

Athens Selectboard Meeting Minutes
March 17, 2022
Athens Elementary School Building

In attendance: David Bemis, Janet Perry, Denise Randall, Darlene Wyman, Hannah Regier, Harold Noyes, Charles Chase, Sandi Capponcelli, Donald Capponcelli, Dennis Mirante, Lynn Morgan, Ivor Stevens, Amber Stevens, Bruce Tenney Jr., April Lyman, Donna Currier, Wichie Artu, Krista Gay, Sherry Maher, Tim Stevenson, Zachariah Wicker

1. Called to order at 7:03

Denise makes a motion to not require masks. David seconds. Put to a vote: 3 yes, 0 no.

2. Two appointments to the Athens Selectboard / Selectboard Organization

Vermont Secretary of State office and VLCT both counsel towns to warn a special town meeting for the election of new selectboard members.

Denise made a motion to hold a special election for the two open selectboard positions on Tuesday, April 26th and hold the balloting at the former Elementary School Building from 10:00am - 7:00pm. Janet seconded. Put to a vote: 3 yes, 0 no.

The Town Clerk will check on when ballots need to be available. Candidate consent forms and petitions should be returned to the Town Clerk asap. The state requirement to gather signatures on a candidate petition is still waived.

David suggests to hold off on organizing the board until the additional members have been elected.

3. Adjustments to the Agenda

Janet asked to discuss a personnel matter in executive session.

New petition presented just before the meeting:

“We the voters of Athens, VT petition the select board to have a special town meeting to vote on decreasing the select board from five to three select board members.”

The petition was presented within 30 days of town meeting, which is within the timing to reconsider a vote. It has enough signatures to call the special meeting.

The selectboard will seek guidance on how to proceed with revoting on the selectboard size.

Denise made the motion to have a special town meeting at 6:00 on April 26th, the same day as the election for new selectboard members. Janet seconded. Put to a vote: 3 yes, 0 no.

4. Minutes of Prior Meeting

David made the motion to accept the minutes of prior meeting. Denise seconded. Put to a vote: 3 yes, 0 no.

5. Public Comments

Wichie: Wants to know if there is something that can be done to help people who get stuck in the mud and can't get home. Selectboard response: It's possible the town truck can help get someone home in an emergency if they can make contact. Another suggestion: the emergency committee can recruit volunteers with vehicles who can make it through. Lynn said that knocking on the nearest door and asking to make a phone call still works. Sherry reminded everyone that there is a public wifi hotspot at the town office that people can connect to and call or email to get help.

Dennis: Brought up the issue at town meeting about the \$15,000 outstanding loan from the housing rehab committee to the meetinghouse committee. He wants the selectboard to find a way to forgive the loan so the meetinghouse can get on with renovating the building. Suggested the town repurpose money left in the Town Office Renovation fund. He also brought up the now town-owned elementary school building and asked how the town is going to handle four big renovation projects on town buildings. David responded that the selectboard can't make the decision on forgiving the loan; it is up to the Housing Rehabilitation Fund members. Various committees are looking into grants for the different projects. The money that is in the Town Office Renovation fund can't be used otherwise unless the town votes on it.

Sherry: Said she has been reading about ARPA funds coming to towns. She wants to know what Athens is getting and what the plans are. David said that there will be a community discussion on how the money is spent. The town will be getting ~\$130,000. We have gotten half already. Sherry suggested that \$15,000 from ARPA could be used to repay the HR loan to the

Krista: Remindsed that all the decisions made by the selectboard need to be unanimous now that it is a 5 person board with only three people sitting.

Donna: Said there is too much salt in the sand that's available to the public. Also people are lifting the gate and going in to put stuff on the burn pile. Dennis M says there are electronic padlocks that can help for multiple people using them. They are expensive.

6. Boards and Officials

Lynn: School has had organizational meeting for the school board. Lynn and Krista are representing Athens on the board. They are still working on how the board will be organized when Westminster officially splits off.

Sandi: The grant the CCAC is applying for via VLCT PACIF for the elementary school building, is in jeopardy because the town garage had 18 items that needed to be corrected when it was inspected two years ago and only 4 have been addressed. David says Wade Masure the inspector, should come back out and reinspect the garage with Matt sometime. Sandi suggested more work be done to comply so that other safety-related grants will be successful.

Don, Cemeteries: The Cemetery Committee is postponing their April meeting to later in the month.

Don, CCAC: At one of the past selectboard meetings they got approval to move ahead with fire alarm inspection. He knows there will be batteries and a horned strobe light that need replacing. It will be a pricey inspection because of all the elements. David says to go ahead and get the batteries.

Don presented three quotes on the installation of exit signs and emergency lighting:

Sparky Electric LLC of Chester, Vt. gave a conservative high-end estimate of \$3,818.00, which included the high-end Hubbell signs that Don requested.

ZW Handyman Services LLC (Zech Wicker) of Athens, Vt. gave a conservative high-end estimate of \$3,090.00, using Lithonia figures instead of Hubbell.

HB Energy Solutions of Springfield, Vt. gave a firm bid of \$2,760.00, using Lithonia fixtures. HB can also do the work sooner.

Denise made a motion to accept the HB bid. Seconded: Janet. Put to a vote: 3 yes, 0 no. Treasurer will cut a check for HB on Monday.

Tim, Emergency Committee: Had meeting Feb 18th. Thanked the members of the emergency committee. Three stores in the area have signed MOUs to provide food in an emergency. On April 6th, Lynn and Tim will attend a workshop by the red cross on emergency shelters. On April 30th the committee will have a meeting to go over practices and procedures. That will be in the Town Office and Community Church. Wichie is in charge of picking up the trailer when it's needed. Sherry asked that if anything changes with the gate at the town garage that a new key be given to the Emergency Committee. The Emergency committee will meet in May to get their heat emergency protocol together. Discussion followed about a grant available for elderly services — possibly they can collaborate with Grafton Cares on it or get help from Gary Fox. David also suggested a mini-split for the town office could act as a cooling location, and could also save money on town's heating costs.

Hannah: Thanked Don for installing the mailbox at the town office. The new town mailing address is 25 Brookline Road. Update on IT installation: The new network equipment has been installed and there is a new wifi password for office staff as well as a guest wifi without a password. Sherry asked if there can be a printer for committees to use. Hannah can check with All Access about it. The town could possibly get a cheap printer for committees to use.

Sherry, Meetinghouse Committee: Had a deadline for bids and will review three bids on Monday. The bid the Committee wants to go with has to go through preservation trust and historical preservation, so it may be a while to get it confirmed. Planning on having the plant sale again this spring on May 28th. Also want to do the quilt show and craft fair later in the

summer, as well as possible concerts. They are looking to cosponsor some events with Brookline Meetinghouse.

7. Annual Appointments / Annual notices / LEMP

Fence Viewers:

David made a motion to renominate Don Capponcelli, Robert Anderson and Adrian Tenney. Denise seconded. Put to a vote: 3 yes, 0 no.

Housing Grant Committee:

David nominated Hannah Regier for treasurer. Denise seconded. Put to a vote: 3 yes, 0 no.

Planning Commission:

David nominated Tim Stevenson. Denise seconded. Put to a vote: 3 yes, 0 no.

Surveyor of Wood and Coal:

Denise nominated Don Capponcelli, David seconded. Put to a vote: 3 yes, 0 no.

Tree Warden:

David nominated Robert Anderson, Denise seconded. Put to a vote: 3 yes, 0 no.

Town Service Officer:

David nominated Lynn Morgan, Denise seconded, Put to a vote: 3 yes, 0 no.

Representatives to Windham Regional Commission:

David nominated Andy Toepfer and Bob Anderson. Denise seconded. Put to a vote: 3 yes, 0 no.

Emergency Management Director:

Denise nominated David Bemis, Janet seconded, Put to a vote: 3 yes, 0 no.

Budget Committee:

David nominated Hannah Regier, Denise seconded, Put to a vote: 3 yes, 0 no.

SWWC Solid Waste Management District Representative:

Janet nominated David Bemis as the representative and Denise Randall as the alternate, Denise seconded. Put to a vote: 3 yes, 0 no.

David made a motion that regular selectboard meetings be held the third Thursday of each month at 7pm. Denise seconded. Put to a vote: 3 yes, 0 no.

David made a motion that the Brattleboro Reformer be the paper of record for the town. Denise seconded. Put to a vote: 3 yes, 0 no.

Sherry asked that the Meeting Box at the Reformer be used for meetings and events. David said that can be done

LEMP - Local Emergency Management Plan

Reviewed updated document.

Denise made the motion to accept the document and have David sign it. They will add the Athenian to the document as a web or social media channel. Janet seconded. Put to a vote: 3 yes, 0 no.

8. Warrants and Mail

Mail was opened and warrants signed.

David made a motion to sign the weight permits for Bazin Brothers and Ivor Stevens. Janet seconded. Put to a vote: 3 yes, 0 no.

The permits were signed.

10. Roads

David updated that the roads are being spread with stone and gravel. The over the rail mower will cost an extra \$1000 to get it down here this year. Discussion followed on other options for mowing.

9. Executive Session

David made a motion to enter executive session at 8:55pm, where premature public knowledge would clearly place the town of Athens a substantial disadvantage. Hannah, Darlene and Sandi were welcomed to stay. Denise seconded. 3 yes, 0 no.

David made a motion to leave executive session at 9:09pm. Denise seconded. 3 yes, 0 no

No decisions were made in executive session.

11. Further Business

Janet commented that it has come to her attention that adults have been involving high school kids in town issues recently. She doesn't think that kids should be penalized for things that are going on in the town. The incident involved an adult texting a kid in school about the road conditions in Athens. Receiving the text got the kid in trouble at school.

April asked if it's true that no one else is supposed to ride in town equipment. David said it's not a specific policy, but it's discouraged under normal circumstances.

David made a motion to adjourn at 9:19. Denise seconded. Put to a vote: 3 yes, 0 no.

Respectfully submitted,
Hannah Regier, Town Clerk