

The Town of Moriah Town Board held a Budget Workshop on October 12, 2021 at 7:00pm at the Town of Moriah Court House, 42 Park Place, Port Henry, New York.

Present: Thomas Scozzafava Supervisor
Paul Salerno Councilman
Matthew Brassard Councilman
Nathan Gilbo Councilman

Excused: Thomas Anderson Councilman

Others Present: Becky Gilbo and Rose French, Town Clerk

The Supervisor called the meeting to order at 7:00pm by saluting the flag.

The Supervisor read the legal notice calling for the budget workshop.

The Supervisor asked if anybody had any general questions regarding the budget, other than the Planner and sidewalks. Salaries will be discussed for LeeAnn, Chip and Art.

Councilman Gilbo would like the projected surplus/deficit compared to last year's budget. Becky Gilbo stated we still have 3 months to go; over on campsite and have not received any CHIPS money yet. She is projecting that all revenues will come in. The Supervisor stated that we did not project all that was taken in for the campsite. He also stated that the fund balance is healthy. He stated Becky will work on the figures and get them to Councilman Gilbo.

Councilman Gilbo feels we are missing out on a lot of grants. Even if we have to pay a \$40,000 salary, what we get in grants would make up for it. Not knowing what is out there for grants =missed opportunities. The Supervisor stated he does not disagree. He stated back when the Empire Zone was here to get grants; we had a full time person. The planning office is good for water and sewer grants. The Supervisor stated there is talk at the County to hire another Planner; each Town would contribute to the salary. The Supervisor does not want an "employee"; before we are said and done it would cost the Town \$70,000, with insurance etc. and then it is too hard to get rid of them. He stated some grant writers get a percentage. Councilman Brassard asked how we would hire a grant writer like that and the Supervisor stated we would have to do RFP's. Councilman Salerno asked how we put it in the budget and the Supervisor stated we add it for next year and Councilman Gilbo stated then we would explore the options out there. The Supervisor stated he would not be here next year. Councilman Salerno stated we should reach out to other towns and see how they do it and he also stated that the State should be giving each town a list of all the grants out there. Councilman Brassard stated he got on grants.gov and there are 1,600 out there. Councilman Gilbo would like to add it to the budget as a line item and then pursue it next year. The Supervisor stated that the Essex County IDA is good for National Grid and Health Center grants, etc. He asked the Board if they were in agreement with putting \$40,000 in the budget under General for a grant writer and the Board was in agreement with this. Councilman Brassard stated now we need to get someone to write an RFP. The Supervisor stated he will speak to Bill Johnson.

Councilman Brassard asked if \$10,000 was still in the budget to do the bathroom at Champ RV Park. Becky stated it is part of .4. Councilman Brassard does not feel we should keep increasing campsite fees and not give anything in return. Councilman Brassard asked if it would help if we went to bid to do the bathroom and the Supervisor said no, we should be able to do the job ourselves. Councilman Brassard would like to see it get done. Councilman Salerno stated we need to come up with a plan as to what exactly we want done. The Supervisor stated \$10,000 should cover it. Becky stated we should add \$10,000 because there is only \$9,000 left.

Councilman Brassard asked about the shift differential for police officers. Becky stated it is for 3pm to 7am and it is \$0.70. Councilman Brassard would like to see it increased to \$1.50. The Supervisor asked Councilman Brassard why \$1.50 and Councilman Salerno suggested doubling it; \$1.40. The Board was in agreement with this; Becky will add \$0.70 to shift differential pay.

Councilman Salerno had no changes to the budget he wanted to discuss.

The Supervisor stated he received a letter from LeeAnn Sprague asking for an increase in pay. He copied the Board with her letter and also attached a packet of what the County pays for Account Clerks. He stated in 2022 she will be making \$17.36/hr. She plans to take the Senior Account Clerk exam and is a good employee and does a good job. The Supervisor stated job retention is critical. Councilman Brassard stated if she took the exam she could get more. The Supervisor said no. Councilman Salerno stated that it has to be all employees to be fair. The Supervisor stated that Judge Venne approached him about more money for the Court Clerk. She and Julie will be making \$14.63 in 2022. Councilman Brassard asked if we can raise salaries \$0.50 for union guys if we wanted to and the Supervisor said no! The Supervisor stated we are talking about LeeAnn here. Councilman Salerno stated his answer is no, he is not supporting it, it has to be across the board. Councilman Brassard stated we could bump her up if she passed the test. The Supervisor asked Becky if she has had one increase already and Becky said yes. Councilman Gilbo stated if she was doing extra tasks then yes, he would support it. The Supervisor asked Becky if she was still in the "learning" phase and Becky said yes. Becky stated there was talk of her doing the web page for the campsite for extra work. Councilman Gilbo stated he agreed with Councilman Salerno. The Supervisor stated Chip Perry wanted more and he told him no. The Supervisor then asked the Board if they were in agreement with LeeAnn staying the same and they were in agreement with this.

Councilman Brassard stated that Chet Woods has offered to clean the bathrooms at both campsites to free up the laborers. The Supervisor suggested that the Town not hire back Clark and Zack next year that would help; it is the Managers and Assistant Managers job to clean the bathrooms; it is part of their job! He does not support this. He stated a good foreman would help. Councilman Brassard stated they had zero issues at Champ RV Park this year. Matt Ball will be going to Building & Grounds starting in January. Becky stated we are down 1 laborer in the budget; in the budget for 3 laborers and 1 foreman; not 4 laborers. The Supervisor stated we are going to need new employees and pay them more.

Becky reminded the Supervisor we need to discuss the Senior Van and sidewalks. The Supervisor stated Jamie Wilson Highway Superintendent suggested going out to bid for the sidewalks and the Supervisor and Councilman Gilbo feel we should be able to do it in house. Councilman Brassard stated we may have to go to bid for the section in front of the bank. Councilman Salerno suggested Building & Grounds helping out with the sidewalks and the Supervisor stated that sidewalks fall under the Highway Garage. Rose stated that Center Road and Main Street across from Harland Funeral Home are bad and where they installed the car charging stations by the post office there is a lip in the concrete that someone is going to trip over. The Supervisor asked if the Board wanted to put \$20,000 in the budget as a line item for sidewalks; Becky stated she will use fund balance for this; \$30,000 will be put in the 2022 budget for sidewalks. The Supervisor stated the Board needs to come up with a plan for water and sewer next year.

The Supervisor stated as far as the Senior Van goes we can wait and see if the County surplus's one.

The Supervisor stated he has been speaking with Elise Stefanik regarding a police station. She is confident she can get an ear mark. The Supervisor will have another conversation with the captain. There would be 6 troopers here and they would serve Ticonderoga, Crown Point and Moriah. The biggest question we have is will there be 1 here in Moriah full time; the Supervisor will get an answer to this. We will maintain the property. The Supervisor stated we need a police presence. He also stated that if this falls through the Town will have to think about hiring a couple of police officers or wing it with the one we have now. Councilman Gilbo stated his concern is that we are footing the bill for the building and then they are in Ticonderoga all the time. The Supervisor stated that Ticonderoga does not want them there. He would suggest an informational meeting but we need the cost first. The Supervisor is going to speak to Gary Olcott; he should be able to give us a price. Councilman Salerno stated we need details of what exactly it is to be built with; he stated that \$300,000 is peanuts compared to hiring 2 new police officers. The Supervisor stated we need to negotiate with them like Councilman Gilbo said; we need one here full time if we are footing the bill.

The Supervisor stated that next year the Board will need to look at consolidating water and sewer districts. Becky stated it would be Water 1, Water 2 and Water 4, Water 3 would always be Separate-Port Henry; and sewer 1. The Supervisor also stated that the fire departments need to

consolidate. Councilman Brassard asked if the Board could initiate the vote and the Supervisor stated he feels it will happen on its own.

Becky ran down all the changes: Add \$40,000 to budget for a grant writer; Add \$10,000 to budget for bathroom at Champ RV park; Add \$0.70 to shift differential for police after 3pm to 7am; add \$30,000 to budget for sidewalks and she stated no to LeeAnn's raise correct, the Supervisor said correct. The Supervisor asked what account the planner is being added to and Becky asked if it was General or water & sewer or both. The Supervisor stated to leave it in General for now. Councilman Salerno agreed.

The Supervisor stated that Councilman Gilbo wanted to know what the fund balance was and Becky stated it is in the Annual Report.

The Supervisor stated the Board needs to get somebody lined up for Supervisor.

The Supervisor stated we used fund balance for the 2022 budget in Water District 2. Councilman Gilbo asked how that affects the tax levy. Becky stated if we need to increase a district we can supplement with another districts fund balance to stay within the tax levy.

Councilman Salerno stated we need a definitive answer as to what we can use the stimulus money for.

The Supervisor stated he and a couple of other Supervisors met with the Attorney General regarding Bail Reform and she agreed it is a problem. She is from Brooklyn and new about Witherbee NY because of Johnny Podres.

The meeting adjourned at 8:11pm.

Town Clerk