

Athens Special Selectboard Meeting Minutes
May 9, 2023
7:00pm at the Athens Town Office

In attendance: Sandi Capponcelli, Hannah Regier, Janet Perry, Harold Noyes, David Bemis, Denise Randall, Amber Stevens, Dennis Mirante, Carol Bingham

Called to order at 7:00

Adjustments to Agenda

None

Public Comments

None

Meet with Budget Committee

The amount the budget needs to be reduced now is \$23,947.59. The board will cut \$24,000.

David asks for suggestions

- Janet says the selectboard salaries can be lowered by \$500 this year as she does not want to be paid.
- Janet suggests the new computer could wait until next year, saving \$1,300. Denise says to wait on cutting it for now.
- Sandi says to look at trash situation again. Decamp could reduce pickups to twice a month and lower their cost \$10,000 for the new 12 month contract. This would save ~\$5,000 for the rest of this calendar year.
- David suggests shutting down the community center heat from November until March. Sandi says this would make it hard to do fundraisers and community events. Janet suggests reducing the electricity budget by \$300, oil by \$500 and maintenance by \$2,000.
- Janet says they could cut the heating oil for highway garage to \$6,500
- David suggests the garage trash removal budget could be lowered to \$400 if the town truck was used instead of the dumpsters.
- Janet suggests the highway training could be lowered to \$250. This is not done.
- Janet suggests taking \$2000 out of sand

Hannah brings up that Mike Bates was correct about there being a deficit last year and that the selectboard should technically be assessing an extra 5% tax this year to cover last year's overspending.

- Janet suggests cutting the grant matching fund by \$5,000

The board discusses how the community center could save the revenue it generates.

So far the cuts equal \$17,550

David suggests either cutting trash completely or reducing the paving fund by the remaining \$6,450 that needs to be cut

The board discusses raising the price of trash bags to either \$4 or \$5. David says there have to be some consequences to the town for voting the budget down. Sandi says people are not going to be receptive to having trash service cut in half and the bag cost going up. Harold suggests cutting the trash completely and having an article in March to put it back in. Denise says it is likely that no trash contractor would want to work with the town if we stop the service now. Sandi suggests taking the money out of the paving fund and have an article in March about the trash.

The board decides to lower the paving fund to \$53,550.

David also wants to raise the trash bag cost by \$.50 to \$4.00.

David makes a motion to make the above budget cuts. Denise seconds. Put to a vote: all in favor

David makes a motion to raise the price of trash bags to \$4.00 starting today. Denise seconds. Put to a vote: 1 in favor, 4 against.

Further Business

Amber says there needs to be a town reappraisal. The CLA is currently 87.4. The contractors who do the appraisal are already booking into the 2025 season. Any assessments that are done now are based on the assessment rates that were set in 2009, which puts the town behind dramatically. The reappraisal fund will have \$25,000 in it by 2025 which should cover the cost of the reappraisal company. Amber says NEMRC is the one that is being recommended to do the reappraisal. David says it would need to be on the agenda for the board to vote on it. David asks where the legislature is at with having the state taking over the process. It is still in flux, but it seems like the state will mandate that towns do reappraisals every 6 years. Denise and Sandi say that the Listers need to get on the schedule of the contractors now. The discussion and vote will happen at the next selectboard meeting.

Sandi asks if it is possible to get a key for the Community Center for Josh Ferenc who wants to start using the building next week. Hannah says he can come in and sign a key out. Sandi will bring him the key.

Hannah says she called a board of abatement meeting at 6:30 next Thursday.

Harold makes a motion to adjourn. Denise seconds. All in favor.

Adjourned at 8:26

Respectfully submitted,
Hannah Regier, Town Clerk