April 12, 2016

7:00 P.M.

The Town of Pink Hill held its monthly board meeting on Tuesday, April 12, 2016 at 7:00 p.m. in the town hall board room. Present for the meeting were Mayor Carol Sykes, Commissioners Mike Hill, Donald King and Debra Grady, Town Attorney George Jenkins, Public Works Director Timmy Kennedy, Police Chief Joey Thigpen, and Town Clerk Kimberly Mitchell.

Visitors present at the meeting were Patrick Flanagan, David Tuten, 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 and asked Commissioner King to lead everyone in the pledge of allegiance. Commissioner Hill made a motion to approve the agenda with amendment 5a. Commissioner King seconded the motion and it carried unanimously. Commissioner Hill made a motion to approve the consent agenda including the March 8, 2016 regular board meeting minutes. Commissioner Grady seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

The first item on the agenda was the Asset Inventory & Assessment Grant. Mayor Sykes introduced David Tuten with Stroud Engineering and thanked him for coming and turned the meeting over to him. Mr. Tuten said he is from Stroud Engineering and they are based out of Greenville and they do a little bit of everything such as land development, water/sewer, and they also try to go after a lot of the grants for the small towns. He said the state just had training a couple of weeks ago and they are also going to be established for the spring of this year as far as grants available for all municipalities. He stated something interesting came up as far as that they have never done before and that is the asset and management plan for a lot of the small towns. They are putting in up to $150,000 for water and/or sewer individually so a lot of the small towns can put together a capital improvement plan and that includes asset management plan, capital improvement plan, and the O & M manual. Mr. Tuten said he has worked with Commissioner Hill a number of times on some of the O & M manuals for some of the smaller towns. He said they have gotten a lot pickier over the years. He stated their definition of an O & M manual has to include the manufacturing specs for that particular plant whether it is water or sewer and they want the actual plans or manuals that came with the equipment. Mr. Tuten said it really builds up a lot of time to put something like that together. The state decided since we are requiring it more and more, so let’s go ahead and make it available to some of our smaller towns with funding involved.

He said Harry Bailey and himself came by and met with Timmy and Kim last week and talked to them to see if they were interested if something would be available that they wanted to try to pursue and they said that we should bring it before the board to get your input also. The only thing about it is they are saying you have to put 5 percent into the cost but the little thing that they put into that is that it can be work. So the town itself can put time in towards trying to get the asset management plan in place and that counts toward that 5 percent. He said overall it should not cost the town anything. Mr. Tuten said now there again it is the first time that they have implemented the program and if you have done anything with the state as far as stuff like this, it is always a learning experience on our side and their side so things do change.

He said if the board has any questions he is hoping that he can answer them and see if it is something that maybe you would like to submit the paperwork for. Mayor Sykes asked if it was for water and/or sewer and Mr. Tuten replied yes. He said he had talked with Timmy to see if they would want to do one or do both and Timmy feels if we want to do both of them then we can go ahead and try to apply for it.

Mr. Tuten said they are pressing it more and more to get an asset management plan in place. It is not something that you can just throw together in three or four weeks. So getting all three documents in place to get the points for an asset management plan is going to be time consuming which is where the money comes in that the state is allowing you to try to apply for. He said but getting that in place puts you 10 points on the next funding cycle. Mr. Tuten said the way to get grants now and the way it has been in the past is you have to kind of put together a package and score your system as you are going along. He said an asset management plan now is 10 points on that system and it is a pretty huge chunk of points off on the get go. Mr. Tuten said they try to tell you that you shouldn’t try to apply for this type of grant just to get the documentation for the points but really it is all a numbers game in the end anyway.

He said with the asset plan in place you are putting everything out in the books, so anybody that comes in after Timmy or whoever knows exactly what the town has whether it is water or sewer. Everything put there is going to have an age and an assessment part of it so you can see how old your inventory is and when you are likely to see something break in the future or whether you need to try to save up funding for that very product that might break down or something like that. Mayor Sykes asked Mr. Tuten if the grant has started yet or are we just in the beginning stages. Mr. Tuten said as far as starting the application has to be submitted by the end of the month. He said they decided to do training at the beginning of this month so we have had all of about a week. He said they said here is the paperwork and here is the instructions and now try to apply for it. So we are kind of on a tight turntable. Mayor Sykes asked is it mainly first come first serve or just the points. Mr. Tuten said as far as this from the training they said that they really want to try to get as many of these out as they possibly can being this is the first time they have done it and this is going to be the first cycle for the spring of 2016. He said he does not foresee a lot of people trying to go for it. In fact some of the other people he has talked to when they have called their engineering firms, they are like maybe they will try in the fall or spring of next year. He said there is not a lot of meat on the bone for certain engineering firms.

Mr. Tuten said they do not care if it is large or small as long as it benefits the town and it also works for us, we will go for whatever it is. He said they think that they can get the package together as far as trying to submit to get the funding for the town by the end of the month. Mr. Tuten said they are going to have to work closely with Timmy and Kim as far as getting the paperwork and seeing exactly what the town already has in place so we can put a dollar amount on what it would possibly cost to get the final product. Once the state decides that they want to move forward with the funding, they have kind of done something different than what they have done in the past. He said once they approve that package they are going to call us to move forward to discuss with them what the money is going to be used for before they will go ahead and give you the final approval which he thinks is great.

Mayor Sykes asked how long if we are awarded the money will we have to complete the project or is this just something that we are going to save until we need to do something. Mr. Tuten stated eighteen months. Mayor Sykes asked what the maximum amount was. Mr. Tuten stated it was $150,000 but for a town this size he did not see it coming close to that because you have to submit an application for water and then you have to submit an application for sewer. He said you cannot do a combined application. Mayor Sykes asked if there was a minimum amount that the project has to have. He said the minimum thing for this project is you have to have the asset management as far as all your stuff inventoried and the age of it. This is the minimum as far as what the funding can be allowed for. They will allow you to do it in phases and that is something that did come out in the training. If for some reason you are not able to do the full three pieces, Asset Management, CIP, or O&M, they will let you do it in phases. Mr. Tuten said but for a town this size he does not see where it would be an issue to try to do all three at once.

He said he has a feeling that this is going to be popular especially this fall and there is going to be more competition. There again also kind of what Timmy was leading to earlier, they did discuss some of the things that were going to be available this fall which is going to be the CDBG money which is going to be mostly towards infrastructure where there is water and sewer. He said they have kind of gone away from the housing, they definitely lean more towards the water and sewer. He said that has been really big the last two or three years. There will be a drinking water State Revolving Fund and also with the $3 million bond referendum they just passed, they are not sure what they are going to do with it yet, but they know they are going to split it thirds. Have a third available for this fall and then the two cycles next year. He said they really have not said exactly how much they are going to put towards grant money and/or loan money but that is what they are going to try to work out this summer. Mayor Sykes said but we are talking about grant money plus our 5 percent contribution. Mr. Tuten said for this type of plan here it is just going to be strictly grant money and 5 percent which hopefully will be all in work. He said he does not think it is going to take very long for Timmy to work that off.

Mr. Tuten said they are submitting it and there is not going to be any charge to submit it and if it gets submitted, then we will move forward with trying to structure the grant. He asked Commissioner Hill if he had seen the benchmarks and he replied no. Mr. Tuten said that is something new for this cycle also. They decided to put five benchmarks on any grants now. You have to hit three out of the five. You have to be worse than three of the average benchmarks for the State of North Carolina. Mr. Tuten passed around a paper for the board to see concerning the benchmarks. He then passed around another page with the calculator on it that the state has put together. He explained at the very top of the page is where you put in your town and it automatically grades you on those benchmarks. Now all the other numbers are fictitious, those are put in there automatically with the calculator that do not represent the Town of Pink Hill at all but those benchmarks are what you have to have now. If you do not hit three, then you are not eligible for any grants at all. Mr. Tuten three out of five is 10 percent 15 and then 20 percent. Mayor Sykes stated she certainly thought it was worth the try.

Timmy asked Mr. Tuten if he was right or wrong that the plans have to be upgraded every 5 years. Mr. Tuten said the Capital Improvement Plan has to have been created within the last 10 years and approved within the last 5 years. Timmy said he thinks the last one was done by Mr. Butts and he has been retired about 7 or 8 years. Mr. Tuten said the way that the grant funding right now looks like they have placed some of this information on the website for the Capital Improvement Plan itself you get 2 points and for a full Asset Management Plan you get 10 points.

Mayor Sykes asked how long he thought it would take to get it together. Mr. Tuten stated there again he doesn’t know exactly everything that we have because he hasn’t sat down with Timmy or Kim yet. He said that will determine exactly what they have got to work with and then that will determine the timeline. Mayor Sykes asked if we get it in on time when would the award take place. He said it is at the leisure of the state he hates to say. Mr. Tuten said there is nothing that really has to be approved tonight but there is three pieces of information that is really time sensitive. One is going to be the LGC forms which is the 108a and 108c and there is one called a Fund Transfer saying that you have not transferred any funds from your water/sewer to your general fund for frivolous reasons. Most towns don’t have any issues with that if they have managed their books correctly but if you have been moving your stuff around then you are automatically ineligible for any type of funding from the State or Federal Government. Mr. Tuten said there is a resolution that has to be approved but the state actually realized that they did not give enough time to try to get this application together, so instead of having the resolution in place by the end of the month, they have given us a June 15th deadline. If the town decides that they want to move forward with this funding, then he will go ahead and get the template filled out for the town and then email it to either the town or Timmy. Then it can be passed at the next board meeting. George Jenkins asked Mr. Tuten if he needed the resolution tonight and he replied no because he did not have it with him for tonight. Mayor Sykes asked if we are going to do this and we have got to have a resolution, can we go ahead and approve the resolution. George said without having a resolution to see, he thinks that they could pass a resolution but not his resolution indicating that it is the intent of the board to engage in this inventory and apply for the grant. Then you can dot the “I’s” and cross the “T’s” when he gets the resolution itself to you. Kim stated she was thinking that the board would make a motion to proceed with the grant application process and then at the next meeting approve the resolution. Commissioner Grady made a motion to apply for the Asset Inventory and Assessment grant. Commissioner Hill seconded the motion and it carried unanimously. Mayor Sykes thanked David Tuten for coming.

Mayor Sykes said the next item on the agenda was the Lenoir County Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP) and she introduced Patrick Flanagan who is here to make the presentation. Patrick Flanagan told the board to look at the handouts and follow along with the presentation. He said he is with Eastern Carolina Council and we run what is called the Eastern Carolina RPO which is a Rural Transportation Planning Organization. He stated they have a four county area that they cover which includes Lenoir County and what the RPO does is transportation planning and prioritization of projects within those four counties. Mr. Flanagan said they are kind of like the middle man between those counties and the municipalities within those counties and NCDOT in Raleigh. One of the things that NCDOT is required to do by general statute is comprehensive transportation plans. Right now Lenoir is getting ready to undergo one of these comprehensive transportation plans. He said they have not started the plan yet. He wanted to come and talk with the board, explain what it is, and kind of go over what the plan means and what we will be doing and how it affects Pink Hill so you guys have an understanding before we really get underway in this process. The comprehensive transportation plan is really a long range transportation vision. It is a 30 year look from now until 30 years from now at what potential transportation projects will be needed within the study areas. So for this study it is Lenoir County. Mr. Flanagan stated this is a multimodal plan meaning we not just talking about roads and highways, this is also bicycle, pedestrian, rail, transit and every mode of transportation that is going to be looked at within this comprehensive transportation plan. It also involves a lot of public participation. We do a survey of the citizens. We have public comment meetings where we look at draft ideas and stuff to get some feedback from the public. What we are really looking for is how the area is going to grow, whether that means household population or whether it means economically through business and industry and that kind of stuff. How it is going to grow, how much it is going to grow, where it is going to grow over those 30 years, and then applying that to the existing transportation network and seeing what needs to be improved based on those growth rates and where we think that growth is going to happen. In other words if an industrial park is going to open right north of Pink Hill, then we need to know that because there is going to need to be some road improvements to help serve that industrial park. He stated that is the kind of thing they are talking about. If there is going to be a large residential neighborhood that is getting ready to be built in Pink Hill, that is the kind of thing we are going to want to know about so we can talk about if they are going to need sidewalks there, are they going to need bicycle lanes, or are we going to need to do any road improvements. He said they are doing that over a 30 year period. Mr. Flanagan said looking at our existing transportation network, how is it working right now, do any improvements need to be made based on how it functions right now, and then also as we add population and employment over those 30 years, what other potential issues popup that we are going to need to have some sort of answer or fix for within this plan. That is the general concept of what the comprehensive transportation plan is.

Mr. Flanagan said, so again we are looking at those deficiencies in the network and where we expect deficiencies in the future and trying to create projects that will fix that deficiency. So from this plan comes actual projects that will be submitted to NCDOT for prioritization across the state to compete for funding from NCDOT to build these projects. The plan is not physically constrained, there is no kind of set dollar amount for any individual project or the total number of projects. This is really kind of a real visionary document so as the citizenry of the study area can really kind of say here is what we think our vision needs to be for transportation, here is what we want, and here is what we think we need. It really is kind of a wish list for the area and then you take those projects on that wish list and submit them through the RPO to then go for that prioritization process at NCDOT.

The plan really takes about 2 years to complete and we haven’t started yet but we are getting ready to gear up, so we are making this presentation to you and all the municipalities in the county of Lenoir to have everybody kind of on the same page and understand what they are doing and then we will really start this plan. Mr. Flanagan said it is a long range vision trying to get the needs of the individual towns and put that into the bigger picture of the county and make one vision that makes sense for all the various areas of the county but also make sense with your neighboring counties and that kind of thing. He said trying to have some sort of document that we can use moving forward to have an idea of what we need and when we need it next so we can kind of start planning for these things. Mr. Flanagan said a real big aspect of the plan is taking our current land use and making that fit with those transportation projects, so they are not fighting each other and so they are working together. Through that kind of planning and having that vision, we can reduce the cost of those transportation projects. Some much of what NCDOT is facing right now is fixing problems they created by some of the projects they did in the past and didn’t really have that clear concise vision of what they needed to be doing. NCDOT does not have a lot of money right now and they have a lot of projects across the state and they are doing a lot of fixing things that they shouldn’t have to be fixing because they weren’t being diligent about their planning going into the future. Hopefully with this plan everybody can be on the same page and then we can be a lot better about reducing the cost of projects down the road by everybody being on the same page right now and continuing to think about those projects as we move forward.

Mayor Sykes asked how does this coincide with what DOT is doing about the super highways and the bypass around towns, when is that going to take place 30 years from now too. Mr. Flanagan said it depends on the specific project but to answer her question, those kind of projects are exactly what we are talking about. So we are going to be looking at the population growth and the traffic growth because of the population and part of this plan will be to determine does a specific town need a bypass, does it not need a bypass. Mayor Sykes asked hasn’t that already been talked about and decided on already? He replied that some of it has but not all of it. These comprehensive transportation plans when they were first put into place which was about the early 2000’s, they were only done for municipalities so just the town. He said Kinston has one and Beulaville has one and those are really the only ones around here that have a comprehensive transportation plan. The state started to kind of look back and say well now we have got all these little individual plans for these little individual towns but we didn’t really look at how Kinston fit in with Beulaville let alone Pink Hill in the middle. Mayor Sykes asked what about all these pamphlets we get and it has got Pink Hill and the roads are saying it might go here or it might go there. Mr. Flanagan stated he was getting there. He said what happened was Kinston got a comprehensive transportation plan. They had all kinds of projects but actually most of the projects weren’t within the city limits of Kinston because you are projecting your growing and all this. So the Kinston bypass was outside of the Kinston city limits but Lenoir County wasn’t considered when that plan was going on. He said DOT kind of took a step back and said we need to be thinking about these things county wide and making sure that everybody is involved so that whenever we are talking about whether it is a Pink Hill bypass or a Beulaville bypass or a Kinston bypass, everybody kind of in that area is getting to look at it together and make that decision together. Because a lot of what you are saying where everybody is confused and kind of double talking is Kinston had one idea because they had this comprehensive transportation plan but Lenoir County had another idea because Lenoir County wasn’t involved in the Kinston comprehensive transportation plan. He said so nobody was on the same page.

Mr. Flanagan said one of the things that they really try to do with these comprehensive transportation plans now that they are doing them county wide, is make sure everybody is on the same page. So when we do have a project like the Kinston bypass it gets put into one of these plans and that is the first step. Mayor Sykes asked who is going to make the decision, when you get your plan done and they have got their plan done, which one they are going to use. She said it is going to be the DOT that makes that decision so to her and she doesn’t want to throw cold water on his project, but she doesn’t even see the town even coming into the picture of it or we may. Mayor Sykes stated our population in 4 years hasn’t changed but in three people in this town and we don’t want to bypass our town. Mr. Flanagan said he understands and so right now there was an idea for a project for a Pink Hill bypass but that was not in a comprehensive transportation plan because we did not have one for this area. He said you have the example of the Kinston bypass in the Kinston CTP and that then goes into what they call the prioritization process and NCDOT. This is where every transportation project in the state every mode is scored. He said every project in the state gets scored based on this NCDOT scoring mechanism and whoever scores the highest, that project gets in line for funding. Once you score high enough to get in line for funding, then they come to the locals and say okay we have got this idea for a Kinston bypass and now we need to talk to you about where it is going to go and what it is going to look like. Mr. Flanagan said if you guys were at all involved in the Kinston bypass when they started doing the planning for that you will remember they had something like 300 options with a turn to the south of town and a turn to the north of town. They were working for 2 years with the locals looking at environmental issues, wetlands, and all this other kind of stuff to pick the actual route that the project was going to take and what it was going to look like on the ground. When you put a project in this plan, it is the idea of the project and it is the concept of the project and it is not the finished project. But to really answer your question, you cannot put a project into the prioritization system unless it comes from one of these plans. So the example of the Pink Hill bypass that was talked about by a commissioner and all of that stuff, that would not have been able, now because of the way they are doing things, to be entered into the prioritization system because it didn’t have the approval of the local areas coming from one of these plans.

Mayor Sykes said so you think once we get our prioritization do you think it is going to be any different than what it was the first go around. Mr. Flanagan replied sure. Mayor Sykes said because everybody was so adamant against the bypass and all this stuff before, why do you think it will not be that way again because you have got the same people. Mr. Flanagan said because we really start looking into in depth data, looking at what your traffic counts are, what business projection is growing in the area, what population growth whether it is within the town or outside of the town, county wide where is growth happening, and really target the transportation projects to those things. He said to tie them to the data as well as involving the public from the beginning. He stated to remember that they are going to do a survey for all the citizens of Lenoir County and get their feedback on what they think the issues are. Again engage the public once we have some draft project ideas and go out to the public and show them the maps, have a look at stuff and say you know we like this idea but wouldn’t this be better if it was over here or how do we solve this. He said there is a lot more public engagement on the front end to get the feedback, exactly what you are saying. Mr. Flanagan said DOT does not have a lot of money. If there is something here that the people don’t want to do, DOT is not going to force you to do it because they don’t have the money to just be building whatever they dream up. Commissioner Hill stated DOT has a lot of projects going on right now. Commissioner Grady said are you saying that those projects that Commissioner Hill is mentioning right there are going by you comprehensive transportation plan. Mr. Flanagan said some of these projects predate comprehensive transportation plans. The US-17 project in Jones County has been a project for 30 years long before comprehensive transportation plans were done.

Mr. Flanagan said you have mentioned that Pink Hill is a small town and you haven’t seen a lot of growth. We recognize that but not every project in here is going to be a big four lane bypass type project. We could have a recommendation here for NC-11 to add bike lanes. It could be a very simple thing. It could just be you have a small two lane road that has really narrow lanes and no shoulder. It could just be a modernization project where we are talking about taking it and making instead of 10 foot lanes bringing it up to 12 foot lanes with 1 foot of paved shoulder. Commissioner Grady said when the CTP decides on a project and say it was for us and if we might not agree with it is it still going to follow through any way. Mr. Flanagan replied no ma’am. Commissioner Grady said we are a small town and our population hasn’t changed very much and so really this is a very big picture. She said like she has said in the past she is new on the table but she thinks the town commissioners and the mayor have done a great job with decisions that we needed for our town.

Commissioner Hill said he has traveled all over Eastern Carolina and these little towns that have been bypassed have dried up. It has killed them and that is what we have been arguing about. He said if they are going to bypass us, then we might as well shut the doors. Mayor Sykes said it will be in the plan if they can find some way to go and not go through the swamps and stuff. Mr. Flanagan said you will be here to see the plan. Mayor Sykes said but not to see the finished product so I don’t know why I am even arguing about it but she does like her town and wants it to do what it is supposed to do but not in favor of any bypass. Mr. Flanagan said I am telling you that NCDOT is moving away from that. He says bypasses are large projects, are expensive projects, and they are tired of fighting locals over it so they don’t want to do it. They have got other stuff to be doing. If you guys feel like Pink Hill doesn’t need a bypass and you don’t want a bypass, now is when you need to speak up and say that. Mayor Sykes replied that they have already done that. Mr. Flanagan said instead of having the decision made for you by the folks around you.

Commissioner King said over the last 3 years they have been talking about this bypass around Pink Hill and even went so far as to give us a rating. He said we are in the rating list already for this bypass that nobody wants. Commissioner King asked if that was all out the window. Mr. Flanagan stated it is nowhere close to happening.

Mr. Flanagan said one of the things that they look at when doing that rating system is the cost of the project and like you mentioned the swamp and all that stuff, that is a very expensive project. So it did not score that well compared to some other stuff around it and it is not really moving forward at this point. They did do a feasibility study for it.

Mayor Sykes asked who is going to do this planning, are they going to do a plan, are we going to get a citizen’s input, how long will it take, and when do we have to do it. Mr. Flanagan in order to do the plan we create a steering committee. He said one of the reasons that he is coming here tonight is because we want all the municipalities to have someone on that steering committee, whether it be an elected person, whether it be a staff person, whether you have like a community organization like a rotary club or something and you want somebody from the rotary club. We want somebody from Pink Hill on the steering committee. Mayor Sykes stated we would have to talk about that. He said we had some time to figure out who we wanted it to be. He said they will not really be meeting until the end of May because they are doing all these presentations but it will be monthly meetings. They have not picked a date or a time or anything like that.

Mayor Sykes asked if it would be the whole county there and he replied yes. He stated everyone would be at the table together. Mayor Sykes said that Commissioner King has been through this one time.

Commissioner King said he has a meeting tomorrow. Mr. Flanagan said that is the Transportation Committee and he is at those meetings. He said they will probably have somebody from the Transportation Committee on there, somebody from the school system on there, and somebody from EMS and Public Safety. All of these things need to be considered and those people will be on the steering committee but we would like at least one person from each municipality to be on the steering committee. When we start talking about specific projects for our area, we will come back and talk to this group about those specific projects. We will have had input from someone in your town on the steering committee but when we start talking specifics for your area, we will come back and sit down with everybody here in Pink Hill. We will talk about those things, get your feedback, and we will be having public comment periods as well as public meetings and we will host them throughout the county. So that people from those various areas can come and look at the stuff and give their feedback as well.

Mayor Sykes stated we have had meetings like this before even here. We have had the DOT people come here and talk about all these bypasses. Kim said this is not just about bypasses. Mayor Sykes replied she understood that. Kim said she is not trying to say anything but I think you are sticking to bypasses and he is trying to explain that it is a project for sidewalks and different things. Mayor Sykes stated she knew it was not just for bypasses. Commissioner King said what they were getting at is to make sure that that old business is dead. Mr. Flanagan said the best way that he can answer their question is the cart was put before the horse and this is the horse, this is where you start. As far as Lenoir County is concerned the slate is wiped clean and we are starting over and that is what this plan is.

Commissioner Grady asked if we don’t choose to be in this plan then what happens to us. Mr. Flanagan said the town will not have any input. Commissioner Grady said so the town does not have any input unless we join this. Mr. Flanagan stated you are not joining you are just participating. Mayor Sykes said they needed to step back and get the citizens input and see what they want and then that way we can go on with the plan right or not go along with the plan. Commissioner Hill said he thinks we need someone on the steering committee. Mayor Sykes stated she agreed with that. Mr. Flanagan said it is a 2 year process, it is a long process to do one of these plans and you want to be involved in the beginning. You want to be there at the steering committee when it starts and you want to be there for the steering committee every time it meets. About a third of the way into it after we have kind of met a couple of times and everybody on the steering committee understands what we are doing and we have talked about a couple of ground things, we create a survey and that is the first chance for public involvement. He said one thing they are going to need from the individual towns is promoting that survey, making sure their people see it, fill it out, or responding. That is our first chance to get an idea of what the area thinks their needs are or what they think they want so we can look at that when we are also looking at the data. This is happening while this 2 year process is going on. He said about two thirds of the way through when we kind of start having an idea of the projects and have some recommendations in draft form, then we go out with some maps. We have those public meetings a couple throughout the county in various locations so everybody has a chance to come somewhere kind of local and look at what we have done and get some ideas of the various projects on the maps. He said so they can provide feedback to those specific projects in their area and across the whole county. Mr. Flanagan stated again once that happens then we take that comment into account, rework any of the projects we need to work based on that public comment. Then we come back to all the municipalities in the county and show you the draft plan or all these various projects and you guys adopt the plan. It is the locals plan and you guys have the final say. All of the municipalities will adopt it, the county will adopt it and once everybody has done that then it goes to the RPO for an endorsement. Then once the RPO endorses it, it will go to Raleigh to the NCDOT Board of Transportation for their adoption.

Mr. Flanagan said to kind of answer Commissioner Grady’s question a while ago, if the town does not accept the plan, you will not have any projects put into that prioritization system. The only way you get projects funded is by putting it into that prioritization and that again is not just highways but we are talking about sidewalks, bicycle lanes, transit, and so forth.

Commissioner Grady asked what other county other than Lenoir can you tell me that is with the CTP Plan. Mr. Flanagan said Eastern RPO is four counties: Greene, Lenoir, Duplin, and Wayne. Commissioner Grady asked if Duplin has signed on yet. Mr. Flanagan said Duplin is doing their comprehensive transportation plan right now and they are about one year into it. He said Greene County has one done and finished theirs in 2011-2012 or something like that. He said that Wayne County is a little different because they have what is known as an MPO (Metropolitan Planning Organization) which is the greater Goldsboro area. So Goldsboro within their MPO they also do long range plans and they just finished theirs. He said and to kind of piggyback off of that and make sure that everybody is on the same page and everything fits together, we are also right now wrapping up a Wayne County comprehensive transportation plan and that one is about 90 percent of the way done. They are almost ready to adopt.

Mayor Sykes asked why we were the last on the list and why haven’t we been presented with this before. Mr. Flanagan asked if she wanted his honest answer and she replied yes. He said because Lenoir County has been a political nightmare when it comes to the bypass and that is why. Mayor Sykes stated she understood that but why can’t we go ahead and do ours whether they want to or not. Mr. Flanagan said we finally got everybody on the same page and we got to a good starting point with the way we moved through the actual planning of the Kinston bypass. There were a couple of years there where everybody was kind of scattered and while going through that planning process for the Kinston bypass, it kind of brought a lot of people back to the table and everybody kind of got back on the same page. He said they feel like now they are at a solid enough point within Lenoir County to be able to move forward with this plan where everybody will participate and everybody will come to the table and we can start with a clean slate. We really feel like right now because the Kinston bypass is kind of in everybody’s head and everybody is kind of already thinking about transportation a little bit, we have got to strike while the iron is hot. He said that is why they are doing it right now. He stated they had the same problem with Wayne County with some of their 795 stuff to the south where with that MPO there was a lot of uproar for a couple of years. He said sometimes you just have to wait it out. Mayor Sykes said if the municipality needs to be in on it, then why haven’t we already been in it. Mr. Flanagan said DOT does these all across the state and you have got to think about all the towns in the state and all the counties in the state. They have been doing these for 10 years now and they had to start somewhere and they had to end somewhere so they have just kind of been working down the list.

Mayor Sykes asked if anyone on the board would like to be on the steering committee. She asked if we needed to table this. Mr. Flanagan said the person that is on the Lenoir County Transportation Committee does not necessary have to be the same person that is going to be on the CTP steering committee. He said he is not asking for any kind of decision tonight but just wanted to tell the board what was going on. Mayor Sykes asked Mr. Flanagan where they would be meeting tomorrow. He stated the Lenoir County Transportation Committee is meeting tomorrow in Kinston. Mayor Sykes asked where the steering committee would be meeting. Mr. Flanagan said they do not know yet, they have not decided that. He said sometimes when they are doing these county plans they rotate it. Mayor Sykes offered to have it here at town hall, fire department, or in the police bay if needed. Mr. Flanagan said they would love to do that because they like the steering committee members to kind of see every part of the county.

Kim asked Mr. Flanagan when he needed to know about someone being on the steering committee. He said mid-May would be good because they will probably start meeting the end of May or early June. He said they will not meet until all the presentations are done. Mayor Sykes said she does not have time to be on another committee but she does want somebody there. Mr. Flanagan said a lot of times it is staff on these committees. Commissioner Grady made a motion to table this issue until the next board meeting. Mr. Flanagan said his contact information is in the back of the presentation if you have any other questions, give me a call or shoot me an email and I will be happy to answer them. Mayor Sykes thanked Mr. Flanagan for coming.

The next item on the agenda was Update on Pink Hill Rose Festival. Susan stated everything with the RoseFest is coming along really well. She said they wanted to know if they can use the tennis courts for a water balloon fight and water. Susan said it is not going to take a whole lot of water. She said Timmy has already filled in the potholes at the tennis courts. Susan said all she needs the board to do is say yes that we can use the tennis courts and they will clean it up afterwards. Mayor Sykes said she did not have any problem with it and asked the board did they have any problem with it and they replied no. Timmy said they will have to pull a water hose from town hall or either the fire department because there is no water over at the tennis courts. Commissioner Grady made a motion to let Susan Myers and the RoseFest use the tennis courts and water. Commissioner Hill seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

Susan stated they are honoring John Currin and Scarlett Howard with a lifetime achievement award. She said instead of introducing the board at the opening, she wants them there when she gives out that award. Susan said somebody big is coming from the state but she does not have the exact name yet. She said she does not have the exact time but she will let the board know when she finds out.

Susan said she does not own the property behind Jones Furniture and she is not currently buying it but the property owner asked her to give this handout to the board about the tree. She said unfortunately that tree needs to come down. Mayor Sykes said if it is the property owner then they need to come and present this to the board. Mayor Sykes stated no I take that back, that tree is not ours and we do not have a dog in that fight just like she has said before so we do not even need to discuss it. Susan said the property owners are elderly and live out of town and she is only telling them because people have been complaining but it is not her property. Commissioner Hill stated that we have already discussed this tree and we told everyone that it is the state’s property. Susan said she just wanted to let them know that when they not we cut the tree down some people will probably be upset. Mayor Sykes said they do not need to come to us but to the owner. Mayor Sykes thanked Susan for coming.

The next item on the agenda was the Carol Drive & Hwy 11 sinkhole and the old sewer plant repair. Timmy said the sinkhole has not gotten any worse but he does have another bid that is in their packet but actually it is not a bid for the whole job. It is a bid to camera it to make sure exactly where the problem is at before any cutting and it is from A.C. Schultes. Commissioner Hill said that price per hour is a loaded gun. Timmy said ours is a lot smaller scale from what they are going to use here. We have washed it with our jet machine and we have used the camera to the best that we can do which was not very well because we couldn’t see very well there. Timmy said that estimate is just to find out what the scope of work is. Mayor Sykes asked if something like this could be covered by a grant and he replied no. Kim said there were three bids, two of which were from last month’s meeting where it was tabled and the new bid was this one. Timmy said it says in Herring-Riverbark’s bid that they are intending on digging right where the hole is at in the road and that may not be exactly where the leak or hole in the sewer line is but just where the sinkhole is happening at. Commissioner Hill said A.C. Schultes’ bid is high and he does not think there is no need to spend that kind of money and we had a problem about 2 years ago with a main line in the woods and Harry Rivenbark wouldn’t even give us a bid. He said every time we have had their bids here on a project he has been the highest bid. Commissioner Hill said I know they are cheaper but cheapest is not always the best. The other bid is from RB and they are the ones that came and bid the line in the woods that was collapsed and he is the only one that gave the town a bid and also repaired a manhole while he was here. Commissioner Hill said they have got two different things to do and one is at the old sewer plant to upgrade the pipes. Timmy said I don’t want to put the old sewer plant repairs on hold but if something has got to be on hold, then it will have to be the old plant repairs/upgrades. Kim told the board that they have two packets and they are both #7 but they are highlighted to show that one packet is Carol Drive and one packet is the old sewer plant and those are the bids for both projects. Kim told them that the budget amendment has already been taken care in a previous meeting to cover the cost of this. We did have to take money from savings to do this but they are projects that needed to be addressed. Mayor Sykes agreed that they both need attention. Commissioner Hill made a motion to let the RB Group do both jobs. Commissioner Grady seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

Commissioner King asked Commissioner Hill to enlighten him here. Commissioner Hill explained the projects that are needing to be done and the bids that they have in front of them to do the work. Commissioner Hill stated that A.C. Schultes is wanting to charge this amount of money per hour to come camera and look at it before they would give a bid. He said we know the sinkhole is there. He said the RB Group gave this price for the sinkhole and Herring Rivenbark gave us this price for the sinkhole. Commissioner Hill said like I said, he didn’t come back and bid on the sewer plant and he didn’t give us a price on the line through the woods to start with, so it kind of leaves a bad taste in our mouth. He said it is about $26,400 total.

George asked Commissioner Hill is it fair to say that when you look at the Herring Rivenbark that the scope of work might end up being more extensive than what they have and therefore more expensive. Commissioner Hill replied yes because if he starts digging where the hole is, he has got to dig elsewhere if it is not there. George said so that bid might end up being too low and is that a fair statement. Commissioner Hill replied yes but then he is going to want to come back and get some more money. Mayor Sykes asked all in favor signify by saying “Aye” and everyone said “Aye” so the motion carried.

The next item on the agenda was Generator Repair at Smith Grady Rd. Lift Station. Kim said everyone should have a copy of the Palmer Consulting Group estimate to look at. Timmy said they are the folks that they have hired to do our service agreement but he does have a call in to somebody else. He said he has a generator right now that is not in operation and hadn’t been in operation for a couple of months or more. Timmy said these are the folks that we have a service agreement with. Timmy said the cost is $4,100 for the control board and even though this is the main brain for the generator it is not the motor, and he asked does that sound like a lot of money to you? Commissioner Hill asked who else did he have to come and look at it. Timmy said KB Power Systems out of Lillington. Commissioner Hill made a motion to table until the next board meeting. Commissioner King seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

NCRWA Conference was next on the agenda. Commissioner Hill said they have a conference coming up in May. He said that Timmy is going to a Collections 3 class and also Alex is up for a scholarship award to help him with his classes and that will help the town. Commissioner Hill said the scholarship would pay for a school that he goes to later not the conference. He said right now we only have two applicants. It would be $250 if split four ways but if only two people put in, then it would be $500 each to be used at a school that they want to go to. Mayor Sykes asked when the conference is. Commissioner Hill said it is May 16th through the 19th. Commissioner Hill made a motion to approve Timmy and Alex to go to the conference. Commissioner Grady seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

The next item on the agenda was to Schedule FY16-17 Budget Workshop/Budget Presentation Meetings in May. Kim stated it needs to be as late in May as possible. Mayor Sykes asked about May 26th. Kim asked how the board would like to do it because she will have the budget pretty much completed and then she will present it to them. Mayor Sykes asked once it has been presented we can change a figure or do we need to do that in the workshop. Kim replied in the workshop. Commissioner Hill asked if it could be presented at the June meeting and then we will have plenty of time to have a special meeting to approve it. Kim said as long as it is adopted by June 30th. Mayor Sykes said but you have to have time to advertise it. Kim said this is what we did last year because she wrote it down just in case. She said the budget workshop/presentation is how we did it last year and it was on May 22, 2015 at 8:30 a.m. and then we adopted it on June 10, 2015. Mayor Sykes said so the workshop is where we sit down and discuss the budget and then you balance it and that is when you present it to us to be adopted. Kim replied yes but she presents it in June. Mayor Sykes said I know but the budget workshop was in May and Kim replied yes May 22nd. Mayor Sykes said but what she is saying is that that is the one that they can sit down if they want to and discuss the budget and argue the budget if it needs to be. Commissioner Hill asked if they could have it on May 26th and would that give him enough of time to advertise. Kim said that would give her enough of time to advertise. Commissioner Hill made a motion to have the budget workshop on Thursday, May 26, 2016 at 1:00 p.m. Commissioner Grady seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

The next item on the agenda WASA Report. Commissioner Hill said he had nothing to report at this time.

Police Updates was next on the agenda. Chief Thigpen said it has been a busy month. He said since the last meeting on March 8, 2016 they have had a total of 9 different incidents, 1 arrest, 3 accidents, issued 23 citations for a total of 25 charges, and 14 warning citations. He stated they have had some break-ins to some vehicles. Chief Thigpen said a couple of the break-ins were at Horne’s Gym on Monday night but there was no video. He said they had one at the Mexican restaurant on Thursday night and they had some video there but the video is not that great. He said they did get kind of a description of the guy and the vehicle. Chief Thigpen said they are targeting people’s cars with purses in them and they took three purses from two different vehicles at Horne’s and one purse at the Mexican restaurant. He said actually yesterday they recovered the purses in Duplin County in a creek right there off of Sarecta Road. Some of the stuff was in the purses but not everything and they were wet from being in the creek. Commissioner Grady said so we need to put our purse in the trunk of the car instead of the front seat. Chief Thigpen said not to leave anything in your vehicle. Mayor Sykes asked did they break the windows. He replied yes, they break the whole window. It is like they are sticking a pry bar in there trying to get behind the window and pop the window. Some of the windows shattered but one of the windows was tinted and it stayed intact but rolled out on the ground. He said we have not had anything like this in a while. They have not had any break-ins in houses just vehicles. He said it is happening in places where there is not much traffic. Mayor Sykes asked if they have a suspect yet. Chief Thigpen said we have a video but we are waiting on the Mexican restaurant. He said he has been in contact with the Mexican restaurant owner and she said she was having her guy that installed the program to come so he can get a copy on a thumb drive. The program guy has not showed up yet because he supposedly was in Atlanta, so I told her that I needed to get it and I am going to get it this coming week if she hasn’t got up with him before then. Chief Thigpen said they do not think it is somebody from in town but maybe from Beulaville. He said the county has had several vehicles broke into and also Club 55 at Seven Springs. Chief Thigpen said they think the guy is from Beulaville because one of the cards stolen was used at an ATM in Beulaville. He said he watched the guy on the video and in about two minutes he is through. Chief Thigpen said that is getting out of the car, breaking the window out, and grabbing whatever and then he is gone. He said other than that everything else is going pretty good.

Chief Thigpen said he also wanted to mention that Commissioner Hill had brought up to him awhile back about the RoseFest and the signs to do because if we have any issues at Wendy’s about leaving some parking spots open. He said if somebody does park there and we don’t know who they are, in my opinion I think there needs to be a sign that says “Jones Parking Customers Only and Towing Enforced”. Mayor Sykes said she thinks he is right. Chief Thigpen said since it is a public street. George said you would have to give notice. Chief Thigpen said he does not know who has to pay for the signs and he and Kim had talked about that. Commissioner Hill said he thought Wendy should have to pay for the signs or put something up. George said but you also need to limit to the time that she is open. Commissioner Hill said she could put on there “Jones Customer parking only until 2:00” or however it needs to be worded so it can be enforced. Chief Thigpen said he hopes that they don’t have any problems but if they do he doesn’t want to go there and say we can’t tow them. Chief Thigpen asked wouldn’t Wendy be responsible herself as far as having them towed because she has got notice and it is her property. George replied yes. Chief Thigpen said he would let Wendy know what she needed to do. He said she needs to put a sign on each parking space but not just one sign. Mayor Sykes thanked Chief Thigpen for his job.

The next item on the agenda is Fire Department Report. Chief Tony Heath said they had a pretty busy and productive month. He said over the last 30 days they had 7 EMS assignments, 3 vehicle accidents, 3 brush fires, 2 structure fires, 2 service assignments which consisted of down power lines on a house and one standby for Lenoir County Sheriff’s Office and the SBI for a meth lab investigation. Commissioner King asked Chief Heath if there is an old house that needs to be burnt down or destroyed, is there any way that we can do that for training purposes? Chief Heath said they would have to look at the house and see what the house consisted of because there is some stuff that we cannot burn legally without it being properly removed. Commissioner King said he would get back with him. Mayor Sykes thanked Chief Heath for coming.

The next item on the agenda was Water/Sewer Report. Timmy said they had the cement work done on Main Street and hopes everyone is satisfied with the cement work. He stated he has hired Garris Paving and of course with the weather they were a little bit behind. They are hoping to be here sometime this week or maybe next week to do the asphalt. Timmy said the tile has been installed at John Worthington’s property in Park Circle. He said he did not quite finish the yard work. Timmy said he thinks Mr. Worthington is satisfied with what they have done so far. He said they did not take the fence down because it looked like we might get in a tight so they did it the hard way. Mayor Sykes asked if he could tell that it has done any good yet. Timmy replied no because it has not rained enough to be able to tell. Commissioner King said he went and talked with Mr. Worthington yesterday and he is happy.

Timmy said other than all the cleaning up stuff they have been doing, usual spraying roundup and weed eating that if anyone sees a spot that they missed to just let him know. Commissioner King thanked Timmy.

The next item on the agenda was Budget Amendments if needed. Kim stated there were no budget amendments at this time but only budget transfers.

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

The next item on the agenda was Comments by the Board. Mayor Sykes read a Thank You note from Sue Hamilton and family. Mayor Sykes said our thoughts and prayers go out to the Hamilton family and also the Del Holt family. Commissioner Grady said she wanted to thank EMS and the fire department for helping with an accident right before you come into Pink Hill in front of the funeral home. She told them that they did a great job for cleaning up the road and assisting. Commissioner King said he appreciated what the police department is doing and the fire department.

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.