January 14, 2013

7:00 P.M.

The Town of Pink Hill held its monthly board meeting on Tuesday, January 14, 2013 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, Chief Joey Thigpen, and Town Clerk Kimberly Mitchell.

Visitors present were Jennifer Rackley, Dora W. Evans, Trina Patrick, John Patrick, Marion Mitchell, Carnel Pearson, and Kenneth Hamilton and Kenny Hamilton.

Mayor Sykes called the meeting to order. Mayor Sykes welcomed everyone to the meeting. Commissioner King then led everyone in the pledge of allegiance. Commissioner Hill made a motion to approve the public hearing minutes and regular board minutes from December 10, 2013. Commissioner King seconded the motion and it carried unanimously. Commissioner Hill made a motion to approve the agenda and amendments #5 and #9 which will be further discussed in closed session. Commissioner King seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

The first item on the agenda was safety concern in neighborhood. Mayor Sykes asked for Mrs. Trina Patrick to come forward to speak. Mayor Sykes thanked Mrs. Patrick for coming. Mrs. Patrick said she was here along with the pastor of her church, Mr. Barnel Pearson. She said they were here to address some safety issues for their community. She stated that there has been several incidents of discharge of firearms in the community that endangers everybody. She stated they are concerned about their children and especially their elders who are homebound that are sick. She said they are here for that reason to address that. Mrs. Patrick stated this is the second time this has happened. She said we all live in danger. Mayor Sykes asked Mrs. Patrick if she has addressed this with the police department. Mrs. Patrick stated yes. Chief Joey Thigpen said that the incident which happened was a robbery that happened right before Christmas where a victim was shot. Chief Thigpen said some of the things that have happened in his opinion are drug related. He stated they patrol the areas as much as they can but it is hard to prevent some things from happening. Chief Thigpen said he knows it is bad and he hates it too but he has given people his cell number and has told them to text or call him if they see someone in the area that does not look right so they can check it out. He said when he started here 7 years ago they did not have stuff like this happening and now all of a sudden it is happening everywhere. He said they had another armed robbery tonight in Kinston. Chief Thigpen said we are not immune from it and he knows it is a problem but they do the best they can. Mayor Sykes said we are all kind of responsible for contacting the police department or the sheriff’s department if we see something like this going on. Chief Thigpen said most of these incidents have happened in the early morning hours and he just does not have the people to work it 24 hours a day. He said he does it when he thinks they need it during business hours and their escorts but he has to cut it off at midnight or either 2:00 a.m. on the weekends. Chief Thigpen said if he keeps an officer out after midnight then he has to cut coverage during the day or during the evening. Mayor Sykes said I know everybody is thinking why we don’t have more coverage and all of us know it comes down to the budget. She said we just don’t have the money to have six or eight policemen on the department. Commissioner King asked Chief Thigpen if anyone has called him during his off time reporting questionable person or persons down there. Chief Thigpen said no other than Mrs. Patrick calling a few times but it has been a long time. Commissioner King asked Mrs. Patrick if the Community Watch is installed in her section of the town as far as anyone that goes to the community watch meetings. She said they are getting called. Commissioner King said that is what he is getting at, it is a two way street. If it is not reported, then Chief Thigpen cannot do anything about it. Chief Thigpen said they need to call communications and not community watch because if they see something that is happening right then, they need to call either 911 or the nonemergency number. He said calling community watch isn’t going to get anybody to them because they do not call the police department. He stated he has not had any calls from community watch reporting suspicious activity in Mrs. Patrick’s area. Commissioner King said what he was getting at, was he thinks they need to get the community watch which seems to be the key to this thing to help us all out. We also need to get more people down there to participate in the community watch. Commissioner King said when you get more eyes and more people looking at something, you can get more action. Commissioner King said if they need him to go there and talk to some people, he would be glad to do it. He stated we need participation. Commissioner Grady stated it takes an individual awareness to be aware. She said if she foresees something or someone strange, she has called Joey’s number and Mr. Hoffman’s number. They may not be on duty but she said that Donnie would come right on. Commissioner Grady said when it is happening it makes you feel uneasy and it is an individual awareness to be responsible. So if someone is walking by or if she has heard something, that is how she has taken care of things and the police have always come directly to her response or called her back. Chief Thigpen said he thinks a lot of it is happening after midnight or early in the morning. He stated they patrol it during the day and during the evening but it is like he tells people when they go through there they are not going to see things that other people are going to see when the police are not there. People see the police coming and they are on their phones texting telling other people where the police are at in the area. They just know where you are at and are going to do what they are going to do when the police are gone. He said he has not been able to get anyone over there to cooperate as far as trying to help solve a lot of the drug problems. Chief Thigpen said he would do whatever needs to be done like giving his phone number out. He stated he knows it is a problem. He said he thinks the problem that they are talking about is dealing with the same individual both times. Commissioner King thanked Chief Thigpen for all that he does. Pastor Pearson of Smith Chapel Church said they have started a project of building a new sanctuary. He said he is up at the church all the time and there is just traffic that is going in and out. He stated even the construction guys that are working there have seen it. Pastor Pearson said there was an incident where he tried to stop the fellows from congregating in front of the church. He has also had an incident where he has had to go before the judge because of what had happened. He stated it is not getting any better. Mayor Sykes asked if he has reported it when he has seen all this traffic. Mr. Pearson stated yes but it is ongoing. He said when the guys come to unload their equipment at the church and it seems like the people going down in the hole there will get mad because we are out there on the street unloading equipment. He said you can see them passing it out in the open. Mr. Pearson said they were standing out there one day and one of the guys almost ran into the back of another guy’s truck that was unloading his equipment. He stated last Wednesday night everything was fine at night but the next morning when he came back someone had ran over one of the trees in the yard at the church and also leaving liquor bottles and other trash in the yard. There is no respect, they just do it because they can. Mayor Sykes asked Pastor Pearson is it where they could get a tag number or license number. Pastor Pearson said he has taken pictures. Commissioner King said if he keeps taking pictures eventually you are going to find that one picture that is going to produce a lot. Pastor Pearson said one young lady rides a moped and another young man rides a bicycle. He said you see people all in the front of the church and they go down in “the hole” to get something and come back out. He stated it is on Old Craft Road. Chief Thigpen stated they have to go by rules and just because you see somebody go to somebody’s house, you can’t just go up there and drag them out or search them for no reason. Pastor Pearson said they respect the police but they do not respect them. He said he and the Deacon of the church were out to that truck that day when the supervisor of construction would not give the young man a job, he went down in there and when he came out he almost ran into them. Chief Thigpen said he had not heard any of this before today. Mayor Sykes asked how could we make them respect everyone or how can we change the image. Pastor Pearson asked if there was a law about if you sell within the area of the church or school. Town Attorney George Jenkins stated it is anywhere and you have to prove it within a reasonable doubt. Chief Thigpen said if you see it and call and give us a description of a vehicle or a person that gives them a right to stop them and at least check them out. He stated but if you don’t call and say I saw this or that, they cannot do anything. Pastor Pearson said the person in question does not even live in Pink Hill but in Beulaville. Mrs. Patrick stated it is not on just one end of the road it is on the other end also and they go back and forth. She said you can write down a tag number on one car and next time that tag number will be on a different car. Mayor Sykes said she appreciated them coming and sharing their concerns and she agreed that it is a problem. Mayor Sykes said if they have any suggestions to please take them to Chief Thigpen because he is certainly willing and wanting to do what he can do. Chief Thigpen said he is restricted to manpower and it takes manpower to make drug cases and money. He said you have to make buys, develop suspects, and take pictures and video to make a case. It is just overwhelming what you have to do in order to make a case but he is not saying he cannot stop cars. He stated someone just has to call. He said he does not know of any calls that they have received. He said he reads his officers daily logs every night and he has not seen anywhere that anybody has made a complaint to communications that we were dispatched on. Chief Thigpen said he does not know when she has called and not saying she hasn’t, but they have not received any calls because his officers document everything they do every night on a daily log. He said they have not received any calls from communications about suspicious vehicles or persons in that area. He stated people just don’t call them. He said that is the first step in order for them to act on it. He said it is going to take more than just the police department to help clean up the community. It is going to take the people in the community too. He stated most of the people doing this stuff is living over there or it is their kids or grandkids. Pastor Pearson said that he and Joey have talked many times but you can say something to the child and the parents get mad. Chief Thigpen said he knows the ones that are doing it but it is the parent’s house that most of them are using to do their stuff. He said they have done search warrants before at the houses in question in the past. He also stated it takes money and the budget has been cut. Mayor Sykes said it does take money but it also takes the whole community getting together to make them respect us and let them know that we mean business when we say it is going to stop. Mayor Sykes said if there is anything that she or Joey or any of them can do, to please let them know. Mayor Sykes stated once again that she appreciated them for coming to the board with these concerns.

The next item on the agenda was Waste Industries/Garbage Contract. Mayor Sykes informed everyone that Waste Industries has bought out OCS and Jennifer Rackley is here to discuss the contract and what they will be doing if we accept them. Ms. Rackley stated she was the Governmental Sales Rep for Waste Industries. She said Mark Myers, Vice President of Sales/Director and herself met with Mayor Sykes earlier on doing an assignment letter. She stated they are very happy and hopes that this transaction will happen and that they will be very pleased to have the town as a customer. She said when she and Mark were here just for asking for the assignment and telling you about the OCS transition, she said they did notice that our contract was coming up in 2014. She said they went ahead and put a contract in place keeping everything the same which is a great benefit for where we are situated with the transfer station because they did purchase that. Mayor Sykes asked Ms. Rackley to explain what the transfer station is and what it means to the town. Ms. Rackley explained that it gives the town the option as far as recycling whether to do it or not. She restated that nothing will change in our contract and it is a 5 year contract term. Ms. Rackley stated they are flexible with the terms and if anyone has any questions, please feel free to contact her. Commissioner Hill asked about their schedule for holidays. Ms. Rackley stated she can get them a list of holidays for them to put on their web page. Mayor Sykes thanked Ms. Rackley for coming and said they would be in touch.

The next item on the agenda was Appointment of Mayor Pro Tempore. Mayor Sykes asked Commissioner King if he would continue to be Mayor Pro Tempore and Commissioner King stated yes. Commissioner Hill made a motion for Commissioner Donald King to be Mayor Pro Tempore. Commissioner Grady seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

The next item on the agenda was decision of Commissioner Appointments. Commissioner King made a motion that each department of the Town of Pink Hill be known as:

1. Utility Department – consisting of street department, sewer department, water department

and Parks & Rec.

1. Police Department – and Parks & Rec.
2. Fire Department – and Parks & Rec.

Commissioner King stated the second part to his motion is that each department will have a department head of one of the elected commissioners and the said department commissioners will be appointed to the department by the Mayor at her discretion. Commissioner Hill seconded the motion. Commissioner King said he thinks if each department has a head that people will take more pride in their job assignment and function much more than they would just being a commissioner at large. He stated he knows he does because if he is responsible for something and it is on paper that he is responsible, then he is going to dig into that part but if he is just given an open field then he might get a little lax. He said that is his opinion of it. Commissioner Grady asked Commissioner King if Utility Department meant water/sewer/streets and he stated yes. Commissioner King also said no matter what the commissioners are, if anything goes wrong the Mayor is left with the short end of the stick regardless of who it is. He said the board is sort of like the Federal Government like the President has a cabinet. He said the commissioners are like the cabinet but they have to work under guidelines from the Mayor or whomever it may be because the Mayor has the ultimate responsibility of the government of this town. Mayor Sykes said as you know at the last meeting what I did and what I said and she did want them to have time to think about it and she appreciated them thinking about it and coming back with their recommendations. She said she is not concerned about who is what commissioner because she knows that all of them are going to do good jobs. Mayor Sykes asked for all in favor of the motion made to signify by saying “Aye”. Everyone said “Aye”. Mayor Sykes stated she was going to appoint Commissioner Mike Hill as Utilities Commissioner which is going to include streets/water/sewer and parks and recreation. She said she was going to appoint Commissioner Donald King as Police Commissioner and parks and recreation. Mayor Sykes then stated she was going to appoint Commissioner Debra Grady as the Fire Department Commissioner and parks and recreation. Mayor Sykes stated if there were any questions to let her know but this is the way it is will be for right now. She said she wanted everybody to know that they had their chance to do your own thing and thank you for going through it and thinking about it. She stated she thinks they did a good job.

Update on Completed Voluntary Annexation and Paying for Easements was next on the agenda. George asked if he could ask the commission to do two things. He asked first if they could hold the update on the voluntary annexation until closed session and second the paying for easements part. He said instead of tabling it from meeting to meeting if the board would consider tabling it until the July 2014 meeting. He stated we cannot pay for the easements until we know how many feet each landowner had. He said we might not know that until the end of June or end of the water project. Commissioner Hill made a motion to table the paying for easements until the end of the project. Commissioner King seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

The next item on the agenda was Police Updates. Chief Thigpen stated since the last meeting on December 10, 2013 they have had a total of 9 reported incidents, 1 arrest, 3 accidents, and issued 11 citations for total charges of 16. He said they have had a rash of robberies. He said it is the first time in a long time that they have had something like this. It seems like it is getting to be everywhere now. He stated they do the best they can. He said they have got one potential suspect in one of them. The last one they had on the other two didn’t have any video or leads to check up on. Chief Thigpen said on one of the incidences earlier he was talking about they do not have nothing on it. He said nobody saw anything or heard anything but the victim and he was not cooperative with them. Mayor Sykes thanked Chief Thigpen for his work.

The next item on the agenda was Fire Department Report. Fire Chief Kennedy stated for the month of January they have had 3 vehicle accidents, 1 EMS call, and 1 odor of gas inside a structure. He said everything seems to be going well. Kenny Hamilton spoke on them trying to get the federal grant again this year to get 30 new sets of gear which will only cost them $7,000 out of an $80,000 part. He said they did get the radio grants and will be getting some VIPER radios as soon as they get where they can get them programmed and get the ID numbers. He stated they have one for every truck (mobile) and also got enough portables to outfit every seating position on the truck which is an OSHA mandate. Kenny said they did get the Cascade System put in the truck and it is installed which makes them self-supportive on filling their air bottles now. He stated he is also in the process of getting an air compressor to be able to fill at the station instead of having to go to Kinston or use their tank up on the truck. Kenny said they got it through the Forestry Service Surplus which is not going to cost them anything right now. It may end up costing a little bit of maintenance to get it running. He stated they have been working on getting things ready for their ISO Inspection in either March or June to get their insurance rate lowered. Mayor Sykes thanked them for their work. Commissioner Grady stated she wanted to tell them that she is glad to be a part of the Fire Department. She said she thinks they do a great job and you help everybody and she is glad to be a part of them. Timmy said he could get with Commissioner Grady later to go over their schedules of meetings and that they would be glad for her to come to their business meetings to see how they conduct business.

The next item on the agenda was Water/Sewer Updates. Timmy stated there were not very many updates since their last meeting. Timmy said they have had some bad weather that has messed the guys up working on the project. There are several tie ends left to be done. Timmy said he would like to say in a public forum that anybody whose water has been disrupted because they have had to cut them off to do a tie end, please bear with them. He said they are doing everything they can to keep that from happening. He stated when there is a water meter that has not been read since he has been here and, therefore, he might not know where the water meter is at. You cannot mark it before the guys get there to dig if you do not know where the water meter is at. Timmy said that is the reason why one of the lines was broken. Commissioner Hill asked Timmy if he had found out anything about that water line this morning. Timmy stated no. He said when he talked with Derek, Supervisor for E.R. Lewis, about that he said he would come out and spot dig some more and try our best to find it. Timmy said they are sure they can find it at the hydrant and the area that they are talking about is over on Old Beulaville Road close to the apartments. He said according to every blueprint and map he has got it shows a 6” line coming down the east side of Old Beulaville Road, goes all the way down and crosses College Street. He stated the new line is supposedly on down College Street and just tie end to it right at the end. He had Commissioner Hill come out with his Penetrating Radar to try to find the water line. Timmy said they spot dug in a couple of spots the other day and that is when the water line got broken. He stated they hit it with a rod and it popped a hole in the top of it. He said that was the smaller line but they could never find the larger line. Timmy said he wanted to let Commissioner Hill know that during the project time span they have had two or three leaks where he has had to go out and make cuts in the asphalt. While E.R. Lewis is having all those cuts patched, he was trying to get incorporated while they were here with the good asphalt. Kim said she had already checked and there are funds available in the Powell Fund to do paving. Timmy said there is more than enough to take care of what he has figured. He said it is $35 a square yard for what E.R. Lewis is charging to do patching. Timmy stated he has figured about $5,300 and that is not counting tax if there is any tax. Commissioner Hill said if they cannot find that 6” line, then they will have to leave two dead ends over there or make a change order and run a 6” from College Street back up to Macon Street. Mayor Sykes asked Timmy to contact Herman and speak with him about this issue. Commissioner Hill informed everyone that there will be a water class here on March 11, 2014 at 8:00 p.m. and will last six hours. Timmy said he would love for the Mayor and Commissioner’s to address the folks because the town is hosting the class here.

The next item on the agenda is Budget Amendments if needed. Kim said there was only one budget amendment and it was to recognize donations that have been received in the fire departments fund raising expense which is $1,000.00. Commissioner Hill made a motion to accept the budget change in the General Fund. Commissioner Grady seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

Remarks by Town Attorney was next on the agenda. George stated he wanted to thank the board for their continued confidence and allowing him to be here.

The next item on the agenda was Comments by the Board. Commissioner Hill wanted to thank all the employees for all work done. Commissioner King wanted to let Commissioner Grady know that Kenny Hamilton is the one that does all the paperwork to get the monies from the Federal Government. He is also the one that makes up the SOP’s and he has a big, big hand in obtaining radios and all equipment that is mandated for the fire department to have. Commissioner King also wanted to thank the Fire Chief, Timmy, for his work. Mayor Sykes wanted to let the board know about the Rose Festival which will be on Saturday, May 17, 2014 at 10:00 a.m. Timmy wanted to let everyone know that the Fire Department on Saturday night, January 18, 2014 would be doing a benefit for donations only. He said they would be serving shrimp stew, fish stew, and chicken pastry and it is all you can eat. He stated the benefit was for the Scleroderma Foundation. They are also having it at the Deep Run FWB Church. The benefit will start at 6:00 p.m. and is all you can eat.

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

The next item on the agenda was Closed Session. Commissioner King made a motion to go in to closed session. Commissioner Hill seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

Commissioner Hill made a motion to come out of closed session. Commissioner Grady seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

Commissioner Hill made a motion to accept the Waste Industries contract as written. Commissioner Grady seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

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

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Mayor Town Clerk