

**River Bend Town Council
Regular Meeting Minutes
October 20, 2022
Town Hall
7:00 p.m.**

Present Council Members:	Mayor John Kirkland Buddy Sheffield Don Fogle Barbara Maurer Bud Van Slyke
Absent Council Member:	Brian Leonard
Town Manager:	Delane Jackson
Finance Director:	Mandy Gilbert
Police Chief:	Sean Joll
Town Clerk:	Kristie Nobles

Members of the Public Present: 10

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Kirkland called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. on Thursday, October 20, 2022 in the River Bend Town Hall with a quorum present.

VOTE – Approval of Agenda

Councilman Sheffield motioned to accept the agenda as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

At this time, the Mayor presented the Town Manager, Delane Jackson with a Certificate of Appreciation to recognize his 8 year anniversary with the Town of River Bend.

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 September 8, 2022 Work Session*
 - Minutes of the September 15, 2022 Regular Council Meeting*
 - Minutes of the September 27, 2022 Special Meeting*

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

The Manager gave the following updates on Town projects:

- Construction of the Town Hall dock replacement has begun.
- The Town has issued the notice to proceed on the construction of the new Public Works Administration Building and it must be completed within 435 days.
- There is a Board of Adjustment meeting on October 27, 2022 at 6:00 p.m. for a Special Use Permit submitted for 5530 Hwy 17 South.
- The Water Meter Replacement Project is expected to begin on October 31, 2022.
- There are three RFQ's (Request for Qualifications) for grant-funded projects due October 28, 2022 at 3:00 p.m. Those requests are for engineering services for construction of the wastewater treatment plant, water AIA and sewer AIA.

- The Annual Shred Event is Saturday, November 5, 2022, 9:00 a.m. through 12:00 p.m.

The Manager stated that he posted a memo on the town's webpage regarding transparency. He stated that within that memo he posted a question regarding how many fire hydrants are located within the Town. He stated one person responded with the correct answer, 112 fire hydrants within town. Donna Ross had the winning response. He awarded her with a gift card for the correct answer. The Mayor stated that years ago, the John Locke Society rated all the municipalities in North Carolina for transparency, and only 9 received an "A" grade with the Town of River Bend being one of those.

Police Chief Joll stated that the National Night Out was on October 4th and was well attended. He expressed gratitude to all of the volunteers and surrounding police departments that contributed to a successful event.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

PARKS & RECREATION/CAC – Councilwoman Maurer

Councilwoman Maurer presented the following reports.

River Bend Community Organic Garden (RBCOG)

RBCOG met on October 3. Garden volunteers worked almost 1500 hours 1/1 to 9/30. Over 2050 pounds of vegetables have been harvested since the spring. Interfaith Refugee Ministries received 250 pounds of crops raised for them. Interfaith plans to submit an article about RBCOG to their national publication. It was a disappointing year for monarchs but the bees are doing well. The NBHS Green Team returned for their tenth year. Fourteen students attended the first session. One garden volunteer is working to install solar power to the greenhouse. The next meeting will be held on Nov 7 at 1:30 pm. All are welcome.

Red Caboose Library (RCL)

The board met on Oct 13. They reported they have a few new volunteers and patrons. They have added evening hours on Tuesday nights. The Banned Book Display was well received. Once again the children's open house was not well attended but several adults enjoyed it. Halloween candy will be available for trick or treaters. The library will hold a book sale in the Municipal Building on Community Yard Sale Day. A permanent home and finances continue to be concerns. Linda noted that all donations at the Community Picnic were to go to the library but they have not received anything. She will try to contact them again. The next meeting is scheduled for Nov 3.

Community Appearance Commission (CAC)

The CAC did not meet in October but they were busy. After months of planning that go back to fall 2021, the CAC launched their yard of the month and festive yards awards program with Halloween. Anyone may nominate a home they find eye-catching. Nomination forms can be found on the town's website. The Christmas light globes workshops was already reported. The third big project is a review of the vegetation along the Plantation median. A detailed report should be ready in January.

There are two vacancies but one may soon be filled. The next meeting is scheduled for November 16.

Parks & Recreation

Parks and Recreation met on October 5. They addressed a long agenda filled with the many details involved in presenting their activities. The Tea Seminar and Trivia Night were both popular and received requests for repeats. Member discussed offering trivia night's monthly beginning in January. The Night Out free refreshment table was busy from opening to about 7:30. Meet and

Greet at River Brew saw a lot of traffic and many residents met with Council candidates while enjoying food and drinks served by Erika and her staff of volunteers.

Upcoming events include the October 22 Community-wide yard sale day with the Red Caboose Library Book Sale and the Garden Club bake sale. Maps will be available at River Brew on Friday and at the Municipal Building on Saturday morning. Trunk or Treat will be held on Saturday, October 29 from 4-6 pm in the Municipal Building parking lot.

November events will start with two Christmas globe light workshops, in conjunction with CAC, on 11/9 and 11/12. A Veteran's Day recognition will be held on November 11 from 3-5 pm at Town Hall. All Veterans and their family members are invited. The annual Thanksgiving Bingo is scheduled for 11/22 from 1 to 4 pm in the Municipal Building. Prizes will be Thanksgiving themed. Pre-register to reserve a seat. This usually fills up early. You will hear more about Christmas events next month. Watch for flyers in the coming weeks.

In addition to offering events, P&R is working on some new ideas for our recreation area and a variety of new activities, many involving partnerships with other groups and agencies. Stay tuned. The next meeting is November 2.

FINANCE – Councilman Van Slyke

Financial Report – Finance Director, Mandy Gilbert presented to the Council the financial statement for the month of September. She stated the total of the Town's Cash and Investments as of September 30, 2022 are \$4,195,324 and Ad valorem tax collections for FY22-23 were \$34,707 and Vehicle Ad valorem tax collections were \$8,830.

Councilman Van Slyke stated that Water Resources Department Policy Manual was included in the agenda package and discussed at the previous Council meeting.

VOTE – Water Resources Department Policy Manual

Councilman Van Slyke motioned to approve Water Resources Policy Manual as presented. The motion carried unanimously. (see attached)

ENVIRONMENTAL AND WATERWAYS ADVISORY BOARD – Councilman Leonard

Councilman Leonard presented the following report.

EWAB met on October 3rd 2022 at 7 PM in the small conference room in the Municipal building. Chairman Ackiss called the meeting to order at 7 PM. There was a quorum of members. There were no visitors. The minutes from the September 5th 2022 meeting were reviewed and approved. Councilman Leonard gave a update on council activities. Old business: 2020 NC state report on sea level raising and impacts on River Bend. New business: no new business. Next meeting November 7th 2022 at 7 PM in the small conference room at Municipal Building. The public is welcome to all EWAB meetings.

PLANNING BOARD – Councilman Sheffield

Board of Adjustment

Councilman Sheffield stated that the Board of Adjustment will hold a Public Hearing on October 27, 2022 at 6:00 p.m. at Town Hall. He stated that the town has received a Special Use Permit request to operate an automotive shop at 5530 South US Hwy 17.

PUBLIC SAFETY – Councilman Fogle

Councilman Fogle presented the following reports.

CERT

The CERT team met on September 28, 2022 at 7:00 pm in the Municipal Building. Five people were present. Discussion centered around the need to update the resident's emergency contact list. A new form will be created. Distribution will be via utility bills assuming this is acceptable to the Town. CERT members can stuff the forms in the envelopes. There was also a brief discussion about CERT participating in National Night Out on October 4, 2022. The next CERT meeting is

scheduled for Wednesday, October 26, 2022, starting at 7:00 pm in the Municipal Building. Check the Town calendar for schedule updates. CERT is always looking for new members. Contact Chief Joll or Mary Holihan for more information.

COMMUNITY WATCH

Community Watch will meet again on Wednesday, October 26, 2022 in the Municipal Building at 7:00 pm. This date is a week after previously scheduled due to the conflict with Candidates Night. Community Watch is always looking for new members. Contact Chief Joll or Egon Lippert for more information.

MAYOR'S REPORT

The Mayor presented the following report.

We are in a season when much is said about transparency in the conduct of River Bend Town business. Some of the statements present facts and other statements do not produce facts. I ask those who will read my October submission to read the attached document, which Manager Jackson posted on the town's website titled, "Transparency and Our Web Page". The heart of Manager Jackson's document is that the River Bend Web Page has copies of official documents that cover many aspects of the Town Council actions and it records how Council decisions were reached. The detail of material contained in the River Bend web page far exceeds what other municipalities post on their counterpart web pages. It is apparent that most misinformation about Town official actions is spread by posting on the social media sites. It is also testimony that the fact that persons using the social media have access to a computer and could access the Town web page and read how the action in question was debated and acted on in open sessions by the Town Council. I ask all who would desire to advance accurate information on actions taken by the Council to take time to look at the issue reported on the Town's web page. If this request is followed, we will avoid much of the spread of misinformation.

Managers Document

I occasionally hear comments about transparency or the perceived lack of it in government. This article is dedicated to a discussion of facts about the Town of River Bend's ongoing efforts to be transparent. First, what does transparency mean? In a literal sense, it simply means - able to be seen through. *Dictionary.com/browse/transparency* says this about transparency - "It is perhaps most commonly used in a figurative way to refer to a state in which things are free from any attempt to hide something..."

If I were asked to specifically give one example of the Town of River Bend's effort to be transparent, I would simply point to our webpage as "Exhibit A." Our web page is full of information about the town. Following is a list of just some of the data you will find on our web page. It's available 24/7/365 from the privacy and comfort of your home, all with just a few keystrokes and a few clicks of your mouse.

- Many years of agendas, minutes and video recordings from previous town meetings. The town is not required to record its Council meetings.
- Council and staff contact information and a Council meeting schedule
- All town ordinances and many town policies, forms and permit applications
- Maps of all sorts and a town calendar of upcoming events
- Lots of information about each town department
- A list of job vacancies and bid opportunities
- Notice of any upcoming public hearings
- Many years of previous newsletters
- Information about Advisory Boards, what they do and how to apply including an application and minutes from past Advisory Board meetings
- Our Comprehensive Plan and lots of floodplain information

- All sorts of budget information, including our current budget and amendments thereto, past budgets, the budget message and all of the documents related to the development of the current budget, which occurred during the annual budget workshops. This includes the PowerPoint presentations that were presented during those workshops. Those workshops are open to the public and literally every single line item in all departments and the amount of funding for it are displayed on the big screen during those workshops.
- Financial Information galore, including our latest and past audit reports, and our award winning Annual Comprehensive Financial Report (ACFR). It includes 18 different tables of statistical data, many of which include 10 years of historical data, including data on fund balance, net position, bonded debt, property tax levy, tax rate, expenditures & revenues by function and even 10 years of data on how many tons of leaf and limb debris was collected, how many zoning permits were issued, how much water was treated, how much sewer was treated, how many miles of water lines, sewer lines and streets there are in town and even how many police arrests were made in town and for what. If you are interested, you can even find out how many fire hydrants and sewer lift stations there are in town and even more information. The first citizen that contacts me and correctly states the current number of fire hydrants in town, according to the latest ACFR, will receive a \$25 gift certificate for River Brew from me personally.
- Financial Dashboard, which is a user friendly tool that looks a lot like an instrument cluster in a vehicle, thus the name. It allows you to easily view the current financial data on 55 different budget related items in 55 different graphs/charts. This report is updated monthly.
- Monthly Finance Report, which contains up-to-date budget information on 101 separate budget items. This report is updated monthly and shows year-to-date data for the current fiscal year.
- Monthly Citizen Agenda Packet - This document is posted on our web page and included in the weekly e-news prior to the Council meetings. It is also printed and distributed at each regular monthly Council meeting. It contains departmental reports, the finance report, Council minutes, materials related to the items that are on the agenda for that particular meeting, advisory board reports and more. You can even see how many work orders the Public Works Department staff received and completed and it's broken down into 15 different areas. You can also see how many zoning permit applications were received and issued and the dollar amount of fees that were collected through that process. You can also see how many citizen complaints were received and how many zoning violation notices were issued. In the monthly Police Department report, you can see data for 38 different areas of police operations.
- Schedule of rates and fees, number of water and sewer customers
- A list of the Top 10 highest property taxpayers (Table 7, page 130 of 2021 ACFR)
- And lots more.....

These are just some, but not all, of the things that you will find on our web page. It's important to note that River Bend is not required to have a web page. No town in North Carolina is. For towns that do operate a web page, the law requires very few items to be posted on the web page. Some of those are: notices of public hearings, special meetings and bid opportunities. Almost all of the items listed above are NOT required to be published on our web page. The town does include them as a part of our effort to be transparent.

In addition to our web page, the Town also operates an e-news service. It is a weekly notice that is sent via email to subscribers. It contains lots of information about upcoming events and meetings and links to many of the items that are on our web page.

If there is any town related data/information that is in the public domain, which you need but cannot find on our web page, just call Town Hall and we will get it for you. However, please be aware that not all data is in the public domain. Some items like some personnel records, utility

customer information and some attorney correspondence is not in the public domain. Also, we can only provide you with data that we have and in the format that we have it. For example, we cannot provide you with a report on how many kids aged 9-15 live in River Bend or how many registered voters live in River Bend because we do not maintain those records.

We also have an official bulletin board where we post information that is required by law. The bulletin board is located on the porch at Town Hall.

Our web page continues to grow. It is updated and expanded regularly. For example, I have recently been asked about the rules concerning closed session. Just this week, some information about that topic was added to our web page. Click [here](#) for the North Carolina law about that topic. Please visit our web page, surf around on it and if you have any suggestions for topics that need to be added, let us know.

The Town of River Bend goes well beyond the minimum requirements in regards to transparency.
Posted - September 14, 2022

PUBLIC COMMENT

Janet Nawojski – 105 Commander Circle - spoke in opposition of Advisory Board term limits.

Mike Repenning –213 Esquire Court – suggested various ways to live stream Town meetings.

ADJOURNMENT/RECESS

There being no further business, Councilman Sheffield moved to adjourn. The motion carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 7:35 p.m.



Kristie J. Nobles
Town Clerk