

REGULAR MEETING – ATHENS TOWN BOARD

December 16, 2024

The regular meeting of the Athens Town Board was called to order on December 16, 2024, by Supervisor Michael Pirrone at 6:00pm and was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag. The meeting was held at the Athens Municipal Building, 2 First St.

The following Town Board members in attendance: Supervisor Pirrone, Council Members Tami Bone, and Becky Pine. Absent Mary Brandow and Tony Paluch.

The following Town Officers/Appointees were present: Town Clerk Phyllis Dinkelacker, Deputy Supervisor Gail Lasher, Highway Superintendent John J Farrell, Town Code Enforcer Albert Gasparini and Town Attorney George McHugh

The following people were in attendance and signed: Michael Barton, Karen Haas, Robert Brunner.

VOUCHERS

The following bills were audited by the Board and ordered paid.

<u>General 2024 Abstract # 24</u>	Vouchers	#515 – 545	\$24,426.06
<u>Highway 2024 Abstract # 24</u>	Vouchers	#173 – 181	\$ 7,515.39

The minutes from: November 18 2024 and December 2, 2024 were distributed to the Town board and motion by Pine and seconded by Bone, to accept the minutes.

Motion carried. Yeah – 3, No’s – 0, Absent – 2.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

HIGHWAY SUPERINTENDENT – John Farrell

- Checked all roads and culvert pipes
- Did a driveway culvert at 268 Potic Mountain rd.
- Been doing tree work on Lees Athens Rd
- Id like to surplus and sell the old 3-point hitch mower to the Town of Catskill for \$3,500.00
- Pre wet salt grant, from the Athens Community Foundation, we were awarded \$20,000.00. I am working on a plan to put that together.
- We had 3 snow events since the last meeting.
- We helped the Village with a water break on Schoharie Turnpike.
- We also decorated the Christmas tree for the Victorian Stroll.

A motion was made by Bone and seconded by Pine to approve Superintendent Farrell to surplus and sell the mower attachment to the Town of Catskill for \$3,500.00.

Motion carried. Yeah – 3, No’s – 0, Absent – 2

CODE ENFORCEMENT – Albert Gasparini See attached.

Mr. Gasparini also reported that he and Town attorney McHugh will be going to court on 12/19/24 regarding paperwork from Luigi Distefano showing his land was zoned commercial.

ASSESSOR – Ms. Dawn DeRose see attached.

FINANCIAL/BUDGET OFFICER – see attached.

Animal Control Officer – Sherry Vieta

Ms. Vieta was asked to come in and meet the Board members. She explained to the Board member that she is called for other animals other than Dogs. When she gets a call for other animals she will call DEC, and they will handle it. She did also let the board know that she would like to continue to be the ACO for Athens.

Supervisor Report: Legal Items

FreePoint Solar, LLC. et al. v. Town of Athens Zoning Board of Appeals. Appellate Division, Third Dept.-Case/Docket No.:CV-24-0711.

Town of Athens, Special Counsel, John Dowd, Dreyer-Boyajian has filed our All the appellate briefs have been filed with the Appellate Division Scheduled for oral arguments in November 2024.

Hailee Dickson, et al. v. Town of Athens Zoning Board of Appeals, et al. NYS Supreme Court, Greene County-Index No.: EF2024-400.

Towns Special Counsel, John Dowd, Esq. preparing memorandum of law in opposition to Dickson and others’ Article 78 Verified Petition.

Town Attorney McHugh-Town Board legal update & explanations.

Supervisor Report: General Items:

Peckham, Schoharie Turnpike odor issues. The Supervisor continues to aid in the resolution of this issue, accurately identify any & all potential causes. Met with Peckham Managers on Dec. 4 with the goal of helping resolve our concerns. Pelham is continuing to operate & monitor their facility according to their best practices. Pelham has asked to be notified at any hour of the day when an odor persists, to help identify the nature & potential cause. The Supervisor scheduled a tour with Culpeper Woods, for Wednesday Morning @ 10:00 am. Mr. Scott Crowe & Ms. Cathy Cavern (Culpeper)

welcomed Scott Pooters & Dan Lewis (Peckham) and Athens CEO Albert Gasparini & Supervisor Pirrone. The group received a complete tour of the plant & operating equipment with available hands-on experience. Constructive conversations, all held questions & answers.

Greene County Ambulance Review Study Meeting #3, December 11 @ 6:00 pm. Supervisor attended the meeting @ Cairo Elementary School. The group struggles with the course of action priorities. Once again, complete individual Town acceptance & participation, was questioned to County Leadership. The continuing answer is “We Don’t Know.” EMS Stakeholders prefer a dominant role in determining services, equipment & personnel needs. While the County Leadership understands its financial sourcing responsibilities. The County Leadership acquiesces to the EMS Stakeholders by permitting their request for a separate meeting, prior to the next Total Group Meeting on January 8.

Re-Appointment Town Assessor. Town Assessor DeRose has expressed her desire to remain with the Town during her next re-appointment term. In conversation with Mrs. DeRose & guidance with the Town Attorney the Supervisor recommends the Town considers his thoughts & justifications. Mrs. DeRose is not seeking an unreasonable salary increase, appreciates the Town’s amicable workplace environment & avoids any poaching possibilities. The Assessor’s Office is well run, organized & efficient. Being able to maintain the continuation of the vast improvements already accomplished. There have been an “indistinguishable” number of complaints, issues & concerns. Grievance day was very small. There were only 36 cases, out of 3000 properties in the Town. Assessor DeRose is open to any questions from the Town Council.

Building Fees, last time updated, June 7, 2021. Waiting for any feedback.

New Business:

The Town Clerk has taken action to secure an “Automated Magnetic Ink Character Recognition Machine,” from National Bank of Coxsackie. The Town Clerk’s Office & Supervisor Bookkeeper will share the machine. Awaiting scheduling from the Bank for delivery, setup, training.

The Town Supervisor has agreed to have Greene County RPTS administer the Town’s 2nd “Mailing of Notices for the Senior Citizen Property Tax Exemption” by December 20, in accordance with the requirements in RPTL Article 467. Total number of Mailings is 1861, Cost to Town is \$994.96.

Town Action: To Authorized Supervisor Pirrone to sign the contract with Columbia-Greene Humane Society/SPAC, under NYS, Agriculture & Markets Law, Article 7 Housing only. Contracts Terms, \$ 40, per dog, per day for the first ten (10) days; on eleventh (11) day, Columbia-Greene Humane will charge \$350 and take responsibility for the dog.

Motion By Pine 2nd By Bone. Motion carried. Yea – 3, No’s – 0, Absent – 2.

Old Business Issues:

Proposed Option to include Agent Print Fee of \$ 1.00 to cover cost of printing materials.

Council Member Pine & Code Enforcement Officer Gasparini has prepared a draft of proposed Building Department Permit & Fees revisions for consideration by the Council. Will have a workshop on 1/8 to review the proposed code changes.

Town Council Concerns:

-In regard to the ARPA grant, The village has spent all their money and still has a small amount still owed.

-Supervisor Pirrone will reach out to the county to confirm if he can spend his money for a different purpose than the one, he asked in the original application.

-Question if any reports about the Athens Community foundation were received. Supervisor Pirrone will reach out to Paul Salvino for report.

- Discussion regarding the Laws for BESS & Cell towers.

Public Concerns:

Karen Haas asked about senior exemptions and enhanced Star program. Was advised to ask the Assessors office.

Community Information:

- Dec 16: Town Board Meeting. Municipal Building.
- Dec 19 : Planning Board Meeting. Municipal Building.
- Dec. 24: Town Office Closed in the Afternoon.
- Dec. 25: Christas Day Holiday. Town Offices Closed All Day.
- Dec. 31: Town Offices Closed in the Afternoon.
- Jan. 1: New Years Holiday. Town Offices Closed all Day.
- Jan 6: Town Board Meeting. Yearly Organizational Meeting. Municipal Building.
- Jan. 8: Zoning Board of Appeal Meeting. Municipal Building.
- Jan. 20: Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. Town Offices Closed All Day.
- Jan. 21: Town Board Meeting. Municipal Building.
- Jan. 23: Town Planning Board Meeting. Municipal Building.

Being no other business to come before the Board.

A Motion was made by Bone and second by Pine to adjourn the meeting at 6:53pm.

Motion carried. Ayes – 3, No’s – 0, Abstentions/Absents – 2.

Respectfully submitted,
Phyllis Dinkelacker
Town Clerk