



BUDGETING FOR RIVER BEND AND FOR EVERY MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT, SMALL OR LARGE  
BY MAYOR JOHN KIRKLAND

As we turn the calendar page to 2024, the Town Council and Town Manager will begin developing the Town budget for FY2024-25. There are several points that I would ask the members of Council and also Town Residents to consider as this process moves to adoption of the budget by 1 July.

1.) The grants that the Manager achieved by working with members of State Agencies demanded a great deal of his time. It needs to be understood that his commitment of time on the approved major projects is not complete. There is still project design work, project bidding and contractor selection, construction supervision and the reporting to the granting agency on each approved project. All of this effort will consume as much or more of the Managers time than he devoted to achieving the grants.

2.) The work in the development of the next Town Budget will compete with the work described in point 1 above. The process involves input from the key staff members and the input and approval of the Council. This is accomplished by several “work sessions” which develop the detailed budget that will be approved by Council. These work sessions are open to the public and citizens are welcome to attend.

3.) In all the work involved and recognizing that funding is not unlimited, the Manager is constantly defending spending that will maintain Town infrastructure and needing to limit the drive to fund “nice to have” but nonessential items that vie for funds.

I can assure you the truth of the statements made above and would ask persons working with the Manager and Staff on budget input to consider these issues. Thanks to all who will read this document.

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## **TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT**

BY TOWN MANAGER DELANE JACKSON

The year 2023 was truly an historic year for the Town of River Bend. In March, the town completed the installation of new water meters. That project was funded by a grant in the amount of \$602,500. In March, the town also received two grants in the amount of \$150,000 each. Those grants are being used to map, inspect, and analyze the town's water and sewer systems. Both of those projects are nearly complete. Also in March, the town received a \$100,000 grant, which will be used to complete a study of the town's water supply. In October, the town received the largest grant in its history. The grant of \$9,393,000 will be used to construct a new water treatment plant. In December, the town completed the construction of its new Public Works Building. The total cost of the building project was nearly \$2,000,000. About \$1,000,000 of that cost was made available by a grant. The building is the largest and most expensive building in the town's history. It should serve the town for many decades.

On December 15, the town held a dedication ceremony for the new building. The grand finale of the event was the unveiling of the name of the building. Until the unveiling, the name had been a highly guarded secret. The name of the building is the "John R. Kirkland Public Works Facility". For the first time in the town's history a building was named in honor of someone. The Mayor was unaware of its name until the big reveal. To recognize Mayor Kirkland's long service to the town, Councilman Buddy Sheffield wrote a poem about the Mayor and read it during the event.

### **Big John**

**There's a little town that has a mayor  
He's 90 but still a major player  
He serves on boards across the land  
And runs the town with an iron hand  
He's on the job both day and night**

---

**And if you're smart don't pick a fight with Big John**

**(chorus) Big John, Big John ... Big bad John**

**His name is Kirkland, sure enough  
But he's not like all that Costco stuff  
That you have to buy in large amounts  
No They don't sell him by the ounce  
There's only one of him and it's pronounced Big John**

**(chorus) Big John, Big John ... Big bad John**

**If a council meeting should unravel  
There's an old bald guy with a wooden gavel  
Who silences the crowd with shame  
"Hey, this is not a football game!"**

**There's rules against this kind of racket  
It's all right there in your citizen's packet  
But if you've got a real complaint  
We'll hear you out or my name ain't Big John**

**(chorus) Big John, Big John ... Big bad John**

**I'm only trying to improve you  
And should the Quaker spirit move you  
Go to the mike and state your case  
Otherwise just shut your face**

**Yes this is a public forum  
But I insist upon decorum  
Here and let me tell you cuz  
We'll do it like the Coast Guard does with big John**

**(chorus) Big John, Big John ... Big bad John**

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He's spent his life in public service  
Only one thing makes me nervous  
Is he gonna read that mayor's report  
You know it's not exactly short  
And we could be here all night long  
Or I could just wrap up this song

And dedicate it to the man  
Whose dedication and whose plan  
Have made this town a domicile  
Where people live with grace and style

A beautiful and friendly town  
That's quickly gaining wide renown  
For such a calm and civil place  
You'd better be or you'll have to face Big John

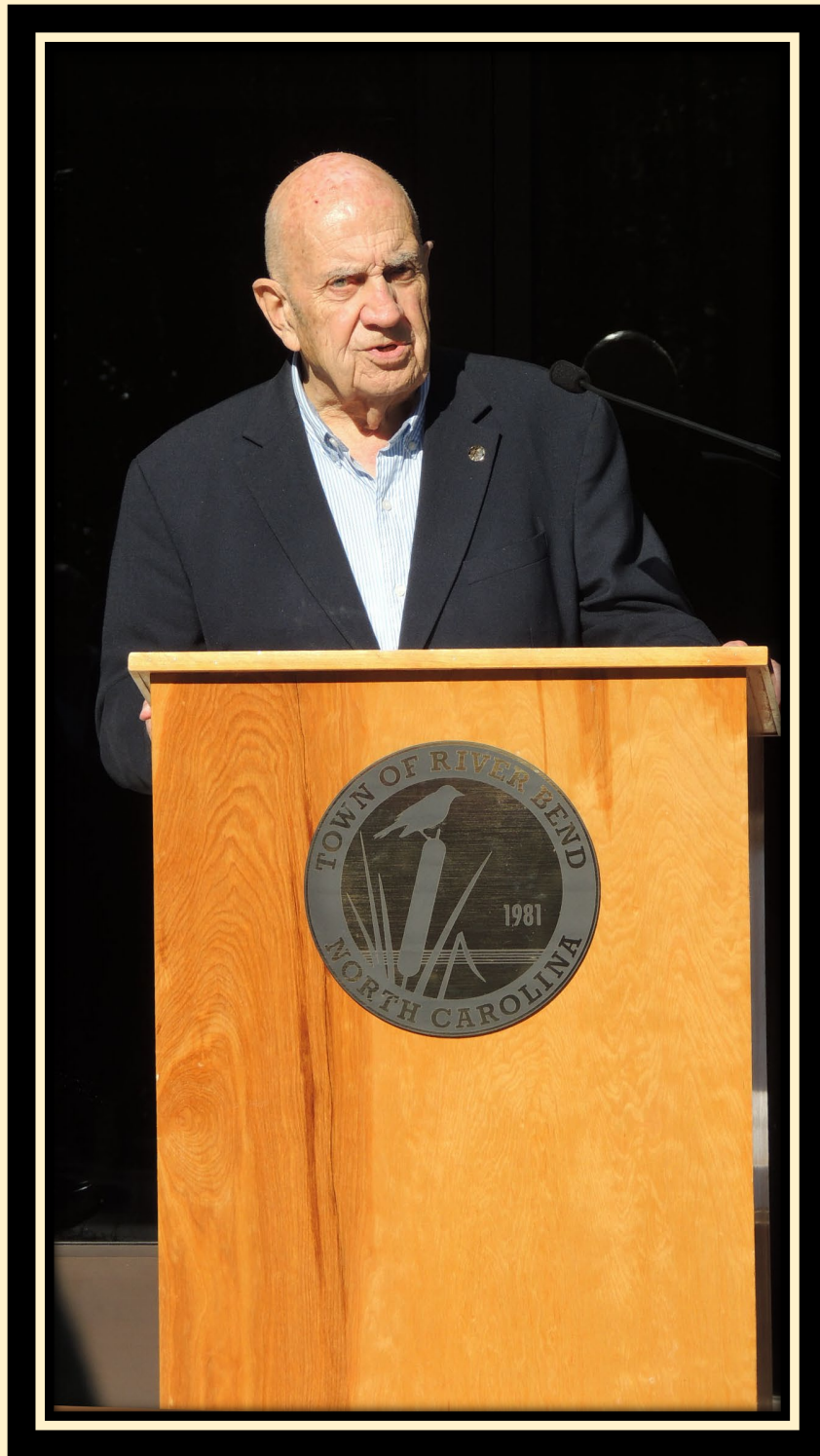
**Big John, Big John**  
**Not so bad John**

The year 2024 also promises to be a very busy and productive year for River Bend. We hope to begin the bidding process for major renovations to the town's waste water treatment plant (WWTP) in early-2024. This project is being funded by a \$9,108,500 grant. When complete, our WWTP will be almost like-new. The renovated WWTP will serve the town for many decades.



**JENNIFER BARROW**  
PHOTOGRAPHER

The following photographs were taken during the dedication of the new public works facility located at 1504 Plantation Drive:



Mayor John R. Kirkland during the opening ceremony





Sign Language Interpreter  
Mr. Tom Richardson



Council Members pictured from left to right: Buddy Sheffield, Barbara Maurer, Jeff Weaver, Brian Leonard, Lisa Benton





Picture from left to right: Former Council Members Don Fogle & Bud Van Slyke









Mayor John R. Kirkland and Family



Mayor John R. Kirkland





Councilman Buddy Sheffield, Town Manager Delane Jackson, Public Works Director Brandon Mills















Caterers

















Pictured from left to right: Councilwoman Lisa Benton, Councilman Brian Leonard, Councilman Jeff Weaver, Councilwoman Barbara Maurer, NC State Representative Steve Tyson, Craven County Commissioner E.T. Mitchell



# *John R. Kirkland Public Works Facility*

*Named in honor of Mayor John Kirkland who has served on the town's governing body from 1997 to present*

*This project was authorized and funded in September, 2022 by action of the River Bend Town Council composed of:*

**Mayor - John Kirkland**

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*Town Council*

Mayor Pro Tem - Irving "Bud" Van Slyke, Jr.

Don Fogle

Brian Leonard

Barbara Maurer

Buddy Sheffield

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Town Manager - Delane Jackson

Public Works Director - Brandon Mills

*Designed by  
The Walker Group Architecture  
New Bern, NC*

*Constructed by  
Bruin Builders  
New Bern, NC*

*Dedicated to service December, 2023*





John R. Kirkland Public Works Facility  
Dedicated on December 15, 2023



## WRD/PW REPORT

BY BRANDON MILLS  
DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS

Hopefully everyone enjoyed the Thanksgiving holiday and is looking forward to Christmas and the new year. Public Works continued to do a great job with their responsibilities, encompassing roadway upkeep, park maintenance, and stormwater management. As the month ended and after Thanksgiving our efforts extended to adorning the town with festive Christmas decorations. The Christmas balls up front and around town hall were made by the CAC and town residents at a CAC event. I would like to thank them for doing a wonderful job. Hopefully everyone is enjoying the lights around town.

Water Resources staff diligently operated the water and wastewater systems addressing one minor challenge of a clogged lift station pump. It's essential to remind everyone to exercise caution in what they flush or drain into the wastewater collection system. To maintain the efficiency and longevity of our system, everyone has to do their part. There is [information](#) on the town's website that gives the do's and don'ts of our collection system. It essentially will tell you how to properly dispose of certain items and what not to flush and drain into the system. Overall, both Public Works and Water Resources deserve recognition for their continued commitment to the well-being of the community.

If you have any questions concerning the Water Resources/Public Works Department, please call us at 638-3540, Monday-Friday, 8am-4pm. After-Hours water and sewer emergencies can be reported by dialing the Town Hall at 638-3870. You will be instructed to dial "9" and follow the directions to contact the on call duty operator. You will then be asked to enter your phone number at the sound of the tone. After entering your phone number, the automated system will inform you that your page has been sent. Please be patient and our utility systems operator will return your call. If you do not receive a call back within ten minutes,

### REPORTING AFTER HOURS WATER-SEWER EMERGENCIES

- ◆ Dial Town Hall at 638-3870.
- ◆ Dial "9" and follow the directions to contact the on-call duty operator.
- ◆ Enter your phone number at the sound of the tone.
- ◆ The automated system will inform you that your page has been sent.
- ◆ Our utility operator will return your call.
- ◆ If you do not receive a call back within ten minutes, please notify the Police Department at 638-1108. They will get in touch with the on-call utility system operator.



# COMING EVENTS

Town Hall Closed  
January 2  
New Year's Day  
Observed

RBCOG Special Meeting  
January 2  
1:30 p.m.  
Municipal Building

\*\*\*Canceled\*\*\*  
EWAB Meeting  
December 4  
7:00 p.m.  
Municipal Building

\*\*\*NEW TIME\*\*\*  
Parks & Recreation  
Advisory Board Meeting  
January 3  
6:15 p.m.  
Municipal Building

Planning Board Meeting  
January 4  
6:00 p.m.  
Municipal Building

Council Work Session  
January 11  
7:00 p.m.  
Town Hall

Council Meeting  
January 18  
7:00 p.m.  
Town Hall

Book/Tech Mobile @  
River Bend  
January 19  
Municipal Building

American Red Cross  
Donation Day Sponsored  
by Parks & Rec  
January 27  
10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.



## RIVER BEND NEWS

FROM TOWN HALL  
is published monthly by the River Bend Town Council for the residents of the Town of River Bend.

MAYOR  
John Kirkland

TOWN COUNCIL  
Lisa Benton  
Brian Leonard  
Barbara Maurer  
Buddy Sheffield  
Jeff Weaver

TOWN MANAGER  
Delane Jackson

TOWN CLERK  
Kristie Nobles

FINANCE ADMINISTRATOR  
Mandy Gilbert

POLICE CHIEF  
Sean Joll

DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS  
Brandon Mills

ASSISTANT ZONING ADMINISTRATOR  
Allison McCollum

GRAPHIC DESIGN & TYPOGRAPHY  
Jennifer Barrow

Contact Us:  
45 Shoreline Drive  
River Bend, NC 28562  
252.638-3870  
[www.riverbendnc.org](http://www.riverbendnc.org)

## Leaf & Limb Collection Schedule for 2023-2024

Residents may begin placing their yard debris street side on the dates indicated in parentheses

### Zone 1 Pick Up Begins

- July 10, 2023  
(July 5, 2023)
- September 11, 2023  
(September 6, 2023)
- November 13, 2023  
(November 8, 2023)
- December 11, 2023  
(December 6, 2023)
- January 15, 2024  
(includes Christmas trees)  
(January 10, 2024)
- March 11, 2024  
(March 8, 2024)
- May 13, 2024  
(May 8, 2024 )

### Zone 2 Pick Up Begins

- July 17, 2023  
(July 12, 2023)
- September 18, 2023  
(September 13, 2023)
- November 20, 2023  
(November 15, 2023)
- December 18, 2023  
(December 13, 2023)
- January 22, 2024  
(includes Christmas trees)  
(January 17, 2024)
- March 18, 2024  
(March 13, 2024)
- May 20, 2024  
(May 15, 2024)

Pinecones, pine straw and leaves must NOT be bagged. For additional important information about River Bend’s Leaf & Limb collection program, please see our updated Ordinance online at [www.riverbendnc.org](http://www.riverbendnc.org). ●

## Town Council 2024 Meeting Dates

- Work Session ..... January 11
- Regular Meeting ..... January 18
- Work Session ..... February 8
- Regular Meeting ..... February 15
- Work Session ..... March 14
- Regular Meeting ..... March 21
- Work Session ..... April 11
- Regular Meeting ..... April 18
- Work Session ..... May 9
- Regular Meeting ..... May 16
- Work Session ..... June 13
- Regular Meeting ..... June 20
- Work Session ..... July 11
- Regular Meeting ..... July 18
- Work Session ..... August 8
- Regular Meeting ..... August 15
- Work Session ..... September 12
- Regular Meeting ..... September 19
- Work Session ..... October 10
- Regular Meeting ..... October 17
- Work Session ..... November 14
- Regular Meeting ..... November 21
- Work Session ..... December 5
- Regular Meeting ..... December 12

All Council Work Sessions will be held in the River Bend Town Hall beginning at 7:00 p.m.

Regular Council Meetings will be held in the River Bend Town Hall beginning at 7:00 p.m.



### Golf Cart Registration

Town ordinances allow for residents to drive their properly equipped golf carts on River Bend streets provided that they are inspected by and registered with our Police Department. If you plan to drive your golf cart on the roadways, you must display the current year registration decal. Decals for 2024 are available now.

Inspection and registration are required annually. The registration fee for each golf cart is \$10.

For additional information and to make your inspection reservation, please call the River Bend Police Department at 638-1108. Click [HERE](#) for more information



### Registration is Required for all Dogs and Cats

River Bend Animal Registrations for 2024 are due by March 31, 2024. All River Bend dogs and cats must be registered annually.

Office hours are Monday-Friday, 8 AM-4 PM.

Owners must present proof of rabies vaccination at the time of registration. Click [HERE](#) for more information.

2024 tags are available now at Town Hall.



### Pet I. D. Photos Now Available

The Town of River Bend is now offering residents the opportunity to link a digital photo of their registered pets to our Animal Registration database. When you register your pet this year, you may submit a photo by e-mail, or staff can scan a photo for you if you prefer. This photo database will help reunite lost pets with their owners more quickly in the event a pet becomes lost.

The service is voluntary and free of charge.

## DOG PARK AT RIVER BEND



River Bend dogs have their own exercise area where they can play with other canines. Situated between the Town Park and Ritter Field, the dog park gives dogs a chance to run while their owners socialize.

The park is open from sunrise to sunset for dogs with proof of current vaccinations. Separate exercise areas accommodate large and small dogs.

For complete list of rules applicable to dog park use, please visit our web site at [www.riverbendnc.org](http://www.riverbendnc.org). Dog park rules are also posted at the entrance to the park.





Sign up for our  
**Emergency Notification System**  
 and receive timely notifications by phone, e-mail, text messages and more.

**SIGN UP NOW**  
 at [www.riverbendnc.org](http://www.riverbendnc.org)

*this service provided by the Town of River Bend through*  
**Blackboard  
 connect**



If you have a medical condition for which you require any type of special medical care during a disaster or if your medical condition requires assistance to evacuate during a disaster, you may wish to apply to Craven County for their Special Needs Registry. The River Bend Police Department can provide you with the appropriate form and provide some basic information about the County's program.



River Bend has a very active Community Watch program supported by our Police Department. If you are interested in volunteering, call the River Bend Police Department at 638-1108.



River Bend has a skateboard park to meet the needs of some of our more athletic residents. A signed parental approval [form](#) is required and helmet use is strictly enforced. For more information about the skateboard park, visit our web site or call the River Bend Police Department at 638-1108.

Click [HERE](#) for more information.