

The meeting was held in person. The Supervisor called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. with an attendance roll call.

PRESENT: Kyle Noonan Councilmember
Patrick Killian Councilmember
Mark Stewart Councilmember
John Donohue Councilmember
Jesse A. Fish, Jr. Supervisor

ALSO PRESENT: Jeffrey Cruz Principal Account Clerk
Erin Trombley Town Clerk
Chris Abrams Highway Superintendent

OTHERS PRESENT: Bruce Lant; Jeff Beecher, Moreau Emergency Squad; Michael Beshara, Moreau Emergency Squad; Steve VanGuilder, Moreau Emergency Squad; Brandon Hayes, South Glens Falls Fire Co.; Benjamin Vaillancourt; South Glens Falls Fire Co.

OLD BUSINESS

Supervisor Fish explained that in the process of receiving bids for the recreation fence discussed at previous meetings, one turned down the offer to bid and another failed to respond. He also said that with \$32,243.07 being paid to the Town by insurance, the cost to the Town to replace the fence would be 28,292.93, which the Principal Account Clerk indicated was available to be transferred from fund A6460.4.

Resolution 348-2024 A motion was made by Councilmember Stewart, seconded by Councilmember Donohue, to accept the Recreation Park Field #3 fence bid from AFSCO Fence at \$60,536 to be paid from Account A7140.4.

Discussion: Councilmember Stewart thanked everyone involved in making this happen, and said while this action was taken in a budget workshop, he felt enough discussion had taken place in regular meetings to warrant moving forward. Councilmember Donohue and Supervisor Fish agreed moving forward at that time was a good idea so work could begin before the weather was too cold.

Asked if all were in favor, the responses were as follows:

Councilmember Noonan	Aye
Councilmember Killian	Aye
Councilmember Stewart	Aye
John Donohue	Aye
Supervisor Fish	Aye

The motion carried 5:0.

INTRODUCTION

Principal Account Clerk Jeffrey Cruz was invited to give an overview of the budget, in which he said the tax rate had decreased from \$.850959 to \$.810391, the total taxes being levied has increased, and some fund balance from the General Fund was being used in the budget now that the fund had stabilized. He continued, saying some Town Outside fund balance also needed to be included in the budget, with the hope that increased Building Fees would help offset the cost. Fund balance used by the Water Department was decreased, he said, and fund balance from the Highway Department was being used intentionally as their fund had grown significantly. Mr. Cruz said at the end of the process he would like to discuss taking some of the fund balance and placing it in a reserve to protect it for the future. He said in that night's workshop they would talk with Moreau Emergency

Squad, South Glens Falls Fire Company, and the Highway Department to discuss their needs for 2025. Councilmember Noonan asked if some money had gone into a reserve fund in 2023. Mr. Cruz said excess sales tax had been placed partly in the Town Outside fund, and partly in a reserve, and those funds were still there.

MOREAU EMERGENCY SQUAD

Account A4540, "Ambulance" was the first account reviewed. \$371,000 had been requested, \$271,000 for .409 Contract, and \$100,000 for reserve for the new building. \$371,000 was included in the draft budget. Steve VanGuilder, representing Moreau EMS, asked if it would be put into a reserve fund as it had been the year prior. Councilmember Noonan said the way he believed it worked in 223 was the funds were set aside for their needs, not that they were set up in a separate account. Mr. VanGuilder said their contract states that the work has to be completed before the funds will be released. He asked about expenses that may need to be paid during construction. Councilmember Stewart said it had been raised as a concern the year prior, that bill may come due before the building is completed, and that the EMS wanted to have funds released before completion if needed. Mr. VanGuilder said the USDA rate had been 3.79% when he last looked into it, Glens Falls National was mid-to-upper 6%, and NBT was low-to-mid 6%. He said the USDA would pay EMS back, but they would still need a local construction loan. He also said USDA was good to work with, but a lot of work had been put into the project and the process is slow.

Councilmember Killian asked how long the term of the loan would be. The response was that the loan term would be 30 years, and the construction would take one year. Councilmember Noonan asked if they thought they would break ground in 2025. Mr. VanGuilder could not say for sure. Councilmember Noonan said he understood their concern to be whether the funds would still be available if the project was not completed within the 2025 calendar/budget year. Councilmember Stewart said he believed the Board could amend the agreement by resolution if a situation arose where funds were needed, or the project wasn't completed before the end of 2025. Principal Account Clerk Cruz said the language of the agreement stated that a voucher could be submitted for funds, and that the language was in each agreement. Councilmember Stewart said the language could read that funds could be made available based upon approved request.

Mr. VanGuilder said the squad had outgrown their space, and that people were sleeping in the living room on army cots, because they only had two bedrooms. Councilmember Stewart said they would amend the language. He asked the EMS representatives how the new rig was doing. Mr. VanGuilder said it was good, and had 4,300-4,400 miles on it for transports, mainly to the Pines, Home of the Good Shepherd, Glens Falls Hospital, and trips back home. He said they always are sure to have two ambulances available, even when they are out transporting outside the Town.

SOUTH GLENS FALLS FIRE COMPANY

Account SF3410.4, "Fire Protection District," was up next for review. Mr. Cruz explained that the requested amount was not on the budget spreadsheet but on a page behind the spreadsheet. He said the total request was \$1,022,968, but he said it was unclear how much South Glens Falls Village would be contributing vs. the Town to the total requested by the Fire Company. Supervisor Fish said the Village budget begins in June. It was clarified that the amount requested was the total needed from both the Town and Village. Councilmember Stewart said he had spoken with the Supervisor and the Town has been supporting about 89% of the Fire Company budget. He said the Village was only giving them about \$82,000 because they take out the fire truck reserve fund and funds for the village building. The Councilmember said he had been working with the Fire Company and takes the position that they are volunteers and they shouldn't have to volunteer to raise money to volunteer for the fire company, and since the Town can't control the Village, he hoped they would do whatever was possible to assist them. He continued, saying in 2024 the Town committed to \$100,00 for a fire truck.

Mr. Cruz said the contract amount was \$654,847 and included in that sum was the \$100,000. Councilmember Stewart said according to the Fire Co. figures, \$347,000 was allocated for the truck, and they need \$675,600 for

operations, less the \$82,000 from the Village leaves an ask of the Town of \$593,600, excluding the fire truck. Supervisor Fish suggested the Town add \$100,000 to the budget, and Councilmember Stewart said that would give the Fire Company exactly what they asked for. Councilmember Stewart asked if it would be ok to budget \$793,600, and if any excess sales tax would be needed from 2024 to accomplish the figure. He said the excess sales tax was estimated at between \$600,000 and \$650,000, and taking \$100,000 from those funds would give the Fire Company everything they requested. Councilmember Noonan asked if this was sustainable, suggesting the ask could increase the following year. Supervisor Fish said there were no guarantees. A representative of the Fire Company said their projection showed their cost to purchase a truck over 20 years, and prices are not going down. Councilmember Stewart said in 2024 they got \$100,000, in 2023 he said he believed they got \$50,000, and in 2025 they would get \$200,000, so in three years the Town will have provided, if the 2025 budget passes, \$350,000 toward either a down payment on a truck, or payments on a truck. He asked the Fire Company to be mindful that the funds for 2025 would be partly from excess sales tax, implying that type of funding may not be available in future budgets.

Councilmember Noonan said it had been asked in the past and he wanted to ask again about the possibility of leasing a truck, an idea he said was vehemently opposed by members of the company in the past. The Fire Company representative said the trouble with leasing is that the trucks are very customized and there are not many companies that will lease trucks. The Councilmember said he raised the issue again because it had been an effective way to save money in the Highway Department. He also said he knew the regulations the Fire Company had to adhere to were different in the Town and Village, making it a different situation than the Highway Dept. vehicles. Before dismissing the Fire Co., Supervisor Fish asked them to get pricing for Storz hydrant fittings across the Town.

LEGAL FEES, MISC.

On Account A1420, Principal Account Clerk Cruz said estimated legal fees at \$192,000 based on 2024 figures. After the draft budget was published, a cap of \$8,000 per month was being negotiated by the Supervisor's office, which would reduce the General Fund budget by \$100,000. Councilmember Stewart asked where the Town needed the extra funds the most. Mr. Cruz said that revenues were not keeping pace with expenses. He referred to the front of the budget material where General Fund Outside revenue was estimated at \$86,654, which he said paid for one person's salary. Councilmember Stewart said appropriations were at 500,000 at that time, which Mr. Cruz confirmed. Mr. Cruz explained that some excess sales tax had been being allocated to this fund to keep it solvent.

He continued, saying if the General Fund was well funded, the Town could always transfer funds by resolution to the General Fund Outside, but funds cannot be transferred from General Fund Outside to the General Fund. Further, he said these funds could also benefit the Highway Department, because funds could be moved from A accounts to B accounts, or from A accounts to D accounts, and from B to DB accounts, but funds moved to Highway cannot be moved back out.

Councilmember Stewart asked if the Highway Fund wasn't well-funded at that time, to which Mr. Cruz responded that it was. Councilmember Stewart asked why \$25,000 was being added. Mr. Cruz said the Highway Department ask had been \$2.75 million, and estimated revenue from CHIPS, sale of assets and so on come to \$1.65 million. \$25,000 was being added to help cover the difference, he said, adding that he didn't anticipate that the department would actually spend it.

As a follow-up, Councilmember Stewart asked Fire Company Board Member Bruce Lant how much money was being put in reserve for a fire truck. Mr. Lant replied, \$40,000. Councilmember Stewart said those funds are put aside to replace the fire truck owned by the Village. He said he had become aware of the various complicated arrangements fire companies have with other villages in Saratoga County, with Supervisor Fish adding to the conversation.

Mr. Cruz guided the Board's attention to the front of the budget binders where the 2025 budget summary was located. He then had the Board turn to the budget timeline on the next page, where he highlights the mandated timeframe for a public hearing on the preliminary budget was set at no later than November 7. The final adopted budget, he said, was due by November 20. He said the pages that followed were appropriations and revenues, which he said were something like a table of contents, followed by the salary schedule, fund balances for 2024 and 2023, and taxable assessments.

Supervisor Fish said there were \$3.8 million in the water fund. Councilmember Noonan said it was a good amount to have in the event of an emergency. Supervisor Fish said it wouldn't cover much but that it was a good start. He said it's something to think about because one pipe was installed in 1952, and he said district 2 has an asbestos pipe installed in 1963 with a 50-year lifespan. He said when he was in the water department, he tested the pipe, and at that time no cement or asbestos were showing, with next testing to be done in 2026, but he said the pipe is brittle. Replacing those pipes would be very expensive, he said.

Councilmember Stewart asked about salary decreases in the documents, specifically labor being decreased by \$1. Principal Account Clerk Cruz said that should be the bottom number in a range, but that it was up to what the Board wanted to do. He said minimum wage for 2025 would be \$15.50 an hour, so \$16.00 an hour would be above that base wage for part-time laborers. Councilmember Stewart asked if it would be a 3% increase with the \$16. Councilmember Stewart said he didn't want to go backwards. Councilmember Stewart asked about a full-time Code Enforcement item on the budget. \$56,000 had been allocated. Supervisor Fish said he had spoken to Pete Bachem, the part-time Code Enforcer, who had said he would not take the position full-time for the proposed salary. He clarified that he would be willing to do it, but if he had to do Inspections when Matt Dreimiller was out, he said he would not do it for that salary, that he could make more doing something else.

Councilmember Donohue said a Town the size of Moreau can keep a full-time code enforcer busy. Councilmember Stewart asked if they should post the position. Supervisor Fish said it was a competitive (civil service) position and would have to go through the County. The consensus among Board members who spoke on the subject was that the Code Enforcer and Building Inspector should cover for each other as needed. Councilmember Stewart said he would abstain from voting because he had matters under consideration in the Building Department. When asked, Supervisor Fish said Mr. Bachem had said he wanted \$65,000 because he would be doing the same job as Mr. Dreimiller. The Supervisor said Matt Dreimiller was hired as Building Inspector/Code Enforcer, and Pete has been doing the Code Enforcement. The full-time position the Supervisor had in mind was Code Enforcement/Building Inspector. Councilmember Noonan asked if Mr. Cruz could send the Board the county wage rate comparison information for their consideration.

Councilmember Stewart asked how the Softball Showcase Director stipend would be paid since he didn't see it on the salary page. Supervisor Fish said it depended on how it could be paid. Councilmember Stewart said that if the stipend was \$10,000 on the low end, the Town would still receive \$20,000-25000 in revenue from a 24-team showcase tournament after paying the stipend. He clarified his question, asking should it be budgeted, or can it be done by resolution out of the Recreation Dept. budget. Another question he said he wanted to discuss with Mr. Cruz is how the umpires would be paid. To the question of the Showcase Director stipend being a flat rate or a percentage, Councilmember Stewart said he thought flat was preferred, so it would be well-organized and run smoothly, and there wouldn't be a financial incentive to take on more than they can manage. Supervisor Fish said Recreation Director Brogan had been given a nice offer in Halfmoon in 2023 but that Mr. Brogan preferred to stay in Moreau so they had given him a raise in pay the previous year. With another small raise this year plus the stipend it still did not amount to the offer from Halfmoon, Supervisor Fish said, but it shows they appreciate the good job he's done for the Town.

Back on the subject of Code Enforcement salary, Councilmember Killian said the average New York salary for the position was \$63,400.

HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT

The Highway Department conversation began with a review of Account A3310 – Traffic Control. Principal Account Clerk Cruz said \$4,000 had been requested for road signs, and \$3,500 was requested for road striping, and that those figures had been included in the draft budget. Superintendent Abrams said when it came to road striping, they put in a request for the roads they would like striped, no pricing is given, the County does the striping, and the Town gets a bill. Councilmember Noonan asked what the Town owed so far in 2024, and Mr. Abrams said he did not know. In 2023 he said the Town's cost came in under the projected figure. A5010 was the next account reviewed. Principal Account Clerk Cruz explained that within this account there were breakout lines. He asked Superintendent if there was anything he wanted to discuss under this account line. Mr. Abrams declined.

Account A5132 – Highway Garage was the next account reviewed. Superintendent Abrams said things had gone well with the figures they had. Councilmember Stewart questioned the drinking water allocation, which had risen and fallen in the past few years, but Superintendent Abrams said he didn't know why there had been a discrepancy, but the number was now accurate. Supervisor Fish asked how many water stations there were, because he knew of a guy who could connect a purified water system using Town water at half the cost of the water cooler water. Councilmember Stewart asked if the Supervisor remembered the cost. Supervisor Fish said it would be less than \$100 per month. Superintendent Abrams said that sounded like it would be closer to \$1,000 per month, which is higher than the budgeted price for water cooler jugs from WB Mason. Supervisor Fish said he would provide the numbers anyway.

Councilmember Stewart asked why the requested electricity figure had risen so much, to which Superintendent Abrams responded that National Grid had asked the State to allow a 17% rate increase. Councilmember Killian explained that household rates and commercial rates were billed at different rates and the rate change may not be the same depending on the billing classification. He questioned if there was a municipal rate.

Next Principal Account Clerk Cruz directed the Board to the Highway section of the budget binder, and the 6-year plan. Highway Superintendent Abrams said their large vehicle purchases had been delayed for some years. He said he had received a letter from the Association of Towns informing him that a two-year stay had been placed on the electric vehicle mandate for snowplows, meaning 2025 & 2026 vehicles do not need to meet the electric vehicle mandate. He asked that \$45,000 be put into the truck fund with the existing \$25,000. He continued, saying the turn-around time for a truck is 2-3 years, and an order can be canceled up to two days before delivery because demand is so high. Councilmember Stewart asked if the Superintendent was looking for three to get ahead of the mandate. Superintendent Abrams said that was part of it. Another consideration he raised was \$50,000-\$100,000 to run the power to the Highway garage to charge the electric vehicles excluding the actual chargers. He had concerns about whether the Town's insurance would handle running that much power to a building with 6 vehicles charging and no one present to monitor things. He said NYS put electric trucks on the Thruway last winter and he said the Governor suspended the operation quickly because the batteries died. By ordering three trucks now, Mr. Abrams said, that would make the next vehicle in line for replacement 13-15 years old by the time new trucks are delivered. He continued, saying the Town never had a rotation schedule for its vehicles, whereas most Highway Departments have a 7-10-year rotation. Using a rotation schedule, he said, allows you to budget for what you will spend going forward.

Councilmember Stewart asked if planned orders would be leases. Superintendent Abrams said it can be a lease or purchase, and that the truck on order is a 5-year lease for about \$70,000, which may be less due to lowering rates. The Councilmember clarified that the request would not impact the 2025 budget, which the Superintendent confirmed. Mr. Abrams said it could be addressed in the new year by resolution authorizing a signature on a document indicating the Town wants to buy a vehicle. The order for the truck that is in the works was placed two years ago, according to Superintendent Abrams.

On another subject, Mr. Abrams said the department needs a new lawn mower, and that he estimates that he spends about \$6,000 a year on repairs for the existing mower. He said the tractor is still good but he cannot locate a vendor who sells a replacement mower compatible with the tractor. This year he said the mower was operational for fewer than 30 days. The mower connects to the engine, transmission, and rear axle, and he said it is causing stripped out holes, torquing, and damaged rear axle seals. He estimated that an order would take nine months to fill for a new machine. Councilmember Stewart asked if the budgeted amount of \$195,000 was just for the mower or for the tractor too. Superintendent Abrams said it was a whole new mower and tractor.

Principal Account Clerk Cruz said to see the total of what was budgeted for in equipment, to turn to Account DB5130.2 (Equipment) for the breakdown. \$224,000 of the amount included was for current leases, which he said the Town was obligated to pay, \$45,000 was for Highway equipment reserve as discussed earlier, \$195,000 for a boom mower, and \$4,000 for a zero-turn mower. The Highway Superintendent explained that the zero-turn mower is needed because the Department had run out of old mowers to recycle to repair other old mowers. He said either they need a new mower or they could go back to having the Recreation Department mowing for them. The consensus was that this was not the preferred option.

There was additional discussion and clarification around the large tandem trucks referenced earlier. Mr. Cruz said tandem #1 was already ordered, but not included in the budget because it would not be received until the following year, and funds for tandem #2 were being added to the equipment reserve. Mr. Abrams said when ordering opens again in 2025, a letter of intent would suffice to start the process of ordering the second truck. Councilmember Stewart said they should look at ordering another or maybe two more trucks after that. In response to a question from Councilmember Killian, Mr. Abrams said for smaller repairs they had knowledge of everything but electrical and emissions within the department. Outside the department, he said usually Adirondack Truck Repair was the least expensive. He added the new truck on order was an International.

Principal Account Clerk Cruz moved the Board's attention to salaries on the following page. He said two new employees had been requested. Salaries for contract employees are divided between accounts DB5110 and DB5142, he said, with a combined estimated total to date of \$800,000, including new hires. Contract negotiations were underway, he said. Councilmember Stewart questioned the difference between 2024 and 2025 figures being \$52,000, which Mr. Cruz explained was because in their contract, new hires come in at a lower rate, and that both DB5110 and DB5142 were included in the estimated total.

Superintendent Abrams said he did a look back and in 1991 the department had 13 employees on the Highway crew and that former Supervisor Gutheil reduced the force to 11. The Superintendent said he runs the paver and trucks for blacktop himself, and he indicated someone else needed to drive those, and that more trucks were needed on the roads during snowstorms. He said some rounds were taking 4 1/2 hours to complete. Councilmember Noonan asked if the department had enough equipment for two more employees to use. Superintendent Abrams said yes. He added there are new roads added every year and they are behind on maintenance.

The Superintendent asked if there were any questions about the boom mower or zero-turn mower. Councilmember Stewart said both had been included in the budget so he was all set. Councilmember Noonan did ask what kind of zero-turn mower could be purchased for \$4,000. Superintendent Abrams explained that the mower would be used for the lawn at the Highway garage which is less than 2 acres. Supervisor Fish said the Water Department also had one that cost about \$4,000.

Before leaving, Superintendent Abrams asked about where to put wood chips that would result from brush grinding the following week. Councilmember Killian said he can use it for bedding for cows if they want to dispose of it there, and that the tree services dump their wood chips there. There was an existing pile that still needed to be disposed of, according to Superintendent Abrams. Supervisor Fish said it was up to the Board, and there was some concern that someone could complain about it being a gift. Councilmember Killian said if they need a place to dump them, they can dump them at his farm for free. Supervisor Fish asked what they usually do

with the chips. Mr. Abrams said they give it away to residents and quite a bit is disbursed that way. Councilmember Stewart suggested adding the idea to the agenda for a future meeting to obtain public feedback on the idea.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Resolution 349-2024 A motion was made by Councilmember Noonan, seconded by Councilmember Stewart, to enter into executive session for the purpose of reviewing the work history or performance of an unnamed employee or employees.

Asked if all were in favor, the responses were as follows:

Councilmember Noonan	Aye
Councilmember Killian	Aye
Councilmember Stewart	Aye
Councilmember Donohue	Aye
Supervisor Fish	Aye

The motion carried 5:0

The Board entered into Executive Session at 8:32 p.m.
The Executive Session ended at 9:07 p.m.

Supervisor Fish indicated that no action had been taken in the Executive Session.

Resolution 350-2024 A motion was made by Councilmember Stewart, seconded by Councilmember Donohue to adjourn the meeting.

Asked if all were in favor, the responses were as follows:

Councilmember Noonan	Aye
Councilmember Killian	Aye
Councilmember Stewart	Aye
Councilmember Donohue	Aye
Supervisor Fish	Aye

The motion carried 5:0. The meeting adjourned at 9:07 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Erin Trombley

Erin Trombley, Town Clerk