

The Town of Moriah Town Board held a special meeting on Tuesday, October 11, 2022 at 6:30pm at the Port Henry Fire Department with the Fire Commissioners of Fire District #3 to discuss the condition of the building and any other pertinent business regarding the fire district.

Present:	Thomas Scozzafava	Supervisor
	Tom Anderson	Councilman
	Matt Brassard	Councilman
	Nathan Gilbo	Councilman

Absent	Paul Salerno	Councilman
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Others Present: Bill Ball, Meg Wendell, Ron Mitchell, Chuck Kolodzey, Ron Nesbitt, Jim Hughes, Brian Venne and Rose French-Town Clerk.

The Supervisor stated the Town Board wants to work with the fire commissioners but they need a home. He stated we are a separate government entity and we are supplying the fire department with a building. He stated there are 2 other fire departments in the Town of Moriah; why are we providing just Port Henry Fire Department with a building. The Supervisor stated he has had 2 parties interested in buying the building. He wants to work with the department to come up with a plan. The Supervisor asked what the plan was with the old A & P building on Main Street. He asked the Commissioners if they just need a building to house their equipment; if so they could add on at a later date.

Councilman Brassard met with Titan Roofing about a month ago, they inspected the elevator shaft; substantial cost to fix; can't find anybody to fix it; whole roof would need to be replaced. The Supervisor stated the Town has no use for the building; historical significance only; structure is solid.

Chuck Kolodzey stated they want to stay there until they can build a new fire house down the road. The Supervisor asked Mr. Kolodzey if they wanted the building and Mr. Kolodzey said no, they want a new building. The Supervisor stated the department has to do something sooner or later. Rick Doliver wanted the building; he could have leased it to the fire department. The Supervisor stated the Town could surplus the building and put it on the market or the Town could give it to the fire department for free.

The Supervisor stated the fire department needs a plan. Jim Hughes stated they had people look at the old A & P; evaluated the building, floors could not hold the weight of the fire trucks; abatement is still an issue and there are cracks in the building; they were discouraged from retrofitting it in to a fire department. Jim Hughes stated the fire department is strategically placed in Port Henry on NYS Route 9N for hazmat material running on NYS Route 9N; also CP Rail and water rescue. The Supervisor stated the Town Board is not questioning the importance of the department.

The Supervisor stated he hears constantly that the fire departments should consolidate. Chuck Kolodzey asked if all fire departments were on board with that and the Supervisor said yes. Jim Hughes stated the tax rate for Moriah is 1.77/1000, Mineville/Witherbee is .98/1000 and Port Henry is 99/1000; he asked if the departments were blended would everybody have to pay Moriah's debt and the Supervisor stated the Town would oversee the budget. Jim Hughes stated that is not good, a town doesn't know anything about operating a fire department.

Councilman Gilbo stated the Town Board is not interested in the building. Ron Mitchell stated they don't want to put \$100,000 in just the roof on the building. The Supervisor stated the Town carries insurance on the building. Mr. Mitchell stated they want out of the building just as much as the Town wants them out. Bill Ball stated they could take out a loan and just put up a building; place to put the trucks, add on as you can; put more in to it as you can afford to.

The Supervisor stated they need a building; can borrow 2.2 million; comptroller would never approve that; get something up at the A & P for trucks/bathrooms and go forward as you can afford it. Chuck Kolodzey and Ron Mitchell both stated that they would be going backwards to try and get in to the old A & P building. Jim Hughes stated the last time they looked at the asbestos abatement it was \$80,000; Bill Ball stated it is probably more than that now. The Supervisor stated the asbestos is in the floor.

Jim Hughes asked about the state police substation; is that a dead issue. The Supervisor said yes as far as the town paying for it. He stated there is a new commissioner so the conversation is ongoing. The Supervisor stated we offered them land the capital improvement is up to them. The Supervisor stated that they will not go with a fire department and a police station together. He stated he supports the concept of a police station but it is not up to the tax payer to pay for it.

The Supervisor stated the fire department could look at a 3rd party for bonding. Chuck Kolodzey stated he would like to see support from the Town Board for grants; that would mean a lot. Jim Hughes stated Cuomo gave Whiteface money to put up a building but the fire department can't get any help. The Supervisor stated Governor Hochul built a football stadium; one party rule; look at Moriah Shock closing.

Chuck Kolodzey stated he thought when the Village dissolved there was talk of money for a new fire department; the Supervisor stated there has been a change in leadership; the fire department needs to have this discussion with Elise Stefanik, Dan Stec and Matt Simpson. Jim Hughes stated he is constantly writing grants. The Supervisor stated the Highway Garage is in the same boat, it would collapse under too much snow, live within your means. The Supervisor stated there is always the 3rd party loop hole and Jim Hughes stated 3rd party picks are for electrical and mechanical; can't do them anymore.

The Supervisor asked if a 3 bay garage would work and Chuck Koldozey asked how long one of them would last. The Supervisor stated it was criminal that the guy promised the fire department the world, Jim Hughes said correct, his plan was to shoot the moon for \$2.5 million. Chuck Kolodzey stated they still need a fire house if the Town is going to kick them out and the Supervisor stated yes, the department needs to come up with a plan. Brian Venne asked if the Town would sell it to the Town and the Supervisor stated they didn't want it.

Ron Mitchell stated it took a year the first time, it's going to take another year to get a plan in place. He stated they still have to go to the people. The Supervisor stated it has to be a realistic plan. Jim Hughes stated it was the perfect storm asking the people for a new fire house right after COVID. The Supervisor stated he feels the people would have supported it if it wasn't \$4.5 million. Jim Hughes stated they asked the people for a blank check and they said no.

The Supervisor said take this building and own it. Jim Hughes asked if it was on the registry and the Supervisor stated if it was grant money that would be an issue but it is not. The Supervisor stated the Town would turn the building over to the fire department and Chuck Kolodzey stated a new building would last longer. The Supervisor stated he feels all fire departments will be paid within 10 years. Jim Hughes stated he feels it was not properly explained to the people back in April. He feels a steel building will only last 10 years. Councilman Anderson stated he does not want a unified budget; he appreciates all the fire department does. He has been trying to get internet on Mullen Bay for years; NYS very hard to work with.

The Supervisor stated he has been fighting with NYS over \$500,000 police station and they closed Moriah Shock.

Jim Hughes stated when the Village dissolved the Town acquired all their assets and debt, the Town agreed to this; people are still paying for the debt.

Meg Wendell stated the assessed value is 86 million; not enough to spread the cost of the debt around. She stated before the vote the department sent letters around to everyone in the district and Facebook went crazy and they were asked not to respond; they haven't done anything since because they feel defeated.

The Supervisor asked if the borrowing limitation was ever discussed and the commissioners said no; the Supervisor stated that was deceitful and the department should try and get their money back,

Jim Hughes stated if the Town has a buyer they could put up some temporary shelter like a Quonset hut.

Ron Mitchell stated the cost to heat the building was a lot; Meg Wendell stated it was \$17,000 last

year and they budgeted \$25,000 this year.

The Supervisor stated just do the bays and bathrooms now. Ron Mitchell stated it is still a process; doesn't happen overnight. Bill Ball stated they could insulate this building really well and put some propane furnaces in. Brian Venne stated that doesn't fix the roof. Councilman Brassard stated the elevator shaft needs to be replaced; drains are an issue and the whole roof needs to be done.

Ron Mitchell stated they are paying \$4,000 in taxes.

Jim Hughes asked if the potential buyer was in a hurry and the Supervisor stated they want it for storage. The Supervisor stated again that the Board will work with the department. Jim Hughes stated he asked to be put on Elise Stefanik's schedule; hasn't heard anything yet.

Bill Ball asked why Moriah and Mineville/Witherbee fire departments get \$26,000 a year from the Town. The Supervisor stated that Port Henry Fire Department used to get paid to do fire protection but when the Village dissolved it all became Fire District #3. Meg Wendell stated that \$26,000 is a lot of money in their budgets. The Supervisor stated you can't compare apples to apples; there are 3 fire departments in Moriah outside fire protection; if it became a town wide fire department there would be no more fire protection. The Supervisor stated fire protection is based on assessment.

The Supervisor stated he had nothing more. Chuck Kolodzey thanked the Board for coming. The Supervisor stated if they want the building take it or scale the new building back. Meg Wendell stated this building needs a roof. The Supervisor asked if they wanted a vote to put money in to this building. Brian Venne asked what other building that the Town owns needs money put in to it and the Supervisor stated you are missing the point; can't have the whole Town paying for the Port Henry Fire Department. Meg Wendell stated this is an emergency situation. Councilman Brassard stated we can't get anybody to fix it.

Jim Hughes asked if BOCES could do the Court House roof and the Supervisor said no, they won't allow it.

The meeting adjourned at 7:34pm.

Town Clerk