

Town of Pinetops
Board of Commissioners
Regular Monthly Meeting (Also available via Zoom)
Minutes
May 5, 2020
Pinetops Town Hall

Present. Present for the meeting were Mayor Brenda Harrell, Commissioners Donald Webb, Dennis Sugg, Oscar Mabry and Barbara Taylor. Mayor Pro-Tem Florence Pender was out of town but still able to participate in the meeting via Zoom.

Also in attendance. Town Administrator Natalie Bess, Finance Officer Tammy Keesler, Public Works Director Phil Webb, and Police Chief Stacy Harrell. Van Holland from the Tar River Times paper was also in attendance as well as the Town Attorney, Brian Pridgen who was present via Zoom.

A. Call to Order

Mayor Harrell called the May 5th meeting to order at 6:00p.m. The Mayor took a moment to welcome everyone that was present via Zoom.

B. Invocation

Invocation was given by Public Works Director, Phil Webb.

C. Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Harrell led the Pledge of Allegiance.

D. Proposed Agenda

Mayor Harrell called for a motion to approve the proposed agenda. Commissioner Taylor made a motion to approve the proposed agenda. Commissioner Webb seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

E. Consent Agenda

Commissioner Webb made a motion to approve the minutes from the Regular Meeting held on April 21, 2020. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Taylor. Motion carried unanimously.

F. Public Comments

Mayor Harrell opened the public comment section to those citizens that had requested to speak. Any citizens wishing to speak had to call or email questions to the town by the allotted deadline. The public was not allowed to be physically present at the meeting due to the Governors Executive Order limiting the number allowed at public gatherings to no more than 10 people due to COVID-19.

(1) Administrator Bess told the board she had received an email from Carolyn Hopkins concerning abandon vehicles in the yard next to her. The same issue was brought before the board last year and was resolved in a timely manner after the Chief spoke to the individual and explained he was not in compliance. After that conversation the individual removed 3 vehicles from his property. After receiving the current complaint the Town Administrator proceeded to contact Chief Harrell to let him know the issue is repeating itself. That same day the Chief had the police department contact the individual to let him know again that he was out of compliance. After the police made contact with the individual he complied with the order and removed 4 vehicles off of the property.

(2) Commissioner Taylor stated that she had been contacted by David Manning who requested that the picture of Deputy Manning be removed from the police department and returned back to his family. The board agreed to honor this request and return Deputy Manning's picture back to the family.

(3) Commissioner Sugg reported that he had received some complaints about speeding between the Quality Mart and the Methodist Church. The posted speed in that area is 35 mph. The Chief assured him they would keep an eye out for this but did let the board know that due to the COVID-19 situation they are not doing a lot of traffic stops at this time.

G. Departmental Reports

1. **Police Department.** Chief Harrell read over the police report for the month of April. The total calls for the month was 1,153. There were 744 Business checks, 105 escorts, 93 residence checks, all other calls were divided between vehicle stops, community policing, animal complaints, alarms and numerous other miscellaneous calls. The police department is fully staffed with 7 full-time officers. To date the town should receive reimbursements totaling \$9,139.38 via a Justice Assistance Grant from the Governor's Crime Commission. This leaves a balance of \$15,358.62 remaining on these grant funds. The police department has made 3 COVID-19 related charges per the Governor's Executive Orders as it relates to Shelter in Place and no gatherings of more than 10 individuals.

2. **Public Works Department:** (a) Phil Webb read over the water and sewer report for the month of April. The report shows the total million gallons of sewer flow and water discharge for the month. The sewer flow totaled 6.38 million gallons which averages to 219,000 gallons per day and the water discharge totaled 5.14 million gallons which averages to 171,000 gallons per day. He did check with Derek Smith from the Wooten Company to see if there were any funds available for preparing an Asset Inventory Plan for the Wastewater Treatment Plant. The town does qualify for a \$150,000 grant with a minimum match of 5% but could pay as much as \$7,500. This grant has a submittal deadline of September 30, 2020. The town also qualifies for another type of funding that has no deadline for submission but he doesn't know how much would be grant/match. Drilling is scheduled to begin on Monday for the Well Construction Project. Commissioner Sugg inquired about the capacity of the wastewater treatment plant to which the public works director responded was 300,000.
3. **Fire Department:** The board received a copy of the Fire report for the month of April. The Fire Chief was not present at this meeting. The total calls for the month of April was 5. The report consisted of Town Fire Calls = 3, Mutual Aid Fire Call = 1, and Medical Responder Calls = 1. Hours in Training & Meetings = 0 (due to not being able to hold classes). Commissioner Sugg questioned why the Fire Department fills up at the local gas stations instead of using the bulk tank. The public works director stated that it was probably due to convenience since the gate is locked when the maintenance crew leaves for the day.
4. **Finance Officer:** Ms. Keesler gave the financial report for the month of April. The general fund had a negative balance of \$33,915.97. The electric fund had a positive balance of \$44,349.32 for the month of April while the water/sewer fund also ended the month with a positive balance of \$24,514.16. During the month of April the water/sewer fund make a transfer to the general fund in the amount of \$49,919.00. The electric fund also made a transfer to the general fund in the amount of \$204,970. In total the general fund received transfer of \$254,889. She also presented the board with a Budget to Actual Report for the month as well as a Paid Check Report for April.
5. **Town Administrator:**
 - a) The Town Administrator told the board that there were 6 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Pinetops as of May 1st. Edgecombe County had 94 confirmed cases which is up from 42 reported last week.
 - b) The Town Administrator told the board that the town is having to keep up and report loss revenue as required through Executive Order 124.

- c) Pinetops has been set up through the FEMA Portal so we would be eligible for any reimbursements if or when they may be disbursed. The Town Administrator has been contacted by a representative for Edgecombe County stating he would be in contact with the town to advise them of any funding that may be available for Pinetops.
- d) The Town Hall lobby door is still closed due to COVID-19. We are not accepting credit card payments at this time but instead are urging customers to drop cash, checks, or money orders in an envelope through the slot on the door. The office is still operating under normal hours, Monday-Friday, 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Office staff is being staggered at this time. Once the lobby is reopened we may want to look at putting up some type of partition between staff and customers. The town's park and community building remain closed as per the governor executive order relating to public gatherings of no more than 10 people.
- e) Administrator Bess told the board she plans to reach out to local business to make sure they are aware of funds that might be available to them to help offset loss sales as a result of COVID-19.
- f) Administrator Bess presented the board with a proposed Adoption timeline for Fiscal Year Budget 2020-2021. She is proposing a budget workshop be held on May 19th, budget presented on June 2nd, and the Public Hearing & Adoption of the budget being held on June 30th. The board decided to hold the budget workshop on May 19th at 4:00 p.m. The town attorney stated that we could conduct the public hearing electronically if needed but the town would have to allow a 24 hour period for public comment prior to adoption and after. However if it is done by electronic means the town cannot hold the public hearing and adopt the budget at the same meeting because of electronic compliance. Mayor Harrell questioned why there was no regular meeting scheduled for the month of July. The Town Administrator stated that it was her understanding that they didn't usually have one during the month of July but it's up to the board.
- g) Administrator Bess reported to the board that the audit process for fiscal year ending June 30, 2020 will begin in early June. The audit firm has touched base with her already to schedule the first site visit for early June so hopefully everything can be submitted in a timely manner.
- h) Administrator Bess reviewed the letter the town received from the North Carolina Department of State Treasurer and Local Government Commission which addressed certain areas of the town's finances. A response letter has to be sent back to them within 45 days. She told the board that she will work with the town attorney to draft a response. Some of the areas of concern have already been addressed by the town such as contracting Edgecombe

County to collect Pinetops taxes and the hiring of a finance officer. The board will also take a more active role in reviewing the financial reports.

- i) Administrator Bess has been working with the town attorney on updating the personnel manual. She told the board that once she receives a draft manual from the attorney she will have the Chief as well as the Public Works Director review it for any needed changes or corrections. Once that is done she will present it to the town board.
- j) The walkability signs have been installed and the ribbon cutting has already taken place. The only thing left is that there should be an article/pictures in the Welcome to Tarboro Magazine. Mayor Harrell told the board that she thinks it was supposed to be in the May issue.
- k) The preconstruction meeting on the well project took place on 04/14/2020. The drilling is scheduled to begin on Monday, May 11th.
- l) The Town Administrator told the board that one of the properties slated for demolition has already been demolished and the attorney is busy working on preparing demolition orders.
- m) Mayor Harrell informed the board that she had been interviewed by someone from CBS Sunday Morning doing a story on Greenlight. She gave them an interview but also referred them to Suzanne Coker Craig who was more familiar with the topic.

H. Items for Discussion

1. Open Projects Update – Storm water Run-Off Management Project.

Commissioner Sugg handed out information to the board members that coincided with a power-point presentation he gave. Commissioner Sugg and Commissioner Mabry have been working alongside the Public Works Director in developing a Storm water Run-Off Management Project. The main objective of this project is to enhance water flow capacity of existing town drainage infrastructure. The project will be divided into 6 sections from worst-to-best drainage. The board will then utilize a combination of internal and external resources to accomplish project. See which areas the public works department can handle and which areas will have to be contracted out. They will then present a project proposal to the Town Commissioners for approval. He also discussed the importance of keeping the citizens aware of the project and the progress as it is being made.

2. Wastewater Treatment Plant .

Commissioner Mabry took a few moments to speak on having an Asset Inventory Plan prepared for the Wastewater Treatment Plant. This was originally discussed at the last board meeting. The public works director informed the board members last month of two funding options that might be available to the town as per Derek Smith from the Wooten Company.

The first option the town qualifies for is a \$150,000 grant with a minimum town match of 5% which would be \$7,500. The submittal deadline on this grant is September 30, 2020. The town also qualifies for a Search Grant for \$35,000 which has no submittal deadline but he is not sure how much would be grant/match. Commissioner Sugg made a motion to apply for funding to have an Asset Inventory Plan prepared for the Wastewater Treatment Plant. Commissioner Mabry seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

3. Commissioner Mabry wants the town to have an outline of each project, funding, completion dates and project progress reports. He suggested setting up a shared folder on the town's server where all project information could be dropped into. Administrator Bess stated that she will talk to the town's IT person to see if we can set up this shared folder on the towns system. Commissioner Mabry said he would need remote access to this folder through the town.

I. Items for Consideration

1. **Proposed Ordinance Implementing a Process for Renaming Street within the Town of Pinetops.** The Town Attorney, Brian Pridgen told the board that this ordinance is very close to the one that Edgecombe County has. He is stilling trying to find the right person to speak to at the United States Postal Service concerning how to get them to recognize an address. Commissioner Sugg questioned as to whether a street name that is changed inside the city limits would stop once you reach outside the city limits. The attorney stated he was not sure but he would definitely check into it. Commissioner Webb made a motion to adopt the ordinance implementing a process for renaming streets within the Town of Pinetops as written and presented by the town attorney. Commissioner Sugg seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The ordinance shall become effective immediately upon its adoption.
2. **Ordinance Prohibiting the Carrying of Firearms on Town Property.** The town attorney told the board that after speaking with the Chief he was made aware of one item on the ordinance that needed to be stricken. The item he was referring to was Section I C. (2) should strike "the weapon concealed and". If the ordinance is adopted signs would need to be posted informing citizens. Commissioner Sugg made a motion to pass the ordinance prohibiting the carrying of firearms on town property with the correction noted above. Commissioner Mabry seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.
3. **Joint Cooperative Agreement – Down East Home Consortium.** Administrator Bess reminded the board that they had already voted in a past meeting to participate in the Down East Home Consortium but needed to sign the Joint Cooperative Agreement. Being a member of the

down east home consortium does not cost the town anything but could help some Town of Pinetops citizens receive available funding.

4. **Compensatory Time Policy.** The compensatory time policy was presented to the board last month by Chief Harrell as it relates to the police department. Commissioner Sugg made a motion to adopt the compensatory time policy as written and presented by Chief Harrell. Commissioner Webb seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

J. Closed Session for Personnel Matter pursuant to NCGS 143-318.11.

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

K. Adjournment

Commissioner Taylor made a motion to adjourn at 8.09 p.m. Commissioner Mabry seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Date. 6/2/2020


Mayor Brenda Harrell

ATTESTED,


Finance Officer/Town Clerk Tammy Keesler