

A continuation of the public hearing on the 2011 Preliminary Town Budget was held on November 16, 2010 in the Town of Moreau Office Building, 61 Hudson Street, South Glens Falls, New York.

The public hearing was continued at 7:00 p.m.

Town Board Members Present

Tom Cumm	Councilman
Bob Prendergast	Councilman
Gina LeClair	Councilwoman
Todd Kusnierz	Councilman
Preston Jenkins	Supervisor

Town Board Members Absent

None

Also Present: Jeanne Fleury, Town Clerk; Fran Thibodeau, Principle Account Clerk; Jesse Fish, Water Superintendent; Paul Joseph, Highway Superintendent; Lydia Wheeler, Post Star Reporter; Steven M. VanGuilder, President and CEO of the Moreau Emergency Squad; John E. Blanchard, Jr., Chaplain of the Moreau Emergency Squad; John Bonn, Driver for the Moreau Emergency Squad; Brandon Carta, EMT-D with the Moreau Emergency Squad; and Town Residents: Huguette Delvaux, Patrick Lyons and Adele Kurtz

Supervisor Jenkins reported three changes in revenues in the preliminary budget as follows:

Water District 2 increase revenues to \$150,000.00
Water District 4 increase revenues to \$140,000.00
Water District 5 increase revenues to \$30,000.00

Fran Thibodeau asked if these were just increases in water rent revenues or revenues in total and Supervisor Jenkins replied increases in water rent revenues.

Supervisor Jenkins asked if anyone from the public wished to be heard on the Moreau Emergency Squad budget.

Steve VanGuilder stated he talked to some of the emergency squad board members and they feel they should get a 4% increase at least. The squad provides a vital service to the community and there are certain items they need to purchase in order to continue to provide this service and if they don't then it could have an effect on the community.

Supervisor Jenkins replied that after the discussions recently he would agree to a \$4,000.00 increase or a 1.38% increase and he thought the board was also agreeable to an additional increase of \$250.00 per month for accounting services, which would bring the increase for the squad to 3.2%.

Councilman Kusnierz stated that at the November 4th meeting he advocated for a 4% increase and Supervisor Jenkins stated he would go along with that contingent upon us getting a contract and we came up with language that both sides were in agreement with and it is in the hands of the attorneys now so he wanted to know what has changed.

Supervisor Jenkins stated that the discussion was that if they did a monthly write up it would lower their year-end expense some and get them reports on a timely basis so they would know where they are at on a monthly basis financially and they would be able to present us with the information that we want on a monthly basis, which would solve a lot of problems.

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Councilman Kusnierz said on April 22nd at a workshop a question was raised from the public on how the board arrived at the figure of 4% for an increase for the squad during the last budget cycle and Supervisor Jenkins replied at that workshop that “we” and he assumed that meant the “board” used the same percentage that we used for the fire company, which was 4%. He said that when he heard this and he heard last week’s comment he can’t help but think there is an underlying issue and it gives the perception that there is some sort of vendetta out there against the squad. He said if they look at the 4% that is in this year’s contract for the fire company it comes up to just over \$16,000.00 and if you look at the figure proposed for the community center it is a 5.2% increase or a \$12,000.00 increase. What he is advocating for the squad is a 4% increase, which amounts to \$8,000.00 not even half of what the fire company is getting and they provide a vital, critical service to the community. He asked the squad what would happen if we didn’t increase their funding to 4% and all the board members heard them say that there would be vital equipment that the squad would not have available to them and they might not be able to provide the same level of protection that our community has come to expect from previous contracts. He asked the board to reconsider and increase the squad’s budget by 4%, which would equate to \$8,000.00.

Supervisor Jenkins said he looked quickly at their financial statements for the last ten months and there is an element of weakness in what they are doing so he understands what their needs are and there are areas where they will have to tighten their belts even if we use the numbers that Councilman Kusnierz is talking about. He said he was at \$7,000.00 and Councilman Kusnierz is at \$8,000.00 and he responded something to the effect that he wouldn’t have a problem with that, but he didn’t know where the rest of the board was at.

Councilwoman LeClair asked the squad if they were going to hire someone to use Quick Books.

One member of the squad responded that he thought about taking a training class on how to use Quick Books himself. The cost for the course was about \$110.00 to \$120.00.

Councilman Kusnierz asked the gentleman if he was a volunteer and the answer was yes.

Councilman Kusnierz then stated that he shouldn’t have to do that and it should be a reimbursable expense if the Town is requiring it as part of the contract.

Councilman Cumm said he agreed with Supervisor Jenkins. He wouldn’t mind something close to 4%. We are paying for the accounting services of the Moreau Community Center and the Fire Company now. It is part of the money that is given to them. He wouldn’t have a problem with the Town including an additional stipend to allow the squad to have an accountant do what the accountant for the community center does. He asked Supervisor Jenkins what his proposal was in terms of a percentage and Supervisor Jenkins replied just under 4%, a \$5,000.00 increase plus \$3,000.00 for the accounting services.

Councilman Kusnierz said he was looking at it from a fairness standpoint. He stated that we heard about the financial problems that the Moreau Community Center is facing due to mismanagement, no fault of anybody on this board, and they are over \$650,000.00 in debt. He heard in the budget workshops that the reason for the increase was that they are facing a tax increase and the taxes increased, because of reval, which was an action on the part of this board and to try to assist them in paying down their debt on the \$650,000.00 loan. He didn’t think he was asking for much by asking for a 4% increase for the squad in light of those facts.

Councilman Prendergast said he heard mention about equipment needed and he asked what equipment that was.

A member of the squad replied that their medication facilitated intubation program is not a requirement of REMO, but something they provide whereby medications can be given to a person to temporarily paralyze them so they can be intubated and help them breathe. If they were underfunded this may have to be eliminated. They have an auto pulse program, which is a mechanical CPR device. It is a unit that does

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chest compressions. There are other pieces of equipment that they need that he couldn't think of off the top of his head.

Steve VanGuilder stated that the hospitals used to assist them with drugs, but now they have to buy their drugs and every 14 days they expire and have to be disposed of and replaced. This is a cost to them.

Councilwoman LeClair asked if they would cut that versus cutting their banquet money of \$14,000.00.

The reply was that they would have to cut that too, but the banquet is funded by donation money.

Councilwoman LeClair stated it is still part of their budget.

Councilman Prendergast advised the squad that it is important to express these things and the reasons for the requested increase. He has heard a couple of times that other departments are getting 4% and so we should too, because of that. That isn't the reason why we give an increase. We look at everyone's budget and we look at the reason for the requested increase and we try to determine if it is needed. He then asked if all the information has been supplied that they asked for. He said they gave the squad a list.

The only thing Supervisor Jenkins could think of that hasn't been received is the billing schedule. We received the 990 tonight.

Councilman Kusnierz asked if the figure proposed for the Moreau Emergency Squad was contingent upon whether or not the Town Board receives documentation on something.

Supervisor Jenkins said we already agreed to that and they are going to give it to us.

Councilman Kusnierz said he would hate to think the board was holding the squad hostage for something they may or may not have provided that has the potential of putting the public at risk from a safety standpoint.

Councilman Prendergast replied that the word "hostage" gets some real good press. All he was doing was asking questions during budget time. It is his responsibility to do it and he will do it and he told the squad that they weren't the only department that he will do it with or has done it with.

Councilman Kusnierz replied that anybody who speaks publicly whether or not they get press is up to the press.

Councilman Prendergast stated that they always pick up on some nice words.

There was a short back and forth conversation between Councilman Prendergast and Councilman Kusnierz that could not be transcribed as the conversations were simultaneous.

Supervisor Jenkins said he didn't have a problem going with \$5,000.00 along with \$3,000.00 for the monthly accounting so we have current financial information. He has concerns looking at their overall financial picture. They have gotten weaker financially over the last couple of years and they need to start working on that and with current financial information they can do that. That means he is on line with Councilman Kusnierz as far as the dollar amount.

Councilman Prendergast said he was on board with it. He didn't want to short the community from the service. He knows a little bit of something about community services, but the message is the same to the squad as it is to everybody else. They look at everybody's budgets and ask some tough questions and he told the squad that they have to come up with the answers. It is a process they will have to go through. They aren't the only department that gets questioned.

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Councilman Cumm said he was alright with the \$5,000.00 and \$3,000.00.

Councilwoman LeClair said she is not. She said it isn't about the quality of service and the dedication. That is unquestionable. She didn't feel they were holding them hostage, they were holding them accountable. Comments she has received from the public are, "do you know how the money is spent", "do you know if the paid and unpaid side of the squad are fiscally conservative, as we all need to be in these times". She doesn't feel they have been given the information they need to answer these questions. She said it has nothing to do with their services. It is difficult to look at any of them and know how much they do and how dedicated they are and do this, but this is how she feels.

Councilwoman LeClair said she would like to revisit the amount of pay they allocated for a working foreman at rec. They allocated 50 cents per hour more for that position over a laborer. This means, that department head would always stay ahead of a laborer by 50 cents per hour in that department and the responsibility is a lot larger. She stated that the person they currently have in that position has saved the Town thousands of dollars, because he has a license to maintain the fields and by not hiring out to do this it has saved the Town \$4,300.00 this year. A \$1.50 per hour increase over a laborer would cost the Town \$3,120.00 and we would still be ahead by \$1,000.00 just on the savings by maintaining the fields. This doesn't take into account the other things he is capable of doing that we have not had personnel be able to do in the past. She proposed a \$1.50 per hour increase for that department head. It is not a raise. It is a switch in responsibilities and it is a different job. It is not the same job with a higher raise. She stated that back in 2005 the foreman made \$17.00 per hour and they were proposing \$13.10 per hour five years later for that same position. She wasn't proposing \$17.00 per hour. She was proposing \$14.10 per hour. Future raises would be at the same rate as the rest of the employees. She stated: "When they had the spraying done in 2009 it cost us \$7,688.00. The cost of the supplies was \$2,316.00. I figured \$1,000.00 for labor and that is double what his hourly rate is or roughly double what his hourly rate is. I figured 40 hours to do the job. In conversations with him today he said it didn't take 40 hours to do the job. He did it over a week's time, several hours a day. It wasn't a 40 hour job, so I have been high on my estimates not low."

Councilman Cumm stated he had no problem with that. He said he is well worth the money and saved us quite a lot.

Councilwoman LeClair said he does the repairs on our water system and does a lot above and beyond a laborer and is willing to take on the responsibilities.

Councilman Kusnierz stated it is his feeling and he has always said that the Town's employees are the greatest asset and with that being said he thinks they could do a better job evaluating the employees and rewarding those who go above and beyond what is expected of them. We don't have a framework for that kind of evaluation in place currently and he would like to see that happen next year. He won't support someone being singled out and given a raise over and above everybody else without that framework in place.

Councilwoman LeClair said she wasn't asking for a pay raise for laborer. She was asking for the pay raise for working foreman.

Councilman Kusnierz said in previous discussions Councilwoman LeClair advocated for a promotion for that individual to that slot, so while it may be a technicality in whether or not she was advocating for a new position or a pay increase for somebody, we should be looking at all of our employees equally.

Councilman Prendergast said it is difficult when you single somebody out. It creates problems with the other employees. This is one issue for him and the other is economics. He said they have to treat everyone as close to equally as they can. Past experience tells him it creates a lot of problems.

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Supervisor Jenkins said he didn't have a problem going to \$14.10 per hour based on the fact that we promoted him to a working foreman position. The information presented shows us he is worth keeping around and otherwise he may go elsewhere.

Councilwoman LeClair said she wasn't looking to give him this rate until he moves into the working foreman position. If we decide to keep him on as a laborer then he will be paid the laborer's rate. If the board decides to move him into the working foreman position then we will start paying him the working foreman rate at that time.

Adele Kurtz asked if they were going to advertise for that position if it is a new position.

Supervisor Jenkins said it isn't a new position it is an employee transfer. They have already asked civil service about this. They said no test is required for that position.

There was discussion between Supervisor Jenkins and Adele Kurtz about this.

Adele Kurtz stated that if the Town is an equal opportunity employer than the Town has to advertise.

Supervisor Jenkins said the Town doesn't have to run an ad for every job in order to be an equal opportunity employer by definition.

Steve VanGuilder asked if the squad was getting a 4% increase and Supervisor Jenkins replied 3.8% or 3.9%.

Steve VanGuilder asked the board if they would be okay with giving them an increase of \$8,746.00 and Councilman Kusnierz said the 4% would equate to \$8,736.00.

Supervisor Jenkins said they were giving them an increase of \$8,000.00.

A member of the squad said it really isn't 4%, because in the \$8,000.00 is money for accounting services.

Supervisor Jenkins said by doing a monthly accounting they will lower their annual audit fee, because they will be doing a good deal of it monthly.

Adele Kurtz said she didn't see anything budgeted for the security position in the rec. park.

Supervisor Jenkins replied that it is really a laborer position and not listed as security.

Adele Kurtz noted that there was \$31,000.00 in the budget for zoning contractual and she said that the re-zoning committee has not met in the last twelve months and that money was put in the budget last year to finish up the project they started two years ago. She asked if it was anticipated that they would pay another \$31,000.00 to that firm.

Supervisor Jenkins said they didn't pay that \$31,000.00 yet. He said there is very little work left to be done. Most of the work left is with the committee and Joe Patricke has been working with our attorney on this. He didn't think the Chazen firm was paid anything this year.

Adele Kurtz asked what the contractual amounts were for in the Zoning and Planning budgets.

Supervisor Jenkins didn't have the answer to her questions available at this hearing, but stated that some of it was for legal expenses and fees paid to the members of the Zoning and Planning Boards.

Councilman Cumm advised that he and Supervisor Jenkins and Joe Patricke attended a class at Suny Albany this date on an Agricultural and Farm Protection Program and he would like the board to establish

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a steering committee on this made up of members from the Town Board, Zoning Board, Planning Board and community members and he would like Councilman Kusnierz to head up that committee.

Supervisor Jenkins said he would get some information to Councilman Kusnierz about this.

Adele Kurtz asked if the \$275,000.00 in the general repairs budget and snow removal budget for highway was for personnel services for the entire highway department.

Supervisor Jenkins replied yes. He said it used to be split three ways and last year they decided to show the payroll on each end. It gives them a better handle in the interim and the highway superintendent knows on a monthly basis where he is at with payroll.

Adele Kurtz asked what the \$80,000.00 in the contractual line item in the assessor's budget was for.

Supervisor Jenkins stated that some of it was for legal fees and the rest for contractual issues.

Huguette Delvaux asked the board if now that they have wrapped things up with the squad if they were going to have the two attorneys go after the "misfit group" for trying to ruin the squad's reputation.

Supervisor Jenkins replied that he didn't know who the "misfits" were, but it wasn't going to be the responsibility of the attorneys to do that and he didn't think there would be much of a case. In his personal opinion it would be difficult to pursue.

Supervisor Jenkins said he looked forward to next year and not having any of the issues that they had this year and the squad can concentrate on what they have to do and the board won't have to spend a lot of time on it. That is their goal and hopefully it will happen.

A motion was made by Councilman Cumm and seconded by Councilwoman LeClair to close the public hearing on the 2011 Preliminary Town Budget at 7:42 p.m.

Roll call vote resulted as follows:

Councilman Cumm	Yes
Councilman Prendergast	Yes
Councilwoman LeClair	Yes
Councilman Kusnierz	Yes
Supervisor Jenkins	Yes

Respectfully submitted,

Jeanne Fleury
Town Clerk