

Athens Special Selectboard Meeting Minutes
January 16, 2024
7:00pm at the Athens Town Office

In attendance: David Bemis, Sandi Capponcelli, Janet Perry, Krista Gay, Denise Randall, Hannah Regier, Donald Capponcelli, Dennis Mirante

Called to order at 7:00

Adjustments to Agenda

Sandi makes a motion to add signing the WRC contract for the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan. Denise seconds. Put to a vote: all in favor.

Public Comments

Dennis Mirante asks to add an article to the town report for acting on the town report. David says they will be working on the warning on Thursday.

Don Capponcelli says he noticed some nice comments about the road crew. He asks if the chair and town clerk received the article for the cemetery commission asking for \$3500 as a separate article. They have.

Denise says someone mentioned that they liked how Route 35 looks now that the blasting was cleaned up and that they didn't like how it looked before it was cleaned up.

Meeting with Budget Committee

Hannah says that Amber and Carol couldn't make it but she has added some figures that Amber gave her.

The town doesn't know what FEMA grant money will come in. Janet says the state is still working on getting towns to a 90% reimbursement for emergency road work. There is a statewide threshold that needs to be met. David thinks the threshold will be met easily.

The board discusses how to budget for the health insurance opt out amount for the highway labor. Hannah had included it in salary because it's taxable income. The board asks to make a Health Stipend line item for that amount.

Krista asks if Sandi has info on the other benefits. Sandi gave vision and dental info to Matt so he can decide what plans might work for him. She will be asking VLCT for disability and life insurance quotes. Duane didn't want dental and vision insurance. The board thinks it's important to have disability insurance for employees and those quotes will be added to the budget when they come in.

Dennis Mirante asks if benefits could be an ala carte choice from a "bucket" of funds that is affordable for the town. The board considers that could be something for next year, but not now when there are only 9 days to get the budget finalized.

David asks about adding something a health stipend for Hannah. Hannah says that she knows of a part time job open recently that was offering a stipend of \$200/month for a health stipend. That is her only point of reference and the reason she asked the board if it would be possible, as she must pay for her own insurance and doesn't have another job that pays for it. David asks if the town paying half of her premium would be reasonable since she is working about half-time. Hannah says the plans are subsidized at her income level, so even a \$100/month would help. The board thinks that \$200 a month is reasonable.

Denise makes a motion to offer Hannah a \$200/month health stipend. Sandi seconds. Put to a vote: all in favor.

This will go into a Health Stipend line item under the office salaries budget section. There will be one in the highway salary section for the opt out amount.

Garage port-a-potty is \$2,000 under General Supplies. Amber talked to a few different places and the prices were all similar.

Water supply for the garage – Sandi bought them a rechargeable pump, coffee maker and coffee. The Capponcellis can continue to buy the water at Hannafords. Sandi says the crew can always take a jug home and fill it up also.

David asks about the \$2,750 for the garage scoping project under garage New Construction. Hannah says that is the remainder of what will be paid and lines up with the \$2,710 being rolled forward in the surplus line item as the unused portion of the MERP mini-grant.

Hannah says the maintenance for the town office furnace just cost \$960.00. The Community Center furnace maintenance was ~\$190.00. The board reviews the bill. Don will talk to Dead River and see if they charged the town for the trip to Springfield and back. David asks if they have a service contract program where they do servicing for a fixed rate. Denise says that now that Russel Brown has passed, the town should consider a service plan for the furnaces.

The town office Building Maintenance line item is increased to \$1000.

Hannah says she had someone from HB out to look at the generator because it hadn't been testing itself for the last month. She thinks the visit will be included as a servicing in the maintenance contract. Jim from HB suggested a snow fence be installed on the north side of the generator to keep snow out of the air intake and/or a shed roof over it to keep the snow off the unit.

SWNH Fire Mutual Aid figure is up to \$8671.00. David says that is just for dispatch service. The cost is supposed to be based on the grand list. Krista says it looks like a scam. David says it kind of is but he doesn't think we can do anything about it.

Krista asks why the rescue contract went down. It's because the calls were fewer than expected. Krista asks why the town pays for both ambulance and rescue. David says that the rescue helps with the people and to get them in the ambulance and the ambulance transports to the hospital. Rescue is different from the Fire protection.

Krista brings up the telephone bill for the community center. It's for the alarm system which needs a dedicated line and long distance. Hannah can ask VTel if they have a long distance plan that's less expensive than MCI.

Chloride tank and rental figures from Matt? He hasn't gotten the quotes yet. Sandi will get on it with him.

Breakdowns on the contracted services for highway – Sandi will also try to get those from Matt.

The board discusses the over the rail mower rental. Brookline bought a wheeled excavator with an over-the-rail attachment. Denise wonders if they want to rent it or hire out mowing services.

Emergency road work on Brookline was caused by driveway and basement runoff. The bill is \$10,665 so far. Matt is talking with the State about some reimbursement. David doesn't think it would fall under FEMA because there isn't an emergency right now. The board wonders if the homeowners' insurance might cover some of the cost. Sandi says the homeowners will need to do something in the future to prevent it from happening again. Don thinks there was also a lot of water coming off the hill behind the house. Sandi says there was a 3-4" pipe gushing water from the basement pump.

Janet says the Paving Fund can be used for repaving that section of road.

\$10,000 is added to Emergency Road Work, in case the state doesn't cover the full costs. Janet says that Athens isn't the only town that had damage from this recent rain, which should work in the town's favor.

David makes a motion to accept and sign the contract with Windham Regional Commission to assist with writing the Local Hazard Mitigation Plan. Krista seconds. Put to a vote: all in favor.

Hannah asks if Sandi wants to do the subrecipient reporting for two grants. There is a letter from the state requesting the reports by 45 days after the end of the fiscal year. The grants are the Ober Hill scoping grant and another \$7,000 which she thinks is for the LHMP. Sandi thinks the LHMP grant is \$10,000. She will look into the report.

Janet asks if the selectboard meeting on Thursday will be at the Community Center. Sandi says the soil pipe has been attended to. Janet points out that the board will be doing the town meeting warning and if they need any paperwork, it will be helpful to be at the town office. The board and Hannah agree. David says he posted the meeting for the town office. Denise says that she won't be able to attend the BOA or BCA meetings, but will get to the Selectboard meeting as soon as she can.

*Denise makes a motion to adjourn. David seconds. All in favor.
Adjourned at 8:06.*

Respectfully submitted,
Hannah Regier, Town Clerk