

A budget workshop was held by the Town Board of the Town of Moreau on October 16, 2014 in the Town of Moreau Municipal Building, 351 Reynolds Road, Moreau, New York.

The workshop began at 7:15 p.m.

Town Board Members Present:

Robert J. Vittengl, Jr.	Councilman
Gina LeClair	Councilwoman
Todd Kusnierz	Councilman
Bob Prendergast	Councilman
Preston L. Jenkins, Jr.	Supervisor

Town Board Members Absent:

None

Also Present: Leeann McCabe, Deputy Town Clerk; Fran Thibodeau, Principle Account Clerk; Reed Antis, Town Resident and Planning Board Member

The Moreau Community Center Budget was discussed first, Account A8060.

The Moreau Community Center requested a 2% increase.

Councilman Kusnierz said he was aware that the Town has partnered with programs through the Moreau Community Center.

Donna Nichols stated that the Moreau Camp was a partnership and they have since taken over the whole program. They worked with Sandy this past summer over joint things. The Community Garden was done with the Pep Grant. There was enough revenue made on Camp Moreau to keep the Garden Program going. There were 116 children who participated in the Moreau Camp this summer vs. 88 last summer.

Supervisor Jenkins said he heard that there was some discussion about the Moreau Community Center using the old Town Hall for projects. Although, he is not sure what programs could be run without any issues with the building itself.

Donna Nichols stated that the Board of Directors discussed it and they do not think it is feasible and it is off the table for them.

Councilman Vittengl asked if the Annex Building could be used.

Donna Nichols said she would love for it to be a Youth Center, but it is a tough location. Kids can't walk there and Route 197 is a dangerous road.

Donna Nichols advised that they owe \$236,000 on their debt. They started out at \$630,000. They hope to make four extra payments on principle only this year.

The Moreau Community Center hired a Development Director. They are at the point where it made sense. The Director will work on targeting programs and targeting ways to get rid of the debt.

Supervisor Jenkins mentioned the 6% interest rate that the Moreau Community Center is paying on their loan. Donna Nichols said they shopped around for a better rate about two years ago and could have

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gotten a lower rate. However, the closing fees would have been between \$15,000 to \$20,000 and SEFCU waived the closing fees so they stayed with them and have to pay that interest rate.

Councilman Kusnierz said he sees where they are giving 2% raises and asked how they dole them out.

Donna Nichols said they used to give raises across the board. Last year Board of Directors wanted her to give out merit raises. They have to get people to where they think they should be. She took the pot of money that the 2% would be and doled it out based on merit. Two years ago they increased the staff in the kid's program and bumped them to \$8.50 an hour so that when the minimum wage goes to \$9.00 an hour it won't be a huge jump up.

Councilman Kusnierz saw where they had a line item for accounting fees in the amount of \$6,000 and asked who their accountant was. Donna replied, Jeff Beecher.

Councilman Prendergast asked about their computer system. Donna said it has been updated and they back up data off site.

Councilman Kusnierz saw where they had a line item for equipment rental in the amount of \$10,000 and asked what it is for? Donna replied, copier rental, postage machine rental and color printer rental, etc.

Councilman Kusnierz asked what the program miscellaneous line item in the amount of \$5,500 is for. Donna replied trips. Jeanne Gutheil builds in certain overhead. They have a credit card program so it includes credit card expenses and PayPal.

Councilman Kusnierz asked if their employees are salaried or hourly. Donna replied that Jeanne, she and the new Development Director are salaried and the rest are hourly.

Councilman Kusnierz asked if they pay overtime if they exceed their regular hours. Donna replied no they give compensatory time. Jaeger & Flynn is providing some human resources and redoing a policy for them.

Donna Nichols said the kids program fees are: Morning \$40.00/Afternoon \$50.00 a week. \$145.00 week for two.

Councilman Kusnierz said that he asked about miscellaneous expenses and Donna Nichols mentioned senior trips. He sees where they also have a line item for senior trips. He asked what the difference is in the two line items.

Donna Nichols replied that the senior trip line item is awash in and out. The money we collect from the people taking the trips goes into this account and checks are written right back out to the hotels, Upstate Transit, etc.

Supervisor Jenkins asked how many current members the Moreau Community Center has.

Donna Nichols replied that they only count senior members and nobody pays dues so it is hard to track. Jeanne and Connie said 3,000 newsletters go out, but not just to the Town of Moreau members.

Donna Nichols said she is most proud of the fact that they have been able to expand their youth services. The Moreau Summer Camp had 45 kids participate the first summer and 116 participated this past summer. They are still working towards being able to work more with the School District, they work with

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them a lot.

Supervisor Jenkins asked if they have looked into grant possibilities. He said he knows they partner with the School District.

Donna Nichols agreed that you have to work with others. That is the only way they fund the grants lately. They wouldn't have gotten the \$250,000 grant for the Community Coalition for a Drug Free Community if they hadn't partnered with the Prevention Council and the Schools.

This concluded the discussion with Donna on the Moreau Community Center Budget.

The Fire Department budget was discussed next.

Present from the South Glens Falls Fire Company were Brian Abare, Mike Shaver, Tim Pease, Peter Lemery.

Councilman Kusnierz notices that they hadn't provided a detailed request like last year.

Supervisor Jenkins said they are requesting a 6% increase and that is what is in the Tentative Budget.

Pete Lemery introduced himself as the new President of the South Glens Falls Fire Company.

Councilman Kusnierz asked how they spent the money that the Board freed up last year that would have been earmarked for a truck.

The answer was that they didn't use it. They left it in the fund for a new truck. They determined that trucks are getting more and more expensive so they didn't want to take the \$30,000 out of the fund for a new truck and they left it there to earn interest. \$30,000 wouldn't have bought them air packs. They were looking at \$200,000 plus for air packs. They muddled through and found replacement equipment to get them through. They will eventually have to change, but it is not immediate and they are planning properly for the future. Turnout gear has a shelf life of five years at \$2,300 a set.

Councilman Prendergast asked if they budgeted for air packs this year.

The answer was that it was questionable as to how long the company was going to be in business and it is still in business so they were able to maintain the air packs. They have to keep them functioning. Turnout gear is more expensive every year. They try to plan for incoming members and replace damaged gear. Ten sets per year are planned on. This year not many new recruitments. Damaged gear is sent back for repair.

Councilman Prendergast noticed a lot of items in their request have been reduced.

They advised that if they repeatedly did not spend a line item they deleted it this year. The one big jump was radio replacement \$5,000 to \$15,000. The system they use has failed three times. They are looking at options to improve the system. They are trying to modify their own system so they can function through these times.

The cost for portable radios is \$1,800 each and they are going to \$2,000 each.

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Councilman Prendergast asked if they are going to be purchasing air tanks and turnout gear.

They are purchasing turnout gear, but not more than usual. Ten sets this year. They bought ten sets last year. The cost is \$6,000.00 or \$7,000.00 for a full set of turnout gear. They are maintaining the air tanks they have and no plans for a major purchase in the upcoming year.

Councilman Prendergast said the other big item last year was hose.

They are not up to date on hose. Forestry hose this year will be purchased and one other type. They budgeted for this purchase. The Forestry hose they have now is about 15 years old. They lost 400 feet of the Forestry hose last year during normal testing.

Supervisor Jenkins said he has no problem with a 6% increase. It only uses up 1/3 of the tax cap. The board made a commitment last year to try and help the Fire Company move ahead a little bit. The 6% was based on what they talked about last year and he left it at that in the Tentative Budget.

Councilman Prendergast asked if they are going to purchase a new truck someday.

They still have the truck account and keep putting money in each year.

Councilman Vittengl asked what vehicles they have.

Two engine rescues (one at Station on 197 and one at the Station in the Village), ladder truck at Village Station, Village Truck (gear is theirs and Village owns truck and they maintain the truck), tanker here, dive van, brush truck and pickup truck for boat trailers and Sprinter Van. They know some people questioned that purchase, but it came out of our fundraiser money and some was money they saved from the convention in 2010.

Councilman Kusnierz asked why the line item for accounting increased from \$3,500 to \$8,000.

The response was that they use Jenkins, Bethel and Beecher and the Fire Company voted to jump ship and shop around and the prices were coming in at \$8,000 to \$10,000 so they budgeted \$8,000 for a new accountant.

Councilman Kusnierz stated that is a big difference between two firms that do the same thing and a big expense for the taxpayers.

The response was that the Fire Company wants it that way, but they don't see the Board of Directors approving it, so they will probably be staying with Jenkins, Bethel and Beecher.

Councilman Kusnierz said it will be difficult for him to support a 6% increase in their budget and a tax increase, because he doesn't vote for tax increases and especially with \$5,000 going towards accounting when they know that they have to replace gear.

They agreed and they think the Board of Directors will agree.

Councilman Prendergast said he doesn't want them to feel that they are being forced to go with a company called Jenkins, Law and Beecher. When they go talk to the Board of Directors they have to decide what the driving force is that makes it worth \$5,000 more to go with another company.

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Supervisor Jenkins wanted to say that he has no financial interest in that firm any longer. They just still use his name. They bought him out almost eight years ago.

Councilman Kusnierz said he is hearing that there is a potential for them to jump ship and go with another accounting firm.

The response was that it will absolutely not happen. They can't reduce that line item tonight though without the Board of Directors.

Supervisor Jenkins stated that Jeff Beecher has a heart for not-for-profits in the community and he gives good rates.

The Fire Company asked if they could discuss where they want the difference spent and Councilman Kusnierz said any place other than professional services.

Supervisor Jenkins looked at their financial statements and their three major debts. They got great financing through Adirondack Trust, but the other seems rather high. If they could restructure the one loan for 15 years they could save about \$1,000 a month at a lower rate of 2.96%. It is possible that Adirondack Trust might work it out with them without closing costs. It would be worth looking into it.

They talked about solar and how the Fire Company should look into solar for their building to see if it would reduce their electric costs.

They talked about the air packs again. They discussed how to replace all forty air packs and how maybe they could purchase ten a year so that they don't all go out of service at one time. Same as with the turnout gear. They purchase so that they don't all need to be replaced at one time.

The Board of Directors met with their insurance company and saved some money there and they are going out to bid this year for insurance to try and save some money.

Supervisor Jenkins said that most of the Towns in Saratoga County have gone with NYMIR. NYMIR has kept our price down this year and it is close to what it was five years ago and we have quite a few additional coverages.

This concluded the discussion on the Fire Company budget.

Salaries for elected officials was discussed. The Supervisor put in the Tentative Budget a 2% increase in the Council Members' salaries and he increased his own salary a flat rate of \$225.00 the amount of the 2% increase for the Council Members. The Town Clerk and Highway Superintendent and Town Justices were in for a 2% increase also.

Councilman Prendergast was of the opinion that the Council People had an increase last year so they shouldn't get an increase this year.

Councilman Vittengl and Councilwoman LeClair agreed.

Councilman Kusnierz was of the opinion that all elected officials are in the same boat. They are all here to serve the community and should be same.

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Councilman Prendergast didn't agree.

Councilman Kusnierz was of the opinion that all elected officials should either get a raise or not at all. It should be the same for all elected officials.

Supervisor Jenkins said he would keep it the same then.

Councilman Prendergast was of the opinion that they are not comparing apples to apples with the Highway Superintendent and Town Clerk vs. the Town Justices and Town Board Members. It is a full-time job for the Town Clerk and Highway Superintendent, but is not for the Town Board Members or Town Justices. It is a full time job and a career for the Town Clerk and Highway Superintendent.

Supervisor Jenkins said he would ask the Town Clerk to prepare the resolution to set the elected officials salaries and they will do it at the next meeting.

Councilman Prendergast asked when the last time was that the Supervisor had a raise.

Supervisor Jenkins said he is not worried about it. He hasn't had a raise at the county in several years either. The only Towns in the County that exceed his salary are in the Towns of Clifton Park, Malta and Wilton.

Councilman Prendergast said that not all supervisors are full time. At some point, some day, this Town is going to have to pay.

Supervisor Jenkins said that at some point they will have to raise it for the person who wants to do the hours required for that pay. At this point he would go along with what the Town Board gets.

Councilman Kusnierz was of the opinion that full-time and part-time elected officials are in a total separate class. They don't have to show up for work, it is what they want to make it. It should be either all get increases or none. Town Board Members don't get benefits and other elected officials do get benefits. It is not like a regular job, it is what they make it. They need to be uniform with elected officials

Supervisor Jenkins said he thinks all elected officials should get a 2% increase then, because the other elected officials should get an increase.

Councilman Kusnierz said that is fine. He just wants his position to be known.

Supervisor Jenkins said that when he started working on the Tentative Budget he thought it should be 2%, but when it came to his salary he only increased it by the same dollar amount, because he knows that Todd thinks it should be a dollar amount at times and it shouldn't always be a percentage.

Councilman Kusnierz said that the Supervisor just made a statement that he thinks it should be dollar amount. When he made those statements, the Board has always agreed to it and it has been when a percentage increase has such a minimal impact. The elected officials are a separate class and should be treated equally.

Councilwoman LeClair agreed with Councilman Prendergast. The Highway Superintendent., Town Clerk, Town Justices are different than the Town Board Members. They don't have a say in it, but she thinks the

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public would think they are entitled to it. It is okay to say that they don't have to be here, but they are here and she thinks the community is happy with those elected officials. They show up and go above and beyond and she is very impressed with them.

Councilman Kusnierz was not saying they aren't worth it.

Councilwoman LeClair said she knows he wasn't saying that, but she thinks the community would feel it was an okay thing, because they all support the jobs these people have done.

Supervisor Jenkins said he agreed with Councilwoman LeClair and Councilman Prendergast, but also agrees with Councilman Kusnierz and all should be treated the same and they should go back to what he put in the Tentative Budget originally.

Councilman Kusnierz said that was fine with him, it was at 2% right?

Supervisor Jenkins said he justifies the 2% increase in his mind, because our workers need 2%. The inflation rate they say we have in this country is so inaccurate. Anybody that shops or buys gas or anything knows that inflation is really higher than what they are telling us. Not many years ago he bought an expensive car for \$7,500 and now you are talking \$50,000 for a truck.

It was agreed to go with the Tentative Budget figures for elected officials and they will be voted on October 28th.

Supervisor Jenkins said the rest of the salaries will be discussed next Wednesday night. Almost all are at 2% except a couple of positions. Highway Clerk they are proposing part-time to full-time. Recreation we are talking about moving one person to working foreman at a larger increase than 2%. Ted Monsour runs the Transfer Station and maintenance of buildings and makes less than some people at the Transfer Station. They have to discuss Kathy Perez's salary. There may be some other things they will find so everybody take time to go through them.

Councilman Kusnierz said he wants to discuss over-time when they discuss salaries. It is getting out of control. We are paying serious money to some employees for over-time. He doesn't know how it got that way. He asked if didn't we have a policy.

Supervisor Jenkins said it boils down to how the Labor Law reads.

Councilman Kusnierz said there are employees who are putting in a lot of overtime on a regular basis and who have come to expect it. These are salaries with overtime that are a good chunk of change. He is sure there is a more cost effective way to accomplish what we have to do.

Supervisor Jenkins said Jesse Fish has two part-time people and Earl takes more time and that is the only one who really has that issue.

Councilman Kusnierz said he wasn't singling anybody out.

Supervisor Jenkins said that is about the only one. Recreation may have a 1/2 hour or hour of over-time here or there.

The Highway Department was the other one mentioned that has a lot of overtime and it was said that we don't have any control over that department and it is contractual. It is part of the job. A lot of the

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overtime is in the winter months with plowing.

Supervisor Jenkins said the Water Department is the only other department with overtime.

Fran Thibodeau said there was some overtime in Recreation Department with the State Tournament, but the state reimbursed us for most of the overtime. Tim tries to watch the overtime in that department.

The Budget Workshop was concluded.

Respectfully submitted,

Leeann McCabe
Deputy Town Clerk

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