

VILLAGE OF ATHENS BOARD MEETING
MINUTES – March 23, 2022
6:30PM –Athens Firehouse

PLEDGE TO THE FLAG

PRESENT: Mayor Serrago, Trustee Gail Lasher, Trustee Rickie Gabrielle, Trustee Nancy Poylo

ABSENT: Trustee Joshua Lipsman

Village Attorney Tal Rappleyea was also present.

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

PUBLIC HEARINGS:

There are two Public Hearings this evening:

Public Hearing #1

Held for the purpose of hearing public comment on proposed local law #1 of 2022 which would override the tax levy limit established in General Municipal Law §3-C.

The Mayor opened the meeting to Public comment on proposed Local Law #1.

No comments from the public.

Public Hearing closes at 6:33 PM.

Public Hearing #2

Held for the purpose of hearing public comment on the ‘Civilian Oversight in Policing’ Draft Law created in accordance with the New York State Police Reform and Reinvention Collaborative, Governor’s Executive Order 203 of 2020.

The Mayor opened the meeting to Public comment on proposed local law #2.

Jane Cole-Raffety, village resident, asked how the committee will be formed –what will be the process going forward?

The Mayor responded that the details are in the proposed law and refer to the village website because there is more information coming regarding this committee.

No other comments.

Public Hearing closes at 6:39 PM.

APPLICATIONS:

1. Facility use application. Streets. Applicant: Athens Cultural Center. A **MOTION** was made by Trustee Poylo, seconded by Trustee Lasher, all in favor approving application as submitted

2. Facility use application. Riverfront Park. Applicant: Athens Performing Arts Corporation. A **MOTION** was made by Trustee Lasher, seconded by Trustee Gabrielle, all in favor approving Application as submitted.

A **MOTION** was made by Trustee Lasher, seconded by Trustee Gabrielle, all in favor approving waiving the open container law during concerts and for those areas specified in the application.

3. Membership application. Athens Volunteer Fire Department. Applicant: James Wais. A **MOTION** was made by Trustee Gabrielle, seconded by Trustee Lasher, all in favor approving application as submitted.

RESOLUTIONS:

1. Proposed Resolution Approving Minutes

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

Offered by:
Seconded by:
Record of vote:
Tabled until next meeting

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

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Village Board approve the payment of vouchers as presented:
GENERAL FUND – Abstract #2089, vouchers numbered #9921499 through #9921527 in the amount of \$41,824.81
SEWER FUND – Abstract #10506, vouchers numbered #9921532 through 9921535 in the amount of \$615.66

Offered by: Trustee Poylo
Seconded by: Trustee Lasher
Record of vote: All in favor

3. Proposed Resolution Regarding NY-NJ Watershed Protection Act: H.R. 4677

(Resolution attached)

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Village Board is in support of passing the NY-NJ Watershed Protection Act: H.R. 4677:

Offered by: Trustee Lasher
Seconded by: Trustee Poylo
Record of vote: All in favor

CORRESPONDENCE:

1. Mid-Hudson Cablevision. Re: Annual Franchise Fee
2. Riverkeeper. Re: 11th annual Riverkeeper Sweep – May 7th
3. Arbor Day Foundation. Re: Congrats to Athens – Tree City USA
4. NYSDOH. Re: Notice of violation

BUSINESS:

1. Scheduling Public Hearings for Tentative Budget and zoning changes recommended by the Cannabis Committee

Public Hearing for the Tentative Budget will be held April 13, 2022 at 6:30PM.

Public Hearing for the proposed changes to zoning will be held on April 27, 2022.

2. Organizational Meeting – will be held April 4, 2022 at 6:30pm in Village Office.

3. General Code- renewal of online code

A **MOTION** was made by Trustee Poylo, seconded by Trustee Gabrielle, all in favor to authorize Clerk-Treasurer to give General Code the ‘go-ahead’ for updating online code and books.

4. Community Center – heating issues

All Phase and Trojan have completed their work at the Community Center for Boiler/chimney work.

Maintenance agreement discussion forthcoming.

5. Financial Statements for February distributed to VB members

The Mayor noted that Chief Butterworth of the Athens Fire Dept. emailed her regarding the Fire Department’s intended youth member program. At a previous VB meeting, The Chief noted that they wanted to institute a restricted active member youth program in their Fire dept. The VB asked that they provide further information in order to finalize the legitimacy of the program. The further info was in the email.

A **MOTION** was made by Trustee Gabrielle, seconded by Trustee Poylo, all in favor approving the youth program at the Athens Fire Department.

Village Attorney Tal Rappleyea informed the VB that he is working on:

- Delinquent town water user
- Closing for RLF recipient
- Finalizing law on allowing restaurants to have outdoor seating
- Community Center lease with the town of Athens

DPW Director Anthony Proper informed the VB that there is a water leak in the woods near Leeds-Athens Road. The Cemetery is willing to let the DPW use their gator to repair the leak. Mr. Proper asked the Village Attorney if that would be ok.

Village Attorney replied 'yes'.

The Mayor informed the VB that the 'Friends of Athens' have requested to hold a 'cleanup day' for the Village. Areas discussed were Leeds-Athens Road, Union Street, Route 385 and Second Street (from Water Street to Warren Street).

'Friends of Athens' have a donated dumpster for the day and asked where they could place it for the day?

DPW Director Anthony Proper directed them to place it by the DPW garage parking area

Mayor Serrago thanked Trustee Gabrielle for serving for the village as Trustee.

Trustee Gabrielle stated that it has been an honor and a pleasure to serve the village and work with everyone here.

A MOTION was made at 7:30PM by Trustee Lasher, seconded by Trustee Poylo, all in favor to enter EXECUTIVE SESSION to discuss litigation.

A MOTION was made by Trustee Lasher, seconded by Trustee Poylo, all in favor to exit Executive Session and resume regular village board meeting at 7:50PM.

ADJOURN VB meeting – MOTION made by Trustee Gabrielle, seconded by Trustee Poylo, all in favor

MEETING ADJOURNS at 7:51PM.

Village Board of the Village of Athens, New York
DATED March 23, 2022
RESOLUTION REGARDING NY-NJ Watershed Protection Act: H.R. 4677

WHEREAS, New York Congressman Tonko has proposed the NY-NJ Watershed Protection Act, a unique federal investment program to authorize \$50 million of federal funds to protect and restore all watersheds, including the Hudson River Watershed, that flow into New York-New Jersey Harbor and

WHEREAS, the Act has unanimous support among the Hudson Valley's Congressional delegation; and,

WHEREAS, the Act would provide benefits to diverse stakeholders such as the protection of fisheries and wildlife, conservation of natural resources and public and private lands, critical urban greenspaces, ocean and coastal resources, and various opportunities to improve the quality of life for community members throughout the region; and

WHEREAS, the Village of Athens, NY is part of the most densely populated and economically important regions in the country, the proposed NY-NJ Watershed Act will provide enormous economic and environmental benefits locally, regionally and nationally; and

WHEREAS, watersheds provide drinking water, tourism and outdoor recreation, economic opportunities, as well as sustain fisheries, critical wildlife and provide vital infrastructure from flooding and rising sea levels; and

WHEREAS, the Act would provide matching funds to achieve the goals of New York State Department of Environmental Conservation's Hudson River Estuary Program, a state program that has greatly benefitted Hudson Valley communities; and,

WHEREAS, the Act would fund shoreline management and restoration within the watersheds,

WHEREAS, as an elected body tasked with protection and safeguarding irreplaceable water-connected resources and nature-based flood hazard mitigation measures that are essential to protect human life and infrastructure; and

WHEREAS, this Act would direct the Secretary of the Interior to enhance collaboration and coordinate restoration activities at all levels of government to protect fish and wildlife habitats, endangered species, improve water quality, increase public access to the estuary, mitigate flood risks, and develop public outreach and educational activities; and

WHEREAS, many residents of the region of the NY-NJ Watershed live in communities lacking environmental justice, where access to and enjoyment of fish, wildlife, clean water, and other natural resources have been impaired or compromised, federal funding is necessary to mitigate these long overdue environmental and social issues; and

WHEREAS, the Village of Athens, NY would benefit from the Act as it would establish beneficial programs and award grants to help fund valuable restoration projects in our local community; and

WHEREAS, the Village of Athens, NY is a cornerstone in which its residents depend on and the region relies on for its resources to provide prosperity throughout the state, therefore, the Village of Athens, NY must uphold its duty to protect the community's access to drinking water and natural resources; and

WHEREAS, the Village of Athens, NY has an opportunity to be a social and environmental leader of the state, by supporting the NY-NJ Watershed Protection Act, we may lead by example and facilitate much needed change; and

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Village Board of the Village of Athens, NY supports the passing of the NY-NJ Watershed Protection Act.

MOTION made by Trustee Gail Lasher
Seconded by Trustee Nancy Poylo
Trustee Rickie Gabrielle votes aye
Mayor Amy Serrago votes aye

ABSENT: Trustee Dr. Joshua Lipsman

RESOLUTION passes

VILLAGE OF ATHENS
LOCAL LAW NO. 1 FOR THE YEAR 2022
A LOCAL LAW TO OVERRIDE THE TAX LEVY LIMIT ESTABLISHED IN GENERAL
MUNICIPAL LAW §3-C

Be it enacted by the Village Board of the Village of Athens as follows:

Section 1. Legislative Intent: It is the intent of this local law to override the limit on the amount of real property taxes that may be levied by the Village of Athens pursuant to General Municipal law §3-c, and to allow the Village of Athens to adopt a budget for the fiscal year beginning June 1, 2022 and ending May 31, 2023 that requires a real property tax levy in excess of the "tax levy limit" as defined by General Municipal Law §3-c.

Section 2. Authority: This local law is adopted pursuant to subdivision 5 of General Municipal law §3-c, which expressly authorizes the Village board to override the tax levy limit by the adoption of a local law approved by vote of at least sixty percent (60%) of the Village Board.

Section 3. Tax Levy Limit Override: The Village Board of the Village of Athens, County of Greene is hereby authorized to adopt a budget for the fiscal year 2022-2023 that requires a real property tax levy in excess of the amount otherwise prescribed in General Municipal Law §3-c.

Section 4. Severability: If any clause, sentence, paragraph, subdivision, or part of this Local Law or the application thereof to any person, firm or corporation, or circumstance, shall be adjusted by any court of competent jurisdiction to be invalid or unconstitutional, such order or judgement shall not affect, impair, or invalidate the remainder thereof, but shall be confined in its operation to the clause, sentence, paragraph, subdivision, or part of this Local Law or in its application to the person, individual, firm or corporation or circumstance, directly involved in the controversy in which such judgement or order shall be rendered.

Section 5. Effective date: This local law shall take effect immediately upon filing with the Secretary of State.