

**Town of Pinetops**  
**Board of Commissioners**  
**Regular Monthly Meeting (Also available via Zoom)**  
**Minutes**  
**December 6, 2022**  
**Pinetops Town Hall**

**A. Call Regular Meeting to Order**

Mayor Harrell called the Regular Meeting to Order.

**B. Invocation**

Invocation was given by Commissioner Sugg.

**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 presented. Commissioner Webb seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

**E. Consent Agenda**

Commissioner Sugg made a motion to approve the November 1, 2022 Minutes as written.

Commissioner Mabry seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

**F. Guests**

**1. Tierra Norwood – Small Business Education Opportunities**

Appeared before the Board to discuss two free education opportunities that are currently being offered to small business owners in the community. The first program is call Edgecombe Business S.O.A.R. which helps entrepreneurs with every step it takes to start-up a small business. The free program consists of eight weeks and explores the strengths, operations, aspirations and results of the entrepreneur business ideas. Classes will be held at Edgecombe Community College each week

on Tuesday from 6pm -8pm beginning January 10, 2023-March 21, 2023. The second free program being offered is call "Grow with Google Program". She would help provide services/training for small business to assist with the use of GOGGLE. This free service is not only being offered to small business owners but includes local students and anyone needing help with digital training. The training sessions will be offered in a group setting but can also provide a one-on-one more in- depth session if needed. The training sessions may be held at the Library or in the Conference Room.

#### **G. Public Comments**

No public comments were made at the meeting.

#### **H. Departmental Reports**

- 1. Police Department:** Chief Harrell read over the police report for the month of November 2022. The police department answered and/or initiated 1129 official police actions. Currently the department still has 1 cadet in BLET. He briefly discussed the International Association of Chief's of Police Staffing Study as well as the NCLM Pay Study. A detail copy of the entire police report is hereby attached to the minutes.
- 2. Public Works Department:** David Phillips read over the water and sewer report for the month of November 2022. The total water produced for the month was 4.25 million and total wastewater treated was 3.4 million. There were 2 main water leaks and 3 electrical outages during the month. The knuckle-boom truck is still broken so the maintenance workers are having to load the leaves in the dump truck. The small bucket truck is still out of operation and is awaiting a part before it can be repaired. He presented the Board with two estimates he had received on installing a 6' chain link fence around Well #6 on Car-Farm Rd. Upon Mr. Phillip's recommendation the Board approved to go with the estimate from Moye Fence Company in the amount of \$6,692.00. The Public Works Director told the Board he felt the maintenance department was understaffed. He also asked the Board when the policy adopted last year concerning leaves being raked into the yard is going to be enforced. Currently they leave a door hanger referencing the violation, but no penalty is enforced so leaves keep getting on the streets and eventually into the storm drains. The Administrator informed the Board that he has requested a list of vehicles/equipment by age in the public works department to determine those items that may need to be replaced first.

3. **Fire Department.** Chief Burress presented the fire report for the month of November 2022. There were 8 service calls for the month. A detail copy of the fire report is hereby attached to these minutes. Chief Burress presented the cemetery report for the month of November 2022. The total lots sold for the month of November was 2. A detail copy of the cemetery report is hereby attached to the minutes. Commissioner Mabry asked if the new cemetery software is being used. The Fire Chief stated that for the last couple of months he enters the information from lots sold directly into the software. Commissioner Mabry requested the Town Administrator follow-up with Odyssey to check on the status of the files being populated into the new cemetery software.
  
4. **Finance Department.** Ms. Keesler gave the financial report for the month of November. The general fund had a loss of \$34,423.78. The electric fund had a gain of \$38,302.88 for the month while the water/sewer fund also ended the month with a gain of \$25,255.33. Ms. Keesler presented the Board with a Paid Check Report for the month along with a Budget to Actual Report. The adjusted ending balance for the month of November is \$3,503,368.99. Ms. Keesler advised the Board that she had spoken with the Auditor, Rebekah Barr on 11/29/2022 concerning the status of the FY 2022 audit. The Auditor has scheduled a site visit for 12/08/2022 at 9.00am.

#### I. Items for Discussion

##### 1. Sewer Rate Increase – Effective January Billing

In early November Alicia Melton with the N.C. Rural Water Association completed the rate study for Pinetops. The rate study suggested a proposed sewer rate increase of 28.25% for FY 23-24. Ms. Keesler suggested the Board consider splitting the rate increase, so it doesn't impact customers as much. She suggested half of the rate increase become effective this January while the other half won't begin until July 2023. This is a 14.12% rate increase for both inside/outside Sewer customers which equates to a base charge increase of \$2.67 and .77 per 1000/gals versus a base charge increase of \$5.33 and \$1.53 per 1000/gals. Smaller increases are suggested for the next 5 years ranging from 5.00% - 7.25%

No increases are proposed in water until year 5 (2.00% rate increase).

Small electric increase proposed beginning in year 2 ranging from 1.50% - 2.75%. The above 2 funds can be discussed in greater detail in the budget work sessions.

Commissioner Mabry made a motion to approve a sewer rate increase of 14.12% for both inside and outside customers to become effective on the January billing. Commissioner Sugg seconded

the motion. Motion passed unanimously. A notice of the sewer rate increase will be included in the next billing, posted on the Town Hall door and included on the town's webpage.

2. Credit Card Policy & Acknowledgement Form

Ms. Keesler explained that this was a recommendation that came out of the Local Government Commission meeting with the town on October 18, 2022. The town does currently have a purchasing and procedures policy that was originally adopted on August 7, 2018 that briefly address credit cards but the LGC felt a more detail policy might be warranted. Authorized users would be required to sign an annual credit card acknowledgement form stating they understand and agree to the terms governing the use of the town's credit card as well as acknowledge that they will be held liable for any misuse or willful violation of the terms of the agreement. Commissioner Webb made a motion to adopt the Credit Card Policy as written and hereby attached to these minutes. Commissioner Sugg seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

3. Any Other Business

**J. Action Items/New Business**

1. Non-Profit Donation Applications

Administrator Ventresco presented the Board with 2 applications he received from non-profits applying for money from the town. The maximum amount to be awarded per application is \$500 per fiscal year. The non-profits that applied for funding was (1) Pinetops-Old Sparta Community Improvement Club, Inc. and (2) Women of Standards. After a brief discussion the Board agreed that the only organizations that should be allowed for funding have to be 501 (c) (3). Commissioner Taylor made a motion to approve the recommendation to fund the Pinetops-Old Sparta Community Improvement Club, Inc. application not to exceed \$500. Commissioner Webb seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously. The town has currently approved 4 non-profit funding applications for a total of \$2,000.

2. Approve Facility Rental Policy

Administrator Ventresco presented the Board with a Community Center Facility Rental Policy. The proposed policy is more in-depth such as the fee schedule being broken down differently where in the original policy the total deposit was \$175.00 regardless. The new policy proposes no charge for Town-Sponsored Use, Community Service Use, or Non-Profit or Community Group Use. There will be a \$100 deposit fee required that is separate of the facility fee schedule.

Commissioner Taylor suggested the town provide an itemized checklist for the renter, so they know exactly what is expected from them in order to receive the deposit fee back.

Commissioner Mabry suggested the adoption of this policy be tabled until a checklist can be drafted that way it can all be approved at the same time. Commissioner Mabry will draft a facility checklist and forward it to Mr. Ventresco prior to the next Board Meeting.

3. Any Other Business

1. Executive Session – Personnel Matters

Commissioner Mabry made a motion to go into Executive Session to discuss Personnel Matters. Commissioner Webb seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Webb made a motion to come out of Executive Session and back into Regular Session. Commissioner Sugg seconded the motion. The Town Administrator told the Board that the motion can be made in Executive Session since it pertains to a Personnel Matter.

Commissioner Mabry made a motion to go back into Executive Session again so a vote can be taken as it pertains to a personnel matter. Commissioner Webb seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Mabry made a motion to come out of Executive Session and back into Regular Session. Commissioner Webb seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

K. Adjournment

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

Date: 1/3/2023

  
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Mayor Brenda Harrell

ATTESTED:

  
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Finance Officer/Town Clerk Tammy Keesler