

BUDGET HEARING – ATHENS TOWN BOARD –November 12, 2018

A budget hearing of the Athens Town Board was called to order on Monday November 12, 2018 at 7:00 p.m. by Supervisor Robert F. Butler, Jr. with the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

The following people were present: Supervisor Butler; Councilwoman Mary H. Brandow; Councilman Michael Ragaini; Councilman Anthony Paluch; Councilman Richard M. Surrano, Jr. and Town Clerk Linda M. Stacey. (Highway Superintendent John J Farrell was absent.)

These people were also present: Attorney Virginia Benedict; Bookkeeper/Budget Officer Michael Strenka; Jane and Richard Kerr; Gerald Townley; Theresa Cardinale; Larry Styles and Daniel Zuckerman of the Catskill Daily Mail.

**Supervisor Butler** informed those present that the public hearing would remain open until the next meeting on November 19, 2018 at 7:00 p.m. he then asked if anyone had any questions regarding the budget.

**Jane Kerr** asked what the line item was that covers the retirees; what are the retirees being offered? She had attended both meetings that the retirees were invited to, and thought she understood, however the next day there were rumors going around saying something else. Now she wanted to hear directly from the Town Board what is really being offered.

**Supervisor Butler** stated that Blue Shield Insurance for the retirees is currently at \$539 per person and United Health Care is approximately \$320 per person. He went on to explain that he will have to amend the Employee Handbook, but he proposes to pay \$500 of each single retiree's insurance if they remain on Blue Shield, and they will have to pay the \$39 difference. Their spouse will have to pay \$539 (the full cost), so the cost to the retiree with a spouse would be \$578 a month (retiree \$39, plus spouses \$539= \$578).

**They do however have an option** of switching to United Health Care which is approximately \$320 per person. The Town is willing to pick this \$640 up at NO cost to the retirees or their spouses.

**Supervisor Butler** informed those present, that the Town continues to reimburse the Medicare premium to the retiree but does not have to; the public should not have to keep picking up this cost as it is not their primary insurance.

**Jane Kerr** asked about another scenario: (due to donut hole) What if the retiree has to stay but the spouse can switch.

**Supervisor Butler** stated that has not even been talked about. It would be a paperwork nightmare. It could be an option.

**Jane Kerr** there is a fear factor when you are changing health insurance.

**Supervisor Butler** I know there is a fear factor; I'm trying to be fair but trying to watch costs.

Discussion followed on \$14,500 as revenues in building code violations. This was an expense to pay someone to board up the Budget in as it was a safety hazard. (Costs included labor, and materials.)

Town Board went over the remaining budget. Public Hearing on Budget remains open.

There will also be a Public Hearing on the 2% Tax Cap at the next meeting.

Councilman Paluch proposed turning over his salary.

**Councilman Richard M. Surrano, Jr.** made a motion seconded by Councilwoman Mary H. Brandow *to purchase a tablet for the Assessor's department field work, out of 2018's budget.*  
Ayes-5 (Butler; Brandow; Ragaini; Paluch; Surrano) Noes-0 Absent-0 Abstentions-0

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As there was no further business to come before the meeting a motion to adjourn was made by Councilman Richard M. Surrano, Jr. seconded by Councilman Michael Ragaini. Ayes-5 (Butler; Brandow; Ragaini; Paluch; Surrano) Noes-0 Absent-0 Abstentions-0

The meeting was adjourned at 8:25 p.m.

REGULAR MEETING – ATHENS TOWN BOARD – October 1, 2018

The regular meeting of the Athens Town Board was called to order on October 1, 2018 at 7:00 p.m. by Supervisor Robert F. Butler, Jr. with the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

The following people were present; Supervisor Butler; Councilwoman Mary H. Brandow; Councilman Michael Ragaini; Councilman Anthony Paluch and Town Clerk Linda M. Stacey. (Councilman Richard M. Surrano, Jr. and Highway Superintendent John J. Farrell were absent.)

These people were also present: Attorney Virginia Benedict; Bookkeeper/Budget Officer Michael Strenka; Assessor Carol McBride; Code Enforcement Officer Albert Gasparini; Theresa Cardinale; Fran McCusker; Michael Pirrone; Barbara Trembacz; Madelyn Brandow and Patrick Doyle.

The following bills were audited by the Board and ordered paid:

General Abstract #17, vouchers #352 through #363 inclusive for \$26,901.44.

Highway Abstract #16, vouchers #184 through # 194 inclusive for \$63,989.62.

Code Enforcement Officer Albert Gasparini reported he issued a building permit for a solar panel roof system; a garage; and a modular home with a garage.

He had a Demolition permit for a barn on Spoorenburgh Rd. (APO Sleepy Hollow Lake, Inc.)

A Complaint about the demolition work at Spoorenburgh Rd. Rd. from a neighbor. (All in compliance of the removing of barn.) Supervisor Butler requested a copy of the manifest.

5 Certificates of Occupancy Searches were received.

Three (3) violations: Property Maintenance: Tall/Weeds at Doll General

“ “ : Tall Vegetation at Dollar General

“ “ : Tall Vegetation at Verizon Utility Building on  
Rte. 385 near Thorpe Rd.

Hudson River Bulk: Attorney for Robert Tyson confirmed that Hudson River Bulk brought fill to the site itself using its own trucks- there was not a third party trucking company involved. He is working to see if he can get at least an estimate of the amount, but doesn't know yet if that number is available. Attorney requested a visit to review Town records about Hudson River Bulk.

Attorney Virginia Benedict arrived at this time: 7:10 p.m.

Assessor Carol McBride reported that after 2019 all Enhanced Star Renewals will be renewed by NYS Taxation and Finance. The Assessor will no longer be renewing this exemption.

Reassessment: Data Mailers have been sent to all Village properties. Next month data mailers will begin to be sent to the owners of Town residential properties.

Address updates are being received from school tax collectors for county and town tax bills.

She has a required class for ethics at Columbia Greene Community College on Friday December 7, 2018. Assessor's Office will be closed that day.

Bookkeeper/Budget Officer Michael Strenka went over the Supervisor's Report for September.

Councilman Michael Ragaini made a motion seconded by Councilwoman Mary H. Brandow *to accept the Supervisor's Report for September as presented*. Ayes-4 (Butler; Brandow; Ragaini; Paluch) Noes-0 Absent-1(Surrano) Abstentions-0

Councilman Michael Ragaini made a motion seconded by Councilwoman Mary H. *Brandow to accept the Town Clerk's Report as presented*. Ayes-4 (Butler; Brandow; Ragaini; Paluch) Noes-0 Absent-1(Surrano) Abstentions-0