

Town of Pinetops
Board of Commissioners
Special Called Meeting
Budget Work Session Minutes
May 11, 2021 2:00 pm

Mayor Harrell called the Special Called Meeting to order.

All Board members were present for the Budget Work Session along with the Public Works Director, Police Chief, and Finance Officer. The Town Attorney was also present via ZOOM.

Commissioner Taylor led the invocation.

Mayor Harrell led the Pledge of Allegiance.

There were no objections to the proposed agenda.

The Finance Officer presented the Board with the Budget Scenario for fiscal year 2021-2022. She explained that it contained the items that were discussed at the budget retreat. These items included the town administrator position, an employee that is to be split between administration and the police department as well as a full-time police officer position. It also includes the Billing Clerks position being increased to \$15.00 per hour.

Some items that are not included in this Budget Scenario is the IT estimate recently received and the two options on cemetery software. Commissioner Mabry explained that there was only \$175 between the two proposals and that was due to 1 user vs 2 users. He told the Board that his recommendation would be to go with the 2 users' proposal. Commissioner Webb made a motion to purchase the 2nd user proposal from Pontem Software for \$4,870. Commissioner Sugg seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously. Commissioner Mabry stated that since Ms. Odyssey Brown has been cc'd on all this that she would handle it. The Finance Officer asked Commissioner Mabry how much he felt should be included in this budget for IT to which he responded, \$25,000.

Also not included in this Budget Scenario is the 21% rate increase from BCBS for renewal of the current group medical plan. She told the Board that she did plug in around a 11% increase, but the renewal came in higher than anticipated. The 21% rate increase will cost the town an additional \$37,947. She told the Board that she did receive a proposal for the coverage we had

previously from BCBS which came in about half the cost, but the coverage was not as good. They also offer United Health as an option, but it is harder to find providers in the area. Commissioner Taylor made a motion to renew the current BCBS health plan as quoted with the 21% rate increase. Commissioner Sugg seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

The board discussed changing the proposed 2.5% merit increase into a 2.5% COLA. This was mainly because the merit system will probably not be in place by the upcoming fiscal year. Commissioner Sugg made a motion to approve a 2.5% COLA for employees for fiscal year 2021-2022.

The board agreed to leave the 1% 401-k increase for general employees as voted on at the budget retreat. This will increase the general employees 401-k town contribution from 2.5% to 3.5%.

Commissioner Sugg suggested in the upcoming fiscal year that the Board look for better returns when it comes to the town's financial investments such as money market and savings accounts.

The Finance Officer told the board that this budget scenario does include a 25% rate increase for both the water and sewer. These increases would begin as of July 1, 2021. The increases are needed to help alleviate the infrastructure issues the town is facing. Also, since the town has been designated as a distressed unit, they must show an incentive to improve the situation such as increasing rates and decreasing interfund transfers. She did tell the Board that she didn't include the storm water fee of \$3.00 per customer as discussed at the retreat since she was recommending a 25% rate increase for both the water and sewer. Commissioner Sugg made a motion to approve the 25% rate increase for both the water and sewer to be effective July 1, 2021. Commissioner Taylor seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

The Public Works Director presented job qualifications for two positions he has vacant. Commissioner Mabry stated that Ms. Brown can edit the job qualifications presented for the two vacant positions and post them on the town's website. After some discussion the Board decided to advertise the electric position with a minimum starting salary of \$22.00 per hour and the water/sewer position will have a minimum starting salary of \$18.00 per hour. Both positions salaries will depend upon the applicant's qualifications. The Board requested that the Town Administrator position be advertised at the same time. The amount included in the proposed budget for this position is \$90,000.

The Finance Officer will make all changes discussed today and be ready to present the proposed budget for fiscal year 2021-2022 at the June 1, 2021 regular meeting. Along with the proposed budget a budget message and budget ordinance will also be presented for review.

Commissioner Sugg made a motion to go out of regular session and into closed session to discuss personnel matters and obtain legal advice. Commissioner Webb seconded the motion. The motion was passed unanimously.

Commissioner Sugg made a motion to go out of closed session and back into regular session. Commissioner Harrison seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

The Board asked that a closed session to discuss personnel matters be added on the June 1st Agenda.

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

Date: 6/1/2021


Mayor Brenda Harrell

ATTESTED:


Finance Officer/Town Clerk Tammy Keesler