

**River Bend Town Council
Regular Meeting Minutes
October 15, 2020
River Bend Municipal Building
7:00 p.m.**

Present Council Members: Mayor John Kirkland
Don Fogle
Brian Leonard
Bud McClard
Buddy Sheffield
Bud Van Slyke

Town Manager: Delane Jackson
Town Clerk: Kristie Nobles
Town Attorney: Dave Baxter
Finance Administrator: Margaret Theis
Police Chief: Sean Joll

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Kirkland at 7:00 p.m. on Thursday, October 15, 2020 at the River Bend Municipal Building with a quorum present.

CONSENT AGENDA

The Mayor presented the Council with the Consent Agenda. Councilman Leonard stated there was an error on page 2 of the Work Session Minutes from September 10, 2020. This had been corrected prior to the Council Meeting and copies were distributed to Council Members at the meeting. Councilman McClard **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 10, 2020 Work Session
Minutes of the September 17, 2020 Regular Meeting

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

The Town Manager stated that he would like to acknowledge that October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month and that the Town Employees and Council Members all displayed an article of pink to support the cause.

The Manager stated that he had completed the BRIC application and letter of interest to FEMA to apply for funding for construction of a new public works building. He stated that overall \$33,600,000 is allotted to the State and the Town is requesting \$638,000. A decision should be made by Friday, October 23, 2020 as to if the Town has advanced to the next level of the application process. The Manager stated that the Town had received money from FEMA for flood mitigation that will allow the Town to expand the second level of storage in the current public works building. Councilman Sheffield asked if the Town is awarded the BRIC money, will the Town build a new public works building and tear down the current building. The Manager stated that the Town's application would require the Town to demolish the current building and

rebuild outside the flood plain. Councilman McClard asked if the Town would be able to build in the current public works building area again and the Manager stated that the Town would not be permitted to do so.

The Manager stated that Election Day voting will be in the new Municipal Building and no early voting will take place in the Town of River Bend.

Councilman Leonard asked if Coastal Dredging has starting dredging. The Manager stated that the barge is in place but the contractor has not started dredging. The contractor wanted to confirm his insurance limitations before completing the contract. The Manager stated that the Town would be responsible for cleaning the road after the silt is transported to the disposal site.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

PLANNING BOARD – Councilman Sheffield

Planning Board – The River Bend Planning Board met on October 1st at 6:00 p.m. in the Municipal Building. A quorum was present. Guests included the Town Manager and Mr. Brian Swicegood. The usual reports were given. Mr. Swicegood addressed the board about his desire to purchase two lots within the Town limits of River Bend to create a home for his family. He requested that the board alter its ban on farm animals in the Town limits. It is his desire to create a 16-acre home/farm that, among other things, would feature some animals such as a goat, a donkey, some ducks and chickens. He explained that he wants his children to grow up with the experience of taking care of animals to teach them responsibility, aside from the simple fun of it. Mr. Swicegood was excused and the board took his request under advisement. There was much discussion. It was determined that the area of the potential mini farm is already zoned for “agriculture” but changes would need to be made to allow for farm animals. No decision was reached. Chairman Lippert asked the members to do their homework on the subject and be prepared to render a decision at the November Planning Board meeting. The next topic was a proposal to require sidewalks in the zoning requirements for subdivisions in new development within the Town. The board decided in favor of the proposal and sent it to the Council for a vote. The board also decided to remove language from section 15 of the Town's ordinance concerning the responsibility of homeowners to maintain storm water drainage ditches in front of their homes. This change was submitted to the Town Council for a vote. The meeting was adjourned.

The next meeting will be November 5th. As always, all citizens are invited to attend, although numbers are restricted by Covid-19 regulations.

Vote – Public Hearing for Subdivision Ordinance Amendment

Councilman Sheffield motioned to hold a public Hearing on November 19, 2020 for a proposed amendment to the Town's Subdivision Ordinance. The motion carried unanimously.

Vote – Public Hearing for Stormwater Drainage Amendment

Councilman Sheffield motioned to hold a public Hearing on November 19, 2020 for a proposed amendment to the Town's Zoning Ordinance. The motion carried unanimously.

PARKS & RECREATION/CAC – Councilman McClard

Parks & Recreation – Councilman McClard stated that the Parks and Recreation Board met on September 30, 2020 to discuss Halloween options for this upcoming year. The board agreed to host a drive thru Trick or Treat in the Municipal Building parking lot on October 31st, from 3:00

p.m.to 5:00 p.m. The board also agreed to host a Halloween Mailbox Decorating Contest with prizes offered.

RBCOG Garden – Councilman McClard stated that the Organic Garden has not resumed regular meetings since Covid-19 arrived. He stated that Fall production would include lettuce, kale, swiss chard, radishes, turnips, rutabaga and garlic. Gardeners will begin clearing out the beds and the garden will be rototilled over the next few months. All the beehives with the exception of one have been decimated by wax moths and the Monarch butterflies will be heading south soon.

Red Caboose Library Board – Councilman McClard stated that the library had re-opened and the Grab and Go process is working well. He stated there is a Book and Bake sale planned for Saturday November 21, 2020 from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

PUBLIC SAFETY – Councilman Fogle

Discussion – Room Naming Options - Councilman Fogle stated that all of the proposed names for the public meeting rooms had been compiled and provided to the Council. After some discussion the following room names were agreed upon by the Council:

Large Room in the Municipal Building to be named Plantation Room.

Small Room in the Municipal Building to be named Shoreline Room.

Large Room in the Town Hall Building to be named Council Chambers.

Small Room in the Town Hall Building to be named Town Hall Conference Room.

PUBLIC WORKS – Mayor Kirkland

The Mayor stated that there was a PWAB meeting this month with three members in attendance. The Mayor stated that the Board has several openings and solicits volunteers to serve on this Board. If interested please contact the PWAB Chairman Mr. Buck Irvin, Town Clerk or himself. Applying is as easy as filing a form with the Town Clerk. Then it will be presented to the Council for action.

FINANCE –Councilman Van Syke

Financial Report – Finance Administrator Margaret Theis told the Council that the total of the General Fund Cash Balances as of September 30, 2020 was \$3,882,536. Ad valorem tax collections for FY20-21 were at \$10,653, and Vehicle Ad valorem tax collections were at \$6,956.

ENVIRONMENT AND WATERWAYS – Councilman Leonard

Councilman Leonard gave the following report of the last EWAB meeting:

EWAB met on October 3, 2020 in the large meeting room in the Municipal Building. Chairman Stevens called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.. There was a quorum of members. There were no visitors. Most members wore masks. Councilman Leonard updated the board about ongoing Town Council matters.

Old business: Dredging: Update of ongoing efforts to secure a contractor. Drainage: Update on Channel Run project and the planning board's recommendation to change the Town's ordinance. No wake signs: Update of status of new signs ordered. Canal survey: Update of status of getting contractor to conduct survey. New business: There was no new business. The next meeting will be on Monday, November 2, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. in the small meeting room in the Municipal Building. Visitors are welcome. The meeting adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

MAYOR'S REPORT – Mayor Kirkland

The Mayor presented the following report:

After 25 years residency in River Bend it is safe to say that the Town's appearance has never looked so good.

This statement is remarkable when one considers that two years ago we had just suffered the devastating visit of Hurricane Florence. Those that lived through that event will clearly recall the massive piles of appliances, furniture and demolition debris that lined the streets in the floodplain areas of Town. It had all the resemblance of a war zone.

Fast forward. There are still homes that are being restored but exterior appearances of these few homes reveal very little of that ongoing effort. A visitor driving through Town today would see little evidence of the Florence visit of only two years past.

Many persons have worked hard to make this transformation possible. I shall list some of these people:

1. Individual Homeowners: who quickly removed the compromised furniture, appliances and interior building materials. These homeowners worked with the Town's floodplain administrator Allison McCollum and the FEMA representative agents who spent several weeks in Town addressing loss and covered restoration compensation. This was followed by an army of contract personnel and traffic in support of rebuilding.
2. The Storm actions of the Town Council: required attendance at several called meetings to authorize documents needed for Federal and State funding grants. The continuing conduct of operations is made possible by the Town's annual budget. The Council spends hours in a number of sessions working with the Manager and Staff to authorize the annual budget, set the tax rate, and authorize the major projects that the Manager will execute during the course of the budget year. This authorization gave the Manager necessary authority to begin initial recovery efforts as we waited for return of requested grant funding. Thanks to the Council for the quick response each time a request for action was made.
3. Town Staff: under the leadership of Manager Delane Jackson the Town's infrastructure suffered some compromise but the dedicated staff kept the utility systems operating and there was virtually no interruption in this service. Manager Jackson carefully monitored what assistance would be available from Federal Agency and State sources to assist in rebuilding and recovery. Many staff members assisted in developing requests for emergency assistance. In total more than \$1,000,000 from these sources assisted in the recovery effort. The staff effort went largely unnoticed at the time. We all need to offer thanks and appreciation to these persons, who were at the same time dealing with their own recovery at home.

The Town has emerged from the wrath of Hurricane Florence in a strong position. The Homeowners, Town Council, Manager and entire Staff are due thanks and appreciation for clearly superior service during this very trying period.

Now we engage the COVID-19 pandemic. May we all see the conquering of this cruel virus in the near future.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No public comments were made.

ADJOURNMENT/RECESS

There being no further business, Councilman Sheffield moved to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 7:55 p.m.



Kristie Nobles
Town Clerk