Call to Order / Pledge of Allegiance:

Ken Olin, Chairman, called the Board of Apportionment & Taxation Budget Workshop meeting to order at approximately 6:00 p.m. All those present recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

BOARD OF APPORTIONMENT & TAXATION:

Ken Olin, Chairman- Present
Wayne Bragg- Present
Charlotte Madar-Present
Judson Crawford-Present
John Belden- Present
Jimmy Tickey- Present
**BOARD OF ALDERMEN:**

John Anglace, President-Present  
Lynne Farrell- Present  
Jack Finn- Present  
Stan Kudej- Present  
Noreen McGorty- Excused  
John Papa- Excused  
Anthony Simonetti- Excused

6100 Miscellaneous

Department requested $0; Mayor recommended $1,481,250

Non-attendance.

Chairman Olin: Under Youth Programs, the original budget was $400,000, the adjusted budget was $400,000. They spent $11,663 and their balance is $388,337; meanwhile the Mayor slashed their budget to $275,000.

Wayne Bragg: Why isn’t there a request?

Alderman Finn: There is nothing in the book.

Wayne Bragg: Does that mean that they do not want anything?

Chairman Olin: I do not know.

Wayne Bragg: They spent $11,000 this year.

6200 Capital Spending
Department requested $0; Mayor recommended $15,000

Non-attendance.

**6500 Outside Agencies**

Department requested $361,165; Mayor recommended $329,165

Kathy Bronson, Christian Counseling Center
(Board of Directors and Treasurer for the Christian Counseling Center)

Judson Crawford: Have you read, or put on the board, that anything given out to other outside agencies, there is an Ordinance #659 that has to be adhered to before any funds are given out.

Wayne Bragg: What does the ordinance say?

Judson Crawford: Record financial auditing by outside agencies.

Wayne Bragg: So, you are saying that every one of these requests require an outside audit.

Alderman Finn: The only one that is not in compliance is TEAM. They did not fill out a form.

Charlotte Madar: We are okay for everyone else, except TEAM.

Kathy Bronson: Our clinical director is away, so she will not be able to attend. She speaks very eloquently on the mission of our center. I have been a long-time board member and treasurer. The center currently provides counseling services to the Town of Shelton, and approximately thirty plus towns that are represented. We provide approximately 5400 counseling hours in this past year. One of the newer things that we have provided this year was teen and adolescent group counseling. It was weekly counseling that went over very well; it was made up of primarily City of Shelton teens. The
other that was very well received was an adolescent group for eating disorder therapy, which it will be continuing. We are able to offer that based on the funds that are received, from the City of Shelton, so that has been very helpful.

I remember from last year, we have talked about our intern program and that was very successful this past year; we are hoping to expand on that. It also helps us to provide the counseling hours at a reduced rate. So, again, we are finding it very difficult for people to afford counseling services due to job loss, reduced insurance benefits. The funds help us to do that, also. One of the things that are unique to our center are Med Management: we have a psychiatrist on staff in the center, so we are able to offer the counseling services, but in fact, if someone needs to be offered the medical management program, we do not have to send them to another center because we are able to administer all of the services at our center. Our center is also very conducive to family therapy. We have a licensed social worker, and licensed marriage and family therapists, psychiatrists and APRNs on staff.

Chairman Olin: Are these full-time?

Kathy Bronson: It is not full-time, based on the clinical hours and the therapists. Most of them are probably around twenty hours per week. The therapy hour is considered to be one hour, but then there is also the work behind it.

Alderman Finn: It is my understanding that the Christian Counseling Center has set up staff in Newtown, to assist the children and the adults after the Sandy Hook shooting. That was above and beyond of taking care of the needs of the center.

Kathy Bronson: That was one of the things I wanted to say, as a Board Member, the next day the Board got an email stating how the counseling center had reacted to the tragedy. Our psychiatrists had contacted them and offered the center’s support, and then of course, our clinical director also contacted them. We have two people on the Board that are Newtown residents, so currently we have a staff member that is still working within the school, helping out. I just thought it was very nice for the City to respond so quickly, and we
were actually able to provide services. A school to offer grief support also contacted us. I thought it was very nice for our City. I was also pleased as a Board Member to have had that email immediately. The center is working with other agencies to address how in the future, the outside agencies to come together to work quickly and respond. I thought that reflected very well on the City of Shelton, to have our center respond and be so involved.

Wayne Bragg: The current budget is $4,000. You spent that amount and are you requesting an extra $10,000. Briefly describe to us to what is creating that difference.

Kathy Bronson: Each year we have requested the $10,000, and we have been allocated the $4,000. Every year the need keeps on increasing and we always find that we need more and more. As I said, the economic conditions and more people needing additional counseling services. The need is great and we are a very frugal center. We offer quite a bit in our center, and the fact that we have a psychiatrist on staff is really amazing for the center. We make our dollar stretch as far as we can. We can always use more, and our internship program is doing very well and we would like to expand it. Our group sessions are another good area for the teens. So, we are always in dire need of funds.

Alderman Finn: Some time, the center is looking to expand and hold a second floor. Maybe some time in the future, you can offer additional services to more Shelton residents.

Kathy Bronson: Our clinical director speaks very well of the mission. She and I are Shelton residents, so she would be glad to talk to anyone, if anyone has any other questions. I know that she was very disappointed that she could not be here tonight. She would be glad to meet with anyone, or a group. It would be a plus if you would take a trip to visit the center.

John Belden: Where are you located?

Kathy Bronson: We are located in Huntington Center. I think the other plus: it almost looks like a little house, so it is very conducive to family and children therapy.
John Belden: It is right along the backside of the green.

Kathy Bronson: We are centrally located and as I said, it is very conducive for family therapy. It is beneficial, especially for children because you are not going into a big building, hospital or a regular center setting.

Judson Crawford: This is information for you and your Board: when I was reading the information, under the need of the center, and the Board of Directors are appealing to the Town of Shelton. It is notified as being the City of Shelton.

What would happen if you were cut, as the Mayor has done? Would you be able to live with a cut?

Kathy Bronson: We are always looking to be sustainable as a non-profit, to be able to continue. We have been there for 35 years, and we have celebrated our 35th anniversary. We are looking to stay sustainable, but that is where we were able to build up these group sessions, internship programs. Naturally, when you lose funding, you have to cut in different areas. We are very frugal, so we would find a way to stay there. I don’t think that we would be able to offer what we do now, if we did not have the funds to do it.

Alderman Finn: It is a tight budget and have learned to live with it. If there are shortfalls, we just move things around to make sure everything balances.

Charlotte Madar: I have a question: comparing your 2012 income and expenses. Last year you had a total income of $563 and this year you projected $529. Your client fees have dropped in income; the insurance is dropped for income. The Medical Management has dropped well over the difference of the $6,000 that the Mayor dropped; it is way over $6,000.

Kathy Bronson: Is that our budget?

Charlotte Madar: It is your 2013 budget.
Kathy Bronson: Generally we run a very conservative budget, so when we set out to do our budget, we do it based on historical information and we budget on a certain number of hours. Our budget is based on 5400 therapy hours, but last year we did 5600 therapy hours. Currently we budget conservatively, which means that-

Charlotte Madar: If you did more, than why are you getting less insurance income? You have dropped from $271,000 insurance income to $265,000. If you say you have more client hours, wouldn’t you have more insurance and client fees coming in?

Kathy Bronson: We would, but 2013 is based- so what happens is when we go back to do our budget, we budget based on the 5400 therapy hours, so we did 5400 in 2012; so in 2012, it shows more income than our 2013 budget.

Charlotte Madar: So you don’t expect the 254? If you are budgeting for less, than you would expect less. Correct?

Kathy Bronson: Generally we would hope to see that-

Charlotte Madar: That is how you based it, because it is well below. The $529,000 total, compared to $563,000 is over $30,000 less. The $6,000 that was cut by the Mayor was wiped out in here. I am just trying to reconcile from what you were showing from last year.

Kathy Bronson: As I said, we budget on a 5400 therapy hour, but depending on what we provide, we would expect to do beyond, or at least go beyond what we did in 2012. Based historically, we also provided below that, so each year when we try to do our budget, we budget on 5400 hours, just to be sure. If we do not go over 5400 hours, then that is our base point. We have working with our budget, with this number, for a number of years. I always feel comfortable basing below, or conservatively at 5400 hours. As the budget increases, then the costs and therapy hours will rise. We always seem to break even or go into a minor deficit.

Alderman Finn: Right now we are running deficits; we are actually breaking even now.
Kathy Bronson: When I came on the Board, we were suffering from a deficit position and we worked a number of years to get us at that break-even stance.

Alderman Farrell: I sit on the Board of the Connecticut Mental Health Foundation, and I also sit on the Board of Area Cooperative Educational Services and about five other boards dealing with the same thing. Right now it is critical to give funding to these types of organizations because of not just what is happening with Newtown but Boston and wherever else. It seems to be in the environment lately, and people need to have these services.

Kathy Bronson: We have clinical director and an administrative director and they would be glad to meet with anyone who has other questions.

Chairman Olin: Every year they request $10,000 and the Mayor cuts them back to $4,000.

Charlotte Madar: I think any amount that we give to these places is a good deal.

9900 Contingency

Department requested $0; Mayor recommended $150,000

Alderman Anglace: With the Contingency Account, it all depends on what happens.

The Board of Aldermen is a five-year bonding. I believe we had a little over $2,000,000 this year, and it has been pretty much the same amount of money. We do take of a lot of things; we just had our regular meeting and we have just approved 3 vehicles for maintenance, $56,000 for air-breathing apparatus, etc. We also approved the ordinance for the Open Space Account. That is done with Conservation’s full knowledge and understanding. Instead of putting $250,000 in that line item account, we will transfer in 45 days, to the Open Space Trust Account. We are going to replace what Open Space spends during the year out of the Trust Account, up to
$50,000 maximum. Historically they have not spent over $50,000, so we are well into the confines of what they need to operate. The kinds of monies that they do spend it if they get an appraisal on a piece of property, pinning within the boundaries of a property, if they have illegal expenses in conjunction with the purchase of the property, or whatever their needs are on obtaining properties for the City. There are some issues with Open Space, where some people have encroached on open space and Theresa Gallagher, who is involved with Open Space, has brought this to the attention of the Mayor and Corporation Counsel. In essence, some have encroached accidentally and some have encroached when they were absolutely aware of what is going on. There are certain kinds of encroachments for different situations. Open Space felt that it was best for the Mayor and Counsel to get into it and to assess the situation; to go out and look at it and then to make a decision; they are in the process of doing that. It hasn’t resulted in any expenditure from Open Space Trust Account, but in some cases, to give you an example: there is a cul-de-sac and you know how houses are on cul-de-sacs- there is a trail in the back of Sinsabaugh Heights and what happened was that Open Space was doing this in the trail they had to take into consideration that the houses were there. We needed people to get onto the trail, so we had some Open Space given to us between two houses and it gets somewhat close. The trail goes up there, right into the cul-de-sac and you walk up to the next street to pick up the rest of the trail. It is not the best of situations, but it was a compromise that Open Space had to make. There have been issues with some of the people that live in those houses, they have small children and there are strangers around and they do not know who is who. It is not a good situation, so the short end of it, is that it was referred to the Mayor also. Him and Counsel are looking at that to see what they can do about that. One of those people that live in those houses has encroached on Open Space. I don’t think that they did it willingly or knowingly, so they are up there and working out the situation.

Open Space hasn’t spent any money on any serious court cases over it, but those are the kind of things that they could spend money on. That ordinance changed so we do not have to put $250,000 in. We cannot tell you until the year is over to know what we are going to need for next year. I think Tom Harbinson could give us a good estimate of how much he thinks that they will spend this year. If you
want, I will follow up with Tom and I will let you know, or I will have Tom write Ken an email, and have him give you an estimate. I will explain to Tom and see what we have to do.

Charlotte Madar: If they are going to take the money out of that $50,000, do we have to allow money in the budget, as well?

We have $250,000 in there, theoretically and now there is going to be $50,000 available to them, so we do not have to give them any of that $50,000?

Alderman Anglace: We have to put it in the budget. Here’s what is going to happen: I will talk to Tom Harbinson and tell him to give us a number that you feel comfortable with, the number that you are going to spend out of the Open Space Trust Account from last year. I will have him write that to Ken, you can then plug that number into the Open Space Account and that will be the amount of money that you give them. Tom Harbinson knows that it will be somewhere up to $50,000. It could be as much as $50,000, but it cannot exceed $50,000.

The main reason for all this change is that the properties that we have been purchasing, and we have properties on the radar and we are negotiating other properties now, this will give us an idea, confidentially. Somebody approached us about a piece of property on Utonka Trail, in Pine Rock Park. It is not a major expense- the maximum would probably be around $10,000 for the property. We would just pick that up and pay for it, no brainer. Other properties, such as that chicken farm; we made a deal and we are paying for it over three years. The price would be $150,000 over three years. The people like this deal because they do not get all of the money in one year. Income tax does not hit them, and they get it in three years. From our point of view, it is good because we can spread out the cost over three years. There were several properties that were doing this and we exceeded the $250,000 consistently over the last six or seven years. The radar says that we are going to continue to do that. These are not major pieces of property, maybe at 150 acres, but these are good-sized pieces.

How big is the size of the chicken farm?
Alderman Finn: It runs from behind the Police Department to Huntington Center.

Alderman Anglace: Apart of the deal, we gave him the use of the chicken coops. I think we have been fortunate in the Open Space area. We are talking about additional properties to the high school complex. The other one that we did, adjacent to that was Soundview Avenue, and we are now in the process of negotiation over a 9 acre piece contiguous to that whole thing. It is a good central area to keep building, and the people that have these properties know it, and know it is good for the City and they are calling us. I think they are talking to some people in White Hills as well. We changed the way we do business; it is as much in our best interest, as well as the people’s interest to sell.

Alderman Finn: We have a problem on Wesley Drive, where this woman enters into the Open Space; they encroached on it by 70 feet.

Charlotte Madar: Are there any questions on Capital Spending?

(No questions were posed on Capital Spending)

2. ADJOURNMENT

Charlotte Madar MOVED to adjourn the Budget Hearing meeting of the Board of Apportionment and Taxation; SECONDED by Wayne Bragg. A voice vote was taken and the motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned approximately 6:45 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Brittany Gannon
Acting Clerk, Board of Apportionment and Taxation