

Town of Pinetops
Board of Commissioners
Special Call Meeting
May 19, 2020
FY 2020/2021 Budget Planning Workshop

Present: Mayor Brenda Harrell, Commissioners Donald Webb, Dennis Sugg, Barbara Taylor, and Oscar Mabry. Mayor Pro-Tem Florence Pender was out of town so she was not present for the meeting.

Also in attendance: Town Administrator Natalie Bess, Finance Officer Tammy Keesler, Police Chief Stacy Harrell, Public Works Director Phil Webb, and Van Holland from the Tar River Times paper.

Call to Order

Mayor Harrell called the special meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

Invocation

Dennis Sugg led the board in a word of prayer.

Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Harrell led the pledge of Allegiance.

Acceptance of Proposed Agenda

Commissioner Taylor made a motion to accept the proposed agenda. Commissioner Webb seconded the motion. By a show of hands the motion passed unanimously.

Items for Discussion

1. FY 2020/2021 Budget Planning

The Finance Officer went over the proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2020-2021. She told the board that the budget in front of them had not changed since the one they received during the previous budget retreat. She went on to explain that it hadn't changed because she was waiting to hear from the board on what they wanted to do as it pertained to salaries, benefits, and rate increases. She did tell the board that she would make sure to include the changes they discussed at the budget training meeting that was held on May 14, 2020. Those changes included combining a couple of expenditure line items such as Contracted Services and Professional Fees as well as Office Supplies and Departmental Supplies. Commissioner Mabry also suggested at that meeting that we look into doing away with the miscellaneous line item and distribute those funds into more appropriate line items. Commissioner

Mabry and Commissioner Sugg also expressed during the previous meeting that they wanted to make sure we set aside \$7,500 to be used to cover the towns match for an EIA Study to be done on the wastewater treatment plant.

Administrator Bess told the board that she had been in contact with BCBS concerning the medical coverage renewal and was told the town could expect a 6% decrease. The renewal would be for the same plan the town currently has which is a 70/30 plan with a \$1,000 deductible. The board asked her to see if she could get some additional quotes on different medical plans. She told the board that she has asked for additional quotes but have yet to receive word back but she will send them another email now. Shortly after she sent the email she heard back from them on another plan they were offering which was an 80/20 plan for just \$17.64 more per employee per month. Commissioner Webb made a motion to move the town's current medical coverage offered through Blue Cross Blue Shield from a 70/30 plan to the 80/20 plan. Commissioner Sugg seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Webb made a motion to honor the 457 plan as it currently is offered for the employees that are on the plan right now with the understanding that it will not be offered to any employees not currently enrolled in the plan. There are only 3 previously retired employees that are on the plan and receiving a town contribution of 5%. These 3 employees are still actively working for the town. Commissioner Sugg seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Mabry made a motion for the town to continue paying the monthly cell phone reimbursement to the employees already receiving them but that the policy be revised to eliminate the annual \$200 cell phone upgrade. Commissioner Webb seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

The board decided to leave the Longevity Pay policy as it currently is. The current employees will still qualify to receive this benefit but it will not be offered to new hires.

The board decided to leave the Christmas Bonus as it currently is for fiscal year 2020-2021 with the understanding that employees will be told that this will be the last time they will receive the bonus this way. The bonus is currently figured as 2% of their base salary. Beginning in fiscal year 2021-2022 the bonus will be determined as a flat rate.

Commissioner Sugg made a motion to leave the Dependent/Spouse/Family coverage policy as it currently is for the employees already covered on it with the understanding that any new hire employees will only be offered this coverage as 50/50 for the duration of their employment. Commissioner Webb seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Mabry made a motion to move \$14,000 from the electric money left in escrow from the purchase of a knuckle-boom truck and deposit it into a 6-month Certificate of Deposit earmarked for Water/Sewer Infrastructure. Commissioner Sugg seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously. Commissioner Mabry also

suggested we set aside \$2,000 in the upcoming fiscal budget to go towards this. The finance officer told him that she would include a line item for this request.

Chief Harrell gave a presentation on the police department 2020-2021 proposed budget. During his presentation he gave a couple options as it pertained to with or without a 2% COLA and with or without the addition of a full-time Administrative Operator for the day shift. He told the board that his budget contained items that he could control but not items such as benefits and taxes. He also told the board that he would like to receive permission to seek grant funding through the USDA for the purchase of 2 police vehicles. He explained that even if the town receives funding there would be no payment due until the next fiscal year. He also told the board that he is considering purchasing a pick-up in lieu of a car since they hold their value better. He also told the board that he is planning on selling a couple of the older vehicles for \$4,000 which will help offset the cost. Commissioner Sugg asked the public works director if he needed any new vehicles to which he replied he would like to get another pick-up. Commissioner Webb made a motion to seek funding through USDA for the purchase of 2 police vehicles and 1 pick-up for the public works department. Commissioner Taylor seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The board asked the finance officer to refigure the proposed budget with all the changes noted above as well as with a 2% COLA.

The board will meet again for another budget meeting on Wednesday, May 27th at 3.00 p.m.

Adjournment

Commissioner Webb made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7.00 pm. Commissioner Sugg seconded the motion. By a show of hands the motion passed unanimously.

Date. 6/2/2020

ATTESTED.


Finance Officer/Town Clerk Tammy Keesler


Mayor Brenda Harrell