

**VILLAGE OF ATHENS**  
**MINUTES-May 24, 2023**

*The Public Hearing and the Meeting were held at the Village Office located at 2 First Street, at 6:30PM.*

**PLEDGE TO THE FLAG**

*PRESENT: Mayor Amy Serrago, Trustee Gail Lasher, Trustee Josh Lipsman, Trustee Rob Scott and Trustee Alison Phoenix.*

*Village Attorney Tal Rappleyea was also present as well as Clerk-Treasurer Mary Jo Wynne for the purpose of taking Minutes.*

**PUBLIC HEARING:**

Public Hearing held for the purpose of hearing public comment on the proposed increase of rates for water and sewer hookups to the municipal system.

The Mayor opened the Public Hearing for public comment:

- Robert Brunner asked what this actually costs the village or is this change just to make money.

The Mayor and DPW Supervisor Sprague informed everyone the cost for manpower for installation of hookups and that that fee is actually an 'add on' to the application fee. The proposed increase is to stay current with other community's fees, and in light of new potential developments commercially now is the time to act.

The Clerk-Treasurer also noted that new users should have to pay toward the capital improvements made to these systems by residents over the years. For town users who do not pay a village tax it is very desirable to tap into a municipal system.

- Chris Pfister commented on the rate for water and sewer hookups -will it be combined or separate?
- Yves Goldberg asked when the last time rates for hookups were increased?

Mayor/Clerk noted probably over 10 years.

- John Pulice, resident of Schoharie Tpk. mentioned that there are still no sewer lines on Schoharie Tpk. Will this be discussed again.

Mayor stated 'no' – right now the grant and bond money will be used to fix the system that we have as it is in need of many repairs due to the age of the infrastructure.

The Mayor closed the public hearing at 6:43 PM.

**PUBLIC HEARING CLOSED**

**OPEN REGULAR VB MEETING.**

**PUBLIC:**

1. *Nancy Poylo* attended the VB meeting to provide the VB with the paint colors that the Planning Board has approved for the Community Center front door.

The Mayor stated that would be a great project to complete but they will need to get some estimates on getting the door prepped/stripped and repaired before the paint can be applied.

2. *John Pulice* attended the meeting to discuss the placement of the handicapped signs on Route 385 in front of the Catholic Church? Who measures the spacing of the signs? He also mentioned again that the traffic there is very dangerous. People are driving too fast, and someone is going to get hurt coming or going into Church.

The Mayor and the Director of the DPW stated that that is a State Road. They will get together and share the contact information that they have for the State DOT and inquire about the placement of the signs. Mayor Serrago stated that she will contact Senator Hinchey's office.

Mayor Serrago mentioned the APD being made aware of his concerns. Mr. Pulice stated that having a policeman there never worked out. They would show up once maybe twice and then that was the end of it.

3. *Chris Pfister* attended the meeting to discuss several issues:  
The first issue is trees. The removal of the tree at 3 S. Washington Street. Mr. Pfister stated that the Minutes from that Meeting were not correct and that the issue was that the property owner did not like the tree and that is why it was removed. Sidewalks and electric lines are always an issue with trees in the village and they should not be cut down just because someone doesn't like the tree.

The Mayor responded stating that the decision was made over 2-3 meetings and not just a 'quick thought'. The property owner was unhappy; therefore the village's arborist was consulted and he stated that the village should not plant any more of this species because it is not a good choice for village streets. After that the CAC met to discuss the tree at their meeting but they did not have a quorum. At that point it was 'bounced' back to the village board for a decision. Given all the information provided and also after receiving a letter from a member of the CAC recommending removing this tree the VB decided that the tree should be taken down. The VB reviewed the information given to it from several sources and decided that the tree should be removed.

Mr. Pfister just wishes that there was a different process for deciding these things.

Also, there are some ivory silk lilac trees on the N. side of the parking lot that look like they are dying – someone should look at them.

Mr. Pfister also stated that he is trying to get the Friends of Athens involved in planting some more trees along with the CAC group.

Second issue is dilapidated buildings in the village. In November of 2021 he sent a letter to the VB regarding dilapidated buildings. As of now, nothing seems to have changed. These properties include Ciampa's trailer (Washington Street), Brunner's properties (Union Street, N. Franklin Street and Route 385), Heines' properties and the Olivett property (Constantine Court).

The mayor stated that Code Enforcement has begun the proceedings to condemn the property on Constantine Court.

The mayor asked the Attorney how long we give property owners to act on these letters of condemnation.

The Attorney stated that it depends upon how dangerous the property is.

Pneuman's property on Route 385 can be added to the list as well.

The last issue is the renovation of the Municipal building. What is the status of it and how is the relationship between the Town and the Village?

The mayor responded that the relationship between the Town and the Village is better.

Presently, the VB is working on getting funding to repair the gym and make it usable again. The hallway floors have been completed, etc. The VB does not want to leave the building. It's just about getting funding.

4. *Joanne Stickles, business owner of Happy Clown, located on Route 385*, attended the meeting to ask the VB to consider putting boat docks in the river on South Street (by the old DPW garage).

The Mayor stated that that was probably not possible as the Village does not own that property. Also making this request difficult was the permitting process with US Army Corps of Engineers and Peckham barge traffic.

#### **APPLICATIONS:**

1. Facility Use Application- Riverfront Park. Applicant: Paulette Miller-Travis- Paddock Club  
A **MOTION** was made by Trustee Lasher, seconded by Trustee Lipsman, all in favor approving the application as submitted.
2. Facility Use Application- Riverfront Park. Applicant: Ezra Anderson – Graduation party  
A **MOTION** was made by Trustee Lipsman, seconded by Trustee Scott, all in favor approving the application as submitted.
3. Facility Use Application- Riverfront Park. Applicant: Athens Cultural Center.  
A **MOTION** was made by Trustee Phoenix, seconded by Trustee Lasher, all in favor approving the application as submitted.
4. Application for Outdoor Entertainment Permit for Commercial Establishments and Events held on Village Property. Applicant: Stewart House.  
A **MOTION** was made by Trustee Lasher, seconded by Trustee Scott, all in favor approving the application as submitted.
5. Facility Use Application- Docks- Riverfront Park. Applicant: Hudson Ferry Company.  
A **MOTION** was made by Trustee Lipsman, seconded by Trustee Lasher, all in favor approving the application as submitted.

#### **RESOLUTIONS:**

1. Proposed Resolution Approving Minutes

BE IT RESOLVED, that Minutes from the Village Board meeting held on May 10th, 2023 be approved:

Offered by: Trustee Scott

Seconded by: Trustee Phoenix

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:

GENERAL FUND – Abstract #2137, vouchers numbered #9922495 through #9922512 in the amount of \$9,511.00

WATER FUND – Abstract #10552, vouchers numbered #9922483 through #9922494 in the amount of \$21,087.64

SEWER FUND – Abstract #10533, vouchers numbered #9922476 through #992481 in the amount of \$4,536.82

Offered by: Trustee Lipsman

Seconded by: Trustee Phoenix  
Record of vote: All in favor

3. Proposed Resolution Approving the issuance of up to \$1,400,000 in serial bonds for the Water System Improvement Project (WSIP)

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Village Board authorize the acquisition, construction, reconstruction and addition of certain improvements to the Village's Water Supply and Distribution system, including, without limitation, land, equipment, machinery, and apparatus relating thereto and replacement of such equipment, machinery and apparatus, stating the estimated maximum cost of said acquisition, construction, reconstruction, addition and replacement together with certain costs preliminary and incidental thereto, is \$1,400,000 appropriating said sum therefor and authorizing the issuance of up to \$1,400,000 serial bonds of the village to finance said appropriation: (Full resolution attached)

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

4. Proposed Resolution Approving the issuance of up to \$1,150,000 in serial bonds for the Wastewater Treatment Project (WWTP)

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Village Board authorizes the undertaking of a certain project consisting of (1) the separation of the combined sanitary and storm water sewer systems in certain areas of the village, including the acquisition, construction, reconstruction, appurtenances thereto and (2) the acquisition, of certain water mains and lines in close proximity to said sewer system, stating the estimated maximum cost of said project, together with certain costs preliminary and incidental thereto, is \$1,150,000 appropriating said sum therefor and authorizing the issuance of up to \$1,150,000 serial bonds of the village to finance said appropriation: (Full resolution attached)

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

5. Proposed Resolution to Approve Appropriation Transfers (see attached)

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

6. Proposed Resolution Approving the Sportsmen's Club to sell beer at the Street Festival

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

**CORRESPONDENCE:**

1. Jesse Vail – Resignation
2. Barry Rausch – Resignation
3. William Wyant – Resignation
4. Greene County – Notice for Training for Planning Officials presented by NYDOS.
5. NYS Urban Forestry Council – 30<sup>th</sup> Annual NY ReLeaf Conference.
6. NYSDOT – CHIPS statement

**BUSINESS:**

Revolving Loan Applications- Village Clerk's office has received 2 applications for review by VB and the Village Attorney.

Trustee Lipsman noted that since the Village of Athens is a 'Tree City USA' the Village must have a day of observance, pass the attached Resolution and provide a public pamphlet. He also informed the VB that another member needs to be appointed to the CAC.

A **MOTION** was made by Trustee Lipsman, seconded by Trustee Lasher, all in favor to approve the attached 'Official Proclamation' declaring June 10<sup>th</sup> in the village as Arbor day and urges all citizens to celebrate Arbor Day and support efforts to protect our trees and woodlands.

Trustee Lipsman also reminded the Mayor about passing the Green purchasing policy.

Trustee Scott informed the VB that the new Loader has arrived for the DPW and that the property on Wayne Street is still a mess and it needs the lawn mowed. He will contact Flats Brothers.

Trustee Scott also noted that a student has been working on a community service project which included the donation of many items to the dog park. The Village Board extended a sincere Thank you!

Trustee Lasher informed the VB that Dawna Johnson has resigned as president of the Cultural Center and Becky Hart will be taking her place.

Trustee Lasher also noted that the Street Festival would like to purchase 4 benches for the festival and then let the Village use them as they wish. The VB stated that that would be fine.

The Mayor signed the tax warrant for the village.

A **MOTION** was made by Trustee Lasher, seconded by Trustee Phoenix, all in favor approving giving the Mayor authority to execute agreements for both the Fire Protection Contract and the lease for office space with the Town of Athens.

The VB discussed holding a Public Hearing for amending Section 201-16 of Village Code regarding repeat offenders for lawn mowing/property maintenance.

The increase for water/sewer tap applications will be discussed at the next meeting.

A **MOTION** was made by Trustee Lasher, seconded by Trustee Lipsman, all in favor, to enter into Executive Session at 8:15PM.

**ADJOURNMENT**

VILLAGE OF ATHENS OFFICIAL PROCLAMATION

Whereas in 1872, the Nebraska Board of Agriculture established a special day to be set aside for the planting of trees, and

Whereas this holiday, called Arbor Day, was first observed with the planting of more than a million trees in Nebraska, and

Whereas Arbor Day is now observed throughout the nation and the world, and

Whereas trees can be a solution to combating climate change by reducing the erosion of our precious topsoil by wind and water, cutting heating and cooling costs, moderating the temperature, cleaning the air, producing life giving oxygen, and providing habitat for wildlife, and

Whereas trees are a renewable resource giving us paper, wood for our homes, fuel for our fires, and countless other wood products, and

Whereas trees in our village increase property values, enhance the economic vitality of business areas, and beautify our community, and

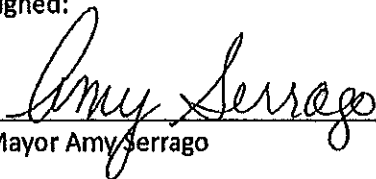
Whereas trees – wherever they are planted – are a source of joy and spiritual renewal,

Now Therefore, I Amy Serrago, Mayor of the Village of Athens, do hereby proclaim Saturday, June 10<sup>th</sup>, 2023, as Arbor Day in the Village of Athens, and I urge all citizens to celebrate Arbor Day and to support efforts to protect our trees and woodlands, and

Further, I urge all citizens to attend Athens Community Day on Saturday, June 10<sup>th</sup>, in order to receive a flyer about trees and tree planting in the Village of Athens developed by the Athens Conservation Advisory Council.

Dated This 24th day of May 2023

Signed:

  
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Mayor Amy Serrago

APPROPRIATION TRANSFERS

<u>FROM</u>		<u>TO</u>	
A1320.1 Auditor	5000.00	A1010.4 BOT exp.	700.00
		A1210.4 MAYOR exp.	400.00
		A1420.1 ATTORNEY	3900.00
A5110.4D Road	28742.00	A1620.4 CC bldg oil	13500.00
		A5110.4REPAIR	15242.00
A5142.4 Salt exp.	5800.00	A5132.4 garage	3800.00
		A5110.4b vehicle fuel	2000.00
A9040.8 Workers comp	6900.00	A9050.8 unemployment	1550.00
		A9070.8 Firemens comp	1421.00
		A6410.4 Publicity	1500.00
		A7560.4 Cultural Ctr	87.00
		A9030.8 SS/MED	2342.00
A8160.4B WASTE	1183.00	A5110.4F tree trimming	1183.00
A3410.4 Fire Misc	3400.00		
A3410.4E	400.00	A3410.4repairs	563.00
		A3410.4vehicle fuel	1833.00
		A3410.4D phone	300.00
		A3410.4C bldgs & grounds	609.00
		A3410.4 heat	495.00
A9015.8 POLICE RETIREMENT	10968.00	A3120.1 POLICE SALARIES	10968.00
A9010.8 RETIREMENT	12989.00	A3120.1 CODE SALARIES	12989.00
A9055.8 DISABILITY	1655.00	A3120.4 POLICE MISC. EXP	1655.00
TOTAL	77037.00		77037.00