that they are moving to a new platform that will tie all systems together. Mr. Richetelli stated there is an initial upfront cost, but this will provide for a more efficient way to do business.

Mr. Arnold asked why they was a decrease in Gasoline for Buses (5107). Mr. Richetelli stated they are locked in with the City's fuel prices that are down from prior years.

Chairman Lema asked for an explanation of the increase in Furniture & Equipment (7340). Dr. Cutaia provided a brief summary of upgrades planned for the schools, that includes 2 classrooms in each middle school and transformation of the library at Foran High School.

Ms. Ranges asked if there were plans to obtain more Chromebooks for additional grades. Dr. Cutaia stated second grade would be receiving Chromebooks but not for take home. She also stated a touchscreen devise is planned for Kindergarten and First Grade but that it would not be 1 to 1. Dr. Cutaia stated at this time they do not have a plan for pre-school as they are still looking at what would be appropriate for 3-4 year old.

Mr. Arnold asked for an explanation of Textbook Adoptions (6411). Dr. Cutaia stated the Textbooks (6410) is for replacement textbooks and Textbook Adoptions (6411) provides new books when there is new curriculum. Mr. Fitzpatrick asked if there was a cost associated with online resources. Dr. Cutaia stated there are some free resources, and some are paid for through licenses or purchasing software. Mr. Fitzpatrick asked how many Chromebooks are lost or stolen each year. Dr. Cutaia stated all Chromebooks come with an insurance plan and parents are also encouraged to purchase a plan. She further stated that repairs are done in-house or sent to the vendor. Dr. Cutaia commented that there are very few issues that arise with the Chromebooks and that students are very responsible with the Chromebooks.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked when teachers are required to notify of intent to retire. Mr. Richetelli stated there is no deadline. Mr. Fitzpatrick asked if positions for teachers retiring are counted in the budget. Mr. Richetelli stated they are included at \$65,000 each.

Mr. Arnold asked for an explanation of the increase in Professional Learning/Development (8111). Dr. Cutaia stated this is to provide higher quality of instruction which will be necessary with the new curriculum. Mr. Fitzgerald asked how the funds are used. Dr. Cutaia stated it provides for our teaches to run classes as well as consultants. Mr. Fitzpatrick asked how the cost differs between teachers and consultants. Dr. Cutaia stated teachers are paid based on rate specified in contract and consultants charge daily rates and tend to be higher in cost.

1000 SERIES

Mr. Arnold asked how Curriculum Work (1118) ties into Professional Learning/Development (8111). Dr. Cutaia stated it would be added to the writing of the new curriculum.

Chairman Lema asked if Secretarial (1121) has been reduced by 3 positions. Dr. Cutaia that is correct, 1 position at each high school and 1 at central office.

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked what positions are considered Non-Certified Supervisors (1120). Mr. Richetelli stated they are spelled out on page 9. Mr. Fitzpatrick asked where the Behaviorists (1129) were previously listed. Dr. Cutaia stated Behaviorists were previously under Teachers-Certified and are moved to Non-Certified Assistants (1129).

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked how Reverse for Salary Negotiations (1131) are determined. Mr. Richetelli stated they look at what contracts have settled and anticipate what other contracts may settle. Mr. Fitzpatrick asked for an explanation of Retirements (1130). Mr. Richetelli stated this is the severance package for retirements. He further stated it is estimated based on prior year statistics. Mr. Arnold asked if there is a policy removing accruals. Mr. Richetelli stated it is by contract and they are working to sunset the provision.

2000 SERIES

Mr. Fitzpatrick ask for an explanation of the Defined Contribution Plan (2007). Mr. Richetelli stated paraprofessionals are not part of the City's pension plan, so they are offered a voluntary defined contribution plan to which the Board of Education contributes. Mr. Fitzpatrick asked about teacher pensions. Mr. Richetelli stated teachers participate in the State pension plan. Mr. Fitzpatrick asked for an explanation of Social Security (Medicare) (2004). Mr. Richetelli stated that is the employ portion that Board of Education is required to pay.

3000 SERIES

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked for an explanation of Sub Teaching Services (3212). Mr. Richetelli stated substitute wages are increasing from \$90/day to \$95/day to be competitive and to keep pace with the minimum wage increases.

4000 SERIES

Chairman Lema asked if the Board pays sewer usage to the City. Mr. Erodici stated the Board does pay for sewer usage. Mayor Blake stated that all City buildings pay for sewer usage. Mr. Lema asked why All District (Maintenance) (4304) has been eliminated. Dr. Cutaia stated that has not be in place for a few years because it was to site specific

5000 SERIES

Mr. Fitzpatrick ask why transportation for Sp. Ed. Aide / Van Driver (5109 & 5111) had

increased. Mr. Richetelli explained special education transportation is specific to the student's needs. Ms. Swift stated transportation can vary depending on the needs and behaviors of a student. Mr. Moulton asked if people are moving to Milford due to the special education program. Ms. Swift said they have seen an increase and that Milford has attractive programming for students in need.

Chairman Lema asked what constitutes Telecommunications-All District (5401). Mr. Richetelli stated it is all types of communication systems. Mr. Fitzgerald asked how many cellphones are used by the Board. Mr. Richetelli stated only maintenance staff are assigned cellphones.

6000 SERIES

Chairman Lema asked if textbooks are gone from schools. Dr. Cutaia stated textbooks are not gone, they are centrally located. She further stated that in the budget replacement textbooks are under Textbooks (6410) and new textbooks are under Textbook Adoptions (6411). Mr. Fitzpatrick ask why the increase in Textbook Adoptions. Dr. Cutaia explained new curriculum will require new textbooks.

Mr. Fitzpatrick why Computer Software (6902) had decreased approximately \$100,000. Mr. Richetelli explained they reviewed usage and found programs that were not being used as well as redundancies.

7000 SERIES

Mr. Arnold ask if the increase in Computer (7350) is due to Chromebooks for 2nd grade. Mr. Richetelli explained the Chromebooks on a 4-year lease replacement cycle. He further stated this year they will be adding a 4th lease to the program.

Chairman Lema asked why there is an increase in Equipment (7310). Dr. Cutaia stated this is due to interactive arts and music.

8000 SERIES

Mr. Fitzpatrick asked why a significant increase in All Schools Professional Development (8111). Dr. Cutaia stated this is growth around the new curriculum and developing teachers for more effective teaching. She further explained that more of the development is being done in-house which is less expensive.

GRANTS DETAIL

None.

APPENDIX

Mr. Arnold asked what Computer (7350) on page 24 entails. Mr. Richetelli stated this is the computer leases broken down by school. Mr. Arnold asked if IT supports the computers. Mr.

Richetelli stated they are supported by the vendors for State accounting purposes.

Chairman Lema stated the meeting was in recess at 7:38 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Toni Jo Weeks", is written over a horizontal line.

Toni Jo Weeks Recording Secretary