

**VILLAGE OF ATHENS BOARD MEETING
MINUTES – February 23, 2022**

Pledge to the Flag.

PRESENT: Mayor Amy Serrago, Trustee Rickie Gabrielle, Trustee Nancy Poylo and Trustee Joshua Lipsman

ABSENT: Trustee Gail Lasher

Village Attorney Tal Rappleyea was also present (remotely).

Clerk-Treasurer Mary Jo Wynne was also present for the purpose of taking Minutes.

A hybrid in person/remote meeting format was held at the Athens Firehouse located at 39 Third Street at 6:30PM.

PUBLIC:

1. *Stan Oldakowski, resident of Water Street*, attended the meeting to discuss a letter he recently received from the Village's Code Enforcement/Police department stating that he needed to remove his trailer before January 22, 2022 as he is in violation of section 158 of village code.

He was hoping that the VB would grant him permission to keep the trailer on the property year round given there has been a camper/trailer on that property (prior to him living there) for over 30 years. He noted that he keeps the property clean and attractive looking. He was also made aware of the fact that one resident complained about a trailer near her property and that is what prompted the letters to property owners being mailed.

Mayor Serrago agreed that the VB was made aware of this due to a complaint made by a resident regarding a different camper. Anyone violating that same code had to be notified. However, it is a safety concern being in the flood zone.

Mr. Oldakowski questioned the issue of safety and also inquired as to whether it can be 'grandfathered' in?

Village Attorney referred to the code and stated that that section does not reference 'grandfathering' at all.

Mayor Serrago stated that once an issue has been brought to their attention they must act on it and adhere to the Village code. It is the law and unfortunately, they cannot make exceptions.

Mr. Oldakowski asked the VB if he could at least leave the camper there for this winter as spring is almost here. It is in the snow right now and by the time he gets it out of there, spring will be here and it will be time to move it back in.

The VB agreed that he could leave the camper/trailer where it is until the end of the summer as stated in the code.

2. *Samira Abed*. Re: Airbnb- Code Enforcement – No show

3. *Sarah Grinberg, Chairperson of the Athens Community Garden*, attended the meeting to discuss the plans to enlarge their growing space as provided to the VB.

VB approved plans as submitted.

4. **Tina Chaden, resident of Brick Row**, attended the meeting to discuss a letter that she received from Code Enforcement/Police stating that she was in violation of Local Law 2020-03 because she has not registered her STR. She is questioning this violation since she does not consider her listing on Airbnb as meeting the criteria in the law for 'Short term rental'. She stated that she only rents a bed and provides breakfast, therefore she considers herself a 'bed and breakfast' that she lists through Airbnb. She considers herself a lodging facility according to the definition in the law.

The Mayor stated that she understands that the definition in the code/law is confusing but given what is in the law, Ms. Chaden's accommodations would be considered a 'short term rental' thereby requiring a permit. Her accommodations do not qualify as 'bed and breakfast' because the state strictly controls, permits, inspects these type of facilities. The accommodations that she extends are not regulated by the State as a 'bed and breakfast' and they are listed on Airbnb's website, which have no regulation other than the internet.

Ms. Chaden asked why the VB has decided to start charging people for this activity.

Mayor Serrago noted that the VB felt that the dramatic increase in this activity should be regulated so we are all aware of these facilities. In addition, if unchecked, it has the ability to change our community. Other communities are regulating this activity as well.

5. **KJ Holmes**. Re: Airbnb – No show

6. **Chris Hoppe, President of the Hudson River Historic Boat Restoration and Sailing Society**, attended the meeting to discuss the recent purchase made by Scenic Hudson of 133 N. Washington St. located on the river in the village.

The Hudson River Historic Boat Restoration and Sailing Society have just completed the restoration of a racing sloop named the Eleanor and are looking to find a home for her. In this way, perhaps people can come and see the boat during the off-season.

Mayor Serrago expressed interest and noted that the ice boat people have contacted Scenic Hudson as well. They are interested in their purchase as well.

Mayor Serrago noted that she will keep them both in the conversation. Maybe they can tie both interests into the property and create some type of maritime destination.

7. **Carol Pfister, representing the Cultural Center**, shared pictures of the renovation project going on at the Cultural Center.

The building permit application for the project was discussed. It was noted that it is not necessary but it is good to have for documentation of work done.

APPLICATIONS:

1. Facility Use Application- Riverfront Park. Applicant: Greene County Cruisers. One application for meetings and another application for "Car cruisers". A **MOTION** was made by Trustee Poylo, seconded by Trustee Gabrielle, all in favor, to approve the applications as submitted.

2. Permit to peddle Application. Applicant: Mr. Ding-A-Ling. A **MOTION** was made by Trustee Lipsman, seconded by Trustee Gabrielle, all in favor to approve application as submitted.

RESOLUTIONS:

1. Proposed Resolution Approving Minutes

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Minutes from the Village Board meeting held on February 9, 2022 be approved:

Offered by: Trustee Poylo

Seconded by: Trustee Gabrielle

Record of vote: All in favor

2. Proposed Resolution Approving Payment of Vouchers as Presented on Abstracts

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Village Board approve payment of the following vouchers as presented:

GENERAL FUND – Abstract #2086, vouchers numbered #9921435 through #9921456 in the amount of \$20,709.88

WATER FUND – Abstract #10518, voucher number #9921461 in the amount of \$1,765.22

SEWER FUND – Abstract #10504, vouchers numbered #9921419 through #9921424 in the amount of \$10,245.18

Offered by: Trustee Gabrielle

Seconded by: Trustee Poylo

Record of vote: All in favor

3. Proposed Resolution Approving Rescinding Resolution #6 made by the Village Board on February 13, 2019

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Village Board rescind Resolution #6 made by the Village Board at a Village Board Meeting held on February 13, 2019 approving the conveyance of the Community Center building to the Town of Athens.

Offered by: Trustee Poylo

Seconded by: Trustee Lipsman

Record of vote: All in favor

CORRESPONDENCE:

1. Central Hudson. Re: Dig Safely.

2. NYSDOH. Re: Monitoring requirements for 2022.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Collaruso and Son, Inc. – bid for Union Street project

The Contract was discussed at the previous meeting. Due to the fact that the contract, at that point did not have an end date for work completed, the Vendor put November 30th, 2022 as the date for work completion.

The contract looks complete now.

2. Financial Statements for January 2022 were distributed to VB members by the Clerk-Treasurer

OLD BUSINESS:

1. Fund balance policy.

Discussed at last meeting.

The Clerk-Treasurer encouraged the VB to have one in place per the OSC.

Maybe make it part of the Organizational meeting annually as with other Village policies.

Mayor will distribute the draft policy to VB members to address at budget time.

2. Proceeds from sale of old dpw garage.

The funds were to be used for a project that did not go through so the monies need to be deposited into an existing account or set up a new one.

Mayor feels strongly that the proceeds should be deposited into the Building Renovations Fund.

Trustee Lipsman asked the Village Attorney about the status of the Stretch Code.

Village Attorney responded that he is working on it.

Trustee Poylo informed the VB that the Town of Athens is setting up a planning and zoning training at the end of March and invited the Village to attend.

Also noted that she is working on the social media policy.

A MOTION was made by Trustee Lipsman, seconded by Trustee Poylo, all in favor, approving the purchase of ceiling tile from GNH lumber at a cost of \$2900.00 for the Firehouse ceiling.

Mayor Serrago discussed the fact that, considering the numerous projects the village has coming up; she would like to open a discussion naming Jason Preisner, Lamont Engineering, as the official Village Engineer.

ADJOURNMENT

A MOTION was made by Trustee Poylo, seconded by Trustee Gabrielle, all in favor to adjourn.

8:00PM