

**River Bend Town Council
Regular Meeting Minutes
December 14, 2023
Town Hall
7:00 p.m.**

Present Council Members: Mayor John Kirkland
Lisa Benton
Brian Leonard
Barbara Maurer
Buddy Sheffield
Jeff Weaver

Town Manager: Delane Jackson
Police Chief: Sean Joll
Finance Director: Mandy Gilbert
Town Clerk: Kristie Nobles
Town Attorney: Trey Ferguson

Members of the Public Present: 19

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Kirkland called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. on Thursday, December 14, 2023, at the River Bend Town Hall with a quorum present.

VOTE – APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Councilwoman Maurer motioned to adopt the agenda as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

ADDRESSES to the COUNCIL

Mr. Homer Ray addressed the Council and stated that he felt the Town of River Bend was not bicycle or pedestrian friendly. He asked the Council to considering adding auxiliary lighting to the walking path near Town Hall.

SPECIAL PRESENTATION – Audit Presentation for Fiscal Year 2022-2023

Mr. Austin Eubanks, CPA with Thompson, Price, Scott, Adams & Co., P.A.' stated that the River Bend staff was pleasant and cooperative. He said that his firm has issued an unqualified opinion on River Bend's FY 2022-2023 audit, which is the best rating an auditor can give.

CONSENT AGENDA

The Mayor presented the Council with the Consent Agenda. Councilman Sheffield moved to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. The motion carried unanimously. Within this motion, the following items were approved:

A. Approve:

*Minutes of the November 9, 2023 Work Session Meeting
Minutes of the November 16, 2023 Regular Council Meeting*

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

The Manager stated that the new Public Works Building dedication is tomorrow, December 15, 2023 at noon.

Chief Joll presented Corporal Borner with his Advanced Certificate from the North Carolina Training Standards Division and Officer Johnson with the Chief Award of Excellence for his dedication and hard work over the past year.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

PARKS & RECREATION – COUNCILMAN WEAVER

Councilman Weaver stated that Parks and Recreation met on December 6, 2023 and have officially changed their meeting time to 6:15 p.m. Their next meeting is January 3, 2024, at 6:15 p.m.

CAC – COUNCILWOMAN MAURER

Councilwoman Maurer presented the following report.

The CAC did not meet in December. If you are enjoying the festive lights at town entrance and around Town Hall, thank the CAC and the workshop participants, who, over the last few years, including this one, have created over 125 light globes. Remember to say thanks to the Public Works staff who installed the lights. The Christmas festive home nomination dates will run from December 5-15. Two winners will be announced on December 20. Nominations can be made by the homeowner, a neighbor or someone who likes the decorations. Board members await the Council's decision on how to proceed following receipt of the arborist's detailed report and recommendations. Planning continues for an Arbor Day celebration and an Independence Day craft décor program. The next meeting is scheduled for January 17, 2024, at 4 pm in the Municipal Building. The meeting is open to everyone. Please attend if you are interested. The members of CAC send holiday greetings to everyone.

DISCUSSION – Future Use of Vacated Public Works Building

Councilwoman Maurer stated that she would like to continue the discussion on the future use of the Public Works Building from last week since the entire Council is now present. She stated that the Town currently has a contract with the Red Caboose Community Library for their services and she would like to see the Town allow the library to utilize the Public Works Building for fair market value. Councilman Leonard said that the Town is a government agency providing space and the library would be a contractor providing services. Councilman Weaver stated that he did not want to rush into making a decision. Councilman Sheffield asked if the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board has offered any recommendation for use of the building. Councilman Weaver stated the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board has not completed the amenity survey of the Town due to a high turnover of members, so he does not know if that building is included in their recommendation. Councilman Sheffield stated that the hours of library are limited and if there would be a way for Parks and Recreation to use the building in addition to the library, then he felt it should be considered. Councilwoman Maurer stated that the library is planning on extending their services and hours when they have more room for events. She also stated that that building is going to need some serious renovations and the library would be responsible for that not the Town, but if Parks and Recreation uses the building the renovations would fall on the Town. Councilman Leonard stated that the Council has been discussing finding the library a permanent home for a few years now. Councilman Sheffield stated that since the library has limited hours, maybe Parks and Recreation can use the building when the library is not. Councilwoman Benton stated that was very reasonable. Councilman Leonard stated he was thinking of maybe a Community Center that has more activities than just the library services. Councilman Sheffield stated he would rather allow the library to use the building instead of paying them money for services. The Town Attorney stated that the Council could amend the contract to include services for a space.

VOTE – Vacated Public Works Building

Councilman Leonard motioned to direct the Town Manager or Town Attorney to draw up a contract / service agreement to provide space in exchange for services that the Red Caboose Community

Library provides the Town, based on discussion from tonight and previously. The motion carried unanimously.

FINANCE – COUNCILMAN LEONARD

Financial Report – Finance Director, Mandy Gilbert, presented to the Council the financial statement for the month of November. She stated the total of the Town’s Cash and Investments as of November 30, 2023, were \$2,608,139 and Ad valorem tax collections for FY23-24 were \$54,464 and Vehicle Ad valorem tax collections were \$6,590.

VOTE – ACCEPT AUDIT REPORT

Councilman Leonard motioned to accept the Fiscal Year 2022-2023 Audit Report presented. The motion carried unanimously.

MAYOR’S REPORT

The Mayor presented the following report.

THE VALUE TO ALL OF THE THANKSGIVING AND CHRISTMAS HOLIDAYS

There is an understanding that we each can take away from these two important holiday celebrations in America. I realize that not everyone will agree with me in my view, however, I have tried to live by these standards and have found that these holidays point us all to important elements of our human interface. Both Thanksgiving and Christmas follow early American Christian tradition, but most other religions of the world have accepted the celebrations into their cultures. As we celebrated Thanksgiving, many families assembled for the occasion to share a daylong reunion and a very specially prepared meal. Many also then reminisced on family events of past celebrations. These discussions are particularly important to the young of the clan who were not participants in the events of family history. This holiday also is a time when Americans of every nationality are most generous in helping persons in need. Christmas has become a worldwide time to share presents with family members and with close friends. It seems that the commercial side of the holiday is launched in early October with ads on television commercials and in newsprint. While the day is the heart of the Christian Faith, still all the world is knowledgeable of the origin. May we all reflect on the positive values that we can and should take from this season of celebration.

PUBLIC COMMENT


Linda Klopf – Randomwood Lane - Thanked the Council for moving forward with allowing the library to utilize space in the old Public Works Building. She stated this has been discussed for a long time and this is a very positive thing for our community. She stated that the library has funds set aside and volunteers to do renovations to the building.

Jon Hall – Knotline Road - Thanked the community, the volunteers, the Council, and the town employees. He stated that it seemed to be a rocky year, but the community seems to be calming down and headed down the right path. He stated he is proud to be a River Bender.

Don Fogle – Anchor Way - He stated that he agreed with Mr. Homer Ray regarding lighting on the walkway. He asked that if the Council rewrites the Red Caboose Community Library contract, that certain performance items are included in the contract. Such as the minimum hours a day the library is open, annual reports on usage and updates on the library inventory. He also stated that the building is currently in the flood plain, should there be another flood.

ADJOURNMENT/RECESS

There being no further business, Councilman Sheffield moved to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 7:55 p.m.



Kristie J. Nobles, CMC, NCCMC
Town Clerk