

**VILLAGE OF ATHENS BOARD MEETING  
MINUTES – MAY 22, 2019**

**PRESENT:** Mayor Stephan Bradicich, Trustee Gail Lasher, Trustee Robert Scott, Trustee Amy Serrago and Trustee Dr. Joshua Lipsman.

Village Attorney Tal Rappleyea, DPW Director Anthony Proper and Joe Myers (Northdome) were also in attendance.

*Pledge to the Flag*

**PUBLIC:**

1. *Village resident John Pulice* attended the meeting for several reasons:

- Village water. He is unhappy with the quality and he hears people complain about it all of the time and everyone buys bottled water for this reason.

The Mayor noted that the VB will be discussing the water system later this evening and also Trustee Lipsman is chairing the newly established water quality committee.

- Trees. The Rectory for the catholic church specifically asked that a tree not be planted in front of it and a tree did get planted there. Mr. Pulice asked who will be taking care of the tree and mowing around the tree. He noted that the village does own that property technically.

Mayor Bradicich mentioned that he did forward the request not to plant the tree in front of the Rectory on N. Franklin St. as requested to the Friends of Athens.

The Mayor and Trustee Serrago noted that the committee that planted the trees will care for them. They are actively fund raising to raise enough money to care for the trees.

Discussion ensued regarding property ownership of areas between sidewalks and roadways. Who is responsible for mowing etc.?

The same goes for the sidewalks – the property owner does not own the sidewalk but they are responsible for maintaining them.

VB concurred that the Village owns these portions of property but the property owner should maintain them.

Trustee Scott noted that he takes pride in his property so he maintains the area around his property that is owned by the Village.

You may not own it but it is your responsibility.

- Parking issue. When the church on N. Franklin Street is having services the parking on that street is terrible in that cars are parked facing in the wrong

direction. He noted that this occurs all over the village and he has noticed that the cops drive right by and do nothing.

Trustee Lasher stated that she would discuss it with the Chief of Police.

- Fence issue. The neighbor next to the rectory put up a fence and put the good side of the fence on his side. If someone puts up a fence aren't they suppose to put the good side on the side of their neighbor?

Trustee Serrago noted that there is not a good neighbor clause in the Village of Athens Code Book for fence placement therefore when putting up a fence you can put either side up on your property.

Trustee Scott noted that it is usually a courtesy to put the good side on your neighbor's side.

- Survey. A survey was completed by a neighbor of the rectory as they are putting up a fence. He is concerned because the surveyors dropped the mapping pins without notifying them. And also he questions the results of the survey as it relates to the placement of the fence. The VB and Village Attorney stated that that was a civil matter not a Village Board matter.

2. *Nancy Poylo, resident of the village*, attended the meeting to discuss sidewalks. Ms. Poylo stated that she wanted some clarity regarding sidewalk maintenance. She understands that the property owner must maintain their sidewalks, however, when the sidewalk buckles due to the root of the Village tree what is the liability on the homeowner?

The Village Attorney stated that it is tough but the property owner should work with the tree committee to figure out a way to keep the tree, perhaps cut the root and fix the sidewalk.

Village DPW Director Mr. Proper stated that in the past the DPW has lifted the sidewalk, cut the root out of the ground and then re-laid the sidewalk.

Mayor Bradicich mentioned that this is a common problem throughout the Village and that he will take a look at her sidewalks in the near future.

3. *Ian Palmateer, resident of the village*, attended the meeting to ask a couple of questions regarding the trees that were just planted throughout the village. Who paid for them and how was it decided where they would be planted?

The Mayor replied that the trees were paid for by donations and grants received by the not for profit group the 'Friends of Athens'. An Arborist came through and created an inventory of trees in the village. As a result of this inventory, trees that were deemed unhealthy or dead were cut down and then sites were listed for possible tree plantings along with species and size appropriateness.

Mr. Palmateer asked the Village Board about liabilities or sidewalks that have been made unsafe by village trees. He also wanted to know that if he wants to replace the bluestone sidewalk in the historic district does he have to replace it with bluestone?

The Village Attorney stated that the issue of replacement of sidewalks was a question for the Code Enforcement Officer.

If the sidewalk has to be replaced with bluestone, which is very expensive, will the village help him out since bluestone is much more expensive than other mediums and the village does own the sidewalk.

4. *Frank Pedatella, village resident residing on N. Water Street*, voiced his concern regarding the Friday night concert series. South Water St. has 'no parking' restrictions but North Water St. does not. People park all over the place and leave bottles and trash and have no regard for the neighborhood. He suggested that they 'bus' people down from the School.

He stated that he feels that the organizer of the event just wants to get as many people as he can to the event and he also noted that he is not a fan of the 'rock and roll' music. All the bands sound alike and the 'open container' law lifted in the park fills the park with derelicts.

5. *Bruce Pruiksma, resident of the village located on State Route 385*, returned to the Village Board Meeting as a follow-up to the issue discussed at the last meeting. He would like to know the status of lowering the speed limit on Route 385.

Mayor Bradicich informed Mr. Pruiksma that no paperwork was previously submitted to NYSDOT on this matter.

Mr. Pruiksma stated that former Mayor Alberti told him that he had had a lengthy meeting with NYSDOT regarding this.

Mayor Bradicich noted that perhaps they had a meeting but there is no paperwork submission as far as he has found.

Mr. Pruiksma also made mention of the fact that he hears that the police department is in the process of purchasing a new car. He has an issue with this since he has heard that the equipment in the police cars is not certified.

Mayor Bradicich noted that he has confirmed with Chief of police Masse that all of the equipment in the cars is certified.

He reiterated that there is no police presence on this section of Route 385 even though they do pay village taxes. He noted that one of the officers told him that they are not allowed to go that far up Route 385. Mr. Pruiksma has offered to let the Athens Police Department sit in his driveway and they have not.

Mayor Bradicich informed Mr. Pruiksmas that there have been 2 recent policing surveys completed using state equipment in this area. These surveys determine whether there is a 'need to police' based on traffic patterns. It was determined based upon these surveys that there was a low need for policing.

Mr. Pruiksmas asked to see copies.

Mayor Bradicich noted that in order to go forward he will be meeting with the Town Supervisor as this roadway leads into the Town and in order to make it efficient they will need to be involved.

## **INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS AND FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES:**

Trustee Lipsman stated that everyone in attendance this evening was invited due to the fact that the village has an ancient infrastructure with heavy demands that is in need of updating. The VB is looking at opportunities to address this issue and explore funding that may be available through information that those in attendance may be able to help with by identifying the village's needs, what funding is available and how the VB may go forward in obtaining this funding.

In attendance for group discussion:

*Jill Falchi* – Capital District Regional Planning Commission needs and their requirements

*Brock Juusola* – Engineer for Delaware Engineering. Has completed numerous upgrade projects at the WWTP in the Village. I&I projects as well.

*Connor Hambly Young* - Team Leader -Cornell Cooperative Extension. Culvert Assessment and Climate Smart Resiliency Plan was completed for the village in the past.

*Joe Myers* – Northdome operations – Owner. Contract operator for WFP and WWTP.

*Anthony Proper* – DPW Supervisor – Has been working with the Water System and WWT system for over 28 years.

Ms. Falchi provided handouts describing funding opportunities including Clean Energy Communities Program through NYSERDA and Climate Smart Communities Program.

Joe Myers provided a handout to VB members listing 3 items that go beyond the regular maintenance budget items and would require capital planning. These items are the SCADA system, I&I and water distribution system rehabilitation and/or replacement.

Anthony Proper noted that Rural Water Association is coming next week to perform smoke testing in the village. Smoke testing will help to identify areas of I&I.

Dr. Lipsman noted that he envisions that a planning grant would be the first step in developing a plan for large infrastructure projects. It seems mapping the system will need to be accomplished.

Mr. Proper and Mr. Myers mentioned that some Sewer lines in the village have already been lined.

Brock Juusolo concurred. He also informed the VB that 10 years ago the village was under a moratorium due to excessive I&I. An order on consent was issued which prohibited any new hook-ups to the Village's sewer system without permission until the situation was rectified. The WWTP was totally re-engineered and renovated to accommodate the I&I more efficiently to make it manageable which lifted the moratorium. In 2013-2014 the Village lined approximately 1/3 of all the manholes. I&I will never totally be resolved it must be manageable however.

Mayor Bradicich informed the VB that he has met with Mary Beth Bianconni of Delaware Engineering to discuss the DPW garage as well.

Mayor Bradicich also noted that the grant cycle begins in July which puts the VB on a tight schedule if they are interested in pursuing these funds. The VB needs to decide on which actions they would like to take.

Mr. Juusola agreed with the timeline for applying for grants. An Engineering Planning Grant would be the best start. He also wanted to alert the VB that there are some talks about NYSDOT being interested in partnering with the village for project on Route 385. In that case the village may want to keep aware of this and try to work on getting the infrastructure worked on as well. It may be a good pairing.

Mr. Young mentioned again that there are monies available for replacement of culvert pipes. As previously stated the culvert assessment has been completed for the village. Climate Smart Communities Funding and Hudson River Estuary monies were discussed as it relates to Culvert projects as well. The resiliency planning tool has been completed by the village and can be used as a tool to define what you need and what you have.

DPW Director Anthony Proper noted that there is a project tentatively planned for this summer on Union Street that is estimated to cost over 135,000.00. The VB was going to use the CHIPS money available this year but it will still leave the project at a deficit.

Projects cannot be reimbursed after the fact they must be pre-approved.

Mayor Bradicich will discuss the priority projects and how to fund them through grant programs with Delaware Engineering.

Trustee Lipsman will work on funding for the culvert project on Union Street with Ms. Falchi and Mr. Young.

Mayor Bradicich thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

#### APPLICATIONS:

1. Applicant: D.R. Evarts Library – Athens Community Center gym. (re-visited from last meeting)
2. Applicant: M. Wynne – Athens Riverfront Park – gazebo.

#### MOTIONS and RESOLUTIONS:

1. Proposed Resolution approving Minutes from meeting held on May 8<sup>th</sup>, 2019:  
BE IT RESOLVED, the Minutes from Village Board Meeting held on May 8, 2019 be approved:

Offered by: Trustee Serrago  
Seconded by: Trustee Scott  
Record of vote: All in favor

2. Proposed Resolution approving payment of vouchers as presented:

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

GENERAL FUND – Abstract #1993, vouchers numbered #9918737 through #9918762 in the amount of \$26,764.58

WATER FUND – Abstract #10449, vouchers numbered #9918763 through #9918768 in the amount of \$20,139.95

SEWER FUND – Abstract #10431, vouchers numbered #9918769 through #9918772 in the amount of \$10,998.00

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

3. Proposed Resolution approving appointment of new Recreation Director:

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Village Board approves the appointment of Jennifer Mortiz as the Recreation Director for the Village of Athens Recreation program:

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

4. Proposed Resolution approving use of the Community Center gym:

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Village Board approve the use of the Community Center gym as requested in the facility use application by the D.R. Evarts Library:

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

5. Proposed Resolution approving use of the Athens Riverfront Park gazebo:

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Village Board approve the use of the Athens Riverfront Park gazebo as requested in the facility use application by M. Wynne:

Offered by: Trustee Lipsman  
Seconded by: Trustee Serrago  
Record of vote: All in favor

OLD BUSINESS:

1. Tin Pan Alley – request for café (revisit)

NEW BUSINESS:

1. NYMIR Risk control survey was conducted on May 16, 2019.

Trustee Lasher informed the VB that she has been working with the APD to negotiate their contract. A meeting will be needed with the Mayor to go over the demands.

Trustee Serrago informed the VB that she has been working with a committee to update the village website and social media.

Trustee Scott has completed the process of interviewing and finalizing the hiring of the Recreation Director.

Mayor Bradicich has informed the VB that he has met with the owner of 91 acres of property located along Route 385 and Brick Row. Preliminary planning is underway for development.

ADJOURN: 9:15 PM

Offered by: Trustee Serrago  
Seconded by: Trustee Lasher  
All in favor

*Respectfully submitted:*

*Mary Jo Wynne*