

A budget workshop was held by the Town Board of the Town of Moreau on October 13, 2010 in the Town of Moreau Office Building, 61 Hudson Street, South Glens Falls, New York.

The workshop commenced at 7:00 p.m.

Town Board Members Present

Todd Kusnierz	Councilman
Gina LeClair	Councilwoman
Tom Cumm	Councilman
Bob Prendergast	Councilman
Preston Jenkins	Supervisor

Town Board Members Absent

None

Also Present: Jeanne Fleury, Town Clerk; Fran Thibodeau, Principle Account Clerk; and the following members of the Moreau Emergency Squad: Steve VanGuilder, President; John Blanchard, Chaplain; Ron Quinn, E-Board Member; Andre Delvaux, Chief Operations Officer; and Helen Glenn, Secretary

The board members met with the Moreau Emergency Squad to review their budget request and the tentative budget for the Town of Moreau for the year 2011.

The Moreau budgeted amount for 2010 for the squad was \$218,400.00 the tentative budget figure is \$218,400.00 and the request from the Moreau Emergency Squad is \$235,000.00.

The squad was asked what their monthly mortgage payment was and the answer was \$1,618.00. They recently refinanced at 6.25% interest.

Councilman Prendergast asked if they could pinpoint the reason for their requested increase.

Steve VanGuilder replied that they figured the utilities would go up.

Andre Delvaux added to this that the hospital does not exchange medical supplies with any of the squads any longer so there will be an expense to the squad for the purchase of medications. Also, new portable radios are needed at a cost of about \$1,500.00 to \$1,600.00 each. They need to supply one portable radio for the ambulance, one for the fly car and one VHF mobile and one 800 MHz mobile for the ambulance and fly car.

Councilman Kusnierz asked why there was a significant decrease in contract amount from Northumberland.

Andre Delvaux replied that was a projected figure. Last year Northumberland gave the squad a 15% increase and for 2011 they are proposing a 3% increase.

Councilman Prendergast said he didn't understand the squad's figures for 2010 vs. 2011. They showed \$308,700.00 for the Town of Moreau for 2010 and he asked where that figure came from.

Andre Delvaux replied that it was a projected figure with the adding in of the ambulance pay off amount of \$128,000.00.

Councilman Kusnierz stated that historically the Town of Moreau has given the squad a 3% increase and Supervisor Jenkins said that last year the Town Board gave a 4% increase to keep it in line with what the South Glens Falls Fire Company got.

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Councilwoman LeClair noticed the line item in the squad's proposal for the purchase of software in the amount of \$5,000.00 and asked if it was necessary to buy software every year.

Andre Delvaux replied yes. It was billing software.

Councilman Kusnierz asked the squad members if it was true that their proposed budget does not include paid staff and all the squad members replied this was correct.

Councilman Kusnierz stated that the argument has been made that Moreau taxpayers are paying for the paid staff and asked if this was incorrect.

Andre Delvaux said yes.

Councilwoman LeClair asked Andre to explain how they pay their staff and Andre answered any money that is recovered from third party soft billings.

Councilwoman LeClair asked if there are any excess funds do they go towards expenses.

Andre Delvaux replied no. There is never an excess. They run from month to month and that is why they looked into receiving their third party billing money every two weeks, because there is usually two or three months during a year when there are three payrolls for the month and payroll runs from \$18,000.00 to \$22,000.00.

Supervisor Jenkins said that the board considered that, but they haven't received any of the information they requested since their last meeting with the squad until tonight.

Steve VanGuilder said that was his fault.

Councilman Prendergast asked if there are any privately run/owned emergency squads left.

Andre Delvaux wasn't sure about Fort Edward, but any other organization that he is aware of is paid.

Councilman Prendergast asked about Empire.

Andre Delvaux replied that they contract with the hospitals/inter-facility transports.

Councilman Prendergast asked if they are funded with tax dollars and the answer was no.

Helen Glen stated that Empire is for profit and Moreau Emergency Squad is not.

Supervisor Jenkins asked what their response time was now and Andre Delvaux responded three minutes.

Supervisor Jenkins said he asked, because they held a Public Safety Commission meeting at Saratoga County the other day and they talked about the changes in response time.

Andre Delvaux stated that last year they requested mutual aid about 15 times and they were primarily second and third ambulance calls. This year it has been two or three so far.

Supervisor Jenkins asked how many units they have out there and Andre replied three.

Councilwoman LeClair asked if they have coverage for all of them and Andre replied there is at least one in station paid and other volunteers coming in or other people on-call to satisfy a crew that can't handle second and third calls.

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Councilman Prendergast asked if both ambulances go out is the crew ALS certified and Andre replied 85% to 90% of the time.

Councilman Kusnierz said he would be willing to support a 4% increase that mirrors the contract with the fire company with the understanding that if the Town incurs any new legal costs in the next fiscal year in relation to the squad that we be able to back that out of the contract and if this court case could go away this year it would be great.

Steve VanGuilder said they have been told that they can't talk about the court case. He said he would rather sit down with the board members without lawyers present and have a conversation.

The board members responded to this saying that they have done that and Supervisor Jenkins added that they did that and it went well and then the lawyers came back in and it ended up with problems.

Councilman Prendergast said at public meetings the Town Board has had discussions with the attorney for the Town and the board has told him we are going to do something different than what he recommended. He works for us. Anytime you hire somebody they work for you. He told the squad members present that their attorney works for them and it is their decision not his.

Supervisor Jenkins said the squad has spent a lot of money on legal services and the Town has spent a lot of money on legal services and that is money that the Town could have given the squad.

Steve VanGuilder said in the 15 years he has been with the squad he has never known them to pay their lawyer this much.

Councilman Kusnierz said they shouldn't talk about the court case. He wanted to know how everyone felt about the money and he asked them to give him numbers.

Councilwoman LeClair said she wanted to make her opinion known, because she said it at a public meeting. The "bear in the closet" for her is that there is evidence that Preston has seen that there are members of the squad that are making double (Councilwoman LeClair couldn't finish her sentence, because Councilman Kusnierz and others interjected the following comments.)

Councilman Kusnierz said that she was getting into the court case now.

Supervisor Jenkins stated that he didn't have evidence. He has statements only and hearsay.

Councilwoman LeClair stated that the squad could pay whatever they want, she didn't care what they got paid, but if the payroll is higher than the average payroll for an equivalent paid squad elsewhere then there isn't money to flow back into the unpaid side and the unpaid side is supported by taxpayers.

Steve VanGuilder said no matter where you go you won't get the service you get here in Moreau.

Councilwoman LeClair said she wasn't questioning the service and Steve VanGuilder stated that it costs more for better service.

Councilwoman LeClair stated that it is a question in her mind if the taxpayers are supporting the unpaid side by thousands more than they have to if the salaries are out of line.

Councilman Kusnierz stated that is the crux of the court case. He said this is a budget workshop. Let's get the numbers out there. He told Councilwoman LeClair to tell them how she feels about the numbers. If she is not happy with the service and she feels they shouldn't get more..... (Councilman Kusnierz didn't finish the sentence as Councilwoman LeClair interjected the following comment.)

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Councilwoman LeClair said she wasn't questioning the service. She is very happy with the service. It has nothing to do with the service.

Councilman Kusnierz stated that nowhere are we talking about salaries and they aren't asking for one dollar of taxpayer's money for salaries and they should work on the budget. If they want to talk about the court case then they should hold a separate meeting.

Councilwoman LeClair and Supervisor Jenkins both spoke at the same time and said that they weren't talking about the court case and Councilman Kusnierz said it was the crux of the court case.

Supervisor Jenkins stated that they were talking about the budget and all Councilwoman LeClair was saying was that there is money in this budget which definitely supports the paid.

Councilman Kusnierz asked where, he didn't see it.

Supervisor Jenkins stated the buildings they use and the vehicles they drive.

Councilman Kusnierz asked where there figure for salaries was.

Supervisor Jenkins replied that nobody said there were salaries there rather there was support. What Councilwoman LeClair said is true that if they had excess income then it could support some of the expenses.

Supervisor Jenkins stated that if the board had the information they needed they probably wouldn't be having this discussion. He doesn't have a problem with dealing with the facts and he thought they had a basic agreement and were going to move ahead.

Helen Glen asked if any members of the board have checked with other agencies to see what they get for an hourly rate.

Supervisor Jenkins said he talked with Dan Stec the Queensbury Supervisor and the pay scale for their emergency service was pretty comparable. There may have been a 50 cent per hour different, but that wasn't an issue.

Supervisor Jenkins explained to the squad how he works on the budget. He looks at last year's budget and what has been spent through the month of September and then he estimates what the expenses will be through the rest of the year for each department and he comes up with a tentative budget. He doesn't have any kind of information like this from the Moreau Emergency Squad that he can use and to him that is a problem.

Steve VanGuilder asked Supervisor Jenkins what he does with their receipts and Supervisor Jenkins said not much, because they don't give him much information and Steve VanGuilder said all he had to do was look at them.

Supervisor Jenkins said that wasn't the point. He wasn't interested in every specific item and Steve VanGuilder said that is what he wanted.

Supervisor Jenkins said at the meeting they had they resolved a lot of other issues about what they wanted, but they shouldn't get into that discussion here.

Councilman Kusnierz asked the board members what they wanted to give the squad based on what information has been provided and what information has not been provided so we can move on.

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Councilman Prendergast stated that he never tells a person that comes before the board what he is going to give them. He discusses it after they leave. He has been councilman for 21 years and he has never had people come in from the community center or anyplace and told them this is what you are going to get.

Supervisor Jenkins told the squad members that it would be helpful if they gave him a printout from quick books for the past nine months showing the money received from the Town and how it was spent. It should be easy to do.

Councilman Cumm stated he thought they should have that every month.

Councilman Kusnierz asked Supervisor Jenkins if didn't he put a tentative figure in the budget for the squad and Supervisor Jenkins replied yes.

Councilman Kusnierz stated that we have told them as we have every year where we stand on it right now then.

Councilman Prendergast said he hasn't told them where he stands, that is a tentative number the Supervisor put in.

Councilman Kusnierz said he was just told we never tell them what they are getting when we have a starting point right now.

Supervisor Jenkins advised that the number put in the tentative hasn't been reviewed by any board member yet.

Councilman Prendergast stated that year after year volunteer services have come before the board and asked for an increase and it was easy for him to understand that this item went up and that item went up. It is no different than any other department or individual that comes before the board and asks for an increase. Then the squad went to a paid service and he didn't know a lot about it so he started thinking that it may be an opportunity for the taxpayers to see a gradual decrease in what we have to give, because now, unlike before, they have to start charging customers. However, he still sees requested increases. In his mind it would be easier to get a handle around it if he could see all the factors that have an effect on the requested increase and in his mind he doesn't see all the factors. If he asks the Moreau Community Center to give him all the factors and even what they pay their people they would say okay here you are.

Councilman Kusnierz stated it wasn't always that way and Councilman Prendergast said he felt confident that what he is saying is true.

Councilman Prendergast said it is hard for him to get his hands around the squad coming in year after year asking for an increase, because they went from volunteer to charging people. What is it that is causing the big increase in the request not only this year, but last year and the year before?

Stephen VanGuilder said last year it was the radios.

Councilman Prendergast asked if that is all and if so then we gave them too much.

Councilman Kusnierz said they weren't comparing apples to apples as far as level of service and type of service. He asked if didn't they go to a whole new level of care when they went to the third party billing.

Stephen VanGuilder said yes.

Andre Delvaux stated that it was so they could have the 24/7 paramedic coverage. There used to be five of them trying to cover.

Councilman Kusnierz said it was coverage we didn't have before and it costs money.

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Steve VanGuilder said that what the board doesn't know is that Andre is a critical care paramedic that has a full-time job and when he gets out of work he goes to the Moreau Emergency Squad and works. The squad runs 24 hours a day, seven days a week and we are dealing with people's lives. Andre literally works 24 hours a day seven days a week. That is all he has on his mind. If he is at his full-time job his mind is constantly thinking about what is going on in Moreau and is there a crew up there and if there is a second call he calls people to respond. They fill the schedule with volunteers first and they have to have the schedule in by the 20th of the month for the next month.

Councilman Kusnierz asked Steve VanGuilder if he knows what Andre makes and Steve VanGuilder replied yes.

Councilman Kusnierz said he has been told at several meetings by several board members that even he didn't know. He heard it at the last meeting.

Councilman Cumm stated that at one time he told him he didn't know.

Steve VanGuilder said he could vouch for that and Councilman Cumm is right. At one time he didn't know how much Andre made, but after the discussion with Councilman Cumm he found out what Andre makes.

Councilman Cumm asked Steve VanGuilder if the 2010 expenses were \$466,500.00 for 2010.

Steve VanGuilder said no.

Councilman Cumm said that is speculation then and Steve VanGuilder said that was right.

Councilman Cumm said that the board doesn't know then what the actual expenses were to date.

Supervisor Jenkins said there is a print out that the board receives that shows the expenses.

Steve VanGuilder stated that he wished the board members would stop by. He said that he saw Supervisor Jenkins at Fire Prevention, but he never stops by the squad and neither does Supervisor Bill Peck from Northumberland. He feels like the two boards are fighting this whole thing.

Councilman Cumm said he has the squad's meeting schedule, but since the litigation has been going on he made the decision that he can't attend.

Steve VanGuilder said the board doesn't know how many Town Board Meetings he wishes he could have attended. He listens to the audios of the Town meetings and hears the comments from the Town Board and they tick him off and he can't say anything and he has to grin and bear it until this whole thing is over.

Councilman Kusnierz asked why they don't sit down together in the same room without attorneys and work this out.

Steve VanGuilder stated then it becomes a public meeting.

Councilman Kusnierz said he didn't care if it was a public meeting and asked if Steve did.

Councilman Prendergast said if it is over the contract wouldn't it be in executive session.

Steve VanGuilder said he doesn't mind, but then there are going to be the misfits there who are out there.

Supervisor Jenkins stated that they could solve the whole issue and provide the information that they can work with. He thought after the meeting in July there was a basic agreement.

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Councilman Cumm asked Andre if he has seen the contract from Queensbury that they have with their emergency squad. It is about 60 pages and they tell them what the salaries are going to be and they specify what the EMT's and paramedics are going to be paid. He isn't even close to wanting to do that here in this Town. However, there is certain basic information that we are lacking to make an informed decision about anything.

Andre Delvaux asked if the information that was provided with the proposed contract was what the board was looking for.

Helen Glenn asked Supervisor Jenkins if couldn't he and Jeff Beecher as professional accountants discuss what the board needs for information and get it.

Supervisor Jenkins stated they already had that discussion and he hasn't received the information. Apparently it isn't ready yet.

Andre Delvaux stated that the year-end 2009 statement isn't ready yet and Councilman Cumm said they haven't received a 990 yet.

Andre Delvaux said it should be easy enough for Jeff Beecher to do a report with quick books.

Helen Glen acknowledged that it was much easier when it was a volunteer job, but unfortunately the days of volunteer squads are gone.

Councilwoman LeClair stated that every dollar in the budget comes out of someone's pocket and she wants to make sure it is spent wisely.

Councilman Cumm stated that they sat through a two hour meeting on the budget for the highway department and they looked at every line item and considered what the expenses were year-to-date and what was left year-to-date and that is what they based the 2011 budget on. The board doesn't have the information from the squad necessary to formulate the squad's budget.

Steve VanGuilder stated that Bill Peck the Supervisor for Northumberland called him and said that Northumberland was going to give the squad \$76,000.00. Steve asked what the Town of Moreau was going to give them.

Supervisor Jenkins stated they couldn't give them that answer at this meeting, but they will let them know soon.

Councilman Kusnierz asked the squad if they could live with the tentative budget figure.

Steve VanGuilder said yes and then asked what it is.

Supervisor Jenkins advised that the tentative budget figure is the same number as last year. He didn't want to change it without talking to the board first. The board will discuss what they are going to do.

Supervisor Jenkins said he wants to see what their operating expenses are for this year.

Councilman Cumm said he wants to see the 2009 expenses and revenues and the 2010 year-to-date figures (expenses and what is left in each line item). With those numbers he could decide whether to increase the squad's budget or reduce it.

Supervisor Jenkins stated that if the squad wanted to authorize Jeff Beecher to release whatever information he has to him it would save them a step.

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Councilman Kusnierz asked what the reason was for the 7% increase request.

Steve VanGuilder replied radios and an ambulance.

Andre Delvaux said it may be based on the same percentage as Northumberland and there is a large radio purchase coming up.

Andre Delvaux asked if they added a line on the monthly reports that would be a year-to-date total along with the monthly expenses if this would be beneficial to the board.

Supervisor Jenkins said at this point if they had a nine month total (January through September) they could project the expenses through the end of the year.

Andre Delvaux said he will see if they can run a report for January through September.

Councilwoman LeClair said they should remove the \$18,000.00 line item from the squad's proposal for banquets as we can't fund banquets.

Councilman Kusnierz said we do it for the Fire Company.

Councilwoman LeClair stated that they have said they don't use the Town's money for banquets.

Councilman Kusnierz said that there is a line item for it though.

Councilman Cumm was talking to Supervisor Jenkins about the squad's budget request and the information the squad provided and didn't hear what Councilman Kusnierz and Councilwoman LeClair were discussing regarding the banquet line item so he stated that there is a line item for banquets and he said the Town can't fund banquets.

[Amended 10/25/10 jf at request of Councilwoman LeClair.]

After brief discussion, Councilman Kusnierz stated for the record that it can't be said that banquets are being paid for with taxpayer money when in 2010 \$76,000.00 was brought into the squad by way of donations and in 2011 it is projected at \$40,000.00 and that number is in the total budget.

Supervisor Jenkins stated that all the other revenues except insurance goes through the account.

One of the squad members said the banquet figure is in the budget, but it is not funded by taxpayer's dollars.

Andre Delvaux said the squad would get a report to the Town Board.

This concluded the discussion with the Moreau Emergency Squad at 8:05 p.m.

The Recreation budgets were discussed next.

The first one the board reviewed was A7140 Playgrounds & Recreation.

Supervisor Jenkins said he put zero in the tentative budget as it should come out of the capital project fund (HP account) for equipment and bleachers. The \$60,000.00 contractual figure should be adequate in this opinion.

Councilman Prendergast commented that the playground appears to be missing some equipment.

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Councilwoman LeClair stated that there has been a problem with older kids breaking some of the playground equipment. She would like to see newer items that little kids can use.

Supervisor Jenkins agreed that there are a lot of younger children on Saturday mornings in the park and they don't have anything to play on.

Supervisor Jenkins mentioned that the Law & Finance Committee for Saratoga County approved a \$75,000.00 grant for the Town of Moreau towards the Town's land purchase adjacent to the rec. park.

Councilwoman LeClair stated that Jeremy Tripp approached her with a concern over the traffic flow across the big parking lot in front of pavilion 2 and he wants to line it with removable triangular pieces that act like speed bumps. We would need fifty of them and the cost would be between \$2,000.00 and \$2,500.00.

The Joint Recreation Project Fund A7145 was reviewed.

It was agreed to remove \$20,000.00 from this account and put it into the HP account.

The A7310 Youth Programs Fund was reviewed.

Councilwoman LeClair asked if the board would consider reinstating a working foreman in the rec. department. She proposed that the hourly rate should be a little more than a laborer's rate.

Councilman Cumm agreed with this idea.

Councilman Kusnierz asked if it would be a new position that would have to be created.

Supervisor Jenkins replied no. It would be a realignment of job title. Jeremy Tripp is the person that would be considered for the position. The board will make the final decision when they do the salaries.

Supervisor Jenkins stated that Steve Gram didn't budget anything in HP7180 Recreational Capital Project so he put in \$150,000.00. It was \$200,000.00 for 2010. The Town is going to get \$75,000.00 back towards the land purchase from the Diehl Family that will go back into this account and Fran Thibodeau stated that there is a fund balance in that account of \$162,000.00.

Supervisor Jenkins referred to the project list for 2010 that never got done. He said if projects are going to be proposed there has to be a plan in place to get them done.

Councilwoman LeClair stated that Steve Gram would like to make improvements to the beach area. It is heavily used.

Supervisor Jenkins said that's all find and good, but not one project on the 2009 and 2010 list has been done. Somebody has to take it by the tail and go with it.

Councilman Prendergast said the question is does he have time to do all that and his director job.

Supervisor Jenkins said he understood that and Steve needs clerical help. When they get to payroll they will have to discuss that. Maybe we can find someone to work six months in the summer to do clerical work.

Councilwoman LeClair suggested that before they put the \$75,000.00 back into the HP7180 account we should consider setting up a separate reserve account that is for anything recreational in the Town such as development of the riverfront property that she is working on now, a bike trail in Town or another park somewhere. She was afraid that if they moved all the money into the fund that they have now for the park they can never use that money for anything but the recreation park.

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Supervisor Jenkins said that doesn't affect the current reserve account. The \$75,000.00 has to go back into the Hp7180 account.

General discussion followed.

Councilman Prendergast asked what the increase was in the recreation budget from last year.

Fran Thibodeau replied that in 2010 it was \$276,000.00 and proposed for 2011 is \$249,000.00. There is a decrease.

Supervisor Jenkins said he reduced it and there are still some funds in there that we probably won't spend.

Supervisor Jenkins said there has to be a change made in the general fund revenues at some point, because the mortgage tax is going to come in higher than expected.

General discussion followed.

The workshop on the budget concluded at approximately 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeanne Fleury
Town Clerk