

Town of Pinetops
Board of Commissioners
Regular Monthly Meeting (Also available via Zoom)
Minutes
March 1, 2022
Pinetops Town Hall

A. Call Regular Meeting to Order

Mayor Harrell called the Regular Meeting to Order.

Mayor Harrell introduced the new Town Administrator, Fred Ventresco to the Board.

B. Invocation

Invocation was given by Phil Webb.

C. Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Harrell led the Pledge of Allegiance.

D. Proposed Agenda

Commissioner Mabry made a motion to approve the proposed agenda as submitted. Commissioner Webb seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

E. Consent Agenda

Commissioner Webb made a motion to approve the February 1, 2022 Regular Board Meeting Minutes as written. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Mabry. Motion passed unanimously.

F. Guests

1. Will Williams – MRL Networks

Will Williams appeared at the meeting via ZOOM to give the Board an update on the Conference Room Audio/Video as well as the rest of the IT. The credit card machine now accepts payments in about 50 seconds where it was taking a couple of minutes after the installation of

the new desktop. He recommends if this is not acceptable then they could look at a different scanner. Commissioner Sugg stated he would check with Southern Bank to see what type of card scanner they have and if it would be compatible with our system. Will stated that would be fine but he is not sure if it would be compatible. He informed the Board that 3 machines have currently been replaced which consists of the Cash Register, Utilities Shop Maclune, and Chief Harrell's desktop. A laptop was also purchased for the fire department. Also discussed was purchasing a new PC or laptop for the Town Administrator. Will recommended a docking station so he could have the option between the PC and laptop. The file server is scheduled for installation on March 15th. As far as the conference room Audio/Video goes it looks like the video is working well but the audio not so much. Will stated this is not his specialty thus the reason for getting Integrated Visual Solution to submit a quote. His recommendation was to take the camera off the proposal because he didn't think we needed it which would remove around \$3,495 from the total price of \$7,436. Commissioner Mabry recommended a plug & play system for around \$200. The Board agreed to allow Commissioner Mabry to purchase the plug & play system first to see if that would fix the audio problem and if so reimburse him the purchase price.

2. Bonner Jenkins – 112 N S.A. Gilliam St.

Bonner Jenkins appeared before the Board on behalf of her father, Elmer Fuller. She explained that her father was interested in purchasing the land located at 305 S.A. Gilliam. She presented the Board with a Letter of intent for land purchase. Mayor Harrell asked if he had a price in mind to which she responded not at this time. She knew he would have to pay the demolition cost, any back taxes owed, and any other fees associated with the property. Mayor Harrell asked Ms. Keesler to contact the town attorney to see what costs are associated with the property and what the market value is on it as well.

G. Public Comments

1. Carolyn Hopkins – 314 N 6th St.

Carolyn Hopkins wanted to know why her utility bill jumped up over \$100 this month. David Phillips, public works explained that over 26 days on the billing cycle was below freezing so it doesn't matter if you don't adjust your thermostat it is still going to be higher because of the frigid weather. She then inquired as to when the Board was going to implement the flat rate on electric as discussed back in 2019. Commissioner Mabry re-enforced that the flat rate was approved a couple of years ago, but no effective date was ever set. Commissioner Sugg suggested it be added to the budget retreat so that a decision can be made one way or another.

2. **Phyllis Arrington – 214 S 2nd St.**

Phyllis Arrington stated she had received two complaints about the high utility bills from concern citizens and she told them she would bring their concerns to the Board. She inquired as to what was the proper protocol for complaints. Mayor Harrell explained that she didn't have to wait until the Board meetings she could bring any complaints or concerns to the Town Hall. She stated she would love to see better communication between the citizens and the Town Board.

H. Departmental Reports

1. **Police Department.** Chief Harrell read over the police report for the month of February 2022. The police department answered and/or initiated 967 official police actions. The department is currently down 1 officer and down 2 dispatchers. A copy of the entire police report is hereby attached to the minutes. Chief Harrell told the Board that the Tractor Pull is scheduled to take place this year and our officers will provide security as usual. Commissioner Mayor mentioned that they will need to fill out a special event application.

2. **Public Works Department.** Phil Webb read over the water and sewer report for the month of February 2022. The total water produced for the month was 4.14 million and total wastewater treated was 5.22 million. A copy of the report is hereby attached to the minutes. Well #8 should go online by March 4, 2022. Mr. Phil told the Board that he would like to change the lineman position currently being advertised to just a maintenance position since the town hasn't received much interest. Commissioner Sugg agreed that might be the best route to take since public works needs another body and any major electric work can be outsourced. David Phillips explained that he could possibly train someone to do secondary electric work. The Board instructed Mr. Phil to write a job description as he sees fit and then that position can be advertised on the town's website. The pump #1 in the Digester Building at the WWTP has a hole in the casing. Mr. Phil explained that the pump is 37 years old and repair is not recommended. The replacement cost is \$9,1490 plus tax. The finance officer explained that there is \$10,000 in contingency but the Board could possibly use ARP funds. The Board instructed him to go ahead and order the pump since it needs to be fixed. The Board asked the finance officer to check with the Attorney or Upper Coastal Plain Council of Governments to see if ARP funds can be obligated for this type of purchase if needed.

3. **Fire Department.** Chief Burress presented the Fire report for the month of February. The total calls for the month of February was 12. A copy of the entire fire report is hereby attached to the minutes. Chief Burress presented the Cemetery report for the month of February. The total lots sold for the month of February was 1. A copy of the entire cemetery report is hereby attached to the minutes. Chief Burress asked the Board at the last meeting to consider allowing 2 urns or memorial boxes to be placed in one plot because he had been contacted by an individual who was interested in this. The Board agreed that it was okay to go ahead and allow it this time but would like for a draft to be done pertaining to the updated cemetery regulations and policies for Board approval. Commissioner Mabry inquired as to whether the fire department laptop was purchased through the fire department budget or directly out of the appropriated IT funds. The finance officer reported that the fire department laptop was purchased through the fire department budget and not directly out of the appropriated IT funds. The purchase of the laptop was covered through a fire department state grant.

4. **Finance Department.** Ms. Keesler gave the financial report for the month of February. The general fund had a loss of \$4,545.06. The electric fund had a positive gain of \$62,907.00 for the month of February while the water/sewer fund also ended the month with a positive gain of \$24,716.29. She presented the Board with a Paid Check Report for the month of February along with a Revenue and Expenditure Report. The adjusted ending balance for the month of February is \$2,548,536.97. A copy of the entire report is hereby attached to the minutes. The ARP regional strategic planning workshop was held on February 16, 2022 at the Edgecombe County Administration Building. Ms. Keesler, Phil Webb and Commissioner Sugg was in attendance. The meeting basically discussed the "Final Rule" in greater detail. It looks like most municipalities will be spending funds under the category "Revenue Loss" since it gives greater flexibility to towns. The towns total allocations should be \$393,500. The money must be obligated by December 31, 2024 and spent by December 31, 2026. The viable utilities initial education (distressed units) in-person training is scheduled for March 16, 2022 from 8.30 a.m. to 4.00 p.m. at the UPCPCOG. This is a mandatory meeting for distressed units. Ms. Keesler, Phil Webb, Commissioner Sugg and Mayor Harrell is scheduled to attend. Commissioner Mabry has spoken to Will from Locality about the possibility of taking over the services that MRL Network is currently providing the town. Commissioner Mabry suggested he come before the Board at the next meeting to give a presentation on what he can provide the town to which the Board agreed.

I. Items for Discussion

1. Mayor-Council vs Council-Manager Form of Government

Commissioner Mabry presented the Board with a summary he received from the town attorney stating the primary differences between the Council-Manager form of government and the Mayor-Council form of government. He asked the Board to review the document because in his opinion he felt like a Manger should be able to manage. The main difference would be that a Manager would be allowed to control personnel decisions such as hiring, firing, and disciplinary decisions where a Town Administrator's hands are tied on these types of issues. The new Town Administrator stated that he would like to have time to review this document and possibly talk to the Town Attorney before he can offer any input on this topic. The Board decided to table this vote until the Budget Work Session so he can have time to review the document and the town attorney will be present at the budget retreat to answer any possible questions.

2. ARP Funding List

There was nothing new to add to the list at this time but hopefully the Board can discuss it further at the budget retreat and begin to obligate funds for specific projects.

J. New Business

1. Advertise Grass Contract Bids

Ms. Keesler asked the Board's permission to advertise the Invitation for Bids for contract mowing services. The bids will be accepted through Friday, March 25th and voted on at the budget retreat scheduled for March 29th. Commissioner Sugg made a motion to advertise the Invitation for Bids for contract mowing services. Commissioner Webb seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

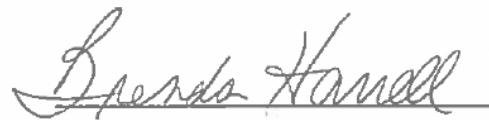
2. Schedule Budget Retreat

The Budget Retreat has been scheduled for Tuesday, March 29, 2022 from 8:00 am to 3:00 pm at the Lion's Club. The Board asked that the town attorney be invited to attend.

K. Adjournment

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

Date: April 5, 2022



Mayor Brenda Harrell

ATTESTED.



Finance Officer/Town Clerk Tammy Keesler