

# ~CITY COUNCIL COMMITTEE REPORT~

## *Budget Hearing*

### *Health, Housing, Public Safety, Social Services*

Tuesday, April 10, 2012

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Chairman Philip Curran called the meeting to order at 7:21 p.m. on Tuesday, April 10, 2012, in Room 3C, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Danbury City Hall, 155 Deer Hill Avenue. Present was Committee members Jack Knapp, Phil Colla, Paul Rotello and Andrew Wetmore. Also present to address the Budget: David St. Hilaire, Director of Finance; Shawn Stillman, U.N.I.T.; Chief Alan Baker, Danbury Police Department; Chief Geoff Herald, Danbury Fire Department; Scott Leroy, Health & Human Services; Paul Estefan, Civil Preparedness; Pat Waldron, Veterans Advisor. Ex Officio Members: Joe Cavo, Warren Levy, Colleen Stanley, Mary Teicholz and Fred Visconti.

Chairman Curran introduced everyone present at the meeting.

Mr. St. Hilaire reviewed the line items as follows:

#### Police Department:

Budget was increased from \$14,947,207 to \$15,415,789 due to contractual increases (2.25%) and motor vehicle fuel increases (additional \$40,000). Minor line item adjustments, nothing significant. Chief Baker pointed out that beginning July 1<sup>st</sup>, there is an unfunded state mandate regarding basic training and continuing education. The items is not reflected in the budget, however funds will be shifted from line items to make it work. Chief Baker is pleased with the budget.

#### Animal Control:

Budget was increased from \$272,478 to \$280,777 due to contractual increases and motor vehicle fuel increases. A new vehicle is anticipated in the next 3-4 years. \$14,000 has been set aside in reserve which will be built upon for the purchase.

#### Fire Department:

Budget was slightly increased from \$11,589,983 to \$11,606,637 due to motor vehicle fuel increases. No significant change in the overall budget. Contract has not been settled—no contractual increases within the Fire Department. There have been shifts within the line items—#5855, contribution grants, \$15,000, training school, line item has been reassigned to #5502-0001, maintain building training school; lease equipment line dropped significantly because of a lease being removed, \$45,000, funds have been reallocated throughout the line items. A new capital item proposed—ladder truck—there is a proposal to lease-to-purchase the truck for either seven or ten years. Chief Herald noted the department has fourteen vacancies, the overtime expense will increase slightly, however, personnel are paid straight time.

#### Ambulance Fund:

Budget decreased from \$3,274,765 to \$3,062,631. Budgetarily, last year, they were not treated as an enterprise fund, this year, they are going to be treated as an enterprise fund. Last year, we used the operating transfer out to the general fund. As an enterprise fund, we want to fully cost the department out. In order to have a true cost, we need to assign all the associated costs—including the first responders. Chief Herald pointed out a number of programs the department is trying to implement. Of importance is the evolution of fire and emergency services. The fire load has dropped and the medical load has increased. Over 60% of the fire

department calls are medical calls/first responder calls. At the same time, the ambulance calls have increased. The expense of an ambulance to respond, treat and transport to the hospital is expensive. A paramedicine program is being looked into. This group will be out in the community to address various community issues in the hopes of reducing the potential for calls—either medical or fire emergency services.

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Unified Neighborhood Inspect (UNIT):

Budget decreased from \$128,904 to \$123,555 due to a reduction in part-time salaries. Shawn Stillman expressed a desire to participate in some form of safety training but did not have the funds and Mr. St. Hilaire assured Mr. Stillman the funds would be made available to him as safety is the number one concern.

Veteran's Advisory:

Budget increased from \$57,568 to \$59,068 due to replacement uniforms and motor vehicle fuel. No significant changes.

Health & Human Services:

Budget decreased from \$1,358,714 to \$1,303,560. 5% reduction to the grant agencies and slight reallocation to the line items.

Civil Preparedness:

Budget increased from \$127,550 to \$127,950 due to the use of the War Memorial. Paul Estefan explained that for the last 50+ years, the War Memorial has been used for more events than any one particular City facility. It is primarily used as a shelter—no matter what the issue. The funds would be used to upgrade the locker rooms for handicapped accessibility. The men's locker room will be upgraded first as that is where all the plumbing is housed. The women's locker room will follow.

Building Inspector:

Budget increased from \$638,968 to \$658,456 due to contractual increases and a small increase to outside services. Mr. St. Hilaire created a line item for building emergencies.

Dept. of Consumer Protection:

Budget increased from \$53,381 to \$54,449 due to contractual increases.

Elderly Services:

Budget remained flat. They were able to take on the contractual increases as a result of the reduction in part-time salaries.

Elderly Transportation:

Budget remained flat.

Community Services-Total:

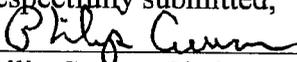
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Budget decreased from \$456,275 to \$433,461, overall 5% (Downtown Council, United Way, Volunteer Center). Community Services has seen a 35% reduction over four years. The agencies throughout the City have come together to work more effectively.

**A motion was made by Councilman Knapp and seconded by Councilman Colla that the Committee recommends to the City Council that they accept the Mayor's proposed budget for Health, Housing, Public Safety and Social Services as presented subject to Public Hearing. The motion carried unanimously.**

**A motion to adjourn was made by Councilman Rotello and seconded by Councilman Wetmore. The motion carried unanimously at 9:00 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,



Philip Curran, Chairman

Jack Knapp

Phil Colla

Paul Rotello

Andrew Wetmore