



The City of Danbury's 2006-2007 Budget

Mayor Mark D. Boughton

“Reinventing Danbury's Government 2006”

Mr. President. Honorable Leaders and Members of the Common Council, Madam Clerk, City Officials, Department Directors, Employees and my fellow Danburians.

In accordance with the my duties as Mayor and those prescribed by the Charter of the City of Danbury, I respectfully present my proposed budget, and the Comprehensive Capital improvement plan for the Fiscal year 2006-2007.

Before I begin my budget details, let me say thank you to the legislative body of our city, the Common Council, and its leadership. Our Council spends hours working on the City's business in a voluntary capacity. In the coming month, they will be giving up their evenings and weekends to deliberate over this body of work. For their dedication and commitment we should all be thankful.

I also want to thank a very special elected official, our Council President Vin Nolan. As you all know, Vin has accepted a position with the Town of New Milford. As such, this will be his last city budget he will work on for a while. I want to thank Vin for all of his help and support over the last several years. He will be missed and he has been a tremendous asset to our City.

Of course our thank yous would not be possible without recognizing our Director of Finance and Personnel Dena Diorio. Dena has spent hundreds of hours pouring over these numbers and with the aid of her capable assistant Judy Baris, has been able to create a first class document that all of us can be proud of. Dena's work is outstanding in every way.

My friends, as in the past Danbury stands on strong financial footing. Our 2006-2007 budget reflects careful planning and an eye towards the future. The early retirement program has been a tremendous success. 12 people have opted to accept the terms and conditions of the program. Let's take a moment to reflect on those individuals and their contributions to our city.

In the Engineering Department:

Bill Buckley  
Pat Ellsworth

In the Health department:

Jack Kozuchowski

In the Library:

Betsy McDonough  
Laura McLaughlin  
Eileen McCormack

In the Office of Common Council:

Jimmetta Samaha

In the Zoning Department:

Wayne Skelly

In the Corporation Counsel's Office:

Ric Gottschalk

In the Department of Welfare and Social Services:

Debbie McKenzie

In the Tax Collectors Office:

Cathy Skurat

In the Personnel Office:

Julio Lopez

Each of these individuals has contributed to the betterment of our City over the many years. We salute them and we thank them for their many years of dedicated service.

While we are sad to see these talented professionals leave the City of Danbury, we are also cognizant that the City and its services must go on. To that end, Dena Diorio, Mike McLachlan, and I have developed a reorganization plan that will enhance services and save the taxpayers money. In addition, Chief Baker has provided his vision for the Danbury Police Department that will provide us the operational framework for the new police station and will result in a more responsive and modern Police Department. Those changes and the expanded services and cost savings are why we have entitled this budget "Reinventing Danbury's Government 2006."

We know that change is never easy. There is always institutional resistance and skepticism that impedes progress. I know that I am asking our departments to redefine what they do, and how they do it. But in the end it is for the common good that we approach the leadership of our city. After all, it was John F. Kennedy who said ***"change is the law of life. And those who look only to the past or the present are certain to miss the future."***

This most important component to our redesign, our change if you will, is our core mission. The core mission of the City of Danbury is defined by our mission statement.

***"The City of Danbury's mission is to ensure a superior quality of life for its citizens by providing the most cost effective municipal services while preserving the cultural, historical and natural resources of the City. We are committed to working with citizens to enhance Danbury's position as a premier place to live, work, and raise a family in a traditional yet progressive community."***

The mission statement defines and drives our decision making process in the City of Danbury.

This year's budget reflects the core mission. In addition, each of our departments was asked to develop their own mission statement that connects back to the City's statement. In this way, our mission is clear, our purpose is clear, and the flow of communication down to our departments is seamless.

### **Public Safety**

Most important to our mission statement and to quality of life in the City of Danbury is the delivery of public safety services. On May 9<sup>th</sup> this city will make a critical vote on funding for a new police station and on funding for much needed public safety technology and equipment. The Police station will be 75,000 square feet and include all of the ancillary uses that are required of a modern day police department. Most importantly, the new police station will be equipped for centralized dispatch for police, fire, and EMS.

The vote on May 9<sup>th</sup> will also include funding for the Fire Department to replace aging vehicles and to outfit the new Westside Fire Station.

To complement the delivery of these services and the new Police building, the 2006-2007 budget has a number of improvements to the Danbury P.D. The operating budget includes funding for 16 new vehicles for the P.D. In addition, the 2006-2007 budget also includes video cameras to be installed in each patrol vehicle, as well as new laptops for the patrol cars that will be more rugged and more durable. The video cameras will help provide a record of the interaction our officers have with the public and serve as an important tool in recreating crime scenes as well as protecting our officers. The lap tops are much needed and will replace the aging computers in the vehicles.

The operating budget also includes funding for a new public safety technology person to handle sensitive technology issues in the Police and Fire Departments. This will also be cost

effective as those duties are currently handled by police and fire staff. By hiring a civilian for these functions, we can redeploy an officer and a firefighter back to the field.

Finally, there is the issue of operations within the Police Department. Last year I asked Chief Baker to design a strategic plan for the Police Department that would reflect the needs of growing diverse community in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Chief Baker and Deputy Chief Shanahan have developed their plan which is called "Vision 2009"

This plan is comprehensive and is thorough. It reflects and updates recommendations from the strategic plan developed in 1983 for the Police Department by the International Association of Chiefs of Police. These recommendations were never implemented by prior administrations. "Vision 2009" analyzes staffing levels, equipment, sworn officer training, traffic enforcement, and quality of life enforcement.

Specifically the Chief is reorganizing the Department into four divisions. Patrol, Investigations, and Professional Standards, each commanded by a Captain, and Administrative Services, commanded by a Civilian Manager. A Commander overseeing each division will increase accountability and responsiveness.

Patrol Division will have three platoons commanded by a Lieutenant and five Sergeants. The Community Policing Unit will include School Resource Officers, UNIT Officer, and Community Conditions officers. There will also be Traffic and a Street Crimes Unit.

Investigations will include General Investigations, The Youth Bureau, and Special Investigations. It will also include the Evidence Barn, combines Homeland security and intelligence functions and will have additional resources for white collar and computer crimes.

The Professional Standards Division will include Internal Affairs, Accreditation, Training, Recruiting, and Headquarters functions. The Division will completely update and modernize the rules and regulations for the department. The Division will also coordinate all training and cross training.

Administrative services include the complete civilianization of dispatch. It will assign clerks to handle private duty scheduling, the property rooms, and personnel functions.

By civilianizing many of the functions currently done by Police Officers, we will be able to put many more officers on the street, doing what they are paid to do and doing what they were trained to do, and what they like to do. Serving our residents and protecting the public.

Both the Chief and I recognize that these changes will require negotiating with the police union on the impact of the reorganization. We believe that for the Department to move forward in the 21<sup>st</sup> century we must implement these changes so that we may provide more efficient Public Safety services to our residents.

## **Education**

Education spending continues to be one of the main drivers in our budget. Our Board of Education has asked for approximately 8.3 % increase in their operating budget. At the same time we have reorganized and reduced spending on the City side of the budget. This year is no different. I am proposing an increase to the Board of Education of 5.9% to 100 million dollars or approximately 5.5 million dollars more than last year. In the last 4 years education spending has risen by almost 20 million dollars. Yet student enrollment has only increase by 100 students.

Of course I would be remiss if I did not mention the states failure to fully meet its obligations as it relates to educating our young people. Once again this budget year requires cities and towns across Connecticut to make difficult decisions between delivering basic city services and educating our children.

Finally, let me emphasize that we are excited about the future of education in Danbury. This fall the new Western Ct. Academy of International Studies will open. It will provide a state-of-the-art educational experience for our young people. With over 1000 applicants, it has already proven to be a tremendous success. In addition, the renovations to Broadview Middle School are almost complete and the Rogers Park Middle School renovations will begin this summer. The construction of Roberts Avenue Replacement School will begin this fall.

Indeed Danbury's children are poised for academic success with new facilities. We are thankful to our taxpayers who understand the economic benefit of quality schools *and* an educated work force.

The 2006-2007 budget also reorganizes and shifts resources to focus on the quality of life issues that are critical to the health of our neighborhoods. This spending plan is important to our mission statement and ultimately to our residents.

## **UNIT**

Last year I introduced to the Council the Livable Neighborhood Plan. The plan focused on three core areas. Specifically, we created a new Department called the UNIT or Unified Neighborhood Inspection Team, we proposed the Danbury Neighborhood Bond which was adopted by the voters in November of 2005, and we proposed a number of initiatives within the 2005-2006 operating budget relating to the improvement of our neighborhoods.

Over the past year the UNIT has been very successful at improving the quality of life in our neighborhoods. The challenge for us has been coordinating the various team members during an already busy work.

This year I am proposing that the UNIT be expanded to full time status. In the 2006-2007 budget we have realigned departments so that team members will work on UNIT activities on a full time basis. An office will set up on the first floor of city hall called the Office of Neighborhood Assistance. Assigned to the office will be one Fire Marshall, a Police Officer who specializes in eradicating graffiti, an assistant zoning enforcement officer, the blight inspector, and the neighborhood coordinator. The UNIT will conduct inspections of housing on a full-time basis, intervene and mediate neighborhood disputes, educate residents about our zoning laws and provide feedback to our staff about challenges within the various neighborhoods throughout our city.

The UNIT will report to the Director of Permit Coordination Sean Hearty. Sean will also be given the title of ZEO Coordinator and we will backfill the position of ZEO with an Assistant ZEO.

***Total Savings in this realignment will be \$21,009.00.***

### **Corporation Council**

With the retirement of our Deputy Corporation Council, we have decided to realign the roles of each of our respective lawyers on staff. We will fill the Deputy Corporation Counsel position with Attorney Les Pinter.

Les has been a dedicated and hardworking attorney in the Corporation Council's Office for almost twenty years. He has earned this promotion.

Along with Bob Yamin, Les will be lead counsel for the City on a variety of different issues. He will also continue his work with the Airport, he will be responsible for issuing opinions on the interpretation of the Charter, interpret all of our Code of Ordinances, and review all city contracts.

Robin Edwards will continue her work on land use issues, work with our Boards and Commissions, and work on environmental issues.

The third position will be filled by a Labor Attorney. We believe that we can save the City significant dollars by hiring an in house labor attorney to handle day to day collective bargaining contract interpretations, review and ensure EEOC compliance, ADA compliance throughout the city, assist the city in pension interpretations, represent the City in mediation and arbitration hearings, and assist the Civil Service Commission.

***Total Projected Savings: \$40,203.00***

### Department of Health, Housing, & Welfare

This year I am proposing that the City of Danbury create a new department by merging the Departments of Health, Housing, and Welfare.

Our City wide mission of providing a superior quality of life for its citizens also includes those that are struggling with the issue of homelessness. Earlier this year I appointed a Task Force on Homelessness that was charged with developing a plan to end homelessness in ten years. This new Department will position the City to better meet the challenges of an expanding and diverse population of residents along with implementing strategies to put our plan in motion.

The Department of Health and Housing has extensive expertise in housing related issues and is charged with the advising the Mayor on housing policy. The Department provides staff support to the Danbury Housing Partnership, the Non-Profit Development Corporation and the Fair Rent Commission, and investigates complaints of housing discrimination. The Task Force recommends that the Danbury Housing Partnership be designated as the body responsible for the implementation and oversight of the 10 year plan. The Welfare Department manages the city shelter, and is also charged with improving access to housing, emergency shelter, medical care, and other social services to the homeless population. By consolidating these departments, the new organization will focus its resources on developing plans and strategies to create more affordable housing opportunities for our citizens.

Finally, I have included funding in the budget for the Dream Homes Community Center, a collaborative effort between the Danbury Housing Authority, the Association for Religious Communities, WeCahr and People First. The Center will act as a point of entry for individuals and families and direct them to community housing and other resources to prevent homelessness. The Dream Homes Community Center in conjunction with a refocused Department of Health, Housing, and Welfare will change the dynamic of our homeless population from managing a difficult problem, to ending it!

***Total Projected Savings: \$119,296***

### DPW/Engineering

With the retirement of City Engineer/Public Works Director we have reorganized the roles and functions of each department. Specifically, the proposed budget for the Engineering Department eliminates funding for the Assistant Engineer, and the position of City Engineer/Public Works Director has been eliminated and has been replaced with a City Engineer. The position of Public Works Director has been created and funded in the Highway Department.

This reorganization will provide enhanced focus and direction as we seek to implement the various bond issues that have been approved by our voters over the last two years, and provide additional supervision and management of our Public Works departments.

***Total Projected Savings: \$23,000***

## **Personnel**

While there will not be major changes to the Personnel Department we are doing some fine tuning of the operations of the organization. Specifically, we are upgrading the vacant Executive Secretary position to a Personnel Assistant. This function will allow us to provide an upgraded level of service to our employees and enhance the expertise in the office.

We have also added dollars in the Personnel Department to assist the administration as we seek to launch an aggressive recruitment plan to fill key positions to help us fulfill our mission statement.

## **Airport**

As most of you are aware, last summer was a difficult time for our Airport. With the unfortunate event of the stolen Airplane we have reevaluated our security so that we are sure that we are doing all that we can to keep our airfield secure. To that end we commissioned an Airport Security Study by the Louis Berger Group. The study made many recommendations to improve security. A key recommendation was to add staff to the Airport Administration. Therefore I am proposing to add the position of Assistant Airport Administrator to assist in implementing the recommendations of the security study.

## **Misc.**

In addition, the 2006-2007 budget includes two positions that will not be back filled or have been reduced to better reflect the needs of the community.

Specifically:

We have reduced the position of Assistant City Clerk to part-time status saving the city \$25,222 in salary.

We have also eliminated the position of Assistant Library Director saving the City \$67,810.

***Total Projected Savings: \$93,032***

## **Sewer & Water Funds**

Our Sewer and Water funds continue to experience cash flow problems related to the draw down of the surplus in these accounts from the 1990's. At a time when we should have been slowly raising rates the City opted to cut rates and run down each of these accounts to the point of insolvency. Our rate study conducted in 2004 put us on the path to financial stability in these funds by providing a 5 year plan to improve financial operations. Last year we made significant changes to the rate structures and how the rates are calculated for our users. Those changes have improved performance and most of the difficult decisions have been made to set the funds on secure financial footing. This year we are calling for a gentle increase in rates and no rate structure changes for these funds.

## **Summary**

The 2006-2007 budget is full of change and improvements and reaches to attain the core values of our mission statement. The impact of these changes to our taxpayers is minimal. Our budget *cuts* the mill rate to 22.05. This will give tax relief to our motor vehicle owners and means that a typical homeowner who owns two vehicles will see a net increase of just a few dollars.

In addition, I am proposing no new fees or changes in existing fees.

Expanded services, improved public safety, sound education, and new efficiencies are the hallmark of our reinventing government plan.

A mission statement that reflects a progressive, forward thinking city, that serves our residents. Our budget gives us a mission statement that reaches down to our city departments and connects with our residents.

The 2006-2007 budget gives us a plan to manage and improve accountability. It's a plan that gives us clearly defined goals and a vision that all of us can be proud of.

A realignment of our Police Department and other key City Departments that reflects the growing needs of our community yet saves the city valuable tax dollars and resources.

This is what our City is about and what we will be working to implement in the coming year.

Tonight, I ask for the Council's cooperation as they deliberate over this spending plan. Our finances have never been stronger, our outlook never been brighter. Let's work together on a bi-partisan basis to keep Danbury moving forward.

With these thoughts in mind I respectfully submit to you this budget for our City's 2006/2007 fiscal year. Thank you, God Bless America and God Bless our Great City....