

The regular meeting of the Athens Town Board was called to order on May 15, 2023, at 7:00 pm, with the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag, by Supervisor Michael N. Pirrone, at the E. J. Arthur Elementary School, 51 Third Street, Athens, NY.

The following people were present: Supervisor Pirrone; Councilmember Mary H. Brandow; Councilmember Michael Ragaini; Councilmember Anthony Paluch; Councilmember Shannon Spinner and Town Clerk Linda M. Stacey.

These people were also present: Highway Superintendent John J. Farrell; Finance/Budget Officer Don Pierro; Code Enforcement Officer Albert Gasparini; Fran McCusker; Theresa Cardinale; Russell Nadler; Gail Lasher; Amber Clark; Diane Eastwick; George Greiner; Rick Rabideau; Terry Rabideau; Dennis Deleonardis; Doug Paquette; Jeff Ruso; Nick Dellisanti; Jeneane Walker; Margaret Muenkel; Bob Muenkel; Robert Brunner; Hailee Dickson; Becky Pine; James Connor; Catherine Connor; Amy Serrago; Yves Goldberg; Anne Krause; Tom Krause; George F. Stacey; Luigi DeStefano; M.K. Garvey and Carl Ublacker, NYSDOS, Local Efficiency Grant Program.

Local Efficiency Grant Program (LGE): Mr. Ublacker explained that the Program is administered by the New York Department of State. They provide technical assistance and competitive grants to local governments for projects that will achieve savings and improve municipal efficiency through shared services, cooperative agreements, consolidations, and dissolutions. The Department of State is committed to working with our partner municipalities to control costs while maintaining the quality of local service delivery.

Grants are eligible to promote community and economic development through

- Transportation, telecommunication, and basic public infrastructure critical for community development
- Workforce and employment related education
- Entrepreneurship, technology and business development
- Basic health care and other public services in severely economically distressed areas
- Promotion of resource conservation, tourism, recreation, and preservation of open spaces
- Development of renewable and alternative energy sources

Eligible applicants include municipalities, counties, not-profits, and Native American tribes.

Project Funding:

- Maximum of \$1,000,000 for infrastructure projects, and \$500,000 for all other project types
- Match of 20% in Distressed Counties and 50% in Transitional Countries
- Maximum of 80% total federal funding per project

Other cost reduction Efforts for Local Governments are Highway Services; Fire and Emergency Services; Water and Wastewater Services; Police Services.

Planning Grant would be 90% State and 10% Local.

Mr. Ublacker also held a question-and-answer session.

The meeting was called back to order

Councilmember Shannon Spinner made a motion seconded by Councilmember Mary H. Brandow *to approve the following vouchers* which were audited by the Board prior to the meeting:

General Abstract #10, vouchers #221 through #245 inclusive for **\$17,058.53**.

Highway Abstract # 9, vouchers #85 through #90 inclusive for **\$11,538.26**.

Trust and Custodian:

Dawoodani/Convenient Store- Abstract #3, voucher #3, for **\$317.03**.

FreePoint Solar- Legal- Abstract #4, voucher #4 for **\$3,611.12**.

Ayes-5(Pirrone; Brandow; Ragaini; Paluch; Spinner) Noes-0 Absent-0 Abstentions-0

Councilmember Anthony Paluch made a motion seconded by Councilmember Shannon Spinner *to approve the minutes of May 1, 2023, as read.* Ayes-5(Pirrone; Brandow; Ragaini; Paluch; Spinner) Noes-0 Absent-0 Abstentions-0

Highway Superintendent John J. Farrell reported that the 2023 CHIPS Project has been completed, with help from the Town of Catskill; Town of New Baltimore; Greene County Highway and the Village of Athens.

The Oil & Stone Project is scheduled for the end of June.

He has been conferring with Lamont Engineers, for a redesigned Stone Culvert Project, on Church Street in Leeds.

Mr. Farrell reported that the Joint Town /Village Cleanup Day, held on April 29th went well, they filled three (3) dumpsters.

Highway Superintendent Farrell informed the board, there are Federal Grant opportunities with the Safer Highways Program, available and that on May 23rd Highway Superintendents from the County, Town and Village are going to meet and brainstorm to produce a grant idea.

The highway crew helped the Village install their docks.

They helped moto pave with Coxsackie and the Town of New Baltimore.

There was an accident with two (2) vehicles. An accident report has been filled out. It has been reported to our insurance company. He did not know the amount of damage

Code Enforcement Officer Albert Gasparini gave his report:

He has been issued six (6) building permits. Fifteen (15) building inspections were done.

Several Building Permit inquiries were made: New House, Septic System. Multiple inquiries of parcels of land to build homes. Residential Solar Panels.

A Temporary Certificate of Occupancy for 52 Travis Blvd. for a modular Home Company to install insulated entry doors to unheated basement and attic.

A Certificate of Compliance to 716 Sandy Plains Rd/Interior Renovation.

There were ten (10) Certificates of Occupancy search requests.

Two (2) Short Term Rental Certificates: 1321 Schoharie Turnpike and 15 Longwood Drive.

Notes:

FreePoint Solar for Potic Mountain Road on going with the Zoning Board of Appeals.

Stop Work Order: No Building Permit for Two Decks Still in effect for: 686 Greene Lake Road, New engineered Plans have been submitted. Review of existing deck with Engineer, Contractor and Code Department have been done. Waiting for engineer to verify deck dimensions for building permit. There are now three hundred thirty-eight (338) short-term rentals.

The **Assessor's Office** continues to accept questions, provide aid, accept grievances, and address any other related matters.

The First Day of the Grievance Day appointments are not filled at this time. They have received bulk Grievances from related law firms.

The Office continues to give as much time as needed to all residents.

Finance/Budget Officer Don Pierro reported that all financial activity for January 1st through April 30, 2023 has been recorded on the General Ledger with no exceptions.

Annual Excise Tax (Form720) was prepared and filed with the Department of the Treasury for the average number of staff on the MVP policy for the year ending 2022.

The Annual PERMA Payroll Audit was reviewed and verified with no exception.

The Summary of Cash and a Combining Balance Sheet are updated and attached to the rear of the monthly Statement of Activities report.

All Bank Statements and Cash Reconciliations were completed for the month ending April 2023 with no exceptions noted.

The next annual payment of \$65,137.15 including principal and interest will be made in September 2023 for the single piece of bonded indebtedness.

On April 26, 2023, the Town received an impact Fee from Flint Mine Solar Project with much Gratitude to the Town Supervisor and Town Attorney for their successful efforts and perseverance on behalf of the Town of Athens.

Resident Luigi DiStefano has been dumping dirt over and above the amount allowed. He wants to put more dirt down. Code Enforcement reports that a “Cease & Desist” was issued. He was reviewed by the Planning Board in 2006. In 2023 the Planning Board said it was not their place to decide. The Code Enforcement Officer researched and brought it to the Town Board.

Mr. DiStefano can’t dump any more dirt until the Code Enforcement Officer gets answers to several questions he has,

Supervisor Pirrone informed the Board that the new Fire Protection Contract has been received. It has been reviewed by the Supervisor and has been forwarded to the Attorney for minor corrections.

The new Village /Town Lease has been received and reviewed by the Supervisor and forwarded to the Attorney for review.

Supervisor Pirrone stated that a Citizens Committee will be formed (due to the Moratorium) to address the Town’s concerns, protect the public health, safety, and welfare of the residents of the Town of Athens and to maintain the status quo as to certain solar energy uses, as the present zoning regulations in the Town do not adequately address this type of use. The Committee will be a blend of 5 (five) residents from the entire Town. They will be aided by legal & engineering professionals.

Councilmember Anthony Paluch said he has a few people.

Supervisor Pirrone advised the Board preliminary conversations were held with the Town Attorney regarding Cell Tower Code #162. They are considering options and paths to explore.

June 5th the Town Board will meet at the Highway Building, at 7:00 pm.

Residents Russ Nadler, Hailee Dickson and Becky Pine would like a Moratorium on Cell Towers.

Supervisor Pirrone said he has been talking to the Attorney, and this is already in motion.

As there was no further business to come before the meeting **Councilmember Shannon Spinner made a motion to adjourn seconded by Councilmember Michael Ragaini**. Ayes-5(Pirrone; Brandow; Ragaini; Paluch; Spinner) Noes-0 Absent-0 Abstentions-0

Meeting adjourned at 8:15 pm.