

**BOARD OF FINANCE
BUDGET HEARINGS - PROPOSED BUDGET FY 2022-2023
FEBRUARY 22, 2022**

The Board of Finance held a virtual budget deliberations session on Monday, February 22, 2022 via Zoom. 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, Chairman
Scott Moulton
Ray Arnold
Lauren Ranges
Meghan Smith

Also Present

Mayor Benjamin G. Blake
Peter Erodici, Finance Director

(8112) Elections

Kerri Rowland, Registrar, stated there is a potential for August primaries this year. Possibly for both parties. She requested money be placed back into the account as prior primaries and elections totaled \$110,000 and \$105,000 is currently in the budget.

(4115) Registrar of Voters

Kerri Rowland, Registrar, discussed the census and redistricting. She stated there are minor changes and expenses are minimal. She mentioned that some line items were increased because local redistricting may still require changes that will impact certain accounts such as postage and overtime. Ms. Rowland discussed increased costs for canvassing in effort to keep voter registration lists as clean as possible. Debra Fellenbaum, Registrar, stated canvassing also included absentee ballots as part of canvassing expenses.

(4129) City Clerk

Karen Fortunati, City Clerk, stated the budget is flat except for \$20,000 increase in indexing and recording which is due to change in vendor. She stated the new vendor offers more efficiency and accuracies. The new vendor will also communicate with MUNIS. Ms. Fortunati stated she is looking forward to the new program. Chairman Lema if the online search will change Ms. Fortunati stated it will require researching via the new vendor. She stated searches can be conducted without charge and only when documents are printed there will be a fee charged. Mr. Moulton asked if the charge is a one-time set up. Ms. Fortunati stated it is the fee going toward and discussed fee structure between the current vendor and new vendor. Chairman Lema asked if conveyance tax revenue is a comfortable number. Ms. Fortunati stated she does feels confident with the figure provided.

(4119) Human Resources Department

Tania Barnes, Human Resource Director, stated overall the budget is flat except for \$1,000 increase - \$500 for pre-employment physicals and \$500 for pre-employment testing. She stated a new vendor was acquired for physicals and prior vendor was no longer providing service and testing. Mr. Moulton asked explanation of testing. Ms. Barnes stated it is for those employees with CDL licenses are required to submit to random drug testing.

(4145) Pension Board

Tania Barnes, Human Resource Director, stated an increase in secretarial fees is being requested to accommodate for an increase of \$50 for each meeting as meeting typically run an hour and one-half. Chairman Lema asked if all secretarial fee rates are the same. Mayor Blake stated each Board & Commission is different. Some have boards have staff. Chairman Lema stated there should be some uniformity in fees.

(4593) Public Library

Chris Angeli, Library Director, state the budget has a minor increase most due to salaries. She has requested an increase in the seasonal temporary account. Ms. Angeli stated there has not been a wage increase in over 10 years and minimum wage increase. Ms. Angeli discussed project to digitize microfilm. Ms. Ranges asked how many books are purchased annually. Ms. Angeli provided a brief explanation on the purchase of new books.

(4133) Probate Court

Benjamin Gettinger, Probate Judge, stated budget is flat with the exception of \$100 to allow for materials to reflect change in Probate Judge. Chairman Lema asked the amount of contribution by the Town of Orange. Mr. Gettinger stated Orange contributes 25% of the budget.

(4123) Community Development

Julie Nash, Community Development Director, stated that budget is flat except for increase for part-time assistant to full-time and level up to specialist. Ms. Nash provided an explanation of the benefits that will be realized with a full-time specialist within the office. Mr. Moulton asked if the part-time person is consistent or changes from time to time. Ms. Nash stated staffing has been consistent with the assistance of a seasonal temporary as needed.

(4401) Council on Aging

Leonora Rodriguez, Director, stated budget is flat. Ms. Rodriguez provided brief explanation of services provided and number served. Ms. Ranges asked if the facility is fully opened. Mr. Rodrigues state the center is open and in February returned to classes. Ms. Ranges asked if membership fees remain the same. Ms. Rodrigues stated the fees are the same. Mr. Moulton asked if expenses were lower due to Covid. Ms. Rodrigues stated the facility was open, although classes were not being offered. She stated Covid did not have a large impact due to support received from stimulus and

other sources. Mr. Moulton asked how much of the request amount represents the total budget. Ms. Rodrigues stated it is approximately 80% and provided an explanation of how the balance of the budget is made up.

(8103) Milford Arts Council

Paige Migilio, Director, stated the MAC is celebrating 50 years. She discussed the hope of being back to normal for the gala year. Ms. Miglio stated some events have been cancelled and rescheduled. She discussed reopening with Covid protocols and impacts on the MAC. Ms. Miglio stated membership has remained static. She discussed goals post-gala year. Ms. Miglio stated staff expansion is needed with year-round programming. Mr. Moulton asked what percentage of the budget the grant represents. Ms. Miglio stated the budget runs from \$270,000 to \$290,000. Chairman Lema asked if there had been an increase in the budget. Ms. Miglio stated it was previously increased from \$65,000 to \$70,000.

(8412) Transit District

Henry Jadach, Director, state the district has provided all services throughout the pandemic. He discussed the transportations offered. Mr. Jadach stated the budget amount remains the same. He stated there revenue was down due to people not using transportation during the pandemic, but CARES act provided assistance. Mr. Moulton asked if routes were reduced during Covid. Mr. Jadach stated the fixed routes ran the same and van services were reduced due to lack of requests. He stated it is now picking up and a marketing campaign is underway to reacquaint people with the services. Ms. Ranges asked if vans are by appointment only. Mr. Jadach stated they are by application process. Chairman Lema asked if parking is being changed due to fewer commuters using the train service. He discussed need for short-term parking. Mr. Jadach stated the spaces are being paid for although they are not being used regularly.

(8425) Beth El Center

Jennifer Paradis, Director, provided an update on services provided. She stated the center was open at full capacity during the pandemic. Ms. Paradis discussed increases in request for services due to inflation. She discussed programs offered through the center. Ms. Paradis discussed the no-freeze program and the increase request for services. She reviewed percentages of numbers served as Milford residents. Ms. Paradis stated the funding request remains flat. Mr. Moulton asked for clarification on decrease at homeless camps. Ms. Paradis provided an explanation of the strategies applied in aiding and reducing homelessness. Mr. Moulton asked the total budget. Ms. Paradis stated it is approximately \$1 million. She discussed increased staffing requirements for the center and impact to budget.

(8113) Bridges

Jennifer Fiorillo, CEO, highlighted services provided during the pandemic. She stated there are approximately 1,300 Milford residents being serviced. Ms. Fiorillo provided a brief summary of services provided. She discussed challenges in worker shortages and increases in demand. Mr. Fiorillo stated funding request is level. She stated local funding helps to bridge gaps in expenses for

administrative overhead. Ms. Ranges asked how many staff members in total. Ms. Fiorillo stated 200, which includes part-time and contracted.

(4210) Police Department

Keith Mello, Police Chief, stated there is an unprecedented number of openings in police officer positions. He stated there will be approximately 12 opening by the end of March and another 5 openings in the summer. Chief Mello discussed staffing issues within the department. Chief Mello discussed request for parking attendants to address parking issues at Walnut Beach. He discussed regulatory and statutory training requirements. Chairman Lema asked if the seasonal temporary increase is related to parking attendants. Chief Mello stated that was correct. Chairman Lema asked if the number of vacancies includes dispatchers. Chief Mello stated dispatchers are separate and discussed the difficulties in retaining dispatchers. Ms. Ranges asked if the dispatchers are shared by the Fire Department. Chief Mello stated the dispatchers are all under the police department although some work on the police side and others on the fire side. Mr. Moulton asked for a clarification of the number of police officer openings. Chief Mello stated with the new officers there will be 12 openings. Discussion ensued concerning staffing. Mr. Moulton asked for an explanation of Overtime Park. Chief Mello discussed staffing at beaches with police offices full time. Mayor Blake stated there are several line items that were zeroed as those items will be funded via ARPA. He stated more information will be provided by the technical discussion meeting.

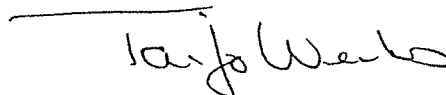
(4240) Animal Control

Scott Ellingson, Animal Control Officer, budget remains flat with the exception of an electricity increase. Chairman Lema asked if heating fuel is oil or gas. Mr. Ellingson stated the heating is gas fuel. Chairman Lema asked for an explanation of rabies control. Mr. Ellingson stated it is the feral cat program where the cats are trapped, neutered and given a vaccine. If adoptable they are adopted out and if not released back to the colony. Chairman Lema asked if contribution from Town of Orange is in revenue. Mayor Blake stated it is \$75,00 per year that goes to a special account for used by Animal Control.

Ms. Ranges and Mr. Moulton made and seconded a motion to recess until Monday February 28, 2022 at 5:30 p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

Chairman Lema stated the Board would stand in recess until February 28, 2022. The Board recessed at 7:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Toni Jo Weeks
Recording Secretary