

**River Bend Town Council
Regular Meeting Minutes
February 17, 2022
Town Hall
7:00 p.m.**

Present Council Members: Mayor John Kirkland
Buddy Sheffield
Don Fogle
Barbara Maurer
Irving Van Slyke
Brian Leonard

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

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Kirkland called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. on Thursday, February 17, 2022 in the River Bend Town Hall with a quorum present.

ADDITIONS/DELETIONS TO AGENDA

Vote – Deletion to Agenda – Councilman Leonard moved to delete item 12B Advisory Board Ordinance Amendments from the agenda. The motion carried unanimously.

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 January 20, 2022 Regular Council Meeting
Minutes of the January 28, 2022 Special Council Meeting
Minutes of the January 20, 2022 Closed Session Minutes

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

The Manager stated that he met with the engineering firm that is overseeing the water meter replacement project and has sent a notice of award to the low bidder. He has received the official documentation approving additional funding for this project. He stated that the previously approved resolution would need to be amended to reflect new funding amounts. He also stated that the loan was approved for a zero percent interest rate.

He stated that he had received notification that the Town was not approved for either of the two AIA grants that were applied for. He stated each grant was for \$150,000 each for the water system and sewer system.

The Manager stated that he has received the Offer -to-Purchase for the 2 acre Davis property off Plantation Drive and he has completed the perk application with Craven County. He stated he should have those results within 4 weeks and the Town may be able to close on the property around the end of April.

The Manager stated that he has been working on completing the Golden Leaf Grant application for Phase II storm water improvements in the Channel Run area and the maximum amount that can be requested is \$250,000. He hopes to have the application submitted by the end of February.

The Manager stated that the Mayor and he met with MetroNet regarding service in the Town. At this time, they are waiting on more information from the MetroNet representative.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

PLANNING BOARD REPORT – COUNCILMAN SHEFFIELD

Councilman Sheffield presented the following report.

The regular meeting of the Planning Board was held on Feb 3rd at 6:00pm in the Municipal Building. A quorum was present. Chairman Lippert called the meeting to order. The usual reports were given. There was only one item on the agenda. The Council has asked the Planning Board to study and make recommendations for the Town's sign ordinance. Assistant Zoning Administrator McCollum explained that parts of our ordinance are now unenforceable due to rulings by The Supreme Court regarding signs as free speech. The Board was asked to study the ordinance with this new information in mind and be prepared to propose changes at the March Meeting.

BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT REPORT – COUNCILMAN SHEFFIELD

Councilman Sheffield presented the following report.

The River Bend Board of Adjustment met Feb. 3rd at 5:45 in the Community Building. Present were Chairman Ackiss and members Weisser and Forrest. Member Leonard participated remotely. The only order of business was the approval of the minutes of the January 4th meeting. A motion was made and seconded. The motion passed. The meeting was adjourned.

PUBLIC SAFETY – COUNCILMAN FOGLE

Councilman Fogle presented the following reports on Community Watch and CERT.

CERT

CERT met on January 26, 2022 with six members and the liaison present. It was decided that future CERT meetings will be focused on training. Also, Mary Holihan will check with other CERTs around the state to see what activities or training events they have had. The next CERT meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, February 23, 2022. It will be held in the Large Conference Room in the Municipal Building and start at 7:00 pm. Check the Town web pages for updates. Anyone interested in joining CERT should contact Mary Holihan.

Community Watch

Community Watch reported 1159 patrol hours for 2021. The next Community Watch meeting is scheduled for February 16, 2022. It will be held in the Large Conference Room in the Municipal Building. Anyone interested in joining Community Watch should contact Egon Lippert.

PARKS & RECREATION/CAC – COUNCILWOMAN MAURER

Councilwoman Maurer presented the following reports.

Parks & Recreation

Parks and Recreation met on February 2. The February activity is a craft workshop called Repurpose Books on Wednesday, February 23 from 1-4 pm. It's amazing what can be created from an old, no-longer wanted book. St Patrick's Day bingo will be offered on March 17, 2022 from 1-4 PM. If you are interested please contact Gloria Kelly to sign up. She can be reached at 252-876-3267 or gloriakelly@gmail.com. That information is posted on the town website and in the weekly River Bend ENews. Plans are in process for the annual Easter Egg Hunt and Sunday in the Park. The Fourth of July celebration will return this year. If you are interested in helping with

planning please contact Gloria or another member of Parks & Rec or me and I will pass your name and contact information to the board. The next scheduled meeting is March 2 at 7pm. Parks and Rec has two vacancies. Anyone who would like to participate in planning and presenting activities is invited to file an application.

Community Appearance Commission (CAC)

The CAC is scheduled to meet on Wednesday, March 19 at 4pm. There are two vacancies on this board. This is an active board. They are working on plans for some significant updates to town owned locations. If you would like to be a part of the process, come to a meeting and file an application to join.

River Bend Community Organic Garden (RBCOG)

The regular meeting was held on February 7. The bees are active. A package of queen and workers has been ordered for the other hive and will arrive in the spring. New beekeeper Denise Kelly has been taking a beekeeping class. The Green Team had 2 productive sessions. Root knot resistant seeds arrived and were delivered to a nurseryman who will be starting them. Volunteer Jackie was thanked for cleaning and organizing the greenhouse and shed. The next meeting is scheduled for March 7 at 1:30 pm.

Red Caboose Library (RCL)

The board met on February 3. The agenda consisted of routine business. Council members recently received a report from the library board. They hoped you found it informative and plan to make it an annual report. They request your feedback with suggestions for any additional information so they can incorporate changes into the next report. The next board meeting is scheduled for Thursday, March 3 at 2 pm. All meetings are open to the public and anyone is welcome to attend.

FINANCE – COUNCILMAN VAN SLYKE, JR.

Financial Report – Finance Director, Mandy Gilbert presented to the Council the financial statement for the month of January. She stated the total of the Town's Cash and Investments as of January 31, 2022 are \$4,116,745 and Ad valorem tax collections for FY21-22 were \$587,708.82 and Vehicle Ad valorem tax collections were \$46,108.34.

ENVIRONMENTAL AND WATERWAYS ADVISORY BOARD– COUNCILMAN LEONARD

Councilman Leonard stated that EWAB did not meet in February. The next scheduled meeting is Monday, March 7th at 7:00 p.m. at the Municipal Building.

MAYOR'S REPORT

The Mayor presented the following report.

Many cities and towns in the United States and most likely around the world are in a period of transition that has not been experienced until recent times. Our River Bend is not immune from that substantial change.

The transition is driven by several forces that have occurred almost at the same time. Those forces would certainly include:

1. The COVID-19 pandemic
2. The rise of the volume of misinformation on social media (SM) postings
3. The seeming willingness of great numbers of citizens to accept as truth the material posted on SM without researching it.
4. The speed we now experience in communication and speed of transportation connecting even the most remote parts of the world.

Looking first at the COVID impact, we have been trying to respond to the many facets imposed by the pandemic while having no recent model of previous threats to provide the path to solutions. Our Manager and staff have been very effective in providing timely information coming from Federal, State and County health departments. Shaping our response to that direction has served the Town well.

A look back at the rise of social media whether it be for the good or the opposite of good: The Pew Research Center published data shows that American adults using the internet in 2000 was just over 50% and by 2015 that number was 80%. We also need to recognize that during this same period several commercial corporations entered the internet field and greatly expanded the public access and use of this communication media. It is likely that few of the persons engaged on social media will spend time in research to validate the truth of what they read on the monitor screen.

The advent of rapid communication and travel and that impact on decisions: Those of us old enough to remember the film "Around the World in Eighty Days" will recall that the film was set in the Victorian era and portrayed the many modes of travel needed to complete their trip. Today, with help of a travel agent one could make the same trip in eighty hours.

Things in 2030 will most certainly be different than today and that difference will likely impact every municipality in the nation. At the same time every level of government will interface with many members of the electorate believing that the norm can go back to "the good old days" if you guy and gals in government would just try.

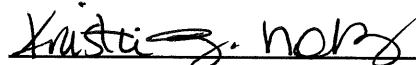
In closing, we must work together to chart our way into the future without the aid of a guide, and try our honest best to find the right solutions.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comments at this time.

ADJOURNMENT/RECESS

There being no further business, Councilman Sheffield moved to adjourn, the motion carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 7:46 p.m.



Kristie J. Nobles
Town Clerk