

Town of Pinetops
Board of Commissioners
Regular Monthly Meeting (Also available via Zoom)
Minutes
August 3, 2021
Pinetops Town Hall

A. Call Meeting to Order

Mayor Harrell called the Meeting to Order.

B. Invocation

Invocation was given by Phil Webb.

C. Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Harrell led the Pledge of Allegiance.

D. Proposed Agenda

Commissioner Mabry asked that we add a couple of additional items under Items for Discussion. These items included voting on the Economic Development Plan as presented at the last meeting as well as adopting a Minimum Housing Policy. Commissioner Taylor made a motion to approve the proposed agenda as amended. Commissioner Sugg seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

E. Consent Agenda

Commissioner Webb made a motion to approve the June 25, 2021 minutes as written and submitted. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Taylor. Motion passed unanimously.

F. Public Comments

1. Mary Jones - 206 N Martin Luther King

Mary Jones came before the Board to try to get an answer on when she could expect to get the flat rate on electric lowered as it was promised back in 2018. She told the Board that this has been discussed numerous times, but the rate has yet to be lowered as previously promised. Mayor Harrell replied that the issue would be discussed. She also questioned as to if the town could create some type of budget

billing to help customers to which the Board replied that this service is already in place. Anyone interested in budget billing can inquire more about the service at the town office.

2. Pastor Randy Smith – Pinetops Baptist Church

Pastor Randy Smith called in on behalf of the Maccripine FWB Church Association requesting permission to close off 1 block in town in order to hold a community event. The event would consist of gospel music, a movie, as well as the distribution of hot dogs and chips. The request is to block off a section of street from Hamlet to Burnette. The event would take place on September 25th from 4.00 p.m. to 10.00 p.m. The churches were hoping to use the Piggly-Wiggly, Southern Bank, and Town Hall parking lots for traffic. Commissioner Sugg inquired to whether the bathroom situation had been discussed to which he responded that they would probably use a couple of Portable Johns. Commissioner Webb made a motion to grant the request to close off the one block of street between Hamlet & Burnette for the churches to hold the community event on September 25th. Commissioner Sugg seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

3. Kendrick Ransome – Golden Organic Farms

Kendrick Ransome phoned in to request permission to hold a food truck rodeo towards the last week in August. The food truck vendors would set-up by the Gazebo in the Piggly-Wiggly and Southern Bank parking lot and promote healthy living. Mayor Harrell explained this was private property so he would have to get permission from them prior to the event. The Board asked if he could develop a plan and report back at the September meeting. He explained that he was hoping to hold the event on the last week in August but if they needed a more detail plan, he will try to get one ready and report back at the September meeting. Commissioner Mabry told Mr. Ransome that he would be glad to work with him on developing a plan.

G. Departmental Reports

1. **Police Department.** Chief Harrell read over the police report for the months of June and July. The total calls answered and/or initiated were 3081. A detailed copy of the police report is hereby attached to the minutes. The Chief told the Board that he is in the process of hiring an 8th full time officer as well as an additional dispatcher. Speed humps on S. SA Gilliam Street should be installed soon. Chief Harrell is also working with the town attorney on additional properties that may need to be added to the demolition process. The house at 305 S. SA Gilliam Street is the last one left on the initial list from 2018. The property located at 309 Sally Jenkins Street has been repaired. Commissioner Mabry and Commissioner Sugg both questioned as to the way the

software reports the calls on the call log versus citations reports. Chief Harrell explained that the reports come from two different software, so they are not handled the same.

Commissioner Mabry made a motion to adopt the minimum housing/abandoned property policy as written. Commissioner Sugg seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Mabry suggested the town attorney be contacted about drawing up a town policy pertaining to charges that will be incurred to customers who damage the lid sensors or the complete transmitter on the auto read meter. The customer will receive a warning for the first offense but will be charged \$50 - \$250 depending on the piece of equipment damaged. The written policy will be presented at the next meeting for a vote to be taken.

2. **Public Works Department.** Phil Webb read over the water and sewer report for the months of June and July. The total June water flow was 7.49 while the sewer was 10.78. The total July water flow was 5.4 while the sewer was 6.0. A detail copy of the water/sewer report is hereby attached to the minutes. Two employees have recently been hired, one with a Grade 2 wastewater certificate and one utility worker. The town has not had any luck in recruiting an electrician. The Board suggested looking into other options such as contracting the electrical work out.
3. **Fire Department.** Chief Burress presented the Fire report for the month of July. The total calls for the month was 16. A detail copy of the Fire Report is hereby attached to the minutes. The Fire Department is working on funding to purchase a Lucas 3 CPR Device at a cost of \$15,000. The machine performs CPR mechanically. Mayor Harrell told the Board that she had received a letter from the Fire Department requesting that the Pinetops Town Board appoint Greg Lancaster as the new Assistant Fire Chief. Mr. Lancaster would be replacing Curtis Lovett who recently retired from the department after serving 43 years. Their Board voted unanimously to appoint Greg Lancaster. Commissioner Webb made a motion to approve the Fire Departments request and appoint Greg Lancaster as the new Assistant Fire Chief. Commissioner Sugg seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously. Chief Burress presented the Cemetery report for the month of July. The total plots sold this month was 0. A detail copy of the Cemetery report is hereby attached to the minutes.
4. **Finance Officer.** Ms. Keesler gave the financial report for the month of June & July. The adjusted ending balance for the month of July was \$1,943,238.81. A detail copy of the Financial report is hereby attached to the minutes. She presented the Board with a Paid Check Report for the months of June and July along with a Revenue and Expenditure Report for July. Ms. Keesler reported that

the final amount transferred to the General Fund for the FYE 06/2021 was \$375,000 which is a decrease of \$59,211 from the previous year. The auditor has scheduled the first site visit for FYE 06/2021 for September 8-10.

H. Items for Discussion

1. Revisit Recycle Schedule

Mayor Harrell told the Board that customers are getting confused with the newly implemented recycle schedule. Currently the pick-up is scheduled for the 1st and 3rd Tuesday of the month, but this didn't consider a month that contains 5 weeks. Moving forward it is suggested the schedule be changed to every other week. The new schedule will be announced through the All Call System, the newsletter, and on the customer's utility bill.

2. Re-Open Board Meetings to Public

The town was considering re-opening the Board Meetings to the public but now has second thoughts due to the new emerging DELTA Variant. The Board unanimously decided to leave the meetings as is for now which means they will remain zoom call only for the public a little while longer and revisit it again as warranted. Also suggested was doing an All-Call to let customers know that a mask will be required upon entrance into the Town Office.

Commissioner Mabry made a motion to adopt the Economic Development Plan as written and presented at the last meeting. Commissioner Sugg seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously. Commissioner Mabry asked Mayor Harrell to contact Bruce Naegelen with the NC Department of Commerce to let him know that Board has made a motion to officially adopt the plan.

I. New Business

1. ARP Funds

Ms. Keesler told the Board that the town has received the 1st of 2 installments of ARP Funds in the amount of \$196,795.67. The second disbursement will be released no sooner than one year after the first. The total estimated grant amount is \$393,591.34. The town will have until Dec. 31st of 2024 to use or appropriate the funds and until Dec. 31, 2026 to finish the work. The funds can only be used for allowable categories outlined by the UST for pandemic recovery. The money must be kept separate from the regular budget and detail reports pertaining to the ARP Funds will be required.

2. CARES ACT Funds

Ms. Keesler told the Board that she would like to go ahead and send in an application to Edgecombe County requesting the town's 2nd allotment of CARES ACT funds. The Town of Pinetops was originally recommended an allocation of \$21,000 to which the town had already received the 1st round allocation of \$10,000 in September 2020. The 1st allotment went toward PPE, sanitize supplies, Police OT pay and the set-up of a zoom phone/account. The 2nd allotment would be used for new computer set-up in the conference room, email account set-up, drop box set-up, and the remainder going to the essential workers as a one-time bonus shown as a Thank You/Hazard Compensation Pay for continuing to work during the onset of COVID-19. She recommends full-time employees receive a one-time bonus check of \$450 while part-time employees receive \$150. Commissioner Sugg made a motion to approve the request to submit the application requesting the Town of Pinetops 2nd round allocation of CARES ACT funds from Edgecombe County in the amount of \$11,000. The motion includes the full-time employees receiving a one-time bonus check in the amount of \$450 and the part-time employees receiving \$150 as a thank you for their continued work during the COVID crisis. The Board also approves the Pinetops Hazard Compensation Policy as presented. Commissioner Mabry seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

3. Distressed Units

Ms. Keesler reminded the Board that the town had received a letter on April 16, 2021 declaring us as a distressed unit; mainly due to the town being on a check list where a point system was used. As a requirement the town will need to develop some action plans such as 1) Asset Inventory & Assessment; what we currently have, what needs to be done, what needs to be done first 2) Rate Study- consistent, regular increases as it relates to a financial strategy to get the job complete 3) Develop Short-Term Action Plans (2-5 years) that address infrastructure repair, maintenance, and management.

4. Town Administrator Applications

Mayor Harrell gave the Board a brief update on the process of getting a new Town Administrator. The applicant pool has been narrowed down from 5 to 3 and they will meet with those 3 on August 9th. From there the committee will bring the final recommendation back to the Board at the September meeting.

5. Commissioner Taylor told the Board that she had been in contact with Wendy; daughter of former Mayor Pro-Tem Florence Fender. She contacted her to discuss a possible time when

they could be in town so the Board could honor her with a Proclamation and/or plaque for her many years of dedicated service. The date of September 11th was mentioned since they want to hold the event outside due to the continuing COVID situation. The Board thought this was a good idea so Commissioner Taylor stated she would contact Wendy again to help finalize plans so hopefully she has more details at the September meeting.

J. Adjournment

Commissioner Webb made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Taylor seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Date, _____

9/7/2021



Mayor Brenda Harrell

ATTESTED.



Finance Officer/Town Clerk Tammy Keesler