

MINUTES

A regular meeting of the City Council of the City of Pinehurst was held on October 10, 2023, at 6:00 p.m. at Pinehurst City Hall Council Room. The following council members were present: Cynthia Adams, Sarah McClendon, J. Michael Shahan, Joey Vance, Troy Pierce, and Greg Willis. City Attorney Tommy Gunn was absent. Mayor Sarah McClendon called the meeting to order and established a quorum. Councilman Greg Willis gave the invocation followed by the reciting of the United States and Texas Pledges of Allegiance. The following business was transacted.

On the motion made by Councilwoman Cynthia Adams and seconded by Councilman Joey Vance, council members unanimously voted to approve the minutes of the Regular Session held on September 12, 2023.

Council members reviewed budgeted expenditures for August 2023. Michele Andreu began by reading a prepared Financial Report written by City Secretary Debbie Cormier. The written report went as follows: There were no new Capital Outlays for August 2023. Regarding the Income Comparison, August 2023 year-to-date versus August 2022 year to date, the General fund appears to have a deficit this year of slightly more than \$2 million. However, when the items highlighted in orange are removed from both sides of the equation, August 2023 YTD revenue exceeds August 2022 YTD by \$95,381. The Garbage fund 2023 YTD revenue exceeds 2022 YTD revenue by \$60,886. The Water/Sewer fund appears to have a deficit this year of more than \$2.4 million. However, when items from one-time events and grant funds are removed, 2023 YTD revenue exceeds 2022 YTD revenue by \$31,480. The Debt Service Fund is truly behind the prior year by a little more than \$13,000. Overall, 2023 YTD revenues exceed 2022 YTD revenues by \$174,651. When comparing YTD actual revenue versus YTD actual expenditures, the revenues exceed expenditures in General Fund by \$104,152 and in the Garbage Fund by \$64,620. Expenses exceed revenue in the Water/Sewer fund by (\$6,506) and in the Debt Service by (\$9,663). Overall, YTD revenue exceeded YTD expenses by \$152,603. In August, the General Fund had a slight loss in cash reserves. The Garbage and Water/Sewer Fund had slight gains. Overall, there were 7.22 months of cash reserves in July 2023 and 7.18 months of cash reserves in August 2023, a decrease of 0.04 months, which is virtually unchanged from the prior month. Council members were informed to contact Ms. Cormier with any questions after she returned from her vacation.

No one signed up to address the Council under the Citizen Comments section of this agenda.

City Administrator Jerry Hood informed the council that the new slope mower had arrived, and the Public Works Department had been mowing the right of ways. He stated that the Public Works Department was also digging ditches throughout the city. Mr. Hood noted that there had been a few water leaks due to the drought and dry weather but stated that the Water Department had taken care of those issues. He went on to say that Code Enforcement had been issuing permits and 3 new homes were being built. Councilman Greg Willis asked about Rick's Grill and Steakhouse. Mr. Hood informed him that permits had been issued and services had been turned on. Mr. Hood noted that the following was not on the agenda but wanted to let the council know about the spending of some of the ARPA Funds. He advised that the ARPA funds had allowed the city to provide funds for the cost share on the Imelda Grant for pipe bursting and Lift Stations in the 33rd Street area. He said the funds had been used to purchase several computers for the city and fire gear for the Fire Department. He informed council members that the Police Department was in the process of obtaining prices for tasers. He commented that the tasers the officers

currently used were outdated and stated that they were unable to get the cartridges for them to work properly. In addition, he advised that the Police Department was getting bids for cameras to update their system and to be placed in the evidence room to comply with state guidelines. Councilman Greg Willis asked about the tiny homes and if they were on schedule. Mr. Hood stated that the project was on schedule. He advised that it took about two weeks to build the first tiny home and the second one had been started. He also noted that they were clearing the land, establishing a parameter, and building a retention pond as required by the Orange County Drainage District.

Concerning the discussion of awarding, by Resolution, a contract for Management Services pertaining to the application and implementation, if awarded, of the City's 2023 Community Wildfire Defense Grant (CWDG) funded and administered through the National Forest Service (NFS) through the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and authorizing the execution of a contract, Mr. Hood explained that this grant had a 25% cost share on projects or a 10% on updating. He stated that the city might be eligible for a waiver of the cost share because Pinehurst was an under-utilized city in this area. He noted that an application could be submitted and said that it would not cost the city any money to apply, other than the advertisement in the paper. He advised, once the Grant administrator was approved, there would be a teleconference to discuss the projects. He stated that some of the projects were to restore the landscape across the city and to make sure the city had a safe environment. In addition, he said that the grant could be used to improve wildfire responses, which meant that the city purchase a brush truck and wildfire gear. He noted that this was a \$1 Billion grant that has been available for the last two years and said that applications were due October 31, 2023. Mr. Hood recommended Traylor and Associates as the grant administrator. Councilman Joey Vance made a motion to approve Traylor and Associates as the grant administrator. Councilman Troy Pierce seconded and the motion carried. Mr. Hood read the Grant Resolution aloud and in its entirety.

Concerning the discussion and approval to appropriate Opioid Funds for Drug & Opioid Abuse and Prevention related purchases, Mr. Hood explained that the city received \$10,000 in Opioid money from a lawsuit. He stated that all cities received a portion of the total funds. He informed the Council that there were requirements on how to spend the funds. He said that the funds would need to be spent on education to decrease opioid usage. Mr. Hood stated he talked with Chief of Police Chris Humble to determine in what areas the money could be used. He advised that the Fire Department could also benefit from these funds. It was determined that the most useful appropriation of the funds would be for education of drug misuse. He advised that the way to get the word out would be through educational items distributed through the Cops & Kids Program. Councilman J. Michael Shahan made a motion to approve the appropriation of Opioid Funds for Drug & Opioid Abuse and Prevention. Councilman Troy Pierce seconded the motion and the motion carried.

On review and discussion of possible revisions to the City's Ordinance regarding the Collection and Disposal of Brush/Limbs and Bulk Waste, Mr. Hood explained that the bulk pick up was changed when the city started using Piney Woods. He advised that Piney Woods would pick up 2 items per week on the normal garbage day. Mr. Hood informed council members that the city took the position to charge for limb pick up because it was being abused. He stated that citizens would cut down trees and expect the city to pick them up for free and it would take several trips to International Paper to dump the brush. He said that this was not how the service was intended to be utilized. The service was intended for the citizens to trim their bushes and be able to dispose of them easily. Mr. Hood explained that people would have contractors or themselves cut trees on weekends and put them by the road for the city to pick up. He

explained when the city passed the ordinance, council members were thinking of all citizens and did not want to charge someone for a service they were not using. He stated that is why the city only charged the people that use the service. The mayor suggested that the city send out letters with information on limb pick up and the charges. The mayor also stated that she had been getting phone calls about the charges. Mr. Hood explained that Piney Woods would pick up the limbs with regular garbage, but limbs would need to be bundled or put in the garbage can. He advised that the charges associated with the limb pickup were to offset the cost of gas and repairs for the grapple truck. Mr. Hood stated the papermill could cut off the free dumping of the brush and limbs and then the city would have to pay to dump those items. Mr. Hood noted that he had obtained an estimate for the cost of a new grapple truck to be able to give the council options. A new grapple truck would cost \$258,000. He stated the cost of a new truck and an operator would be \$160 per garbage account. Mr. Hood noted if the city utilized one of the three existing people from the Street Department, the cost per month per service would be \$60.00 a month. He explained that the city would need a new grapple truck and an employee and that would cost roughly \$85,000 a year to cover the note and an employee. Mr. Hood said most of the time when you explain why the city charges its customers, they understand but some will not. Councilman Joey Vance asked if the Wildfire CWDG grant could possibly pay for a grapple truck. Mr. Hood stated that it was something worth looking into and asking about. Mr. Hood stated the options were 1) the citizens could pay the city for brush/limb pickup, 2) the citizens could pay Newton County landfill because the Orange County landfill did not take limbs. He noted that the Orange County landfill would take white goods but the costs were \$15 per truck bed, \$25 for a 5x10 trailer, or \$50 for a bigger trailer, or 3) Bulk items could be picked up by Piney Woods on regular garbage day. Councilman Troy Pierce wanted to make it clear that Piney Woods would pick up 2 bulk items a week and those included limbs. Mr. Hood confirmed Councilman Pierce's statement but said that the limbs would need to be bundled, put in contractor bags, or in a garbage can. Councilman Troy Pierce stated that there were resources to pick up limbs without a cost if the citizens would follow the guidelines. Mr. Hood also stated that another resource was for citizens to rent a temporary dumpster through Piney Woods to remove debris. He stated that West Orange, Bridge City, and Vidor do not pick up limbs. Mr. Hood noted that a big problem was that the citizens would start out with a limb pile and then they added debris. He said when debris is added, it must be placed in a roll off and it costs the city to have that roll off dumped. Subsequently, the city must then charge the citizens more for the service.

On announcements, comments, and request from the Council, Mr. Hood stated that the lease for the police unit would be over in April 2024 but advised that the city could cancel it now without any penalties. Mr. Hood explained that a police vehicle did not need to be leased and advised that he had found a Tahoe in Dallas for \$54,000. Mr. Hood noted that he would like to finance the Tahoe through First Financial Bank so the city would own the vehicle. He stated he had some homework to do, and he would be presenting it to the Council at the next meeting.

There being no further business to discuss, Mayor McClendon adjourned the meeting at 7:00 p.m.

/s/ Debbie Cormier
City Secretary

/s/ Sarah McClendon
Mayor