

**River Bend Town Council
Regular Meeting Minutes
January 16, 2025
Town Hall
7:00 p.m.**

Present Council Members: Mayor Mark Bledsoe
Buddy Sheffield
Lisa Benton
Brian Leonard
Kathy Noonan
Jeff Weaver

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

Members of the Public Present: 14

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Bledsoe called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. on Thursday, January 16, 2025, at the River Bend Town Hall with a quorum present.

VOTE – Approval of Agenda

Councilwoman Benton motioned to accept the agenda as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

ADDRESSES TO THE COUNCIL

Judith Williams – 1104 Plantation Drive - addressed the Council with concerns for an alternate route out of River Bend and would like two additional stop signs at Plantation and Shoreline Drive.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

No Public Comments

CONSENT AGENDA

The Mayor presented the Council with the Consent Agenda. *Councilwoman Noonan 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 12, 2024 Regular Council Meeting

FY25-26 Budget Kick-Off Presentation

Manager Jackson presented a PowerPoint presentation outlining the budget process for the FY25-26 budget. The Council reviewed their Priorities and Vision Statement and the proposed meeting schedule for the FY25-26 budget workshops.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

The Manager gave the following updates:

- The supplier of the BIRM media that the Town recently purchased has a pilot program for CR26 media and the Town will be participating in that program.
- The monthly newsletter is on the town's website for the public to view.

Police Chief Joll provided annual and monthly statistics regarding the town's police department statistics.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

PARKS & RECREATION – Councilman Weaver

Councilman Weaver provided the following quarterly report.

October

The Board participated in National Night Out on October 18 with two booths, one providing prizes for children who spun a wheel and the other gave them an opportunity to paint rocks to add to Balboa—the ongoing community project. RBCOG was also featured. The booths were busy all evening and gave P&R an opportunity to foster greater community interaction. Pumpkin Palooza was planned for October 26 to include Trunk-or-Treat, a pumpkin patch, alpaca farm, face painting and a food truck. Due to low interest from the community, the event was cancelled and will be re-imagined for 2025. A Halloween trivia campaign was created to further engage on social media and drive traffic to the information-only page.

November

The Board held a Veterans Day event on November 11 with representatives from three military branches—Army, Navy and Air Force—speaking to attendees about their service. A moment of remembrance for Mayor John Kirkland was included. Refreshments were served. The event was not well attended possibly due to the long weekend or the time of the event. A Friendsgiving event was held on November 23 with good community participation. Residents contributed to the potluck and played games after the meal. The Board received good feedback from attendees.

December

The annual Holiday Tree Lighting was held on December 6 with the inauguration of the town's new tree. Mayor Pro Tem, Buddy Sheffield, presided over the tree lighting. The new Santa and Mrs. Claus were well received and provided a warm and gracious welcome to the children. The Red Caboose Library provided wrapped gift books and the P&R Board gifted coloring books and additional games. The larger room was used to create numerous crafts. The event was well attended and the Board received great feedback from families. A community-generated idea to view holiday lights was introduced and the Board reached out to the CAC to create an event that would highlight festive home awards nominees. The event was held on December 20 and included the Tinsel Train (golf carts), along with Holly and Twinkle trolleys.

At this time Councilman Weaver stated that the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board has recommended Diana Pantall and Stephanie Viers for appointment to the board.

VOTE – Parks & Recreation Appointment

Councilman Weaver motioned to appoint Diana Pantall to the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board for a term beginning January 16, 2025, and expiring June 30, 2026. The motion carried unanimously.

VOTE – Parks & Recreation Appointment

Councilman Weaver motioned to appoint Stephanie Viers to the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board for a term beginning January 16, 2025, and expiring June 30, 2025. The motion carried unanimously.

RIVER BEND COMMUNITY ORGANIC GARDEN

Councilman Weaver gave the following report from the RBCOG December meeting:

Gardeners worked forty-five hours in December 2024 volunteer hours totaled 2035. Since its inception on Earth Day 2013, volunteers have donated 33,184 hours of garden labor and administrative tasks. The total 2024 harvest of vegetables and herbs was 2739 pounds. 11% was

donated to Interfaith Refugee Ministries. The goal of at least 10% has been met every year. Outside work decreased but spring planning kept volunteers busy. Planting will begin in February. The next meeting is scheduled for February 3, 2025, at 1:30 pm in the Municipal building. Guests are always welcome.

CAC – Councilwoman Benton

Councilwoman Benton stated that CAC met on January 15, 2025, and they discussed how CAC wrapped the year up with an event in conjunction with Parks and Recreation called the Tinsel Train and the Holley Trolley, which was a successful event and may need additional trolleys next year. She stated that there are several ongoing projects at this time, the Plantation Median Rejuvenation Project, the Festive Awards and Crab pots events are just a few. She stated the next meeting is on March 19.

BIRM Media Update

Councilwoman Benton stated that the new BIRM media has been delivered. At this time, she held up a Ziploc bag sample of the media for the audience to see. She stated that the Manager stated in the Budget kickoff presentation that they anticipate the media to be installed within 60 days.

FINANCE – Councilman Leonard

Financial Report – Finance Director, Mandy Gilbert, presented the financial statement for the month of December to the Council. She stated the total of the Town's Cash and Investments as of December 31, 2024, were \$3,080,599 and Ad Valorem Tax Collections for FY24-25 were \$679,059 and Vehicle Ad Valorem Tax Collections were \$50,997.

ENVIRONMENTAL AND WATERWAYS ADVISORY BOARD – Councilman Leonard

Councilman Leonard provided the following report from the EWAB December meeting: Chairman Hall called the meeting to order at 7:01 PM. There was a quorum of members present. There were no visitors. The minutes for the December 2024 meeting were approved. Councilman Leonard gave a council update and answered members questions. Old Business: Still work to provide fishing line recycling containers. New Business: There was no new business, Volunteer Hours: 6 No February 2025 meeting The next meeting will be on March 3rd, 2025, at 7 PM in the small conference room in the municipal building. The public is welcome to attend. The meeting adjourned at 7:15 PM

VOTE – Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan 5-Year Update to the Town's Mitigation Actions

Councilman Leonard motioned to approve the Town's Mitigation Actions as presented for the Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan 5-Year Update. The motion carried unanimously.

Councilman Leonard motioned to approve the Town's Substantial Damage Inspection Procedures Policy as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

MAYOR'S REPORT

The Mayor presented the following report.

It's an honor to be here today as your mayor, and to share a message that lies at the heart of everything we do here in our community: **unity**.

We live in a world that is fast-paced, ever-changing, and sometimes divided. It's easy to focus on what sets us apart, whether that be our different backgrounds, experiences, or beliefs. But what makes us strong — what truly defines us — is the undeniable fact that, despite our differences, we are all part of the same community.

Unity is about more than just being in the same place at the same time. It's about recognizing that each of us has a role to play. We all bring something unique to the table — whether it's our ideas,

our skills, or simply our kindness and compassion. It's when we combine these strengths that we truly thrive.

But unity doesn't mean we always agree. It doesn't mean that we have to think the same way or act in the same way. What it does mean is that we respect one another, listen to one another, and — above all — stand together. It means finding common ground even when we disagree and remembering that what unites us is far greater than what divides us.

As your mayor, my commitment is to foster an environment where this unity continues to flourish. Together, we will tackle the challenges that come our way, celebrate our shared successes, and build a future that reflects the best of all of us.


So let us continue to work hand in hand, building a community that not only survives but thrives. Let us continue to celebrate what makes us different, while always remembering what binds us together: our common humanity and our shared purpose.

Thank you for being a part of this incredible community. Together, there is nothing we cannot achieve. River Bend, Together We Rise

Thank you and have a good evening.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, *Councilman Sheffield moved to adjourn. The motion carried unanimously.* The meeting adjourned at 7:20 p.m.



Kristie J. Nobles, MMC
Town Clerk