

The Athenian

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Sponsored by Grafton Cares

OCTOBER 2021

It's That Time of Year

You can feel it coming, ever so slowly. Each day just a little colder, the night temperature approaching the 30's and the frost. Should I light the wood stove? Should I close things up?

On the bright side, nature's spectacular show is beginning. The colorful leaves of autumn light our way for the winter to really set in.

In this issue you will find a variety of news. Whether it's something to get involved with, what good books to read, news about the Select Board, the School Board, and plenty more. So read on...

- *Dennis Hunt*



Hazard Mitigation Plan renewed and a grant that is in process to facilitate that.

- There was a question on the matter of changing Town Meeting to all Australian ballot. It was clarified that with such a change, there would be no opportunity to offer amendments to any of the articles other than simply voting them up or down. There could be discussion about the articles, but candidates on the ballot would not be able to speak to their candidacy. There will be further discussion on this at the October meeting.

- Sandi Capponcelli reported that the Community Center Advisory Committee had their first meeting.

There are many things to be cleared out of the building and they are thinking about a tag sale in October.

- Darlene Wyman announced that she will not be seeking to be reelected as Town Clerk and Town Treasurer come the end of her current term in March. She spoke with Hannah Regier who is interested in the positions.
- Janet Perry reported on the roads on behalf of Matt Perry. The roadside mowing was completed, and there are some spots in town that are still needing attention and rocks to better handle water runoff. State permits would be needed for work near the beaver pond as it is wetlands. There was some discussion on a plan for trading the backhoe and the Board voted to proceed with the plan for lease to own allowing Janet to sign any needed contract documents.

- *Sherry Maher*

Select Board Meeting Tidbits

In addition to news in other pieces below, here are a few things from the September Select Board meeting that might be of interest:

- A statement written by Tom Taylor was read to the Select Board addressing concerns about statements being made about him by Town employees, and in particular a report that the Select Board had banned him from Town property. This came to light when efforts were being made to get the emergency shelter trailer moved in advance of the recent hurricane forecast. He asked that his statement be included with the meeting minutes.
- Concerns were again raised by Krista Gay regarding the conflict of interest policy and whether or not Board member Perry can vote on employee discipline matters. She also stated that since the Board is now informed about the defamatory statement concerns, the town could be potentially liable for any losses that may result.
- A request was made that FACT8 TV be asked to remain to record meetings in their entirety. Often the cameras leave at the start of executive session, and thus any follow up from that or public comments at the end of the meeting are not recorded.
- There was discussion on the process to get the

Budget Committee Update

The budget committee is just starting to work on the 2022 budget. We'll be meeting with the selectboard on Oct 12 to hear any projects that they would like us to look into. So far we know that the town has locked into fuel prices for the winter season at 2.38/gal for heating

oil and 2.60/gal for diesel. The Cat backhoe that the town bought five years ago will be paid off this year so the ~\$25,750 annual payment will not be on the budget in 2022. The selectboard has already decided to trade in that backhoe for a new one, while it has a high trade-in value. The new payment will be \$10,600/year for five years. The budget committee will look at how much of that new payment can come out of what is already allocated in the Equipment fund, and how much, if any, will be budgeted for additionally. - *Hannah Regier*

Notes from the School Board

September 8th the School boards were notified that Superintendent, Chris Prat, and the Assistant Superintendent, Dr. Lynn Carey, have both handed in their resignations due to personal reasons. Andy Haas was appointed as the Interim Superintendent to take office as of Sept. 8th. The process of seeking superintendent candidates will start ASAP.

Wednesday Sept. 15, the Grafton Elementary School was temporarily closed and using virtual learning due to two students testing positive for COVID. All students considered close contacts were tested for COVID. All the close contact student tests came back negative and school was able to reopen on Wednesday Sept. 22. In the future, every Thursday there will be asymptomatic COVID-19 surveillance testing for staff and students provided by the Vermont Department of Health at all the district schools. For more information regarding this weekly testing and to access the consent form see the 9/17/2021 Gabber.

The state has accepted the steps that Westminster has done toward the withdraw from the WNUESD at their meeting with Westminster on Wednesday, Sept. 15th. They also granted the newly elected Westminster school board their request to have authority starting now to build a budget and to establish a teacher/staff roster for the year 2022-2023. But the day to day running of the Westminster school will remain under the authority of the WNUESD board until July 1, 2022.

We are starting our budgeting procedures. First, we are looking to identify what the school staff and the town's folks consider important, both in the area of the building and grounds, and the academics. These ideas will then be prioritized. There will be an ESSAR (government recovery money grant) survey sent out to all parents. Please fill this out so we hear your voice in this process.

There is a shortage of interventionists and paraprofessionals within our SU and nationwide. If anyone has a desire to work with the children, contact the GES office and inquire about requirements and procedures for applying.

Please contact me if you have any suggestions, concerns, or positive feedback. - *Lynn Morgan*

News from Grafton Cares

For all of us here at Grafton Cares, September was much quieter than we had hoped, and because of steadily rising cases of Covid, we cannot predict a time to reintroduce community lunches and dinners. While we continue to deliver Meals on Wheels to nine customers, news has been published that Valley Cares has been compelled, for financial reasons, not to renew their contract for preparing those meals. Hopefully, by now another facility has been found to fill that role, and our function in getting meals to people who need them will not be interrupted.

We face yet another disappointment in not being able to host the special luncheon celebrating our seniors "over 80," but we shall once again be delivering to them lovely gift baskets acknowledging how important they are to life in both Grafton and Athens.

Among other activities we have distributed the following: \$175 in gas cards for medical appointments, two sunshine baskets, and one baby blanket. We also provided two rides to medical appointments and loaned out one walker. Returned to us were one shower chair and a raised toilet seat.

Here in Vermont, we can take great pride in leading the nation in our intelligent and effective response to the plague that has caused everyone so much suffering. In being "Vermont Smart," we can beat this horrific disease. Our thanks goes out to everyone who, through vaccination and the following of health guidelines, has helped preserve the well-being of us all. All the best to everyone. - *Bill Toomey*

Community Center Advisory Committee

On September 18 the volunteer Community Center Advisory Board (CCAC) met for a walk through of the school building to see what it's overall condition is. We started in the attic and worked our way down to the basement. Don Capponcelli with his many years of working at the Marlboro College campus is acting as our advisor as he knows the ins and outs of building standards and maintenance.

It seems, despite not having a regular maintenance schedule, that the school building is in fairly good condition. There are some minor issues to address before it can be opened to the public for use, but hopefully that will be no later than the end of November.

There is discussion on the table as to the variety of uses this building may have in the coming years other than just a community center. There is, of course, the yearly town meeting but also brought up is the possibility of moving the town office from its present location up to the school building. There are a couple of scenarios concerning this move and naturally our main concern are the property taxes. Our group will be

searching out alternative funding in the way of grants to see if such a move would be possible and/or feasible. Some of the other ideas are, in the future, of having a kitchen in the basement and having it set up so community suppers could be held there or if someone wanted to rent the building/basement for a function such as a reception or family gathering, it would be doable. Part of this idea is that the building would be paying for part of it's upkeep. If we are to use the building in the coming years on a regular basis, it needs to be able to help pay in part for its maintenance.

Another idea for the building is for it to be a warming/cooling shelter as our climate continues to be quite unpredictable and/or an overflow shelter in conjunction with the Red Cross approved church shelter if the need arises.

We are planning to have a "donation" tag sale in October. The date will be finalized at our next meeting October 7th. The dates in mind are either the 16th or the 23rd (both are Saturdays) of October. To clarify the use of the word "donation", we will have some items available such as children size chairs, adult chairs, school desks, various types of school paper, and other items gleaned from the school building. If you would like an item, or 2 or 3, we ask that you make a donation so we can take the first step in making the building available for use and that is a deep cleaning and possibly painting the school room walls. As you can imagine after so many years of little to no use, things are looking tired and shabby.

Notices will be posted about the tag sale date and times at the usual places. We will also ask athensvt.com, the Athens Facebook page and the Athenian to send out the message of date and time.

- Sandi Capponcelli

Grafton Firefighters Tag Sale Returns

One of Southern Vermont's popular Fall events over the past 40 years, the Grafton Firefighters Tag Sale, is back this year after being cancelled last year due to the Covid pandemic. The tag sale, which benefits the Grafton Volunteer Fire Department, will take place on October 9th and 10th at the firehouse at 711 Route 121 just East of Grafton Village. Beginning many years ago with a single table in front of the firehouse, the sale has grown over the years to fill the firehouse and spill into a large tent. This year it is expected that an additional tent may be needed according to Amber Stevens, who is President of the Grafton Fire and Rescue Auxiliary, the sales' sponsor.

Throughout the years that the Auxiliary has conducted this sale it has developed a reputation for its

variety, quality, and the many bargains to be found. Locals and visitors alike line up early waiting for the signal that the sale is open in order to search through the well organized displays of furniture, linens, toys, small appliances, housewares, books, recordings, tools, and much more. People have been known to shop both days of the sale since most remaining items will be half price on the second day. The sale will be from 9-3 on Saturday, October 9th and from 9-1 on Sunday, October 10th. Donations of usable goods for the sale are still being accepted through Friday, October 7th each day from 9-1. Volunteers to help prepare for the sale and help at the sale are needed and should contact Amber Stevens at 802-376-5646.

Like many small rural volunteer fire departments, the Grafton Fire Department is not fully funded by the town which makes the Fall Tag Sale an important source of financial support to meet its needs. Of course it wouldn't be a firefighters' event without a display of the ladder truck, engine, UTV, and rescue truck accompanied by volunteer firefighters ready to answer questions. The sale will go on rain or shine and shoppers will be expected to help keep everyone safe by honoring the usual Covid precautions. Updates can be found on the Grafton Fire and Rescue page on Facebook.

-Dave Ross

2021 Fall Fireman's Food Sale

The Grafton Elementary School PTG will be holding

our annual food booth sale at the Fireman's Fall sale. We have raised a good deal of money in the past but we need a lot of help to accomplish this. We will be looking for people to work the booth to sell coffee, tea, hot chocolate, donuts, hamburgers, hotdogs and crock pot goodies. We also usually have a lot of baked goods donated and sold by donation. We will be looking for LOTS OF baked

good donations, food and help at the booth. The less we have to spend to get this up and running the more profit we make! Please sign up early

(<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/30e0a4fafa2da0fa7-2019>) so we can shop for anything that has not been signed up for on Thursday evening or Friday. Thank you!

- GES PTG



Food News You Can Use

Below is a list of local sites where food assistance is available at no or little cost to you. Please get the word out to your friends and neighbors about these programs as we go through these uncertain times.

Grafton Community Church Food Pantry. The food pantry at the Church is sponsoring free food pickup at

the Church during the week. Stables such as pasta, tomato sauce, jam, oatmeal, and sometimes even frozen meat if available. Call Mary Feder at the Church at 843-2346 or email her at graftonchurch@gmail.com and leave your name and phone number to arrange a pickup time and please wear a mask. Delivery can also be arranged.

Townshend Community Food Shelf. This long-time food shelf is open and providing food to those who need it. They have limited fruit, vegetables, milk, frozen meats, and fresh bread. They also have canned food, pasta, rice, and shelf stable proteins. They are located in the Townshend Church and are open every Monday from 6pm to 7pm. Be sure to wear your mask. If you have questions call 365-4348.

Everyone Eats—Newfane. This program benefits our communities in several ways. It financially supports area restaurants and their employees, as well area farmers and other food producers. And we get to eat nutritious meals! Meals are distributed every Thursday from 5pm to 6pm in front of the Newfane Congregational Church. All meals are free and there is a onetime registration at the site or call Jeryl at 802-348-7173. Deliveries can also be arranged.

Meals On Wheels. Senior Solutions in Springfield, VT sponsors a Meals On Wheels program for seniors and those with disabilities. Grafton Cares provides pickup and delivery three times a week, Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. Sign up is straight forward. Call Senior Solutions Senior Helpline at 800-642-5119 for all the particulars and enjoy having meals delivered to your door in Athens and Grafton.

Veggie van Go. Free food is available for the months of September and October on the 4th Thursday of each month (10/28) at the Newfane Green on West Street. The purpose of the program is to help people obtain fresh fruits and vegetables to sustain a healthy lifestyle. All are welcome and no proof of eligibility is required. This program is sponsored by Grace Cottage Family Health & Hospital and the Vermont Food Bank.

Multiply Your EBT Benefits at a local Farmers Market. Do you have 3Squares VT/SNAP benefits? When you use 3Squares VT/SNAP or P/EBT benefits at a local farmers market, you'll get up to \$10 match in Crop Cash. That means \$10 in EBT buys \$20 of local food! The Townshend Farmers Market is open on Fridays, Brattleboro Area Farmers Market is open on Saturdays, and the Putney Farmers Market is open on Sundays.

- Dennis Hunt

Library Corner

Smiles and Gratitude

Big thank yous to Wendy Martin, Tania Evans, Judy Rowley and Sarah Yarosevich for donating new books for our collection. Michelle Dolloph dropped off more

small paper bags for use in curbside service and Sarah Yarosevich planted mums in the library urns. We are most grateful!

New Books and More!

We have many great new mysteries on the shelves, as well as the newest fiction by Chris Bohjalian, Debbie Macomber, Kazuo Ishiguro, Danielle Steel and other bestsellers.

In non-fiction, find new books about trophy fishing, the Revolutionary War, survival stories, cookbooks, biographies and other fascinating subjects to entertain and educate.

If you write two book reviews for **Our Readers Recommend Section**, you will earn a gift certificate to MKT! In fact, the **Our Readers Recommend** display is a great spot to check for good books to put on your reading list.

Library Programs

We have **two** on-going book groups—our in-house Page Turners Book Group (4th Tuesdays—attendance on Zoom is always an option) and the Nature & Books Discussion series, co-sponsored with the Nature Museum (4th Wednesdays—Zoom only). Contact the library for more information.

Do you want to improve your conversational Spanish? Join us in-person or on Zoom for our weekly Spanish sessions—best for intermediate to advanced speakers.

Love crafts and Halloween? Stop by the library to paint a pumpkin on Saturday, October 2. We provide the supplies. You may leave your finished pumpkin here to decorate the porch or stop back later when it's dry to take home. This program is open to all ages! While you are here—make sure jot your ideas down on our “Thankful Pumpkins”! Stay tuned for more details about Halloween @ the Library.

October Library Programs

Library Closed for Staff Vacation: Monday, October 4 through Saturday, October 9

Spanish Conversation on Zoom, Tuesdays 11am, intermediate level—No Spanish on 10/5

Pumpkin Art! Saturday, October 2, 9am-12pm, Stop by the library & paint a pumpkin.

The Pager Turners Book Group, Tuesday, October 26, 2-3:30 pm, Theme: In Cold Blood: True Crime Stories

The Nature & Books Discussion Series, co-sponsored with the Nature Museum, Wednesday, October 27, 6-7:30 pm on Zoom, *Finding the Mother Tree* by Suzanne Simard

Halloween @ the Library—Stay tuned for details!

- Michelle Dufort

Senior Solutions Offers Tai Chi Instructor Training for Fall Prevention

A two-day Tai Chi Level One Training, focusing on improving balance and preventing falls, will be held on

November 4 and 5, from 10:00 am – 5:00 pm each day at Neighborhood Connections in the Mountain Marketplace, Londonderry, VT. Senior Solutions will cover the full tuition of \$300 as well as personal mileage for those attending, and the instructors will be Anne Bower and Laurie Knauer, Authorized Trainers from Tai Chi Vermont, Inc.

The workshop consists of two full days where Level One movements and fundamental exercises are practiced. Safety issues and ways to adapt movements for people’s limitations are considered. Attendees will receive pre-learning materials, full certification for two years, free Skillbuilder workshops (offered periodically), and mentoring. They will also teach classes through Senior Solutions a few times per year on a volunteer basis.

Because the Covid-19 virus and its variants are still with us, all necessary precautions will be observed. This includes masking for those not vaccinated. Masking for all may need to be required, but this will be determined closer to the workshop date.

Fall Prevention Tai Chi is a fun and rewarding experience that helps not only those you teach, but yourself as well. Its benefits include improved balance, coordination, flexibility, focus, memory, and mindfulness. Those who practice frequently often find their sleep, blood sugar levels, and blood pressure improve as well.

For registration and questions, please contact Wendi Germain, Nutrition & Wellness Director of Senior Solutions at WGermain@seniorsolutionsvt.org, or 802.755.7295 - *Thom Simmons*

Nature Museum Update

The Nature Museum is offering a number of programs that you can explore on their website info@nature-museum.org Here is the list.

Mighty Acorns Preschool Explorers Club. October-November-December. \$10 per child. Registration required.

Autumn Evening Story Time. Friday, October 15 at 7:00. \$15 individual, \$30 family. Registration required.

Guided Forest Hike and Early Morning Talk with Tom Wessels. Saturday, October 30 at 10:00 am.

Mastering the Art of the Outdoor Fire. Saturday, November 6 at 10:00 am. -*Dennis Hunt*

Notes From A Weather Journal

What a summer! First, we had drought conditions followed by endless rain. Paging through my weather

journals I found that a lot of rain is normal for this time of year and quite frustrating. Here are a few examples.

October 1, 2010. “A massive rainstorm yesterday continuing today. Many inches. Temps 57.7 to 69.1”

October 1, 2012. “Cool, rain continues. Enough! Temps 58.8 to 83.8.”

October 1, 2019. “Foggy and cloudy. Everything is wet. Expecting rain. Temps 55.0 to 67.0”

We can expect a killing frost around October 15. But often this is followed by warmer weather. So, if you can cover what you want to save, it can be worth the effort.

-*Dennis Hunt*



Thoughts To Ponder

These have been tough times with this pandemic and we must continue to adapt. Here are some interesting points of view from some famous people

“It is not the strongest of the species that survive, nor the most intelligent, but the one most responsive to change.”

-*Charles Darwin*

“Progress is impossible without change, and those who cannot change their minds cannot change anything.”

-*George Bernard Shaw*

“If you don’t like something, change it. If you can’t change it, change your attitude.”

-*Maya Angelou*

-*All quotes selected by Dennis Hunt*

COMMUNITY INFORMATION

Select Board Meetings: 3rd Thursday 7:00 PM

Budget Committee: 2nd & 4th Tuesday 7:00 PM

Meeting House Committee: 2nd Monday 10:00 AM

School Board: 2nd Thursday 6:30 Grafton School

Do you have a news item for The Athenian or a favorite family story to share? Or would you like to be on our email list and get the newsletter in your inbox?

CONTACT US at theathenianvt@gmail.com.



TRASH PICK-UP: OCT. 4 & 18

RECYCLE PICK-UP: OCT 11 & 25

Photo Credits:

Foggy Fall Mornings - Jay Maciejowski