

Town of Athens Board Meeting Minutes  
September 7, 2021

The regular meeting of the Athens Town Board came to order at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, September 7, 2021 with the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

The following Board Members were in attendance: Supervisor Robert F. Butler, Jr.; Councilman Michael Ragaini; Councilwoman Mary H. Brandow; Councilwoman Shannon Spinner. Also in attendance: Deputy Town Clerk Gail M. Stacey. Councilman Anthony Paluch, Superintendent John J. Farrell and Attorney George McHugh were absent.

The following people were also in attendance: Lawrence Styles; Annika Vogt; Theresa Cardinale; Fran McCusker; Lynn Brunner; Thomas Satterlee; Tim Mercer; James Lee; Jeff Stockbrine; Merrill Roth; Ellen Roth; Robert Brunner; Carol Pfister; Chris Pfister; Phyllis Dinkelacker; Rickie Gabrielle; M.K. Garvey; Mayor Amy Serrago, Fred Gillen, Jr.; Cari Gardner; Donald Gardner; Village Clerk Mary Jo Wynne; Kathy Jackson; Marla Butler; Michael Campbell; Village Board Member Gail Lasher; Rick Surrano; Nora Adelman.

The following bills were audited by the Board and ordered paid:  
**General Abstract #17.** Voucher #388 through #416 inclusive for **\$21,090.28.**  
**Highway Abstract #17.** Voucher #126 through #141 inclusive for **\$66,740.01.**

The Board previously audited the following bills from the meeting of August 16, 2021 that had been cancelled: **General Abstract #16** voucher # 361 through #387 inclusive for **\$5,249.25** and **Highway Abstract #16** voucher #119 through #125 inclusive for **\$58,839.94.** All bills from this abstract have been paid.

Mayor Amy Serrago and Village Board Member Gail Lasher came before the Board to discuss whether the Town of Athens would be rehabilitating the existing building or building a new Town Hall. Supervisor Butler had previously discussed the past lease agreement with the Mayor and Gail Lasher prior to the meeting. The past agreement to take over the building was never rescinded nor had there been a motion to do so.

**A motion to rescind and remove the motion of the agreement of five years ago to transfer ownership of the building from the Village to the Town** was made by Councilman Michael Ragaini and seconded by Councilwoman Shannon Spinner.  
Ayes: 2(Ragaini;Spinner) Noes: 2(Butler;Brandow) Absent: 1(Paluch) Abstentions: 0  
Motion did not carry. A second vote will take place at the next scheduled Board meeting with all members present.

Further discussion occurred with Mayor Amy Serrago stating that the Village wants to move forward and is willing to make the investment into rehabilitating the building with the Town. The Comprehensive Plan between the Town and Village states that the members of the community want the Town and Village offices to stay together in the same building. If the Town does not stay in the building, then the Village is looking to collect the past 3 years in rent or utilities in full and also cleaning costs. Also, there would be an agreement drawn up between the Town and Village for as long as the Town needs to occupy the building until the new facility is built. Supervisor Butler in formed the attendees that this meeting was not a public hearing but questions would be answered. Gail Lasher stated that, even though the Village owns the building, there is a covenant in the deed with Coxsackie Athens School District that has certain guidelines as far as the building is concerned and one of them is that the building cannot be sold. Several attendees asked about rehabilitation costs versus new building costs. Figures could not be given at this time. It was also stated that the Town should consider the residents of the community when making its decision to stay in the building or build a new facility. Councilman Michael Ragaini gave a presentation on existing building and/or new building.

If the Town Board votes to stay in the existing building, the rehabilitation will be done as a whole and not room by room. Previous studies have shown that the existing building and foundation are structurally sound. Residents would like a cost comparison for existing building versus new building. If the Town stays in the building, then more grants/additional funding would be available for renovations because the building is historical which the engineers would seek out. With cash in reserves, up to half of costs could initially be paid. The intent is not just to sign a bond for the amount and pass it along. The project is not subject to Permissive Referendum but certain aspects of the money would be. Gail Lasher would like the elected

officials to take into consideration the feelings of the majority of the community and stay in the existing building with the Village.

Rick Surrano came before the Board with a few more questions in regards to the vote from five years ago about taking over the building. As a previous councilman of the Town Board who voted for staying and rehabilitating the building, he wanted to know what has changed since then. The answer given was the delay on the initial motion to take over and environmental changes. He also wanted to know, at today's costs, if a new building could be built at around 1.8 million dollars. Don Pierro, Bookkeeper/Budget Officer of the Town informed Mr. Surrano that the numbers may be available at the next Town Board meeting. Supervisor Butler added that the initial cost projected to rehab the existing building came in at around 3 million dollars.

**The Town Clerk's Report** was reviewed by the Board. Councilman Michael Ragiani made a motion to accept the Town Clerk's Report seconded by Councilwoman Shannon Spinner. Ayes-4(Butler;Ragiani;Brandow;Spinner) Noes-0 Absent-1(Paluch) Abstentions-0. Motion carried.

**The Meeting Minutes of August 2, 2021** were reviewed by the Board. Councilman Michael Ragiani made a motion to accept the minutes seconded by Councilwoman Mary Brandow. Ayes-3(Ragiani;Brandow;Spinner) Noes-0 Absent-1(Paluch) Abstentions-1(Butler). Motion carried.

A resident on Howard Hall Rd. had a complaint about speed but was not present at the meeting to discuss the matter. There was a short discussion amongst the Board in regards to the issues on that road which is a county road. Supervisor Butler will reach out to Scott Templeton to see if he has had any complaints and to hopefully get some of the issues taken care of.

Supervisor Butler inquired whether the Town Clerk's office had received any applications for the Planning, Zoning, or Community Foundation Boards. There were no applications received as to date.

**Supervisor Robert F. Butler, Jr.** appointed Paula Butler to the Athens Community Foundation for a term of one year. This will be his yearly appointment. Any other applicants will have to be voted on.

**Michael Campbell** came before the Board in regards to Quarry Rd. He was informed that the Town Bookkeeper/Budget Officer Don Pierro has made a draft plan (list) of things to do for Quarry Rd. and the Dresser property which has been approved by the Town Attorney George McHugh. Mr. Campbell states that the Town is not doing their job as far as the road is concerned. He also states that all the houses on said road are illegal. Supervisor Butler will have Town Code Enforcement Officer Albert Gasparini go down there and do a proper inspection of all properties. Mr. Campbell discussed the Dresser (Peck) property and he was informed that Code Enforcement has been directed to pull his application and that Mr. Peck has received many violations. Quarry Rd. is a private, unpassable, 911 road. Mr. Campbell owns up to the power lines and several acres of land. The Draft Plan was discussed along with 911 status of Quarry Rd. There are several issues that need to be dealt with. The rental of an ATV may be an option to get down into road to do inspections, issue violations, etc. Drones may also be another alternative to get a lay of the land. It was also asked if Rolling Hills Rd. and Lime Kiln Rd. would also be considered for inspection. Forest Rangers may also be utilized for the maps of the roads. Copies of the deeds for the properties on Quarry Rd. will be obtained.

**Councilman Michael Ragiani** made a motion to accept the Draft Plan for Quarry Rd. seconded by Councilwoman Shannon Spinner. Ayes-4(Butler;Ragiani;Brandow;Spinner) Noes-0 Absent-1(Paluch) Abstentions-0. Motion carried.

**Bookkeeper/Budget Officer Don Pierro** presented the Supervisors Report to the Board for review and discussion. Three out of the four funds still have a surplus. The B Fund has a slight deficiency. Two funds have been appropriated. Bank reconciliations are fine. The final copy of the Union Contract has been received and just waiting for signature page. Employee Handbook was completed August 2, 2021. 50 percent of the ARPA funds have been received. Funds have to be used a specific way and getting equipment for infrastructure repairs may be a stretch. The Town will be getting reimbursed for wages paid and lost revenue in the court due to the co-vid closure. Funds are very restrictive. The Procurement Policy is final with no specific changes. Supervisor Butler met with Supervisor Finch of Catskill to help improve one of the fire

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companies in the district. Don will be helping with the financials and has come up with a 2022 Budget for said fire company and is being reviewed by Mr. Finch. Deadline for budget is coming near. A new CPA firm has been suggested for the fire company and they will be adopting that. Assessor Dawn DeRose has a couple of requests in regard to Mr. Farbstein and certain work needed before he starts next year. Alison Dooley, retired NYSRPTS, has been brought on to help out with back log. Supervisor Butler had a question in regards to the State Mortgage Tax. Funds received will be used for over budgeted expenditure lines and for the needed work in the assessor's office.

**Councilwoman Shannon Spinner** made a motion to accept the Supervisors Report seconded by Councilman Michael Ragaini.  
Ayes-4(Butler;Ragaini;Brandow;Spinner) Noes-0 Absent-1(Paluch) Abstentions-0. Motion carried.

With no further business to come before the Board, Councilwoman Shannon Spinner made a motion to adjourn the meeting seconded by Councilwoman Mary Brandow.  
Ayes-4(Butler;Ragaini;Brandow;Spinner) Noes-0 Absent-1(Paluch) Abstentions-0. Motion carried.

Meeting Adjourned at 8:30 p.m.