

**River Bend Town Council  
Regular Meeting Minutes  
November 21, 2024  
Town Hall  
7:00 p.m.**

Present Council Members: Mayor Pro Tempore Buddy Sheffield  
Lisa Benton  
Jeff Weaver  
Brian Leonard  
Barbara Maurer

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: 11

**CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Pro Tempore Sheffield called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. on Thursday, November 21, 2024, at the River Bend Town Hall with a quorum present.

**VOTE – APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

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

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Eugene Roth – 111 Knollwood – stated that he is in the process of establishing a business association for the Town of River Bend to bring attention to the businesses within the town.

James Crozier – 33 Pier Pointe – thanked the Council for taking a major step in replacing the Birm media. He stated that he is concerned with flushing the system specifically at the dead ends.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

The Mayor Pro Tem presented the Council with the Consent Agenda. *Councilman Leonard 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 October 10, 2024, Work Session Meeting  
Minutes of the October 17, 2024, Regular Council Meeting*

**TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT**

The Manager gave the following updates:

- The December council meetings are earlier in the month, due to the holidays.
- The auditors will be at the next meeting to give their annual report.
- The shred event was a successful event with 130 cars and 4,900 pounds of documents shredded. The Town Clerk thanked Community Watch for assisting with the event.

Police Chief Joll reminded the citizens of River Bend, that the holidays are around the corner and to lock their doors.

### **ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS**

#### **PUBLIC SAFETY – Councilwoman Benton**

Councilwoman Benton stated that Community Watch has volunteered over 700 hours so far this year and expressed gratitude to the police department for the purchase of a tent to use at events. She stated that Officer Royston is the liaison for the police department to Community Watch and Community Watch is currently accepting applications for volunteers.

#### **PARKS & RECREATION – Councilman Weaver**

Councilman Weaver stated that Parks and Recreation met on November 6 at 6:30 in the Municipal Building. He stated that the board has some vacancies along with a volunteer list for anyone who wishes to volunteer without being on the board.

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

Councilman Weaver gave the following report:

The fall planting was very successful. The sweet potato harvest had an excellent yield. Garlic was planted; it will be harvested late next spring. The workdays were very productive. The daily sign-up calendar is so successful that it will be used all year. Workdays will continue to be scheduled on alternate Saturdays. Starting hours will be later as the weather gets colder. Gardeners worked a year-to-date total of 1891 hours. Planning for the 2025 garden is underway. The next meeting is scheduled for December 7, 2024, at 1:30 pm in the Municipal building. Everyone is welcome to participate in monthly garden volunteer meetings and to visit the garden.

#### **CAC – Councilwoman Maurer**

The following report was provided in the agenda and entered into the minutes:

The Community Appearance Commission participated in National Night Out. They reported “great interaction” and feedback from attendees.

The CAC hosted two very successful Christmas globe workshops. 31 attendees made one globe for themselves and one for the town. The town now has over 150 globe decorations, all made by previous and current workshop participants. River Bend residents and visitors will be able to enjoy the festive lights this holiday season.

The third annual Fall Festive Award had sixteen nominations and two winners. Addresses were posted for residents who wanted to drive around to see the homes and a You Tube video was posted to view the homes. Information was also posted on the CAC Facebook page. Nominations for the third annual Christmas Festive Award will begin on Dec 5. Winners will be announced on December 20. Last year was an overwhelming success and this year promises to be even better. People are already starting to decorate. CAC and P&R are discussing a viewing tour for the community. Look for information on both Facebook pages. A Special Meeting was held on November 14 to interview a landscape designer as part of the Plantation Median Project. The CAC voted to recommend that Elena Hebert be hired to develop a design for the first (test) section of Plantation median. The town hired her for a previous landscaping project. The Christmas tree lighting is scheduled for December 6<sup>th</sup>. The town just purchased an artificial tree that may not be delivered by the 6<sup>th</sup>. If not, the lighting date may be moved to the following week. Look for further announcements. This year, the CAC planted and maintained three perennial gardens in the pathways around the playground and one raised bed behind the dog park. Three of the four have done well in spite of drought and deer. The gardens draw pollinators and are an attractive addition to the town’s gardens. The regular meeting was held on Wednesday, November 20. Any business

not already reported here will be added to next month's report. The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, January 15, 2025.

### **FINANCE – Councilman Leonard**

Financial Report – Finance Director, Mandy Gilbert, presented the financial statement for the month of October to the Council. She stated the total of the Town's Cash and Investments as of October 31, 2024, were \$2,658,865 and Ad Valorem Tax Collections for FY24-25 were \$141,227 and Vehicle Ad Valorem Tax Collections were \$34,059.

### **VOTE – Budget Amendment**

Councilman Leonard then called on the Town Manager to review Budget Amendment 24-B-02. The Town Manager stated that the proposed budget amendment would transfer funds for several reasons. He stated that the amendment would change the part-time Public Works position to a full-time position and forgo the part-time finance position at this time. It would also approve a new full-time position for Public Works to handle the lawn and landscaping duties since the contractor has submitted his resignation. Additionally, the amendment would also fund the purchase of the new Birm media approved by Council at the November work session.

*Councilman Leonard motioned to approve the Budget Amendment as presented. The motion carried unanimously. (see attached)*

### **PLANNING BOARD – Councilman Sheffield**

Councilman Sheffield presented the following report:

The regular meeting of the Planning Board was held on Nov. 7<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 pm in the Municipal Building. A quorum was present, as were the town manager and a few citizens. The meeting was called to order. The usual reports were given. Nobody chose to make a public comment. Manager Jackson gave an in-depth explanation of the NC Public Records Law as it applies to River Bend Advisory Boards, specifically the Planning board. Then, he informed the board that it is time to update the Town's Comprehensive Plan. This is a kind of "wish list" where things are outlined that the Planning Board would like to see accomplished for the town. It is a state requirement and figures into things like state grants but does not obligate the town to do anything proposed in the Plan unless those things are subsequently ordered by the town Council. Manager Jackson told the board that he has heard nothing new from the Developers of the Davis property on Old Pollocksville Rd. since they submitted a preliminary plan several months ago. The board took no action. The meeting was adjourned. The next meeting is set for December 5<sup>th</sup>. All interested citizens are invited to attend.

### **MAYOR'S REPORT**

Mayor Pro Tem Sheffield read the following report and stated that the following report is not a disclaimer by the Town, that he is only one councilperson.

According to Harry Truman, being a public servant is "like being a jackass in a hailstorm. You just have to stand there and take it." I am usually fine with that. I am not, by nature, a confrontational person. However, there is a limit to what this jackass will stand and take.

At the last council meeting in October, someone suggested that members of our town government stand to profit from the town's projects and developments. He used the phrase, "follow the money.". There is a term to describe that suggestion which I cannot use in a meeting like this, but let's just say it shares my initials.

I have been to a lot of places and done a lot of things in my life. The government of River Bend is the most upright, honest and transparent organization I have ever been involved with. If it were not, I would not be a part of it. I have been on the council for nine years and I make a whopping 200 dollars a month. You are welcome to follow that money. You will find that it's just

about enough to pay the tax on my Social Security. Nobody up here is in this for money, legal or otherwise.

There is a small but vocal contingent in this town who, based on their public statements, apparently believe that the town government is corrupt, and that there are secret meetings with developers leading to council members taking payoffs. These individuals seem to feel they need to rise up like concerned citizens in some kind of movie of the week and fight city hall. There's only one problem. None of that is true. And so, these people spend their time like Don Quixote, fighting dragons that don't exist. It does not serve the town, and it doesn't do them any good either.

Maybe there is a general mistrust of government. That's not hard to imagine in a world where the Pentagon recently announced it can't account for three quarters of a trillion dollars of its budget. Maybe people project that mistrust onto their local government. Maybe you moved here from a place where your town could not be trusted. River Bend is not that place.

A frustration of this job is knowing that there are big improvements that could be made that would make River Bend better for everybody and that those improvements are very difficult, if not impossible, given the limited resources we have to work with. When I first became a council member, I could see things that needed to be done and I asked the man who was town manager back then, "Can't we get a grant for that?" He told me that the median income of River Bend residents was too high for us to ever get a grant. We now have a different manager who has taken on that formula and beaten it like a rented mule. We do get grants, and great things are on the horizon for River Bend. But we live in a push-button world and patience is in short supply.

Please stand up and tell us what's bothering you. Tell us, "I'd rather you spent money on this instead of that." That's what we're here for. You have the right to free speech, and I will fight for that right to my dying breath. But, as the old saying goes, your right to swing your arm ends at your neighbor's nose. If anyone has any evidence whatsoever of wrongdoing by our staff or government, please bring it out and we will fight the corruption together. Otherwise, please keep the baseless innuendo to yourself.

At this time, Councilman Leonard thanked everyone who voted in the most recent election.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, *Councilman Leonard moved to adjourn. The motion carried unanimously.* The meeting was adjourned at 7:32 p.m.



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Kristie J. Nobles, MMC, NCCMC  
Town Clerk



**TOWN OF RIVER BEND  
 BUDGET ORDINANCE AMENDMENT 24-B-02  
 FISCAL YEAR 2024 - 2025**

BE IT ORDAINED by the Council of the Town of River Bend, North Carolina that the 2024-2025 Budget Ordinance as last amended on July 18, 2024, be amended as follows:

Summary

General Fund	2,455,307
General Capital Reserve Fund	89,007
Law Enforcement Separation Allowance Fund	515
Water Fund	716,406
Water Capital Reserve Fund	20,215
Sewer Fund	711,406
Sewer Capital Reserve Fund	25,250
Total	<u>4,018,106</u>

Section 1. General Fund

Anticipated Revenues

AD VALOREM Taxes 2023-2024	980,165
AD VALOREM Tax-Motor Vehicle	104,400
Animal Licenses	1,500
Sales Tax 1% Article 39	205,910
Sales Tax 1/2% Article 40	121,885
Sales Tax 1/2% Article 42	102,881
Sales Tax Article 44	14,636
Sales Tax Hold Harmless Distribution	112,233
Solid Waste Disposal Tax	2,200
Powell Bill Allocation	101,000
Beer and Wine Tax	13,225
Video Programming Sales Tax	47,041
Utilities Franchise Tax	116,156
Telecommunications Sales Tax	6,779
Court Refunds	500
Zoning Permits	7,000
Federal Grant	23,364
Miscellaneous	15,000
Interest- Powell Bill Investments	50
Interest-General Fund Investments	44,533
Contributions	900
Wildwood Storage Rents	18,144
Rents & Concessions	18,000
Sale of Fixed Assets	0
Transfer From Capital Reserve Fund	72,650
Appropriated Fund Balance	<u>325,155</u>
Total	<u>2,455,307</u>

**Section 1. General Fund (continued)**

Authorized Expenditures

Governing Body	69,500
Administration	331,200
Finance	148,972
Tax Listing	14,700
Legal Services	49,000
Elections	600
Police	867,795
Public Buildings	84,500
Emergency Services	5,800
Animal Control	22,555
Street Maintenance	246,385
Public Works	218,738
Leaf & Limb and Solid Waste	87,500
Stormwater Management	58,031
Wetlands and Waterways	2,900
Planning & Zoning	60,000
Recreation & Special Events	11,000
Parks & Community Appearance	66,331
Contingency	23,043
Transfer To General Capital Reserve Fund	86,757
Transfer To L.E.S.A. Fund	0
Total	<u>2,455,307</u>

**Section 2. General Capital Reserve Fund**

Anticipated Revenues

Contributions from General Fund	86,757
Interest Revenue	<u>2,250</u>
Total	89,007

Authorized Expenditures

Transfer to General Fund	72,650
Future Procurement	<u>16,357</u>
	89,007

**Section 3. Law Enforcement Separation Allowance Fund**

Anticipated Revenues:

Contributions from General Fund	0
Interest Revenue	<u>515</u>
Total	515

Authorized Expenditures:

Separation Allowance	0
Future LEOSSA Payments	<u>515</u>
Total	515

**Section 4. Water Fund**

Anticipated Revenues

Utility Usage Charges, Classes 1 & 2	202,039
Utility Usage Charges, Classes 3 & 4	19,024
Utility Usage Charges, Class 5	11,651
Utility Usage Charges, Class 8	5,326
Utility Customer Base Charges	280,228
Hydrant Availability Fee	19,215
Taps & Connections Fees	1,250
Nonpayment Fees	10,500
Late payment Fees	7,774
Interest Revenue	4,260
Sale of Capital Asset	0
Appropriated Fund Balance	155,139
Total	<hr/> 716,406

Authorized Expenditures

Administration & Finance [1]	495,618
Operations and Maintenance	200,788
Transfer To Fund Balance for Capital Outlay	0
Transfer To Water Capital Reserve Fund	20,000
Total	<hr/> 716,406

*[1] Portion of department for bond debt service: 134,691*

**Section 5. Water Capital Reserve Fund**

Anticipated Revenues

Contributions From Water Operations Fund	20,000
Interest Revenue	215
Total	<hr/> 20,215

Authorized Expenditures

Future Expansion & Debt Service	20,215
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**Section 6. Sewer Fund**

Anticipated Revenues:

Utility Usage Charges, Classes 1 & 2	260,280
Utility Usage Charges, Classes 3 & 4	40,743
Utility Usage Charges, Class 5	25,677
Utility Usage Charges, Class 8	10,825
Utility Customer Base Charges	297,179
Taps & Connection Fees	1,250
Late payment Fees	8,251
Interest Revenue	8,760
Sale of Capital Asset	0
Appropriated Fund Balance	58,441
Total	<u>711,406</u>

Authorized Expenditures:

Administration & Finance [2]	490,618
Operations and Maintenance	195,788
Transfer to Fund Balance for Capital Outlay	0
Transfer to Sewer Capital Reserve Fund	25,000
Total	<u>711,406</u>

*[2] Portion of department for bond debt service: 116,309*

**Section 7. Sewer Capital Reserve**

Anticipated Revenues:

Contributions From Sewer Operations Fund	25,000
Interest Revenue	250
Total	<u>25,250</u>

Authorized Expenditures:

Future Expansion & Debt Service	25,250
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**Section 8. Levy of Taxes**

There is hereby levied a tax at the rate of twenty-four cents (\$0.24) per one hundred dollars (\$100) valuation of property as listed for taxes as of January 1, 2024, for the purpose of raising the revenue listed as "Ad Valorem Taxes 2024-2025" in the General Fund Section 1 of this ordinance. This rate is based on a valuation of \$410,950,000 for purposes of taxation of real and personal property with an estimated rate of collection of 99.38%. The estimated collection rate is based on the fiscal year 2022-2023 collection rate of 99.38% by Craven County who has been contracted to collect real and personal property taxes for the Town of River Bend. Also included is a valuation of \$43,500,000 for purposes of taxation of motor vehicles with a collection rate of 100% by the North Carolina Vehicle Tax System.

**Section 9. Fees and Charges**

There is hereby established, for Fiscal Year 2024-2025, various fees and charges as contained in Attachment A of this document.

**Section 10. Special Authorization of the Budget Officer**

- A. The Budget Officer shall be authorized to reallocate any appropriations within departments.
- B. The Budget Officer shall be authorized to execute interfund and interdepartmental transfers in emergency situations. Notification of all such transfers shall be made to the Town Council at its next meeting following the transfer.
- C. The Budget Officer shall be authorized to execute interdepartmental transfers in the same fund, including contingency appropriations, not to exceed \$5,000. Notification of all such transfers shall be made to the Town Council at its next meeting following the transfer.

**Section 11. Classification and Pay Plan**

Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) for all Town employees shall be 3.7% and shall begin the first payroll in the new fiscal year. The Town Manager is hereby authorized to grant merit increases to Town employees, when earned, per the approved Pay Plan.

**Section 12. Utilization of the Budget Ordinance**

This ordinance shall be the basis of the financial plan for the Town of River Bend municipal government during the 2024-2025 fiscal year. The Budget Officer shall administer the Annual Operating Budget and shall ensure the operating staff and officials are provided with guidance and sufficient details to implement their appropriate portion of the budget.

**Section 13. Copies of this Budget Ordinance**

Copies of this Budget Ordinance shall be furnished to the Clerk, Town Council, Budget Officer and Finance Officer to be kept on file by them for their direction in the disbursement of funds.

Adopted this 21st day of November, 2024.

  
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Morris T. "Buddy" Sheffield, Mayor Pro Tempore

Attest:

  
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Kristie J. Nobles, Town Clerk, MMC, NCCMC