

The Council of the City of Milford met in a Budget Work Session in Council Chambers at 745 Center St. at 9:00 a.m. on November 19, 2011. Mayor Vilardo, Jr. called the meeting to order.

Roll Call: Present: Mayor Vilardo, Jr., Vice Mayor Pittman, Ms. Evans, Ms. Hinners, Mr. Lykins, Ms. Brewer and Ms. Walter.

Also present were: Jeff Wright, City Manager; Dan Burke, Finance Director; Pam Holbrook, Assistant City Manager; Susan Ellerhorst, Assistant to the City Manager; Jamey Mills, Chief of Police; and Ed Hackmeister, Service Department Superintendent.

Mr. Burke reviewed all of the budget changes that City Council authorized at the October 29th meeting. He showed how these budget changes affected the cash balance in the General Fund, the Park Fund, and Capital Fund.

Mr. Wright indicated that the Municipal Building is not up to date as it relates to Fire Codes. Mr. Hackmeister has made him aware of various 'dead zones' within the building and strobes that are no longer functional. It is the intent of Mr. Wright to bring the building 'to code' not only for the safety of employees and tenants but to hold the City to the same high standards as we hold others.

Mr. Wright also stated his desire to add trees to the Parkway and place 'running' clocks to all new vehicle purchases.

Mr. Dan Burke, Finance Director, opened the Income Tax and Finance Budget discussion.

Mr. Burke discussed upgrades within the Finance Department. He is particularly pleased with the residents' response to the new bills. The new one-page bills offer a usage graph, news of the City and with the inclusion of return envelopes, seem to be more user-friendly than the previous billing cards.

Recently Steve Wagner, retired Finance Director, came into the office to audit vehicle registration. He discovered 347 errors from 2009 amounting to a recovery of \$13,000 and 357 errors from 2010 amounting to a recovery of \$14,000.

He will be invited into the office to audit the 2011 registrations. Once the changes are made, they are permanent and we will receive this money annually.

Allyn Bartlett has refocused his attention to tax collection with emphasis on early tax filing and online filing now being available. We extended office hours to be available in the evenings but found that no one came in to take advantage of it. We intend to try it again in the spring.

We and RITA held office subpoena programs this fall. The City collected \$2,258,000 in earnings tax revenue this year. This includes revenue from Tata that was submitted in error and later refunded. Our 2011 collections are \$99,000 higher than 2009 and \$191,000 higher than 2010. The increase is a good indicator of growth within the City and can also be attributed to aggressive collection efforts by City staff.

Mr. Burke listed several goals for the Finance Department:

- 1) Landlords – rent rule requirements. We would like to be able to count on monthly reports of residents from rental property owners and be able to issue a fine for non-compliance.
- 2) At this time we have a couple different address lists within different departments – he would like to have one 'master list' of addresses including whether or not the addresses are for rental property and who is the owner
- 3) He would like to have online credit card payments available to residents in the first billing of 2012. There would be a 2% cost to the City which we could either pay ourselves or cover with an add-on fee to the bill payer. He will continue to gather information on this and will be able to give a recommendation to Council.
- 4) He is working with Mr. Wright to restructure utility rates (ie. more to water, less to sewer). We may not be raising net costs to residents, just revising the various utility rates.

Mr. Burke indicated that year-to-date Inheritance Taxes collections are unusually low in 2011.

In closing he mentioned that two members of his staff will be retiring: Jenny Yoho in 2012 and Pam Lee in 2013. The final dates of both retirements are contingent on the State Pension Funds available to them. He will, however, need funds to pay both for approximately one month to train their replacements.

Ms. Pam Holbrook opened the Planning/Zoning Budget discussion.

Ms. Holbrook indicated that there is an increase in Professional Services line in the event a study relating to the Lila Avenue – Main Street area is needed.

The increase in Line Items **2500-2521** relate to the Plotter to work with the GIS implementation software which will support utility services and the City Engineer. The Water Department would be the first department brought online. The others would follow.

The first step would be to purchase the equipment and software in January. The next step would involve gathering data. The Water Department will be shooting points and gathering data. However, there might be a need to hire a student or intern to help gather data and perhaps an engineering company to assist in shooting the points.

The goal is to have all departments within the City to have access to the GIS program. While this equipment and software would not bring in any revenue to the City, it would allow us to do our jobs more effectively. At the present we have to have a staff member take maps to be copied to other entities.

Ms. Brewer asked if other local communities have a plotter.

Both Mr. Wright and Ms. Holbrook answered in the affirmative: both Loveland and Miami Township have this equipment.

Ms. Holbrook then distributed the Trail User Survey to those in attendance. She indicated that not a lot of people had come to the Trail User meeting; however, those who came are passionate about the trails. The attendees all agreed that a map listing restaurants, parks, and associated businesses (Bishop's Bicycles) would be very helpful to those on the trail.

Ms. Holbrook indicated that she thought it would be helpful to have a "Welcome to Milford" sign at the canoe livery at Jim Terrell Park.

Presently Ms. Holbrook is working on the Sign Ordinance which will appear before the Planning Commission on December 14th and before City Council in January. One of the topics that will be brought before Council will be electronic message centers. Staff does not see any issues with these signs other than being able to regulate brightness. Staff also recommends limiting portable signage and replacing them using an A-frame sign program.

Ms. Holbrook will be working on Hamilton County CDBG Projects in 2012. She also wanted to inform Council that the landscaping pre-bid meeting was held yesterday (11-18-11) and it appears that eight vendors will likely bid on the contract.

Mr. Jeff Wright opened the City Manager Budget discussion.

Mr. Wright indicated that there have been several changes in the past few months:

- 1) We have two new tenants upstairs.
- 2) We have offered extra training of employees – CPR, fire extinguisher, and computer training for several employees. Susan Ellerhorst has been instrumental in scheduling these trainings.
- 3) He has added a level of communication with the weekly reports to Council and Department Heads.
- 4) IT improvements include a disaster recovery system that includes all of our satellite buildings.
- 5) CIP includes a refined budget process allowing the information to be available earlier in the budgeting process.
- 6) The signage at the Municipal Building has been improved.
- 7) The Service Department, under Ed Hackmeister, worked quickly to prepare the 3rd floor for tenants.
- 8) We will introduce a Wellness Program to staff members to encourage them to be pro-active in their overall health and wellness.

Mr. Wright indicated that he believes we need perception changes in how we view ourselves, how our businesses view us and how do our residents view us. He distributed an insert from 'Cincy Magazine' that highlighted the City of Montgomery. He has arranged to have a similar insert promote Milford in the May issue. We will be collecting advertising sponsors to cover the cost. He will be working closely with Pam Holbrook, Susan Ellerhorst and Karen Wikoff in this project.

Ms. Brewer asked how the staff perceived the changes.

Mr. Wright stated that the great majority of staff are very excited with the changes. He indicated that he has an 'open door' policy that has welcomed all staff members to discuss ideas for improvement with him. The Department Heads have been very supportive of positive changes.

Mr. Wright then explained that Economic Development increases in 2012 will include small business enhancement grants. The enhancements can include improvements to signage and store fronts. We will also be able to supplement this fund with monies from CDBG Grants.

Mr. Pittman asked if we have considered advertisements in the 'Ohio' magazine.

Mr. Wright answered that the 'Ohio' magazine and 'Cincy' magazine have the same publisher so it is very possible that our insert from the 'Cincy' magazine could appear in some context in the 'Ohio' magazine at a lower cost.

Mayor Vilaro asked if we have someone who vets events. The conception within the City residents is that all events are 'ours'.

Mr. Wright replied that we do not. The events involve different staff members who then pass the information on to those Department Heads who will be involved.

Ms. Walter asked if an Event Coordinator would work through the Community Development Commission.

Mayor Vilaro stated that he thinks it would be a good idea to have one person who coordinates the events; who has all the facts since we are inconveniencing residents by closing roads. The residents need one person to talk to who has the timetable for road closures, etc.

There was a general discussion regarding how events are coordinated within the City.

Mr. Wright then continued with discussion of the City Manager budget. He said that within the Personal Policy book it states that Education Reimbursement is available to staff members. He has never heard of anyone who actually received a reimbursement. He mentioned that Susan Ellerhorst is enrolled in a Master Program at NKU in Public Administration and she has been paying the total costs herself. He feels she is a perfect example of one who deserves and would be entitled to education reimbursement.

Ms. Brewer stated the City should also reimburse staff for the cost of maintaining their CDL licensure.

Mr. Wright agreed then opened a discussion regarding health insurance. The employees pay 3% of the costs at this time. They will pay an additional 3% in August, 2012. The City cannot continue to pay 30% increases annually for this insurance. Council will support a move to leave the CLG insurance pool if it beneficial. The first date a move from the pool would be available is August 1, 2012.

Discussion of the Law Director Budget opened at this time.

There are no changes in the 2012 Budget except an allowance for a possible salary increase.

Discussion of the City Council Budget opened at this time.

The City Council Budget basically covers membership dues, and support of affiliations.

Mr. Wright received a request from Angelo Santoro to support a Clermont County Philharmonic concert at SEM on July 8, 2012. The concert is open to all residents. The cost would be \$1,500. This is an event we have supported in the past. Council agreed that this was a worthwhile event.

Ms. Walter asked if we could also support the Terrace Park Country Club fireworks display on July 4, 2012. We have never offered financial support.

Mayor Vilaro stated that our police officers already provide traffic support for the event. Council agreed that this is an event we should support with a financial donation and additional police officers.

Miscellaneous Information

Mr. Burke stated that we will have an audit in 2012.

Mr. Pittman made a Motion to change the allocation of funds collected income tax to 96% General Fund and 4% Capital Fund, seconded by Mr. Lykins. All voted yes.

Mayor Vilaro asked for a Motion to Adjourn. Mr. Lykins made a Motion to Adjourn the Budget Meeting; seconded by Mr. Pittman. All voted yes.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:55 a.m.