

ATHENS VILLAGE BOARD MEETING
MINUTES – May 22, 2024

PLEDGE TO THE FLAG

PRESENT: Mayor Amy Serrago, Trustee Gail Lasher, Trustee Josh Lipsman, Trustee Alison Phoenix and Trustee Joey Dillberg

Village Attorney Tal Rappleyea was also present.

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

PUBLIC:

1. *Johnny Osborne, owner of 'Night School' Brewery* attended the meeting to discuss and answer any questions that the village board has regarding his request to provide outdoor seating at his establishment. He provided the VB with a diagram of his intent.

A MOTION was made by Trustee Lasher, seconded by Trustee Dillberg, all in favor, approving Night School's request to provide outdoor seating on Second Street given the diagram provided.

2. *Ralph Vendresco, resident of Athens* attended the meeting to discuss unkempt properties in the village. He stated that the village looks like 'crap'. It's never looked this bad, and he has lived here for many years. There are buildings that have been being worked on for years, houses falling down, cars parked in the roadway with no license, a junkyard in the middle of the village... He would like to know if anyone is working on these issues.

The Mayor replied that the one issue is under investigation by the state so there is nothing they can do about it. She also noted that it is difficult to 'touch' private properties. One property that they were in the middle of condemning unfortunately the owners came forward and now it is at a standstill.

Mr. Vendresco mentioned several properties not located on S. Franklin Street that are in very bad condition.

Mayor Serrago disagreed with Mr. Vendresco and noted that there are a lot more good things going on than bad things and she mentioned several businesses in the village that have opened and are doing well.

Trustee Lipsman also stated that it is very frustrating trying to fix these eyesores. The issue of property owner's rights always stalls progress. The VB is limited with the tools that they have to deal with these issues. The state does not work with us in order to clean up these properties unfortunately.

Trustee Lipsman asked that Mr. Vendresco submit an official complaint form listing all of the properties that he is concerned about.

Mayor Serrago agreed that that would be the thing to do and then she can follow up with Code Enforcement.

The Village Board thanked him for attending the meeting.

APPLICATIONS:

1. Outdoor Entertainment for Commercial Establishments and Events Application. Applicant: Stewart House.

A **MOTION** was made by Trustee Lasher, seconded by Trustee Dillberg, all in favor, approving the application as submitted.

2. Facility Use Application-Riverfront Park. Applicant: Food Pantry

A **MOTION** was made by Trustee Lasher, seconded by Trustee Phoenix, all in favor, approving the application as submitted.

RESOLUTIONS:

1. Proposed Resolution Approving Minutes from Village Board Meeting

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Village Board approve minutes from meeting held on May 8th, 2024:

Offered by: Trustee Lipsman

Seconded by: Trustee Lasher

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 the payment of vouchers as presented:

Offered by: Trustee Phoenix

Seconded by: Trustee Dillberg

Record of vote: All in favor

CORRESPONDENCE:

1. Athens Performing Arts Corporation. Re: APAC concert night liability.
2. Waterfront Advisory Committee. Re: Updated opinion on Brice Marden Garden – 11 N. Water Street.
3. BlueWave. Re: Water Surface Lease Opportunity.
4. BlueWave. (Follow-up to correspondence #3).
5. Greene County Office of the Administrator. Re: ARPA opportunities.
6. NYSDOH. Re: Lead and Copper Rule Revisions (LCRR) and Lead Pipe Right to Know Act (LPRTK).
7. Law Office of Rogendy Toussaint, Esq., PLL. Re: William Wallace, et.al. v. The Town of Athens Assessor's Office.

NEW BUSINESS:

A Public Hearing will be held for the purpose of increasing water rates at the second meeting in June.

The Mayor signed the tax warrant to collect taxes for the village.

Trustee Phoenix discussed the status of this Summer's Recreation program. The program must be modified from the program we have run in the past due to state regulations differentiating camps from other programs that do not require permits and regulations. The village is attempting to develop a 'non camp' summer recreation program. If we cannot come up with a new director and a passive program then

it may not happen this year. A program needs to be solidified in the next couple of weeks or there may not be a program this year.

Kathy Jackson and Marge Clark spoke in favor of moving forward on creating a program this summer.

Village Attorney Tal Rappleyea also spoke about how this need for modification occurred. NYSDOH investigated the program last summer and violated the village for several items that would be considered a 'camp' program. The village was given an extension which is almost expired to document changes to the program, have them reviewed and approved. If that occurs then the program can occur this summer.

The Mayor noted that she has been working closely with someone at the state that has been very helpful in differentiating recreation program from summer camp and therefore helping to create a program we can move forward with this year.

Discussion ensued between members of the public and the VB regarding this issue.

Bottom line it appears is that if this team that's come together can come up with a passive program then the program will continue but if not then the program may take a hiatus this year.

The position of Recreation Director has been posted on Indeed.

Trustee Phoenix also mentioned that the AVFD Chief is looking for a Chief's vehicle. Possibly taking monies from the Fire Dept Equipment Fund. Half of the vehicle would be paid for by the Athens volunteer fire department.

A MOTION was made by Trustee Lasher, seconded by Trustee Lipsman, all in favor to put a bid on a chief's vehicle in an amount not to exceed \$12,000.00, contingent upon the Fire Dept. splitting the cost in half from their monies.

Mayor Serrago informed the village board on several issues:

- SRO at EJA. She met with the school, a school board member, and sent a letter to the BOE in support of keeping a member of the APD as the SRO at EJ Arthur Elementary School but it did not go well. The school feels that it is too expensive, and the Sheriff's department will be taking it over.
- Village building. There will be a meeting with the Town Supervisor, the Mayor and the Village Attorney to discuss going forward with the renovation of the building. The Town Board is not receptive to this project any longer.
- The title search on the N. Franklin Street drainage issue proved conclusively that it is not the village's property. There is no evidence that we own the property.
- Cultural Center. Working on a plan to transfer the building to the Cultural Center. The building is better off belonging to them.

ADJOURNMENT:

7:50PM MOTION made by Trustee Lasher, seconded by Trustee Dillberg