

The Town of Moriah Town Board held a Special Meeting on October 5, 2023 at 6:00pm at the Town of Moriah Town Hall, 38 Park Place, Port Henry, New York, for the Town Clerk to present the 2024 Tentative Budget to the Town Board.

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

Others Present: Rose French, Town Clerk

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

The Supervisor stated Becky Gilbo is out with Covid.

176. ON MOTION by Councilman Anderson, seconded by Councilman Brassard, the following resolution was

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

RESOLVED authorization for Supervisor to sign Memorandum of Understanding with Moriah Central School regarding emergency repairs to Viking Lane, a Town road, due to recent flash flooding which has resulted in damage to a culvert, roadbed damage and accumulation of silt and debris. The emergency repairs will primarily occur on the Town owned roads, and debris removal will occur on property owned by the Town and property owned by the District.

Discussion: The Supervisor stated he and Councilman Brassard met with Bill Larrow, Superintendent, they were in agreement, meeting went well. Councilman Brassard stated it helps that the school will probably get state aid.

The Supervisor stated the purpose of this meeting is for the Town Clerk to submit the Tentative Budget to the Town Board. The Supervisor then distributed a list of proposed salaries to the Town Board. He stated all employees will get a \$2.00/hr increase; elected officials will get 3%.

Rich Lapier will drop down to 20 hours per week.

The Supervisor stated there will be an added position in the Town Clerk's office. Councilman Salerno asked if this was an additional employee and the Supervisor said yes. Councilman Anderson asked if this position would be full time with all the benefits and the Supervisor said yes. He stated LeeAnn Sprague is doing more and it is too much for her; need to transition away from paying bills. The Town Clerk stated the Supervisor approached her about adding an employee in the Town Clerk's office to pay the bills and the Town Clerk agreed; will make new person Deputy Town Clerk as well. Councilman Gilbo asked if this new position was in the tentative budget already and the Supervisor said yes.

Councilman Salerno asked if the Town could budget for 40 hrs per week for Rich Lapier in case he is needed and the Supervisor said no; he stated if there was an emergency and Rich had to work over he would get paid over time.

The Supervisor stated \$19.00/hr was put in the budget for the Court Clerk. Councilman Gilbo asked what happened to the desk audit she had; the Supervisor stated it showed she was doing the work of an account clerk but not getting paid for it; the County has approved the position of Court Clerk; \$19.00/hr would make her the 2nd highest paid court clerk in Essex County. Councilman Brassard stated the Justices had asked for \$25.00/hr on their budget work sheet. The Supervisor stated the Town Board sets the Court Clerk salary.

The Supervisor stated there is a new truck for Building & Grounds in the budget. Councilman Gilbo asked if we could get a used truck for \$16,000 not a new one for \$60,000; Councilman Brassard stated the old truck will go to the campsite. The Supervisor stated he felt the current Building & Grounds truck would be good for another year.

The Supervisor stated we definitely need some budget workshops; this budget is way over.

The Supervisor met with Chip Perry, he stated the water plants will need repairs and replacements over the next 3 years. The Supervisor stated there will be an increase in Water #1, #2 and #4; from \$295.00 to \$310.00 and Sewer will go from \$241.00 to \$246.00.

Health Insurance is going up 10%; there is another plan that would be a savings to the Town and the employee; Councilman Brassard stated it would save \$80,000-\$100,000 a year. The Supervisor stated the only problem with the Teamsters plan is when you hit 55 and retire you are booted off the Teamster's health insurance. Councilman Brassard explained the FSA card; out of pocket goes up; Town would fund it. Councilman Gilbo asked if the 10% increase was in the budget and the Supervisor said no.

The Supervisor stated that water and sewer are capital improvements; the Board could agree to use some of the stimulus money for it. Councilman Anderson asked how much stimulus money was left and the Supervisor stated \$350,000-\$400,000 left. Councilman Gilbo asked if there is a list of high priority projects and the Supervisor stated Chip Perry is very good at providing one but he does not have one from the Highway Department or the Water & Sewer Department. The Supervisor stated that Chip Perry is very preventative maintenance minded.

The Supervisor stated the Sewer Project is underway now; hoping to get some EFC money.

The Supervisor stated that Matt Courtright has reached out to the Town again regarding the Contractual Partnership Agreement with the Ticonderoga Area Chamber of Commerce for Moriah visitor, marketing, public relations and Business Resource Partner.

Councilman Salerno asked if at the 1st budget workshop Becky Gilbo would have the general fund balance and balance for all departments. The Supervisor stated she already gave them to him but he doesn't have them right in front of him. The Supervisor stated we have a healthy fund balance. Councilman Salerno asked if there was a guide to what the Town needed to keep as far as a fund balance goes and the Supervisor said no; he cautioned you really should not play with the fund balance; he stated if we did we would never meet the 2% tax cap in future budgets. Councilman Brassard stated the Highway fund balance is down.

Councilman Salerno asked what the time frame was for the stimulus money; when did it need to be used by and the Supervisor stated 2025. Councilman Salerno asked if it could be used for almost anything; the Supervisor stated it is hard with water and sewer because only half of the community is benefiting.

Councilman Salerno stated the Board could be a 3-man staff next year if they agree not to appoint someone. Councilman Brassard stated the Board could agree to appoint someone or they can leave the seat open; election is in November; if someone is appointed it is not to finish out the term; only until elections. Councilman Salerno asked if the Board could hold a special election and the Supervisor said no. Councilman Anderson asked if the Board would still have a quorum and the Supervisor said yes, a quorum is 3. The Supervisor stated this budget includes 4 councilmen; can discuss more at the workshop.

The Supervisor stated we need to schedule a public hearing on the preliminary budget with a special board meeting to follow. He stated the elected official's salaries needs to be in the publication for the Public Hearing. The Board was in agreement to hold the public hearing on Monday, November 6, 2023 at 6:00pm at the Town of Moriah Court House. Councilman Salerno stated elected official's salaries could stay the same or increase; the Supervisor stated we can discuss that at a workshop. The Supervisor also stated if elected official's salaries are changed after legal notice another public hearing is required.

The Town Board agreed to hold a budget workshop on Tuesday, October 17, 2023 at 6:00pm **AND** Tuesday, October 24, 2023 at 6:00pm at the Town Hall.

The Supervisor stated if any Town Board members are approached regarding fungus/pressure washing and Whistlepig direct them to the Supervisor to make sure the same/correct information is given out. He stated the NYS DEC is investigating. He stated Whistlepig is not in any

violation and the Town has no control over it. He stated Whistlepig has made an economic impact on the Town of Moriah; taxes, employees; they are a benefit to the community.

Councilman Anderson asked if there was anything new on the Hydro Project and the Supervisor stated it is back in front of FERK; permitting is all done. The Supervisor stated that Phoenix Tailings will be doing test boring; they need a site for a lab; working with Solvay. Councilman Anderson asked how this would benefit the Town and the Supervisor stated through tax revenue. Councilman Salerno stated he saw J Hutchins at the culvert at the school. The Supervisor said yes, Jim Dugan-Essex County will draw up the contract; hoping to mobilize next week. The Supervisor stated they will access the culvert by the old road and south of the sign at the school entrance. Councilman Gilbo stated he went and looked at it; there is a beaver dam that covers the entrance to the culvert. The Supervisor stated he has asked Essex County Soil & Water to inspect it because the culvert is 50 years old. He is hoping the culvert is still in good shape so it does not need to be slip lined.

The meeting adjourned at 6:44pm.

Town Clerk