

ATHENS COMMUNITY CENTER ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Minutes of December 4, 2025 meeting

The meeting was called to order at 6:38PM by Co-Chair Tina White. Present were Tina, Sarah Rattet, Sandi Capponcelli and Don Capponcelli, committee members. Also present was Gretchen Havreluk.

*The minutes of the August, September, October and November meetings were not available for review.

***Assistance with Grant Funding** – Gretchen’s services are being made possible through MTAP funding which runs out on December 31, 2025. There were a variety of topics discussed with regard to future grant searches:

- Town ownership of the Community Center building may be an obstacle to Community Center-related grants. Gretchen seems doubtful that a long-term lease would alleviate this obstacle.
- There may be Community Block Grant possibilities for qualifying municipalities. One of the determinates is median household income within the municipality. Athens resident population was 453 in 2023, up from 380 in 2020. Percentage of second family homes is not known by the Committee. Sandi thinks it is around 50%.
- Parts of a grant application should include photos of the building, yearly activities and attendees from surrounding towns.
- 501C-3 nonprofit status is recommended for fundraising. Second homeowner families should be reached-out to. Claims can be made for tax deductions.
- Goals – Goals need renovations. Renovations cost money.
- We need a separate budget for actual needs.
- We need a grant writer to both write and to manage grants.
- The Rural Economic Development Initiative (REDI) helps rural communities access the funding they need for community and business development.
- The Committee is needed to “rally” in its outreach.
- Can we start a capital account and fund it this year?

***Children’s Christmas Shop review** – This event was a big improvement over its first Christmas shop in 2024. There was \$403.00 in proceeds from item sales plus donations. Attendance was way up from a year ago.

- Tina has researched for additional tables. She has found some with a 300-lb rating. She would recommend the purchase of 2 to 4 additional tables. It is thought that with more fold-up tables the heavier non-fold-up tables around the room’s perimeter wouldn’t be moved as often.

***Renovation Update** – The grant-funded work at the Town Garage is running behind the originally-planned schedule. Don has not yet filed a building permit application for the rest room renovations planned for the Community Center. He will keep Tina apprised of schedule updates.

***Weather Emergency Trailer** – The Community Ctr. Committee does not know what the Weather Emergency Committee has decided with regard to the emergency trailer contents.

***Signage** – Signage discussion centered around a bulletin board to be located at the driveway entrance off of Brookline Road.

*The meeting was adjourned at 7:55PM (Sandi Capponcelli moved to adjourn; seconded by Tina White).

Respectfully submitted,

Don Capponcelli