

A budget workshop was held by the Town Board of the Town of Moreau on October 18, 2016 in the Town of Moreau Municipal Building, 351 Reynolds Road, Moreau, New York.

Councilwoman LeClair called the workshop to order at 6:00 p.m.

**Town Board Members Present**

Alan VanTassel	Councilman
Bob Prendergast	Councilman
Gardner Congdon	Supervisor [Arrived at 6:15]
Gina LeClair	Councilwoman
Todd Kusnierz	Councilman

**Those present for the Court portion of the Budget Workshop:**

Lisa Sperry, Deputy Town Clerk; Fran Thibodeau, Principal Account Clerk; Jeffrey McCabe, Town Justice; Timothy Alden, Town Justice; Reed Antis, Planning Board Member

Fran Thibodeau advised we would start with account A110 to review the Court budget.

Justice McCabe started with a review of the contractual portion of the budget. He stated their costs have gone up exponentially. He referred to a list of items he had submitted to show how they came up with their budget request. Some of those items were printer cartridges, dues, mileage for conferences, Time Warner and SCI. In reference to the conferences, he noted in 2015 they saved in travel costs on their trip to Niagara by carpooling and there were less travel costs due to the fact that both the Judge and Clerk conferences were at the same location. However, it is expected that the costs will be higher now as these types of conferences are not together anymore (Judge and Clerk conferences are at different locations). The conferences are very important for the education of the Clerks. They are all-day classes and are very beneficial to the Clerk's education and job performance. He stated the costs are trivial compared to the education they are getting from these classes. The Judicial conferences are also for educational purposes.

Justice Alden stated their costs for supplies have gone up over \$1000 this year. The State gave them 6 or 7 free printers, however, they require costly cartridges. He referenced prior budgets have been in line with costs for the past few years, but costs are now going up. He feels that even though they will try to stay within the budget, they are likely to go over in expenses this upcoming year.

Councilman VanTassel asked if it were possible to get the cartridges via a contract. Justice McCabe said they can, however, it is more costly. Over half the printers require name brand, costly cartridges. Aftermarket cartridges create problems with the printers, causing them to have to replace the printer. They are already over their 2015 supplies expense, with 2 months to go this year (2016). They have tried to cut costs wherever possible, such as getting their cards and envelopes through the County.

Revenues were discussed but no changes were made.

Councilman Prendergast summarized the Court's request to increase the Contractual line to the \$20,700 requested in lieu of the \$12,000 tentative budget. Justice McCabe stated \$15,000 would be acceptable. Fran Thibodeau asked if they planned on JCAP this year. Both Justice McCabe and Justice Alden emphasized the JCAP of \$4500 is possible, but if they do not receive it, they will not purchase the filing cabinets they have earmarked for it. It was agreed by the Board to increase the Contractual line of the budget for 2017 to \$15,000.

The next discussion was regarding the salary of Jennifer Miller, Court Clerk to Justice McCabe. Justice McCabe stated Ms. Miller has a Bachelor's Degree and finished first in the County on the Court Clerk's Civil Service Exam. He referenced another employee's starting salary (\$30,000 in 2013) within the Court Clerk's office, and asked that Ms. Miller's salary be raised to that same amount of \$30,000. Councilwoman LeClair asked for verification as to whether or not, in a prior Town Board meeting, it was stated they would revisit Ms. Miller's salary after she had taken the exam. Justice McCabe and Councilman Kusnierz both agreed it was stated on February 9, 2016 at the Town Board Meeting.

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Justice Alden stated they have lost Court Clerks to better paying jobs elsewhere after they spent a year and a half training them. The morale is low due to their staff being underpaid. Supervisor Congdon stated he would like to review all the salaried positions prior to the Preliminary budget. No changes were made to the Court's salary budget at this time.

Councilman VanTassel asked for clarification on the fill-in Court Officer budget line of \$930. Justice McCabe stated that the \$930 is being budgeted for those days the Court has a substitute Court Officer.

No further changes were made to the Court tentative budget at this time.

Councilman VanTassel asked if there was anything else they would like to discuss.

Justice McCabe advised there was not.

The Court portion of the Budget Workshop concluded at 6:40 p.m.

**Those present for the Fire Department portion of the Budget Workshop:**

Lisa Sperry, Deputy Town Clerk; Fran Thibodeau, Principal Account Clerk; Members of the South Glens Falls Fire Company: Wayne Palmer, President; Keith Dickenson, Chief; Benjamin Vaillancourt, Board of Directors; Ronald Quinn Sr., Board of Directors; Mike Shaver, Board of Directors.

This portion of the Budget Workshop began at 6:45 p.m.

Mr. Palmer stated his dissatisfaction with the tentative 1% increase for the Fire Department budget this year. The figures he gave us are much lower than what he felt they really needed. He doesn't feel there has been enough money in the Fire Department budget over the last 20 years to keep up with the times. Equipment needs to be replaced on a schedule per laws and regulations they have to follow. Some examples were: Turnout Gear needs to be replaced every 7 years, regardless of usage, Air Packs every 20 years (\$262,000 to replace all in 2015). He has implemented a plan to replace them on a rotation schedule, 3-4 per year, so as to not have to replace them all in the same year again. Mr. Palmer mentioned one of the fire trucks is 20 years old and has to be replaced next year, another has to be replaced 2 years after that. Their 1991 Rescue/Scuba Truck should have been replaced years ago. The two fire trucks will need to be replaced at a cost of approximately \$1.5 million in a four year period. They will have to finance those even though they try to save money every year for eventual equipment and vehicle replacement. They currently have approximately \$350,000-\$400,000 saved.

Mr. Palmer noted they do not spend any money frivolously. Food, beverages, uniforms, t-shirts, annual banquet, dinners, picnics etc., are paid for with their FI (Foreign Insurance) fund which is funded by the State and can only be spent on the members, or they are funded with donations. It was noted that the new sign out front was paid for by donations.

Mr. Palmer briefly reviewed the building and grounds portion of their budget items, noting some of the maintenance and updates that will need to be done. He stated the legal portion of the budget was entered in anticipation of becoming a fire district again. Also noted was the new budget line for the Low Angle Rescue. This equipment is needed for the many rescues they are involved in that are located in our parks and woods etc.

Mike Shaver added they are more than just a Fire Department.

Mr. Palmer and Mr. Shaver stated they would like to see more Town funding so they can reduce their borrowing. Supervisor Congdon asked if they have looked into reducing their interest rates on their loans. Mr. Palmer advised they have recently refinanced and have lowered their interest rates on their outstanding loans, saving about \$40,000 through Adirondack Trust.

There was a discussion on the growth of the Town, the schools and how this growth correlates to more calls, more usage of their equipment and more costs for the fire department. They need more support in the way of funding from the Town.

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Councilman VanTassel asked for clarification regarding the Foreign Insurance fund. Mr. Palmer advised it cannot be spent on utilities, fuel, office supplies, fire prevention, equipment, building maintenance, improvements etc. It can only be spent on the members.

Councilman VanTassel asked them to share anything they have done to decrease costs.

Mr. Palmer noted they have saved money on their insurance, phone expense and they are conservative with their heat & A/C settings.

Mr. Shaver added that they always request 3 quotes for any repairs on their trucks to assure they are getting the best possible price.

Councilman Kusnierz asked how the \$32000 for equipment was spent last year.

Mr. Palmer listed several items including: 10,000 feet of hose had to be replaced due to age, two thermal imaging cameras and k12 saws.

Councilman Kusnierz asked how they plan to spend their equipment budget this year.

Mr. Palmer answered some items will be: Foam (\$3,000), two more thermal imaging cameras, approximately 5,000 feet of replacement hose, some equipment that needs replacing on a rescue truck, and some wild land equipment/gear.

Councilman Kusnierz inquired about the new budget line for Low Angle Rescue. He asked what was spent this past year for that type of rescue.

Mr. Palmer named a few items such as: Packs, helmets, ropes, and harnesses. He also clarified this year's new budget line is for a piece of low angle rescue equipment that is quite costly and possibly a tow behind storage trailer for this equipment.

Councilman Kusnierz suggested they reach out to Senator Marchione for support and possibly additional funding via municipal grants that may be available.

Mr. Palmer indicated he would do so. He also reiterated that he feels they are an underfunded Fire Department relative to size and volume. He stated they are the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest Fire Protection District in New York State. They cover 54 square miles and we have water surrounding most of the town.

Supervisor Congdon asked about the frequency of Mutual Aid. Supervisor Congdon noted traffic is backed up during these types of calls when there is a traffic accident. Trucks sometimes block the roads.

Mr. Palmer stated that 6 a.m. – 6 p.m. is the only time they provide or receive Mutual Aid due to the lack of manpower. Mr. Palmer and Mr. Shaver assured this is necessary due to the safety of those involved. It was also brought up that they are shorthanded during the day as it is difficult for most members to leave their day jobs to respond to calls. It is not like it used to be when members were allowed to leave for calls during the day, and many work out of town. They need as much help as they can get and they provide Mutual Aid in return to our neighboring towns and villages. Mr. Shaver advised many towns are starting to have paid firefighters and it is a trend we should be aware of and consider in the future.

Councilman VanTassel re-directed the conversation to the budget. He noted the Fire Department is looking for a 10% increase compared to the 1% in the tentative budget.

Mr. Palmer stated he is willing to concede. Supervisor Congdon asked if an increase of \$25,000 in the budget would work. Mr. Palmer stated that \$25,000 up from last year's budget would be acceptable.

Supervisor Congdon advised he would like to see more money saved for truck replacement this year. He also inquired about the cost of a new truck.

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Mr. Palmer advised the following average truck costs: Engine \$650,000-750,000; Engine Rescue \$800,000-850,000; Ladder Truck \$1 million plus, all un-equipped. It was noted a new ladder truck will be needed in less than 10 years, larger than we currently have. We are not equipped for our new and future high-rise buildings. Queensbury Central would have to be called in for assistance. The Board agreed the fire department budget will be increased to \$505,000 and asked that they put \$50,000 into savings into their truck fund. Fran Thibodeau asked how this increase was to be funded if there is a 0% tax. She does not feel there would be enough Sales Tax to cover this increase. Supervisor Congdon stated there will be.

Mr. Shaver advised they are again asking for additional hydrants to be installed in Water District 2. They are currently too spaced out and we are in need of more. They have asked for this for the last two years and have not seen results. Supervisor Congdon assured them there is money in the budget for them this year.

Mr. Shaver stated there was money in the budget for the last two years but there hasn't been any new hydrants put in. He would like to see a few installed this year.

Councilman Prendergast spoke about making sure we were all on the same page with what was agreed upon so that we do not leave with different expectations. He also commended them for the job they do as volunteers.

Councilman Kusnierz noted that the Board is ok with the proposal they agreed upon but it should be noted that nothing is final yet. The Board still has to come up with final budget figures. Mr. Palmer agreed and stated he understood this is just a proposal at this time.

Councilwoman LeClair also supported these statements.

Councilman Prendergast asked if the Fire Department is eligible for any Federal grants at this time.

Mr. Palmer answered they are not due to NIMS compliancy. There are a few members that need to get their certifications before they can be considered. They have been working on this along with a State grant they are hoping to get for a Foam Trailer, which they would need to have if a large propane facility is built here.

Councilman Prendergast asked if they solicit donations from local businesses or corporations.

Mr. Palmer stated they do not, however, they do have local businesses donate to them.

Supervisor Congdon asked if the Fire Department would be able to handle a propane facility fire at this time.

Mr. Palmer replied they would not. There was some discussion about the Fire Department's meeting with Joe Patricke, the former Building Inspector. They had voiced their concerns to him during that meeting. Specifically their concerns with the 110 apartment buildings behind the proposed location and their concerns with any fence that might be installed. They discussed the water supply to the location as well. Mr. Palmer clarified that they have the equipment should there be a fire, however, they do not have a Pre-plan in place for this type of emergency.

Councilman Kusnierz asked if they ever reach out to developers for donations.

Mr. Palmer responded they have but have not received any. There was a conversation about a fire tax but no changes were made at this time.

Supervisor Congdon stated the increase of sales tax estimate this year should cover the \$25,000 increase proposed for the Fire Department budget.

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The Fire Department portion of the Budget meeting ended at 7:35 p.m.

Additional conversation ensued regarding the proposed sewer district. Supervisor Congdon wants the Town to revisit a past sewer proposal (35 years ago) that involved adding a gravity fed sewer line down Route 9. He feels this would benefit more residents, cost less and is more likely to be approved by the public. He would like the drawings from the past proposal to be found and re-considered. He feels the Village of South Glens Falls may have them.

Councilman Kusnierz stated he was all for decreasing costs per EDU but doesn't want to miss the chance we have now for the grant funding.

The Board then had a brief discussion on paying bills associated with the Color Run. It was agreed to revisit this at the Audit meeting on 10/25/16.

The meeting ended at 8:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Sperry  
Deputy Town Clerk