

Town of Pinetops
Board of Commissioners
Special Call Meeting
May 27, 2020
FY 2020/2021 Budget Planning Workshop

Present: Mayor Brenda Harrell, Commissioners Florence Pender, Donald Webb, Dennis Sugg, Barbara Taylor, and Oscar Mabry.

Also in attendance: Town Administrator Natalie Bess, Finance Officer Tammy Keesler, Police Chief Stacy Harrell, and Public Works Director Phil Webb.

Call to Order

Mayor Harrell called the special meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. She also welcomed anyone who may be attending via ZOOM.

Invocation

Invocation was given by Mayor Pro-Tem Florence Pender.

Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Harrell led the pledge of Allegiance.

Proposed Agenda

Items for Discussion

1. FY 2020/2021 Budget Planning

Commissioner Mabry requested that the governing board line item Board Members Stipend/Travel be separated. He stated he would not accept a stipend payment but would submit any travel expenses incurred for reimbursement. Commissioner Sugg made a motion to delete the Board Members Stipend/Travel line item and instead set-up a Travel Expense Only line item in the amount of \$1,200 to be paid as reimbursement for mileage submitted. Commissioner Pender seconded the motion. Commissioner Taylor opposed the motion. The motion passed 4-1.

Commissioner Mabry suggested the Fire Department be limited to a set amount for monthly meals. Commissioner Webb stated that he disagreed with that suggestion because the department is strictly volunteered and they account for that expense in their original budget request. Commissioner Sugg made a motion to lower the fire department

line item Equipment/Maintenance from \$17,000 to \$15,000. Commissioner Mabry seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Mabry questioned as to whether the donation to the Banner Cry Lodge for an Easter Egg Hunt was returned back to the town since the event was cancelled due to COVID-19. Administrator Bess answered that it was not returned since it was made as a donation and would probably be used towards another scheduled event in the future.

Commissioner Sugg suggested imposing a hiring freeze in the upcoming fiscal year due to budget constraints. If a crucial position becomes vacant then they should only be replaced through board approval.

Commissioner Mabry made a motion to waive the downtown improvement line item for this year due to budget constraints. The original proposed budget amount for fiscal year 2020-2021 was \$3,000. Commissioner Sugg seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

The finance officer did inform the board that she would need to amend the proposed budget to include the estimated cost for demolition of condemned property. The town administrator stated that the estimate was figured based on \$4 per square foot which makes the cost around \$28,000. The budget proposed today does include a 2% COLA for employees at an additional cost to the town of around \$23,711. The last time employees received a COLA was back in 2018. The budget also includes a Full-Time Administrative Dispatcher position as proposed by the Chief. The salary for that position was figured at \$24,000 and would be eligible for benefits. The finance officer told the board that the current proposed budget included the items she was asked to change such as combining a couple of line items. At the last meeting it was suggested that professional fees & contracted services be combined, office & departmental supplies be combined, and the miscellaneous expense be removed from departments.

Conversation went back and forth as it pertained to the Full-time administrative dispatcher position. Currently there is a temporary/permanent person filling in for the full-time dispatcher that is currently out on extended sick leave. At this point the Chief doesn't know if that employee will be able to return to work and if so in what capacity. Due to budget constraints the board was not completely sold on hiring an additional full-time dispatcher at a salary of \$24,000 along with benefits. Commissioner Sugg made a motion if the full-time dispatcher currently on sick leave does not come back then the current temporary/permanent person will move into that position and the Chief would be allowed to hire a part-time dispatcher for \$12.00 per hour not to exceed 30 hours so no benefits will be given. However, if the full-time dispatcher does come back then the current temporary/permanent person will move into that part-time position not to exceed 30 hours, \$12.00 per hour, and no benefits. Commissioner Mabry seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. This option would save the town around \$6,000.

Commissioner Sugg made a motion to give employees a 2% COLA for fiscal year 2020-2021 since they haven't received one in a couple of years. Commissioner Pender seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The finance officer asked the board to consider increasing the current electric transfer for fiscal year 2019-2020 by \$130,000 and the water/sewer transfer to the general fund by \$30,000 instead of using the Appropriated Fund Balance as originally budgeted in order to help alleviate any additional decrease on the general fund balance. She told the board that the original appropriated amount was \$207,964 but at this time she is just asking to use \$160,000 to help offset any expenditure overages. Commissioner Mabry made a motion to increase the Fiscal Year 2019-2020 electric transfer to the general fund by \$130,000 and the water/sewer transfer to the general fund by \$30,000 instead of using the original budgeted appropriated fund balance. Commissioner Webb seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Administrator Bess presented the board with a list of proposed dates outlining the Budget Adoption Process. Currently the proposed Fiscal Year 2020-2021 budget is scheduled to be presented to the board on June 2, 2020 at 6:00 p.m. If the budget is presented on that date then a copy will be made available to the media as well as the public if so requested. A public hearing will be advertised and at that time any public comments will be welcomed. After the public hearing the budget can be adopted. However, if not all board members can be physically present and the meeting is still having to be held via electronic means then the budget cannot be adopted until after a 24 hour period preceding the public hearing.

Adjournment

Commissioner Webb made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 5:00 pm. Commissioner Pender seconded the motion. By a show of hands the motion passed unanimously.

Date: 6/2/2020

ATTESTED:

Tammy Keesler
Finance Officer/Town Clerk Tammy Keesler

Brenda Harrell
Mayor Brenda Harrell