

**River Bend Town Council  
Regular Meeting Minutes  
January 18, 2024  
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: David Baxter

Members of the Public Present: 17

**CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Kirkland called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. on Thursday, January 18, 2024, at the River Bend Town Hall with a quorum present.

**RECOGNITION OF NEW RESIDENTS-**

Edwin Vargas – 119 Randomwood Lane – introduced himself and stated he moved to River Bend after his home was flooded in Hurricane Florence. He also stated he served in the Navy for 24 years.

**ADDITIONS / DELETIONS TO THE AGENDA**

Councilwoman Benton motioned to amend the agenda by adding CAC Appointment as item 12C. The motion carried unanimously.

**VOTE – APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Councilwoman Benton motioned to adopt the agenda as amended. The motion carried unanimously.

**ADDRESSES to the COUNCIL**

Mr. Edwin Vargas – 119 Randomwood Lane – addressed the Council with suggestions for the Town's budget and how the Town displays and compares multiple years of the budget data.

**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 December 7, 2023 Work Session Meeting*
  - Minutes of the December 14, 2023 Regular Council Meeting*

### **Budget Kick-off**

Manager Jackson presented a PowerPoint presentation outlining the budget process for the FY24-25 budget. The Council reviewed their Priorities and Vision Statement and the proposed meeting schedule for the FY24-25 budget workshops.

### **TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT**

The Manager gave the following updates:

- The last pay request for the new water meters has been submitted.
- The AIA Water and Sewer Systems Engineering Services are about 50% complete.
- The plans and specifications for the permit for the Wastewater Treatment Plant Enhancement project has been submitted.
- Water supply analysis work has been started.
- The engineer has been working on a site analysis on the property recommended to purchase for the new Water Treatment Plant.

### **ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS**

#### **PLANNING BOARD – COUNCILMAN SHEFFIELD**

Councilman Sheffield gave the following report:

The regular meeting of the Planning Board was held on Jan. 4<sup>th</sup> at 6:00pm in the Community Building. A quorum was present. The meeting was led by Vice Chairman, Bob Kohn, in the absence of Egon Lippert. The first order of business was the swearing-in of the board members by the Town Clerk. The usual reports were given. After a period of public comment, the board took up a preliminary subdivision sketch plan submitted by the owners of the Old Pollocksville Road property which is now being referred to as the Aare Creekside Community. Manager Jackson gave a power point presentation and made it very clear that the plan is very early and that many hoops have to be jumped through by the developers before anything can be submitted for board action. Mr. Keith Spalding-Robbins of Strongrock Engineering was on hand to answer questions from the board, of which there were many. No vote was taken as there is nothing to be approved or disapproved of at this time. The meeting was adjourned at around 7:00pm. The next meeting is scheduled for February 1<sup>st</sup>. As always, the public is invited to attend.

#### **PUBLIC SAFETY – COUNCILWOMAN BENTON**

Councilwoman Benton stated that Community Watch will meet on February 21 and in need of volunteers.

#### **PARKS & RECREATION – COUNCILMAN WEAVER**

Councilman Weaver stated that Parks and Recreation met on January 3 and have a Special Meeting scheduled for January 24.

#### **VOTE – Parks & Recreation Appointment**

Councilman Weaver motioned to appoint Victoria Stuppy to the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board for a term beginning January 18, 2024, and expiring June 30, 2024. The motion carried unanimously.

#### **RIVER BEND COMMUNITY ORGANIC GARDEN**

Councilman Weaver gave the following report:

Garden volunteers met at a special meeting on January 2<sup>nd</sup>. The meeting was rescheduled due to the New Year's Day holiday. Nine members attended. The garden had a quiet December. The total number of volunteer hours for 2023 is 1710. This is the tenth year of operation. Total work hours since the first shovel went into the ground on Earth Day 2013 are 30,970. The final harvest

of the year took place of December 29. Garden volunteers harvested and shared 2540 pounds of vegetables and herbs in 2023. Ten percent was donated to Interfaith Refugee Ministries. Volunteers, visitors, neighbors and community members received vegetables, herbs and flowers throughout the year. Volunteers will start plants in seed flats in early February. One volunteer has offered the use of her greenhouse to start the vegetables. Work hours are irregular during the winter so visitors should call ahead if they want to tour the garden. Everyone is welcome to attend and participate in monthly garden volunteer meetings.

#### **CAC – COUNCILWOMAN MAURER**

Councilwoman Maurer presented the following report.

The CAC met on January 17<sup>th</sup>. All board members, one applicant, the Council liaison and two guests attended. A lot of activities are planned, starting with an Arbor Day program. Guest speakers will address the attendees, and a tree will be planted in honor of Arbor Day. There will be a tree giveaway. Local Girl Scouts troops will have a plant-a-seed table. Refreshments will be served. Additional activities will be announced. The crab pot lights and workshops were so successful that workshops will be offered again in 2024. Over 200 globes were hung in 2023. The first year of Festive and Beautification awards was very successful with more participants in each successive event. Board members discussed ways to increase nominations and simplify the nomination process. An Independence Day Project will be crafting a lighted seasonal outdoor decoration. Two workshops will be offered with dates to be announced as soon as they are confirmed. A new applicant, Maryann Taylor, introduced herself. A motion was made and seconded to recommend her appointment. The liaison will forward the recommendation to the Town Council. The CAC is operating within its budget. They plan to request a similar amount for the budget year 2024-25. CAC members volunteered 509.5 hours of service in fiscal 2022-23. So far in the current year, they have worked 226.5 hours. The next meeting is scheduled for March 20, 2024, at 4 pm in the Municipal Building. The meeting is open to everyone. Please attend if you are interested. Guests and volunteers are always welcome. You don't have to be a board member to participate.

#### **DISCUSSION – CAC Median Revision**

Councilwoman Maurer stated that she is about to make a motion that should be unnecessary. It is being made because of misinformation that is being circulated. On March 16, 2023, at the request of the CAC, Dr. Tom Glasgow made a presentation to Council concerning his recent site visit to inspect the medians on Plantation Drive and Anchor Way. On April 20, 2023, Brenda Hall, the CAC Chairperson, made a presentation to Council, which included several recommendations from the CAC about the median. One of those recommendations, related to Issue #2 Road Safety, was to recommend that the Council "consider", emphasis on the word "consider" alternative median space utilization. There were two CAC options listed in that recommendation, #1 was to install a walk path down the center of the longest median stretch and #2 was to remove the medians and repave roads with a designated walk path. Those recommendations appeared on slide 19 of the CAC recommendation under #2 Road Safety. A copy of that slide is included in the agenda packet for your review. Since that recommendation was shared with Council, there has been much discussion, both among Council and River Bend residents, about the future of the medians. There seems to also be some confusion about this particular part of the CAC recommendation. Based on what I've heard to date from Council members and the Town Manager, I believe there is no desire among Council to remove/pave any of the median and never has been. There is no money in the budget to do so and never has been. The CAC is an official Advisory Board. They have the authority to make recommendations to Council. They have done so. Their recommendations merit Council consideration. As Council, our role is to consider and then act upon their recommendations. However, just because we discuss them, that does not mean that we completely agree with them. In an effort to end any unnecessary division on this issue, I believe that we can easily resolve this matter by taking official action now.

**VOTE – CAC Median Revision**

Councilwoman Maurer motioned eliminate from consideration all of the CAC's recommendation related to issue #2, while we continue to discuss and consider the CAC's recommendations on issues #1 & #3. The motion carried unanimously.

**VOTE – CAC Appointment**

Councilwoman Maurer motioned to appoint Maryann Taylor to the CAC Advisory Board for a term beginning January 18, 2024, and expiring June 30, 2025. The motion carried unanimously.

**FINANCE – COUNCILMAN LEONARD**

Financial Report – Finance Director, Mandy Gilbert, presented to the Council the financial statement for the month of December. She stated the total of the Town's Cash and Investments as of December 31, 2023, were \$2,978,833 and Ad valorem tax collections for FY23-24 were \$475,160 and Vehicle Ad valorem tax collections were \$7,220.

**VOTE – Grant Application Resolution**

Councilman Leonard motioned to approve the Grant Application Resolution for water wells as presented. The motion carried unanimously. (see attached)

**VOTE – Budget Priorities and Budget Calendar**

Councilman Leonard motioned to adopt the FY24-25 Mayor and Council Priorities and the FY24-25 Budget Schedule as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

**MAYOR'S REPORT**

The Mayor presented the following report.

Budgeting For River Bend And For Every Municipal Government, Small Or Large.

As we turn the calendar page to 2024, the Town Council and Town Manager will begin developing the Town budget for fiscal year 2024-25. 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.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Anita Van Amerongen – 141 Quarterdeck – stated that she has put her house on the market and expressed gratitude to the Council and town staff.

Bob Brinson – City of New Bern / Ward 6 Alderman– stated that he represents the closest Ward to the Town of River Bend and stated that he serves with Mayor Kirkland on the MPO board. He provided his contact information for anyone who may wish to contact him as he is the closest liaison to the City of New Bern for the Town of River Bend.

**CLOSED SESSION**

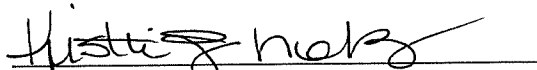
Councilman Sheffield moved to go into Closed Session under NCGS 143-318.11(a)(3)(5). The motion carried unanimously. The Council entered Closed Session at 7:53 p.m.

**OPEN SESSION**

Councilman Sheffield moved to return to Open Session at 8:17 p.m. The motion carried unanimously.

**ADJOURNMENT/RECESS**

There being no further business, Councilman Sheffield moved to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 8:17 p.m.

  
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Kristie J. Nobles, CMC, NCCMC  
Town Clerk

**RESOLUTION BY GOVERNING BODY OF APPLICANT**

WHEREAS, The Town of River Bend has need for and intends to construct, plan for, or conduct a study in a project described as Water Supply Wells, and

WHEREAS, The Town of River Bend intends to request State loan and/or grant assistance for the project,

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, BY THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF RIVER BEND:**

That Town of River Bend, the **Applicant**, will arrange financing for all remaining costs of the project, if approved for a State loan and/or grant award.

That the **Applicant** will provide for efficient operation and maintenance of the project on completion of construction thereof.

That the **Applicant** will adopt and place into effect on or before completion of the project a schedule of fees and charges and other available funds which will provide adequate funds for proper operation, maintenance, and administration of the system and the repayment of all principal and interest on the debt.

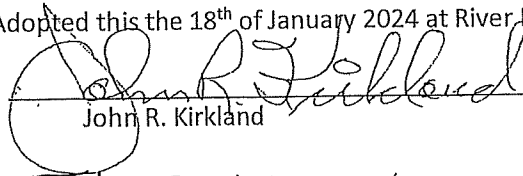
That the governing body of the **Applicant** agrees to include in the loan agreement a provision authorizing the State Treasurer, upon failure of the Town of River Bend to make a scheduled repayment of the loan, to withhold from the Town of River Bend any State funds that would otherwise be distributed to the local government unit in an amount sufficient to pay all sums then due and payable to the State as a repayment of the loan.

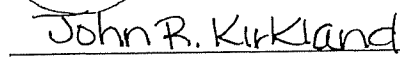
That Delane Jackson, Town Manager, the **Authorized Official**, and successors so titled, is hereby authorized to execute and file an application on behalf of the **Applicant** with the State of North Carolina for a loan and/or grant to aid in the study of or construction of the project described above.

That the **Authorized Official**, and successors so titled, is hereby authorized and directed to furnish such information as the appropriate State agency may request in connection with such application or the project: to make the assurances as contained above; and to execute such other documents as may be required in connection with the application.

That the **Applicant** has substantially complied or will substantially comply with all Federal, State, and local laws, rules, regulations, and ordinances applicable to the project and to Federal and State grants and loans pertaining thereto.

Adopted this the 18<sup>th</sup> of January 2024 at River Bend, North Carolina.

  
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John R. Kirkland

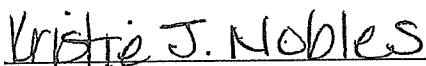
  
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John R. Kirkland  
Mayor

**CERTIFICATION BY RECORDING OFFICER**

The undersigned duly qualified and acting Town Clerk of the Town of River Bend does hereby certify:  
That the above/attached resolution is a true and correct copy of the resolution authorizing the filing of  
an application with the State of North Carolina, as regularly adopted at a legally convened meeting of  
the Town Council duly held on the 8th day of January 2024; and, further, that such resolution has been  
fully recorded in the journal of proceedings and records in my office. IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have  
hereunto set my hand this 18th day of January 2024.



Kristie J. Nobles



Town Clerk

(SEAL)

