

FY2009 Budgetary Hearings

Appropriations Committee

Chairman Brodeur, Boisselle,
Mortimer, Infurna, Tramontozzi,
Forbes, Seaboyer, Medeiros, Conn
Absent: Wright, McAteer-Margolis
In attendance: Children's Librarian
Marianne Stanton; Beebe Estate
Trustees Betsy Friedburg and Susan
Hollister; Deputy City Solicitor
Robert Van Campen, Mayor Dolan;
Director Dennis Kelley; Chief
Assessor Donald Dragt; IT Director
Jorge Pazos; Health Director Ruth
Clay; City Clerk Mary-Rita O'Shea;
City Auditor/CFO Patrick Dello
Russo

Appropriations called to order by Chairman Brodeur at 7:35 p.m.

Order No. 08-201, City of Melrose Operating Budget for Fiscal Year 2009 in the amount of \$60,553,844.79.

Alderman Mortimer motions to open Public Participation, 2nd by Alderman Boisselle. All in favor. No one comes forward. Alderman Mortimer motions to close Public Participation, 2nd by Alderman Boisselle. All in favor.

Order No. 08-230, A Resolution in recognition of the Week of the Young Child. (AL-1)

Chairman Brodeur reads the Resolution and presents a special copy to Melrose Public Library Children's Librarian Marianne Stanton.

Alderman Mortimer moves to Place on File, 2nd by Alderman Boisselle. All in favor.

Beebe Estate	10,000.00	Trustees Betsy Friedburg and Susan Hollister
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Ms. Friedburg says the budget has been level-funded for the past several years with most of it going toward utility costs and this year the Trustees were asked to reduce it by 23%. There are some repair projects that need to be taken care of that are paid through the building repair line-item. The boiler needs replacement in the near future. Rental information is available on the website however the parking situation is difficult during the day time because the senior center is in use. The estate receives a small monthly rental income from MAAV (Melrose Alliance Against Violence) and the building provides space for public activities. The other monthly events total less than \$100 in revenue and goes toward building repair projects. The budget was cut mostly by reducing custodial services; she hopes rentals will cover the cuts.

Alderman Mortimer motions to move the bottom-line, 2nd by Alderman Medeiros.

On discussion Alderman Infurna thanks Ms. Friedburg and Ms. Hollister and the other

Trustees for all of their work.

Chairman Brodeur asks how old the boiler is and when it is expected that it will need replacing. Ms. Hollister says it's about 20 years old and parts are getting scarce. Everyone thinks it's on its way out but no one knows when it will go. It's a steam heating system making it a little trickier. The gas bill is the largest one they have. Installing zone heating may save money but it's trickier because it's a steam system.

On the motion to move the bottom line, All in favor.

City Solicitor	525,543.41	Deputy City Solicitor Robert Van Campen
		Mayor Dolan

Mayor Dolan says it is his intention to name Attorney Van Campen as full-time City Solicitor at the next full board meeting. David Lucas will become Deputy City Solicitor with a smaller role. The mayor says his ultimate goal was set up three years ago to eliminate outside counsel. The City saved over \$200,000 over the last two years as a result.

Chairman Brodeur says it's nice to see the Labor Counsel line-item reduced to zero.

President Conn says it's good to see the Labor Counsel position going in-house; it's no longer feasible to have outside labor counsel. President Conn says David Lucas did a good job and he's glad he is staying on in some capacity. He asks what the \$20,000 in Special Counsel is for. Attorney Van Campen says he doesn't anticipate using all \$20,000 but it will be used to pay outstanding labor costs or uninsured litigation matters that he and Mr. Lucas couldn't handle. President Conn asks how many cases there are in addition to the one outstanding; Attorney Van Campen says there are none. President Conn asks if this line-item could withstand a \$5,000 cut; Attorney Van Campen says it probably could.

Alderman Medeiros asks if the contractual line-item 534250, Elect Mass, is for the Massachusetts General Laws Annotated. Attorney Van Campen says yes; he transferred to West Law which provides on-line service for four users and covers all books and updates for his office.

Alderman Boisselle asks about the 11% increase in the Property Insurance line-item. Attorney Van Campen says it is the estimate received from the insurance agent and covers every item of insurance in the City. Alderman Boisselle says \$35,000 has been spent in suits and claims and only \$10,000 is budgeted for next year. He asks if all claims are being settled. Attorney Van Campen says FY08 is high because of the number of employment matters incurred against the City. Each one costs the City a \$10,000 deductible.

President Conn moves to cut line-item 528970, Special Counsel, by \$5,000 to \$15,000, 2nd by Alderman Tramontozzi. All in favor.

Alderman Mortimer motions to move the amended bottom-line of \$520,543.41, 2nd by Alderman Boisselle. All in favor.

Library	896,974.28	Library Director Dennis Kelley
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Mr. Kelley says the budget is conservative but realistic, providing the library to be open seven days per week during the school year. The library will also obtain certification from the state's Library Board. He needs about \$30,000 in additional funds, which the Library Trustees will appropriate in September.

Alderman Boisselle says that the Audio Material line-item is down quite a bit. Mr. Kelley says the money appropriated by the Trustees will be put in there.

President Conn says the Library has a large Electric expense and asks if there is anything being done to reduce costs. Mr. Kelley says that a couple of years ago the electric company changed the lighting, worth about \$15,000. People are in the building from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. every day; it's a major item in the budget. President Conn asks if the Mileage line-item is a collective bargaining item; Mr. Kelley says yes. President Conn asks about the interplay of the City budget and funds from the Trustees. Mr. Kelley says the Trustees will donate \$30,000 to the City and hopefully it will be put into this budget. President Conn asks if it is money from donations and fees. Mr. Kelley says yes; it is money not to be used for operating expenses but for books and other materials.

Alderman Forbes says Audio Materials has been reduced by 95% and Books reduced by 46%. He asks if the increased use of high tech means there's a need for fewer books. Mr. Kelley says no; those line-items will be supplied by the Trustees.

Alderman Infurna thanks Mr. Kelley and asks him to once again to explain how someone can donate books to the library using the Wish List. Mr. Kelley says there is a direct link to Amazon.com on the Library's web site with three categories of books the Library would like to have. When the order is placed the books are sent directly to the Library and the person placing the order receives the bill. He says it is a very successful program and people use it to commemorate birthdays and other events.

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

Assessor	194,370.85	Chief Assessor Donald Dragt
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Mr. Dragt says this budget is less complicated than the School budget and a little more complicated than the Beebe Estate's budget. Amounts changed include increasing Salary and Wages; Ann Spataro's hours will increase from 19 to 24 hours because of the passport program. The Contractual section has a large decrease in the Reval line-item due to the completion of the three-year Patriot Properties contract. They were required to inspect all houses in Melrose and prepare a document and analysis for the DoR. He will take that work over, which is why that line-item decreased dramatically. Another change includes a significant increase in Education/Seminars. The clerks will take seminars and this budget restores funding for a week-long summer Assessor's seminar.

Alderman Seaboyer asks how the passport program is doing. Mr. Dragt says it is going well. About 100 passports are processed each month, raising about \$2,500 per month. He hasn't pushed the program and there hasn't been any advertising in the newspaper for a reason; it is a service to the community but he wants to remain as the Assessor's office and provide that service. Alderman Seaboyer asks if he will bring Patriot Properties back at any time. Mr. Dragt says that is what the Professional Services line-item is for.

President Conn asks who represents the City on tax title cases; Mr. Dragt says he does. President Conn asks if outside counsel is used at all. Mr. Dragt says outside counsel was used last year, but that's the only time, and the case has settled. President Conn asks if there are any unsettled cases. Mr. Dragt says there is only one; it's a multiple year case and it isn't resolved.

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

Info Tech	337,203.48	IT Director Jorge Pazos
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Mr. Pazos says this budget represents what his department needs to provide support to all other departments. The only real significant change is the \$13,500 increase in MUNIS Support. The Department Equipment budget includes \$17,000 for DR/BC Service (Disaster Recovery/Business Continuity), an IT computer purchase offered by MUNIS. It houses the City's financial information so that in the event the City doesn't have access to its system locally, the information such as payroll and vendor checks may be retrieved within hours. This computer purchase represents the City's move to put into place a STAN, which is a really big box of hard drives.

President Conn asks if the MUNIS budget line-item is derived from a contract or estimated. Mr. Pazos says MUNIS has a fee schedule based on the size of the budget. President Conn asks if it is a set fee; Mr. Pazos says yes.

Alderman Medeiros says she is happy to hear about the move to improve storage. She says computer technology and hard drives change so quickly and asks how long this will be relevant. Mr. Pazos says the appliance will be purchased from Network Appliances. There is nothing fancy about it except the software that drives it; it is standard hardware. Alderman Medeiros asks if there is a warranty; Mr. Pazos says yes, against manufacturer defects. He is also buying a support agreement for the first year. Next year that number will be rolled into the License line-item.

Alderman Forbes says the Programmer line-item in FY07 was \$13,000 and to date \$8,000 has been spent for FY08; he asks about \$10,000 being appropriated for FY2009. Mr. Pazos says that line-item is used for a consultant predominantly for MUNIS but someone else could be brought in. The City is implementing a benefits program that will be integrated with the financial program. Alderman Forbes asks if a special company will be used; Mr. Pazos says Donna Cardillo will be used.

Alderman Boisselle asks if the School Department has DR/BC storage. Mr. Pazos says it doesn't have it yet. Alderman Boisselle asks if the School's storage will be in the City's budget or in the School's budget. Mr. Pazos says he'd like to see it in the School's.

Alderman Medeiros asks about line-item 522004, WAN Communication and line-item 525106, Telephone maintenance. Mr. Pazos says telephone maintenance is to maintain the desktop handsets or to add to the system when necessary. WAN is the wide area network; it was updated several years ago and now with the security cameras being installed these funds will be used to bring a consultant on board for a feasibility study in using the Verizon fiber network.

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

Dept. Equipment 124,855.00 IT Director Jorge Pazos
Alderman Medeiros motions to move the bottom-line, 2nd by Alderman Boisselle. All in favor.

Health 452,125.53 Health Director Ruth Clay
Ms. Clay says the Sanitary Inspector position is full-time and inspects everything except housing. She has found issues at hazardous waste sites and has worked closely with the DEP to help rectify them. As of January 1 the Health Department is no longer in the massage establishment business, which has impacted the department's revenue. The Canine Control officer is having an excellent year and works closely with the Humane Society. Funds from the donation made to the City in November were used to house Johnny the dog for two months. Substance Prevention has 1½ people and is pretty high profile. She's hoping to get \$75,000 in earmarked money; there would be a huge decline in what the program could do without it. Melrose is sharing a public health nurse with Wakefield; she is here on Monday and Tuesday and in Wakefield on Thursday and Friday. The nine year grant is up this year for school nurses; Ms. Clay says she has reapplied but won't hear for a couple of weeks. The Franklin School Early Childhood Center will have a school nurse funded through tuition and the City is ending the school nurse partnership with St. Mary's.

Chairman Brodeur asks about the revolving fund. Ms. Clay says revenue is from flu clinics and the sale of bicycle helmets and expenditures include paying part of the Canine Officer's salary (5 hours per week) and a few hours for the Public Health nurse.

Alderman Seaboyer asks about the School nurses. Ms. Clay says that for the first time ever, every school has a full-time school nurse. They are paid from a variety of sources. It was one of the Board of Health's goals and the City has gone from having 3 full-time nurses to 11 in eight years.

Alderman Forbes asks about Pest Control. Ms. Clay says it's primarily for mosquito control. Alderman Forbes asks if the state comes in for mandated testing. Ms. Clay says that only dead crows and blue jays are tested for West Nile virus and traps are tested for Triple E and West Nile virus. Alderman Forbes asks about spraying. Ms. Clay says aerial spraying by helicopter is done in April and individual hand spraying is done in small spaces. Truck spraying has not been done since she's worked for the City; it's a lot of chemicals with limited application. The community as a whole feels that the City shouldn't spray using trucks.

Alderman Boisselle says that there is \$20,000 in Professional Services but only \$4,000 has been spent. Ms. Clay says that will be used to pay CDM for consultant services for hazmat land. It also pays for constable services and a carrier to bring bats in for state testing.

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

City Clerk 220,245.05 City Clerk Mary-Rita O'Shea

Ms. O'Shea says of the 351 cities and towns in Massachusetts, 52 have a city form of government and there are 38 communities with birthing hospitals. Cities with birthing hospitals can't be compared because some have an election commission separate from the Clerk's office and some have a licensing commission separate from the Clerk's office and very few have a birthing hospital. Melrose does it all.

Alderman Seaboyer asks about the clerk vacancy. Ms. O'Shea says the purpose of that position is to cross train that person to work 15 hours per week year-round, assisting with the City Clerk's office and the Elections office. Alderman Seaboyer asks if there are any volunteers in her office. Ms. O'Shea says they help with the census. Alderman Seaboyer asks if 15 hours are enough. Ms. O'Shea says ideally the position would be full-time but she is under the financial constraints of the City.

Alderman Forbes asks if the former registrar, Dotty Maguire, is paid. Ms. O'Shea says yes.

Chairman Brodeur asks if her office does birth certificates for anyone born in the City; Ms. O'Shea says yes.

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

Election/Registrar	47,456.12	City Clerk Mary-Rita O'Shea
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Ms. O'Shea says the census is the heart of the office, generating information for the street listing book and voter registration. All information is opened and input into the computer.

Alderman Mortimer says part-time Salary and Wages is down 33% and asks if those funds will be used for the position in the City Clerk's office. Ms. O'Shea says she will be receiving a check from the state for \$11,000 for the two elections.

Alderman Medeiros asks if that line-item is for the poll workers; Ms. O'Shea says yes.

Alderman Boisselle asks about the Professional Services line-item being decreased. Ms. O'Shea says the 15 hour per week position will be doing the work.

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

Mayor	243,736.24	Mayor Dolan
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Mayor Dolan says his office has seen a considerable amount of changes over the past year. Seven years ago he started with a wonderful staff: Mike Hughes and Beth Lucien. Mike has transferred to the cemetery and Beth has moved to Maine. It was a challenge for him to make sure there was no drop off in services. He is fortunate to have hired Brigid Alverson and Mike Lindstrom. Mike Lindstrom is not just the Mayor's aide, he is everybody's aide. He is the community liaison. His salary has moved from DPW bonds to a position in City government. He has had dozens of volunteers that have given their time. In particular, Sally Kennedy, Tony Gilardi and John Cornetta have given thousands of dollars in time. His office also has young interns volunteer in the summertime; no one is ever turned away and it's a great way to build up a resume. The

Dues line-item is increased by \$1500 because of the increase in the Metro Mayors Association membership fee. Education Seminars has also increased. His goal is to attend the Mayor's conference in Washington, D.C. as it is the only conference he attends. The City has received federal dollars as a result. He didn't like the name of the Mayor's Unclassified line-item so he changed it to Community Outreach, which is what it really is; the funds are used to sponsor programs that bring people together. He believes the number being brought forward is a reasonable one.

Alderman Medeiros says Dues and Memberships is a big line-item and asks what \$19,000 covers. Mayor Dolan says the Metro Mayors Association is a lobbying agency and offers professional development. Under Mayor Lyons a group of cities decided to organize and the association was formed. Membership costs \$10,000 annually and it's a high price, but it could mean \$100,000 in additional revenue for the City under such programs as the regional 9-1-1 system, the Shannon Grant, and the Municipal Partnership Act. The entire GIC policy came out of this association; the \$10,000 dues is a worthy investment. National Cities is the only other organization that the mayor belongs to.

Chairman Brodeur asks if the MMA dues covers the Board of Aldermen. Mayor Dolan says yes.

Alderman Seaboyer asks if outside vendors will be brought in to pick up trash on DPW Day. Mayor Dolan says no, that pick up will be delayed by one day; over 1,000 children will be attending the event and every hand is needed to keep them safe. Alderman Seaboyer asks if the bonds used to pay Mike Lindstrom's salary are no longer available. Mayor Dolan says the Upham Street and Ell Pond projects are coming to an end. Alderman Seaboyer says Mr. Lindstrom was hired as the DPW liaison and asks if that work is shifting to the Mayor's office. Mayor Dolan says Mr. Lindstrom is the constituent liaison and information officer. The key point of the position is that, during work that is disruptive to a neighborhood, he is the one person available to deal with their concerns; that is his job. Alderman Seaboyer says there is still a lot of bonds out there and asks why not continue to pay him as such. Mayor Dolan says his is a position that was always paid on-budget and he thinks it's best to keep it that way. He has additional plans for him as the Communications Administrator. Alderman Seaboyer asks if the Board of Aldermen entertained a cut in that line-item would that salary be picked up by bonds. Mayor Dolan says that obviously he would keep him and he would rather use bond money on the projects.

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

Auditor	324,040.59	City Auditor/CFO Patrick Dello Russo
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Mr. Dello Russo says the only increases in the Salary and Wages line-item are strictly salary step increases and COLAs. The overtime line-item is reduced to \$500, which is generally paid to the payroll clerk. There is only one contract outstanding, which could reduce that number. Audit Services is increased by \$6,000. Professional Services is decreased by \$200 and he hopes the \$1,500 will get him through FY09. He says that everything else is the same. The Capital Outlay line-item for the state mandated GASB study was previously appropriated and is an ongoing project to identify the City's health insurance liability and to find a place for it on the balance sheet. He can't predict when

the liability will have to be funded. The pension allocation needs to be reformed because the present payment schedule is putting unnecessary pressure on the community, especially when looking at this new liability. He thinks the state will allow cities and towns a 30-year schedule to pay it down. The requirement now is for the City to recognize the liability which will be looked at by the rating agencies any time the City goes to bond. Mr. Dello Russo stresses that any item he brings before the Board of Aldermen regarding stabilization funds is hammered out with the outside auditors beforehand. He says they bring a lot of perspective to the City.

Alderman Seaboyer says GASB is a monster in the closet and asks when the plan is due and if Mr. Dello Russo has any idea of what the liability is. Mr. Dello Russo says the liability is in the \$40-\$50 million range and that it has not yet been determined when it must be funded.

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

Aldermanic 120,127.24

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

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

Appropriations adjourns at 9:26 p.m.

Maribeth Harrington
Clerk of Committees