

The Town of Moriah Town Board held a Budget Workshop on October 24, 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  
Matthew Brassard Councilman  
Nathan Gilbo Councilman

**Absent:** Thomas Anderson 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.

The Supervisor stated that Becky Gilbo did a lot of work on this budget since the last meeting. Board decided to take \$26,000 out of budget for the pump for WWTP. Councilman Gilbo stated it was less than \$26,000; no warranty on repairs and it would be a build and install.

The Board agreed to leave \$30,000 in budget for Water #1 and Water #2 pump.

The Supervisor stated Chip Perry would like a new truck; current truck is from the Village of Port Henry; the Supervisor feels it would go another year. Councilman Anderson asked if the truck was in the budget and Becky Gilbo said no. The Supervisor stated we could use fund balance from 2023 funds; go to bid; or wait until next year. Councilman Brassard stated to go to bid. Councilman Gilbo asked what the truck was used for; just around town or what; would we surplus the old one; the Supervisor stated we could put the truck on next year's budget-for 2025.

Becky Gilbo stated the Chamber is \$15,000; the building & grounds truck is out. The Supervisor stated Carol Chiarella met with him and Councilman Brassard regarding their budget; they wanted \$31,000 from the Town. \$15,000 is in the budget and they can request funds for special events; will have to go in front of the Board that way. Councilman Salerno stated their appropriation is \$15,000 and then it would be up to the Board to decide to give them money for special events and the Supervisor said yes. The Supervisor stated the farmer's market didn't cost them anything. Councilman Brassard stated he spoke to Matt Courtright; the Town of Ticonderoga does not give the Ti Chamber any money; it's all special events; fishing tournaments are huge in Ticonderoga; bring in a lot of money. The Supervisor stated Matt Courtright proposed \$5,000 to work with the Chamber; not the Town. Becky Gilbo stated she expressed to Carol to reach out to the Ti Chamber; use a YCC student as an intern for the Chamber next summer. The Supervisor stated the Town of Moriah is the only Town that gets money for YCC. He stated the Chamber could use bed tax money to pay the \$5,000. Councilman Salerno asked who gets the \$15,000 and the Supervisor stated the Chamber gets it; it does not go to one person. The Town Board agreed to leave the Chamber appropriation at \$15,000; decide on the \$5,000 at the Organizational meeting.

Becky Gilbo handed out new fund balances; Councilman Gilbo asked if they were through the end of the year and Becky stated yes. Becky asked if the Board wanted to stay with the Bronze Plan for the Health Insurance; even if we have the worst case scenario the Town would still be saving \$49,000 and leave at 70% and the Board was in agreement with this.

The Supervisor stated the tax cap is based on the levy. He also stated the stimulus money balance came down due to expenses on the College Street field.

Councilman Gilbo asked how much fund balance we had to use and Becky stated \$150,000 between General and Highway. Councilman Salerno asked \$150,000 to get to 2% and Becky said yes. He then stated he feels it would be a small amount to go to 1%. The Supervisor stated if you keep it flat; next year tax increase. Councilman Salerno asked if any Town has ever gone over the 2% and the Supervisor said yes Ticonderoga has a couple of times.

Councilman Salerno stated the Assessors have to do a reval on 2600 parcels; the Supervisor stated they may not be done this year or even next year. Councilman Salerno asked if they raised 25% across the 2600 parcels wouldn't that reduce it and the Supervisor said yes but then you would lose on the school tax. The Supervisor stated the Board should go to an appointed

Assessor. Becky stated the Assessors could decide we are going up 25%. Councilman Salerno asked if it was public knowledge how the \$ is derived at and the Supervisor said yes; impact statement. Councilman Salerno stated on the school tax bill it has full market value on it; the Supervisor stated taxed on assessment value. Councilman Gilbo stated the equalization rate is 75% and the Supervisor said yes; based on sales; if there aren't any go to the next community to see where you should be for sales; not comparable.

The Supervisor asked Councilman Salerno if he wanted to stay with 2% or go to 1%. Councilman Brassard stated he would like the tax cap to go to 1%. The Supervisor stated we will have to use some fund balance to get to that. Councilman Gilbo stated it would be an additional \$50,000 to get to 1%. Becky stated she will work on it tomorrow. Councilman Salerno stated it would cost \$182,000 out of fund balance to get to 1%. Becky stated the stimulus money is down to \$318,000. Becky will get figures for 2%, 1% and 0%.

Councilman Salerno stated he wanted to change his vote to yes to give the Highway Superintendent the \$2.00/hr raise. The Supervisor stated he can't do that; has to get put to vote again.

**191. ON MOTION** by Councilman Salerno, seconded by Councilman Brassard, the following resolution was

Approved	Ayes	Salerno, Brassard
	Nays	Scozzafava, Gilbo
	Absent	Anderson

**DEFEATED** to give the Highway Superintendent a \$2.00/hr raise for 2024.

Discussion: The Supervisor stated he had a discussion with Jamie Wilson Highway Superintendent. He stated the Board knows his feelings on elected officials and raises; you know what the pay is when you run. Councilman Salerno stated it is difficult when some employees get 3% and some get \$2.00/hr, highway employees could end up making more than the Superintendent with overtime; the Supervisor said no. Councilman Salerno asked if there were a certain number of hours the Highway Superintendent has to work and the Supervisor said no. Councilman Salerno is afraid there is going to be hard feelings over this; if it was a 4-year term; could get nasty. The Supervisor stated he would never suggest the Highway Superintendent going to a 4-year term for this exact reason; not for Town Supervisor position either; would never support it. The Supervisor stated there are benefits to being an elected official. You could be in a coma and still get paid; come and go as you please; you can take a week off whenever you wanted to; an hourly employee uses own time; you can't compare apples and oranges. Councilman Salerno feels the board made a mistake when the Village of Port Henry dissolved; the Highway Superintendent salary and the Water & Sewer Superintendents salaries are very different now; he stated somewhere along the line the Highway Superintendent salary got elevated and the Water & Sewer Superintendents did not. The Supervisor stated the Board cannot go backwards; both took on a lot more; he does not disagree with how salaries got so different. The Supervisor stated the Board has made a lot of mistakes. Councilman Salerno stated he feels the Board is rolling the dice not giving Mr. Wilson the \$2.00/hr. The Supervisor stated the Board voted again and they did not agree.

Becky Gilbo stated she would make the changes and email the Board tomorrow.

Councilman Gilbo asked about water and sewer increases; Becky stated water will go to \$310.00/yr and sewer will go to \$246.00/yr. The Supervisor asked Becky what the projected tax rate for Water #1 and Water #2 was; she stated in 2023 it was \$1.55/1,000 and in 2024 it will be \$1.62. The Supervisor asked if the Board decides to keep the rate flat what would it be and Becky stated she will work on it and email the Board tomorrow; make decision on November 6<sup>th</sup>.

The Supervisor stated the Board needs to start the process to consolidate districts and start charging for sewer debt on vacant properties in Port Henry; Councilman Anderson asked why Port Henry doesn't currently pay sewer debt and Councilman Brassard stated the Village chose not to. The Supervisor stated the Board will have to have a public hearing and vote to include the debt portion in Port Henry.

Councilman Salerno thanked Becky and the Supervisor for all their hard work.

The Supervisor told the Board they needed to decide if they want the tax cap at 2%, 1% or 0%; Councilman Salerno asked why 0%, Becky stated we have fund balance to use; Councilman Salerno asked what if something catastrophic happened and Councilman Gilbo asked how much fund balance we would use; Becky will figure it out tomorrow; she thinks we would need to use \$300,000 of fund balance to get it to 0%. The Supervisor stated rule of thumb is to keep 6 months operating expenses in fund balance. Becky asked the Board if they were ok with her figuring out 2%, 1% and 0% and how much fund balance to use and she will email them tomorrow; the Board said yes. Councilman Salerno asked Becky if the new fund balance totals were projected through the end of the year and Becky said yes.

The meeting adjourned at 7:06pm.

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Town Clerk