

Athens Selectboard Meeting Minutes  
March 21, 2024  
7:00pm at the Athens Community Center

In attendance: David Bemis, Sandi Capponcelli, Janet Perry, Krista Gay, Denise Randall, Mike McConnell (WRC), Hannah Regier, David LaPosta, FACT TV (Cody), Caleb Lemieux, Don Capponcelli, April Lyman

**Called to order at 7:02**

**Board Organization**

*Janet nominates David Bemis to be chair. Denise seconds. No more nominations. Put to a vote: four in favor. David abstains.*

*Janet nominates Sandi Capponcelli to be vice chair. Krista seconds. Put to a vote: four in favor: Sandi abstains.*

**Adjustments to Agenda**

None

**Minutes of Prior Meeting**

*David makes a motion to accept the minutes. Kristas seconds. Put to a vote: all in favor.*

*Janet makes a motion to accept the minutes from Town Meeting. Denise seconds. Put to a vote: all in favor.*

**Public Comments**

Hannah brings up the hedge on the property that used to be the Smiths'. She says that she has been helping the new owners with a few things like cleaning out the house. Matt has said that he wants to cut down the Hemlock hedge along the road and that it is his right to do so because it is in the town right of way. Hannah has asked him to not cut the hedge and hopes that if the town wants to cut down a defining feature on private property that they would reach out to the landowner and come to an agreeable solution before simply exercising a right to cut down a 50 foot long, 50-year-old hedge. David says that it would be reasonable for the town to contact the landowner. He says that if a tree is leaning out in the road and causing problems, the town could cut it, but if trees in the right of way aren't causing problems and the property owner doesn't want them cut, the town shouldn't just cut them. Krista asked if the landowner didn't want the hedge cut. Hannah says she can't speak for the landowner, she just wants to make sure the town discusses it with the landowner before removing a defining feature of their property.

**MTAP Agreements**

Mike McConnell says that one of the agreements is for the town plan. The \$9,250 grant is for WRC's time to work on the town plan update and ensure it complies with state standards.

*David makes a motion to sign the agreement for Municipal Planning Services agreement. Janet seconds. Put to a vote: all in favor.*

Krista says that Sherry reached out to her to ask if there was any availability in the MTAP program to help with the planning to make the Meetinghouse handicapped accessible. There might be matching funds available through the Vermont Preservation Trust if the town can get planning assistance through MTAP. Mike says that it's worth a shot to ask the state about it. This would be a separate application to the state from the two grants already applied for.

*Denise makes the motion to sign the agreement for \$43,495 for the Community Center Scoping work. Sandi seconded. Put to a vote: all in favor.*

### **Boards and Officials**

Sandi says she spoke with Bartlett Holmes and they figured out where the driveway location is for the permit.

Janet says the Planning Commission is still going through the plan page by page. They hope to have it wrapped up by the end of December. With the grant they just got from MTAP, Windham Regional will be also looking at the plan and putting in their suggestions and redoing the maps.

Krista says they still need someone on the Schoolboard. The elementary and high school budgets did pass.

There will be an easter egg hunt with the Easter Bunny on the 30<sup>th</sup> from 1-3. There will be a potluck also.

### **Treasurer Report**

The budget has been updated with everything voted on at Town Meeting.

There is a meeting with Maggie Foley next Wednesday at 1:00 to work on next steps for the town garage project and understand what there is funding for. Sandi, Janet, Don and Hannah will be at that meeting.

There will be a kickoff with Jon Saccoccio for the scoping work for the Community Center on April 3<sup>rd</sup> at 10:00am. Sandi and Don are invited to that.

The Disability and Life Insurance quotes from VLCT come to \$1620/year total for three employees, below what was budgeted for it. \$50,000 life insurance. Long Term Disability had two plan options, B and C. Plan B has a 90-day elimination period; Plan C has a 180-day elimination period. Short Term Disability is a \$500 maximum benefit.

*Krista makes a motion to accept the quote for the policies with Plan B. Sandi seconds. Put to a vote: four in favor. Janet abstains.*

Hannah says there have been issues with the fire alarm in the Community Center. The power supply controller board is broken, which affects the ability of the panel to work in a power outage. The part HB ordered for \$477 wasn't compatible with the vintage system, so they are looking into if the system needs a new mother board as well. For now, it's on, but isn't up to proper standards.

Hannah has been talking with the state liquor control board so the town can get set up to issue licenses. She's trying to get them to remove the town from the "do not ship" list for wine clubs.

*David makes a motion to order a porta potty for the town garage. Sandi seconds. Put to a vote: all in favor.*

Don Capponcelli / Cemetery Commission: They are looking at the rollover of their CD and options for reinvesting it. Hannah asks Don to get James Neathawk to come to the town office and sign his oath of office.

Caleb Lemieux says he will accept the constable position.

### **ARPA Allocation Resolution**

David reads a resolution authorizing the town to use the remaining of their allocation to fund government services in the recovery phase of the Covid-19 pandemic, specifically using the remaining \$125,064.65 for municipal workforce retention.

*Sandi makes a motion to pass the resolution. Denise seconds. Put to a vote: all in favor.*

Don Capponcelli asks what just happened. Hannah says she would like to know as well. David explains that the resolution was recommended by VLCT so that the ARPA funds will be reported once as being transferred to the general fund and won't need continued reporting to the feds. If the town didn't do that, they could have potentially lost the money. Janet says they will now help pay for payroll. Hannah asks how the board would like her to handle the funds. The board wants the funds to go into the general fund. They will show up as revenue, but not offset taxes. Hannah says there will be a large surplus at the end of the year. Janet says that VLCT has some explanation of what to do with the surplus.

### **Solid Waste Collection**

David asks if the town wants to award a no-bid contract after May with the current contractor or put the service out to bid.

Krista says that if there's a chance to save money they should. Denise expresses concern that in the past the town has had issues with other businesses not following through with what they promise. David says they can put it out to bid and then judge responses by the criteria needed.

David asks Hannah to put it out to bid for the April meeting. The board will forward any names to Hannah to share the bid request with. Decamp will be asked to bid as well as they have been very accommodating and reliable.

*David makes a motion to put out a request for bids in the paper and on the website and contact area companies and the company that is currently serving the town, and have the bids by the April selectboard meeting. Denise seconds. Put to a vote: all in favor.*

### **Appointments / Annual Requirements**

*David makes a motion to appoint Don Capponcelli, Robert Anderson and Adrian Tenney to be Fence Viewers. Sandi seconds. Put to a vote: four in favor, Sandi recuses.*

*Housing Rehabilitation Committee appointments:*

*David makes a motion to appoint Hannah Regier. Sandi seconds. All in favor.*

*Sandi makes a motion to appoint David Bemis. Denise seconds. Four in favor, David abstains.*

*David makes a motion to appoint Denise. Janet seconds. Four in favor, Denise abstains.*

*David makes a motion to appoint Janet Perry. Sandi seconds. Four in favor, Janet abstains.*

*David makes a motion to appoint Krista Gay. Denise seconds. Four in favor, Krista abstains.*

*David makes a motion to appoint Sandi Capponcelli. Denise seconds. Four in favor, Denise abstains.*

*David makes a motion to appoint Carol Bingham. Four in favor, Janet abstains*

*David makes a motion to appoint Janet Perry to the Planning Commission for a three-year term. Sandi seconds. Put to a vote: four in favor, Janet abstains*

*David makes a motion to appoint Don Capponcelli to be surveyor of Wood and Coal. Denise seconds. Four in favor, Sandi abstains.*

No one has expressed interest in the Health Officer position. It will remain vacant for now.

*David makes a motion to appoint Jay Maciejowski to Tree Warden. Janet seconds. All in favor.*

*David makes a motion to appoint Lynn Morgan to service officer. Sandi seconds. All in favor.*

*David makes a motion to appoint Andy Toepfer and Robert Anderson to be Windham Regional representatives. Denise seconds. All in favor.*

*Sandi makes a motion to appoint David Bemis as Emergency Management Director. Denise seconds. Four in favor, David abstains.*

*David makes a motion to appoint Janet Perry & Amber Stevens to the Budget committee. Denise seconds. Four in favor, Janet abstains.*

*Denise Randal nominates David Bemis to the SWWSWMD. Sandi seconds. Four in favor, David abstains.*

*David makes a motion to appoint Denise Randal as the alternate to the SWWSWMD. Four in favor, Denise abstains.*

Hannah says the board must recommend some names to the governor for appointment of the vacant Justice of the Peace position.

*David makes a motion to put April Lyman's name on the list to send to the governor. Sandi seconds. Four in favor, Krista abstains.*

*David makes a motion to choose the Brattleboro Reformer as the town's paper of record. Krista seconds. Put to a vote: all in favor.*

Krista asks what the Surveyor of Wood and Coal does. David explains that it's to inspect purchased wood or coal in case someone thinks it isn't the full quantity.

*Sandi makes a motion to sign the Certificate of Compliance for Roads and Bridges. Denise seconds. Put to a vote: all in favor.*

David says there is a meeting with the emergency committee on Monday where they will bring up the Local Emergency Management Plan and then take that up as a vote at the April board meeting.

The board discusses the proposed legislation regarding requiring meetings to be hybrid – in person, with a virtual option. David says the legislation has slowed down.

Hannah will work with VLCT to get the Disability and Life Insurance plans in place as soon as possible.

### **Warrants and Mail**

The warrant was signed and mail opened.

David brings up the state's flood buyout program for properties. No one on the board has heard of anyone expressing interest in it.

David asks about the quotes for solar on the Community Center. Don says that Mike McConnell had reached out asking for top priority projects for climate emissions reduction projects. He said that MERP would hopefully take care of the worst weatherization issues with the garage, so he thought a solar project for the community center would be the next best payback. The size of 20kw would cover the needs of all the town buildings. Don got quotes quickly and submitted them to Mike. Mike is now not sure the grant program will happen as quickly as he first understood, but Don thinks the quotes were still worth getting. Don talks a bit about the state of the roof on the community center.

*David makes a motion to sign the MRGP permit for the town. Sandi seconds. Put to a vote: all in favor.*

There is a \$500 fee that needs to be paid with the permit. David wants someone to check if the implementation table is up to date in the portal before checking that box on the form. Sandi is doing that and will drop the form back at the town office.

*David makes a motion to sign weight permits for Bazin Brothers, Amerigas, Dead River, Consolidated Communications, and Bacon Sales and Acquisitions. Krista seconds. Put to a vote: all in favor.*

Hannah will print out the WRC appointment forms and David will come to the office and sign them.

Hannah suggests putting in applications for Senator Sanders' CDS grant again this year, for both the Community Center and the Garage. The board thinks that's a good idea.

### **Further Business**

Sandi says she spoke with Matt to keep her informed whenever a vehicle goes into Valley Auto. *Sandi makes a motion for the board to authorize Hannah to pay bills to Valley Auto the week it comes in without waiting for a board meeting. At Hannah's discretion, she will check with the board if the bill seems higher than she is comfortable paying without approval. Krista seconds. Put to a vote: all in favor.*

Sandi says that Matt came to her saying that the Tractor Supply card was declined. Hannah says that Matt should come to her if there's an issue and she will try to sort it out. Tractor Supply did have an issue with not posting a payment to the town's account, which has been fixed now.

*David makes a motion to adjourn. Sandi seconds. All in favor.  
Adjourned at 8:11*

Respectfully submitted,  
Hannah Regier, Town Clerk

**RESOLUTION**  
**RESOLUTION FOR AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT (ARPA)**  
**ALLOCATION**

**WHEREAS**, on March 11, 2021, the President of the United States signed into law the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) to provide continued relief from the public health and economic impacts of the COVID-19 public health emergency; and

**WHEREAS**, ARPA created the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund (SLFRF) that provided direct funding to state, local, and Tribal governments across the country to support their response to and recovery from the COVID-19 public health emergency; and

**WHEREAS**, the Town of Athens has accepted an allocation of SLFRF in the amount of \$131,211.85; and

**WHEREAS**, SLFRF provides needed fiscal relief for recipients that have experienced revenue loss due to the onset of the COVID-19 public health emergency; and

**WHEREAS**, Treasury presumes that up to \$10 million in revenue has been lost due to the public health emergency and recipients are permitted to use that amount (not to exceed the award amount) to fund “government services.”; and

**WHEREAS**, Recipients may elect a “standard allowance” of \$10 million to spend on government services through the period of performance; and

**WHEREAS**, All recipients may elect to use this standard allowance instead of calculating lost revenue using the formula provided by the U.S. Department of the Treasury, including those with total allocations of \$10 million or less; and

**WHEREAS**, the Town of Athens has the need to fund government services while in the recovery phase of the COVID-19 pandemic.

**NOW, THEREFORE IT BE RESOLVED**, the Selectboard of the Town of Athens, Vermont, authorize the following:

**Section 1.** The following allocation of SLFRF funding to fund government services under the replacing lost public sector revenue spending category as follows:

Obligate and expend SLFRF funds in the amount of \$125,064.65 for the purpose of municipal workforce retention.

Passed and Adopted by the Selectboard of the Town of Athens, Vermont on the 24 day of MARCH, 2024.

ATTEST:

Don Quinn

James R Perry

John D Day

Levin R Allen

A Capponcelli