

**BOARD OF FINANCE
BUDGET HEARINGS - PROPOSED BUDGET FY 2020-2021
FEBRUARY 18, 2020**

The Board of Finance held a budget deliberations session on Monday, February 18, 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 5:34 p.m.

Board Members Present

Brian Lema, Chairman
Ray Arnold
Lauren Ranges
Scott Moulton

Also Present

Mayor Benjamin G. Blake
Peter Erodici, Finance Director

Excused

Joseph Fitzpatrick

Peter Erodici, Finance Director, noted that the minutes from February 10, 2020 should be corrected as follows: Page 4, Public Debt should read \$147,000,000.

(4133) Probate Court

Judge Beverly Streit-Kefalas stated the budget remains flat. She stated that the total expenses of \$23,071 are require to be paid by the municipality with Milford being responsible for 75% and the balance of 25% paid by Orange. Judge Streit-Kefalas stated that there may be changes in the expense numbers during the year due to the new State mandated efilng for attorneys. She further explained that the postage account should decrease but anticipates an increase in copying costs since the Court must maintain a hard file which includes all efiled documents. Mr. Moulton asked about the total budget to run the Probate Court. Judge Streit-Kefalas stated that municipalities are responsible for expenses such as postages, supplies and copying and all other expenses are paid by the State. Mr. Arnold asked what the copier expense represents. Judge Streit-Kefalas stated it is the leased copier that renews in 2023.

(4123) Community Development

(4155) Economic Development

Julie Nash, Director Community Development, stated the budget is flat. She also discussed the continued use of online marketing for Milford. Ms. Nash also stated that the budget for Economic Development if \$1 as a placeholder and no increase is being sought.

(4593) Public Library

Chris Angeli, Director Public Library, stated the budget requests a .4% increase from last year. She stated the library continues to offer great services and in order to put money into services offered administrative costs have been streamlined where possible. Ms. Angeli stated the computer accounts have increased due to the number and variety of computers at the library. Mr. Arnold asked for an explanation of the Computer, Other account. Ms. Angeli explained items paid for from the account such as software upgrades, wifi, and programming. Mr. Moulton asked if the library received other funding other than the City budget. Ms. Angeli stated most public programs are paid for through the Friends of the Library.

(4144) Zoning Board of Appeals

(4142) Department of Permitting and Land Use

Joseph Griffith, DPLU Director, stated the Zoning Board of Appeals budget has been decreased to \$600 from the prior year of \$8,800. He explained this is due to secretarial and advertising fees being moved into the DPLU budget. Mr. Griffith stated in regard to the DPLU budget funding had been moved around depending on the division. He further explained that advertising and overtime show increases due to the funds being moved over from Zoning Board of Appeals. Mr. Griffith explained that costs of advertising public notices and postage has increased. He also explained the increase in Miscellaneous Professional Service will be to engage a consultant to assist with the Plan of Conservation and Development. Mr. Griffith stated that new permitting software (Municipality), has been purchased through MIS. He also stated that permitting fees have recently increased. Chairman Lema asked how active permits have been in the Building Department. Mr. Griffith stated the Building Division has been very active. Chairman Lema asked if there were any vacancies in the department. Mr. Griffith stated there are 2 building inspector positions. He further stated that interviews have been conducted for one position which should be filled soon. Mr. Arnold ask for an explanation of the Dangerous Building account. Mr. Griffith stated that account provides for demolition and boarding of unsafe building when it is ordered by the building official. Mr. Arnold asked what drives overtime. Mr. Griffith explained the various evening meetings and for the Building Division when an inspector is called out for a fire or other incident involving damage to a building.

(4119) Human Resources

(4145) Pension Board

(4151) Civil Service

Tania Barnes, Human Resource Director, provided an overview of the Human Resource Department's work over the past year. She stated the HR system has converted to MUNIS and went live this past July. Ms. Barnes stated the City received a wellness award and this is the second year as a platinum employer. She also stated with the assistance of Recreation and Public Works the employee wellness center was opened. Ms. Barnes stated the budget for Human Resources this year remains flat with slight increases in the overtime account, membership, advertising and office supply accounts. Mr. Moulton asked if there were just 4 employees in the Human Resources department. Ms. Barnes stated that is correct and all positions are now filled. Chairman Lema asked if the Human Resources department is responsible for police and fire. Ms. Barnes stated police and fire do their own recruiting and Human Resources department provides assistance with labor matters,

benefits and pension. Ms. Barnes stated there are no increases requested for Pension Board or Civil Service. She explained those budgets cover secretarial expenses for meetings.

(8112) Elections

Kerri Rowland, Registrar, explained that the budget is lean. She further stated that it is expected there will be a primary in August for the presidential election. Mr. Moulton asked how the budget compares to 2016. Ms. Rowland stated she believes this is slightly under the 2016 budget. Mr. Arnold asked why the 18/9 budget was higher than what is being requested in this budget. Ms. Rowland stated that was due to a primary and the required number of poll workers. She further stated that they do their best to keep the budget as tight as possible.

(4115) Registrars

Debra Fellenbaum, Registrar, stated the budget is lean. Ms. Rowland stated that funds were moved from travel/conference to postage. She explained the mandate to send letter to anyone that makes a change to their voter registration.

(4129) City Clerk

Karen Fortunati, City Clerk, stated the budget request is flat. She stated that one change in the office this year is online dog licensing. Mr. Fortunati stated they department processes approximately 3,000 dog licenses each year. Chairman Lema asked where revenue from dog licensing shows in the budget. Ms. Fortunati stated it is the dog fund on page 6. Chairman Lema asked about the increase in conveyance tax line and if that is a comfortable number. Mayor Blake stated Peter Erodici assists in setting that number based on prior sales.

(4401) Council on Aging.

Leonara Rodriguez, Executive Director, provided handout and statistics of services offered from the prior year. Chairman Lema asked the total membership on page 4 of the handout is 480. Ms. Rodriguez explained that is due to increase of new members. She also explained that the City provides 83% of the budget and they are looking to reduce expenditures wherever possible. Mr. Rodrigues further explained that the budget requests a \$500 increase in office supplies due to increase in membership and rising costs. Mr. Moulton asked where balance of budget come from. Ms. Rodriguez stated the balance is from fundraising. Ms. Ranges asked what the cost of membership. Ms. Rodriguez stated fees are \$15 for Milford residents and \$30 for non-residents. Chairman Lema asked who provides plowing, utilities and maintenance. Mr. Rodriguez stated it is provided by Public Works.

(8103) Milford Arts Council

Paige Miglio, Director, stated there is no increase in the budget request. She stated that the Milford Arts Council is the third oldest in Connecticut. Ms. Miglio stated the total budget is \$200,000 with half funded by the City. She stated the balance of the budget comes from other grants, fundraising and membership fees. Ms. Miglio stated MAC would like to grow the budget to provide increases to staff

and 1 additional part-time staff member. She discussed a CHEFA grant recently receiving for lighting. Mr. Moulton asked how many staff members. Ms. Miglio stated the are currently 3 part-time and they are hoping to add 1 additional part-time for 3 to 4 hours per week. Mr. Moulton inquired about membership fees. Ms. Miglio stated the fees are per year \$35 for Artist and start at \$50 for Patron. Chairman Lema asked if they pay for maintenance. Ms. Miglio stated they pay for all maintenance except structural.

(8107) Regional Mental Health

None

(8412) Transit District

Henry Jadach, Director, stated the City request represent 15% of the Transit District operating budget. Mr. Jadach discussed new buses and bus shelters planned for the coming year. Chairman Lema asked if the bus shelters would similar in design to those already in place. Mr. Jadach stated that is still be decided but they will be something that fits within the downtown design. Chairman Lema asked if the parking lots were different prices. Mr. Jadach stated the only one that is different is that owned by the City of Milford and is limited to Milford resident only. He further stated that parking lot is self-sustaining.

(8425) Beth El Center

Jennifer Paradis, Executive Director, provided a handout. She stated the center is asking for a modest increase of \$5,000 out of need. Ms. Paradis discussed the significant increase of capacity and expansion of programs. She discussed addition of an outreach worker to the center's staff. Ms. Paradis provided information on the addition of a breakfast program and investment in emergency shelter providing services to Milford persons in need. Mr. Paradis provided information on community partnerships to address unsheltered homelessness. Chairman Lema inquired about increase in Block grant. Ms. Paradis explained this was due to a partnership with Guilford to bring in a shoreline diversion specialist. Mr. Moulton inquired about the number served by the center. Ms. Paradis stated 148 adults and 48 minors had been served. She discussed the family triage program and efforts for no homeless families in Milford. Mr. Moulton asked about the number of beds and length of stay. Mr. Paradis provided information on the number of beds and types and stated the goal is 30 days to housing, but currently are averaging 54 days.

(8427) Literacy Volunteers of So. Connecticut

Tammy Jackson, Director, stated the budget is flat with no increase requested. She provided a brief summary of the prior year accomplishments. Ms. Jackson stated the center celebrated its 25th year. She provided a brief explanation of programs offered and discussed problems with retaining tutors. Mr. Moulton asked what percentage of the budget is the \$5,000 the City provides. Ms. Jackson stated the total budget is \$125,000 with fundraising. Mr. Ranges asked how many students attend. Ms. Jackson stated there are over 100 students.

(8428) Milford Historic Preservation Commission

None

(8113) Bridges

John Dixon, President and CEO, stated the budget request is the same as last year. Mr. Ranges asked if there was a mobile unit. Mr. Dixon stated there is for medicine assisted treatment. He stated this was provided by a grant from the Department of Public Health. Mr. Dixon stated the unit served over 50 people and is working to serve more.

(4240) Animal Control

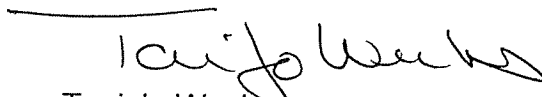
Scott Ellingson, Animal Control Officer, stated there is not increase in the budget. Chairman Lema asked if a new facility was being planned. Mayor Blake stated there are plans to enhance the current facility. Chairman Lema asked if the City owns the land where the shelter is located or if it is leased from the State. Mayor Blake stated it is a small City owned parcel surrounded by State property. Ms. Ranges asked if the shelter is busy. Mr. Ellingson stated it is slow now but expects it will pick up once the weather is warmer and people begin to let their dogs out again. Mr. Moulton asked if all positions are filled. Mr. Ellingson stated there are no vacancies. Chairman Lema asked about the revenue received from Orange. Mayor Blake stated it is a special revenue account. He stated last year some funds were used to enhance the dog park at Eisenhower Park. Mr. Arnold inquired about Public Act 613 account. Mr. Ellingson stated that is a statute that stated the Animal Control Officer gets \$1 for every dog adopted or redeemed.

(4210) Police Department

Keith Mello, Police Chief, stated there is an increase of \$53,000 out of a 1.4 million budget. He stated this is due to contractual wage increases and all other accounts remained the same or went down. Chief Mello stated that some categories may not be sufficient to fund all costs and that come July 1st they may have to take from other line items to manage those costs. Mr. Moulton asked if new cruisers would be purchased. Chief Mello stated 20 years ago a dozen or more vehicles would be purchased, but now it averages 4.5 vehicles per year. Mr. Moulton asked the life of a cruiser. Chief Mello stated approximately 1 year on the front line and 1-2 years on the back line due to the fact the vehicles are in constant use. Chief Mello also commented on how equipment has changed over the years. Chairman Lema asked if there would be a deficit in overtime. Chief Mello stated there would that this number is under other departments of same size and complexity. Mr. Moulton asked if there were any vacancies. Chief Mello stated there are currently 3 vacancies. Chairman Lema asked if dispatch is still segregated police and fire. Chief Mello stated with new hires they have been cross-trained. He stated there are 2 employees that are not yet cross-trained, but it is in process. Mr. Moulton asked if all officers have body worn cameras. Chief Mello stated that all officers have them and he discussed the expenses for upkeep and replacement. Chairman Lema asked if body worn cameras are mandated by law. Chief Mello stated they are not. Chairman Lema asked if the Board of Education budget included SRO's. Mayor Blake stated the request is the same as last year. Mr. Moulton asked if we aid provided to other towns is charged back. Chief Mello stated it is not charged and discussed mutual aid.

Chairman Lema stated the Board would stand in recess until February 19, 2020. The Board recessed at 7:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Toni Jo Weeks". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style. Above the signature is a horizontal line.

Toni Jo Weeks
Recording Secretary