

Athens Select Board Regular Meeting Minutes
Thursday, November 20, 2025
7:00pm at the Athens Town Office

Present: April Lyman, Christian Rogerson, Ellen Mirante, Dennis Mirante, Robbie Sprague, Keith Hermiz, Meg Staloff, Amber Stevens (Town Clerk), Don Capponcelli, Janet Perry (Select Board Member), Krista Gay (Select Board Member), David Hemis (Select Board Member), Denise Randall (Select Board Member), Sandi Capponcelli (Select Board Member)

Meeting called to order at 7:06pm. FACT TV was present and recorded. Krista Gay took minutes.

No adjustments to the agenda.

Minutes for the Prior Meeting

Denise makes motion to accept prior minutes. Sandi seconds. All in favor. Motion passes.

Public Comments

Ellen states that she spoke to someone at Grace Cottage Hospital ("Grace Cottage") about "reduced prices for insurance for our employees." Krista asks why Ellen spoke to someone at Grace Cottage, and asks whether it was a broker or a "random person." Ellen explains that she "picked up a sheet" while she was there about getting financial assistance. Ellen states that she believes that this could help offset the cost of health insurance. David and Denise state that they believe that this individual is to help individuals, not the Town. Ellen also states that she spoke to someone at MVP and Blue Cross and that she found numbers for insurance on the internet. David states we don't have insurance figures for next year, but the Budget Committee will be meeting soon.

Dennis states that on Monday he stopped and looked at the bulletin board and he saw that the hearing was going to be at 6pm, but no one showed up. David explained that there has been a significant turnover with Town Clerks this year, with 3 different individuals serving as Town Clerk in the last year. Amber explains the miscommunication that happened regarding the time.

Keith Hermiz and Robbie Sprague from Grafton Fire & Rescue introduce themselves. Board members thanked them for their department's services to the town, including recent fast response rates. The Fire Department is asking for a \$350 increase, this will be for the ladder truck fund. This was based upon a cost of living percentage increase. The current trucks still pass required tests but are decades old. Keith says the Rescue squad did 45 calls in Athens last year, and about 80 in Grafton. Keith explains that they allocate their budget per capita. For their numbers, they had 645 in Grafton in 380 in Athens. The Rescue squad is asking for a \$250 increase. Keith provides the names of individuals in Athens to volunteer with the Fire & Rescue. He appreciates the fast response rate that these individuals can provide in Athens. David notes that the requested figures will go into the budget. There is discussion regarding that the contract with the Fire & Rescue rolls over from year to year.

Boards & Officials

Meg speaks on behalf of BDCC. She shares about the work that the organization does, including connecting local children and adults to various economic opportunities. There is a full-time position in the local high school that the organization sponsors. They will be asking for the same amount as the previous year. Krista states that she appreciates Rachel and folks from the organization coming to Athens and the events that the organization provides, such as the young professional groups.

Krista reads an email from Sherry regarding the Meetinghouse. They have preliminary approval from PIV Conservation Easement Committee for handicap access plan. They will need to grant final approval once all the scoping is done. Additional components need to be included in the scoping work. The Meetinghouse Committee anticipates needing additional funds from PTB. The funds will need to be matched. If the Committee receives the full \$1,800 in additional funds, the Town would need to cover the remaining \$400 along with the \$350 we have already committed for a total of \$750. The Committee will share the revised details once they are available.

Krista gives an update on the school board, including the state-wide redistricting task force's recommendations. There is still a lot of uncertainty regarding re-districting going forward.

Krista gives an update on the Community Center from Tina. There are a number of rentals in the upcoming months. The Community Center communicated with Tim regarding the trailer. They would like the trailer moved on the other side of the ramp so that there is still place for the ADA parking spot. The building will be shut down for renovations. Dani and Jessica are suggesting that the use of MTAP funds be used on the Community Center to hire an individual to support engagement, collaborate with an architect, and to assist with grants. There is discussion regarding the ADA parking signs. Sandi says that Matt has them.

The Select Board went through their to-do list from the previous meeting, and discussed pending items.

Nothing from the Planning Commission, just waiting on the vote on December 8.

I. Construction at Town Garage

David told Matt that the Town Garage is currently a construction zone, and that people should not be there unless needed. David states that members of the Select Board can be at the Town Garage, however, unauthorized people should not be there. The State Police were called recently for unauthorized people causing a disturbance at the Town Garage. David asks for permission to be able to issue a criminal trespass order for people that trespass.

Sandi makes a motion to allow David to issue a criminal no trespass order and David adds that it would be to bring it to either a special select board or regular select board meeting to address with the entire board. Krista asks for clarification on what would happen: if the road crew would just inform David that someone was at the garage and he would issue the order. Krista states that it makes her uncomfortable "giving one person the ability to do that when I feel like we don't have cameras there and it could be very subjective giving one person the ability." David says they would not be arrested at that point, they would only be given a notice. So if it happened tomorrow, they would be given a notice prior to the meeting in December. So there would be 3 weeks that the person could go on the property. There is discussion regarding the dangers

that individuals could encounter in a construction zone. Krista states that if it's marked as a construction zone, people shouldn't be there.

Dennis interjects from the audience "define poking around." David says "if you see a sign that says construction zone, then keep out." Dennis asks how it would be applied to family members. Dennis asks to know what David's objective is. David responds "the objective is that nobody be down there." Dennis alleges discrimination. Board members respond that this is not discrimination. David reiterates that he never mentioned Dennis or Ellen. Board members highlight the number of things that have occurred, including the State Police being called which did not involve Dennis or Ellen. Sandi says maybe there should just be a sign posted, and that folks should not be there if they are not a Select Board member, a road crew member, or a construction crew. Janet mentions that there is a policy that was passed regarding no unauthorized personnel at the Town Garage. David mentions an inspection that was done by VLTC the Board doesn't want anyone to get hurt.

David says we will put the signs, if people are asked to leave, then we can have a special meeting. Krista says she thinks that is how it should be. David and Dennis make statements back and forth. David reiterates that there have been a number of things that have occurred at the Town Garage, including the State Police being called, for which Dennis and Ellen were not there. David reiterates that the proposed action is to post signs, not to arrest anyone. Krista mentions that her husband had to call the cops for someone poking around their property in the Summer which is near the Town Garage. The Town Garage is on a main road, it can look empty.

No one seconded David's motion.

David amends the motion to make a motion to post no trespassing/construction zone signs, and if anyone believes that there is an issue that warrants a no trespass order, then a special Select Board meeting will be called. Sandi seconds. All in favor. Motion passes.

There is more discussion from the Board members regarding the dangers of having unauthorized personnel at the Town Garage, such as having individuals access the salt or sand piles.

Dennis states "and what if you're curious about what our road workers are doing? Any particular day or time that you don't see any activity and you say, where's my tax dollars going." Krista states that when she worked for the government, folks weren't allowed to go in and watch her. She asks David if people can go in and observe him at the police department, David says no. Denise says people don't go and watch her at school. Amber states that the garage in Grafton is locked 24/7 and that there are cameras.

Dennis brings up that when he was on the Select Board, the road crew was supposed to start at 6am and didn't show up until 6:55am. David states that the State of Vermont told the Select Board that they could not stalk employees. More back and forth between David and Dennis. David tells Dennis he is out of order.

ii. More Checklist Items

Krista says she reached out to Garrett at Vermont-T's. He's supposed to get back to her.

David recommends using Verkada for security systems. He explains system storage and that you can search for specific things in saved video. Krista makes a motion to have the Town Clerk reach out to Verkada for pricing. Sandi seconds. All in favor. Motion passes. Krista instructs Amber to reach out to Verkada for quotes before the next meeting.

The Board goes over more of their to-do list from the previous meeting. A letter is read from the homeowner at the top of Whitney Road. They understand the concerns with the town plowing the road. They ask for their driveway not to be blocked with snow plow banks. Regarding the Hutson Circle/Taylor Hill Agreement, April says to contact Heather Chaudoir.

Amber and the Budget Committee looked at changing to the fiscal year. Amber explains some pros to do this. A list from VLCT was provided. Switching to a fiscal year allows the Town to be on the same schedule as other organizations. There is discussion about how allowing for multiple tax payment days could be beneficial. Perhaps this could help with the delinquent tax list.

Krista makes a motion to go into executive session after making a finding that the town would be at a substantial disadvantage, in order to receive legal advice.

Ellen asks what the disadvantage is. Krista says that it's a substantial disadvantage to disseminate legal advice as it would waive the attorney-client privilege. Ellen claims that the disadvantage would be to "us." Krista explains that they cannot share with the town the privileged legal advice that they have received.

Sandi seconds the motion. All in favor. Motion passes.

Executive session entered at 8:47pm. The Board invites Amber to remain in executive session. Executive session ends at 9:10pm.

Krista makes a motion to have Sandi contact VLCT to obtain legal advice. David seconds. All in favor. Motion passes.

Amber states that the listers sent out 38 viewing letters. They have viewed 1/3 of them and have a handful to schedule to view. They are working on it. For the clerk and technology, Amber has been going through what technology needs to be updated. NIMRC has an animal license module that is helpful for doing dog licenses. Currently it is all by hand. It is \$495. It is unclear if this is for a year. Amber will check to see if this is a one year price. If we could get it in place before January, that would be great. David makes a motion to purchase the NIMRC dog module. Sandi seconds. David says it will be up to Amber on whether she purchases. All in favor. Motion passes.

Sandi says David's signature is needed for a box culvert for Hammond Engineering. Sandi makes a motion that David signs it. Denise seconds. All in favor. Motion passes.

Krista reads the motions that were adopted at the November 10, 2025 Select Board meeting. This includes:
1) Don entering into a contract with Engineering Motions. Krista makes a motion to have this motion

sustained. David seconds. All in favor. Motion passes. 2) David made a motion to hire an electrician not to have supplies and labor exceed \$10,000. David makes a motion to sustain the vote. Sandi seconds. All in favor. Motion passes. 3) David made a motion to go with Northern Tool option for generator. Krista makes a motion to sustain this vote. David seconds. All in favor. Motion passes.

Little Free Pantry

Krista shares that she and her husband put a Little Free Food Pantry at the end of their driveway and it has been successful. The problem is that with snow coming, where it is now will be in a giant snowbank. She shares that the one in Saxtons River which is a physical raised box has been successful, and she wants to find someone that would be willing to build a structure. She is not asking the Town to pay for it. She is not asking for any financial commitment. She just wants to be able to put something on Town property where it is snow plowed. There is discussion on where to put it, including next to the Town Office or at the lower part of the driveway at the Community Center. Christian says the location of where it is nice. Krista asks if they could put something next to the dirt pit or the bulletin board. David said it could go next to the small sandpile near the mailboxes. Krista reiterates she is not looking for money. Sandi said that Krista and Christian should take a walk to see where we think would be the best spot. David said to talk to Matt and see if the location would be good with the snow plow. Krista states she has to reach out to a construction company. Sandi and David discuss building a small structure next to the sand pit. Krista said this is great because it's near their house so it would be easy to maintain. Krista says she will talk to construction folks and report back to the Board and will check with Matt. Sandi says if Matt gives any problems, to send him to her. Christian asks if we need to bring this to the Select Board. Sandi says to email them to let them know.

Garage Project Update

Don shares financials for the project: The total budget for MERP was \$306,228. So far, has only spent \$113,257. So the project is approximately \$31,000 under budget.

There were ARPA funds that went to the general ledger. Of that, \$119,729 is budget for the garage. So far has spent \$66,500 and is about \$9,200 under budget. That's even with the added expenditure of \$8,300 on the additional parlance to the roof that wasn't budgeted. There are also other pots of money available including a \$375,000 Merck grant, and \$24,000 in reserve funds. Don is working with Amber regarding getting reimbursed for various grants. Discussion regarding the building of the garage. Don has reached out to Mike McConnell regarding the building. Discussion what is permissible under the Merck grant. Discussion regarding maintaining heat and heat loss in the building and insulation methods.

Don is working to get appropriate permits for the Community Center. He is hoping to get a plumbing contractor to the site. Janet asks if Don will be able to get the garage project done before starting on the Community Center. Don explains that these projects will go on simultaneously. Merck wants all funds committed by March 2026. We have until 12-31-2026 to expend.

Discussion regarding oil tank. If we are unable to get the oil in there in a timely manner, we can look into contracting with Dead River. Plumbing still needs to be done. If current contractor cannot meet the deadlines, they should let us know so that we can find someone else. There is no contract. They were just the bid winners. Don discusses progress that has been made so far, including electrical work.

Warrants and Mail

There is a letter from Windham Hill Pinnacle Association for us to sign on to the purchase of Peter and Susan Sheehan parcel to be added to the Athens Dome property. Sandi makes a motion that we sign the document saying that the Town of Athens supports the Windham Hill Pinnacle Association project to acquire the former lands of Susan and Peter Sheehan off Walker Rd, for 130 acres. Denise seconds. All in favor. Motion passes.

David makes motion to have Sandi contact to VTRANS to reference grant #CA0763 and give her the authority to sign. Denise seconds. All in favor. Motion passes.

Denise says that the road crew is on 4 days per week. There were some things that came up in private lives and so there were some absences. Sandi says they are back to a 5-day work week. Need to question when they are going back to 5 days per week.

Ellen asks questions regarding the petition that she submitted. David states that the Board is talking with their attorney. There was a motion earlier in the night to have Sandi contact VLCT. Ellen claims that she was told that the Board must provide language for it to be accepted. David states that the Board is speaking with their attorney.

Denise makes the motion to adjourn. Sandi seconded. All in favor.

Adjourned at 10:01 pm

To do:

Amber

- Post meeting minutes on website
- Obtain quotes for Verkada cameras
- Speak with NIMRC regarding dog license software

Sandi

- Contact attorney regarding legal matter
- Contract Vtrans regarding grant CA0763
- Send letter to Witney Hill property owner
- Contact Heather re: Butson Circle/Taylor Hill Agreement

Krista

- Find construction contractor for Little Free Pantry building and coordinate with Matt

David

- Add employment policies to next meeting agenda

Road crew

- Work with Community Center re: ADA parking spot

- Post construction zone signs at town garage

Charles J. Leigus
175 R. Tuttle Rd
Durham, CT 06422
(860) 638-9689
cleigus@msn.com

Selectboard – Athens, VT
25 Brookline Rd
Athens, VT 05143

July 25, 2025

RE: 39 Whitney Rd.
Athens, VT

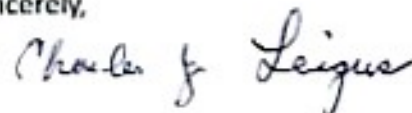
Dear members of the Selectboard,

I am writing in regard to the maintenance of Whitney Road that services my property and residence located at 39 Whitney Road. The Town of Athens (the "Town") has recently performed a substantial improvement to the road surface and drainage along the road. I am very appreciative of this work completed and commend the crews on a job well done. I believe the recent work will provide adequate access/egress for emergency vehicles and Town highway maintenance assets, which may not have been the case formerly.

For a number of years, Henry Woodbury maintained the roadway as open in the winter months. As of late, Benjamin Picz, of 1 Whitney Rd., has been maintaining the roadway between his residence and mine during the winter months, by plowing, at his own expense. I feel it is imperative that the roadway be maintained as open and serviceable at all times of the year, including plowing, particularly in case of an emergency or for any other needs to access the property.

Please let this correspondence serve as a formal request to have the Town assume the responsibility to maintain the road as open by plowing during the winter months. I would greatly appreciate any consideration that the Selectboard would give to this request.

Sincerely,



Charles J. Leigus

Town of Athens, VT

25 Brookline Rd.
Athens, VT 05143
802-869-3370

November 7, 2025

Charles J. Leigus
175 R. Tuttle Rd.
Durham, CT 06422

Dear Mr. Leigus,

I apologize for the lateness in response to your letter requesting the town to plow your road.

The Selectboard acting as Road Commissioners and under the advisement of Matt Perry, Road Foreman and the Agency of Transportation (AOT) have decided as a class 3 road the town is not under any obligation to plow Whitney Hill pursuant to State Statute VSA 19 302 (<https://legislature.vermont.gov/statutes/section/19/003/00302>): (B) The minimum standards for class 3 highways are a highway negotiable under normal conditions all seasons of the year by a standard manufactured pleasure car. This would include sufficient surface and base, adequate drainage, and sufficient width capable to provide winter maintenance, except that based on safety considerations for the traveling public and municipal employees, the selectboard shall, by rule adopted under 24 V.S.A. chapter 59, and after following the process for providing notice and hearing in section 709 of this title, have authority to determine whether a class 3 highway, or section of highway, should be plowed and made negotiable during the winter. However, a property owner aggrieved by a decision of the selectboard may appeal to the Transportation Board pursuant to subdivision 5(d)(9) of this title.

Our Road Foreman does not believe that the road is currently in a condition that would support the safe use of town equipment on it.

Sincerely,

Sandi Capponcelli
Selectboard Vice Chair.

November 13, 2025

Town of Athens, Vt

25 Brookline Rd

Athens, Vt 05143

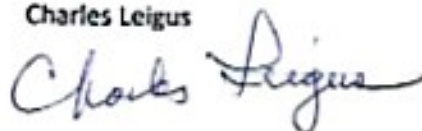
Atten: Sandi Capponcelli

Dear Select Board,

Thank you for your response regarding the requested snow plowing of Whitney Road. I understand the reasons concerning the feasibility of not plowing, however there has been times in the past when my entrance has been blocked with snow from previous plowing. If that could be avoided it would be greatly appreciated.

Best Regards,

Charles Leigus



Town of Athens, VT

25 Brookline Rd.
Athens, VT 05143
802-869-3370

November 20, 2025

Charles J. Leigus
175 R. Tuttle Rd.
Durham, CT 06422

Dear Mr. Leigus,

I just received your letter this morning. I want to thank you for being understanding in this situation.

We have a selectboard meeting this evening and I will make sure the record shows your response and I will also make it a part of the record that the Selectboard, acting in our capacity as the Road Commissioners, will direct the Road Foreman and crew that there be no snow piles that would inhibit a private person and/or company from plowing the road from Picz's property up to your house/property.

Thank you,

Sandi Capponcelli