

Budget Hearing
Health, Housing, Public Safety, Social Services
Wednesday, April 17, 2013

Chairman Phil Curran called the meeting to order at 5:45 p.m. on Wednesday, April 17, 2013, in the Caucus Room, 3rd Floor, Danbury City Hall, 155 Deer Hill Avenue. Present was Committee members Jack Knapp, Andrew Wetmore and Paul Rotello. Phil Colla was unable to attend.

Also present to address the Budget: Mayor Mark Boughton; David St. Hilaire, Director of Finance; Paul Estefan, Civil Preparedness; Chief Alan Baker, Danbury Police Department; Chief Geoff R. Herald, Fire Department; Scott LeRoy, Director of Health, Housing & Welfare; Shawn Stillman, U.N.I.T.; Leo Null, Building Inspector.

Ex Officio Members: Duane Perkins, Joe Cavo, Fred Visconti, Colleen Stanley, Warren Levy.

Chairman Curran opened up the meeting to Mr. St. Hilare. Mr. St. Hilare reviewed the line items as follows:

Building Inspector:

Budget was slightly reduced from \$658,456 to \$658,072. The department was able to absorb the contractual salary increases within the budget, primarily within part-time. Under safety equipment, Mr. Null pointed out that per the contract agreement, steel-toed shoes have to be supplied. The union contracted amount is \$85/pair. The proposed \$680 was for the contract only and he is asking for an additional \$180.

Civil Preparedness:

Budget was reduced from \$127,950 to \$124,815 due to the elimination of the office equipment line.

Health & Human Services:

Budget was increased from \$1,303,560 to \$1,323,560 due to contractual salary increases. Last year, there was a vacant position which has been filled. Outside services has been reduced.

Unified Neighborhood Inspect (UNIT):

Budget was increased from \$123,555 to \$140,507. Part-time salaries account was increased due to downtown area. Mayor Boughton pointed out some necessary shifting of funds may occur within this line item once the retirement incentive program gets underway. Part-time positions will be switched to full-time.

Police Department:

Budget was increased from \$15,415,789 to \$15,779,456 due to contractual salary increases. They have shifted funds from other line items to help with overtime. Of note is the cost of ammunition and fuel rising considerably. Chief Baker pointed out the new computers will need to be reflected in the next budget because the computers will not be installed by July 1, 2013—it is anticipated they will be installed within the new fiscal year. Chief Baker updated his staffing position—his department currently employs 146 but should be staffed at 155 employees.

Budget was increased due to contractual salary increases, overtime went up slightly, fuel increases. Two capital reserve accounts have been reserved: equipment, building & structure. Every four years or so, their vehicle needs to be replaced which is specialized. The building is in serious need of repair/replacement within the next five years. Employees: 2 full-time animal control officers, 1 secretary, 2 part-time kennel cleaners.

Fire Department:

Budget was increased from 11,480,017 to \$12,396,637. The department is operating with a significantly short head-count. They have had to supplement with overtime. Every other line remains relatively flat. The department has some ongoing needs for equipment replacement—some not immediate—a capital replacement program is being established. A new budget item is a replacement program for rescue tools and fire apparatus—the funds cannot be used for any other purpose.

Dept. of Consumer Protection:

Budget was slightly reduced from \$54,449 to \$53,349. This department is a service as provided department. Mayor Boughton would like to have an eye toward expanding services in the future.

Elderly Services:

Budget remained flat.

Elderly Transportation:

Budget remained flat. Staffing is always a challenge, currently there are two part-time drivers.

Veteran's Advisory:

Budget was increased from \$59,068 to \$62,068. The part-time salary was slightly modified.

Ambulance Fund:

The difference between the current year's budget and next year's budget is how the equipment line will be handled. The line is being removed as it is a capital request. The remaining lines have no significant change.

Health Empl. Benefits:

Budget was reduced from \$20,000 to \$0. No need to fund vacant positions as the department is fully staffed, there is no need to fill positions in the next budget year.

Public Safety Empl. Benefits:

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Budget was reduced from \$450,000 to \$223,770. There was a greater need in the Fire Department budget, funds were shifted to accommodate the needs of that department (i.e. fund vacant positions, needs for U.N.I.T., Police Department, etc.).

Community Services:

Budget was reduced from \$506,972 to \$462,691 (Downtown Council, United Way, Volunteer Center).

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. The motion carried unanimously.

A motion to adjourn was made by Councilman Wetmore and seconded by Councilman Knapp. The motion carried unanimously at 7:06 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Phil Curran, Chairman

Jack Knapp

Andrew Wetmore

Paul Rotello