

A public hearing was held by the Town Board of the Town of Moreau on November 7, 2019 in the Town of Moreau Municipal Building, 351 Reynolds Road, Moreau, New York for the purpose of hearing public comment on the proposed 2020 Preliminary Budget.

The Supervisor called the public hearing to order at 6:30 p.m.

Town Board Members Present

John Hogan	Councilman
Alan VanTassel	Councilman
Gina LeClair	Councilwoman
Kyle Noonan	Councilman
Theodore T. Kusnierz, Jr.	Supervisor

Town Board Members Absent

None

Also present: Leeann McCabe, Town Clerk; Jeffrey Cruz, Principal Account Clerk; Reed Antis, Planning Board Member and Town Resident; John Donohue, Councilman Elect; Town Residents: Ron Quinn, Jr. and Mike Lesser; Village Residents: Harry Gutheil Jr. and Peggy Jenkins

The following notice of public hearing was published as a legal ad in the Post Star Newspaper on October 31, 2019:

TOWN OF MOREAU

NOTICE is hereby given that the Town Board of the Town of Moreau, County of Saratoga, State of New York, will hold a Preliminary Budget Public Hearing for the fiscal year beginning January 1, 2020 on November 7, 2019 at 6:30 p.m. in the Town of Moreau Office Building, 351 Reynolds Road, Moreau, New York. At such hearing any person for or against any item therein contained or in favor or against said budget as compiled may be heard. Further notice is hereby given that said Preliminary Budget is on file in the Town Clerk's Office at 351 Reynolds Road, Moreau, New York, where it is available for inspection by any interested person during business hours. Copies of said budget will be available for distribution at the Preliminary Public Hearing to be held on November 7, 2019. Pursuant to Section 113 of the Town Law the proposed annual salaries for 2020 of Elected Officials are hereby listed as follows:

Supervisor		\$48,305
Council people	4 @	\$12,360 each
Town Justices	2 @	\$28,589 each
Town Clerk		\$46,153
Highway Superintendent		\$59,644

Dated: October 31, 2019

Theodore T. Kusnierz Jr., Town Supervisor
Town of Moreau

The Supervisor gave a brief overview of the Preliminary Budget stating that total appropriations for 2020 are at \$9,770,770 and anticipated revenues at \$5,926,405. The Town will be utilizing \$1,671,513 of fund balance. He stated that the way the budget is structured, it will keep the Town under the tax cap and would only increase the tax rate \$0.02/1,000 of assessed value.

The Supervisor stated that the Town will be replacing the new Highway Garage roof in 2020. They've used the lowest bidder and will also have a construction manager to oversee the work. He stated that they've budgeted just over \$477,000.00. He stated that they're hoping that the grant, that was applied for under Senator Marchione, is being carried forward under Senator Jordan and that the amount of \$200,000.00 will be released. He stated that this will help offset the cost of the repair.

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Another big ticket item is in Water District 6. There's \$185,000 budgeted to repaint the tower.

The Supervisor reported that the Town remains with no highway tax nor a fire tax. They're being funded through sales tax, which means \$538,410.00 will not come out of the tax payer's pockets.

The Comptroller's report indicated that the Town should be utilizing more fund balances. The Supervisor stated that they have reduced the total tax levy for the lighting districts by utilizing \$100 per district out of each lighting district to follow the recommendations of the State Comptroller.

With regard to Recreation, the Town will be utilizing Capital Reserve Funds to make improvements at the Park and along the Hudson River where the Town owns land for trail use. The Town Board is committed to move forward with a multi-use paved trail along the river. The Town has earmarked \$60,000 for that purpose. They've also budgeted \$20,000 for the repair of the maintenance building at the Recreation Park and to make improvements to the tennis court. They hope to convert a portion of the tennis courts to a pickle ball court. There's \$6,000 allocated for improvements to Fields 4 & 7, which will result in more groups being able to utilize them. There's also \$35,000 allocated for the construction of a pole barn for equipment storage.

The Supervisor stated that they provided nearly all of the employees a 3% raise and in some areas they did adjustments at the request of department heads, which came out of their budgets.

Councilwoman LeClair stated that she appreciated all the hard work the Supervisor had put into the budget.

Councilman Noonan stated that it went very smooth and was glad that they met with the department heads.

The Supervisor opened the floor for comments from the public and explained the rules of procedure.

The first member of the public to speak was Reed Antis. He introduced himself along with Mike Lesser as Board Members of Grant's Cottage. They wanted to thank the Town Board for budgeting \$5,000 for the Cottage. Mr. Antis stated that they're still trying to get possession of the ball field that's up there. They could use it for parking space as well as for outdoor events. He stated that they are also working with the State for a fire suppression system.

Mr. Lesser stated that they're raising money so that they can display one of President Grant's suits. In order to protect the suit, they'll need a special case for the display. He stated that the cost would be from \$5,000-\$15,000.

Mr. Lesser stated that the Cottage is wholly dependent on grants and contributions and thanked the Town Board for their support.

The Supervisor stated that he was present when Senator Schumer visited the site and asked Mr. Antis if he knew where Mr. Schumer stood on his efforts to have the Cottage put on the National Registry of Historical Sites. Mr. Lesser stated that it needs to be presented before the National Parks committee and that they haven't met in a while. Mr. Antis stated that he believed they don't have enough commissioners. He stated that they haven't met in over two years. Once they have enough commissioners, they would meet a couple times per year.

The Supervisor stated that he's had conversations with regard to the ball field and will be bringing it up again in a few weeks.

John Donohue stated that he thought it was wonderful that they allocated funds for a multi-use trail and asked if they plan on finishing it this year or if it will be an ongoing project. The Supervisor stated that they anticipate completion in 2020.

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Harry Gutheil was next to speak. He stated that he had no idea what the fund balance was in various accounts. He stated that some of the water districts are dependent on fund balance. Water district 6 is using \$45,000. He asked how sustainable the district will be. He commented that water district 2 has revenues that are exceeding expenditures by \$40,000 and that they should look at using the reserve or look into a rate reduction. He stated that on page 1 of the budget, the Assessor's budget is up \$59,000, which is a 33% increase. He asked how that happened. Traffic control is up \$13,000. There's a \$720,000 change in ambulance on page 4. On page 6 economic assistance dropped. On page 7, Recreation, he wasn't sure how much money was coming out of capital projects.

The Supervisor replied to his questions first by stating that there was a question about fund balance in water district 2 and that they are looking at all water districts in 2020. They are also looking into the possibility of consolidation of water and sewer districts. He stated that the Town has contracted with engineers to do a study to see what the benefits would be. The Town has applied for grant money that would pay 50% of the cost of the plan and if the Town were to move forward with the plan, it would pay for 90%.

The Supervisor stated that there was an increase over last year in the Assessor's budget. He stated that the Town has a contract with GAR Associates to do things that the Town hasn't been doing.

The Supervisor stated that the \$13,000 in traffic control was due to an increase in the cost of paint for road striping. Mr. Gutheil asked if that shouldn't come out of the DB account. The Supervisor stated that he would look into that and if it wasn't appropriately assigned, they'll change it.

The Supervisor replied on the question of the ambulance budget by stating that the Town used to take custody of the insurance money. He stated that it's not statutorily required and that the money goes directly to the squad now.

The Supervisor stated that with regard to the economic development question, the Town is working with the Saratoga County Prosperity Partnership to develop an economic development plan. There is money budgeted for 2020 in case the new Town Board wants to act on the plan.

The Supervisor stated that they will be relying on \$121,000 in capital reserve funds for recreation projects. He stated that the increase in the personal services can be attributed to the fact that they've hired a full-time Recreation Leader, who will oversee the Recreation Department as well as buildings and grounds.

Mr. Antis spoke again and stated that he hopes there will be money budgeted to remove some trees at Rice Cemetery. He stated that when they talked about the pole barn, it wasn't mentioned how big it would be. Mr. Antis stated that he was disappointed that this Supervisor is the first to take a stipend for the position of budget officer. He voiced his opposition to the budgeted amount.

The Supervisor stated that there are funds budgeted for cemeteries. He stated that the pole barn will be as big as it can be for the amount of money budgeted. It will have four sides and two doors (one oversized for equipment) and will be used for cold storage. With regard to the stipend, he stated that previous administrations have approached this job differently. He stated that he had put in the stipend last year for \$1,000 and the Town Board increased it slightly. He stated that he was okay with that. He stated that about half of the Town's in Saratoga County have either a Comptroller or a Budget Officer. He stated that it's a bargain to have the Supervisor as part of the process. He stated that the compensation will bring in individuals with experience that have a lot to offer the community. He stated that he was comfortable with the salary.

Councilwoman LeClair stated that the last year, before Supervisor Kusnierz, the previous Supervisor told the Principal Account Clerk to just plug in the numbers from the previous year. She stated that Supervisor Kusnierz did his job and spent a lot of time on the budget.

Harry Gutheil spoke again, first by asking about the non-property tax distribution, stating that it was down almost \$100,000. The Supervisor replied that it was sales tax. He stated that the general fund was

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bleeding and the budgets that were being put together weren't sustainable, with no mechanism to sustain them without increasing taxes. The Supervisor stated, that was one of the main reasons they eliminated the fire protection tax. He stated that once taxes were eliminated outside the general fund, they could assist the general fund with excess sales tax. He stated that the Town is sending \$300,000 in sales tax back to the County. The Supervisor stated that part of the reason for sending a lesser amount to the County is because they will be relying on part of the general fund money to repair the highway garage roof. Mr. Gutheil stated that it was a sore subject for him. He stated that the tax payers shouldn't be on the hook for that. He stated that apparently the roof has been a problem from day one and that it should have come out of someone's insurance policy.

Mr. Gutheil asked if the Town is anticipating any revenue from internet sales tax next year. The Supervisor replied that the Town is relying on the County's estimate for sales tax. He stated that this administration has been conservative on the numbers. They're going off the figures that the County estimates on sales tax. He stated that the first budget workshop for the County is next week and he presumes it will be part of the conversation.

Mr. Gutheil asked about the reduction in mortgage tax. The Supervisor stated that the actual numbers are down year to date.

Mr. Gutheil stated that the planning and zoning budgets are both up on the contractual line. The Supervisor stated, that as a result of the update to the master plan, the Town is going through and revamping the planning and zoning ordinances. He stated that most of the work will be completed through that line item and commented that it was being done by the LA Group.

Mr. Gutheil asked about the increase in the highway appropriations-outside the village. The Supervisor stated that a portion is for the highway garage roof replacement and a portion is for a new plow truck. The Supervisor also stated that they had budgeted for a culvert replacement in 2019 but as they got closer, it was too late in the year for DEC to issue a permit. By waiting until 2020, the Town may have the opportunity to receive a grant in the amount of \$50,000 toward the project.

Mr. Gutheil asked if the Town knew what the estimated general fund amounts were. The Supervisor replied, that as of August 31, 2019, it was just over \$2,000,000.

Mr. Gutheil asked about the Transfer Station and commented that there was \$44,000 budgeted in estimated revenues. The Supervisor stated that the Transfer Station has never had a capital reserve set up for the compactor and there is a need for repairs to the roof. He stated that it's the Board's fiducial responsibility to plan ahead. The Supervisor stated that they've relied on the County for \$30,000 each year. Last year the Town was told they wouldn't be getting the funding but the County changed their mind. He stated that there's no guarantees for future years.

There were no other comments from the public.

The Supervisor stated that he would keep the public hearing open so they can get an answer, whether it's a DB or general fund to be used for highway road striping. He expects to ask for a motion to close the public hearing at Tuesday evening's regular meeting. The Supervisor stated, if anyone has additional comments, they should get them to the Board, so they can get them on record.

The public hearing ended for the evening at 7:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Leeann McCabe
Town Clerk