

**River Bend Town Council
Budget Workshop Minutes
May 11, 2021
River Bend Town Hall
4:00 P.M.**

Present Council Members:	Mayor John Kirkland Don Fogle Brian Leonard Barbara Maurer Buddy Sheffield Bud Van Slyke – arrived at 5:15 p.m.
Town Manager:	Delane Jackson
Public Works Director:	Brandon Mills

The Mayor called the meeting back to order at 4:00 p.m. and announced that Councilman Van Slyke would be arriving later. He then recognized the Town Manager. The Manager presented a resolution in opposition to House Bill 496. Councilman Sheffield motioned to approve the resolution as presented. The motion was unanimously approved. (see attached)

The Manager then began discussions of the Proposed Budget for FY2021-2022 in the enterprise funds, which included a PowerPoint presentation. The Manager also stated that Public Works Director Brandon Mills was here to answer any questions related to water or sewer operations.

The Manager followed the advertised agenda and presented details related to water and sewer funds cash levels, all water and sewer fund departments, water and sewer capital improvement plans, the utility rate model and revenues for the water and sewer funds. During the discussions the Manager explained that the proposal contained \$15,000 for a local match for two grant applications in the amount of \$150,000 each and that he was also planning to apply for another \$50,000 grant to fund a feasibility study for a connection with the Jones County water system. He also stated that the proposal did not include \$12,000 for the Town's closing cost fees for the ASADRA grant because he was not sure if that would be due in FY21-22. He stated if it does come due in FY21-22, we will simply do a budget amendment to fund that expense. Councilman Leonard asked if we had any long-term plans to address our water quality issues or if we just plan to remain status quo. The Manager stated that until the Council designates funding for any improvements, we would remain status quo. There was a general discussion about water quality issues and how expensive all options to solve them seem to be.

Councilman Leonard asked how old our WWTP is and what is the life expectancy of a WWTP. Brandon Mills said that our WWTP was built in the late 70's to early 80's. The Manager stated that 50 years was about an average life expectancy. Councilman Van Slyke joined the meeting.

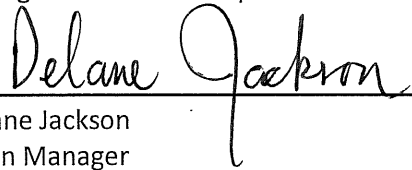
The Manager presented the proposed water and sewer rate model and stated that the proposal contained no increases to the residential rates. He noted that the non-residential water customers had enjoyed a 1-year break from the water rate increase that took place in April, 2020. He also clarified that the break was due to them not being charged at the appropriate equivalent unit (EU) as is factored into the rate model. That had given business a break during COVID. The proposal would return non-residential customers to the correct EU and thus return them to the pre- April, 2020 rate model equation. Councilman Sheffield asked if the Council needed to take action now to return to the non-

residential rates to what they were. The Town Manager explained that when the Council adopts the schedule of the rates and fees for FY21-22, it will contain those changes.

During the meeting there were some discussions about the cash reserves in both enterprise funds. Councilman Fogle asked if the Town could borrow from the reserves if necessary to respond to a catastrophe. The Manager stated yes but under certain regulations. Councilman Leonard stated that the use rate fee of \$4.02 for water had been the same for a long time. He suggested that since some major projects may be needed down the road that we should look at increasing fees gradually, over time as opposed to one big increase. Councilman Fogle suggested considering tying future rate increases to the CPI, which would result in small, annual increases. Councilwoman Maurer agreed that we need to consider that option for future rate increases.

The Manager ended the session with slides that showed a summary of the revenues for each enterprise fund and pointed out the appropriated fund balance in each. He asked if there were any further questions.

With no further questions, Councilman Sheffield motioned to recess the meeting until May 13, 2021 at 4:00 p.m. The motion was unanimously approved. The meeting recessed at 6:17 p.m.



Delane Jackson
Town Manager



**RESOLUTION OPPOSING HOUSE BILL 496
OF THE 2021 NORTH CAROLINA LEGISLATIVE SESSION**

WHEREAS, recognizing the importance of zoning to the peace, prosperity, and happiness of North Carolina's municipalities, for generations the State of North Carolina has allowed municipalities to regulate local development through the enforcement of local tree ordinances; and

WHEREAS, the Town of River Bend has responsibly exercised the zoning and land use authority granted to it by the State of North Carolina; and

WHEREAS, the Town of River Bend's zoning ordinances have been approved with extensive community involvement and neighborhood-appropriate considerations: and

WHEREAS, the Town of River Bend recognizes the importance of trees in its jurisdiction not only for aesthetics but also for their many positive contribution to the environment; and


WHEREAS, HB 496, now pending in the North Carolina General Assembly, would strip towns of the ability to enact tree ordinances and enforce already existing tree ordinances.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Town Council of the Town of River Bend, North Carolina hereby expresses its opposition to HB 496.

Approved this 11th day of May, 2021.



ATTEST:


Kristie J. Nobles, Town Clerk


John R. Kirkland, Mayor