

**BOARD OF ALDERMEN  
BUDGET DELIBERATIONS SESSION  
APRIL 24, 2024**

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MILFORD CITY CLERK

The Board of Aldermen resumed its budget deliberation session regarding the Board of Finance's recommended budget for fiscal year 2024-2025, on Wednesday, April 24, 2024. Chairman Vetro called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. asking those present to join in saluting our flag and reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

**1. Roll Call**

**Board Members**

M. Arciuolo, II  
E. Beatty  
B. Bevan  
M. Casey  
J. Federico  
P. Healy  
A. Fowler  
J. Jenkins  
S. Marlow  
H. Mulrenan  
R. Pacelli, Jr.  
W. Smith  
P. Vetro  
R. Vitali  
W. Willis

**Also Present**

Mayor Anthony S. Giannattasio  
P. Erodici, Finance Director  
J. Rosen, Chief of Staff

**Excused:**

Chairman Vetro welcomed everyone to the 2024-2025 budget deliberations. He stated tonight's meeting was the departmental portion of the budget process.

Ald. Pacelli and Ald. Marlo made and seconded a motion to come out of recess. Motion carried unanimously.

**Fire Department (p. 51)**

Anthony Fabrizi, Fire Chief, discussed stakeholders and budgetary outcomes. He discussed putting forward a fiscally responsible budget. Never losing sight of the overall City budget. Chief Fabrizi discussed the number of calls received per year and development and growth putting demands on the fire department. In 2016 the PSA was obtained by the City allowing for the Fire Department to transport to medical facilities. Chief Fabrizi discussed increases in the scope of services and training.

He commented on budgetary requirements, including staffing, training and equipment. Chief Fabrizi stated 25% of the revenue from EMS is put back into the department. He discussed securing other funding sources such as grants for breath apparatus and a marine grant for emergency services on the water. Chief Fabrizi stated historically many line items were underfunded and Mayor Giannattasio made a commitment to fully fund those items. He discussed the importance of the services provided and the necessity to adequately fund the department. Chief Fabrizi stated the budget is manageable for the department. Chairman Vetro asked with the development around the City will there be a need for a new firehouse. Chief Fabrizi stated the economic development trend is multi-unit housing. He stated with the number of units and multi-unit projects are increasing call volume. Chief Fabrizi stated with the current call volume and no increase in manpower since 1972 there are challenges with keeping firefighters trained as they are busy with calls. Ald. Vitali asked when a development is planned is there a possibility that there is communication with developers to plan for substations. Chief Fabrizi stated a meeting was arranged with the developers of the Connecticut Post Mall to discuss concerns of the project tasking the department. He stated there has not been a response yet, but it was a good first discussion. Ald. Marlow asked if there are planned retirements and if there are individuals applying to be firefighters. Chief Fabrizi stated there will be 3 retiring this year, but in the recent past there has been an unprecedented turnover. He stated the downside is the lost experience. Chief Fabrizi discussed the value of seasoned firefighters. Chief Fabrizi stated quality candidates have applied to the department. He discussed the testing process and said it is one of the best across the state. Ald. Marlow asked for an explanation of the Class 1 rating. Chief Fabrizi discussed the ISO rating. He stated there are only 475 Class 1 departments nationwide and discussed what is required to obtain the rating. Ald. Federico asked if the department is fully staffed. Chief Fabrizi stated the department will be fully staffed once the 3 recruits in the fire academy graduate in May. Ald. Federico asked if the number of firefighters is adequate. Chief Fabrizi stated looking forward and with the possibility of another fire station in the future, it would require an additional 20 members. Ald. Federico noted the vacation line is lower than the prior year, she asked if that is due to retirements and vacation payouts. Chief Fabrizi stated that is the aftereffect of Covid and filling vacancies. He discussed backfilling and hiring back personnel. He discussed required manpower per shift. Ald. Federico asked for an explanation of the educational supplement line-item increase. Chief Fabrizi stated it was historically underfunded. Ald. Federico asked why there has been no expenses on the scuba team and are expenditures anticipated. Chief Fabrizi stated due to retirements the dive team was put on hold and a decision will be made moving forward. Ald. Federico asked why there has been no spending under vehicles and equipment. Chief Fabrizi stated the funds have been used to purchase administrative staff cars and fire marshal division. Ald. Federico asked for an explanation of vehicle repair. Chief Fabrizi stated over \$200,000 has been spent for vehicle repair so far this year. He stated a repair shop was previously located in the department and there is discussion with Public Works to have dedicated mechanics to repair fire apparatus. Chief Fabrizi discussed the importance of staff that is familiar with the apparatus. Mayor Giannattasio stated Public Works will be requesting a master mechanic that works on fire apparatus. Ald. Beatty asked if training line-item request is sufficient to complete necessary training. Chief Fabrizi discussed different types of training that is provided to the fire personnel. He stated training is both in-house and with outside vendors. Chief Fabrizi discussed the difficulty of training when staff may be called for emergency response. Ald. Healy asked if all firefighters are certified EMT's. Chief Fabrizi stated that is correct. Ald. Healy asked how many paramedics on staff. Chief Fabrizi stated there will be 22 when one member completes training this week. He stated 3 additional staff members are in paramedic training. Ald. Healy asked if there are paramedics on all shifts. Chief Fabrizi stated that is

correct. He discussed shift assignments and equal distribution among all shifts. Ald. Healy asked what incentive is provided to encourage staff to become paramedics. Chief Fabrizi discussed the compensation structure for paramedics. Ald. Healy asked if paramedics have left to go to other municipalities due to compensation. Chief Fabrizi stated that has happened and is very difficult to avoid. Ald. Healy asked if the decrease by Board of Finance to training will have a negative impact. Chief Fabrizi stated the training budget was previously \$35,000 so an increase to \$50,000 is better than before. Ald. Healy asked for an overview of emergency management. Chief Fabrizi stated the Assistant Emergency Management Director's wage is funded by Region 2. He discussed working with Region 2 and being a good steward. Chief Fabrizi discussed Everbridge messages to inform the public. Ald. Fowler asked what line items are underfunded. Chief Fabrizi discussed line items where the department received less than proposed. He stated prior budgets did not keep pace with inflation. Ald. Jenkins asked if the budget as proposed puts the department in a position to not need transfers at a later time. Chief Fabrizi stated that he believes that will be correct. He discussed establishing baselines and proper management. Mayor Giannattasio stated the budget has been adequately funded for the department, where historically it was underfunded. He discussed training and maintaining Class 1 making an investment in the department. Ald. Beatty stated last year \$200,000 was restored to the fire department budget. Ald. Bevan asked why fire apparatus responds to a medical emergency. Chief Fabrizi stated the closest engine to the emergency will respond and an ambulance will respond for transport. A paramedic may need to respond from a different location requiring a third piece of apparatus. He discussed more paramedics in the future may alleviate this scenario. Ald. Bevan asked if there are more medical emergencies than fire responses. Chief Fabrizi stated that is correct, approximately 65% are medical responses. Ald. Casey stated the fire department is one of the best in the county and asked what leads to such success. Chief Fabrizi recognized his predecessors for the work they provided to the department. He stated the department was one of the first to provide EMS services in the 1960's. He discussed the importance of providing the best service to the community. Ald. Healy asked if the fire clothing line item is sufficient. Chief Fabrizi discussed increased costs and time to obtain. He discussed laundering gear for cancer prevention and OSHA initiatives translating to 2 sets of gear for each member. Chief Fabrizi discussed 5 year rolling cycle for gear replacement. He stated the increase is helpful and discussed requesting transfers from other accounts as necessary. Ald. Healy discussed revenue received from EMS services. He asked if the revenue helps in augmenting purchase of equipment and gear. Chief Fabrizi stated it helps and is a go-to when some of the accounts fall short. Ald. Federico asked how often firefighters that have recently completed the academy leave for another department. Chief Fabrizi discussed the firefighters that have recently left for another department. Ald. Vitali asked if the funds allocated for the 24/24 budget would adequately meet the needs of the department. Chief Fabrizi stated it is difficult to mention. He stated he was never afforded the opportunity to have a budget that meets the contractual needs and to the credit of Mayor Giannattasio this year is more manageable. He said the department will do their best to manage properly and hit the mark.

### **Lights, Hydrants, Water (p. 62)**

Chief Fabrizi stated there is good water supply coverage in the City, although there is one area that is deficient and those areas are challenging. He stated the requested funds allows for a hydrant where a new street is put in or where a deficiency exists. Ald. Marlow asked how hydrant water charges are determined. Chief Fabrizi stated it is contracted with the Regional Water Company. Ald. Federico asked why street lighting has increased significantly. Chief Fabrizi referred to a comment in the

budget book and stated there is little control over the cost as it is set by United Illuminating. Peter Erodici stated the account historically had higher costs and the water cost had shortfalls, so the lighting is coming down to allow for transfers to the water.

#### **Emergency Management (p. 58)**

None.

#### **C-Med (p. 88)**

Ald. Federico asked for an explanation of C-Med. A.J. Murphy, Assistant Chief, stated it is a stateside communication between hospital and transport.

#### **Public Library (p. 35)**

Suzanne Thomas, Assistant Library Director, stated programs and services is a new line item. She stated Friends of the Library providing funding for all programming. Ms. Thomas stated the request is \$2,500 to provide this core service. She discussed other services provided by Friends of the Library. Ms. Thomas stated an increase to \$45,000 for electronic media is being requested. She stated usage is up 47% since last year. Ms. Thomas explained how electronic media is leased and access requirements. She stated electronic media costs are not sustainable and are problematic across the country. The average wait time for e-books is 126 days and e-content is a core service of the library. Ald. Federico asked if the increase to the electronic book line item would help the wait time. Ms. Thomas stated she does not believe it will solve the problem but will allow for a more robust program. Ald. Federico note the marketing and communication director position was not recommended. Ms. Thomas discussed having at the administrative level a marketing staff member. Ald. Marlow asked if the Founder's Walk program will impact library expenses. Ms. Thomas stated the Founder's Walk Committee has been very responsive to library needs. She discussed a drive-thru book program and materials needed to be purchased by the library. Mayor Giannattasio stated the marketing and communications specialist is very important and was put on hold for this budget cycle and will be considered going forward.

#### **Borough of Woodmont (p. 88)**

Ed Bonessi, Warden, provided background on the Borough of Woodmont and services provided. Ald. Vitali asked the tax amount for Borough residents. Mr. Bonessi stated it is .85, approximately \$150 per home. He discussed beach maintenance provided by the Borough and contractual obligations with FEMA.

#### **Department of Permitting and Land Use (p. 27)**

Joseph Griffith, Director of DPLU, provided a brief description of the Department of Permitting and Land Use. He stated the budget request is \$8,200 over last year's budget. Ald. Marlow asked if there will be a need for additional building inspectors in the future. Mr. Griffith discussed a current vacancy and the difficulty in filling the position. Ald. Healy asked if the Assistant City Planner position is vacant. Mr. Griffith stated the request was to reinstate the position. Mayor Giannattasio stated the

position was eliminated several years ago. Ald. Healy asked if qualifications or salary is the issue with filling the building inspector position. Mr. Griffith stated there are municipalities that offer a higher salary, and it is a limited field. Ald. Mulrenan asked the reason for requesting reinstatement of Assistant City Planner. Mr. Griffith stated the individual would provide back-up to the City Planner and Zoning Enforcement Officer. Ald. Beatty asked if that position was eliminated in reorganization in 2009. Mr. Griffith stated it was eliminated in 2014. Ald. Beatty asked if it was a budgetary decision. Mr. Griffith stated it was a budgetary decision. Ald. Federico what determines salary for building inspector. Mr. Griffith stated it is a union position and is contractual. Discussion ensued concerning the building inspector position.

### **Transit District (p. 89)**

Henry Jadach, Transit District Executive Director, discussed local bus services provided by the Transit District. He stated commuting is starting to recover and all parking spaces have been purchased with no waiting list. Mr. Jadach discussed electric buses should be on the road in September/October. He discussed Silver Sands shuttle paid for by the State. Mr. Jadach stated a small increase has been requested this year. Discussion ensued concerning services provided by the Transit District. Ald. Vitali asked how electric buses repairs will be done. Mr. Jadach stated drivers and repair staff will be trained.

### **Harbor Management and Marina (p. 110)**

Jim Donegan, Harbor Operations Director, stated over the last 3 seasons there has been continued growth. He stated last season more people came to the marina for overnight or daily visits and amount of events has increased. Mr. Donegan discussed the dredging and mooring field project that took place over the winter. He stated the harbor and marina are ready for the 2024 season. Mr. Donegan stated the budget remains flat, with a few small changes to operational costs. Ald. Pacelli asked how the dredging was funded. Mr. Donegan stated the dredging project started over 9 years ago with permitting, working with Army Corp. and funding. He stated the Army Corp. is responsible for dredging and the mooring field. Federal funds paid for the project. Ald. Pacelli asked if the removal and replacement of moorings was a City expense. Mr. Donegan stated it was the City's responsibility. Ald. Healy asked if additional mooring space was realized. Mr. Donegan stated it did not allow for additional mooring but will allow for deeper draft boats. Discussion ensued on funding for the mooring field removal and replacement. Ald. Federico asked the City cost and what line item was used for the project. Mr. Erodiaci stated funding came from the flood and erosion capital budget at a cost of \$400,000.

### **Probate Court (p. 26)**

Hon. Benjamin Gettinger, Probate Judge, stated the budget is flat except for an increase in goods and services due to the number of case and microfilm. Ald. Beatty discussed case load. Judge Gettinger provided status of case types served. Ald. Pacelli confirmed 75% of the budget is provided by the City and the other 25% by Town of Orange. Judge Gettinger stated that is correct.

### **Golf Course (p. 112)**

Dan Worroll, Golf Commission, stated the golf course is doing very well. He discussed online scheduling for tee times and golf carts. Ald. Mulrenan asked for an explanation for veteran's program and summer miniature golf program. Mr. Worroll stated any veteran that goes through a 6-week class receives a card that is then presented at the course and a lower fee is charged. He discussed a program where holes will be placed on the grounds for families to play miniature golf in the evenings.

### **Information Technology (p.39)**

Adam Heller, Information Technology Director, discussed consolidating technology into the MIS department. He discussed the progress on how services are provided to the departments. Mr. Heller discussed staffing upgrades to be more inline with changing technology. He discussed collaborating and partnering with departments. Mr. Heller discussed changes to the budget request, including reductions. Ald. Federico asked if cellphones are being consolidated. Mr. Heller discussed consolidation of computers and cellphones into MIS department. He stated previously departments had their own line items and they are now being consolidated into the MIS department budget. Mayor Giannattasio discussed savings realized by reducing outside consultants. Ald. Healy asked if 3<sup>rd</sup> party sources are used for testing vulnerabilities and if that would come from the MIS budget. Mr. Heller stated that is correct and provided an overview of the securities in place. He stated that he will in the future request additional funding for network protection.

### **Health Department (p. 79)**

### **Education Health Services/School Nurses (p. 95)**

### **Human Services Department (p. 90)**

Deepa Joseph, Director of Health and Human Services, provided a handout with an overview of the Health Department services and activities over the last year. She stated an increase has been requested to overtime to cover cost of inspections services that are required outside normal working hours. She discussed vaccination clinics and the request for additional funding in medical supplies. Ms. Joseph stated vaccination clinics were previously cash or check and the department is moving to billing for services. She stated by being a billing agency it will allow for billing to Medicare and Medicaid. Ms. Joseph discussed data on health office visits to school nurses. She provided an overview of the work performed by the Community Health Coordinator. Ms. Joseph discussed health education programs offered by the department. She stated the department pursues grant funding and receives over \$500,000 each year. Ms. Joseph discussed pursuing accreditation for the health department. Ms. Joseph discussed the public emergency response division. She stated it is fully funded through grants. Ms. Joseph discussed services provided by Human Services and Youth and Family Services. She stated people are still recovering from the impact of Covid and provided statistics on various services provided. Ald. Fowler asked for an explanation of reinstatement of Community Health Coordinator. Ms. Joseph provided a history of the reinstatement of the position. She stated ARPA funding allowing for the fulltime reinstatement of the position. Ms. Joseph provided an overview of the work provided. Ald. Jenkins asked if accreditation improves opportunity for state and federal grants. Ms. Joseph stated it will open opportunities for grant funding and may eventually be an eligibility requirement.

### **Milford Government Access Television (p. 16)**

Kara Flannery, Chairman MGAT, discussed the role of MGAT and available viewing channels. She provided an overview of productions and numbers of views. Ms. Flannery stated all equipment has been funded through grants. She stated the City funding pays for the labor costs. Ms. Flannery discussed the requested increase allow for more competitive labor costs. She discussed technical difficulties experienced over the year. Ald. Healy asked for an explanation of the increase request for Government Cable Access Service. Ms. Flannery discussed additional coverage and programs MGAT would like to provide. Ald. Jenkins asked how it is determined what events will be covered. Ms. Flannery discussed the programming schedule reviewed and approved by the MGAT committee. Ald. Jenkins if non-profit organizations have the opportunity to request coverage. Ms. Flannery discussed how it is determined if a non-profit organization event will be a covered program. Ald. Jenkins asked if the non-profit organizations pay a fee. Ms. Flannery stated no fees are paid for programming. Ald. Federico asked if there was list of meetings or events that the additional funding request would allow. Ms. Flannery discussed policies and procedures. Ald. Bevan asked if there is paid personnel. Ms. Flannery reviewed the production staff. Ald. Bevan asked why the positions are not listed in the budget. Ms. Flannery stated the hours worked are paid for by invoice.

### **Milford Arts Council (p. 87)**

Paige Miglio, Director Milford Arts Council, provided a handout depicting programming. She stated the MAC has never fully recovered from the effects of Covid. Ms. Miglio discussed staffing and stated membership is nearing pre-pandemic numbers. She discussed the MAC at the Eastbound Train Station. Ms. Miglio reviewed events and programs provided over the past year. She discussed offering a young family program. Ms. Miglio discussed additional hours of programming offered over the past year. She stated the City is the only municipality that supports an arts council. Ms. Miglio provided an overview of collaborations.

### **Council on Aging (p. 87)**

Lenora Rodriguez, Executive Director, stated the budget request is flat. She provided a handout and discussed programs and services offered by the Senior Center. Ms. Rodriguez discussed grant funding received for an Alzheimer program and provided the number of visitors to the center. Ms. Rodriguez discussed the Milford Food Bank and the services provided. She stated a new vehicle was acquired for homebound meals. Ms. Rodriguez discussed transportation services and the Milford Transit Micro Service. She discussed social service staffing and resources. Ms. Rodriguez stated Meals on Wheels has risen since Covid. She discussed increasing wages and other operating costs. Ms. Rodriguez stated she continues to seek grants and donor opportunities.

### **Beth El Center (p. 92)**

Jennifer Paradis, Executive Director, provided an handout and discussed services provided in response to homelessness, housing and hunger needs. She discussed the core programs, with diversion services being the largest and fastest growing program. She stated the community kitchen offers 2 meals a day in a dining room setting. Ms. Paradis discussed partnering with other agencies.

She stated homelessness has increased 14% year over year. Ms. Paradis discussed the need for critical services, the trend of decreasing funding and statistics on services provided. Ms. Paradis discussed types of training provided to staff. Ald. Fowler asked why the Greater New Haven area has experienced more homelessness than other areas. Ms. Paradis discussed the housing market impact on homelessness. Ald. Federico asked how the requested increase of \$5,000 increase was determined. Mr. Paradis stated the increase would support the community kitchen and costs associated with no-freeze program. Ald. Vitali asked that amount of the total budget and how much of the budget amount is grant funding. Ms. Paradis stated the total budget is \$1.5 million and the grant funding provides \$350,000 and development work \$300,000. Ald. Vitali asked how much is raised through fundraising events. Ms. Paradis stated individual giving approximately \$200,000, community organizations \$50,000, faith communities \$50,000 and fundraising events \$175,000.

### **Finance Department (p. 37)**

Peter Erodici, Finance Director, discussed the Finance Department receiving the Certificate of Excellence in Financial Reporting from GFOA. He discussed bond refinances that have realized approximately \$8.5 million savings. Ald. Vitali asked for an explanation of the chair account. Mr. Erodici stated he would like to replace 7 to 8 chairs that are very old and worn. Ald. Casey asked what percentage of taxes were unpaid for last fiscal year. Mr. Erodici stated delinquent taxes are approximately 1% to 2%.

Ald. Pacelli and Ald. Willis made and seconded a motion to recess. Motion carried unanimously. The Board recessed at 12:00 a.m.

Chairman Vetro announced the Board would stand in recess until Monday, April 29, 2024.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Toni Jo Weeks", written in dark ink.

Toni Jo Weeks  
Recording Secretary