

The Town of Moriah Town Board held a Budget Workshop on October 17, 2023 at 6:00pm at the Town of Moriah Town Hall, 38 Park Place, Port Henry, New York.

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

Others Present: Becky Gilbo-Senior Account Clerk and Rose French, Town Clerk

The Supervisor called the meeting to order at 6:00pm by saluting the flag.

He read the legal notice calling for the Budget Workshop.

The Supervisor stated we will be going with the Bronze Plan for the health insurance; 10% increase; significant savings to the Town; with no decrease in benefits; same coverage; premium goes down. Ian from Excellus told Becky that the Town only uses 60% of deductible; Becky budgeted for 70% to be on the safe side. Councilman Gilbo stated it could be 100% though and the Supervisor said theoretically. Becky stated it would save the Town roughly \$164,000 a year. Councilman Gilbo asked what the 60% was based on and Becky stated it is based on the last 6-7 years of experience. Becky also stated this plan mimics the Teamsters Plan; the only thing wrong with the Teamsters plan is when you hit 55 and retire, you are off the insurance. Councilman Gilbo stated the Bronze plan was 70% of the deductible and it would save the Town \$164,000; Becky stated if the Town funded the plan 100% it would be way over.

The Supervisor stated after the workshop's the budget becomes the preliminary budget. He also stated that the Bronze plan is compatible.

Councilman Anderson asked with the Teamsters insurance you get kicked off and Becky stated when you retire at 55 it is so expensive to keep the insurance nobody can afford it.

The Supervisor asked the Board if they were all good with the Insurance. Councilman Gilbo stated the numbers don't match. Becky stated it is a \$164,000 savings to the Town, Ian's projection only includes active members, she has to take in to consideration retiree's and people who get the buyout.

The Supervisor asked the Board again if they were good with the Bronze Plan; Councilman Salerno asked if the 60% was calculated on last year's usage and Becky said yes.

The Supervisor stated NYS has to approve any insurance increases and they did approve it; he stated the County went up 12%.

Councilman Salerno stated theoretically everybody could get sick next year; Becky said yes, then we would have to dip in to the fund balance.

The Board was good with the health insurance.

Councilman Gilbo asked about the fund balance estimate; \$400,000 stimulus and Becky stated you have to take \$400,000 off the General fund balance; balance of \$1,649,400. She stated Kevin Rowland from the Comptroller's office said our fund balance was excessive.

Councilman Brassard asked what the Town's total budget was and Becky stated \$4,427,374. Councilman Gilbo asked what accounts went over the 2%; the Supervisor stated we could get rid of the new truck in Building & Grounds; it's not needed; Becky stated if we do that we will have to use less fund balance; the Supervisor asked the Board if they wanted to take the truck out and the Board was in agreement with this.

The Supervisor stated there is a position in the Town Clerk's office in the budget. Councilman Brassard stated it will be \$18 to start; 35 hours per week; Councilman Gilbo stated the salary would be \$32,760; Councilman Salerno asked why this new position was in the budget and Becky stated she will start filtering herself out next year; and LeeAnn will start to filter in to her

position; seamless transition. Need a new person to pay the bills. The Board agreed to leave this position in the budget.

Becky asked the Supervisor what the \$10,000 was in the Highway budget for and the Supervisor stated that is for a door.

Becky stated that Pam Yakalis, meals on wheels driver may be retiring at the end of the year. Becky stated she never joined the retirement; Becky has left this position in the budget; the Supervisor stated the Town could ask ACAP to take over meals on wheels. The Supervisor stated we will leave the position in the budget until Ms. Yakalis makes a decision. Councilman Anderson stated her not being in the retirement isn't going to be a problem and Becky said no, she signed stating she did not want to join.

Becky stated she budgeted \$25,000 for the Chamber; was \$15,000. The Supervisor stated he thinks \$5,000 of that was for Matt Courtright-Ti Chamber for their help; he stated the budget should be \$20,000. Becky stated we already paid them \$15,000 for their annual appropriation, \$3,000 for the farmer's market; \$3,000 for labor day and also \$4,500 for the fireworks. The Supervisor suggested the Board keep the appropriation at \$15,000 and have the Chamber request money from the Town for special events; then give any occupancy tax money. Councilman Salerno stated the Chamber has from January – August to raise money for the fireworks. The Supervisor stated it is not a good idea to just give the Chamber money. The Board was in agreement with leaving \$15,000 in budget for Chamber and they have to request money for special events; take out the \$25,000.

Becky stated she left \$25,000 in the budget for the Library even though it is on the school tax bill now. The Supervisor spoke to Sue Nephew, Library President; the appropriation will be on the school tax ballot every year. Councilman Salerno stated the school tax bill is raising \$45,000 and they will get \$25,000 from the Town for a total of \$70,000 and the Supervisor and Becky both said yes. The Supervisor asked if the Board was in agreement with leaving \$25,000 in the budget for the Library and they said yes.

The Supervisor stated Ed Roberts wants a vehicle to do animal control; he has access to one right down at Building & Grounds; he only makes 3-4 trips to the shelter each year. Becky asked if Mr. Roberts was allowed to use the truck at Building & Grounds after 7pm and the Supervisor said yes. Councilman Salerno asked if he was eligible for mileage and Becky said yes. The Supervisor thought a cap for the truck might be a good idea; Becky suggested using a campsite truck.

Councilman Gilbo asked the Supervisor if there was any equipment budgeted for the Highway Garage and the Supervisor said no. Councilman Gilbo asked if the Town would do a bond payment for the work at the school and the Supervisor stated he is hoping we will get FEMA money; should be \$200,000 or less. The Supervisor stated we should just cut a check for it; use FEMA money; school will pay their portion. Becky stated we have 2 bond payments; one for the Highway tandem and one for the Highway pickup.

Becky went over the Highway salaries; budgeted for 1 new employee in 2024. Councilman Gilbo asked about general repairs; Becky stated general repairs is anything other than CHIPS to repair roads. Councilman Salerno asked how much the Town gets paid from the County for helping them out and the Supervisor stated it is so much per mile. The Supervisor stated Mr. Wilson is reluctant to work on County roads and he is not sure why. He stated the Board needs to hold him accountable; if he wants new equipment, make the money. The Supervisor stated CHIPS money is for roads; not equipment. The Supervisor stated Highway employees got \$2.00/hr increase, does not include 3%. Councilman Gilbo stated sidewalks are in the budget, what else, he noticed capital projects are up \$40,000; Becky stated that is CHIPS money, it comes in and goes right back out. The Supervisor stated the Highway Superintendent decides what roads are done with CHIPS money but to purchase equipment he needs Board approval.

Becky stated Chip Perry will need to replace water pumps over the next 3 years in Water District #1 and #2 (\$30,000 each year = \$90,000). The Supervisor stated if we use stimulus money the whole Town does not benefit. The Supervisor stated we are very fortunate to have Chip Perry; he is all about preventative maintenance. Councilman Gilbo asked what the difference is between Chip Perry and Art Morgan and the Supervisor stated Chip Perry takes care of the plants

and Mr. Morgan is infrastructure. Councilman Gilbo asked what the interest rate would be if we borrowed, the Supervisor stated 5%. Councilman Salerno stated we could use \$45,000 stimulus money and raise \$45,000. Becky stated we need a plan for the stimulus money. Councilman Salerno stated the stimulus money should be for the whole town; the Supervisor said exactly; this would only benefit those in Water District #1 and #2. Councilman Gilbo asked if we could bond for it and the Supervisor asked the Board if they wanted to take it out of the budget; Becky asked the Board if they wanted to leave \$30,000 in the budget and raise \$30,000 through Operation and Maintenance. The Supervisor stated the water districts need to be consolidated; get debt service off taxes. Becky stated water will go up \$15.00; from \$295.00/yr to \$310.00/yr.

The Supervisor stated there is a new sewer pump in the budget. Becky stated it is \$27,000. She stated sewer will go up \$5.00; from \$241.00/yr to \$246.00/yr. Becky stated the sewer districts need to be consolidated also and the Supervisor stated we had to form sewer district #2 when the Village of Port Henry dissolved. The Board agreed to take the \$27,000 out of the budget for the sewer pump.

The Supervisor stated we have to make major cuts in the budget or use some fund balance to meet the 2% tax cap.

The Supervisor asked Councilman Gilbo if he had any other questions and Councilman Gilbo would like to know the interest on the fund balance for 2023, also the impact on the \$2.00/hr increase and what a bond interest rate would be. Becky will work on getting those and the Supervisor stated it would be a projected rate.

The Board took a 5-minute recess.

The Supervisor stated the Board had their list of salaries. Councilman Salerno stated in 2022 the Assessors were making \$7,802, in 2023 they made \$8,036, the salary sheet says they were making \$7,802 in 2023; Becky stated they was simply a typo and she wished Councilman Salerno had gone to her when he noticed it so it could be corrected. The Supervisor stated Councilman Salerno went to him and he forgot to let her know. Councilman Salerno stated back in 2018 Councilmen were making \$5,119 and in 2024 they will be making \$6,175; the Assessor's will be making \$8,277 in 2024; Councilman Salerno would like to bring the Councilman's pay up to what the Assessors are making. Councilman Salerno stated to the best of his knowledge no Councilman has ever asked for mileage and they will be working with a 3 man Board this year. The Supervisor read a list of what other Councilmen are making in Essex County; average is \$6,000. The Supervisor stated elected officials run knowing what the salary is; he stated he does feel their salary should be adjusted he just doesn't think it should be a couple thousand dollars. Becky asked if there would only be 3 Board members does she have to put a 4th one in the budget and the Supervisor said yes.

177. ON MOTION by Councilman Salerno, the following Resolution "raise Councilman salaries to \$8,277.00; same as Assessor's for 2024"

FAILED	Ayes	Salerno
	Nays	Scozzafava, Anderson, Brassard, Gilbo
	Absent	0

ON MOTION TO AMEND by Supervisor Scozzafava, the following Resolution was

APPROVED	Ayes	Scozzafava, Salerno, Anderson, Brassard
	Nays	Gilbo
	Absent	0

RESOLVED to raise Councilman salaries to \$7,000.00 each for year 2024.

Councilman Salerno stated the Town Clerk makes \$37,464, with a 3% raise she will make \$38,588. He stated LeeAnn Sprague and Julie Ida have received \$2.00/hr each since September. The Supervisor read a list of Town Clerk salaries. Councilman Salerno would like to see the Town Clerk get an increase of \$3,634 vs \$1,124. The Supervisor asked the Town Clerk if she had anything to say. The Town Clerk stated she was stunned when she found out all employees with the exception of elected officials were getting a \$2.00/hr raise and she was getting 3%. She stated she did not come in off the street as an elected official, she worked for the Town prior to being elected. She stated she was strongly encouraged to run for Town Clerk. She just wants what is fair, the 2 different salaries make it seem like she is not doing a good job.

178. ON MOTION by Councilman Salerno, the following resolution was

Approved	Ayes	Salerno, Anderson, Brassard
	Nays	Scozzafava, Gilbo
	Absent	0

RESOLVED to raise the Town Clerk/Tax Collector salary to \$22.58/hr; \$41,096.00 for 2024.

Councilman Brassard would like to do the same thing for Jamie Wilson, Highway Superintendent. The Supervisor stated absolutely not. Becky stated in 2024 he will be making \$66,985.00.

179. ON MOTION by Councilman Brassard, the following resolution

FAILED	Ayes	Brassard
	Nays	Scozzafava, Salerno, Anderson, Gilbo
	Absent	0

RESOLVED to give Jamie Wilson, Highway Superintendent \$2.00/hr increase in salary for 2024.

Councilman Anderson had no questions and nothing to report.

The Supervisor asked if the Board thought we needed another workshop and Councilman Gilbo stated he would like one.

The Supervisor will talk to Chip Perry about the pumps.

Councilman Salerno asked if the Board was operating with only 3 members; 4 with the Supervisor, what happens if there is a 2-2 vote; the Supervisor stated a tied vote fails.

The Supervisor gave a brief update on the culvert at the school. The goal is to keep beavers out of it; trying to find somebody who can trap them. The Supervisor stated the school should never have let it get this bad. He stated the Town's portion should be @ \$100,000 and the School's portion should be @\$100,000.

The meeting adjourned at 8:00pm.

Town Clerk