

Town of Pinetops
Board of Commissioners
Regular Monthly Meeting (Also available via Zoom)
Minutes
December 7, 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 Sugg asked that a few items be added to the proposed agenda. These items include a Deputy Financial Officer position, Fire Department Assessment, proposed water/sewer rate increase, and estimates on repairs to Lion's Club and Centennial House. Commissioner Taylor made to approve the proposed agenda as amended. Commissioner Webb seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously

E. Consent Agenda

Commissioner Mabry made a motion to approve the November 9, 2021 minutes as written and submitted. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Sugg. Motion passed unanimously.

F. Administer Oath of Office & Appoint Mayor Pro-Tem

Mayor Harrell administered the Oath of Office to re-elected Commissioners Barbara Taylor and Donald Webb.

Mayor Harrell explained that the Board needed to reappoint a Mayor Pro-Tem due to the recently held town election. Commissioner Webb made a motion to nominate Barbara Taylor to serve as Mayor Pro-Tem. Commissioner Sugg seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously

G. Guests

1. Bruce Naegelen – NC Department of Commerce, Community Economic Development Planner

Bruce Naegelen appeared before the Board to briefly discuss a proposal to assist the Town of Pinetops with implementation development & training of community advisory committee. He began his presentation by handing out a copy of the proposal to the Board. The proposal outlined the ways they would assist the town in developing an organizational structure and strategic planning tool to help achieve an active inclusive town. He suggested the Advisory Committee/Board be made up of 7-11 members. He also mentioned that he had forgotten to include a Memorandum of Understanding; but if the town is interested in the proposal that was presented then he would make sure to send it. Commissioner Mabry suggested starting by soliciting interested candidates and drafting an application listing the requirements to serve on the Advisory Board. Commissioner Mabry made a motion to accept the proposal submitted by NC Main Street & Rural Planning Center offering the town Assistance with Implementation Development & Training of Community Advisory Committee. Motion seconded by Commissioner Taylor. Motion passed unanimously.

H. Public Comments

1. Phyllis Arrington – 214 S 2nd Street

Phyllis Arrington explained that she had just recently moved back into Pinetops after being gone for a while. She went on to say that she had a conversation with Commissioner Harrison and Mayor Harrell about her interest in getting involved in making Pinetops a better place to live. She spoke about abandoned/dilapidated houses not being occupied which are not only an eyesore but also a safety hazard. She told the Board that an area she wanted to focus on was from Abrams to Cotton Belt. Mayor Harrell thanked her for bringing her concerns to the Board.

2. George Barnes – 508 S 2nd Street

George Barnes stated that he didn't really have anything to say since the Mayor had already answered his questions. Mayor Harrell went on to say that what Mr. Barnes was referring too was a request he had received asking for the rezoning of 2 wooded areas on Pitt Street going towards Tarboro. She had told him that the request would first need to go before the Planning Board; then they would give their recommendation to the Board of Commissioners. The Board of Commissioners would have the final say but only after this process has been followed.

3. Commissioner Taylor

Commissioner Taylor informed the Board that she had been approached by some concerned citizens who were upset about the town not having a Christmas Parade. She explained to them that at the

time the planning would have started that the COVID cases in Edgecombe County were rising again which was a safety concern and therefore for safety reasons the parade was cancelled. She told the Board she just brought it up because she had promised those citizens that she would.

I. Departmental Reports

1. **Police Department:** Chief Harrell read over the police report for the month of November. The total calls answered and/or initiated were 1180. A detailed copy of the police report is hereby attached to the minutes. The Chief told the Board that they currently have 7 full time police officers with an 8th in training. They are down one dispatcher but are in the process of hiring. Chief Harrell presented the Board with a Neighborhood Petition requesting the installation of stop signs at 4th and Reason Street and 6th and Reason Street to help deter speeding. Commissioner Webb made a motion to approve the request to install the stop signs at 4th & Reason and 6th & Reason. Commissioner Sugg seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

2. **Public Works Department:** Phil Webb read over the water and sewer report for the month of November. The total November water flow was 5.50 million while the sewer was 3.2 million. A detail copy of the water/sewer report is hereby attached to the minutes.

3. **Fire Department:** Chief Burress presented the Fire report for the month of November. The total calls for the month was 10. A detail copy of the Fire Report is hereby attached to the minutes. Chief Burress informed the Board that they need to appoint a new Firemen Relief Fund Board Member to replace former Commissioner Florence Pender effective January 2022. The appointee does not have to be a board member but can be anyone the Board so chooses. Chief Burress did tell the Board that he had approached George Barnes to see if he would be willing to serve on the Firemen Relief Fund Board to which he replied, yes. Commissioner Webb made a motion to appoint George Barnes to serve on the Firemen Relief Fund Board effective January 2022. Commissioner Mabry seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Chief Burress presented the Cemetery report for the month of November. The total plots sold this month was 2. A detail copy of the Cemetery report is hereby attached to the minutes. Chief Burress informed the Board that he had been approached by a family interested in the purchase of 8 plots located in the old section of the cemetery. The cost of the 8 plots for a nonresident would be \$6,400.00. The family is aware of the towns concerns with sales of lots in the old section. Commissioner Webb made a motion to allow the sale of 8 plots in the old section of the cemetery at a purchase price of \$6,400.00. Commissioner Sugg seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

4. **Finance Officer.** Ms. Keesler gave the financial report for the month of November. The adjusted ending balance for the month of November was \$2,172,764.01. A detail copy of the Financial report is hereby attached to the minutes. The Board was presented with a Paid Check Report for the month as well as a copy of the Expenditure and Revenue Report. Ms. Keesler took a few minutes to update the Board on the status of the Audit Report Submittal, Cares Act Funding, Distressed Units, and the American Rescue Plan. Ms. Keesler told the Board that she was hoping the Audit would have been submitted to the LGC by the end of November as she was previously told but it looks like it is going to be extended even further. She spoke to the Audit firm on Friday to try to get a completion timeline but was only told that they would probably be sending an amended contract. Ms. Keesler informed the Board that the town has now received the 2nd and final allocation of Cares Act Funding in the amount of \$11,000. The told allocation for the Town of Pinetops was \$21,000. This was funds that were allocated as a result of COVID-19 to municipalities that sent in applications to their county. Eligible uses of these funds were PE supplies, Cleaning & Safety supplies, IT improvement, and Essential Workers Bonus Pay. Ms. Keesler told the Board that she had received an email stating that the town had until April 30, 2022 to complete its initial 6 hr. mandatory education requirement. This can be done either in person or by on demand training. This is the 1st of 4 mandatory requirements that must be fulfilled as a distressed unit in order to apply for available funding. This funding can only be used for infrastructure. Lastly, Ms. Keesler reported there was no more details on what the ARP funds could be used for other than what had already been stated earlier. The eligible uses that have been mentioned are water & sewer infrastructure as well as Broadband infrastructure. The town received its 1st of 2 allocations in July 2021 for \$196,795.67. The 2nd allocation should be received around the same time in 2022. The town has until Dec. 31, 2024 to allocate funds and the work must be completed by Dec. 31, 2026.

J. Items for Discussion

1. Town Ordinance to address Special Events.

Ms. Keesler informed the Board that she had not received an amended draft of the Town Ordinance to address Special Events from the town attorney. She will follow-up with the attorney.

2. Cost to publish a monthly newspaper.

Mayor Harrell stated the Board was interested in this but may need to consider it in the upcoming fiscal year. The Board would need a contract agreement and updated cost sheet by March or April of 2022 for it to be considered in the upcoming fiscal year.

3. Any Other Business.

- (a) Commissioner Sugg presented the Board with a job description for a Deputy Financial Officer. He asked that the Board review the document and consider approving the position at the next meeting.
- (b) Commissioner Sugg stated he would like to see the Board have an assessment done on the Fire Department to take a closer look at the financial composition. He said he had already spoken to an organization that could provide such an assessment. He further stated that this is in no way a reflection on the Fire Department because he would also like to see one done on the Police Department as well as the Public Works Department. The only reason the Fire Department was mentioned first was because they are considering the purchase of another truck. As mentioned at the last meeting the town needs to establish some type of Asset Management Program to help cycle through the useful life span of town equipment.
- (c) Commissioner Sugg asked that the ARP funding list be an on-going item on the Agenda. The list needs to prioritize the towns greatest needs.
- (d) Commissioner Sugg presented the Board with a handout of increase and revenue projections on citizens and town. He was proposing a 15% rate increase in the water/sewer. The proposed rate increase will help the town move into a more favorable position as far as grant eligibility. He was proposing that the rate increase become effective next month but after a brief discussion the Board decided to wait until March in order to give citizens time to be aware of the increase. An average consumer that uses 5,000 gallons would see a monthly increase of \$6.55. The Board asked that the proposed increase be included in the newsletter, on the website, and through the all-call system. Commissioner Mabry made a motion to enact the proposed 15% water/sewer rate increase effective March 2022. Commissioner Sugg seconded the motion. Motion passed.
- (e) Commissioner Sugg decided to table the Lion's Club and Centennial House repair estimates until the next meeting.

K. New Business

Mayor Harrell reminded the Board that the employee luncheon is scheduled for this Friday at 12:00 at the Fire House.

L. Adjournment

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

Date, 1/4/2022



Mayor Brenda Harrell

ATTESTED:



Finance Officer/Town Clerk Tammy Keesler