

FY2010 Budgetary Hearings

Appropriations Committee

Chairman Mortimer, Brodeur,
Tramontozzi, Forbes, Wright,
Seaboyer, Medeiros, Conn,
Boisselle
Absent: Infurna, McAteer-Margolis
In attendance: City Auditor/CFO
Patrick Dello Russo; Mayor Robert
J. Dolan; Board of Appeals
Chairman Steve Broadley;
Emergency Management Director
Ed Kelly; Parking Clerk Jack
Higgins; Chief Assessor Don Dragt;
Human Rights Co-Chairman Bonnie
Cronin; CoA Director Jack Beckley;
Health Director Ruth Clay; Building
Commissioner Paul Johnson; City
Engineer Bob Beshara, Deputy City
Engineer John Scenna

Appropriations Committee called to order by Chairman Mortimer at 7:30 p.m. Order No. 09-166, City of Melrose Operating Budget for Fiscal Year 2010 in the amount of \$60,281,978.62

Zoning Board of Appeals 15,010.00 Chairman Steven Broadley
Alderman Forbes motions to suspend the rules to hear from Chairman Broadley, 2nd by Alderman Wright. All in favor.

Alderman Wright says the members of the ZBA aren't paid. He asks if the only paid position is the secretary; Mr. Broadley says that is correct.

Alderman Conn says he sees that Mr. Broadley has cut this budget by 5% and asks if he will be able to meet his obligations with only \$230.00 in advertising money. Mr. Broadley says advertising costs are now borne by the applicant. The \$230.00 is a reserve fund.

Alderman Conn motions to move the bottom-line, 2nd by Alderman Brodeur. All in favor.

Emergency Management 17,749.92 Director Ed Kelly
Mr. Kelly says the Mayor asked each department to make a 5% cut; this budget is lean but it'll get the job done.

Alderman Conn asks if the clothing expenditure is an annual expense. Mr. Kelly says it is, to replace uniforms and purchase new ones. Alderman Conn asks if he thinks he will use all of it. Mr. Kelly says he hasn't used all of it in the last few years. Alderman Conn says he is only asking in the event the City receives more bad news about local aid and the budget has to be reopened.

Alderman Tramontozzi asks how much in that line-item has been spent to date. Mr. Kelly says he has spent about \$1000. Alderman Tramontozzi asks if he plans on

spending the balance. Mr. Kelly says he's going to try not to. Alderman Tramontozzi asks if he could handle a \$200 cut. Mr. Kelly says he wouldn't be able to take on any new members.

Alderman Forbes asks about the reduction in the Training line-item. Mr. Kelly says the Department is currently 100% compliant. Alderman Forbes asks if it's possible for him to purchase ammunition with the police department. Mr. Kelly says they don't use the same type of ammunition.

Alderman Medeiros asks about being 100% compliant in training. Mr. Kelly says the NIMS training is complete. Alderman Medeiros asks what it means to cut that line-item from \$7,000 to \$1500. Mr. Kelly says the \$1500 is for refresher courses.

Alderman Conn motions to move the bottom-line, 2nd by President Boisselle. All in favor.

Parking	51,642.00	Parking Clerk Jack Higgins
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Alderman Brodeur asks Mr. Higgins what the Traffic Code line item of \$1,000 is for. Mr. Higgins says it's for a study to assess if the parking signs are up to code. Alderman Brodeur asks if he thinks all of the funds will be used this year; Mr. Higgins says he doesn't know.

Alderman Brodeur moves to cut line-item 529303 by \$500 to \$500, 2nd by Alderman Conn. 1 opposed (Forbes). Motion carries.

Alderman Medeiros asks what is covered in Professional Services. Mr. Higgins says it's for Kelly and Ryan; they process the tickets and mailings for the Department. Alderman Medeiros asks if it includes maintenance or armed services; Mr. Higgins says yes.

Alderman Wright asks about the printing budget being reduced by 25%. Mr. Higgins says he won't have to print new tickets for about 5 years.

Alderman Conn motions to move the amended bottom-line of \$51,142.00, 2nd by President Boisselle. All in favor.

Assessor	195,020.60	Chief Assessor Don Dragt
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Alderman Brodeur asks what the fee line-item is used for. Mr. Dragt says the City is charged a fee when recordings are made at the Registry. Alderman Brodeur asks about the \$1500 cut in the Professional Services line-item. Mr. Dragt says that historically it has been used to pay Margaret Ambrogne when Suzy and Ann are out of the office; she has agreed to volunteer her time this year. Alderman Brodeur says it should be cut to zero – \$500 won't buy much. Mr. Dragt says he agrees but it's good to have a cushion in the event someone is needed.

Alderman Brodeur moves to cut line-item 529000 from \$500 to \$0, 2nd by Alderman Conn. The motion fails 4-5.

Alderman Tramontozzi motions to move the bottom-line, 2nd by Alderman Forbes. All in favor.

Pine Banks	117,394.62	Mayor Robert J. Dolan
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Mayor Dolan says Pine Banks Park services Melrose and Malden. This budget represents a 6.22% cut by reducing two seasonal positions to one. There are no major improvements planned for this year.

Alderman Conn says the field complex is first class and is a wonderful venue for the City's youth sports. Hundreds and hundreds of children use it on a daily basis. He says insurance on the City's parks costs \$100,000 per year; money could be saved if Pine Banks insurance policy could be added to the master policy of Melrose or Malden and if the vehicle insurance was added to the City's fleet policy.

Alderman Forbes says the agreement with Fidelity allowing the contractors to park at Pine Banks prevents parents from parking there because the lot is always full. Mayor Dolan says the City received over \$250,000 to complete the ball field and receives a monthly fee from Fidelity to use the parking lot. The project will come to an end soon; the City will have to look at the increase in fixed costs. The Board of Trustees is talking about expansion of nature and walking trails on the Malden side, and looking at installing a regulation track. A new stream of revenue is needed.

Alderman Conn motions to move the bottom-line, 2nd by President Boisselle. All in favor.

Human Rights	3,000.	Co-Chairman Bonnie Cronin
President Boisselle motions to move the bottom-line, 2 nd by Alderman Seaboyer. All in favor.		

Council on Aging	130,293.34	Director Jack Beckley
Mr. Beckley says the budget is very lean at 4.1% less than last year, but it keeps the Center open and the minibus running.		

Alderman Wright says the fire alarm line-item has a 40% decrease in funding yet it has been exceeded this year. Mr. Beckley says in other years it hasn't all been expended; this year faulty alarms were replaced. Alderman Wright asks if the decrease in the HVAC line-item is realistic. Mr. Beckley says he believes so – repairs were made this year.

Alderman Brodeur says the state provides grant money on a per capita basis and asks how the Council on Aging will be impacted if the House budget doesn't survive. Mr. Beckley says they'll make do but it'll make their lives miserable.

Alderman Forbes asks about the elevator contract and expenditures. Mr. Beckley says the rollers broke this year. He always hopes that whatever breaks is covered by the contract but it seems it never is. Fortunately the rollers were covered. Alderman Forbes asks if he puts the contract out to bid; Mr. Beckley says no, but this is the best company so far.

President Boisselle motions to move the bottom-line, 2nd by Alderman Forbes. All in favor.

Health	526,911.61	Health Director Ruth Clay
Alderman Medeiros asks about the 76% cut in Professional Services. Ms. Clay says more funding was added in last year for the work being done on the Hickory Street		

contamination site.

President Boisselle motions to move the bottom-line, 2nd by Alderman Seaboyer. All in favor.

Inspection Services 206,706.96 Building Commissioner Paul Johnson
President Boisselle asks if the increase in line-item 511000, Salary and Wages, is the result of additional staff. Mr. Johnson says no; last year he had two separate budgets. This year they are combined. The duties of the fire alarm technician will be transferred to the Fire Department. The Wire and Gas Inspection Services is absorbed into this budget. President Boisselle asks if \$61,000 represents those salaries. Mr. Johnson says yes. President Boisselle asks about the 60% increase in the education/seminars line-item. Mr. Johnson says again, combining the two budgets gives the impression that the budget has increased by 60% but it hasn't.

Alderman Wright asks if the increase in training is due to the State Building Code coming online. Mr. Johnson says yes; there are major changes in the State Building Code and the Energy Code.

Alderman Conn asks if any of the four people in his department are union members. Mr. Johnson says no – Kevin Walsh is moving to the Fire Department. Alderman Conn asks if the unused sick time is not bargained. Mr. Johnson says no, it isn't.

Alderman Forbes motions to move the bottom-line, 2nd by President Boisselle. All in favor.

Order No. 09-170, Reauthorization of Revolving Funds Requesting the annual approval and reauthorization of the revolving funds the City currently has established, in accordance with MGL Chapter 44, Section 53E 1/2 for fiscal year 2010 as set forth herein.

Alderman Conn says people have to understand the Revolving Accounts allow various departments to receive and expend money as set forth in the Revolving Account. The sole role of the Aldermen in the Revolving Accounts is to vote to authorize them once per year; no money is appropriated to them.

Mr. Dello Russo says that is an accurate synopsis. Annual reauthorization is required by statute. The Commonwealth allows the City to hold a percentage of funds, not by total but by department. This order asks the Board of Aldermen to review the source of funding and the department's authority to expend those funds. If a fund is not reauthorized its life ends at the end of the fiscal year. The department may come back mid-year to ask to increase the funding and expenditure.

Alderman Conn says the balances in Revolving Accounts are not part of the municipal budget. Mr. Dello Russo says that's correct; they are off budget. Revolving Accounts are designed to work with items that are considered unpredictable such as enrollment in recreation programs, the number of vaccine recipients and fines.

Alderman Medeiros says one bottom-line is \$59,000 but the authorization is only \$50,000. Mr. Dello Russo says more money may be accrued than is authorized to

expend; expending more than what is authorized is not allowed.

Alderman Brodeur motions to place the order on hold, 2nd by Alderman Forbes.
Alderman Brodeur says various Department Heads will be coming to future hearings at which time the committee may bring it back up. Chairman Mortimer says all committees with Revolving Accounts are present this evening.

Alderman Brodeur and Alderman Forbes withdraw their motions.

President Boisselle moves to recommend, 2nd by Alderman Tramontozzi. All in favor.

Alderman Forbes motions to suspend the order of business to take up Order No. 09-178, 2nd by Alderman Seaboyer. All in favor.

Order No. 09-178, Amending Melrose Revised Ordinances, Chapter 24, Article III, Section 24-34, Subsection C: Building Permits Fees as set forth herein.

Mr. Johnson says the increases are to offset the 5% cut in the budget as directed by the Mayor.

Alderman Seaboyer moves to recommend, 2nd by Alderman Forbes. 1 opposed (Medeiros). Motion carries.

DPW Administration	526,547.69	City Engineer Bob Beshara
		Deputy City Engineer John Scenna

Mr. Beshara says he has put forth a very aggressive budget in there is \$230,000 in savings over last year. Three positions are being eliminated and there is restructuring of three other positions. He plans to provide better and even more service than last year with the reorganization.

Alderman Conn says the street light actual expenditure this year is \$221,000 and next year's budget is only \$210,000. He asks if that is sufficient. Mr. Beshara says he is looking at new rates; electricity costs are not stable yet. Alderman Conn asks if clothing allowance is collectively bargained; Mr. Beshara says yes. Alderman Conn asks which three positions are being eliminated. Mr. Scenna says one is a MACE union position in the Sanitation Department. Mr. Beshara says the person in that position is out on Worker's Comp and is going on medical retirement. One person asked to be laid off to pursue another opportunity. The third position is a vacant due to a resignation which took place over the winter, and won't be filled. Alderman Conn asks if the first person listed on the salary schedule is paid in part in the water and sewer budgets as well; Mr. Beshara says yes. Alderman Conn asks if the unused sick time is a collective bargaining item. Mr. Scenna says yes, for the ACHE union members.

Alderman Wright asks about the \$50,000 in light maintenance. Mr. Scenna says this is the first year the City has maintained its lights and they were very conservative in how preventive maintenance was handled. They will be more aggressive with only three months left in the fiscal year.

Alderman Tramontozzi asks what the overtime line-item is used for. Mr. Beshara says it's mostly for the ACHE union clerk at Traffic Commission meetings.

Alderman Forbes motions to move the bottom-line, 2nd by President Boisselle. All in favor.

DPW City Hall	149,929.81	City Engineer Bob Beshara Deputy City Engineer John Scenna
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President Boisselle says line-item 527700, Building Repair, is zeroed out. He says the ceiling in the Chamber needs to be repaired. Mr. Beshara says it will be repaired in the FY09 budget.

Alderman Conn says this budget has one employee and asks if he only works in City Hall. Mr. Beshara says he works part-time at City Hall and part-time at the Police Station.

Alderman Brodeur motions to move the bottom-line, 2nd by President Boisselle. All in favor.

DPW Engineering	144,457.99	City Engineer Bob Beshara Deputy City Engineer John Scenna
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Mr. Beshara says one engineer will be full-time paid by a bond; another will be paid 25% from the water and sewer funds.

Alderman Medeiros asks about Professional Services being cut in half. Mr. Beshara says it is a clerical position; the funding is split between Professional Services and part-time salaries. Alderman Medeiros asks if he expects to retain the engineer paid by a bond after this fiscal year. Mr. Beshara says he will have that position as long as there's a bond.

Alderman Brodeur motions to move the bottom-line, 2nd by President Boisselle. All in favor.

DPW Highway	433,637.84	City Engineer Bob Beshara Deputy City Engineer John Scenna
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Alderman Brodeur says the Hired Equipment line-item has spiked. Mr. Scenna says that's in part due to the Betterment line-item being brought to zero; that amount was moved to Hired Equipment. Betterments have been taken off this budget and moved to the Capital Improvement budget. The number is driven by the difficult winter.

President Boisselle asks how the work will be done with the Betterment line zeroed out. Mr. Beshara says betterment funding in this budget is how the City paid for the homeowner's portion. Betterments will now be funded out of bond projects, as allowed by Chapter 90.

Alderman Medeiros asks if new betterments that are brought to their attention will not be allowed to be done this year. Mr. Beshara says there are funds in Hired Equipment that can be transferred over.

Alderman Conn asks why it costs so much for street signs when the City has its own sign shop. Mr. Scenna says the City doesn't have machines to make signs. Alderman Conn asks if he expects to spend all of these funds this year. Mr. Scenna says many

orders were just put in for street signs now that it's spring. Alderman Conn asks if it would be more cost effective to make their own signs. Mr. Beshara says he doesn't know; the City has to have all signs upgraded under federal mandate by 2010. An employee would have to be trained and the system would have to be upgraded in order to do the work.

Alderman Forbes asks if the catch basin work is done in-house. Mr. Beshara says no; it's contracted out.

Alderman Forbes motions to move the bottom-line, 2nd by Alderman Medeiros. All in favor.

DPW Snow	250,000.00	City Engineer Bob Beshara Deputy City Engineer John Scenna
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Alderman Conn motions to move the bottom-line, 2nd by Alderman Tramontozzi. All in favor.

DPW Sanitation	1,037,749.32	City Engineer Bob Beshara Deputy City Engineer John Scenna
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Alderman Brodeur asks about the reduction in the trash disposal line-item. Mr. Beshara says the City was able to reduce the tipping fee by driving to Haverhill rather than Danvers. The move was implemented on March 1 and he expects to save \$100,000 per year. Alderman Brodeur asks if he could absorb a cut. Mr. Beshara says there's an increase in tonnage as a result of taking on the responsibility of the schools. The plan is to pick up at Memorial Hall and other City buildings as it becomes appropriate to do so. Alderman Brodeur asks what it cost the school for pick up; Mr. Beshara says \$30,000. Alderman Brodeur says solid waste tonnage is going down and recycling is going up. He asks if this line-item can live with a \$5,000 reduction. Mr. Beshara says he's not sure. Alderman Brodeur moves to reduce line-item 522700 by \$5,000.00, 2nd by Alderman Medeiros. Motion passes 5-4.

President Boisselle asks if he intends to pick up more trash with three fewer employees. Mr. Beshara says the department has been reorganized to make it work.

Alderman Forbes motions to move the amended bottom-line of \$1,032,749.32, 2nd by President Boisselle. All in favor.

DPW Trees	262,973.96	City Engineer Bob Beshara Deputy City Engineer John Scenna
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Alderman Forbes motions to move the bottom-line, 2nd by Alderman Tramontozzi. All in favor.

DPW Automotive	417,838.41	City Engineer Bob Beshara Deputy City Engineer John Scenna
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Alderman Forbes motions to move the bottom-line, 2nd by President Boisselle. All in favor.

Order No. 09-173, APPROPRIATION Amount: \$122,285.66 From: A/C # 84042-590000 - Contract Stabilization Fund To: A/C # 012111-511000 - Police Salaries This money will be used to fund retroactive raises.

Police Chief Lyle says he credits everyone that was involved – it's the first time the police contract was settled without going to arbitration.

Alderman Brodeur asks if the FY2010 figures are based on these numbers. Mr. Dello Russo says the FY10 budget reflects the agreed upon wages.

Alderman Brodeur motions to move the bottom-line, 2nd by Alderman Forbes. All in favor.

Order No. 09-174, APPROPRIATION Amount: \$805,374.31 From: Available Free Cash
To Acct # 84054-490000 Capital Stabilization Fund, Transfer In \$440,000.00
Account # 84044-490000 Contract Stabilization Fund, Transfer In \$ 48,152.19
Account #19054-490000 School, Other Funding Sources \$300,750.00
Account #016512-537610 Parks, Benches \$ 10,000.00
Account #012111-511000 Police, Salaries \$ 6,472.12
as set forth herein

Alderman Conn asks if this is all of the Free Cash available. Mr. Dello Russo says no; there is \$70,630 remaining which he will seek to put toward the snow and ice deficit. Alderman Conn asks the balance of the Capital Stabilization Fund. Mr. Dello Russo says there is \$484,000; \$40,000 will be used for Morelli Field. The Capital Fund will consist of \$440,000. There is \$45,068 in the fund now. Alderman Conn asks if there is any reason the Aldermen need to pass this prior to the passage of the full budget. Mr. Dello Russo says there are a number of items being requested by DPW; they will need the funds to get the projects done. Alderman Conn says he doesn't like to appropriate all of the Free Cash before the end of the year in case there's an emergency.

Alderman Brodeur asks why it's being done this way and not transferred to the items that Public Works wants. Mr. Dello Russo says the object to setting up a Capital Stabilization Fund is to show the community the number of items that are paid for with cash such as police vehicles. The Stabilization Fund is pay-as-you-go, not bonded items. The Board of Aldermen may vote on each item separately. It helps to manage the funds that the City has and it demonstrates where the priorities are. Transferring funds to this fund shows all other funding has been exhausted. Alderman Brodeur asks about the money going to Schools, Other Funding Sources. Mr. Dello Russo says that may be used to fund the operational budget in FY10. Alderman Brodeur asks if the FY10 School budget anticipates use of these funds; Mr. Dello Russo says yes. Alderman Brodeur says this provides some clarity. There is a tendency to treat the water and sewer Free Cash differently than this Free Cash.

Alderman Medeiros says the School OFS is Medicare reimbursement and belongs on the school side.

Alderman Conn motions to place the order on hold, 2nd by Alderman Tramontozzi.

Alderman Tramontozzi motions to divide out the transfer to Account# 012111-511000, Police Salaries in the amount of \$6,472.12. Chairman Mortimer says that item is Order No. 09-174A and it is before the committee.

Alderman Conn moves to recommend, 2nd by Tramontozzi. All in favor.

Alderman Wright says he understands that part of these funds will be used for Public Works. Mr. Beshara says it's for a new sanitation vehicle as part of the reorganization of the department and pick-up of solid waste and compost.

Alderman Medeiros asks how much of the \$440,000 is set to be spent. Mr. Dello Russo says \$115,000 for Pine Banks; \$29,000 for the third year sidewalk plow payment; \$26,000 for a door at Melrose High School; and \$37,000 for a police vehicle. Alderman Medeiros asks how badly the police vehicle is needed. Chief Lyle says the department hasn't had a traffic vehicle for 2 years. He received grant money to install a license plate reader for it.

Alderman Conn and Alderman Tramontozzi withdraw their motions.

Alderman Medeiros motions to divide each line:
Order No. 09-174 in the amount of \$440,000.00
Order No. 09-174A in the amount of \$6,472.12
Order No. 09-174B in the amount of \$48,152.19
Order No. 09-174C in the amount of \$300,750.00
Order No. 09-174D in the amount of \$10,000.00

Chairman Mortimer says Order No. 09-174A has been recommended and duly seconded. On the motion to recommend, All in favor.

Alderman Conn says if the Aldermen wants to vote all of these through they should vote all of them through.

Alderman Medeiros motions to hold Order No. 09-174, 2nd by Alderman Brodeur. Motion carries.

Alderman Brodeur moves to recommend Order No. 09-174B, 2nd by Alderman Forbes. All in favor.

Alderman Brodeur moves to recommend Order No. 09-174C, 2nd by Alderman Forbes. Motion carries (Boisselle opposed).

Alderman Forbes moves to recommend Order No. 09-174D, 2nd by Alderman Seaboyer. All in favor.

Alderman Brodeur motions to adjourn, 2nd by President Boisselle. All in favor.

Appropriations adjourns at 10:10 p.m.

Maribeth Harrington
Clerk of Committees