Call to Order / Pledge of Allegiance

Christopher Besescheck, Chairman of Board of Apportionment and Taxation, called the Budget Hearing meeting to order at approximately 7:00 p.m. All those present recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call

Board of Apportionment and Taxation
Christopher Besescheck, Chairman- Present
Judson Crawford- Present
Wayne Bragg- Present
Jim Tickey, Vice Chairman- Present
John Belden- Present
Charlotte Madar- Present

Board of Alderman
John Anglace, President- Present
Lynne Farrell- excused
Jack Finn- Present
Stan Kudej- Present
Noreen McGorty- Present
John Papa- Present
Anthony Simonetti- Present

2300 Animal Control

Department Requested $123,893; Mayor recommends $119,759

Judson Crawford stated, where is the estimated tax collection report? I’m just wondering how did the Mayor come up with the final figure of $97,000,000? That should be in section 9 in the back of the books. Where is the fleet inventory from each department that has a vehicle? None of that is in our books.
Christopher Besescheck stated, we can look into it.

Lt. Kozlowsky, Chief Hurliman and Lt. Rodrigues explained, we requested $123,893 and the Mayor recommended $119,759. No opening comments on the animal control.

2500 Police Department

Department Requested $6,669,634.00; Mayor recommends $6,663,034.00

Lt. Kozlowsky, Chief Hurliman and Lt. Rodrigues explained, we realize the economy has not greatly improved and crime is starting to increase with that being said we aren't asking for a tremendous increase in the Police Department budget in the interest of going easy on the tax payers.

Charlotte Madar asked, is there anything specific that you have been really hurt by getting cut?

Chief Hurliman answered, the one thing I wouldn’t like to see cut is personnel.

Wayne Bragg asked, can you review your staffing plan with us? I’m having difficulty reconciling your head count.

Chief Hurliman replied, our current sworn is 50 and the request is for 62. The position we are requesting in non-sworn is a records clerk. We haven’t had one in a while. Even though we are down on head count and the actual salary maybe reduced our overtime costs are running very high.

Wayne Bragg asked, what I’m trying to understand is wont you be looking at a significantly less amount of salary paid this year as a result of the 13 officer deficit?

Chief Hurliman answered, when you say 13 officer deficit remember 4 have left in this year. We are hiring and if the testing is completed within a certain amount of time we will be hiring some people in the end of this fiscal year hopefully.

Wayne Bragg asked, so how many of those 13 will you have on board before the end of this year?

Chief Hurliman explained, well I don’t have any seats in the Academy currently. Currently, the only thing I have are 3 seats for a July Academy and possibly another 3 seats in another Academy which starts around July. There are a few municipalities that should be running an Academy that promised me seats.

James Tickey stated, first congratulations as I read in the first page of the newspaper you’re the second highest chapter to get the award from AAA. Perhaps related to that with the emergency lights in the traffic division those are two that I see in this past
year that was allocated emergency lights is $12,375 and traffic division at $17,000. Yet, the emergency lights so far spent year-to-date approximately $1,200 and the traffic division approximately $2,100 and going forward in the year ahead the emergency lights is being requested and the Mayor recommended $16,790 and traffic division being requested and the Mayor recommended $14,905. Can you just comment on those line items?

Chief Hurliman stated, we are expecting to get some cars and there are also some emergency lights that need to be repaired and that's prior to the end of the fiscal year. It doesn't take much to spend all that on emergency lights in one shot. I expect that will we spend all of it. The traffic division hasn't put in for it yet but there is supposed to be some new radar and laser units that we have not yet purchased.

Wayne Bragg asked, where do you think you will be with headcount at the end of this fiscal year?

Chief Hurliman replied, at the end of this fiscal year if I get the seats in the Academy I’ll be at 53.

Alderman Finn asked, your budget form one was omitted from the budget book can you tell us what your statements of goals are?

Chief Hurliman answered, apparently it was submitted because someone else had it but under goals and objectives is adding more personnel and upgrading the radio system.

Alderman Finn asked, your department returned over a million dollars last year and this year you’re asking for $133,793.00 more how can you justify the increase in revenue when so much was returned?

Chief Hurliman answered, well we didn’t hire last year and actually between last year and this year 5 people left that we didn’t anticipate. Obviously, the salary then gets returned to the taxpayer. This year if you cut the personnel line that means we are definitely not going to hire.

Chief Hurliman explained, everything should be listed in order of importance. We need a new phone system, unmarked vehicles, recording system. We are also changing over the format on the mobile computers.

4400 Library

Department Requested $1,157,176; Mayor recommends $1,114,630
Elspeth Lydon, Library Systems Director and Shawn Fields, Branch Director explained, there were only three lines affected by the Mayor’s proposal. I’m protesting the fact that the fulltime budget was cut by $10,000 the position is empty because the Mayor doesn’t want to fill it not because we don’t want to fill it. I’m afraid that once this gets cut we will be in no position to fill the job when we are finally allowed to because we will have insufficient funds. Secondly, I’m concerned over the cut to books. I realize this has been a pattern over the past 20 years. I hesitate to have to say this but the business of a library is books and the main stay of what we do is loaning books. When you cut the book line we can’t do what the public expects us to do. Granted, we have been given a lot of money is other accounts but when you have to tell people we don’t have the new best seller because the P.O. hasn’t been approved and we aren’t allowed to spend all the money in our line. It really puts question marks in the minds in the people of Shelton as to what kind of community that they live in. With that said I’m content to live with what we got it’s a least two-thirds instead of the half we normally get. The one thing that I’m not going to compromise on and I really want your help is the fact that the part-time line was cut again. Granted, the Mayor helped us by increasing the raise that was given beyond the 2% we requested but he didn’t fund anything this year to continue the 2% raise. So according to this they aren’t going to get anymore. I did count and 9 other departments did get their part-time accounts cut so he isn’t singling us out. I do think if you want my budget to be smaller please tell me how much or what percent and leave it up to the department head to figure out where the cuts should be made.

Wayne Bragg asked, can you comment on your staffing plan?

Elspeth Lydon replied, my staffing plan? I want to keep what I have currently.

Shawn Fields gave a presentation on the increased amount of people using the library services and the decrease of materials, and lack of increases to the part time employees.

Wayne Bragg asked, currently you have 13 fulltime individuals and 22 part time and your request is for 14 fulltime. When do you plan on hiring that 14th person?

Shawn Fields replied, October 2008 when the position came open.

Elspeth Lydon added, the Mayor doesn’t want to fill it because of the cost of benefits. We would be willing to fill in an instant if given the opportunity.

Wayne Bragg asked, so on your part-time equivalence you’re at 22 and that’s where you want to be?

Elspeth Lydon answered, well the positions are all full.
Shawn Fields added, with the economic climate and even with the increased usage it’s not feasible to ask for more but we would like to be able to reward the people that have been working so hard.

Jimmy Tickey stated, thank you for being here, libraries and media centers are vital to our community and they are an information source. Let’s look at that information and we can talk about the books. I see in last year you were allocated $55,000 and year-to-date you have spent $33,200 going forward you have requested $89,000 that were allocated and the Mayor’s recommended budget $65,000. Can you walk us through that process?

Elspeth Lydon explained, the one thing you need to understand with the financial process in the City is I create a requisition in the computer, it’s immediately put into print, signed by Gene Sullivan the purchasing agent and that’s the end of it. It doesn’t go anywhere until the Mayor approves it. I can create all the requisitions to account for every penny in that budget but, it’s useless until the Mayor says I can spend it. So last year money was returned because it wasn’t released by the Mayor. It’s a consistent problem and yes, I can transfer funds into the account but until they are allowed to be released it’s useless. So I plan as much as I like but, I have to go starting in January on a week by week basis seeing what’s released and then move forward. Ideally, we deal with having the best sellers; we need one at each library at least, we want to have the books that are in demand for children and we want to have the books that support the curriculum. There are about 65 categories that we need to have and that takes up most of our budget.

Alderman Finn asked, the positions that are at the branch and the main library do they have the same job descriptions?

Shawn Fields answered, No. Then Shawn explained the differences in the job descriptions.

Alderman Anglace noted, didn’t we give you money last year for your part-timers for an increase?

Elspeth Lydon replied, yes.

Alderman Anglace added, and you also got adjustments last year for salaries as well. It’s not like it wasn’t addressed it’s been addressed you want to address it again this year with the same logic you used last year. You want to reward good performance. Our teachers just went to collective bargaining and they are getting no increases this year.

Shawn Fields explained, I think the difference here is the disparity is so great between what we pay the part-timers here and what other communities are paying them. You have to keep adjusting it.
Alderman Anglace explained, if you look at the part-time account last year you got $210,000.00 and this year you're looking for $224,000.00 that's a $14,000 difference. You're going to use that $14,000 for increases?

Elspeth Lydon replied, well we write them in because we know we aren't going to get them.

Alderman Anglace stated, in your regular payroll account you went from $629,678 last year and this year you asked for $640,529 and you got $630,000 it's wasn't a big increase but it's also wasn't a cut. In the part-time last year you got $210,000 and asked for $224,017 and got $216,000 its $6,000 more in the part-time account but it's not a cut. Would you explain to me where the cut is?

Elspeth Lydon answered, yes we requested $224,017 and the Mayor gave us $216,000.

Alderman Anglace clarified, the cut was what you requested not what you got last year. That doesn't come across to the press and the public that it is an increase from last year that the Mayor gave you but it's less than what you requested. Let's go back to your earlier statement that maybe we should change our budgeting process here. Another thing that is still possible is that you can go back to the Board of A&T during the course of the year and discuss transfers within your line items. With their consent you can move the money around. Having heard some of the comments tonight I think they would be willing to listen and try to work with you.

Alderman Papa added, you can't transfer salaries so this is basically what you're interested in.

Charlotte Madar asked, are there any grants you can apply for?

Elspeth Lydon replied, no our library is considered a municipal library that should be funded by its municipality.

Alderman Anglace stated, my personal comment I think you have raised the awareness of the library over the years and I think you have done a magnificent job with the publications you have put out at both branches and the communications within the City. I think you have more people using the Library than ever before so you're doing a magnificent job.

Charlotte Madar asked, are there any line items that we can change now to restore to the part-time payroll?

Elspeth Lydon stated, I'm willing to give up $3,000 from the Library Supplies account.
**4800 Municipal Property Maintenance**

Department Requested $1,315,618; Mayor recommends $1,315,618

Chris Potucek, Maintenance Supervisor stated, the Mayor gave us everything we wanted across the board.

Wayne Bragg asked, can you comment on your staffing please? You’re currently at a total of 30 for your fulltime and part-time staff and do you also foresee those two positions being filled?

Chris Potucek answered, I don’t foresee them being filled I would like them to be filled.

Wayne Bragg asked, then why are they in the budget?

Chris Potucek replied, I would like them to be filled. I keep requesting them to be filled and I keep getting denied.

Wayne Bragg stated, if we have a position that we know is not going to be filled then it shouldn’t be in the budget.

Chris Potucek replied, but I would like it to be in the budget.

Alderman Papa stated, you have to put in who you want.

The Board of A&T and Board of Alderman told Chris that everyone in maintenance is doing a wonderful job and thanked Chris Potucek for his time.

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**5800 Community Development**

Department Requested $68,666; Mayor recommends $68,666

Charlene DeFilippo, Community Development explained, I do some of the grant writing for the City and I also oversee the Anti-blight program and the local Capital Improvement program. I basically operate as a one person department. I do have one part-time employee named Fred Wills who works with me about 5-6 hours per week. The increases that I have asked for are for salary increases and an increase for sheriff fee’s which, is relative to the Anti-blight program. We are finding that we have to serve more people because they aren’t responding to certified mail.

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**3100 Building Department**

Department Requested $238,195; Mayor recommends $238,195
Joseph Ballaro, Building Official explained, we kept the same budget that we had for last year except for the increase in the contract. The Mayor gave us everything we asked for. In 2009 we took a total of 1,147 permits and in 2010 we took a total of 1,612 and as of December this year we had 1,929 permits. Plus the fact that we just broke ground on 250 unit apartment building with a 300 plus parking garage. So I need the additional help. We have one fulltime employee who is myself and four part-time employees. I hope that by next year we have a fulltime Assistant and Secretary.

Alderman Anglace asked, on the revenue side when was the last time you adjusted the fees?

Joseph Ballaro answered, that's set by the Board of Alderman.

Alderman Anglace stated, you have to request that.

Joseph Ballaro replied, if you would like me to look at it I can.

Alderman Anglace said, I think you should take a look at it.

Judson Cawford stated, under revenue items account 340-01.10 which is building permits, 340-01-11 electrical permits, 340-01-12 that's plumbing permit and 340-01-24 building assessments. They have gone up since last year.

Joseph Ballaro discussed, if you take last year's revenue side we blew it out of the water really it's an educated guess. That's how we come up with our estimate.

3500 Public Works

Department Requested $21,805; Mayor recommends $21,805

George Stachowicz, Highways explained, we received everything we asked for. I don't deal with the budget on a daily basis and Paul DiMauro won't able to make it tonight but is willing to answer all questions.

3600 Engineering

Department Requested $283,556; Mayor recommends $283,556

Non-attendance
**3700 Tree Warden**

Department Requested $120,000; Mayor recommends $100,000  
Non-attendance

**3200 Highways and Bridges**

Department Requested $3,159,935; Mayor recommends $2,954,853  

George Stachowicz, Hoghways explained, where the Mayor made his cuts was in the part-time account. We have four fulltime positions open; the Superintendent, two heavy equipment operators and one mechanic. Currently, we have part-timers in those positions.

**3300 Road Repairs**

Department Requested $50,000; Mayor recommends $50,000  

George Stachowicz explained, any questions really should be sent to Paul DiMauro.

**3800 Recycling Program**

Department Requested $431,408; Mayor recommends $431,408  
Non-attendance

**3900 Sanitation**

Department Requested $2,656,368; Mayor recommends $2,641,416  
Non-attendance

**2100 EMS Commission**

Department Requested $106,501; Mayor recommends $106,501  

Noreen McGorty explained, we have a basic budget and what we asked for is what the Mayor recommended.
Adjournment

Charlotte moved to adjourn the March 6, 2012 Budget Hearing meeting; seconded by John Belden. A voice vote was taken; motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned approximately 8:22pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Melissa Anglace
Clerk, Board of Apportionment and Taxation