

VILLAGE OF ATHENS
PUBLIC HEARING – TENTATIVE BUDGET
April 11, 2012

PRESENT: Mayor Andrea Smallwood, Trustee Herman Reinhold, Trustee Robert June and Trustee Gail Lasher.

Absent: Trustee Anthony Patsky.

Fire Chief John Greco and newly elected Fire Chief Jim Robinson Jr., Code Enforcement Officer Mike Ragaini, Chief of Police Roger Masse and Village Attorney Tal Rappleyea were also present.

Pledge to the Flag.

The Mayor opened the meeting by stating that the purpose of tonight's Public Hearing is to receive Public Comment regarding the Tentative Budget for the Village Of Athens fiscal year beginning June 1, 2012 through May 31, 2013.

Open the meeting to Public Comment.

Pat McLoughlin, resident of the Village, attended the meeting to ask questions or comment on a number of items on the Tentative Budget. Some of those items included the following:

Website Maintenance

Office equipment

Attorney

Cleaner

Police Equipment

Publicity

Ms. McLoughlin noted that the line item for the Cultural Center had not been cut. Ms. McLoughlin feels that if items under 'Culture and Recreation' on the budget are to be cut then it should be all of them at the same percentage, not just the Senior's.

Trustee Reinhold stated that he is in support of being extremely frugal with this year's budget due to the economic climate and the fact that as village residents we pay Federal, State, County, Town and also Village tax. Another reason to be tight this year at tax time is that the village has increased the sewer rate quite a bit this year making it very hard on young families and seniors alike.

He also mentioned that he does not have any knowledge of the financial status of the organizations that the village supports. For example, the senior's, the Athens Fire Department etc. Do they actually need the money or are they making enough money to support themselves? He is in support of cutting these programs back if necessary. If not this year then next year.

Mayor Smallwood stated that she wants these organizations to realize that Trustee Reinhold is speaking for himself.

Mayor Smallwood reiterated that nothing on the budget has been cut yet, including the Senior's line item. This is a Public Hearing for a Tentative Budget and the Village Board is going to review the figures closely and see what can be cut to bring the tax rate increase to under 2%.

Trustee Reinhold noted that the Cultural Center is in a Village-owned building and that the Cultural Center does take care of the building by applying for and receiving grant funds to complete renovations and maintenance projects on the building.

Phyllis Dinkelacker, resident of the Village and Town Councilperson, also asked a number of questions regarding line items on the Budget. For example, health insurance and firehouse cleaner, etc.

Mary Ann Scalera, representing the Senior's Club, wanted to address Trustee Reinhold and the Village Board regarding the fact that the money given to the club from the village is not just for trips. It is also for parties at the building and dinners for the senior's. For some of the senior's in this area that is all that they have for entertainment and they look forward to it greatly. For some this is their only entertainment.

Trustee Reinhold reiterated that he just wants to be straight forward with people and let them know that there is a need to be frugal in the future for the good of all residents.

Ms. Scalera noted that she understands the need to cut back on expenses but not 100%.

Carol Pfister, representing the Cultural Center, attended the meeting to state that the Cultural Center's funding was cut back last year by the Village Board and this year the Cultural Center's funding was cut by the town and also the Community Benefits Grant program. Ms. Pfister would like the Village to take into account that the money given to the center by the Village is used for utilities and minor repairs on the building. They have spent a lot of their money and grant money on renovations to the building as well.

She would also like the Village Board to consider eliminating their charge for water and sewer.

She also wanted the Village Board to consider moving some money from what is left in the appropriation A7550.4 (celebrations) this year to the Cultural Center to cover some of the expenses that they had incurred for the Victorian Stroll this past winter.

Chris Pfister, resident, asked or made note of certain line items on the Tentative Budget. For instance:

Website Maintenance – A1325.1B

Contingent – A1990.4

Streets – A5110.4

Tree Trimming – A

Snow Exp. – A5142.4

Culture and Recreation – A7550.4

Health Insurance – A9060.8

He also mentioned that the transfers to Capital Projects/Reserve funds are just a 'drop in the bucket' considering the cost of these things.

Water Meters were also discussed.

The Village Board thanked everyone for attending tonight's Public Hearing and they will take all of the comments made this evening into consideration while working on the final budget.

A MOTION made by Trustee June, seconded by Trustee Reinhold, all in favor, to adjourn the Public Hearing and open the Regular Meeting at 7:30PM.

Close Public Hearing.

Open REGULAR WORK MEETING.

Department Head Meeting.

Fire Chief John Greco presented the Village Board with a farewell letter stating that his term as Chief was terminating and that his predecessor Jim Robinson Jr. will be taking over.

PUBLIC:

1. Brock Juusola, representing Delaware Engineering, P.C., and Ken Sabia, representing VRI, attended the meeting to update the Village Board on the WWTP-II project and also the transition at that plant and the Water Filtration Plant from Veolia to VRI.

Mr. Juusola and Mrs. Sabia discussed the Wastewater Treatment project's status and the transition in getting that facility on-line.

Sludge removal was also discussed at length.

The Village Board thanked them for coming.

CORRESPONDENCE:

1. Valentine Insurance Center. Re: Blue Shield of Northeastern New York Health Insurance Renewal 2012.
2. Athens Volunteer Fire Department, Inc. Re: New Officers.
3. Greene County Probation Department. Re: Greene County Alternatives to Incarceration (ATI)- Greene County Community Service Program.
4. Town of Catskill. Re: Intermunicipal Agreement.
5. Athens Volunteer Fire Department. Re: Invitation to Annual Banquet.
6. Marie Ostoyich- Greene County Public Health. Re: Synthetic Cannabinoids.
7. NYCOM. Re: Copies of letters sent to Representatives regarding Tier VI pension reform.
8. NYS Assembly. Re: State/Local Cost Share, Post-Flood.

OTHER BUSINESS:

A MOTION was made by Trustee June, seconded by Trustee Reinhold, all in favor, approving payment of the following vouchers:

GENERAL –Abstract #1700, vouchers numbered #9911461 through #9911488 in the amount of \$409,406.22.

WATER –Abstract #10243, vouchers numbered #9911489 through #9911498 in the amount of \$6,325.74.

SEWER-Abstract #10213, vouchers numbered #9911499 through #9911508 in the amount of \$7,760.86.

Financial Reports for the month of March have been distributed to all Village Board Members

A Motion was made by Trustee Lasher, seconded by Trustee June, all in favor, approving the request for vacation time made by Anthony Proper.

Given the fact that 2 other quotes for sludge removal have been received by VRI and that NE Waste Services is the lowest quote, a RESOLUTION was made by Trustee Reinhold, seconded by Trustee June, all in favor, approving the contract with Northeast Waste Services for sludge removal for a one year term.

A RESOLUTION was made by Trustee Reinhold, seconded by Trustee Lasher, all in favor, that the Village of Athens purchase one metal sign for the dock area of the Village Park. The sign should be at least two feet square. They must be placed near the Village Docks and state:

NO SWIMMING AND NO HORSEPLAY ON VILLAGE DOCKS

Discussion ensued regarding having another sign put in the park limiting the time that boats are allowed to dock at the Village dock. No decision made yet.

The Village Budget was discussed. A workshop meeting will be held next week with Mayor Smallwood, Trustee Lasher and the Clerk-Treasurer.

Motion made to adjourn the meeting at 10:00PM.

Good Night Athens!

Mary Jo Wynne