

# The Athenian

Volume 13, Number 8

Sponsored by Grafton Cares

APRIL 2023

## Town Meeting – Redux

**W**ow...you can surely say March came in like a lion this year and kept roaring for a good while! We bet right that the March Community Supper could sneak in just ahead of the first big March storm. All was cleared by Monday evening for Town Meeting as scheduled (though as you'll read below a Special Town Meeting is scheduled for a re-vote on the budget). And then the monster nor'easter hit the following week leaving many without power for the better part of that week! Finally, now spring has definitely sprung with crocuses and daffodils appearing as all that snow disappears. – *Sherry Maher*

### Town Meeting Recap & Redux

With all the Town Offices and most everything related to school district matters being voted by Australian ballots, Town Meeting was mostly over and done with in a little over an hour. We had brief visits from State Senator Wendy Harris, and Representative Heather Chase at the start, and a detailed update on school budget matters from Jack Bryar, now former School Board Chair for Ath-Graf district. Aside from reducing the support for SeVEDS from \$1,140 to \$650, all of the other funding requests to support various social service organizations were readily approved.

The longest discussion was on Article 15 to set the time of future Town Meetings. A motion to return to the traditional Tuesday morning was amended to meet again on the Monday evening prior at 6PM. After much discussion, a suggestion to hold the meeting Tuesday evening was rejected, and the final vote set the day and time again for Monday, 6PM for next year.

The big news of the night was that with minimal debate or discussion, the proposed budget calling for an approximate 37% increase in the amount to be raised by taxes was resoundingly defeated in a paper ballot vote – 14 YES, 40 NO. The Board planned a meeting to revise

the budget that had to be rescheduled due to the nor'easter, but was then held on March 23. A Special Town Meeting is now set for Thursday, April 27th at 6:00PM in Athens Community Center to vote on the revised. Be sure to mark your calendar, and look for the revised budget document posted on the Town website Home page, as well as the meeting minutes under the Meetings tab at [www.athensvt.com/](http://www.athensvt.com/).

You can also watch the recording at FACT8 TV: [https://www.fact8.com/e107\\_plugins/media\\_library/media\\_library.php?118.0](https://www.fact8.com/e107_plugins/media_library/media_library.php?118.0). – *Sherry Maher*

### Select Board Meeting Tidbits

In addition to news above from Town Meeting, here are a few things from the March Select Board meeting that might be of interest:



- The Select Board re-elected David Bemis as chair, and Sandi Capponcelli as vice chair.
- The Meetinghouse Committee is proceeding with seeking bids for the upcoming project for storm windows, floor leveling and moisture mitigation in the crawlspace having received the go ahead from the grant funder.
- A recount was requested by Krista Gay for the 1-year seats on the Select Board. (NOTE – while there were minor changes to the counts, there was no change to the outcome.)
- There was discussion about the cost and billing issues for cybersecurity services is more than what had been budgeted for.
- Most annual appointments were made.
- A question was raised as to why moving the Town Office to the Community Center wasn't put before the voters at Town Meeting. There was concern that it would cause confusion and the committee wasn't ready. Don Capponcelli believes it would be the best and least expensive place to construct a vault for the much-needed improvement to our Town records storage. The Board approved a motion to pursue

grants to make the community center both a town office and a community center.

- Janet Perry seeks to create a policy requiring committees that meet virtually to have the meetings recorded for the public to watch. She thinks it should be required for transparency reasons. Questions were raised as to how this would be accomplished and at what cost.
- It was noted that we have now transitioned from having a Road Commissioner to the Select Board serving as Road Commissioners.
- Josh Ferenc, a resident and middle school science teacher at BFMS requested permission to use the Community Center as a home-base for a 10-week nature-based learning institute. Most of the time, the participants would be outdoors exploring the different ecosystems here in Athens, but would access the center for restrooms and as shelter in case of rain. There was full support for this pending confirmation of all necessary insurance coverage.
- Denise Randall noted an \$8,000 bill for hauling stone. It was noted that so far this year, \$24,635 has been spent on stone for the roads, and that they need to tell Matt to stop on the stone.
- A brief executive session was held for a legal and personnel matter. - *Sherry Maher*

### **Notes from the School Board**

All SU district Boards met this week for reorganization with their new members. For the Ath-Graf board Harold Noyes was elected the chairperson and Cathy Siano-Goodwin was elected as the assistant chairperson. Our monthly meetings were set for the 2nd Wednesday at 6:00 p.m. to be held at the Grafton Elementary School.

The SU board elected Cheryl Charles as the chairperson and Molly Banik as the assistant chairperson. The monthly meetings were set for the 3rd Wednesday at 6:00 p.m. to be held at the BFUHS.

Ascutney Mountain Audubon Society has petitioned the SU board to see if they could rent one of the small buses for their Herricks Cove Wildlife Festival on May 7th. The board unanimously approved the request with the details to be worked out through the superintendent, Andy Haas.

In the superintendent's report, it was reported that there are two candidates being considered for the Middle School principal position. The public was invited to join the Meet the Principal Candidates Event at the Middle School March 29th to ask questions and get more information. The SU is starting the process for the search for a new high school principal. Check the BFUHS and WNESU websites for information as it becomes

available. The camera and entrance door safety upgrades have been upgraded by the state to an ESSER approved project, therefore we are moving forward on plans for this project at each school. At this point, the last day of school will be June 22nd, barring no more snow days, and the high school graduation is scheduled for June 15th.

Please contact me if you have any questions or comments at [lynn.morgan@wnesu.com](mailto:lynn.morgan@wnesu.com) or 802-869-2227. Happy Spring. - *Lynn Morgan*

### **Bystander CPR and Stop The Bleed Class**

Did you know that a person in cardiac arrest can die within minutes if basic CPR is not initiated to keep their blood flowing? Those same few minutes are equally important for someone with uncontrolled bleeding but in that case it's important to quickly stop the flow of blood. Accidents which result in serious bleeding account for 40% of trauma related deaths but at least 20% of those could be prevented if the bleeding was stopped. The survival rate for people in cardiac arrest could be doubled, even tripled, if someone present begins CPR quickly. What happens in the first few minutes in both of these situations comes down to family, co-workers, neighbors, or anyone nearby beginning CPR or taking steps to stop the bleeding. This is critical because whether you are in a rural area like ours or in a more populated area, a First Responder is not likely to reach you in those first few minutes.

The initial steps to take are surprisingly simple and can be learned in a single class. The Grafton Rescue Squad will be offering two classes where in one evening you can learn how to do Bystander CPR and also learn how to stop bleeding. People have often been reluctant to learn CPR due to having to breath into another person but in this class a hands only method will be taught which can be used until First Responders take over and how to use an AED will be reviewed. The class will also teach basic methods of controlling bleeding and will introduce the newer hemostatic blood clotting dressings available and the use of newer style tourniquets.

Grafton Rescue is offering two opportunities for Grafton and Athens residents to take a Bystander CPR/Stop The Bleed class. The first will be on April 26th at the Athens Community Center with the second on May 24th at the Grafton Elementary School. Both classes will begin at 7pm and are free of charge. Preregistration is necessary and residents of both towns can sign up for either class. Register on-line at "[grafftonrescue.eventbrite.com](http://grafftonrescue.eventbrite.com)". Class size is limited so it is important to sign up soon with the first 16 for either session receiving a take home Stop The Bleed kit including a tourniquet. These classes are not offered very often so don't miss out on this opportunity to learn

these vital skills. Questions or further information by email to [graftonrescue@vermontel.net](mailto:graftonrescue@vermontel.net) .

Remember to look for updates on the Grafton Fire and Rescue Facebook page.   
- Dave Ross

### **Grafton Cares News for the Month**

Is April truly the cruelest month? Not if you look far enough ahead—so focus on crocuses, daffodils, and tulips, and all will be well. Certainly, March had its challenges, but we were very lucky to be able to maintain our community meals calendar as well as all deliveries of Meals on Wheels--still, at 6 customers. We also were able to provide \$135 in gas cards, 2 rides to medical appointments, and 2 sunshine baskets.

Our meals calendar for April is as follows: Friday, April 7, dinner in Athens, 6 p.m. Wednesday, April 12, lunch in Grafton, noon Friday, April 21, dinner in Grafton, 6 p.m. Wednesday, April 26, lunch in Grafton, noon.

That's all for now, folks! Happy Spring!

-Bill Toomey

### **April Library Corner**

#### **Smiles and Gratitude:**

Many, many thanks to Pat Mack for installation of new corkboards, to David Ross for repairing and refreshing our sandwich board display, to Steve Nolan for flagpole repair, to Ray Lisai for fallen tree limb removal and to the Windham Foundation for driveway plowing.

#### **Library Spring Happenings**

Join us for our Born to Read Preschool Story Hour, filled with songs and movement, fingerplays and rhymes, short read-a-louds and book exchange, simple crafts and games, and fun and laughter! This informal story hour is appropriate for ages 0-5 and also gives parents and caregivers a chance to socialize too.

You may happen to see the Grafton Elementary School 3rd and 4th graders walking to the library for a literacy program or spy the librarian on her way over to the school for a classroom visit. If you would like to read to a bunch of fantastic students, contact the library and we will host you as a guest reader.

Walks of Wonder, scheduled walks exploring the local landscape in Vermont and New Hampshire, have returned! If you enjoy being outside and would like to join fellow explorers, contact the library to get on the registration list and hit the trail with us.

We continue each month on Zoom with our vibrant Nature & Books Discussion Series, co-sponsored with the Nature Museum. Newcomers are always welcome.

Spanish Conversation Group is still going strong weekly at the library and we welcome your participation.

In addition, the library is often in use for various meetings and gatherings. If you need a space for your

group to meet (or have an idea for a library program not currently offered) please contact us.

#### **Library Building**

A quick update on our heating/cooling upgrades. After consultation with Efficiency Vermont, contracting with an energy auditor, and receiving valuable information about improving energy efficiency, library trustees are evaluating bids from insulation contractors. Stay tuned for more information next month!

#### **Library Programming**

Spanish Group on Zoom, Tuesdays, 11:00am-Noon on Zoom. Intermediate level.

Nature & Books Discussion Series: Wednesday, April 26, 6-7:30 pm on Zoom (Islands of Abandonment by Cal Flyn)

Born to Read Preschool Story Hour 4th Saturday of the month, April 22, 10-11am, Ages 0-5.

Walks of Wonder, Sunday, April 23, 11am: Birding Hotspots! Allen Brothers Marsh/Bellows Falls Historic Riverfront Park.   
- Michelle Duffort

### **Vermont Judiciary Commission on Diversity, Equity & Inclusion**

Members of the Windham County community are invited to an upcoming community forum hosted by the Vermont Judiciary Commission on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. The forum will be held Wednesday, April 26th, 4:00-5:00 pm at the Windham Criminal, Family, and Probate Courthouse, 30 Putney Road, Brattleboro and includes the option to join online via Webex.

Members of the community are invited to provide comments about the diversity, equity and inclusion practices of the Vermont Judiciary.

Thank you, and please contact me by email at [scott.griffith@vermont.gov](mailto:scott.griffith@vermont.gov) if you have questions about these events or about the work of the Commission.

- Scott Griffith

### **A Vermont Gardener's Notebook - April**

In this age of the internet, I do think, when checking out specific plants and cultivars and their care, a Google search is the best way to get the most up-to-date info. However, as a book lover, I will never give up looking through my library to find interesting ideas and to visually see other people's gardens. So, this month, I thought I'd list some of my favorite books that I think are worth having as resources.

My go-to book on shrubs and trees is: **The Homeowner's Complete Trees & Shrubs Handbook** by Penelope O'Sullivan.

For landscaping ideas: **Landscaping Ideas That Work** by Julie Moir Messervy (who is a local gardener & author, by the way).





limited to 12 people. RSVP required—please email Sarah Waldo at sarah\_waldo@hotmail.com or call her at 802-387-6036. The event will be held rain or shine. Please wear sturdy footwear and meet outside the Congregational Church of Westminster West (44 Church Street).

If you've been near a pond or wetland in springtime in the eastern half of the United States, chances are you've heard the loud, high-pitched chorus of at least a few spring peepers. (Or perhaps a few hundred.) The spring peeper (*Pseudacris crucifer*) can be found from Quebec to Florida, and as far west as Texas.

These frogs are small, only about the length of a paperclip, and they weigh only about as much as a nickel. The females tend to be slightly larger than the males.

Learn more about local natural resources and the work of the Windmill Hill Pinnacle Association here: [www.windmillhillpinnacle.org/pages/resources.html](http://www.windmillhillpinnacle.org/pages/resources.html)

*WHPA Newsletter*

## SPRING GREEN UP TIME

This winter's late snow is finally starting to melt and the hidden roadside "treasures" are being exposed. I am so grateful for all who have signed up to help with Green Up this year which is on Saturday, May 6. All the through roads in town are covered. With the new folks joining the Green Up team we have been able to shorten some of last years' long routes. If there is anyone that would like to join our team there are still side roads that could use some Greening Up attention. Anyone who has the time and would like to help, please give me a call to get on the volunteer list (802-869-2227). Once I receive the Green Up bags I'll be in touch with all the volunteers and get your supplies to you. Thanks to all who are able to help with this years' spring cleaning of our town's roadsides.

*- Lynn Morgan*

## Thoughts to Ponder

Flowers are the music of the ground. From earth's lips spoken without sound.

*- Edwin Curran*



The first day of Spring is one thing, and the first spring day is another. The difference between them is sometimes as great as a month.

*- Henry Van Dyke*

## 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 6:00 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](mailto:theathenianvt@gmail.com).



**TRASH PICK-UP: APRIL 3, 17**

**RECYCLE PICK-UP: APRIL 10, 24**

Charles Perham Journal

April 1868

- 1 Have been boiling sap and gathering. The listers here this morning. The stock was appraised at \$539.00.
- 2 A rainy day. In the afternoon went with out team down to James. Then took Alexanders horse and went and got the mail. Received a letter from -----.
- 3 This morning went up on the hill to cut a log to take to the mill. Have been down to the mill twice today. In the evening commenced to read (*Advice to Young Men*) by T H Arthur.
- 4 In forenoon gathered sap in afternoon boiled.
- 5 Have been to meeting today. Quarterly meeting today.
- 6 Have been with Father to Mrs H Whitneys auction. Paid out 55 cents. Emma Ball Ella Edwards & Bell Dodge just here at night.
- 7 A very stormy day. It has snowed all day. Have been reading (*Advice to young men*).
- 8 This morning went down to the mill for a load of boards. Then went to Bellows Falls took out of the Bank \$50.00. To Mr. Ranneys to supper.



- 10 A very snowy day.
- 13 Have been to Cambridgeport with the oxen to get them shod. Father went down with the horse.
- 14 Have been down to grandmothers today. Went with mary to see hired maid.
- 15 Gathered and boiled sap all day.
- 16 Gathered and boiled sap all day. Just night it commenced to rain.
- 17 This morning went to the Post office sent a letter to ----. In the afternoon gathered the sap buckets.
- 18 Have been drawing poles today. Virna and Jane come home today.
- 19 Have been to Brookline to Meeting. Mr Edwards last Sunday to preach. To Uncle Hiram to supper. Leonna has been here today.
- 20 Have been drawing poles on the Ranney lot in the forenoon. Have been to Bennets and Hitchcocks today.
- 21 Turned out 16 sheep. In the afternoon went with father down on the Ranney lot and cut poles and trimmed apple trees.
- 22 Have been mending fences on the Ranney lot. Mr Hitchcock worked for us today. Just at night went and helped David Hitchcock get a cow out of the mire.
- 23 Turned out 27 sheep in the Ranney lot.
- 24 Father has been to Cambridgeport me help take care of the lambs. Received a letter from Lewis Bartlett. In the afternoon mended the pasture fence.
- 25 Have been down to Uncle Johns. After supper harrowed on the green sod.
- 26 Have been to Meeting on the hill today. Mr Ensign preached his first sermon today.
- 27 A snowy day have not worked much. Father has been down to Sterns Hitchcocks. School commences today.
- 28 Phebe and Adaline Bennett here today. Have been drawing poles and mending fence. The snow has all gone today.
- 29 Have been mending fence with David Hitchcock. Fathered commenced to hew the timbers for the sugarhouse today.
- 30 Have been to Saxons River today. Called to Royals Perhams and in the mill.

*Transcribed by James Trimble*

---

Enjoy these local snowy images from fellow Athenians – How much the scene has changed in such a short time!  
 Thanks to Sandi Capponcelli, Laurie Indenbaum, Jay & Ginger Maciejowski & Sherry Maher

