

Town of Athens
Special Town Meeting
April 26, 2022 6:00pm

Called to order at 6:00pm

The clerk read the roll call of voters: 90 voters present.

The moderator informs the meeting that after consulting with the secretary of state, he understands that this is not a reconsideration of the original article from town meeting, but a new and separate article. Regardless of how the article vote goes, the two newly elected selectboard members from the Australian ballot vote will serve for at least 31 days.

Article 1. Shall the town vote to decrease the select board from five to three select board members.

Carol Bingham makes the motion. Don Capponcelli seconds.

Discussion

Tim Stevenson states he would like the will of voters at town meeting should be honored for a while before trying to change it. He would like to see new energy on the board. He wants to hear from people who put together the petition about why anyone should vote for the article.

Don Capponcelli states that he was one of the people who signed the petition because he thinks the issue is worthy of reconsideration. He agrees that it would be great to have new faces in town government, but he sees that the same people are shuffling around between positions and there aren't really new people wanting to serve.

Kate Bova says that there were enough people to run and that it should be given at least a year to see how it works. The article was in the town report. If people didn't think it was a good idea, why didn't they talk about it before town meeting.

Bruce Tenney Jr. says a five-member panel will bring 30-40 years of the past back into the future and everything gained will be lost.

Wichie Artu says is in favor of a five member board because as a volunteer on the weather emergency committee, he has seen work that hasn't been done because there hasn't been a selectboard member to do it. Also points out one of the selectboard members has a conflict of interest and must recuse from town employee issues.

John Oberling asks what the approximate increase in cost to the town would be. David says about \$1.02/day. People laugh.

Sandi Capponcelli says she helped pass the petition around. She thinks with some things going on in town it isn't the best time to switch to a larger selectboard. She has decided to run for one of the new seats. Also asks that if she wins a seat on the selectboard, who will step up to be the new lister. Asks who else will step up to fill other volunteer positions in the town. She says people complain, but very few support the town workload.

Sherry Maher supported the 5 person board at town meeting. Is pleased to see so many people at this meeting. Would like to see it tried for a year. She is encouraged by the change of

date and time of the next town meeting, and thinks with the turnout at 6:00pm in this meeting, there is likely to be better turnout at the next town meeting. Hopes the the two people who win the vote for the seats will have the opportunity to serve out their one year term. Urges people to vote no.

With no other residents wishing to speak, the moderator calls the question.

7 people request a paper ballot.

Votes: 45 yes, 45 no

The article was not approved. There will be a five-member selectboard.

Further Business

Don Capponcelli says there will be a vote in Grafton next month to decide various aspects of the elementary school district and urges people to attend.

Harold Noyes makes a motion to adjourn. Denise seconded. Adjourned at 6:40pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Hannah Regier, Town Clerk