

Board of Commissioners
Regular Monthly Meeting
January 7, 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 , Renaee Cooper, Public Works Director Phil Webb, and Police Chief Stacy Harrell.

A. Call to Order

Mayor Harrell called the meeting to order at 6.00pm.

B. Invocation

Invocation was given by Mayor Pro-Tem Florence Pender.

C. Pledge of Allegiance

Pledge of Allegiance was led by Mayor Harrell.

D. Proposed Agenda

Commissioner Mabry requested that a couple of items be added under Items for Consideration. The first item to be added was the street beside Duck-Thru. The second item to be added under Items for Consideration was getting an assessment study for the water treatment plant. Commissioner Taylor requested that a closed session be called in order to discuss personnel matters. Commissioner Mabry made a motion to approve the proposed agenda as amended. Commissioner Pender seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

E. Consent Agenda

Commissioner Mabry made a motion to approve the consent agenda with approval of minutes from December 3, 2019. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Webb. Motion carried unanimously.

F. Public Comments

Mayor Harrell asked that all cell phone ringers be silenced during the meeting. She also asked the citizens present to refrain from speaking out during the meeting once the public comment section is closed.

(1) Raymond Moss – 107 Sally Jenkins St.

He was inquiring about the status on houses throughout town that were slated for demolition. Administrator Bess stated that some of the houses on the original list had been taken care of by the homeowners. Another one had been taken off the list because it was going through foreclosure. The town is currently waiting on getting an asbestos certificate before demolish can move forward on a couple of properties.

(2) Wanda Harrison – 206 S. Martin Luther King St.

She was questioning why her utility bill has been so high for the last 3 months especially since her husband had been out of the house caring for his mother. She did state that she had an energy audit done 2-3 years ago and had made some repairs at that time. She told the board that she uses a gas heater at the front of the house and just turns the electric heat on towards night fall in order to get the chill out at the back of the house. She also mentioned that her meter had been changed out a few times. Mayor Harrell suggested that a new energy audit might be beneficial. She also suggested trying to leave the electric heat at a comfortable medium temperature so that you don't have to keep adjusting it up and down which actually causes the bill to be higher.

(3) Sarah Staton – 105 N 12th St.

She questioned when customers would begin being charged a flat/base rate on their utility bills. Commissioner Mabry stated that the flat rate was proposed but never approved by the board. The transparency was supposed to start in January which means a breakdown of the billing. She also wanted to know why her sewer is always higher than the water. Mayor Harrell explained that the sewer rate is higher than the water rate because it costs more to treat the sewer.

G. Departmental Reports

1. **Police Department.** Chief Harrell read over the police report for the month of December. The total calls for the month was 807. This number was made up of 311 Business Checks and 113 escorts. The remaining calls were divided between accidents, traffic stops, residence checks, B&E as well as any other calls that are not included above. Parade security was provided by the Pinetops officers = 7, Sheriff = 5, and Tarboro police =3. Each officer received \$75 which is based on \$25/hr. Commissioner Sugg stated that he would like to see the cost associated with the

parade security be taken out of the parade's budget and not the towns. Pinetops police assisted with Cops for Kids program in Rocky Mount conducted through F.O.P. The chief handed out toys on Christmas Eve to kids throughout Pinetops. The 2 new police vehicles are still being outfitted with equipment but should be road ready in the near future. Four officers have just completed radar certification. The town was rewarded a \$24,498 no match justice assistance grant to use as reimbursement for equipment purchased. The grant runs from Oct.-Sept. and the town will be re-applying. Commissioner Sugg asked the Chief if he could get a detail line graph that shows where most of the crimes in town take place. He also requested information about police staff size compared to other similar departments in our area.

2. **Public Works Department.** (a) Phil Webb read over the water and sewer report for the month of December. The report shows the total million gallons of sewer flow and water discharge for the month. The sewer flow totaled 5.11 million gallons which averages to 165,000 gallons per day and the water discharge totaled 4.84 million gallons which averages to 156,000 gallons per day. Commissioner Sugg inquired about the capacity of the wastewater treatment plant. Mr. Phil stated the plant had a daily capacity of 300,000 so the town is currently operating at about 1/3 of its capacity. Commissioner Sugg asked if the town currently flushes lines going to Crisp. Mr. Phil stated yes they do but not that often. He said he would take a closer look into it.
3. **Fire Department.** Steve Burress read over the Fire report for the month of December. The total calls for the month of December was 9. The report consisted of Town Fire Calls - 1, Mutual Aid Fire Calls - 1, and Medical Responder Calls - 7. Hours in Training & Meetings - 115, Fire Prevention & Life Safety Programs -2 volunteer hours. The fire department also presented the town board with the total calls for the entire year of 2019. The total calls from Jan-Dec 2019 were 162. This consisted of Town Fire Calls -40, Mutual Aid Fire Calls - 4, Automatic Aid Fire Call for South Edge FD - 6, & Medical Responder Calls (started last March) - 112. Total volunteer training hours for year 2019 was 2130. Commissioner Sugg asked if all 3 of the trucks had been serviced. Mr. Burress replied that yes all 3 of them had received their annual testing as well as being serviced bumper to bumper. He also reported that 104 hydrants throughout town were serviced and pressure tested.
4. **Finance Officer.** Ms. Keesler gave the financial report for the month of December 2019. The general fund had a positive balance of \$50,285.73 while the electric and water/sewer fund also ended up with a positive balance. The electric fund had a positive balance of \$64,621.45 and

the water/sewer had a positive balance of \$ 31,445.06. These figures represent the operating revenue and expenses for the month of December.

5. Town Administrator.

- a) Administrator Bess told the board that the town is currently accepting grass cutting bids through 5:00 p.m. on February 7th. The bid is for contracted mowing services for a one year period. The contract will include mowing the cemetery. A scope of the project can be picked up at the town hall. The person must provide proof/certification of insurance with bid proposal.
- b) Administrator Bess reported that the walkability signs have come in. There will be a ribbon cutting once the signs have been erected. The signs placement must meet DOT regulations. Mr. Phil will work with Evonne Williams on the placement of the signs. The administrator will let the board members know once the ribbon cutting details have been finalized.
- c) Administrator Bess will let the board members know once the ribbon cutting details have been finalized for the Duck-Thru. Currently, the ribbon cutting is scheduled for 10:00 a.m. on January 21st.
- d) Administrator Bess updated the board on the stream debris removal. She explained that they are just waiting on the final inspection so the project can be close-out/completed.
- e) The Wooten Company recommend tentative award to the lowest bidder, Bill's Well Drilling Company for the Well No. 4 Replacement-DWI project in the total bid amount of \$519,975. Commissioner Webb made a motion to approve the resolution of tentative award to the lowest bidder, Bill's Well Drilling Company in the amount of \$519,975. Commissioner Mabry seconded the motion. The resolution was unanimously adopted.
- f) The water tank removal is scheduled to take place the last week in January. Isler Demolitions, Inc. dismantle and remove down to the concrete foundation the 75,000 gallon elevated water tower. They will receive and dispose of the scrap material.
- g) Administrator Bess wanted to let the board members as well as the citizens present know that folks will be in our area conducting the 2020 census.
- h) Administrator Bess has received information about a waste reduction & recycling grant program. The program is designed to have local governments work with the school systems in establishing ways to reduce waste. The deadline for the waste reduction & recycling grant program is the end of February. Commissioner Mabry told Administrator Bess he would like to work with her and the school systems on this matter. Mayor Harrell suggested stressing recycling in our own town also.

- i) Administrator Bess attended a meeting today at the Council of Government. Commissioner Mabry has an advisory meeting scheduled at the Council of Government on January 15th. The town administrator will also be attending the administrative municipal course next week.
- j) The town offices will be closed on Monday, January 20, 2020.
- k) The February board meeting is scheduled to be held on Tuesday, February 11, 2020 at 6.00 p.m.

H. Items for Consideration

Administrator Bess presented the board members with a list of 6 applicants who had applied for a beautification grant offered through the town. The maximum amount set aside for beautification was \$3,000. In the past the town would match up to \$1,000 per application once receipts were provided. There were still some questions surrounding the grant funding. Is the money only for work done on the front façade or can a business use it for work done to the inside? None of the applications submitted was for work done to the front façade. Commissioner Mabry made a motion to table funding until the board reaches some type of clarification/guidelines as it relates to the beautification grant. He proposed that the board hold a special meeting in order to set up these guidelines once and for all. Commissioner Sugg seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously. Commissioner Sugg asked Administrator Bess if the board members could get a copy of the grant application for review.

Commissioner Mabry asked Mr. Phil to do an assessment of the street beside the Duck-Thru. He explained that big trucks are causing holes at Pine Chapel. Mr. Phil stated that the trucks are going to be a concern because the street is not designed for this type of traffic. The streets in question are Hamlet & Burnette.

Commissioner Mabry made a motion to have Mr. Phil do an assessment/upgrade study for the wastewater treatment plant. Commissioner Webb seconded the motion. Motion was passed unanimously. Commissioner Sugg asked why we are looking at this if we are only operating at 1/3 of our capacity. Mr. Phil stated that the age of the plant is 30 years old and the maximum life of the equipment is usually around 40 years. He went on to explain that equipment is not going to last forever and the plant is getting close to the end of its life expectancy. Mr. Phil told the board that he had talked with Derek from ST Wooten who stated that the town could possibly be eligible for up to \$150,000 towards an assessment/upgrade study.

Closed Session

Commissioner Taylor made a motion to go into Closed Session to discuss personnel matters.
Commissioner Sugg seconded the motion. Motion was passed unanimously.

Commissioner Mabry made a motion to go out of Closed Session and back into regular session.
Commissioner Webb seconded the motion. Motion was passed unanimously.

Adjournment

Motion made by Commissioner Pender and seconded by Commissioner Webb to adjourn at 7:24 p.m.
Motion carried unanimously.

Date: 2/11/2020


Mayor Brenda Harrell

ATTESTED:


Finance Officer/Town Clerk Tammy Keesler