

**River Bend Town Council  
Budget Workshop Minutes  
May 1, 2025  
River Bend Town Hall  
4:00 P.M.**

Present Council Members:

Mayor Mark Bledsoe  
Brian Leonard  
Kathy Noonan  
Buddy Sheffield  
Jeff Weaver  
Lisa Benton

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

Members of the Public Present: 8

The Mayor called the meeting back to order at 4:00 p.m. The Council agreed to pause for public comments/questions after items 18, 21 and 24 on the agenda and limit public comments to 3 minutes. The meeting began with a presentation from the Police Chief about the River Bend PD and the PD's budget for next year and a report of their activities during 2024.

That was followed by a detailed discussion of the following departments: recreation and special events, parks and CAC, emergency services, animal control, wetlands and waterways, leaf and limb, planning and zoning, general fund revenues and fund balance. There was some discussion about possibly combining the Animal Control Department with the Public Works Department. During public comments, Don Fogle recommended keeping Animal Control separate for record-keeping purposes.

During the revenue discussions, the Manager stated that the local sales tax revenues had been better than anticipated thus far in FY24-25. There was a discussion about Powell Bill revenue and how that impacted the town's ability to fund street paving. There was also a discussion about how the town's tax rate was lower than every taxing unit in Craven County except Trent Woods. All Council members except Buddy Sheffield agreed with increasing the tax rate from the Manager's recommended rate of 26¢ to 28¢. There was discussion about implementation of a new vehicle registration fee of \$10 per vehicle and how that revenue could assist with street paving. Everyone agreed to the new vehicle fee.

The Manager ended the session with several slides that showed the recent history and projections for fund balance. He noted the fund balance projection for FY ending 2025 is 59% and the projection for FY ending 2026 is 81%. He stated that these are only an in-house projection and not the same as the audited fund balance figures. He ended his presentation by saying that he was done with general fund related departments and in the absence of Council action, he intended to move forward as discussed.

With no further questions, Councilman Sheffield motioned to recess the meeting until May 6, 2025 at 4:00 p.m. The motion was unanimously approved. The meeting recessed at 5:25 p.m.

  
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Delane Jackson, Town Manager