Special Select Board Meeting
September 8, 2026
7pm
Athens Town Office

Present: Danny Taylor (Select Board Member), Denise Randall (Select Board Member), David Bemis (Select Board Member), Krista Gay (Select Board Member), Janet Perry (Select Board Member), Ike Leslie, Charles Peoples (on the phone)

Call to order 7:04pm

Adjustments to the Agenda
None

Public Comments
None

Village Trust Initiative Proposal
Charles: the proposal is to begin the process of renovating the barn at 125 Brookline Road and to develop a long-term relationship with the Town and Vermont Preservation Trust. He understands that the town applied for the trust a few years ago. The letter is saying that we have the town's support.

David says he's not sure if we applied for a grant a few years ago, may have been a different committee in town.

David asked what they plan to do with the barn. David says it's to be a community center where we will have different work shops and different community gatherings, an event space.

David asks if they get it, if it would prevent the town from participating in the grant in the future. Charles said this is the last cycle of this process, so that won't happen again. So this won't affect the other groups in town.

Denise asked if it would be in competition with the community center. Charles said that the programming that he's thinking of is working with neurodivergent folks.

Ike said a big difference is the type requires long-term set up. Krista said that Charles had been in contact with the community center committee. Krista echoed that the community center committee may not be the best place for long term set up because there are shorter rental thers.

Danny asked if the Select Board is required to sign off if it's private property. Charles said the letter is necessary for the application.

Denise asked if there was any liability for the town if we agree to the letter. Ike said no.

Janet asked if being next to the town garage, if there would be an issue with sound. Since sound proofing would be an issue. Ike said that insulation and sound proofing would be the big lift.

David makes a motion that we sign the letter in support. Krista seconds. Danny, Densie, David and Krista in favor. Janet abstains. Motion passes.

Charles says there's a template from the website, which he provided.

Charles said this good be a great start to building community and relationships.

David marks box that the Select Board is supporting the initiative. David signs.

Further Business
None

David makes a motion to adjourn. All in favor. Motion passes.

Meeting adjourns at 7:19pm

September 8, 2026

Village Trust Initiative Selection Committee
Preservation Trust of Vermont
Vermont Council on Rural Development
Vermont Community Foundation

Dear Village Trust Initiative Selection Committee,

On behalf of the Athens Selectboard, I am pleased to extend our formal endorsement of the Institute for Somatic Sound's proposal and the intent to apply to the Village Trust Initiative. After reviewing the project details and Village Trust Initiative program details, we strongly support your group in advancing this project in our community.

The creation of a Community Trust and the project identified by this group aligns with our town's goals to preserve and strengthen community infrastructure, support local community life, explore opportunities for sustainable rural development, and enhance the use of existing public and community spaces. We believe this project will have a positive impact on both our residents and local businesses by creating opportunities for year-round gatherings, workshops, performances, and community programming.

[X] The Selectboard is committed to collaborating with the project team and supporting its successful implementation.

[ ] The Selectboard wishes to make it clear the following limitations to our support:

_____ [*limitations to the support they want written down.*]

We understand the importance of this project to the broader community and are eager to see it move forward. If you have any questions or need further assistance, please do not hesitate to reach out.

Sincerely,

David Bemis
Selectboard Chair
Athens Selectboard