

December 13, 2016
7:00 P.M.

The Town of Pink Hill held its monthly board meeting on Tuesday, December 13, 2016 at 7:00 p.m. in the town hall board room. Present for the meeting were Mayor Carol Sykes, Commissioners Mike Hill and James Quinn, Town Attorney George Jenkins, and Town Clerk Kimberly Mitchell. Public Works Director Timmy Kennedy, Police Chief Joey Thigpen, and Fire Chief Tony Heath were unable to attend the meeting.

Visitors present at the meeting were Travis Pope with Waste Industries and Susan Myers.

Mayor Sykes called the meeting to order and requested for all cell phones to be turned off please. Mayor Sykes welcomed everyone to the meeting. She then asked Commissioner Hill to lead everyone in the pledge of allegiance. Commissioner Hill made a motion to approve agenda with the amendment adding Travis Pope with Waste Industries. Commissioner Quinn seconded the motion and it carried unanimously. Commissioner Hill made a motion to approve the consent agenda with November 1, 2016 board meeting minutes. Commissioner Quinn seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

The first item on the agenda was Travis Pope with Waste Industries. Mayor Sykes told Mr. Pope that they appreciated him coming and his interest in coming here. Mr. Pope stated that he is the supervisor at Waste Industries here in Kinston. He stated they are the ones who bought out OCS. He said he tries to go to a town hall meeting once a month in all the towns. Travis said he tried to come to the last meeting but Kim informed him that it had been rescheduled. He said he talks with Kim and Shelia a lot and he likes working with them and they are nice people. Travis said any time a customer has a problem they let Kim or Shelia know and they get up with him or talk with Rhonda every once in a while in the Wilson office. Travis said he is not originally from down here. He said he is originally from Kenly and he has been down here for 3 years and lives in Deep Run close to the R-Mart. Travis said he is still learning the areas and figuring out how everything goes around here. He said he does come to Pink Hill a lot and he is married and has a one year old child. Travis said they have actually come to Pink Hill to do trick-or-treating and a lot of stuff. He said the daycare where his child goes told them about it. Mayor Sykes asked the board if they had any questions or comments for Travis. Commissioner Hill said the only comment he had was about closing the lids on the trashcans especially if it is going to rain. Travis asked are they still doing that. Commissioner Hill stated they have been better at it but just keep on them. Travis said here lately they have been using temps because they have been short staffed. He said the driver is supposed to let them know to close all the cans. He stated some towns want them open and some towns want them closed. Travis said he tries to make sure that they are doing the right thing but if we have any problems, just let him know. Commissioner Hill said the bad part about it is if it rains, the carts are right full of water and even if you start pouring it out, the bottom of the trashcan has trash down there. Mayor Sykes thanked Travis for coming.

The next item on the agenda was Susan Myers to give update on Technology Center. Susan said she wanted to give the board a brief update. She said they had an incredible think-tank last Thursday and she invited the board to go. Mayor Sykes apologized for not being able to be

there. She gave each board member a handout concerning that meeting which was held on December 8, 2016 which listed the people who came. Susan said they had four people from the government which is always a good thing but they were from Raleigh and they brought one consultant from Raleigh. Ben Knight was also there and of course J. Mac Daughety. She said that Larry Moolenaar was there and he has volunteered his time now to helping us. We had George Collier with Broadband who has been around for a while and used to be with the Rural Center and Mark Sutherland used to be a Regional Economic Development guy and he is new with the Department of Commerce. She said they really had some great people to come and then we had two people with CenturyLink.

Susan said what they are trying to do is two things and they are very long goals and they may never happen but something good is going to come out of this and it may not be what we think. One is we are trying to get the old media center which will be the technology center used. She said they have a gigabit in there that is going to need at least \$250,000 in renovations. We are in final negotiations with the Preservation to work out an agreement so that will be a new entity, a new nonprofit maybe with some cross board members, etc., because the buildings are tied together and the internet is tied together like Siamese twins but we need a fresh new nonprofit to go with it. Susan said their goal is to find an anchor tenant to use that gigabit. It might be a security company or a data processing center or something that would pay the rent or the bills. Then we could use the majority of the building for what it is now called an open co-working space where people can go in that need that high speed internet and they would have a membership and they would rent offices. The new LCC President stepped up and it was a 2 ½ hour process and he was there the whole time. The rooms over at the Wellness Center that LCC has are mostly unused and he particularly wanted to use the computer lab. So we are going to get LCC back in Pink Hill in one or both of those buildings and that is really going to help us.

The second thing that they want to do is in order for us to become a small town tech community people need access to internet particularly the farmers need access to internet and so one way we can get a broadband in the 12 mile radius because agriculture is changing dramatically. Agriculture is the number one venture capital where you want to put money right now. There is a spot now for us to become the center of agricultural technology and Pink Hill would be ideal for that. Mayor Sykes stated it would be put us on the map too. Susan said it would put us on the map but keep it small but also we could do some stuff so we can retain some of these kids and they have some high paying jobs and don't move away. She said video graphic stuff, that stuff and anything that consumes a lot of internet. Susan said no one really understands how fast a gig is but you probably have 10 MB at home but this is also not coming in but going out. The upload is what requires companies to have. She said that is where they are and they had another meeting last night and we have got people working on different things and something is going to come out of it. Mayor Sykes said she has heard some input on it but it is getting around. She said in the fact the other day when the FEMA people were at LCC the president mentioned being down here and what a go getter Susan is and I said well she is that and we appreciate it but he was very complimentary of what you are trying to do and I think he is on board. Susan said and about the FEMA, we have the gig technology over there and if sometime we can get it over here because at town hall and police office if you have some type of high speed internet and we can be a hub for FEMA too. She said that is something down the road but when you think about planning out you do think about disaster and emergency services.

Mayor Sykes told Susan that they appreciate it and everything that she does. She said this is really off the subject but I know every one of you have ridden down Broadway Street and how pretty it looks and thanks to Susan because it is her buildings and I am sure that one or two down there need to take notice because they haven't done anything. Mayor Sykes said it is a pretty street and if you haven't been down it, then go see the decorations. Susan said you know if one person starts taking care of things, then other people do to and we are starting to see that. Mayor Sykes stated they appreciated that. Susan said if anybody wants to come to these meetings or knows anybody who might be interested, just let them know. Mayor Sykes asked Susan when the next meeting would be. Susan said she doesn't have it scheduled but it will be sometime in January. She said they did have a meeting last night but most of the meetings are not as big as that one. Susan said a lot of came from having the Lieutenant Governor do their video and come down here and the commerce. She said their influence helped to get these people. Susan stated John Bell is on their committee and he has been to some of her meetings. Mayor Sykes said John Bell is a good one to have on your side. Kim said Lee Padrick whose name is on the list helped us with the town's zoning. Susan said he is very quiet and he didn't say anything but he and George are going to give us a report back on recommendations and help us. Mayor Sykes said Lee does a good job. She thanked Susan so much and told her to keep the good work up and if she needed her to call her.

The next item on the agenda was B.F. Grady School Sewer District Interlocal Agreement. George said he thought that we were waiting on something from them. Commissioner Hill stated he thought the same thing. George said he did not make any notes about doing anything other than just making some changes in there which I changed. Commissioner Hill said we have got to wait on them to see what they are going to do. Kim said she thought that George was going to do something and get back with Timmy is what she was thinking was in the minutes. George stated that is right, he does need to get up with Timmy about the technical part of it. He said he has not heard anything from Duplin County that they want to do it. Commissioner Hill said from his understanding they really don't have a choice. Mayor Sykes said personally she would probably call them and say look are you all interested, what is going on. George said why doesn't he put down that he needs to call the county manager. Mayor Sykes said it is their dog in this fight. George said and thankfully it is not costing us a penny but we need to know. Kim said Rich Moore sent an email about the interlocal agreement wanting to know if the town wanted to do an interlocal agreement and that was why we were doing an interlocal agreement and we made changes. Mayor Sykes asked if they got a copy of the changes. Kim replied no, because we were supposed to get it typed up. George said he would call them when he gets out of court tomorrow morning but he thought that they had it and the ball was in their court. George asked Commissioner Hill if that was what he thought. Kim said it was in their minutes and handed George a copy of what was discussed. George said he has written down to contact the county manager, but does he need to contact him or the engineer. Mayor Sykes stated she thinks the engineer because the county manager hasn't responded to any email has he Kim? George said he doesn't mind calling both of them. Mayor Sykes said to do whatever he has got to do to see what we have got to do. George asked Kim if she could give him the phone number for the engineer, McDavid & Associates. Kim said that she could email it to him tomorrow. Mayor Sykes said then George can report back to us at the next board meeting.

The next item on the agenda was Police Updates. There was no police report given at this time due to Chief Thigpen being at firearms training.

The Fire Department Report was next on the agenda. Kim stood in for Fire Chief Heath and said this report was from November 1, 2016 until today December 13, 2016. They have had 16 EMS calls, 4 structure fires, 2 vehicle accidents, 2 fire alarms, 1 brushfire, and 1 electrical fire for a total of 26 calls from November to present date.

The next item on the agenda was Water/Sewer Report. Kim stood in for Timmy and read his report to the board. She read that Timmy found out today that Central Avenue cross tile is washed out just like the cross tile on North Front Street. Kim said Timmy wanted her to ask the board if they wanted to go ahead and get some estimates because we already have R&B hired to do North Front Street. Commissioner Hill asked if it all was going to be under FEMA. Kim replied that none of it would be. She said they came and looked at it when she and Timmy went to the FEMA meeting. Kim said if it had washed the whole road out FEMA would have covered it right then and there. Kim said the guy from FEMA said it would be at the town's expense to fix it and it would not fall under FEMA for Hurricane Matthew. We would have to fill out like a grant application and it would be iffy if we would get the funds to reimburse the town. Mayor Sykes asked who would have the grant. Kim said that would be FEMA.

Kim read from Timmy's note that the R&B Group has been called but they have not set a date to begin work at North Front Street. We have to send in a plan to the Corp. of Engineers to be approved before work can begin. Timmy said that the guy from R&B knows somebody and he is going to see what he can do about that.

Kim also read from Timmy's note that they are still flushing a lot of water each day but residuals are staying constant.

The next item on the agenda was Budget Amendments if needed. Kim stated there were no budget amendments but only transfers and they have a copy of those in their packets.

Remarks by Town Attorney was next on the agenda. George did not have any remarks at this time.

The next item on the agenda was to Discuss Commissioner Grady's open seat. Mayor Sykes said in her opinion, which you haven't asked for but she is going to give it, there has not been anyone to come forward that has even mentioned being interested in it. She said if you know of somebody then do whatever you have got to do but please let's try to get someone. Commissioner Hill said actually he was talking to Mr. Donald King the other day and he said he felt a whole lot better. Commissioner Hill said he told Donald why don't you come back and get your place back on the board and he said he just might do that. Mayor Sykes said well that is good but what she was going to say is let's certainly try to get somebody that is going to be impartial to themselves and everybody else and not somebody that is going to be easily talked into doing politicking for them. Mayor Sykes asked the board did they understand what she was saying because she knows that that has happened before and it is wrong, but it is not wrong to politic. Commissioner Hill said they should not have an agenda to be on the board. Mayor

Sykes stated that is right. She said at least we know Donald and he knows and she knows that he doesn't have an agenda. Mayor Sykes said we can still discuss that and whatever the board decides. She said she would approve that. George asked if he could make one suggestion to put into your factors that you are looking at, and that is you get somebody with some youth and by that he doesn't mean 25 or 30. Mayor Sykes stated she understood and she is for that. He said you need some continuity as time goes on. Mayor Sykes asked when he would be up for reelection if he came back. Commissioner Hill said if he were to come back it would be this coming year. George said when he talks about young he means about 50ish. She said somebody without an agenda who wants to do the best for the town. Mayor Sykes told the board to just think about that and if Mr. Donald agrees to it, then she certainly would be happy to have him back until it is time to file again. Mayor Sykes asked to table this until the next meeting.

The next item on the agenda was Comments by the Board. Commissioner Hill said he wanted to thank everyone for all the prayers for Travis. Mayor Sykes mentioned the trees up here on Central Avenue there by the Methodist Church sign and the Methodist Church building. Mayor Sykes said that Kim said someone from the church came in wanting to know whose trees they were, if they were ours or the Methodist Church because one of them has been struck by lightning and the limbs keep falling off. Mayor Sykes said it is going to blow over and when it does it is going to probably hit the sign and a lot of other things. She said of course at the time Timmy was in here I didn't know or didn't have an opinion but when she went home she rode by there and she is thinking that they belong to the Methodist Church because they are sitting probably at least a foot behind the curb of the town and maybe a little further back. Mayor Sykes asked the board to ride by there and see what they think but she is thinking that they are the Methodist Church's. Kim said they wanted her to call them tomorrow and let them know. George asked if that is part of the Central Avenue that is 50 feet either side of center line. Mayor Sykes said that is what she was thinking about a while ago. George said he thought it was a 100 foot right of way. Kim asked what did she need to tell the church tomorrow. Commissioner Hill said tell them that it is on their property because it is behind the curb and gutter and that is where our right of way stops. Mayor Sykes said she would tell them that it is theirs and if they want to contest it then we will go from there.

Commissioner Hill asked do we need to go into closed session. Mayor Sykes said yes because she wanted to talk about the property of Alejandro's. She asked George if they needed to go into closed session. George asked what she wanted to talk about was in general. Mayor Sykes said in general she wants to know about the IRS and State taxes owed on it. She said if he would sell it to the town, how we can find out what the IRS and State would do. George said what he has done in the past is once we have an agreement in place, but before we close it, contact the IRS and Department of Revenue and tell them here is what we have got. He said say the purchase price is \$30,000 and we are going to access the property at \$10,000 for the demolition work so that means he will have \$20,000 coming to him and will you release that property from your liens for the \$20,000. He said not get rid of the liens but just release that property from it and go after any other property that he has. George said when he has done that for tax foreclosures for the county when he was doing those, the IRS was most cooperative but the Department of Revenue not quite so much but they didn't stand in the way but he had to have actual numbers to tell them like on the tax foreclosure. George said here is how much we think the high bid will be, here is how much the taxes are, the court cost, and so on and anything over that we want to

pay to the IRS or to the Department of Revenue and we are not certain that it is the final amount, because who knows somebody might bid a couple of dollars up and we don't expect it. He said they would go along with it knowing that it is probably not going to be less than this amount. Mayor Sykes asked if the taxes owed is that on all of his property. George replied yes it is on everything. Kim said so we don't have to talk about this in closed session and George said I don't think so. He said he doesn't think that we can talk about this in closed session because it doesn't fit under any of the covenants. Mayor Sykes said she is glad because she wants to talk about it. Kim asked Mayor Sykes what is it you are wanting. She said she really wants to talk with Alex in a meeting. George said but knowing the odds are that he is not going to see a penny of the money. Mayor Sykes said they are never going to pay those taxes. George said the alternatives they are going to have are going to be trying to get some relief back from the money we pay on that and keeping it away from court. Kim stated but they owe us \$10,000. George said yes they owe us for the demolition so we would want that off the top so to speak.

Mayor Sykes said yes Susan. Susan Myers spoke up and said she had two comments. She said she would suggest the town before making an offer getting an appraisal on the property. It might be worth less than you think. Susan said the other thing is while you are getting an appraisal on that property she mentioned about getting an appraisal on the property she is proposing to buy where the old trailer park was. She said even if you get an appraisal it doesn't mean you are going to sell it. Mayor Sykes said the parcel you were talking about last time. Susan replied yes and said she would suggest that the town get an appraisal on both of them. Mayor Sykes stated they really have not made up their minds yet that they are going to get rid of that right now.

George said he is getting close to asking a question that really should be a closed session question, so how about answering yes or no instead of names. He asked has anyone expressed any interest in buying that property, anyone other than a public entity. George asked has a private citizen said they wanted to buy it and put a picture show there. He said if a private individual is wanting to buy it, then we are going to look at it a little bit differently. The end result being ending up in the same place. George said let's just say that Johnson wants to buy it and if he wants to buy it, then we have to go through a different process. We would have to do a tax foreclosure because that \$10,000 is supposed to be collected as property tax and when he doesn't pay it, then we would foreclose on the property taxes and have to have it out for open bids. He said the town would be one of the bidders. George said we have got the biggest non-IRS/Department of Revenue lien. He said our lien is bigger than Lenoir County Tax collections. Mayor Sykes said he is pretty well caught up on his Ad valorem taxes, it is just his state and federal. George said he thinks his 2016 taxes were unpaid but they are not past due yet because January 5, 2017 has not come yet. Mayor Sykes said she would like for them to meet with Alejandro and Maricruz but have some figure in mind and throw these taxes in on it somehow. George said over and above the \$10,000, that money is going to help pay down your taxes. Mayor Sykes said she didn't know about getting an appraisal, she wouldn't be surprised, of course now on the taxes the building is still on it. George said it will be until January 1, 2017 and then it will come off. Mayor Sykes stated right now the evaluation is completely wrong on the taxes because of the building. George said he was going to look on the computer and see what the land value was. Mayor Sykes told him to look under Osario at 101 East Broadway and the Parcel number is #21061. George said it shows that it is 1.38 acres and the land value is \$13,662 according to the tax office. He said this is just land. Kim said because there is nothing

on it now. George said but when this was done there was. He said this was effective January 1st of this year. Kim said so they have not updated it and George replied no. Mayor Sykes said it won't be more than \$15,000, it may be less than \$13,000. She said she thinks it will be less because she doesn't think the evaluation is going up. Kim asked when they do the evaluations. George replied 4 years ago and they are supposed to be doing them right now. George said if the appraised values go up, the tax rate doesn't go up but the taxes still go up. Mayor Sykes said that is what she likes whenever the evaluations go up and we don't have to go up on our taxes but they automatically go up anyway but we don't change our rates. George said the best thing is if you have new families moving into the community and buying \$25,000 houses and fixing them up so that they are appraised at \$75,000 or \$150,000.

Mayor Sykes said okay but getting back to this, what was the building/land appraised at. George said the total value is \$29,531. Mayor Sykes said so the building itself was worth about \$16,000. Kim stated I am just curious why are you interested in it? For the town? Mayor Sykes said she is not interested in buying it herself, she wants the town to buy it. She said she thinks it would be a great asset to the town. Mayor Sykes said maybe she is wrong, maybe she is thinking wrong but she thinks it would be and we could eventually put something there that would draw people in and have something there. George said if the town grows, which he believes it will, frankly you could have a more impressive town hall than this building, nothing wrong with this building, but an impressive town hall over there. He said it would be a great location right in the middle of town. Susan said she is not interested in buying that property. She was several years ago and looked very seriously at it but she does have some ideas and what it would be valued. Susan said the reason she is not interested in buying it is because the Mayor's vision. She said this is the center of town, Central and Broadway is the center of town and respectfully she disagrees with the town attorney about it being a town hall. Susan said it could be some sort of open space for a stage in the center of town and something good could be done with that. She showed them what she was talking about on the map. Susan said that the biggest value would be here but she would agree with them about the \$15,000 and if they argue with you then you could come down. She said you would not believe how low some of the values are. Mayor Sykes said evaluations are going down this year, she feels like. Susan said 4 years from now I think it will be different. She said Al and I plan on starting infield development. There are so many vacant lots and she really learned this from the Mayor when I lived in Charlotte about infield development. The easiest way to grow is to sell all those lots. Mayor Sykes stated she thinks that this would be an asset to the town eventually anyway. She said she sees something like the park in Kinston when they have their annual Festival on the Neuse and Sand in the Streets, there are a lot of people there and they are local folks. Mayor Sykes said she would just love to see the town have it. George said he would suggest two things. One would be to have a special meeting and the second would be to hire an interpreter so there is no doubt about any understanding. You will have somebody who will translate it into Spanish as you go along.

Kim stated that is why she asked Mayor Sykes what she wanted to do with it because she thinks the board was not really knowing what she wanted to do. Mayor Sykes said she just wanted to get the property first and it certainly would not be up to her to say what to do with it, everybody is going to have an input. Commissioner Hill said what about on the other side of the street where the old barber shop was. Mayor Sykes said well that is another thing and she thinks it is valued at about \$7,500. Susan stated she would like to buy that property which is on the corner

of Broadway and Central right across the street from R-Mart. George said on that parcel the land value on it is \$7,500. Mayor Sykes said that is what she thought and that is reasonable and it is a great location. George said he had told her wrong on the H.J. Chevrolet Building, the appraised land value was \$13,662 and the appraised building value was \$29,531. He said he thought the whole thing was \$29,531 but that is just for the building that is no longer there and he is flabbergasted. George said when you said \$16,000 I thought that was about right. Susan said she would not put a parking lot if she bought that other corner but put a building. She said you don't want a parking lot in the center of town but you want parking lots behind the building. Mayor Sykes said so let's have a special meeting and then asked when do y'all want to do it. George said what about seeing what Alejandro can do. Commissioner Hill said after the first of the year. Mayor Sykes said well actually couldn't we do it on our regular meeting night and have it earlier. George said if he can come that he would prefer that at 5:00 p.m. Mayor Sykes said that she would get in touch with Alejandro. Commissioner Hill made a motion that if the mayor contacts Alejandro to have a special meeting at 5:00 p.m. on January 10, 2017 to discuss his property. Commissioner Quinn seconded the motion and it carried unanimously. George said this would be an open meeting. He said if the town wants to buy it, we can go into closed session to discuss the price and the conditions but until that it is open. Kim asked would we need to get an interpreter. George said he would recommend that just so there is no doubt about both of them understanding. He recommended Lee Albritton who is a certified interpreter and he thinks he can be hired. Susan stated she has got people that can be hired. Mayor Sykes said you are right about that, Susan has got some. George said I really think you want someone who is certified. He said this special meeting is contingent on the mayor contacting Alejandro and him coming. Mayor Sykes said if that doesn't happen, then we will just meet at the regular time. Kim said our regular meeting will start at 7:00 p.m. correct? They replied yes. Kim said we won't push it up will we? George said he would hope not. He said we might be able to do this special meeting at 6:00 p.m. because it might not take us two hours. Mayor Sykes said she really didn't think that it will. Commissioner Hill made a motion to amend the time from 5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. for the special meeting. Commissioner Quinn seconded the motion and it carried unanimously. Mayor Sykes said she thinks they need to mention what do they intend to do because the property is going to be foreclosed on if you don't do something with it.

The next item on the agenda was Public Comment Period if needed. There were no public comments at this time.

The next item on the agenda was Closed Session if needed. There was no need for a closed session at this time.

With there being no further business to be discussed the meeting was adjourned.