

**Town of Pinetops
Board of Commissioners
Regular Monthly Meeting
February 4, 2025
Pinetops Town Hall**

A. Call Meeting to Order

Mayor Harrell called the meeting to Order. All Board Members were present except for Commissioner Ransome who was out of town.

B. Invocation

Commissioner Sugg led the Invocation.

C. Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Harrell led the Pledge of Allegiance.

D. Proposed Agenda

Mayor Harrell asked if a message sign could be added to the agenda. Commissioner Webb made a motion to approve the proposed agenda as amended. Commissioner Sugg seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.

E. Consent Agenda

Commissioner Webb made a motion to approve January 7, 2024, minutes as written. Commissioner Sugg seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

F. Public Comments

1. Brice Gardner – 103 Crestwood Circle

Brice gave a small presentation to the Board. He is a member of Troop 961 and for his Life Project he wanted to build a pantry box for the residents of Pinetops. The pantry box would be located by the Town Gazebo and stocked with items such as dry goods, hygiene and first aid products as well as baby goods. Materials for the actual build will be donated by the storage building business located in Conetoe. The construction of the pantry box will be joint effort of Troop 961 and the Backpack Buddies. The Board thought this was a good idea and asked him to come back to next month's meeting with his designs for the pantry box.

2. Hattie Harris – 217 N S A Gilliam St.

Mrs. Harris presented the Board with a final draft of the Pinetops Community Development Advisory Board – Economic Development Implementation Plan for FY25-27 for their review. The main objective is to improve downtown and community conditions. The plan outlines three economic development strategies that should help achieve their objectives. Commissioner Taylor questioned what exactly this group's purpose is because she didn't feel like any of their objectives had been reached in the last three years. The current Advisory Board feels like they are heading in the right direction now, but she stated she can understand Commissioner Taylor's remarks due to the lack of progress by the Advisory Board in the past. She explained

that the lack of progress in the past was a result of poor training, and lack of participation. Mayor Harrell stated that the Board would review the Final Draft presented tonight and be ready to vote on it at the March meeting.

G. Guests

1. Purcell Jenkins – Use of Pinetops Public Event Center/Teach Music

Mr. Jenkins gave a presentation pertaining to a free afterschool music program he was hoping to start in Pinetops. The program would be directed to individuals 8 and up, be held in a group setting on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Friday from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. He was requesting the use of the Pinetops Public Event Center to hold the music program. Currently he wanted to run it through the end of the current school year but if there is a lot of interest maybe he extends it with a summer program. The Board thought the music program sounded good but for liability reasons did request that no instruments be left in the building and that the building be left in the condition it is found. Commissioner Sugg made a motion to allow Purcell Jenkins to use the Pinetops Public Event Center to hold an afterschool music program on the days and at the times mentioned above. Commissioner Bullock seconded the motion. Motion carried.

2. Wooten Company, Elizabeth Weber – 2022 Waterline Project Update

Elizabeth opened by telling the Board that she is the main point of contact for the town's projects which consist of three different ones. She then gave a brief update on each project.

- (a) 2024 WWTP Rehabilitation Project – An application for this project was submitted back in April during the Spring 2024 application cycle. The town received a Letter of Intent to Fund the project on August 23, 2024. The total funding amount was \$6,280,240. \$3,085,803 of this project was offered as a grant, \$2,000,000 principal forgiveness and \$1,085,803 State Reserve Grant. The remaining \$3,194,437 was awarded as CWSRF loan. A meeting was held with the Wooten Company, Mayor Harrell, Commissioner Sugg, Cody, and Tammy. During that meeting rescoping the project was discussed because the \$3,194,437 loan would be tough paying back for a small town. The term of the loan was also discussed, the normal term is 20 years, but Pinetops questioned if we could extend the term to 30 years to help lessen the impact on the budget. Elizabeth asked the Board to review the new scope which lessens the loan to \$2,000,000 to see if any changes need to be made to prioritize the needs of the system. The Wooten Company would like to know which direction the town wants to pursue within the next month or two to not lose any of the funding.
- (b) 2022 Waterline Improvements Project – The assessments are 90% completed. The specifications should be ready to submit to DEQ for approval by the end of February. Construction should begin by the end of 2025. The Board explained that we have streets that are in dire need of replacement, but we were trying to hold off until the water lines are replaced. We have also had three main water lines breaks in the last month. Elizabeth remarked that she will pass this information along to DEQ.
- (c) Water & Wastewater AIA – The water AIA has been completed but the wastewater has not. Elizabeth explained that that Wooten would like for both AIA's to be completed before Cody is given any training.

The Board thanked Elizabeth for coming and asked if she would begin coming quarterly to give updates.

H. Departmental Reports

1. **Police Department:** Chief Harrell read over the police report for the month of January 2025. The police department answered and/or initiated 1332 official police actions during the month.

The BLET candidate is scheduled to graduate in March then will have to complete three months training with the department.

Two full-time dispatchers are currently out of work due to sickness. The Chief explained that he is trying to be conservative but may have to pay overtime to cover the shifts. A detailed copy of the report is hereby attached to the minutes.

2. **Public Works Department:** Cody Lancaster, Public Works Supervisor presented the water and wastewater totals report for the month of January 2025. The total water produced was 6.15 million gallons and the total wastewater treated was 3.89 million gallons. A detailed copy of the report is hereby attached to the minutes.

There were 0 electrical outages for the month of January 2025.

There were 3 main water breaks during the month. Two of the leaks caused customers to be out of the water for approximately 1 hour. The third leak that occurred on the 2800 to 3300 block of NC 43 caused customers to be without water for approximately 8 hours.

The water tank in Crisp was drained for maintenance; the tank was washed out by Southern Corrosion.

The Public Works is currently down 1 employee, applications are being taken for the street maintenance position.

Commissioner Bullock suggested Cody look into purchasing an ice machine for the shop since they purchase ice almost weekly for samples to be sent off.

3. **Fire Department:** Chief Burress presented a copy of the fire report for the month of January 2025. There were 14 service calls for the month. A detailed copy of the fire report is hereby attached to these minutes.

There were 0 cemetery lots sold for the month of January 2025. A detailed copy of the cemetery report is hereby attached to the minutes.

The Chief asked for permission to donate an old defibrillator to a department that doesn't have one. Commissioner Webb made a motion to approve this request. Commissioner Bullock seconded the motion. Motion carried.

The Chief informed the Board that he is scheduled to pick up the new mini pumper by the first of next week.

4. **Finance Department:** Ms. Keesler presented the financial report for the month of January 2025. The general fund had a gain of \$ 71,559.66. The electric fund had a total gain of \$ 48,717.46 for the month. The water/sewer fund ended the month with a total gain of \$ 35,504.63. The adjusted end balance for the month of January is \$2,304,466.03. A Paid Check Report and Budget to Actual Report was also provided for the month of January. A detailed copy of the reports is hereby attached to the minutes.

The Audit Report was submitted to the LGC at the end of January. The Auditor will be present at the March 4th meeting to present the audit report for FYE 06/2024.

Ms. Keesler asked the Board if they had any suggestions or preferences regarding how the financial report is given each month. Commissioner Sugg suggested if any item is trending upwards then maybe that item should be reported so the Board is informed (example: Knuckle-Boom maintenance).

The Budget Work Session packet has been presented to the Board. Please review and if there are any items, they would like to have added to the agenda for discussion just let me know.

I. Items for Discussion.

1. City of Wilson meeting update 01/15

Commissioner Sugg reported that he, Mayor Harrell, Cody, and Tammy met with the City of Wilson on 01/15 concerning renewal of the electric contract. The existing City of Wilson/Town of Pinetops electric contract expires in May 2025. The conflict waivers for both parties have been signed and sent to the law firm of Cauley Pridgen. The City of Wilson will contact the town when the contract is drafted for review.

During the meeting there was a discussion about the possibility of installing an acoustic barrier around the sub-station by Wilshire to help with the noise, which seems to be the best option. The City of Wilson could move the sub-station out of town and back to Wilson at no charge to the town, but we would lose the credit for having the station. The City of Wilson could also move the sub-station right beyond town but that would be at a cost to the town.

2. ABB meeting update 01/16

ABB Plant Expansion Project notes prepared by Commissioner Sugg have been presented to Board Members. Commissioner Sugg and Cody met with ABB on 01/16 to discuss their expansion project. The 3-Phased expansion and modernization project is projected to cost \$15 million. Phase I expands the manufacturing building, Phase II expands and modernize the Administrative Building, Phase III expands and reconfigures the Highway Entry/Exit to/from the plant.

Cody spoke to Jeff; U.S. Real Estate Portfolio Leader who stated ABB is requesting Pinetops pay the cost to move existing powerlines and running new underground services. The total

estimated cost of the ABB project to the town is \$300,000 which is made up of \$200,000 in materials and \$75,000 - \$100,000 in labor.

The Board is going to contact Carolina Gateways, Golden Leaf Foundation, and ElectricCities to see if there are any grant funds available to help offset the towns cost since the expansion project should generate additional jobs.

Commissioner Bullock made a motion to give the Public Works Supervisor authority to go ahead and commit to the purchase of the transformer and electric supplies needed to complete the underground and electric infrastructure. Commissioner Webb seconded the motion. Motion carried.

3. Proposed Charter Amendment

The Town Attorney, Brian Pridgen briefly went over the proposed charter amendment document at the last meeting and left a copy for the Board's review. Once the Board reviews the document and there are no changes to be made it needs to be approved so the Attorney can try to get it introduced into the Spring Session of the General Assembly for their approval. Commissioner Sugg indicated that there was a word that needs to be changed in Section 10 in the first sentence where it pertains to eminent domain; the document refers to it as "imminent".

Commissioner Webb made a motion to approve the proposed charter amendment with the change pointed out by Commissioner Sugg. Commissioner Bullock seconded the motion. Motion carried.

4. Two Vacancies on Pinetops Community Development Advisory board

Mayor Harrell informed the Board that there are two vacancies on the Pinetops Community Development Advisory Board. One member stepped down and another was removed for not attending meetings. The mayor asked the Board to spread the word about the openings on the Advisory Board.

5. Schedule Budget Workshop Date

The first budget work session has been scheduled for Monday, March 10th from 8:00 a.m. to Noon. The work session will be held at the Town Hall.

6. Any Other Business

There was nothing to report at this time.

J. Action Items/New Business.

1. Any Other Business

There was nothing to report at this time.

K. Adjournment

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

Date: 3/4/2025

Brenda Harrell
Mayor Brenda Harrell

ATTESTED:

Tammy Keesler
Finance Officer/Town Clerk Tammy Keesler