

**River Bend Town Council
Budget Workshop Minutes
April 28, 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

Members of the Public Present 8

The Mayor called the meeting to order at 4 p.m. and noted that a quorum was present. However, Lisa Benton and Jeff Weaver were not present. The Town Manager stated that Lisa had notified him that she is on the way. The Mayor read aloud NCGS 143-318.17 and asked everyone to avoid disrupting the meeting. The Council agreed to pause for public comments/questions after items # 4, 10 and 14 on the agenda. The Mayor then recognized the Town Manager.

The Manager then began discussions of the Proposed Budget for FY2025-2026, which included a PowerPoint presentation. Lisa and Jeff arrived during this part, at approximately 4:05. The Manager presented the Council's priorities and vision statement, which were approved at the January 16, 2025 budget kick-off meeting. The Manager noted the "Fundamentals of Budgeting 101" slides. He also noted the slide that outlined his 10 main goals during budget preparation. He stated that he felt his recommended budget accomplishes 9 of 10 goals.

The Manager began to follow the advertised agenda and presented details related to employee compensation and staffing levels, followed by the capital improvement plans, utility and fuel prices, the vehicle replacement plan, IT and various budget-related topics. During the vehicle replacement plan item, the Manager recommended transitioning to a 7-year replacement schedule for police vehicles, since the town had assigned each officer a take home car. He also stated that a spare car is incorporated into the plan. He also noted that this year's CIP included funding for future road and park projects. That was followed by a detailed discussion of the following departments: governing board, administration, finance, tax listing, legal services, elections, street maintenance, storm water, public works and public buildings.

There was some discussion about the COLA and inflation and the rising costs of many items/services in the budget. There was some discussion about the fund balance in the

general fund. There was also some discussion about the proposed 2-cent tax rate increase and a new \$10 vehicle tag fee. The Council discussed the possibility of a 4-cent tax rate increase. There was also some discussion about what to do if the interim leaf and limb contractor did not sign the contract for next year. The Manager stated that he did not have an answer to that question. During public input, Don Fogle voiced his opposition to the CAC's median recommendation and stated his support for construction of a pickleball court. Patty Leonard stated that she did not mind a tax rate increase as long as it was being used for salaries, buildings, infrastructure and things like that. Barry Gasparro of the Lakemere Landowner's Association offered a suggestion about ways to repair the flood control gates there.

The Manager ended the session with a slide that showed a summary of the departments that had been discussed and asked if there were any questions.

Councilman Sheffield motioned to recess the meeting until May 1, 2025 at 4 p.m. The motion was unanimously approved. The meeting recessed at 6:41 p.m.



Delane Jackson, Town Manager