Call to Order / Pledge of Allegiance

Charlotte Madar, Chairman of Board of Apportionment and Taxation, called the Budget Hearing meeting to order at approximately 6:00 p.m. All those present recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call

Board of Apportionment and Taxation

Charlotte Madar, Chairman- Present
Joe Palmucci, Vice Chairman- Present
John Belden- Present
Joe Knapik-Present
Louis Dagostine-Present
John Zikaras- Present

Opening Remarks made by City Finance Director, Paul Hiller:

Paul Hiller: I distributed a revised calendar. The primary change from the previous schedule was we originally scheduled the Board of Education on March 24, 2015. Freeman Burr was out sick last week, as well as the Chairman of the Board of Education, Mark Holden. Charlotte and I had several discussions with the Board of Education last week, and they have agreed to move their scheduled workshop to April 6, 2015. The other departments such as Finance, Tax Collector, Assessor’s Office, Debt Management and Revenue will be held on the following Monday, April 13, 2015.
Secondly, in the rush to put everything together, there are a few changes that I would like to point out in the budget, which was distributed last Monday night. In the Administration budget, Public Communications, the budget summary is incorrect. The budget shows $1,500 but it should show $15,000 and that was what was in the budget. The other major change is under Lease Rental Payments: it was budgeted for $1,050,000 but it has to be increased to $1,147,267. There are three components to that: the lease payments from the gas company and the parking lots. Those two total to $14,500. The major component is the lease payments are the third year on the lease payments for the school buses, which were purchased two years ago. We could put down Bus Fee, otherwise are in default on that lease.

Aldermen Finn: Anything that we are going to increase; you are saying must be. Is this budget still balanced?

Paul Hiller: When we get towards the Revenue section, we have to find a Revenue line to make up that difference.

Alderman Finn: As of right now, it is an unbalanced budget.

Paul Hiller: We are $97,000 off.

Alderman Finn: Where on the Revenue side where we will be making up this difference?

Paul Hiller: There could be some savings on certain things on the expenditures side. On the Revenue side, 85% of our revenue is in taxes.

Moving on to Employee Resources, the line for Increments, the budget summary is incorrect but the budget total is correct: $74,500.

The final one that we have discovered and I did talk to Mayor Lauretti late last week, under the Outside Agency contributions he originally recommended as $1,000 for the St. Vincent De Paul Society. He has changed that to the current level of funding to $8,600, which is an addition of $7,600 to the budget. St. Vincent De Paul Society originally requested $10,000, but like the other contributions is staying with the current ones for his recommendation. Those are changes that we have discovered so far. The two changes that indicated are somewhere in the neighborhood of approximately an addition of $104,000 in expenses to the budget.

I would also like to add for the Long Hill Cemetery Association, which was recommended for $0. Earlier this morning, we did receive a request from the association for the current funding levels of $3,540.
Charlotte Madar mentioned that some of the departments did not get their budgets submitted on time because there are zeros indicated in the Department Requests.

Louis Dagostine inquired as to any deadlines the departments need to submit by, and Paul Hiller indicated, per City Charter on February 15th.

Paul Hiller indicated that one of the problems is that an employee is being disciplined because they changed the date, unbeknownst to himself or the Mayor on the memo. There was a memo that I had sent out dated December 19th, which was dated February 15th and was then subsequently changed unbeknownst to later to March 15th.

0100 Administrative Office

Department Requested $1,994,023; Mayor recommends $1,897,519

Tom Taylor represented the budget for Administrative Office.

Tom Taylor mentioned that the Mayor has matched most of that budget.

Charlotte Madar mentioned that the first item, Regular Payroll, was originally requested for $367,752 and the Mayor has recommended $371,320. That is $23,560 extra, is someone else coming in? Or did you get a raise?

Tom Taylor mentioned there was going to be some changes in the next year; there will be a new person but this amount will pay for the individuals that we have for the full time employees. A chunk of that was due to the fact that we had a change in the Mayor’s increase over the last year, as well as his pension in the personnel budget. I think that was difference between what I had and what the Mayor has recommended.

Charlotte Madar asked if the extra $23,560 was okay for the Administrative Office budget.

Tom Taylor replied that it was fine, but he did not think it would not be spent. He also pointed out that the raise difference was $3,568, not $23,000! That amount would equate to the increase that he had.

Alderman Finn added that the increase of around $4,000 was due to the fact that after the budget was submitted, the Board of Aldermen approved a Merit System increase pay for the Constituent Caseworker, Mayor’s Executive Secretary and the Board of Aldermen Clerk.
Joseph Palmucci agreed that makes sense the budget is a little higher, because that was in last year’s budget.

Aldermen Finn added in the Mayor’s Office, there is the Administrative Assistant, the Executive Secretary, Constituent Caseworker, and Economic Development. Cyndee has someone else working in that office with her in the Mayor’s complex. Where is her salary?

Tom Taylor replied that her salary is on the next page, which is listed under the Part Time Employees line item.

Charlotte Madar mentioned that under the Part Time Employees line item, the Department requested $65,572 and the Mayor recommended $65,000, which is a minus of $572. Can you live with the decrease?

Tom Taylor replied yes he can.

Charlotte Madar added that the Mayor has matched a lot of the items, the exception of another error in the Public Communications line item. The department came out as $1,500 instead of $15,000. It was a typographical error.

For the December Holiday line item, you have requested $2,500 and the Mayor recommended $4,500. Do you know why he increased this line item by $2,000?

Tom Taylor replied that when he went back to Marilynn, she was estimating on how much she was going to need for next December. She did not ask for an increase in that line item. She said she would need $2,500 and said she would spend some of her money this year to buy trimmings for the trees for next year. The amount is good, but she has not spent it all out of the account. Unless the Mayor has some idea on what he wants to do; it has not been expressed to myself or to Marilynn.

Louis Dagostine: The audit report shows a deficit of roughly $260,000 in the last fiscal year. Could you explain why there was a deficit within the department?

Tom Taylor replied that the deficit goes back to the school buses. The buses and the payment for it went through our budget. The Administrative Office runs the Mayor’s Office and all of the side offices.
Tom Taylor represented the budget for Employee Resources.

Charlotte Madar mentioned that the Mayor matched the Regular Payroll line item. He cut the Part Time Employees line item from $86,646 to $78,000; he cut that line item $8,646. Are you able to function with that cut?

Tom Taylor replied that he will have another plan for that line item. Part of the plan is to come up with a Part Time Files Clerk for the Personnel Department. That is the difference that we had last year. We have a Part Time HR Generalist, and we are going out to see the increase for a Personnel Director. In the next year, one of those are going to get promoted or one of those are going to get eliminated.

Charlotte Madar mentioned the Mayor’s recommended number for the Increments line item, of $74,500 is correct but the requested number was changed; it is $500 less.

Also, the line item for City Unemployment was requested in the amount of $20,000, and the Mayor recommended $7,500.

Tom Taylor said he over expended that line item already by $3,000. At one point it was $1,200 per month. Then it was around $60 in one month, and back up to $120 at another month. I was working under the same constraints from last year. I think a more reasonable figure at this point would be $12,000.

Aldermen Finn said historically that no money was spent out of the Inoculations line item in the past two years. He said he believes that the Highways and Bridges Department be tested and Police Officers get tested, per their contract. If everything is mandated, then Highways & Bridges and the Police per their contract are supposed to have this, and Custodians need to have their shots. Why haven’t we spent any money in two years?

Tom Taylor replied that we are inoculating people, but we cannot force them to take that. We make an offer on it, and document it on paper. We can make the recommendation for it, some take and it is absorbed elsewhere in the budget.

Alderman Finn then asked, and then if it is mandated in their contract for Highways and Bridges, Police Officers and Custodians then no employee can say that they will not take it.
Tom Taylor replied, we still have to offer it.

Alderman Finn then said they could still turn it down even though it is mandated.

Tom Taylor said that is correct.

Louis Dagostine: I have a question on the line item for Volunteer Appreciation Day, and Annual Outing. Do these events still occur? Do they differ from the holiday party?

Tom Taylor replied, that is one of them at Christmas time. We have two events: the outing and Volunteer Appreciation. The other budget is for other activities, such as the event for the Fire Department. Sometimes there are multiple events.

Louis Dagostine: Do we need the December Holiday line item in the Administrative Office budget?

Tom Taylor replied, one of those line items are used when someone dies and the City sends a bouquet of flowers or someone has done something good, and we send something like a fruit basket, as well as all of the Eagle Scout awards for this whole area is covered by this office. Civic Affairs/Public Relations is the line item that funds the Eagle Scout awards.

Louis Dagostine asked if they need all of those separate line items for various functions?

Tom Taylor replied yes.

Louis Dagostine: In terms of surplus last year for Employee Resources, the surplus was almost $1.2 million. What caused such a high surplus in this office?

Tom Taylor replied, that we had expected higher costs for healthcare. It is still going to unknown for the immediate future. We have to pay a part of that, and we have various contracts that we need to meet the criteria that were agreed upon, so we need to reserve enough to do it.

Louis Dagostine asked if there was ever a thought to setup a reserve account for healthcare costs so we are budgeting for those things and end up having a surplus at the end of the year.

Tom Taylor replied, it hasn’t been spoken up but it could be a recommendation from your organization.
More discussion on tape.

**0300 Legislative**

Department Requested $166,142; Mayor recommends $161,020

No representation for Legislative.

**0400 Board of Ethics**

Department Requested $600; Mayor recommends $600

No representation for Board of Ethics.

**1500 Public Employees Appeals Board**

Department Requested $200; Mayor recommends $200

No representation for Public Employees Appeals Board.

**0500 Elections**

Department Requested $159,779; Mayor recommends $153,772

Peter Pavone and Jack Finn represented the Elections budget.

Peter Pavone mentioned that all of the Mayor’s recommendations for the Elections line item are spot on, and are agreed upon except for one. The line item we have a problem with is the Part Time Employees line item. The year to date actual is $27,231, we put in for $45,250. The Mayor’s recommendation was around $6,000 less than what we had asked for. The explanation is that we had an employee who has been on medical sick leave for 4 months, and we are behind and trying to catch up before July 1, 2015. Obviously with part time employees there is not sick time that gets accumulated; I guess that is why the drop was made. The change of around $5,400 is because of the 2016, 150 additional man-hours for $5,400. We would ask if we can have that $6,007 extra?
Peter Pavone also mentioned that we decreased the Poll Workers Account because we had an unexpected election due to the passing of Larry Miller, which was not planned on the books. We also had a primary and a regular election. The line items for Canvassing, Mileage, and Meeting are the same.

Charlotte Madar mentioned that the line item for Printing and Advertising is withdrawn by $4,755.

Alderman Finn replied, that there are a few of the line items that are going to be overdrawn. The Board of Aldermen authorizes to overdraw five line items for the rest of the year. The Board of A & T put in for the primary budget, and the Board of Aldermen took out for the primary budget. Now we are making up the difference of the cost for the various line items: Postage, Printing and Advertising, Poll Workers and Commissary are overdrawn.

Charlotte Madar asked if you have to come in to get the line items moved, getting money out of Contingency?

Alderman Anglace replied, the Board of Aldermen authorizes the over expenditure of those accounts at the end of the year, of the last 60 days, that the Charter allows for transfers of those accounts.

Peter Pavone mentioned that the money that is in the State Inspection account would most likely be moved into the one of the line items that were overdrawn.

1100 Probate Court

Department Requested $12,400; Mayor recommends $12,400

No representation from Probate Court.

1900 Legal-Corporation Counsel

Department Requested $196,763; Mayor recommends $196,763

Atty. Tom Welch represents the Legal-Corporation Counsel budget.

Atty. Welch indicated that the budget has remained unchanged from last year to this year. Some of the costs are fixed; those are the salaries of the legal stenographers which is a stipend for secretarial. The two line items that vary are Legal Fees, and that is a reactive account based upon the amount of litigation.
that takes place. That also pays for outside counsel when there is conflict that my office may not handle, or the Assistant Corporation Counsel. I see that the budget is fair and reasonable. I do not see anything in this current fiscal year that is alarming to me.

Charlotte Madar mentioned that the Court Costs line item is overdrawn. You had $3,000, and you have spent $4,380.

Atty. Welch commented the last budget run off that I have is that I had $3,000, and I spent $1,589 and I have a balance of $1,411.

Alderman Finn advised Atty. Welch to possible speak with the Finance Department and speak to them. Your account has $3,000 and as Ms. Madar pointed out, you are overdrawn by $4,380 yet your balance is $7,380.

Atty. Welch said that the February 4th budget run showed that the Court Costs were at $1,589, with a balance of $1,411. I can check with them tomorrow.

**1700 Drug & Alcohol Commission**

Department Requested $1; Mayor recommends $1

No representation from Drug & Alcohol Commission.

**2900 Public Health**

Department Requested $255,994; Mayor recommends $255,994

The budget for Public is state mandated, so the Mayor matched the request from the department request, which also included funding for Parent Child Resource Center.

**1000 Recreation**

Department Requested $1,592,899; Mayor recommends $1,559,567

Ron Herrick represented the Recreation budget.

Ron Herrick mentioned that most of the line items have been met with the Mayor’s recommendations, with the exception of Regular Payroll of approximately $33,000. We can live with the decrease. We did hire some full time employees. We have filled the Recreation Supervisor position; the Mayor
said instead of hiring an assistant at this point he hired two in that position. In a year or two, he is looking to promote. We have also given out the test for Aquatics Specialist. Right now it is being filled on a provisional basis, so actually it does come out of the Full Time Payroll.

We are also a department that takes in monies; we are doing very well right now.

Charlotte Madar asked Ron about what his revenues look like.

Ron Herrick replied, we have three accounts that we deposit into. The Community Center account balance is $307,304. The Trip Account right now has $4,600. The 14 Account was created when the Community Center opened; we consider that our camps and outside programs. Right now the account balance is $42,800.

More discussion found on tape.

**1400 City/Town Clerk**

Department Requested $484,666; Mayor recommends $484,666

Marge Domorod represented the Town/City Clerk budget.

Charlotte Madar noted that the Mayor matched all of your line items in your budget. On Printing and Advertising, you are overdrawn by $717.

Marge Domorod said she was aware of that and contacted the Accounting Department because they had the primaries this year. Our legal notices are very long, as mandated by the State of Connecticut, by the Secretary of State’s Office. Connecticut Post is charging us more and more to place a legal notice in their paper and that is why we are overdrawn. I was aware of it and I notified Accounting of it.

Charlotte Madar asked if this department is scheduled for a line item transfer?

Marge Domorod responded yes.

We have had an increase in our Part Time account. We have two part time employees, and they both receive 29 hours per week. I never have them working on the same day; we usually rotate our schedules. I just requested what it would cost to pay them for the year. As well, our Printing and
Advertising line item has increased, Dues and Subscriptions because the Town Clerk membership fees have increased. If you also notice, the Records Preservation line item is less; it was $6,500 before and this year it is going to be $4,000. That is a grant that we receive from the State Library, which I have been notified this year that we are only receiving $4,000 so I only asked for $4,000 in that account.

More discussion on tape.

1600 Senior Center

Department Requested $400,273; Mayor recommends $315,740

Kathy Ramia represented the Senior Center budget.

Charlotte Madar mentioned that the Regular Payroll line item was requested from the department as $182,151, and the Mayor recommended $150,000.

Kathy Ramia stated with the support of the Senior Commission, we have left in the Senior Center Clerk position, which is a full time position. At some point, we will be looking for the Bookkeeping position too, which was under the Assistant Director. Now they have taken out the Assistant Director and it would just be the Bookkeeping position. They said to leave that in there just in case those positions would become full time again. The clerk retired three years ago, and then I had a part time person in there and then she retired this past January. We are hoping to fill that Senior Clerk position; right now I have a part time receptionist and a part time bookkeeper.

Charlotte Madar asked Kathy Ramia if her department could survive the minus $32,151?

Kathy Ramia said we also placed the Bookkeeper in the part time because we came before you, and if we ran out of money in the Part Time Payroll, we would take it from the Regular Payroll account. That is what we have been doing for the past four or five years.

Charlotte Madar asked if the Mayor’s request for Regular Payroll would be manageable?

Kathy Ramia responded that her department would be able to do that.
Charlotte Madar noted that the Senior Center has requested a budget of $141,212 for Part Time Payroll and the Mayor recommended $88,400, which is minus $52,812.

Kathy Ramia said that they put the part time bookkeeper in the part time account, but we are hoping that it will become a full time position. Also just two weeks ago, I had to put in a Renter’s Rebate Coordinator who used to work at City Hall, but will now be my employee. I do not know whether the Mayor has included that? That position is also part time, so those are additional monies that have not been in the part time account in the years past.

Charlotte Madar inquired as to how much more are those two positions?

Kathy Ramia replied that the part time bookkeeper at 35 hours would be $45,500. I am wondering if the Mayor took that position out of part time and maybe will take that out of full time payroll? The Senior Commission said to leave the position in the Part Time Payroll account because they were not sure if the Mayor was going to replace anyone as a full time employee. We are hoping that is why he kept it in the full time account. Right now I am the only full time employee, so I think the Commission is hoping that the Mayor will either make the Bookkeeper full time or the Clerk.

Alderman Simonetti asked Kathy Ramia what makes up the $182,151, in the Regular Payroll?

Kathy Ramia responded that we do a payroll accrual. When I called to confirm with Finance that neither of the unions has settled their contract for the accrual. She then said didn’t you get the page where the accrual is automatically calculated for you? I said no and emailed it to me, and that’s why she said to add the accrual for a five-day workweek, which is $6,000. I asked if I should leave the accrual in from last year, and she said yes. The accruals were done by the Finance Department, so the accrual was $6,000 added to last year’s total and that is what it came out to. That would be the Assistant Senior Center Director and the Senior Center Clerk full time positions, which has not been filled for the past 8 years and the other position at 4 years. We keep adding it in at some point we will get a full time person.

Charlotte Madar asked as it stands, are you able to survive with the $150,000 and the $88,400 as the Mayor’s recommendations? Or is it vital that we try to find some money in one of those line items?

Kathy Ramia replied if he is not going to do this the payroll is going to be taken out of Part Time, I am going to have to come back to transfer it out of the Regular Payroll like I have been doing in years past.
Charlotte Madar inquired will the two payroll numbers total be enough for your payroll, whether it is full or part time?

Kathy Ramia replied I think it should be, yes. Those are really the largest differences. I only went up on Postage because our mailing permit went up $20; I usually add $50 just in case the stamps go up. On the Equipment Repair line item, we took out $500 because we do not use the mailing machine that had, so we are deducting the $500 service contract because we will not be using it.

Charlotte Madar noted that the Mayor added that number back into that line item. If you go with his number, you will have extra money to play around with so we will leave the money there.

More discussion found on tape.

Adjournment

Chairman Madar MOVED to adjourn the March 23, 2015 Budget Hearing meeting; seconded by Joe Palmucci. A voice vote was taken; motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned approximately 8:00pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Brittany Gannon, Clerk