

The Town of Moriah Town Board held a special Town Board Meeting on Thursday, February 15, 2024 at 5:30pm at the Town of Moriah Court House, 42 Park Place, Port Henry, NY.

Present: Matthew Brassard Supervisor
Paul Salerno Councilman
Tom Anderson Councilman

Absent: Nathan Gilbo Councilman

Others Present: Bill Trybendis, Michael Moran, Joshua Gijanto, Harold Beagle, Dakotah Olcott, Kelly Ashe, Erin Prevette, Robert Stevenson and Rose French-Town Clerk

The Supervisor opened the meeting at 5:30pm. He stated this is an informational meeting on the proposed EMS district. He introduced Dakotah Olcott, Assistant Captain.

Mr. Olcott stated they are out growing their current facility and there is no bathroom. He has extensive knowledge on writing grants. He gave a handout of the Map, Plan and Report for the creation of a Town of Moriah Ambulance Squad (EMS) Special Improvement/EMS Tax District. He stated they had 612 calls in 2023. So far this year they have had 65 calls. They have been supplementing with Essex County Staff for nighttime coverage. They have budgeted for \$200,00 in billing for the 2025 budget, if the new district gets approved this money would go to the Town and the Town would keep the annual appropriation. They currently have coverage 24/7 through the middle of April. Mr. Olcott stated if the district is formed it would be \$1.18 per 1,000 on a \$100,000 home; if it is a flat rate across the board and not based on assessment, it would be \$1.35.

Mr. Olcott stated to form a district you need a map, plan and report. Mike Moran, Captain stated they are currently in violation with the Department of Health because they do not have washing machines and showers available. He stated they do pay rent to the Moriah Fire Department; they are pushing to keep the department going.

Councilman Salerno asked if the 2 new people were mandated or needed. Mr. Olcott stated it is a necessity. Councilman Salerno asked out of the 612 calls whose insurance got billed and Mr. Olcott stated the patient's insurance gets billed; they won't send to collections if it doesn't get paid. Councilman Salerno asked in the instances when narkan is used and there is no insurance, it is a freebie, who pays; Mr. Olcott stated they will still bill but get nothing. Councilman Salerno stated there is no one to pick up the expense and Mr. Olcott said no.

Councilman Salerno asked about the property across the road from the Fire Department, is this new building included in the budget and Mr. Olcott said yes; capital reserve payment; \$800,000 over 30 years. Mr. Olcott stated the property was \$20,000 and they have already purchased it. Councilman Salerno asked if the district would be going after any grant money and Mr. Olcott stated most grant money is fire oriented; making the squad ineligible. They are working on a FEMA grant.

Councilman Salerno asked if it was a flat rate of \$135.43, everybody would pay it and Mr. Olcott said yes. Councilman Salerno asked what the current rate was and the Supervisor stated he thought it was \$.25-\$.30 per 1,000, Councilman Salerno said thank you and asked if there would be a public hearing on the proposed district and the Supervisor said yes. Councilman Anderson stated the rate is currently \$25.00-\$30.00 for a \$100,000 home, he then asked if the cost of the building was in this budget and Mr. Olcott said yes, it would come out of the total budget. Councilman Anderson asked if they would pay for it with runs and Mr. Olcott said that is their goal. Councilman Anderson asked what the piece of property is and Mr. Moran stated it is across from the fire department; was Doug Munson; there is already electricity and water and sewer there. Mr. Olcott stated they already have the property. The Supervisor stated if they build a building now they would not have to start paying for it until next year.

The Supervisor asked if the EMS county payroll included the 2 additional people. Mr. Olcott stated they currently pay Essex County \$94,000; with the 2 additional people it would be \$225,000-projected.

The Supervisor asked about the ALS payments to other agencies and Mr. Olcott stated they are no longer ALS, lost it in the past leadership of the squad.

The Supervisor stated in the proposed budget medical supplies doubled and Mr. Olcott stated \$20,000 is their annual payment for their stretcher and Lucas device.

Councilman Anderson asked if they thought this could be accomplished in 2 years and Mr. Olcott stated that is their goal. It would be a metal building which would take about 2 months to put up but then all the inside would have to be done. He stated this new building is urgent but they are making do. Councilman Salerno asked if they have plans for the new building and Mr. Olcott said yes, he will forward to the board.

Councilman Salerno asked if the squad has already hired 2 new people and Mr. Olcott said no, it is projected. Councilman Salerno asked if their decision to hire 2 more EMT's was based on past calls/runs and Mr. Olcott said yes; it is not mandated. Councilman Salerno asked what other Towns were doing and Mr. Olcott stated the only other Town that is trying to form a district is Ticonderoga; all other Towns have traditional ambulance service.

Supervisor Brassard stated the ambulance squad is a vital service.

Councilman Salerno stated he would like to hear what the public has to say at a public hearing. Councilman Anderson asked if we have to have a public hearing legally and the Supervisor said yes; 10-day notice; Board agreed to have a public hearing prior to the regular board meeting at 5:30pm on Thursday, March 21, 2024.

Supervisor Brassard stated the ambulance squad is now transporting patients to the proper facility. Councilman Salerno asked who determines that and Mr. Moran stated the nature of the injury/illness does. Councilman Salerno stated then the squad would bill the patient's insurance and Mr. Olcott stated it depends on the individual's insurance. Councilman Salerno asked what the cost is to be air lifted; he heard \$20,000 and Mr. Olcott stated he has seen \$30,000 and after communication between the squad, patient and insurance the patient ends up paying \$300.00.

Councilman Salerno stated thank you, thank you for your service. The Board thanked the ambulance squad.

Councilman Salerno asked what would happen if the Board said no and Mr. Olcott stated they would have to petition the Town; public referendum. The Supervisor stated there would be a waiting period after the public hearing. Councilman Salerno stated the Ticonderoga Town Board voted it down. Councilman Anderson asked if everybody else in the County still does it the old way and Mr. Olcott said yes. Councilman Anderson asked about Clinton County, do they have any Town's that have formed their own district and Mr. Olcott said no.

Councilman Salerno stated we will have to see what the voters say. The Supervisor is hoping for a good turnout at the public hearing.

The meeting adjourned at 5:57pm.

Town Clerk