



***Fiscal Committee – Board of Representatives  
Subcommittee re: Opportunity for Process  
Improvements in City's Budget***

Monica Di Costanzo, Chair

Lindsey Miller, Vice Chair

## **Subcommittee Report**

**Date:** Wednesday, October 3, 2018

**Time:** 7:00 p.m.

**Place:** Democratic Caucus Room, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, 888 Washington Boulevard,  
Stamford, CT 06905-2098

The Fiscal Committee Subcommittee met as indicated above. In attendance were Chair Miller and subcommittee member Reps. Jacobson, Morson, Nabel and Pia. Absent or excused was Rep. Fedeli. Also present were Reps. de la Cruz, Di Costanzo, Lee and Zelinsky; and Jay Fountain, OPM Director. (Rep. Zelinsky left the meeting at 7:05 p.m.)

Chair Miller called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

<b>Item No.</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Subcommittee Action</b>
1. F30.085	REVIEW; Format of and Information Needed for 2019-20 Budget Deliberations in order to discover Opportunities for Process Improvements in City Departments in the City's Operating Budget. 07/11/18 – Submitted by Reps. de la Cruz, Pratt, Aquila, Cottrell, DiCostanzo, Jacobson, Lee, Lion, Matherne, Michelson, Miller, Nabel, Roqueta, Sherwood, Stella, Morson, Coleman, Wallace and Zelinsky. 07/23/18 – Report Made and Held by Committee 10-0-1	

Chair Miller stated that the goal is to determine if the information the Board has asked the departments to provide is adequate, and if not, to recommend changes.

Rep. de la Cruz noted that the description of the item has changed since he was submitted. His goal was to understand how each department operates and to drill down into department processes to determine opportunities for budgetary improvements.

Mr. Fountain stated that the departments and budgets are reviewed extensively as part of the budget process before they are given to the Board of Representatives. There is no performance-based budget analysis, which would be a major multi-year undertaking. Very few governments do this, and when it is done, it is usually ignored. Also, it is difficult to link results to resources in a governmental setting. (For example, it would be difficult to compare school results between Stamford and New Canaan) In order to do this type of review, the City would have to look at resources, then outputs and then outcomes (either short-term or long-term). There are numerous factors that influence results, including weather.

The Budget template is often ignored OPM has thought about having the Board focus on particular departments in order to be able to go into depth. Police, Fire and Sanitation are the departments that spend the most money.

Committee members discussed this item with Mr. Fountain:

- Whether Board committees should be part of the review of the budget presentations for the departments over which they have oversight
- That the Fiscal Committee should not micromanage departments
- The Committee needs to understand the effects of the dollar amount of cuts in order to make cuts that aren't arbitrary
- It would be helpful to know how much of a department's budget is fixed or mandatory and how much of the increase is due to the fixed or mandatory costs or things that can't be controlled, such as energy costs
- Departments are hesitant to overshare as a result of fear that the Board is out to cut their budgets
- Getting an idea of how much an increase is fixed or mandatory would only make sense from the larger departments, but might be difficult to determine
- Maybe departments should meet during the fall to discuss their budgets with the committee that oversees them; that way other representatives might have a better understanding of the process (with Fiscal as secondary)
- The oversight committees should be expected to attend the fiscal budget hearings for the departments
- The initial request and the Mayor's cuts are shown in the budget book – possibly this should be made more obvious; the Mayor did inform the Board of this at the beginning of the process last year
- The Fiscal Committee should meet with the Board of Finance to discuss priorities
- The Committee should look at how other cities receive information: maybe CCM and GFOA should be contracted by the Board office
- They should identify a department on which to do a test run
- Possibly a member of Fiscal should attend the Board of Finance meetings

A motion to hold this item was made, seconded and approved by a vote of 5-0-0 (Reps. Miller, Jacobson, Morson, Nabel and Pia in favor).

Rep. Miller adjourned the meeting at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Lindsey Miller, Subcommittee Chair

This meeting is on [video](#).