

**Town of Pinetops**  
**Board of Commissioners**  
**Regular Monthly Meeting**  
**Minutes**  
**March 3, 2020**  
**Pinetops Town Hall**

**Present:** Mayor Brenda Harrell, Mayor Pro-Tem Florence Pender, Commissioners Donald Webb, Dennis Sugg, Oscar Mabry and Barbara Taylor.

**Also in attendance:** Town Administrator Natalie Bess, Finance Officer Tammy Keesler, Public Works Director Phil Webb, and Police Chief Stacy Harrell. The Town Auditor, Phyllis Pearson was also present at the meeting.

**A. Call to Order**

Mayor Harrell called the meeting to order at 6:00pm.

**B. Invocation**

Invocation was given by Commissioner Sugg.

**C. Pledge of Allegiance**

Pledge of Allegiance was led by Mayor Harrell.

**D. Proposed Agenda**

Commissioner Taylor requested that a Closed Session to discuss Personnel be added after the Items for Consideration. Commissioner Mabry made a motion to approve the proposed agenda as amended. Commissioner Pender seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

**E. Consent Agenda**

Mayor Harrell asked that on the February 11, 2020 minutes the word Estate be changed to Escrow as it relates to the money that was left in an account after the purchase of a knuckle-boom truck and a camera system. Commissioner Pender made a motion to approve the consent agenda as amended along

with approval of minutes from February 11, 2020. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Mabry. Motion carried unanimously.

#### **F. Public Comments**

Mayor Harrell opened the public comment section to those citizens that had signed in to speak.

(1) **Janie Farmer – 107 N. Martin Luther King St.**

She explained to the board that she is encountering drainage issues as a result of water & debris that flows down the hill from Dollar General. A heavy rain causes a runoff which in turn over fills the ditches. The storm drain might also need to be cleaned out. Commissioner Mabry responded that maybe these type of issues can be handled in the future through routine maintenance performed by the public works department. Commissioner Sugg suggested the town start some type of future projects plan and that any items brought to the town's attention be recorded so they can be prioritized.

(2) **Raymond Moss – 107 Sally Jenkins St.**

He told the board that he had attended a meeting in the past in which the town attorney was present and there was a discussion concerning the demolition of some properties. Mr. Moss questioned when this was scheduled to happen because the properties looks so bad. Administrator Bess told the board that she actually had spoken to an inspector today about asbestos inspection. She explained that once an inspection is done samples are sent off to check for asbestos. This has to be done before the town can follow through with the demolition process. Mr. Moss asked if the town office could check to see if he is paying inside or outside rates for water/sewer. He went on to explain that he was annexed a couple of years ago but he wasn't sure if his rates were ever turned over to inside rates.

Administrator Bess assured Mr. Moss that we will check into it tomorrow and let him know.

#### **G. Departmental Reports**

1. **Police Department:** Chief Harrell read over the police report for the month of February. The total calls for the month was 1,528. This number was made up of 1,071 Business Checks and 121 escorts. There were 46 Traffic Stops and 22 citations issued. There was 1 reportable accident and all the remaining calls were divided between residence checks, animal complaints, and suspicious subjects/vehicles as well as any other calls that are not included above. The police department recently purchased 6 new laptops at a total cost of \$3,918.12 which is

reimbursable through the Justice Assistance Grant the town received. The department currently has 2 officers out on leave.

2. **Public Works Department.** (a) Phil Webb read over the water and sewer report for the month of February. The report shows the total million gallons of sewer flow and water discharge for the month. The sewer flow totaled 9.89 million gallons which averages to 341,000 gallons per day and the water discharge totaled 5.56 million gallons which averages to 191,700 gallons per day. He stated that the wastewater was up this month due to the amount of rain we have received. Commissioner Sugg asked the Public Works Director what the capacity of the wastewater plant is to which he responded 300,000. He did state that the town would probably receive a violation and possibly a fine from the State for going over but the wastewater plant can handle the over flow.
3. **Fire Department.** Steve Burress read over the Fire report for the month of February. The total calls for the month of February was 14. The report consisted of Town Fire Calls - 2, Medical Responder Calls - 12, Hours in Training & Meetings - 112. Fire Department received 56 ten year smoke detectors by way of grant from the N.C. Dept. of Insurance.
4. **Finance Officer.** Ms. Keesler gave the financial report for the month of February. The general fund had a negative balance of \$39,827.65 while the electric fund had a positive balance of \$78,809.45. The water/sewer fund also ended with a positive balance of \$4,289.14. From this month on the board will also receive a Budget to Actual Report for each month to keep track of the actual revenue and expenditures that have been collected or spent compared to what was budgeted for the fiscal year.
5. **Town Administrator.**
  - a) Administrator Bess reported that all of the walkability signs are now up so this Thursday at 3:30 the newspaper will come down to do a story on them as well as take some pictures. She said all board members and citizens are invited to the event which will be held at the Gazebo.
  - b) Administrator Bess reported that the Stream Debris Removal has been completed.
  - c) Administrator Bess reported that the Water Tank Removal has been completed.

- d) Administrator Bess updated the board on the Well Replacement Project. The company recommended by The Wooten Company and which was also the lowest bidder was Bill's Well Drilling Company. The bid was for Well No. 4 Replacement-DWI project in the total bid amount of \$519,975. The project is still in the planning stages.
- e) Administrator Bess informed the board that the Asbestos Inspector is ready. There will be no cost to the town for the inspections. The samples will cost around \$100 per property. She asked the board if they would like to keep the 105-107 W. Sater Street property on the demolition list or remove it since the town owns it now. Commissioner Mabry made a motion to move forward with the demolition on all properties including 105-107 W. Sater Street. Commissioner Taylor seconded the motion. The motion was passed unanimously.
- f) Commissioner Taylor asked Administrator Bess for a brief update on the meetings she attend. Administrator Bess then proceeded to give a brief update on each.

Commissioner Sugg stated that he would like to know the target dates when projects are to take place as well as receive periodical updates.

Mayor Harrell asked if the Department of Transportation was going to come back to do a little cleanup on the corners where the handicap access were installed. The public works director stated that he doesn't think they are completely done because he saw them recently in town still working on the corners.

Commissioner Mabry asked Administrator Bess how many Planning Board Vacancy applications had been received. She replied that the town had received two; Wanda Harrison and Joyce Ricks. She told the board that she wasn't sure if both were for the planning board position or if one of them was for the Beautification Committee. She went on to say that she was planning on doing another all-call tomorrow in hopes of getting more applicants. The board members decided they would look over the applications during the budget retreat.

#### H. Items for Discussion

- 1) Audit Presentation for FYE 06/30/2019 – Phyllis Pearson

Phyllis Pearson with the audit firm of Petway, Mills & Pearson appeared before the board to present the audit finding for FYE 06/30/2019. She stated that the town has had problems in the past in getting information available in a timely manner such as the financial statements and reconciling the bank statements. She suggested the board members get more involved in the budget process by looking at the financial statements and the budget to actual figures. She also recommended that the budget amendments be done in a timely manner. The main problem this year was that budget amendments weren't made to cover the actual expenditures that were budgeted; most of the general fund departments ended up over. She suggested the board take a close look at the tax rate since Pinetops is really low by the State standards and this is one of the few ways to increase the general fund revenues. She told the board that they needed to keep an eye on the interfund transfers as well as dipping into the fund balance. She reminded them that the State recommends you keep at least 8% Fund Balance of Hand. Commissioner Sugg made a motion to accept the Audit for FYE 06/30/2019 as written and presented by Phyllis Pearson. Commissioner Mabry seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

#### **I. Items for Consideration**

##### **1) Public Hearing – Variance Request – Property located at 112 N. 1<sup>st</sup> Street**

Administrator Bess explained that the planning board met in January to discuss a zoning variance they received from Chester Lancaster dated January 16, 2020. The purpose of the variance was to request to change the minimum separation allowed between buildings be reduced from 20ft. to 5ft. to allow six buildings across the property. The planning board recommended approval of the zoning variance. All adjoining property owners have been notified of the request by certified letters. Commissioner Mabry made a motion to open a public hearing on the variance request for the property located at 112 N. 1<sup>st</sup> Street.

Commissioner Webb seconded the motion. Motion passed. No citizens chose to speak during the public hearing. Commissioner Pender made a motion to close the public hearing and go back into Regular Session. Commissioner Mabry seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Commissioner Webb made a motion to approve the variance request as recommended by the planning board. Commissioner Mabry seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

2) Suicide Walk

Makala Reese appeared before the board at the February 11, 2020 meeting to request use of the park and Lions Club building on September 12, 2020 for the Darkness Walk in Pinetops. During that meeting Commissioner Mabry suggested that it be tabled until this month before being voted on. Commissioner Mabry made a motion to approve the request that was made February 11, 2020 asking for use of the park and Lions Club building on September 12, 2020 for the Darkness Walk in Pinetops. Commissioner Sugg seconded the motion. Motion passed.

3) Suicide Walk Plaque Placement

<sup>McCaulley</sup>  
Makala Reese appeared before the board at the February 11, 2020 meeting to request the board's permission to hang a plaque in the town hall since the work they do is for the community. Commissioner Mabry suggested that it be tabled until this month before being voted on. Commissioner Sugg made a motion to allow them to hang the suicide walk plaque in the Lions Club building. Commissioner Pender seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Commissioner Sugg made a motion to go into Closed Session to discuss Personnel Matters. Commissioner Webb seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Commissioner Taylor made a motion to go out of Closed Session and back into Regular Session. Commissioner Webb seconded the motion. Motion passed.

**Adjournment**

Motion made by Commissioner Pender and seconded by Commissioner Taylor to adjourn at p.m. Motion carried unanimously.

Date, 4/21/2020

  
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Mayor Brenda Harrell

ATTESTED,

  
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Finance Officer/Town Clerk Tammy Keesler