

CITY OF MILFORD  
COUNCIL WORKSHOP MINUTES  
April 17, 2024

The City Council of the City of Milford convened in a Workshop Session on Wednesday, April 17, 2024, beginning at 6:03 p.m.

PRESIDING: Mayor Arthur J. Campbell

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

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

COUNSEL: Solicitor David Rutt, Esquire

ABSENT: Councilmember Daniel Marabello

*PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD PRIOR TO MEETING*

Julie Morris of 74 Cedar Beach Road stated in looking through tonight's packet for this evening and noted there are several items that are not significant to the city's operations. She would encourage council to focus more on assisting citizens versus concentrating on aesthetic type things such as new office chairs and realigning parking lots. She noted many residents cannot afford to pay their electric bill and suggests that be addressed instead.

No one else spoke and the comment period was closed.

*Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) FY2025 to FY 2029*

Council then deferred to the CIP document. City Manager Whitfield noted that his assistant was assigned the spreadsheet when the Economic Development employee left in January and continues to work on it.

It was noted that IT has no projects listed and the Manager Whitfield confirmed that the IT Director had reported he had no needs over the next five years. That is based on a lot less equipment because the majority is in the cloud. Computer equipment is in the operating budget and on a depreciation schedule and is replaced every five years.

Mayor Campbell agreed he found that odd and Councilmember Boyle suggested having at a minimum a placeholder. Finance Director agreed that it may seem wildly unexpected, it could be everything due to the previous IT Director's work and now the current Director moving everything into the cloud which reduces capital costs but increases the operating budgets as service contracts. He doesn't want council to think IT is not doing anything, but that is the reason.

Councilwoman Wilson recalled the previous directive of Council for the City Clerk to implement the new meeting software though she does not yet find it in the budget. City Clerk Hudson agreed there has not yet been a final decision made, and Manager Whitfield instructed her to move forward with her recommendation.

*Economic Development Capital Improvement Plan*

The Milford Corporate Center is in plan review with DelDOT and the Kent Conservation District. We hope to receive final site plan approvals from the Milford Planning Commission and City Council in early 2024. Staff received construction estimates from Becker Morgan Group's construction partners and used those to direct conversations with Emory Hill regarding an acceptable market rate cost per acre. Emory Hill is preparing a level 2 MOU with sales listing agreement and draft Center covenants to present to Council at a future meeting.

*Planning*

The Planning Department CIP comprises of capital purchases for the expansion of the Code Enforcement Division along with professional services fees in preparation for the City's 2028 Comprehensive Plan update.

Planning Director Rob Pierce shared the only item he has is the hiring of a consultant for work on the comprehensive plan update. That item is slated for 2027-28 and was part of last year's CIP.

### *Streets*

The Streets Department CIP comprises of street, sidewalk, bicycle and pedestrian improvements, water, sewer, and equipment purchases. Projects include rehabilitation of streets based on pavement assessment, addressing ADA issues, installing bicycle and pedestrian improvements based on adopted planning documents, replacing, and expanding existing water and sewer infrastructure and purchasing new and replacement equipment for the difference divisions within the Department.

Public Works Director Willis Schafer commended his staff for working very hard to assemble all the information, noting he came in very late in the process.

He talked about several items:

Code Enforcement Truck is a new item; though Director Pierce said that item has already been purchased and should have been removed from the list.

City Engineer James Puddicombe explained several bike path projects (14) are carryovers from previous CIP's though several are scheduled for 2025. The numbers had to be adjusted to reflect the increase in costs.

The annual street rehab project was also adjusted to almost \$1 million also due to rising paving of 15 to 20 percent across the board.

The sidewalk connectivity went from \$150,00 to \$350,000. The initial costs were determined by the Planning Department and over the years there were more areas without curbing or sidewalks that required work. Essentially, \$350,000 allows a complete block to be done.

When asked if any grants had been applied for the sidewalks, bike paths and the TAP project, it was noted that these are being paid for by DelDOT's federal funding and the city's match is only 10% which is what is shown in the CIP.

Dover Kent County MPO prioritizes projects and is working with the planning department on the bike paths.

When asked for a list of sidewalk projects, the City Manager said they are included in other projects.

Councilmembers agree that sidewalk improvements should be paid for by the city and that action needs to be taken to amend the ordinance.

Director Willis proceeded to talk about the streetscape projects, fence installation at city hall, which should be in the operating budget of city hall, city hall parking lot enhancement that will include sealcoating and an additional entrance added.

The Fourth Street flooding project was originally funded through ARPA funds and has since been moved to the street projects of \$.5 million. Of that, \$50,000 was for engineering consultants and \$450,000 for construction costs. That money is unavailable currently, though his plan is to apply for surface water funding according to the City Manager.

Councilman Fulton recommended the \$500,000 study be changed to reflect it involves the actual project and not just consulting costs.

Public Works Director Willis did not have the most recent CIP and City Manager Whitfield presented the following projects as a result:

ADA compliance plan at intersections

Walnut Street pedestrian project

## Kent Place Curb and Roadway

Trailer mounted arrow board to be paid by water, sewer, electric and streets explained by Streets & Utilities Supervisor Charlie Nordberg

Maple Street Bridge Replacement and Southwest Front Street Bridge Replacement are federally funded projects and DelDOT engineers are completing both designs. Both are shown as FY26 projects though Manager Whitfield will have that changed and believes it is scheduled in FY27.

Councilman Baer asked that photos be added to the document so that our residents know the area of each project.

The retaining wall project at the old Carlisle Fire House was then discussed with the city taking the lead and working on an easement with the new owners to extend the riverwalk.

Parks and Recreation Director Brad Dennehy confirmed that both bridge projects are planned for FY26 with Southwest Front Street being priority with bill bond money earmarked which typically encourages DelDOT to move quicker.

## Electric

The Electric Department continues to make good progress for CIP projects. Nearly all legacy streetlights have been replaced with LEDs. Field audit scheduled to identify any outstanding locations. The fiber installation for the P&R Armory has been completed which entailed stringing new fiber along 8th Street and Walnut Street. As well as routing within the offices and city hall. DELDOT Traffic Signal project has been successful in eliminating traffic lights at several intersections. EV Chargers have installation and commissioning scheduled for 1st week of February. Physical security installations have started with the addition of control house door alarms and cameras. GIS Mapping continues to progress. Field collection is complete, and QA/QC is ongoing. The SCADA upgrade is preparing for the database conversion activities.

Director Tony Chipola reviewed the following projects, noting that most are carryover from previous CIP's.

Projects reviewed:

SCADA Replacement Upgrade

SeaWatch Metering Cluster Upgrade

Advanced Relocation

DelDOT Traffic Signals

Delivery #1 Substation Circuit Addition (Elks Lodge Road

Delivery #2 Circuit Addition (solar field/west of Milford)

Feeder Extensions/Bayhealth Tie-in and Loop

Fiber Optic Connection to Public Works

GIS/Mapping-Smart Metering

Horseshoe Drive Distribution

LED Streetlight Replacements

Physical Security Improvements/Substations

Police Inspections

Power Flow Analysis Software

Upgrade Delivery #2 Distribution Relaying

## Fiber Network Mapping and GIS Module

### Regulator Refurbishment Program

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When asked about individual rows and numbers extend across the page and Councilman James finds the numbers budgeted each year do not add up to the number totals in both the physical security and pole inspection and asked that be corrected.

### *Informational Technology*

IT Director Bill Pettigrew said the only thing on his radar was new firewalls and are listed under O&M as a hardware refresh. He asked each department head who informed him they had nothing to be added.

The switch project was completed in May.

The City Manager confirmed that each department budgets their own software; Director Pettigrew said there might be some stuff in tech services he doesn't know about and will reach out to them. If IT should administer all software, they can do that. The Finance Director was putting together SAS agreements for cybersecurity to lower the overall price.

It was confirmed that IT is aware of the various software programs at the police department.

Chief Ashe again shared that the police operate off the State of Delaware CJC network and are not part of the city's server system. It is supported through their own IT budget and the state authorizes any software.

It was confirmed that any software proposed is reviewed by IT for security measures.

Disruptions continued with zoom, as will be reflected in that recording. Confirmation of what was last heard by those attending remotely was obtained.

### *Water Department*

The Public Works Water Division CIP 2025 Comprises of Purchasing and installing a new Chlorine Scrubber unit at Tenth Street Treatment plant to replace an Acca tablet machine. Gas Chlorine is a 100 % disinfectant and after initial cost chemical will be cheaper.

The following projects were reviewed by Public Works Director Shafer.

10-inch Water Main Holly Hill Road to Westwood

Asbestos Pipe Removal

Lead Service Line Removal

Milford Corporate Center Water Infrastructure

Northwest City Tower/Wells/Treatment

Southeast Regional Water Infrastructure East of Route 1

Southeast Regional Water Infrastructure South of Johnson Road

Street Rehab Water Pipe Replacement

Kent Place Water Extension and Tie-In

Shawnee Acres Water Extension

Treatment Plan Upgrades

Citywide Valve and Hydrant Replacement Improvements

Sewer

The Public Works Sewer Division CIP 2025 Comprises of Purchasing a larger 8-inch bypass pump for bigger stations during pump failure and wet well cleaning of rags, and grease. Currently we have a 6-inch that takes care of the smaller pump station volumes. Purchasing a larger pump to keep up with daily flow as the 4 larger stations will help reduce costs now due to having to rent a bigger pump for those stations.

The Public Works Director then continued with a review of sewer projects, supplemented by Public Works Superintendent Steve Ellingsworth:

Washington Street Pump Station Control Relocation/Exterior

Street Rehab Sewer

Milford Corporate Center Sewer Design and Installation

Asbestos Sewer Pipe Removal

Decommission Baltimore Air Coil Pump Station/Install Gravity Main/Hickory Glen Subdivision

Second Street Pump Station Relocation from Below Street

8" Bypass Sewer Pump/Larger Pump Stations

Shawnee Acres Sewer Extension

Pump Station Upgrades

Stational Generator/Fork Landing Pump Station

Chlorine Scrubber/Tenth Street Plant (move to water list)

Council asked that all street rehabilitation components be combined in the document.

Review continued of Garage and Solid Waste projects:

*Garage*

The Public works Garage CIP 2025 Comprises of purchasing Air Conditioning unit to service all the city Vehicles, BS PF5 Transmission exchange Flusher for all city Vehicles, and a miller trailblazer 330 Kohler stick welder.

Air Conditioner Recharge Machine (will be moved to operating budget)

BG PF5 Transmission Exchange Flusher (will be moved to operating budget)

Miller 330 Kohler Stick Welder/Large Metal Repairs to be Transferred in House

*Solid Waste*

Information added by Building Operations/Refuse Advisor Brian Jester.

Trash Truck Replacement/Purchase

Cameras for Refuse Trucks SW-11 and SW-28

*Facilities*

The Public Works Solid Waste Division CIP 2025 comprises of purchasing a new trash truck. This will allow us to complete the routes faster beings we would now have a spare truck for when one breaks down. We would be able to keep the operation flowing. We are interested in truck Cameras for our existing trucks SW-28 & SW-11 for any accidents that may occur. The Public Works Facilities Division CIP 2025 comprises of purchasing new Gate operators. This would consist of a new gate operator for the front and the rear gate at public works. We have been currently replacing parts in these motors for the last couple years to keep them going. They are now at the point where a replacement would cost less than the parts needed. The Parks & Recreation Division CIP 2025 comprises of purchasing would like to add a Video Doorbell Camera for security purposes. PMA security requested us to put the trash container in a fenced area for security purposes. This will entail a new concrete pad with a fenced area for the dumpsters and containers. The Armory (P&R Maintenance building) Division CIP 2025 comprises purchasing a new HVAC system. This upgrade will meet with efficiency smart's recommendations so we will receive a rebate. The crew has been working now without any air conditioning. We would also like to purchase a new Ice machine. As of now they must come to public works anytime ice is needed. The City Hall Facilities Division CIP 2025 comprises of purchasing new Council chamber Chairs. The Customer Service Division CIP 2025 comprises of purchasing a new HVAC system being there current one is 10yrs old and needing to be replaced per Envirotemp. We would also like to request that the Customer Drive through concrete curb be replaced. The curb is currently falling apart and needs to be redone.

P&R Armory/Rear Shop/HVAC System Replacement

P&R Ice Machine/Relocate to Franklin Street facility

Parks and Recreation Brad Dennehy also commented on the requests.

Public Works Gate Replacement (2)

Customer Service HVAC System Replacement

Customer Service Drive Thru Curbing Repairs

Demolition/Existing Storage Huts (postponed)

City Hall Conference Room Chair Replacement (20)

P&R Pole Building Storage (postponed)

Armory Building ADA and Bathroom Improvements/Main Building

Council noted that the rental agreements require responsibility for any upgrades by tenant. City Manager Whitfield said he agreed the city would take care of the improvements with tenant repaying expenses through a monthly rent fee.

The review continued:

Converting Heating at Armory Maintenance Shop (postponed)

Access Control at Armory Maintenance Shop (postponed)

Public Works Building Expansion Design/Additional Office Space for Electric and Planning Department due to Additional Positions

The design cost of \$150,000 was questioned. Department Heads will create a scope of work. Finance Director Lou Vitola added there were also parking lot improvements included, which impacted drainage/stormwater upgrades needed resulting in a multi-million-dollar project.

There have been ongoing discussions expanding the existing administrative building into the shop area. In addition, utilities will need to be relocated.

Council asked for additional clarification with a breakout of the improvements needed.

Project descriptions continued:

Electric Department Rack/Reel Pole Building/Equipment and Material Element Protection

Electric Director provided an in-depth explanation of project. It was recommended various vacant buildings throughout city be considered versus purchasing a new structure.

Public Works HVAC BA System Buildings 200 and 300

Public Works Facility Air Infiltration and Roof Drain Replacement

### *Parks and Recreation*

The Parks and Recreation Department is integral to the vitality and health of the residents of the City of Milford. As the City continues to increase in population additional open space will be required and additional recreational opportunities will need to be provided for Milford to maintain a desirable place to live. The following Capital Improvement items reflect the need to both acquire new parkland, develop new parkland, and maintain our existing parkland with needed equipment and vehicles. It also reflects developing our existing parks with new amenities and making improvements to our current maintenance building.

P&R Director Brad Dennehy shared the following requests:

He shared that prior authorization items have already been approved by City Council and will talk about items he is asking be funded in FY25. He emphasized the items are not his wish list and instead are items that have been requested and he is asking for a yes or no, or that it be postponed to another fiscal year.

Director Dennehy noted the error on the construction of a recreation/community center at Marvel Square. The funding in FY2026 shows \$20,000 and should have been \$2 million though realistically will end up totaling \$5 to \$6 million when completed.

His capital requests include the following:

Construction/5-6 Tennis Courts at Tony Silicato Memorial Park/Behind Boys & Girls Club

It was confirmed that new Rehoboth Boulevard Park will also include tennis courts and asked why the duplication.

Council also pointed out the existing tennis courts at Milford High School available for public use when not being used by Milford High School.

Suggested is moving the tennis courts to the new Rehoboth Boulevard Park only. Item deferred one year for additional information.

Gateway Signs and Improvements/Plantings/Irrigation

Marshall Pond Riverbank Plan Development/adjacent to Kiwanis Building Property/Additional Park Land

Open Space Acquisition/\$500,000/Additional Land/New Playground

Construction/Public Restrooms (previously funded though federal funding is available); move to correct column.

Redevelopment/Bicentennial Park

Riverwalk Extension/Bulkhead Construction/Adjacent to (renovated) Old Carlisle Fire House

Zoom disconnected momentarily, then reconnected.

Sharp Property/Open Space Development:  
Additional Property Purchase

## Continued Improvements to Previously Purchased Sharp Site

Tree Planning/Tree City USA

Lighted Handrail Extended/Phase Two/North of Walnut Street Bridge Downtown

Evaluation/Current and Recreation Needs/Hiring Third Party Consultant

It was opinion of Council the following projects should be included in the O&M budget:

Playground Repairs

Park Maintenance Equipment

Water Truck Spray Unit

UTV Snow Plow Attachment

Director Dennehy said he was directed to include any item over \$5,000 in the capital budget. City Manager Whitfield disagreed stating that \$10,000 should be the threshold.

Councilmember James noted there were several items that should be part of the operations budget. That process needs to be uniform in each department. He asked that this list be reviewed, and appropriate items moved. It needs to be transparent, so the public understands the process.

Finance Director Vitola said the current fixed asset capitalization policy specifies \$5,000 with a life of at least one year. In the general fund, there are different materiality thresholds based on each department. Pushing into the CIP gets attention and transparency at the council level of items that are not routine operating items.

Councilmember James is requesting those items that have been recommended for the O&M budget be transferred. If not moved, he would like to be informed.

Councilmember Wilson noted that the park at Banneker School is not included. She shared the condition of the concrete and the actual rim at the basketball court is in very poor condition and asked why it has never been replaced with the same material used at those at the Salvation Army.

Director Dennehy noted that the prior authorization of basketball courts is specifically that at the Banneker School. He is has been waiting for a proposal from Jerry's proposal to do a full rehab.

*Parking Lots*

City Manager Whitfield said the parking lot at city hall has already been authorized and funding set aside.

City Hall Parking Lot/Two New Entrances/Additional Parking Spaces

North Walnut and Northeast Front Street (part of Streetscapes Plan)

Park Avenue Lot Enhancements (part of Streetscapes Plan)

Parks and Recreation Lot Paving/Completed

Director Dennehy will need to review that before confirming.

*Police*

Chief Ashe noted that the cover pages are from last year's CIP and will provide the new version.

Preauthorized funding/prior years:

\$100,000 New Maintenance Facility Design\*

\$1.7 million Building be Added to FY26

FY25 projects:

Updated Contract/Axon Body Worn Cameras (all officers) & Vehicle(s) Cameras

Design/New Maintenance Facility (approved prior year) \*

Emergency Rescue Vehicle/Federal Funds (deferred)

Ballistic Vest Replacement (less vests per year)

That concludes the department presentations.

Based on Council's request, City Manager Whitfield said they will add the sidewalk replacement project.

There being no further discussion, the Council Workshop concluded at 8:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Terri K. Hudson, MMC  
City Clerk/Recorder