

A budget workshop was held by the Town Board of the Town of Moreau on October 6, 2009 in the Town of Moreau Office Building, 61 Hudson Street, South Glens Falls, New York.

Supervisor Jenkins called the budget workshop to order at 7:10 p.m.

Town Board Members Present

Todd Kusnierz	Councilman
Bob Prendergast	Councilman
Tom Cumm	Councilman
Preston Jenkins	Supervisor

Town Board Members Absent

Gina LeClair	Councilwoman
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Also Present: Jeanne Fleury, Town Clerk; Fran Thibodeau, Account Clerk; Reed Antis, Town Resident; Tim Alden and Jeff McCabe, Town Justices; Steve Gram, Recreation Director and Jeremy Tripp, Recreation Laborer; Jesse Fish, Water Superintendent

The Town Court Budget was discussed first. Tim Alden and Jeff McCabe, Town Justices, met with the Board about their budget.

Supervisor Jenkins began the workshop by stating that the projected revenue estimate for the Court looks to be down to about \$200,000.00 for 2009 yet the Justices budgeted \$220,000.00 for 2010. He asked the Justices if they expected an increase in revenues.

Judge Alden stated that it was hard to tell. They don't write the tickets and the State of New York has cut out the overtime for the troopers. The troopers don't even come to trials anymore. They do everything by conference call.

Judge McCabe stated that with the economy right now it is tougher for people to pay fines. They allow a lien to be placed against a person for non-payment of fines with surcharges.

Judge Alden stated that they convert fines to civil judgments in lieu of jail.

Judge Alden stated that the court clerks spend probably about 25% of their time tracking this stuff. He said that the amount of outstanding fines in Town Court is not a significant amount.

Councilman Prendergast asked the Judges if Moreau was getting their fair share of tickets written.

Judge Alden stated that he wasn't sure how many tickets are written in surrounding communities.

Councilman Prendergast mentioned the radar gun the Town of Moreau purchased for the State Police and the deal was that they were going to spend as much time in our Town as any other Town.

Supervisor Jenkins stated again that the Judges estimated revenues are up 5% yet the revenues are actually down 20% so far for 2009. He stated that the Board could raise the anticipated revenues back up to \$220,000.00.

Judge McCabe explained how the court can collect an entire fine on parking tickets under Section 1210 plus an \$85.00 surcharge and when a surcharge is imposed they can scoff or suspend a license. Otherwise, they can't scoff or suspend for non-payment of parking tickets.

Judge Alden stated that they were talking about reduction tickets/plea bargains not actual parking tickets.

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Judge Alden noted that they accidentally left out a part-time clerk in their budget request. Ron Belisle should be added to their budget in place of Jacqueline Wells at 16 hours per week @\$9.35 per hour, but they would like him to get \$10.00 per hour.

Fran Thibodeau stated that Ron is already making \$10.00 per hour and in the Tentative Budget he is at \$10.35 per hour.

Judge Alden stated that he and Judge McCabe talked and if they have to they can live with the Tentative Budget. Judge McCabe has applied for a JCAP grant for all the equipment items requested in the budget. As usual he has done a good job applying for this grant. The one item that is critical is a new phone system. They are dropping calls all the time.

Judge McCabe advised that the phone system is antiquated and they can't even get parts. He obtained a total of six estimates for a new system.

Judge Alden stated that he and Judge McCabe take great pride in their staff. As far as salaries go they seldom ask for anything for themselves, but they do ask for increased salaries for their staff. All agencies that work with the court clerks have nothing but good things to say about them. They are trained and dedicated. Even the part-time clerks spend a year or two training and then they get picked up by other courts. Jody Munger has been offered a full-time position with the Town of Northumberland. She is willing to stay and work for the Town Court and wants to stay here and is willing to continue on in a part-time capacity at 19 hours per week, but she needs \$12.00 per hour in order to do this and she can't stay for \$9.35 per hour. However, if Jody is increased to \$12.00 per hour then it is only fair that Sue MacMore get an increase to \$12.00 per hour also. It takes time to train a clerk and this is the second time that we have lost a clerk to another court.

Judge McCabe and Judge Alden advised that the part-time clerks aren't made to go to training, but they go on their own.

Judge McCabe stated that the court clerks are so capable they can sit on the bench with them just as well as the two full-time court clerks, Colleen and Lori. They are real assets to the Town both the full-time and part-time court clerks. They do all the sentencing reporting, fines, etc.... and their bookkeeping is phenomenal. If we don't offer them a better pay we will lose them to another court. There is legitimacy to a substantial raise to \$12.00 per hour. Nobody else in Town requires training like the court clerks.

Supervisor Jenkins stated that the Board will take their comments into consideration. However, we are facing a real problem with revenues right now and currently we are holding all raises to 3%. He noted that we have all qualified people working for the Town.

Judge Alden stated that in years past they have tried to keep the difference between Colleen and Lori's salaries at around \$2,200.00 to \$2,500.00 and two or three years ago the Board went back to a straight percentage raise and this creates an inequity. The 3% creates a bigger increase for the higher paid.

Supervisor Jenkins stated that Councilman Cumm has been pushing to do something different than straight percentage raises, but this is hard to do.

Judge Alden added that he doesn't want Colleen penalized by lowering her pay to close the gap as was done with prior Boards.

Councilman Prendergast advised the Judges that it is noticeable how pleasant the working conditions are at the court for a change and the Board hasn't had to deal with personnel issues down there like they have for probably the past 18 years and he told the Judges that he appreciated that.

Judge Alden stated that the stress and tension level has dissipated at the court.

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Judge McCabe added that there was never anything wrong with the staff down there. He added that the court clerks are constantly called and asked to go straighten out other courts and train new clerks and seasoned clerks as well on new systems.

Judge McCabe noted that the Board needs to start addressing the condition of the court building. It is deteriorating.

This concluded the discussion on the court budget at 7:45 p.m.

Jesse Fish entered the workshop next to discuss the Water and Sewer Budgets.

Supervisor Jenkins began by stating that he increased the Sewer District revenues based on the assumption that the Schermerhorn apartments will go on-line next year.

Jesse Fish stated that the mole he requested funding for would be used to install water lines from one side of the road to the other. People are currently paying \$2,500.00 to have an outside contractor install the line from the water service on one side of the road to their property on the other side plus the Town fees. If we purchase a mole then we could provide this service to the people. If we had one we could have used it on three different occasions since he has been water superintendent. There is another two or three more coming up in the near future that it could be used on. If the mole is purchased then a compressor needs to be purchased to operate it. A compressor costs anywhere from \$12,700.00 to \$13,000.00 for a new one and a used one with 500 to 1,000 hours on it could cost about \$7,500.00 to \$8,000.00.

Councilman Kusnierz asked how much it would cost to rent one for the day and Jesse replied probably about \$100.00 minimum. They bill out per piece rented.

Supervisor Jenkins reported that the estimated revenues in the Water Budget don't include any increase in water fees.

Fran Thibodeau noted that Jesse added a full-time person.

Jesse Fish said this was for down the road.

Fran stated "then it won't happen January 1st"?

Supervisor Jenkins replied no, it is more of a safety factor for budgeting purposes.

Fran Thibodeau asked Jesse if he would still need meter readers if he hired a full-time assistant and Jesse replied "absolutely".

Councilman Prendergast asked if the full-time assistant was being budgeted for the future and assumed it would be contingent upon Board approval.

Supervisor Jenkins replied yes. We don't know what will happen with Water District 7 and he went on to explain the IUP process and how we may likely be moved up on the list. There is a lot of activity with the water districts potentially. Whether we will need another full-time or part-time person in the Water Department remains to be seen, but at least the funds will be there.

Jesse mentioned salaries and stated that he started out low and thought he was bringing enough to the table that a little more of a raise would be justified. What he requested and what it was cut too only amounts to \$14.00 per week.

Supervisor Jenkins stated that the numbers are tentative, but right now they were holding at 3%. He mentioned again how the state of the economy is affecting the budget.

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This concluded discussion on the water budgets at 8:00 p.m.

Steve Gram, Recreation Director and Jeremy Tripp, Recreation Laborer entered the workshop to discuss the Recreation Department Budgets with the Board.

Councilman Prendergast noted that there was \$1,500.00 requested for softball umpires and it was cut from the Tentative Budget.

Steve Gram stated that each year he tries to bring softball back each year.

Supervisor Jenkins stated that he could add it back in if that was what the Board wanted.

Brief discussion followed on the turf utility vehicle and Councilman Prendergast stated they could leave it in the budget, but the money may not get spent.

Councilman Prendergast referred to A7145 and asked if this was money that came from developers in the Town.

Steve Gram said yes. It could be used for things like fencing.

Supervisor Jenkins asked Steve Gram what the idea was behind his request for a full-time floater.

Steve Gram stated it would be a person to work for nights and weekends and a person that could be utilized in other departments such as Transfer Station and Highway.

Councilman Kusnierz asked Steve Gram why he doubled the extra help and Steve Gram replied that if he got the full-time floater then that could be taken out of the budget.

Councilman Prendergast questioned whether or not there was enough work to keep another full-time person busy in the Recreation Department for twelve months.

Councilman Cumm asked if early spring clean up of the park was one place they could be utilized and Steve Gram replied yes, he would like everything done by opening day April 1st.

Steve Gram asked the Board if they could store some equipment in the small garage on the side of the Town's building on Route 197 and no objections were raised to this request.

Councilman Prendergast noted that there is a \$44,000.00 increase in the Tentative Recreation Budgets. He further stated that he anticipated that when we started taking in fees from developers that this would help the Recreation Budget and yet he is still seeing increases.

Supervisor Jenkins stated that they could remove the \$30,000.00 that is in A7145 Joint Recreation Projects. The Board could create a Capital Improvement Account, but it requires a resolution and is subject to permissive referendum and they would have to name the project.

Councilman Kusnierz stated that when they see significant increases in any budget during trying times like these they should come under scrutiny. He referred to the \$25,000.00 budgeted for a full-time floater and stated that he wasn't too keen on that right at the moment. He suggested they go back to this after they discussed the salaries.

It was the consensus to remove the \$25,000.00 from A7145 Joint Recreation Projects.

Supervisor Jenkins advised that there is about \$300,000.00 in the Capital Projects Fund HP7180 now and he budgeted \$200,000.00.

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Fran Thibodeau asked Supervisor Jenkins if he wanted to add \$1,500.00 in revenues for softball umpires and Supervisor Jenkins replied yes.

Supervisor Jenkins asked Steve Gram to go over his list of projects proposed under the Recreational Capital Project Account HP7180. He stated that Steve requested \$156,000.00 and he raised it to \$200,000.00 in the Tentative Budget in case another project comes along. We don't have to spend it.

Steve Gram stated with the \$20,000.00 "Beach Improvements" request he planned to purchase playground equipment for the beach and make some kind of separation between the beach and the grass area to make it more attractive to the public.

The \$72,000.00 proposed for a Little League Concession is to build a new concession stand back by the tennis courts for little league. There was also a proposal to remodel the present building for an office.

He noted that there needs to be an upgrade to the septic system for the existing bathrooms.

Supervisor Jenkins stated there is an anticipated fund balance of \$337,000.00 and possibly another \$50,000.00 in revenues next year.

Councilman Prendergast asked what paving was going to be done.

Councilman Cumm asked what was going to be done this year.

Steve Gram said around the concession stand for handicap accessibility and in the future a handicap walkway from the parking lot to the bowl.

Councilman Cumm asked if they were going to take care of the area around the quad this year and Steve Gram said yes.

Discussion followed on the \$24,000.00 for three doors for the Recreation Maintenance Building. It was determined that this was for a building and doors.

Supervisor Jenkins asked about playground equipment.

Steve Gram stated that originally he was going to request \$18,000.00 for playground equipment for the quad area and the Recreation Commission thought that it would be better to put in playground equipment at the beach.

Councilman Kusnierz stated that he has heard repeatedly from the public about the need for playground equipment by the quads for younger children to play on.

Supervisor Jenkins concurred that it would nice to have playground equipment there.

Discussion followed on blacktopping.

Steve Gram asked the Board to consider giving Jeremy Tripp and Bruce Siergery more than a 3% increase in salaries. They have done a great job.

Supervisor Jenkins stated that the Board will take it into consideration, but as a Board they haven't looked at the salaries yet.

This concluded the discussion on the Recreation Budgets.

Reed Antis talked to the Board about sales tax.

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The Budget Workshop was concluded at 8:37 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeanne Fleury
Town Clerk