

The Town Board of the Town of Moreau held a Public Hearing on the Preliminary 2024 Town Budget on November 8, 2023, at the Town Hall, 351 Reynolds Road, Moreau, New York.

The Supervisor called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

Town Board Members Present

Mark Stewart	Councilmember
Kyle Noonan	Councilmember
Alan VanTassel	Councilmember
John Donohue, Jr.	Councilmember
Theodore T. Kusnierz, Jr.	Supervisor

Also present: Brenda Hutter, Town Clerk; Lisa Sperry, Confidential Secretary to the Supervisor; Wayne Palmer; John Cox; Robert Bulman Sr.; Robert Bulman Jr.; Benjamin Vaillancourt; Brandon Hayes; Alyssa LaFountain; Tim Pease; Rob Chadwick; Bruce Lant; Michael Norman; Dave Mattison; Ann Purdue; Harry Gutheil; Keith Chadwick; Dennis Davall; Sheila Itzo; Paul Itzo; Anissa Jacox; Ken Jacox

Supervisor Kusnierz opened the floor to the public for comment, stating the purpose of the hearing was for members of the public to make comments for the record, and that this was not a workshop so there would be no Board discourse during comments. The Board will take the public's comments into consideration when taking action, he said.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Wayne Palmer of 52 White Birch Estates said he was disappointed in the funding levels of the South Glens Falls Fire Company. He said the Fire Company usually asks for an increase of 2%, this year they asked for 12%, with \$50,000 earmarked to cover replacement of equipment. He said the Fire Co. Was short \$300,000 in 2023, plus a \$2.2 million aerial equipment replacement is needed. He continued, saying for the past 22 years the company had asked to be moved to a fire district that would support the Town of Moreau and Village of South Glens Falls. He said if that had been done, the Fire Company would be in a better financial position, but neither the Village nor Town seem interested. In summary, Mr. Palmer said the Fire Company has been 100% volunteer run for almost 100 years, and he was disappointed in proposed funding. He urged more support from the Board.

Harry Gutheil of 21 Spring Street said he had questions and observations upon reviewing the proposed budget. On page 1 under the Assessor's account, he said the Town had spent about \$62,000 in 2022, but \$162,500 was proposed for 2024. He said he had no idea what the Town would be spending the additional \$100,000 on. He said the Town Clerk's personal services were budgeted to be increased by 20%, and after reviewing the previous year's expenses, he wondered why. He remarked about a page-3 traffic control contractual item that was budgeted at about \$19,000 in 2022, which had a proposed budget of \$39,000 for 2024. Mr. Gutheil mentioned Superintendent of Highways personal services budget item had increased from \$75,000 in 2022 to a proposed \$126,000 for 2024, an increase he called "significant." He said he didn't know if the Village of South Glens Falls had been in touch with the Town about the Memorial Day parade, adding that the Town had always supported the event. He said at one time the amount amassed in the event account totaled \$14,000—more was collected than spent, so the Town had not been asked for funds from the Town for several years, he said. He went on to say that he had advised the Mayor that the fund balance for the event had dwindled, so the Village may want to request funds for the event again from the Town in the 2024 budget. Mr. Gutheil said he saw \$2,500 budgeted on page 7 for events in 2024 and no funds were spent from that fund in 2022 so he wondered if a conversation had already taken place on this topic.

Mr. Gutheil raised a concern about an interfund loan on page 9 of the proposed budget. \$150,500 was budgeted and he asked if someone could get back to him on what that item was for. On page 10 he said there was a non-property tax distribution by the County in the A fund. He said in 2022 \$1.4 million had been collected, and for 2024 it was estimated \$789,000 would be collected, a difference he again called, "significant." He observed that interest and earnings had increased, saying he was glad to see it. On page 11, revenue to the general fund was \$679,000 in mortgage tax in 2022, and in the proposed budget only \$310,000 was expected for 2024. He suggested a review of the past 5 years' history to see how accurate their estimate might be. Supervisor Kusnierz advised Mr. Gutheil that his time had expired.

The Town Board of the Town of Moreau held a Public Hearing on the Preliminary 2024 Town Budget on November 8, 2023, at the Town Hall, 351 Reynolds Road, Moreau, New York.

Having exhausted the list of those who indicated they wished to speak in advance of the hearing, Supervisor Kusnierz asked if any other members of the public wished to speak. No one stepped forward to speak. The Supervisor then asked the Town Clerk if any written comments had been submitted to be added to the record. Town Clerk Hutter said none had been submitted.

Harry Gutheil asked if he could have additional time since there had been only three comments. Supervisor Kusnierz said he could.

Harry Gutheil said he saw a sizable increase in water district revenue, and asked to be briefed on why the previous year \$690,000 was collected in water with \$97,000 in metered sales, but for the 2024 budget only \$425,000 was projected. He said one of the main reasons he attended the hearing was on page 19; sewer appropriations. He said he didn't see a budget for each extension, and it looked like it would operate as a consolidated sewer district, and therefore he said it was difficult to track what was being spent from each of the former accounts for what expense. Mr. Gutheil said debt service was projected in the map planner reports to be approximately \$511,000, but only \$282,700 was budgeted. Since the sewer districts were not consolidated, he said he didn't understand why they did not have separate budgets for each. He continued, saying that in the map planner reports, estimated tax rates for sewer district 1 extension 5 are \$9.02 per thousand. Mr. Gutheil said the Town will not attract businesses with a rate like that. He said he understood that consolidation was an attempt to reduce that rate, but the debt was large for just a few properties. He said there are 86 or 87 parcels in extension 5 with only 40 users. He said the total so far for the sewer project was \$19,000,000, which he said he saw as a problem for current and future Administrations because of the business plan.

Supervisor Kusnierz asked again if any other members of the public wished to speak.

CLOSURE OF THE PUBLIC HEARING

Resolution #2023-319

A motion was made by Councilmember Noonan, seconded by Councilmember VanTassel, to close the public hearing.

Asked if all in favor, the following responses were given:

Councilmember Stewart	Aye
Councilmember Noonan	Aye
Councilmember VanTassel	Aye
Councilmember Donohue	Aye
Supervisor Kusnierz	Aye

The motion carried 5:0

The public hearing was closed at approximately 4:14 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Erin Trombley

Erin Trombley
Town Clerk
(May 23, 2024)