

May 21, 2024

City Council -

My name is Julie DeMeulenaere. I am a 7-year resident of Atkins. I have previously been on the City Council and was involved with voting in financing for the fire station project. Regarding the fire station discussions, I do have some concerns. Back in 2022, we did pass the financing piece with Speer Financial for funding up to 4.5 million dollars (Resolution 970). I believe the original resolution amount was at 3.6 million (from Speer Financial Bon Issuance Timeline sheet on December 20, 2021). At the time it was proposed, we were told that the bonded amount would not be completely spent and that a cushion was added in for emergency purposes. When I got on the council, it was my duty to be a voice of the residents. That's how I have always voted. What's concerning is the tactics that have been used to get a number that, to me, is total unreasonable. How did we get to an Option A where it states the 100% designed plans for a 14,000 square foot facility? How can you plan for 6.6 million with 4.5 million being the top amount to finance? So, at one point, you had the votes with Sammy, Jim and Rick Stolefus, so why wasn't the additional money you wanted addressed then and completed or even discussed?

Trevor and Dave were voted in to have a voice for the residents. What they campaigned for and their views/direction is what led them to be elected. People voted for change. Please make sure that is what you are doing, that you are true to your word and that your voice is for the people of this town.

I appreciate the volunteers that are fire fighters for the passion, kindness (the right reasons) that they have done so. The ones that are standing with their hand out like it's expected and say 'if we don't get this 6.5 million fire station then we'll all quit' or "depends who you are" if we show you respect. I have never had 1 fire fighter come get my perspective. I have asked them though. The respect given for the citizens of this town that don't go with the narrative is completely disgusting. From the threats, to people being afraid to say anything and being retaliated against is quite disturbing. If you're involved in this behavior then shame on you. During this campaign, I've seen a lot of innuendos that if you don't agree to the 6.5 figure, you're not for the fire station. The lack of fundraising done by the fire fighters is frustrating. Even if it's just for equipment. Every surrounding town is doing something all year long. We haven't had businesses knocking down our doors to come to Atkins, the inflation rates are high and to expect that we are going to have a huge population growth and business growth the way things are managed is just not realistic. By the time that happens, there will be more regulations and guidelines to follow that will need addressed.... along with the water issues, sewer lines addressed, the school bond tax that will be on to our taxes soon, EMS and planning for a police department will be on the table as well, so please make smart decisions when it comes to the residents of this town. Be fair to all. Us as residents cannot take on all the

burden of unrealistic amounts of money that are said to be "necessities". You cannot max out your borrowing power. That is not a good financial move. When you need to hire a well experienced city administrator and accounting firm to fix your messes, something isn't right. At \$125.00/hr. for both, it adds up quickly. Financials need to be given to council to make proper decisions. Most of these problems would be resolved through transparency. We don't have the amenities and extras at this time to pull in a growing community - nor the land to expand. People won't move here to pay higher taxes and no amenities. It won't happen. To afford the average \$300k-\$500k home in Atkins now requires some deep pockets and good jobs.

There is more I could say but just wanted to voice my concerns as a citizen. We 100% need a fire station. I don't think anyone is questioning that. It's just the costs, the attitudes, and the leadership on how to move forward in the right direction.

I apologize that I could not be there tonight, but I have been diagnosed with strep throat.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'JD' with a stylized flourish.

JULIE DEMEULENAERE