

CITY OF MILFORD  
COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES  
December 11, 2023

The City Council of the City of Milford met in Regular Session on Monday, December 11, 2023, in the Joseph Ronnie Rogers Council Chambers at Milford City Hall, 201 South Walnut Street, Milford, Delaware.

PRESIDING: Mayor Archie Campbell

IN ATTENDANCE: Councilmembers Daniel Marabello, Mike Boyle, Todd Culotta, Nirmala Samaroo, Brian Baer, Jason James Sr., and Katrina Wilson

STAFF: City Manager Mark Whitfield, Police Chief Cecilia Ashe, and City Clerk Terri Hudson

COUNSEL: Solicitor David Rutt, Esquire

ABENT: Councilmember Andrew Fulton

#### PUBLIC COMMENT SESSION PRIOR TO MEETING

William Newsome talked about the many conversations he has had with Milford Police Officers about local unpermitted, uninsured, and unregistered food trucks in Milford. He asked Council to investigate these matters.

With no other persons signed up to speak, the Public Comment Session was closed.

#### CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Campbell called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m., prior to the scheduled Public Comment period.

#### INVOCATION AND PLEDGE

The invocation was given by Councilmember Wilson, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

#### APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

Councilmember Boyle moved to approve the minutes of the August 14, 23, 28, September 11 and 25, 2023 Council Meetings and Workshop, seconded by Councilmember Baer. Motion carried.

#### RECOGNITION

##### *Economic Development Administrator Sara Bluhm*

Economic Development and Community Engagement Administrator Sara Bluhm was commended for being one of twenty-nine students who graduated from Leadership Delaware Incorporated on December 6<sup>th</sup>.

##### *2023 Excellence Award Winners*

The following four employees were recognized:

On Saturday, December 23, 2022, Brian Jester, and Charlie Nordberg were given direction to begin making the Public Works Conference room ready for weekend, overnight guests to be used as an emergency shelter from the weather. The action was taken quickly and efficiently, enabling disadvantaged people from the local Community - to stay indoors for the weekend, during a life-threatening cold snap that took place over the Christmas Holiday

Faith Argo always assists every department with a willingness to help and an attitude of patience and kindness no matter what the situation. She has been a tremendous support person in the stressful implementation of the city's new ERP system.

Steve Zeveney jumped to action to assist an elderly Milford resident who had fallen outside her home on Clearview Drive, Hearthstone, Milford on September 8, 2023. He saw the resident, assessed her injuries, and sought immediate medical assistance for her, after which he stayed with her until EMTs arrived to transport her to the hospital.

#### PUBLIC HEARINGS/FINAL DETERMINATION/ADOPTION OF ORDINANCES

Solicitor Rutt read the rules of the public hearing into record.

It was noted that the next two items were originally scheduled for public hearings on November 27<sup>th</sup>, but action was postponed due to the applicants not being in attendance.

Councilmember Wilson moved to remove Ordinance 2023-46 and Ordinance 2023-47 from the table for discussion and action this evening. Motion carried.

#### *Ordinance 2023-46*

*Legal Owner Randall Kenton for a Change of Zone from*

*I-1 (Limited Industrial District), I-2 (General Industrial District) to C-3 (Highway Commercial)*

*3.72 +/- acres of land located along the north side of NE Front Street and the east side of N. Rehoboth Boulevard*

*Address: 609 NE Front Street, Milford, DE*

*Present Use Pallet Recycling; Proposed Use Pallet Recycling*

*Tax Parcel MD-16-183.07-01-12.00 & MD-16-183.07-01-14.00*

Planner Pierce read the reports from the packet and pointed out the various items included in the packet. The parcels are located east of North Robe, with Boulevard and north of Northeast Front Street, generally at the corner of those 2 streets.

The public notice was published in the Delaware State News on October 30<sup>th</sup> and owners of properties within 200 feet of the parcel were mailed a copy. The Planning Commission reviewed this application at their November 21<sup>st</sup> meeting and recommended approval of the change zone by a vote of 6 to 0.

Applicant Randall Kenton of 16140 Fitzgerald Road, Milford was present. He explained the thought is this change would be a better fit commercially versus industrial use. They are presently cleaning up the area and commercial use seems to be appropriate for the area, adding that the property is for sale. The building is being demolished.

Mr. Kenton pointed out there is another smaller area that is already zoned commercial. It was confirmed both properties are owned by the Kenton family.

The floor was open, and no one spoke for or against the application.

Councilmember Boyle moved to adopt Ordinance 2023-46, seconded by Councilmember Baer. Motion carried by the following 7-0 vote:

Marabello-yes, the change of zone to highway commercial doesn't adversely affect the area.

Boyle-yes, the change of zone is consistent with the future land use designation in the 2018 comprehensive plan for the property which is commercial.

Culotta-yes, he doesn't see any problems with the change to commercial.

Samaroo-yes, it is consistent with the 2018 comprehensive plan future land use.

Baer-yes and likes the fact it is in compliance with the 2018 comprehensive plan.

James-yes, it is aligned with the 2018 comprehensive plan land use.

Wilson-yes, it is in line with the comprehensive plan and ties into other sites and properties.

*Ordinance 2023-47*

*Lands of Iglesia Pentecostal Bethel Delaware, Inc.*

*0.808 +/- acres of land located along the north side of Southeast Front Street approximately 55 feet east of the Charles Street Intersection*

*Application Type: Conditional Use*

*Comprehensive Plan Designation: Low Density Residential*

*Zoning District: R-2 (Residential District)*

*Present Use: Church (095.00), Church Parking (094.00), Former Single-family Dwelling (096.00)*

*Proposed Use: Church with associated parking*

*Address: 803, 805 & 807 SE Front Street*

*Tax Parcel: 3-30-7.17-094.00, 3-30-7.17-095.00 & 3-30-7.17-096.00*

Director Pierce shared the conditional use application is required to allow the existing church to expand their land holdings onto the adjacent property. The church owns three parcels of land. One is used for a parking lot, another contains the church building, and the third is the site of a home that was demolished by the church. They wish to consolidate all three parcels into one in anticipation of expanding the place of worship onto the third parcel east of the present church.

He then read various sections of the documents included in the packet. All items included in the packet were described by the planner.

A new fence was installed and will provide additional screening to its newest residential neighbor.

Properties owners within 200 feet were mailed copies of the public notice which was published in the Delaware State News on October 31<sup>st</sup>. It was also posted at the site.

The Planning Commission reviewed the application at their November 21<sup>st</sup> meeting and recommended approval by a vote of 5-0 with one member recused themselves during the hearing due to a conflict of interest.

Bill Isaza of 21709 F Street, Rehoboth. He said the Pastor and one of the church's elders is also present. The church grew much faster than expected and were looking at properties elsewhere to build a larger church. However, it was determined that 50% of their members walk to church and the move to a new location would become a hardship for them. When the land next door was put on the market, the church purchased it, and they are not combining it to accommodate a few more members of the congregation.

The floor was opened for public comment. No one responded and the floor was closed.

Councilmember Marabello moved to adopt Ordinance 2023-47, seconded by Councilmember Boyle. Motion carried by the following 7-0 vote:

Marabello-yes, there's already a church there now, and it complies with the requirements of conditional use.

Boyle-yes, as the application or the ordinance for conditional use is consistent with the R-2 zoning.

Culotta-yes, it's nice to see the church grow. and I don't see any adverse reason why that would be a problem.

Samaroo-yes, I think combining the properties together for the church is a good idea. And it is consistent with Chapter 230.

Baer-yes, I think it is great to see the church expanding.

James-yes, I vote yes. It will be beneficial to the church, and it will not have an adverse effect on the surrounding properties.

Wilson-yes, it meets all the requirements, and it is nice to see an expansion of the church.

## MONTHLY STAFF REPORTS

Complete reports from each department were included in the council packet.

#### *Police Report*

Chief Ashe provided highlights of the department's monthly activities, statistics, and updates within the department. She also talked about the ribbon cutting event at the new police facility scheduled for tomorrow.

Mayor Campbell shared that he gets calls from other chiefs that talk about how jealous they are of Milford.

Councilmember Boyle moved to accept the monthly police report, seconded by Councilmember James. Motion carried.

#### *City Clerk*

City Clerk Hudson provided a synopsis of the monthly activities that have occurred during November.

Councilmember Boyle moved to accept the City Clerk's report, seconded by Councilmember Wilson. Motion carried.

#### *Monthly City Manager Report*

City Manager Whitfield reviewed several items in his report.

It was confirmed by the City Manager that the Council had agreed on the location of the Pallet Village to be behind the new police station. However, Council disagreed stating that there has not been a vote and a related public comment period was requested prior to any decisions being made, including the location of the village. City Manager Whitfield said he will defer to the City Solicitor on the procedure to schedule a hearing on the matter.

#### *Electric Department*

Electric Department Director Tony Chipola offered information related to his department.

#### *Planning & Zoning Department*

Director Rob Pierce provided a quick synopsis of what he has accomplished during March.

#### *Parks & Recreation Department*

Parks & Recreation Director Brad Dennehy was on leave and no report given as a result.

#### *Human Resources*

Human Resources Director Jamesha Williams provided HR highlights from the month.

#### *Economic Development & Community Engagement*

Administrator Sara Bluhm remains out on FMLA part-time and will return next month.

#### *IT Department*

IT Director Pettigrew reviewed his monthly report.

#### *Finance Department*

Finance Director Lou Vitola provided finance and staff updates.

Councilmember Boyle moved to accept the City Manager and departmental reports, seconded by Councilmember Wilson. Motion carried.

#### COMMUNICATIONS & CORRESPONDENCE

Councilman Baer received a lot of feedback from photos he sent out on the plow paintings.

Mayor Campbell reported he has been invited to the White House by President Biden this Thursday for a Christmas Party. He said that is a biggie for him.

#### NEW BUSINESS

##### *Introduction/Ordinance 2023-48*

*Preliminary Conditional Use Application of Southern States Milford Coop, Inc.*

*4.959 +/- acres of land located along the north side of*

*Milford-Harrington Highway at the intersection of Williamsville Road*

*Comprehensive Plan Designation: Commercial*

*Zoning District: C-3 (Highway Commercial)*

*Present use: Vacant Proposed Use: Retail Sales & Equipment Repair*

*Tax Parcel: MD-16-182.00-01-03.00*

Mayor Campbell introduced Ordinance 2023-48, followed by a synopsis by Planner Pierce. A final determination by Council is scheduled for January 8, 2024.

##### *Design Proposal/KCI Technologies/SE Water/Sewer Extension Project/East State Route 1*

City Engineer James Puddicombe recalled how the City has previously agreed to extend water service across Route 1 to supply water to the properties on the southeastern side of Route 1. On August 21, 2021, City Council acknowledged the need to install the sewer casing under Route 1 to reserve capacity for future development and to limit the future cost for the City. In anticipation of the water crossing, staff have planned to coordinate all utility crossings, water, sewer, electric and fiber to minimize the disturbance and save money through scale and efficiency.

In the interest of limiting construction costs, it is recommended designing and installing these crossings at the same time in the vicinity of Bucks Road and Route 1.

The Public Works Department received a proposal from KCI Technologies (KCI) totaling \$68,800 to design the crossings, conduct research and verify right-of-way, and to perform associated field verification. The recommendation is consistent with the projects approved in the FY23 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) and identified in the enclosed excerpt from the FY24 Capital Improvement Plan lines 62 and 96.

Councilmember Boyle moved to accept the proposal from KCI for Southeast Utility not to exceed \$68,800 with \$45,800 to come from Water Reserves and 23,000 to come from Sewer Reserves, seconded by Councilmember Baer. Motion carried with no one opposed.

##### *FY 24 Budget Adjustment/22 Cedar Beach Road Demolition*

The Planning Department requests an appropriation of \$2,500 from General Fund Reserves to the Planning Department Demolition budget line to cover expenses associated with the demolition and property clean-up of 22 Cedar Beach Road. This is an item that is not budgeted and needs council authorization when a demolition is identified.

Planning Director Pierce obtained written quotes and Blue Heron Contracting was the lowest bid. The expenses associated with the demolition will be placed on the subject parcel's property taxes.

When asked how the City became involved, it was determined there was a request from neighboring property owners though it cannot be seen from the roadway. It was confirmed it is next to Forks Landing and there is a road stub that dead ends onto this property.

It was confirmed the property owner is aware the City is taking this action.

Councilmember Boyle moved to authorize the appropriation of \$2,500 from General Fund Reserves be allotted to the Planning Department Demolition budget line for the demolition of 22 Cedar Beach Road, seconded by Councilmember Boyle. Motion carried with no one opposed.

*Authorization/Electric Department/FY24 Budget Adjustment/Capital to O&M*

Electric Director Chipola presented a request to the Council to consider the authorization of a budget adjustment increase of \$150,000 to the O&M Distribution Lines budget. The original budget was developed based on trended spend from the past three years. Actual spending is highly variable as outages, equipment faults, and other events impacting the budget cannot be accurately predicted. The system has since experienced several large faults necessitating replacement of cable and major equipment to restore service safely and effectively.

Currently, the CIP has underutilized funds for both Advanced Relocation and Machinery and equipment and would best augment the O&M Distribution Lines budget.

Councilmember Boyle moved to authorize a budget adjustment to increase the O&M Distribution Lines budget by \$150,000 to be funded \$100,000 from Advanced Relocation and \$50,000 from Machinery and Equipment to cover anticipated expenses through the remainder of the year, seconded by Councilmember James. Motion carried with no one opposed.

*Authorization/Flex Financial-Stryker Sales, LLC/MPD Lease Agreement/Take-Home Vehicles*

Chief Ashe referenced the following proposal:

**Stryker**

See proposal for detailed equipment descriptions and pricing.

Conditional Sale

	<b>Five Annual Payments</b>
<b>Equipment total</b>	\$28,24250
<b>Freight total</b>	\$465.45
<b>Equipment payment</b>	\$6,449.32
<b>Freight payment</b>	\$106.29
<b>Total payment</b>	\$6,555.61

*Payments are exclusive of all applicable taxes and freight unless otherwise noted.*

Upon delivery, installation, and acceptance. At contract commencement.  
No down payment required.

Net 30 days following installation.

Stryker does not charge interim rent.

Stryker does not charge documentation fees.

The payments quoted herein were calculated based, in part, on an interest rate equivalent as quoted on Bloomberg under the SOFR Swap Rate that would have a repayment term equivalent to the initial term (or an interpolated rate if a like-term is not available) as reasonably determined by Stryker's Flex Financial division. Flex Financial reserves the right to adjust the payments prior to contract commencement to maintain current economics of this proposed transaction. "SOFR" with respect to any day means the secured overnight financing rate published for such day by the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, as the administrator of the benchmark (or a successor administrator) on the Federal Reserve Bank of New York's Website as quoted by Bloomberg.

This proposal is subject to final credit, pricing, and documentation approval. Legal documents must be signed before your equipment can be delivered.

Chief Ashe informed Council this is not a request for funding, but a request to enter into a 5-year contract with Stryker, for defibrillators (AED) that Delaware Law requires every police vehicle to possess.

In evaluating their new take home vehicle program, it was determined that not all police vehicles are equipped with defibrillators, and this would get the department up to legal standard.

The average cost of an AED system would be approximately \$5,000 if purchased and lasts from five to seven years. Each time one is used on an individual, the pads must be replaced. Of the 37 take home vehicles, the average cost to purchase is roughly \$185,000 and would be required every five years.

Instead of purchasing the equipment outright, we are recommending the equipment be leased under a 5-year contract with Stryker, who is under state contract and has provided the attached state contract proposal. Milford Police Department is not asking for any additional funds to enhance this program, rather bringing it before City Council due to the five (5) annual payments that would be required under this contract. The initial startup funding would come from the Take Home Vehicle Program that has already been approved in the amount of \$6,555.61.

The total cost of the equipment over the five-year contract would be \$28,242.50 with five (5) annual payments of \$6,555.61.

Chief Ashe clarified there is no financing involved and she is only asking for authorization to enter into a contract.

Councilmember James moved to authorize Mayor Campbell to sign the five-year lease with Stryker as presented, seconded by Councilmember Wilson. Motion carried.

#### *Authorization/Additional Personnel/Police Department*

Chief Ashe presented the following request for Council review:

The Milford Police Department is requesting authorization to hire additional personnel for the Communication Center and a new Crime Analyst position within the police department. The Communications Center currently has assigned eight (8) full-time dispatchers which allows only for two personnel per shift, with four shifts to cover 24-hour operations. Upon my hire, I promised the City Council I would conduct a staffing study of all personnel within the Police Department showing priority to those areas that require immediate attention due to operational need and the safety of the citizens of Milford. Upon a preliminary review of staffing, it was glaring that the communications center was understaffed and cost-saving measures could be put in place to run this division more efficiently and effectively.

The current makeup creates a serious issue if an employee calls out sick or takes vacation as it will only leave one employee to handle all communications center responsibilities. This does not consider the number of calls that are received and dispatched for other divisions such as the Electric Department if there is a power outage or other storm related events such as flooding, where the Streets Department would need to be notified. In reviewing Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system if one of these events was to take place communications would be fielding on average a hundred calls, while also dispatching and monitoring the police operations on the street. Currently for us to maintain two dispatchers in the communications center at all times requires us to call in another fulltime dispatcher on overtime if he/she is available to come in or contact one of the part-time dispatchers, who may or may not be available to work. This also limits the amount of time off that can be granted to employees, as we are in most cases unable to fill shifts with part-time employees due to their schedule or holidays. Finally, this does not take into consideration if there is an employee out on long term leave such as FMLA or Military. In any of the above examples, this causes us to pay staff overtime or pay additional staff which is not the most cost-efficient way to run this type of Communications Center.

I would also like to create an in-between shift where our normal shifts come in for dispatch at around 6 am and leave around 6 pm/7 pm hour. Those additional personnel would come in mid-shift so that the gap can be filled until FY25.

Therefore, I am proposing one additional dispatcher be added to each shift, totaling four additional personnel. Under this proposal, I would request two of those positions be filled immediately and the other two positions be added at the time of the FY25 budget.

The impact on the FY25 budget is provided below, gross of interdepartmental cost sharing:

<u>Added Civilian Positions</u>	<u>Salary &amp; Wages</u>	<u>Benefits</u>	<u>Total</u>
Dispatch 1-FY25	\$44,554	\$22,623	\$67,177
Dispatch 2-FY25	\$44,554	\$22,623	\$67,177
Dispatch 3-FY25	\$43,576	\$22,597	\$66,173
Dispatch 3-FY25	\$43,576	\$22,597	\$66,173

Internal funding through utility cost sharing would be in place permanently to defray a portion of the cost to add dispatchers.

- FY25 cost sharing (\$45k) results in a net impact of \$222k.
- FY26 cost sharing (\$46k) results in a net impact of \$228k.
- FY27 cost sharing (\$48k) results in a net impact of \$235k.
- FY28 cost sharing (\$49k) results in a net impact of \$242k.
- FY29 cost sharing (\$51k) results in a net impact of \$250k.

This request is in line with the Strategic Plan 2023 under the Public Safety and Preparedness Objective 1, Deployment of Police Resources.

In addition, I am requesting authorization to hire a full-time Crime Analyst with the intent to fill this position within the next sixty days. I am requesting this position to be able to move into the next phase of our Strategic Plan as well as the ability to receive grant funding to help offset some of the costs. As you are aware, Milford Police Department is currently applying for grant funding through the Delaware Criminal Justice Council to fund additional personnel within the Behavioral Health Unit. As part of this grant, we are requesting partial funding for a Crime Analyst to track and monitor, with more detail and precision, the success and gaps within our Behavioral Health Unit. This opportunity to offset some of these expenses presented itself prior to the FY25 fiscal. I have consulted with the Director of Finance Lou Vitola along with the City Manager Mark Whitfield and the following impact and projections on FY25 budget are provided below:

<u>Added Position-Civilian</u>	<u>Salary &amp; Wages</u>	<u>Benefits</u>	<u>Total</u>
Crime Analyst-FY25	\$72,450	\$27,479	\$99,929

A portion of a two-year Behavioral Health Unit (BHU) grant is expected to provide temporary support to the crime analyst position, which would partially mitigate costs later in FY24, all FY25 and most of FY26.

- FY25 grant funding of \$18k results in a net impact of \$81k.
- FY26 grant funding of \$12k results in a net impact of \$91k.
- FY27 cost impact is \$106k.
- FY28 cost impact is \$109k.
- FY29 cost impact is \$112k.

A Property tax increase of 5.3% (3.1 cents per \$100 of AV) instituted in FY26 would carry the cost of the revised operational structure from then onward if we are successful absorbing the net costs associated with the crime analyst and dispatch positions the remainder of FY24 through FY25.

This request is in line with the Strategic Plan 2023 under the Public Safety and Preparedness which will impact six of the seven objectives while also allowing us to implement seventeen of the twenty-one strategies. The most important of all the strategies that this position produces are transparency of accurate crime numbers and transparency of accountability within the Police Department.

Deferring to Finance Director Vitola, he stated he met with Chief Ashe so she could understand the impact, first on fiscal 24's budget and whether we could absorb those costs internally. He is still working on it, but it looks like we will be able to do that. Then he looked at FY25 and FY26, when we would not only benefit from a behavioral health unit grant, but through FY27, 28, and 29, because the police department is unique in terms of funding. It is one of a few departments, and possibly streets are the other, that has no other funding outside of property taxes and grant funding, state funding and federal money. Anything we don't have a grant fund offset has to be funded with a grant revenue offset which comes from utilities, though they are approaching a limit and from property taxes.

There is a need to dive into the budget and look at personnel and graded positions, times, quantity, start date, and burden rate to get the overall costs.

He said the Chief has confidence she can obtain a grant for the crime analyst position. If it is possible to offset the cost in FY25 and FY26, which is no small feat, but if that can be done when the grant expires at the end of FY26, and if no additional grant for that position thereafter, he would need to find additional funding.

When talking about improvements, costs and ongoing operating expenses that are going to occur every year for police, streets and parks and recreation, the best informative value he can provide is what the projected tax equivalent increase would be to offset those expenses, though he is not advocating for a tax increase. A lot of things can change including more future grant opportunities.

He referenced the equivalent tax increase in fiscal 27 after the grant expires, stating that would carry that program indefinitely based on some basic inflators. But at this point, he emphasized those are all unknowns.

The Director is not asking for a vote tonight and is not making a note in the budget file to have that set-in stone. That is the work the Finance Department provided for this request.

They are also trying to determine what else the behavioral health unit (BHU) grant can apply to, and though there was about \$18,000 that could apply to the crime analyst position for each of two years. But otherwise, it is to be determined whether the BHU grant can apply to existing expenses or only to brand new positions only.

For the most part, the rest of that grant funding will be applied to new initiatives, new costs, and we are unable to count on any funding to offset existing costs that would free up funding for the dispatch positions.

Because the dispatch center also serves emergency utility operations and around the clock operations for them because we have no engagement personnel or services, utilities could provide some of the cost share though that would be a first for the police.

Director Vitola explained that is where they looked at these costs in comparison to the tax equivalent based on the projections over those future years.

Chief Ashe said one of the things considered was the number of calls for service the dispatchers receive including a power outage anytime. Through their computer aided dispatch, they know they are averaging about a hundred calls an hour, and possibly more. That's not considering any type of natural disaster that may occur, whether streets are flooding or anything similar.

In talking with the City Manager, he suggested taking from some of the utilities and other funds to help offset what would really in essence require us to hire an outside third-party vendor to do what the dispatchers are already capable of doing here.

Also being considered is providing the dispatcher the ability to view the status because the frustrations dispatchers hear is when call contact the police department, they are unable to be given a status of how long the electricity will be out. They will be able to feed into a similar system so that the electric department must better communicate the anticipated outage length. The dispatchers would then review where the electric crews are and where those areas are going live and where those stop gap measures are occurring in the areas that are still down, and customers continue to call and report.

These types of measures will improve medical response, criminal response and for utilities emergencies after hours.

The second item is the request for a crime analyst. As the Council is aware, they are currently in an application process for the behavioral health unit and should be awarded \$363,000 to continue the growth and properly assess the need for an expansion of the behavioral health unit. One of those components is the proper collection of data.

When she came into this position, there were concerns about how Milford is being labeled and is the city being held responsible for crime that is occurring and not within our jurisdictional boundaries. Getting a crime analyst will help with the economic growth of the city but also promote the city under its true light as crime decreases.

This will also provide hard concrete numbers on whether the department is able to drop crime and continues to drop crime. One of those components under this grant will give us funding of approximately \$8,595 for a two-year time that that grant will come in. That will offset the cost of an analyst for those two years, knowing that she would then have to adopt that into our operating costs at the end of those two years.

She hopes that with this, the growth of residential and with the business community will far exceed those costs.

Chief Ashe concluded by pointing out it will also hold the police department accountable. She shared that the analyst position is crucial to the strategic plan and by not only holding the police accountable to crime, but also creating a method in which they can become more transparent to the community by obtaining that information on the police website and not how it is currently being publicized by Milford's zip code. Instead, the statistics would relate only to the crime that occurs within the City of Milford.

Councilman James agrees there will be a return on investment from both the dispatchers and especially the crime analyst. If moving along with this additional funding, he asked that we find areas in the budget where money can be moved for this purpose. This is a priority without increasing taxes and this may be a time when Council needs to look at other areas of the budget where money can be moved without a tax increase perspective.

Councilmember Boyle said he and Chief talk about funding, but there comes a time when that grant money runs out. He recalled when several years ago, the size of the police force was increased substantially, and it finally got down to the wire when Council realized the City had not grown enough that the tax base was unable to support the police. He does not want to be in a position to over commit at his point.

After much consideration, Councilmember James suggested, and Council agreed, it should be placed on an agenda of the Finance Committee to work with the Finance Director to talk about our priorities and where is the funding coming from. And how to do it in a neutral way before moving forward.

Councilmember Wilson agreed it needs to be reviewed thoroughly and she does not want to hear again and again from residents, and even though they support the police department, that everything is getting bigger and is growing because of the new police building. She wants something in place for future funding before that question is formed and knows that is going to occur and stressed the importance of how we can financially sustain additional employees.

Councilmember Boyle noted that this is part of the Chief’s vision is coming to fruition and it happens to coincide with the opening of the new building that the goal is to enhance our ability to manage the police department and provide a safer city.

Councilmember Wilson moved to postpone this matter and refer it to the Finance Committee for a review and report back to Council, seconded by Councilmember Boyle. Motion carried.

Adjournment

Councilmember Boyle moved to adjourn, seconded by Councilmember Baer. Motion carried.

The Council Meeting adjourned at 9:04 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Terri K. Hudson, MMC  
City Clerk/Recorder