

Town of Pink Hill  
Special Budget Approval  
Public Hearing  
June 19, 2023

Minutes

The Town of Pink Hill Special Budget Approval meeting was held June 19, 2023 at 6:30 pm in the Police Bay. Present at the meeting were: Mayor Yvonne Deatherage, Commissioner Penny Murphy, Commissioner James Quinn, Commissioner Pete Fantini, Town Attorney Will Gray, Jr, Town Clerk Lisa McGee, Daniel White Planning Chair, and Police Chief Michael Hoffman.

Visitors present were: Kevin McGee, Carolyn Whitfield, Kristin Fantini, Joshua Eing, Cierra Dunham, Josh Dunham, Jolene Hoffman and Jayne Zesiger

Mayor Yvonne Deatherage called the meeting to order. Mayor Deatherage said it is time for Public Comments and read the NCGS 159-12 article 3

**Public Comments:**

Carolyn Whitfield

I was lucky enough today to get a copy of the post budget and I had asked also for last year just to kind of compare and look at it. I don't really have that many comments. It was just one thing I was kind of disappointed. I felt like that since it I'm assuming it's a matter of public record that the salary would be broken down because that was one of the big topics last time as far as we as the public have no idea. We talked about raises and it would have been nice if we could've seen like their salary for last year and what their raises will be this year and how that will affect that and how it would be and I'm just curious about salaries because we're in a position right now where we're getting ready to, I guess be hiring new um, what's the word you just told me to use for? Um, Public works people and how that breaks down for the three positions that we have and it, I can't exactly fine that in there and I was wondering what DRSD stand for. Um, it's in here the whole line. It's just little difficult, um, even though we're coming to the meetings and showing interest and wanting to know what's going on in our town. I'm trying to figure out how it does break down and how it works and how it has salary but it's the police and the and then it doesn't really explain what the others it just says like salary and like DRSD salaries and it's the budget says \$31,200.00 and I have, you know there's no way of knowing what that's for and just wondering how that shakes out as far as the salaries shows up in other places. I mean, when it's under police, I know that, that goes to but we also have several policemen and how that works out and then, so, that was the main thing. So, there's one more thing I was wondering there's, I did notice that under park fund, there's no money budget to go to the park. Not sure why that is. Um, but yet and I was also wondering it was mentioned at a meeting of possibly just heard it mentioned and then we never were never brought back up again about the

garbage pickup and they're changing their and was the town considering changing how that would affect the budget if this will make a positive effect or negative effect and a good idea to maybe work on that before you actually budgeted for next year. Thank you very much. I don't give a good answer but those are comments. Commissioner Fantini asked do we get to answer any of those? Mayor Deatherage said if you make a motion for parliamentary procedure. Commissioner Murphy made a motion to come out of Parliamentary Procedure. Attorney Gray said to suspend the rules for the period of this meeting. Seconded my Commissioner Fantini the vote was unanimous. Mayor Deatherage asked the Town Clerk, Lisa McGee if you would refer to the answers of those and you did speak about where the park fund was located at the last meeting. Town Clerk, Lisa McGee, said going back to your question about the DRSD – that is Deep Run Sewer District. Carolyn Whitfield said and we have a salary for that? Town Clerk, Lisa McGee said yes, one of our public works employees gets paid out of that fund. Now as far as the Park Fund that is up under the Expense Administration you do see it a zero but it was moved down to the Culture and Recreation. Because the park is like a recreation thing and not an administration item. So, it was moved to the correct section on the financial report. Mayor Deatherage said and you (town clerk) brought that up at the last meeting. Town Clerk, Lisa McGee said yes that was brought up at the last meeting. Carolyn Whitfield asked and not more information on the salaries? Commissioner Fantini asked Carolyn Whitfield did you get a copy of the salaries? Carolyn Whitfield said no. Commissioner Fantini asked when we give out the budget do we give this out? Town Clerk, Lisa McGee stated what the state told me to post on the bulletin board is what you are approving tonight and I gave her last and this year but the salary part was not there. so, can I tell you what they are, and where they were. Carolyn Whitfield said ok. Mayor Deatherage asked Attorney Gray can we discuss the salaries. Attorney Gray said yes if it is public record. Mayor Deatherage said the current not the proposed. Commissioner Fantini said the proposed is something we have already seen and we have already seen it as a group with the exception of the change one that was presented as .... Attorney Gray said I mean; this is a public document. Commissioner Fantini said the one that was presented by Commissioner Murphy now says Lisa and Part-time so I was wondering how that changed. Town Clerk Lisa McGee said that's because I ask for you to take away my 7 ½% raise. Commissioner Fantini asked so where is that part-time money at now? Town Clerk, Lisa McGee said it sets right there it does not get touched. Mayor Deatherage said until we hire a part-time person. Commissioner Fantini said what I understand is from this budget that Commissioner Murphy that it was only \$5.00 because of half of that \$10.00 was given to you for your raise. Town Clerk, Lisa McGee said right but that's the new one. Commissioner Fantini said but the new one says there is still \$10.71 for the part-time. Town Clerk, Lisa McGee said but that is not for me, that will be for the part-time employee only, that money will not be touched in the 2023-2024 budget unless y'all hire employee. Commissioner Fantini asked well, do we have plans on hiring a part-time employee? Mayor Deatherage said when she gets the rest of the stuff from Connie and starts doing that, you're going to need someone to assist her. That's why you had a full-time and part-time before. Commissioner Fantini asked but didn't we give her \$25.00 because we aren't hiring a part-time? Mayor Deatherage said yeah that was part of it. Commissioner Fantini said no that was part of the agreement that if we didn't hire a

part-time, then, she would get \$25.00 per hour. Before you answer that question and say no, that is what we agreed on in our meeting, I guarantee it we agreed to if she wasn't, we weren't hiring a part-time person. She was bumped to \$25.00 and we're still going to allocate the money and you still want to hire a part-time person, am I right. Commissioner Murphy asked what meeting are you referring to? Commissioner Fantini said the hiring meeting we agreed that if we did not hire anybody by January, we would give her \$25.00 per hour. Commissioner Quinn said so she did ... Mayor Deatherage said and she did. Commissioner Fantini said but she is and she's getting it back dated, remember. We agreed to that last meeting, so now she's going to get \$25 because we don't have, we are not hiring a part-time person but you are going to hire. Mayor Deatherage said we haven't used that money, that's in there for a part-time person ... Commissioner Fantini said I know we haven't ... Mayor Deatherage said it is in there incase we need one. Town Clerk, Lisa McGee said I haven't asked for one. Mayor Deatherage said she hasn't asked for one, but if we take all that stuff that Connie is still doing, that wasn't being done before, she would need a part-time person, so, she could do that work and paying a part-time person would be cheaper than paying Connie, so that's why it's budgeted. Commissioner Fantini said that is confusion when we say that we're not going to hire somebody ... Mayor Deatherage said we are not saying that we are ... Commissioner Fantini said I'm saying when we say we're hiring somebody and we're going to give them this amount of money and if we don't hire a part-time person and then later on, we're going to hire a part-time person. So, we are saying that we are allocating the money for a part-time person but we won't give the money to the police chief what I ask for. Mayor Deatherage said she (town clerk) also requested that she not get the 7 ½% cola raise. Commissioner Fantini said I don't know I get the advocacy and the same thing where I'm trying to advocate for gosh do I remember somebody saying they had it on good faith that Beulaville's chief of police was making \$51,000.00 a year. Beulaville's chief of police is \$65,000.00 I mean. Do you remember when I was told you that. Commissioner Murphy said yes, I told you that. Commissioner Fantini said alright I was just making sure ... Commissioner Murphy said because that is what I found when I looked it up. Commissioner Fantini said well I have it from the actual town clerk in Beulaville that the chief of police makes \$65,000.00 so, I'd say we're a little behind the curve on our town we also have ... Commissioner Quinn said well they also have 1100 people ... Commissioner Fantini said well that's great but he also has eight officers. Commissioner Quinn said and they have a lot more people in that town ... Commissioner Fantini said 1100 .... Commissioner Quinn said and we have what 400 people in our town ... Commissioner Fantini said but we are going to argue over money that everybody else but we're not argue money here so why don't we just take this \$11,000.00 and throw it towards what I asked for. So why don't we make the water assistant an even \$40,000.00 and then they will come .... Mayor Deatherage said they are probably not going to come for that kind of money because they have to have certain certifications .... Commissioner Fantini said I understand that but you always say that but people will surprise you and I can guarantee they were lined up for the other job, yes, they were they were lined up for the Town Clerk job. We had 9 or 10 resumes for that job. I guarantee you if you advertise the jobs and bump it to 15%, 7 ½% for Phillip's job and 7 ½% for Timmy's job. There is no reason for that but if Phillip was staying absolutely let's do it. But you are talking about somebody coming in fresh with

no years of experience. Mayor Deatherage said it doesn't matter about the experience here. Commissioner Fantini said everybody says it going to be a big problem and everybody thinks this and that but I can guarantee you, you'll get a good quality person who wants to work because of the benefits we offer the truck, the gas those things. If you will advertise this job, I guarantee it you will have the resumes out there.

Commissioner Murphy asked Commissioner Fantini so you can make that guarantee?

Commissioner Fantini said well, I've been known to be wrong and I'm ok with being wrong, but I think everyone at this table has been wrong too. Commissioner Penny said I never said I have never been wrong before. Commissioner Fantini said to give someone fresh in off the street the 7 ½% is absolutely absurd, but you won't give it to the chief of police you have argued for everybody else even guys that are leaving us, let me tell you something those guys are valuable and I know it is a heartache, but if we don't start treating this town as a business instead of personal weren't not going to be right. But you argue for everybody else on here but you won't give our chief of police in this town what I think he should make, even if you gave him \$58,000.00. you argue for the one that are leaving, you argue for an assistant and the town clerk and I'm not saying that the town clerk is not doing the job I want you to understand that none of this is personal. But we are not going to give the police chief what he's due and he is due it, he has been here since 2007, you say he's been the police chief since 2022 but I think it has been since 2017 or 2018. Commissioner Murphy said I am not taking the money out of the water fund salaries because we are going to need that money for someone.

Carolyn Whitfield asked do we get an answer about the salary? Town Clerk, Lisa McGee, went and made a copy for everyone in the audience.

Commissioner Fantini read the following:

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|--------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| • Lisa was \$20.00 per hour          | proposed \$25.00 per hour |
| • Chief was \$23.18 per hour         | proposed \$24.92 per hour |
| • Weaver was \$18.690 per hour       | proposed \$20.32 per hour |
| • Cody was \$ 12.50 per hour         | proposed \$15.00 per hour |
| • Timmy was \$28.20 per hour         | proposed \$28.20 per hour |
| • Phillip was \$21.72 per hour       | proposed \$21.72 per hour |
| • Part-time was \$ 10.71 per hour    | proposed \$10.71 per hour |
| • Part-time officer \$14.99 per hour | proposed \$17.00 per hour |

Carolyn Whitfield said now if both Timmy and Phillip leaving wouldn't you want to just give both positions the 7 ½% instead of making the 2<sup>nd</sup> person that close to the 1<sup>st</sup> person, I'm just asking? Commissioner Murphy just because we hire someone does not mean they will get the same thing that the people before were making.

Town Clerk, Lisa McGee, passed out the salary part of the proposed 2023-2024 budget to everyone in the audience.

Daniel White asked why can't you budget for it and put a budgetary number because this is a budget it's not what you are exactly going to pay a person. Commissioner Fantini said because I had rather budget for my police chief. Cierra Dunham said well you should have a range. Commissioner Fantini said but I am more than willing to

budget for my police chief, who should be up higher than he is. Commissioner Quinn said can I ask you something Pete? Commissioner Fantini said you sure can .... Commissioner Quinn asked when you started our budget workshops didn't you come up and say that you wanted everyone to get a 7 ½% raise across the board? Commissioner Fantini said absolutely that's exactly what I wanted. Commissioner Quinn asked didn't we do that? Commissioner Fantini said well, not really. Commissioner Quinn asked why didn't we? Commissioner Fantini said because now you changed the Town Clerk's and you changed Timmy's to Phillip's and that then becomes merit raises and I don't care if Timmy wanted his or not; it becomes a merit-based raise instead of a cola raise. Commissioner Murphy said by all means let's get rid the extra 7 ½ % setting there by Phillip's name and as far as Lisa is concerned, we are only giving her what was promised to her when she was hired. Mayor Deatherage said and she gave back the 7 ½% raise. Commissioner Fantini said so you want to give her \$25.00 per hour plus the 7 ½% cola raise. Commissioner Murphy said no .... Mayor Deatherage said she was given the \$25 per hour because that is what was promised to her. She is refused the 7 ½% ... the budget y'all are looking at is for next year, and she is not getting a raise for next year. Commissioner Fantini said so, every council out there would give someone who has been here 7 months would give them 7 ½ % right away. Commissioner Murphy said she's perfectly happy with the \$25.00 per hour. Commissioner Fantini said but I'm just listening to what she (mayor Deatherage) said. Mayor Deatherage said I'm just saying that you said give 7 ½ % across the board. Commissioner Murphy said well, with the exception of Lisa that would be 7 ½% across the board and the exception of Cody who is working at poverty level and I really believe that he deserves what he is getting. Commissioner Fantini said well, I actually believe that if we give him 7 ½% that it might work out better than the \$15.00 per hour. Commissioner Murphy said if it's more then we can do that too and then that would be your 7 ½% across the board. Commissioner Fantini said I still believe we have a pay difference in salary when it comes to the police chief. Commissioner Fantini said I just can't see why we are giving 15% raises ... Commissioner Murphy said we just said that we were changing it to 7 ½%. Commissioner Murphy said ok let's move on to the next person. Mayor Deatherage said the next person is Kristin Fantini.

Kristin Fantini:

Well, two words that I think can maybe try to let resonate our reflection and perspective, um, they are always going to be different in every situation. Um, because personal feelings are involved. For example, when there are things said about my husband being a false prophet and wanting attention or someone coming to us and saying, well, I was told if there's an issue with the water to come to the commissioner on the hill because this is all his fault. My personal perspective is different than people saying those things, or spreading those lies and blasting a statement, versus person actually doing it or their friends. Our perspectives are different. Imma be hurt while someone else might be happy. Um, those are personal perspectives. All of you should um, everybody in business should be taking the perspective of the best interest of the town. And I think that there's a lot of personal feelings involved. Um, that and they're kind of higher on the list, than the town's best interest. Um, this you know, getting a win for this side, getting a tally mark, making this person look bad, whatever, I think that comes into

play and thank gosh that the first budget workshop was in video because we got a glimpse into not only the budget and you know, because I have no idea about where that money goes and how much we need and how we potentially over budget more than we have been in a long time but we also got some insight in just where what different things that people are important. Um, like was mention before, cola raises up. I talked to a superintendent, another local government, cola raised theirs 2.5% across the board. Because if you start giving different amounts, it is merit based but we have no justification, no personal evaluations, no accountability of why people need to give more or less and when and as a citizen listening to that first budget workshop and hearing that somebody wants to get their 7.50 but then 7.5 based on somebody else's salary. I mean, that was literally mind blowing that nobody but one batten eyelashes. The fact that somebody was going to get 7.5% on top of 7.5%. Not even based on his own salary. I mean, that is asinine to me. Commissioner Quinn said that's why the department of head wanted, that's what Timmy wanted. Carolyn Whitfield said but that's not his money to give away. Kristin Fantini said somebody just said no, you know, that's not how, you know, most workplaces work. Hmm, um, and when you're looking at merit based, there needs to be some accountability, I'm not a professional anywhere but my own career and I have three formal observation every year, evaluation time. Unfortunately, I don't get a raise but I have those checks and balances to make sure I'm doing my job. I don't understand why we can't do that here. Just to say, you know, this is the justification for why people are getting this. Um, that's my one little takeaway from that. all the problems we've got going on is that we want to spend much time saying, you know, get this, get this, get this, but then, we want to, you know, gall at the fact that the police can't get extra money in their budget for gas. More gas but we're finding thousands of dollars away on a hefty raise, on a hefty raise. But we still want more on top of that. I just think that priorities are not sync and personal feelings and agendas are going above the best interest of this town. Mayor Deatherage said if there is no more discussion, Commissioner Quinn made a motion to adjourn the Public Hearing, seconded by Commissioner Murphy vote was 3-0.