

REGULAR MEETING – ATHENS TOWN BOARD – NOVEMBER 10, 2022

The regular meeting of the Athens Town Board was held on Thursday, November 10, 2022 at 7:00 p.m. at the Athens Municipal Building, 2 First St., Athens, NY and was called to order by Supervisor Michael N. Pirrone with the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

The following Board Members were present: Supervisor Michael N. Pirrone; Councilmember Michael Ragaini; Councilmember Anthony Paluch; Councilmember Shannon Spinner; Via phone, Councilmember Mary H. Brandow. Also present; Gail M. Stacey, Deputy Town Clerk.

The following people were also present: Budget Officer Don Pierro; Al Ramm; Village Trustee Gail Lasher; Rick Rabideau; Eric Wansong; Doug Paquette; Terry Rabideau; Patrick Doyle, Flint Mine Solar; Giuseppina Agovino; Mary K. Garvey; Diane Eastwick.

Supervisor Michael N. Pirrone opened the first public hearing at 7:03 p.m. with the reading of the published public hearing notice for the Preliminary Budget.

Village Trustee Gail Lasher had a question regarding Line Item A1620.4 Building & Grounds Capital Outlay. She wanted to know why it jumped from \$11,500 to \$375,000. Budget Officer Don Pierro explained that it broke down as follows: \$250,000 for engineering, \$75,000 towards a purchase and \$50,000 for legal for property that has yet to be determined. **Al Ramm** asked that Line Item A6772.4 Program for the Aging not be decreased to \$2500 and that it should be increased to the modified amount of \$4600. Councilmembers Paluch, Brandow and Spinner were not in favor of a decrease to \$3600. After a brief discussion, **Councilmember Anthony Paluch** made a motion to adjust the Line Item to \$4600 seconded by **Councilmember Mary H. Brandow**.

Brandow.

Ayes-4(Pirrone; Spinner; Paluch; Brandow) Noes-1(Ragaini) Absent-0 Abstentions-0.

Budget Officer Don Pierro explained that the levy is \$869,000 which is a 2.96% increase from the previous year. The tax rate for the Village is \$.87 per \$1000 (\$.06 increase). The tax rate for the Town is \$1.99 per \$1000 (\$.02 increase).

The contingency line will need to be cut again to make the increase of in the levy work.

Chargebacks (Schedule B) for the processing and mailing of the tax bills will be decreased to \$6500 for the 2023 budget year.

Everything has been done to keep the tax rates down. If anything else has to be increased, then the tax rate would go over the 2% cap.

The reserve account has \$43,625 which can be used for legal and Mr. Farbstein (systematic valuation). The Revenue Item will have to be changed from \$40,000 to \$43,625 so as not to carry the reserve amount.

With no further comments or questions, Supervisor Pirrone closed the public hearing (7:40 p.m.).

Councilmember Michael Ragaini made a motion to adopt the 2023 Budget for Fiscal Year January 1, 2023 to December 31, 2023 with 2 corrections seconded by Councilmember Mary H. Brandow, as **RESOLUTION-2022-42**.

Ayes-4 (Pirrone; Spinner; Brandow; Ragaini) Noes-1 (Paluch) Absent-0 Abstentions-0.

Supervisor Michael N. Pirrone opened the second public hearing at 7:42 p.m. with the reading of the published public hearing notice for the **Adoption of Local Law #2 Authorizing Override of Tax Levy Limit for 2023 (2% Tax Cap)**.

With no one from the public with any questions or comments, Supervisor Pirrone closed the public hearing (7:44 p.m.).

Councilmember Michael Ragaini made a motion to adopt *Local Law #2 Authorizing Override of Tax Levy Limit for 2023 (2% Tax Cap)* seconded by Shannon Spinner, as **RESOLUTION-2022-41**.

Ayes-4 (Pirrone; Ragaini; Brandow; Spinner) Noes-1 (Paluch) Absent-0 Abstentions-0.

Councilmember Shannon Spinner made a motion seconded by Mary H. Brandow to approve the following vouchers that were audited by the Board:

10/27/2022-

General Abstract #20, vouchers #487 through #488 inclusive for **\$10,739.00**.

11/17/2022-

General Abstract #21, vouchers #489 through #536 inclusive for **\$76,958.03**.

Highway Abstract #21, vouchers #156 through #167 inclusive for **\$14,470.31**.

Trust & Custodian- Camp Catskills: Abstract #1, Voucher #1 for **\$72.50**.

9071 Rt. 9W: Abstract #1, Voucher #1 for **\$435.00.**

Councilmember Michael Ragaini made a motion to approve the *Minutes of October 17, 2022* as written seconded by Councilmember Shannon Spinner.

Ayes-5 (Pirrone; Paluch; Brandow; Ragaini; Spinner) Noes-0 Absent-0 Abstentions-0.

Councilmember Shannon Spinner made a motion to accept the *Town Clerk's Report* seconded by Mary H. Brandow.

Ayes-5 (Pirrone; Ragaini; Brandow; Paluch; Spinner) Noes-0 Absent-0 Abstentions-0.

The Town received a letter from the Greene County Planning Board with a "No Action" decision for Local Law #1 "Commercial Event Venue".

On the motion of Councilmember Anthony Paluch seconded by Councilmember Shannon Spinner the following **Resolution #2022-37** was adopted: *Local Law #1 amending the Town of Athens Code to Authorize the Planning Board to consider application for Special Use Permits for a Commercial Event Venue in permitted districts.*

Ayes-5 (Pirrone; Ragaini; Brandow; Paluch; Spinner) Noes-0 Absent-0 Abstentions-0.

Due to a scheduling conflict, Supervisor Pirrone will not be able to attend the meeting of February 20, 2022. He will be participating in a training program. He asked if anyone was willing to Chair that meeting and Councilmember Michael Ragaini volunteered.

Councilmember Anthony Paluch made a motion to accept Councilmember Ragaini as that meetings Chairman seconded by Councilmember Shannon Spinner.

Ayes-5 (Pirrone; Ragaini; Brandow; Paluch; Spinner) Noes-0 Absent-0 Abstentions-0.

There was a brief discussion on the 2023 Payroll, Holiday, & Town Board Meeting Calendars.

On a motion of Anthony Paluch seconded by Councilmember Shannon Spinner the following **Resolution #2022-40** was adopted: The Town Board has accepted the 2023 Payroll, Town Board Meeting, and Holiday Calendars.

Ayes-5 (Pirrone; Ragaini; Brandow; Paluch; Spinner) Noes-0 Absent-0 Abstentions-0.

On a motion of Anthony Paluch seconded by Councilmember Michael Ragaini the following **Resolution #2022-38** was accepted: To accept Commercial Driver's License Training Reimbursement Agreement.

Ayes-5 (Pirrone; Ragaini; Brandow; Paluch; Spinner) Noes-0 Absent-0 Abstentions-0.

Rick and Terry Rabideau came before the Board with a presentation for LGE: Local Government Efficiency Grant Program (state money) which provides technical assistance & grants for intermunicipal projects targeting shared opportunities, cost savings, & delivery of efficient, quality services. The program helps to keep expenses down for municipalities. The Village and Town would be responsible for 25% each of the cost, which is \$50,000, equals out to \$12,500 each. There is no deadline to apply. Mr. Rabideau would like the Town Board to invite a representative from the NYS Division of Local Government Services to attend a future meeting to explain the program. A possible webinar will be looked in to.

Patrick Doyle came before the Board with a few updates. Flint Mine Solar is looking build a 100 mega watt solar project, 50 % in the Town of Athens, 50 % in the Town of Coxsackie. The project was first introduced in 2016, contacted landowners in 2017, and open house in 2018. There would be \$500,000 in Pilot payments per year. 70% to the School District = \$350,000, 18% to the County = \$90,000, and 12% (6% each) to the Towns (Athens/Coxsackie) = \$30,000 each. The Host Community Agreements stay in the districts and the Town of Athens and Town of Coxsackie would each receive \$200,000. So in total, the two Towns would each receive \$230,000 a year as opposed to \$65,000 if project went on the tax roll. There is a Pilot application filed in 2021 with the IDA for \$500,000. The State passed a law last year regarding renewable energy. RPTL 57-B deals with how solar and wind are assessed. The IDA can give Pilots and are secure. The State approved the Project with 82 conditions. On August 29, 2022, Flint Mine Solar submitted modifications: ½ of the arrays will be fixed, ½ of the arrays will move with the sun. Also, there is reduction in acreage from 390 to 340. The driveway access has also been reduced from 8 miles to 6 miles. There will be some grading (9 acres)(12 areas total) in the Sleepy Hollow Watershed and the Coxsackie Creek Watershed to accommodate the tractors will be monitored by the DEC. Flint Mine Solar is waiting on the State for approval of the modifications. They are looking to start the project in the Spring of 2023 then finalize the

Pilot/Host Agreement. There was a brief discussion between Mr. Doyle and the attending residents of Sleepy Hollow regarding the project slated for MurdersKill Rd.

Budget Officer Don Pierro briefly discussed the budget hearing for Leeds Volunteer Fire Department.

On a motion made by Michael Ragaini seconded by Councilmember Shannon Spinner on the following **Resolution #2022-39** to accept the Public Hearing with the Town of Catskill to discuss Leeds Volunteer Fire Department proposed budget, November 16, 2022, Catskill Town Hall.

Ayes-5 (Pirrone; Ragaini; Brandow; Paluch; Spinner) Noes-0 Absent-0 Abstentions-0.

Budget Officer Don Pierro briefly discussed the lease agreement with the Village of Athens. The last agreement was in 2021. In 2022, The Town has paid Rent and Janitorial based on the 2021 agreement. Janitorial is paid in full but the rent is slightly behind due to no agreement on fuel and electricity. The building is approximately 15,000 square feet and the Town occupies 2,904 square feet which equals out to 19.60 %. The estimated costs for electric would be \$4200 and fuel would be \$3,000 (2022) which would bring the revision to \$46,193.51. Total rent revision for 2023 with everything included, \$48,473.38. Total rent revision for 2024 with everything included, \$50,768.88. Mr. Pierro is asking the Board if there could be a compromise on the numbers. The Board asked Mr. Pierro what numbers he thought were good. \$45,000 for 2022, \$47,500 for 2023, and \$50,000 for 2024 was the response given. Village of Athens Trustee Gail Lasher stated that the numbers would have to be discussed with the Village Board/Mayor. We still do owe the Village some money for rent and once an amount is agreed on, then we can pay the balance. \$33,178 has been paid as to date. There still needs to be a meeting asap between the Village and Town to discuss the rent monies for the upcoming years.

With no further business to come before the Board, Councilmember Michael Ragaini made a motion to adjourn seconded by Councilmember Shannon Spinner.

Ayes-5 (Pirrone; Ragaini; Brandow; Paluch; Spinner) Noes-0 Absent-0 Abstentions-0.

Meeting Adjourned at 8:50 p.m.