

Athens Selectboard Meeting Minutes  
October 1, 2024  
7:00pm at the Athens Town Office

In attendance: David Bemis, Sandi Capponcelli, Janet Perry, Krista Gay, Denise Randall, Hannah Regier, April Lyman, Carmen Dresser, Linda Taylor, Don Capponcelli, Sherry Maher, Tim Stevenson,

**Called to order at 7:00**

**Adjustments to Agenda**

None

**Public Comments**

None

**Employment**

David says that Duane Snide has tendered his resignation and that an ad should get out as soon as possible. Duane didn't give an absolute end date and told David that he would stay until the town found someone else, but this wouldn't be indefinitely. There is not a written resignation, but Duane has verbally told David and Matt.

Krista asks what the reasons Duane gave for resigning. David says there were a few things that Duane was concerned about. He wasn't happy with the discussions at some of the selectboard meetings. Krista asks if he is at risk for liability for anything. David mentions a comp time issue but doesn't know in more detail. Duane was reluctant to have an exit interview. Krista asks if there is anything the town would be at risk for having to pay unemployment insurance. David doesn't think there is.

Krista asks if the resignation was due to the town's pay and benefits. The board doesn't think so.

*Denise makes a motion to start the hiring process for a highway employee. Sandi seconds.*

*Discussion: The board discusses if there should be a date on the ad. Janet says it would be good to have applicants by the next regular meeting. It may take some time for the ad to get printed. Hannah reads the text of the last ad. The board decides to put in the 17<sup>th</sup> as the priority date and that the position will stay open until filled. Hannah recalls that the last time the town hired someone there was a hiring committee.*

*Krista says that Duane was a great employee and that the board is really sad to see him go. His resignation is accepted with regrets and the understanding that it's an unfortunate event.*

*Motion put to a vote: all in favor.*

Hannah asks where and how many times the employment ad should run and what the price limit is. The following places were decided:

- Commons
- Vermont Journal
- Reformer – Thursdays & Saturdays
- Athens Facebook group
- Town website
- VLCT website

*David amends the original motion to run ads up to a cost of \$1,000. Krista seconds. Put to a vote: all in favor.*

Krista asks if the town should offer Duane severance pay. She says the reason she suggests it is because Duane resigned under slightly suspicious circumstances, and severance would be both a gesture of goodwill, but also an opportunity to ask him to sign a release if he accepts. Krista says Duane has been a really good employee and she doesn't know what happened. She says severance pay isn't uncommon and doesn't need to be a large amount. Sandi says there isn't anything in the town's policies regarding severance pay. David suggests considering it and bringing it up at the next meeting.

Hannah asks if the board would let her know when Duane's last day is so she can alert the VMERS retirement fund.

Sherry Maher asks why the hiring committee isn't formed now so that applications can be reviewed as they come in. Krista says it will be important to be efficient because other towns are also hiring for road crew now and applicants may have choices. The board discusses setting up the committee now or later and who would be on it.

*Sandi makes a motion for Krista and Denise to be on the committee along with Matt. David seconds. Put to a vote: all in favor.*

Sherry asks that if there is anything to be learned from this experience to take forward to the next employee situation, she hopes that the board will do that.

### **Insurance Review**

Hannah shares the VLCT PACIF schedules for review with the board. The policy needs to be renewed by the 18<sup>th</sup>. She asks if they want to add any coverage for cemetery property. David says the cemetery fencing, stone walls in both cemeteries, and gate should be added.

David asks how the building values were arrived at. There is a document from VLCT that has different methods of valuing the property. The board discusses different property and content values. David asks if VLCT could come down and reassess the buildings. Janet volunteers to talk to VLCT. Don will look into values for the cemetery property.

*Sandi makes a motion to adjourn. David seconds. All in favor.  
Adjourned at 7:36*

Respectfully submitted,  
Hannah Regier, Town Clerk