

# **Town of River Bend**



**Fiscal Year 2023-2024**

**Annual Budget Message**

**(A summary of the Annual Budget)**

**And**

**Annual Operating Budget Ordinance**

Town of River Bend, North Carolina  
45 Shoreline Drive  
River Bend, NC 28562

252-638-3870

www.riverbendnc.org

**Fiscal Year 2023-2024**  
**Annual Budget Message**  
**And**  
**Operating Budget Ordinance**

**Mayor**

John Kirkland

**Town Council**

Morris "Buddy" Sheffield\*  
Barbara Maurer  
Brian Leonard  
James Castranova  
Jeff Weaver

\*also serves as Mayor Pro Tempore

**Prepared By:**

**Town Manager**

Delane Jackson

**Finance Director**

Mandy Gilbert

## Budget Message

Honorable Mayor and Members of Council  
Town of River Bend, North Carolina:

May 23, 2023

Pursuant to Section 159-11 of the North Carolina General Statutes, the Town of River Bend's proposed budget for the Fiscal Year beginning July 1, 2023 and ending June 30, 2024 is hereby submitted for your consideration. This budget represents the commitment of the Council to the vision statement and responds to the goals the Council developed at the Budget Kick-Off meeting on January 19, 2023:

1. Continue to provide a safe, dynamic, and attractive community for people of all ages, and continue to address the changing demographic composition of the Town.
2. Continue to provide safe drinking water and quality treatment of wastewater through maintenance of the current systems and continued prudent fiscal management of the utilities.
3. Continue to operate wastewater treatment facilities to maintain regulatory compliance and serve the current and future needs of the Town.
4. Continue to work with advisory boards as a means to encourage citizen participation in Town government.
5. Continue to be good stewards of the natural environment through planned stormwater and floodplain management efforts.
6. Continue to cooperate regionally and with other municipalities and, where appropriate, share ideas and resources.
7. Maintain a commitment to the Council-Manager form of government, and to support an adequate and well-trained staff to serve the current and future needs of the community.
8. Continue to employ sound fiscal management practices to ensure the long-term financial viability of the Town.
9. Maintain a visionary posture, acknowledging that change is inevitable.
10. Continue to conduct the business of the Town with complete transparency and integrity.

Over the course of four budget workshops in May and following numerous hours of staff research and development, this budget was explained in detail and each expenditure and revenue item considered relative to the long-term goals of this community. The uncertainty created by the economy, particularly inflation, the war in Ukraine and residual COVID-19 issues continues to impact the budget process. This year, the budget was also impacted by the property revaluation process. As of today, it is still unknown how long and to what degree inflation and other conditions will be impacting our town, state and nation. The nation is recovering in many areas but still struggling in others. Due to revaluation, I am estimating a property value increase of \$113,544,188 over last year. As always, two major considerations during budget preparation are the tax rate and utility rates. After reviewing all proposed expenditures and revenues, and considering the economic outlook relative to inflation, this proposal includes a tax rate of 24¢, which is a 2¢ reduction from

the previous year's tax rate of 26¢. **The revenue neutral tax rate, adjusted for growth, in accordance with North Carolina General Statute 159.11 is 19.36¢.** The water and sewer rates will remain unchanged.

The annual budget process is influenced by external factors including the condition of the national, state, and local economies, the emergent and pre-emergent needs identified in our community by the elected body, staff, and advisory boards, and the goals noted above. All these factors are considered in this budget, and armed with the knowledge that this document represents a significant amount of careful consideration and study, we are confident that it will allow the Town to meet its obligations, fulfill its goals, and remain fiscally strong.

### Overview

The budget being presented for your consideration is balanced in accordance with the North Carolina Local Government Budget and Fiscal Control Act. The total operating budget for the three major funds are:

General Fund	\$ 2,156,391
Water Fund	\$ 655,335
Sewer Fund	\$ 679,035
Total Operating Budget	\$ 3,490,761

In addition to the three operating funds noted above, the town also has four minor funds that we operate for accounting purposes. They are- Capital Reserves for the General, Water and Sewer Funds, along with a Law Enforcement Separation Allowance Fund. The total of these four funds is \$69,596 and they are listed separately in the budget ordinance.

### General Fund

The General Fund is used to account for resources traditionally associated with government which are not required legally or by sound financial management to be accounted for in another fund. This fund is established at the inception of a government and exists throughout the government's life. Expenditures are divided into functional departments in order to present a clear understanding of the costs of providing certain services. Personnel assigned to a specific functional area are paid from that department. We use a labor allocation formula to more accurately reflect the work being performed by each staff member within each of the three major funds.

The total expenditure budget for the General Fund, including transfers, is \$2,156,391. Overall, General Fund spending decreased \$122,170 as compared to the amended FY 22-23 budget (as of May 18, 2023). Revenue, as required by law, is balanced with the expenditure portion of the budget. This budget contains an appropriation from fund balance of \$198,597, which is a 31.85% decrease over the FY 22-23 fund balance appropriation of \$291,394.

## **Expenditure Highlights by Department**

While not attempting to cover specifics for all of the eighteen (18) departments within the General Fund, what follows are some highlights of the more significant expenditures and programs being proposed for FY 23-24. This year's proposed budget keeps capital spending at a relatively low level of \$43,504 following capital spending of \$72,787 during the FY 22-23 budget.

Street Maintenance: The Town owns and maintains over 17 miles of streets. Each year our engineer reviews an evaluation he performed of all our streets in order to determine the priority for our paving funds. Powell Bill funding is used to support street maintenance. It is appropriated by and received from the State based upon our population and number of miles of town maintained roads. This revenue source has been relatively level in recent years, while costs continue to escalate.

This year we are budgeting \$173,000 to follow the plan developed by our engineer to maintain the integrity of our roadways. The total amount we expect to pay for contracted paving services exceeds the amount we expect to receive in Powell Bill funds; therefore, local revenue will be utilized to complete these projects.

Stormwater: We have allocated \$20,000 of funding within the stormwater Capital Improvement Plan (CIP), but have no specific project identified. Recently, the Town Council took on the maintenance responsibility for the swales within the town's streets. During FY 22-23, we completed a \$278,295 drainage improvement project in the Channel Run area. \$250,000 of that project was grant-funded.

Public Buildings (Facilities): We plan to continue our efforts to be good custodians of our public facilities by making a few needed repairs and some modest improvements.

Public Works: The Department of Public Works pays for, among other items, the cost to operate streetlights and the cost to operate and maintain two vehicles. This year, we plan to finish a project to build a new Public Works facility at a cost of nearly \$2,000,000.

Parks and Recreation: The budget being presented includes continued funding for our Parks and Recreation programs. Excluded from the Parks and Recreation budget again this year is funding for the River Bend Community Organic Garden. It is an educational community garden operated and maintained by a group of volunteers but functions as a component of Parks and Recreation. There is also \$5,000 in funding to support a contract with the Red Caboose Library to provide library services in town.

Police: Expenditures for the Police Department include salaries and benefits for seven full-time and multiple part-time officers, vehicle maintenance, uniforms, fuel, a new vehicle, equipment, Community Watch and more. We provide 24/7/365 police presence within the Town. The Police Department's budget of \$757,000 is the largest in the General Fund,

representing 36% of General Fund expenditures. This year's budget includes funding to support the addition of the seventh pull-time officer.

Elections: Due to a recent Town Charter amendment, the town's municipal elections were moved to even-numbered years. This change resulted in a substantial reduction in the town's cost for elections. The first election under this new format was November, 2022. The next election will be held in November, 2024. Therefore, there is no election funding required in this budget.

Governing Board: This year's budget contains \$36,000 to fund special projects that may receive Council approval during the fiscal year.

Throughout the budget process, Council and staff were mindful of the need to control costs while continuing to provide necessary services and maintain our infrastructure. Our efforts resulted in budgeted expenditures that are quite lean while maintaining the current level of services. The county revaluation for property values was conducted in 2023. The results of the revaluation had a significant impact on the development of the FY 23-24 budget. One of my goals in drafting this year's budget proposal was to reduce the tax rate due to an increase in the property value.

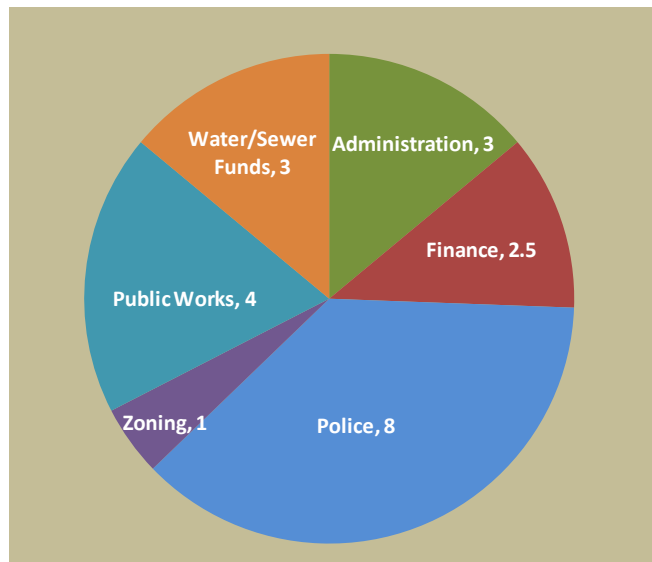
Requested projects and expenditures were kept to a minimum in order to develop a balanced budget and operate with a reduced tax rate. The revenues from some of the transfers are budgeted to be allocated in various CIPs and the Law Enforcement Separation Allowance Fund in the General Fund in order to provide more long-term stability to those plans.

### Expenditures by Category

The North Carolina Local Government Commission (LGC) collects, maintains and compares financial data from all municipal governments in North Carolina. For comparison purposes, they group towns by population. This prevents small towns, such as River Bend, from being compared to large towns, such as Raleigh and Charlotte. They also separate towns that own electrical distribution systems, from those that do not own electrical distribution systems. We fall into the 2,500-9,999 population group that do not operate an electrical distribution system. There are 122 towns reporting in our group. In addition to lots of other data, the LGC compares the per capita expenditure for six functions for each town. Those six functions are: Public Safety, Transportation, General Government, Utility, Debt Service and Other. The 2022 data, (the most recent data from the LGC) is shown in the chart below. See more LGC data on page 32.

Function	Average Per Capita Expenditure of Group	River Bend Per Capita Expenditure
Utility	\$333	\$270
Debt Service	\$138	\$96
Transportation	\$132	\$100
General Government	\$265	\$238
Public Safety	\$447	\$202
Other	\$381	\$285
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,696</b>	<b>\$1,191</b>

One of the largest expenditures for River Bend and for most localities is the cost of personnel. After adding 1 full-time Police Officer, and 2 other part-time employees, we now have 19 full-time employees and 5 part-time positions, or 21.5 full-time equivalents (FTE) Our total personnel costs account for 48% of the combined operating budgets of the General and Enterprise Funds. This chart shows the number of FTE employees working in each department. It does not, however, show the allocation of labor between the General Fund and Enterprise Funds that we use to account for work done outside of an employee’s primary department. We use allocations in order to arrive at a more accurate cost of providing certain services and these allocations were examined as this budget was prepared. A detailed allocation table was provided during the budget workshops.



Through operational efficiencies in the utilization of personnel, leveraging technology to mitigate staffing increases, receiving countless hours of volunteer assistance, and other

management strategies, we are able to maintain a staffing profile below that of comparable localities. In fact, according to 2022 data from the North Carolina Local Government Commission, River Bend's per capita expenditure for salaries and wages was \$357, which is \$92 less than the average of our peer group of \$449.

This budget, following the guidance of the Council, by their continued support of our compensation plan, includes a 4.4% cost of living allowance and a 1% longevity increase, both are only for eligible employees in accordance with the plan. An additional merit pool is available to be used to recognize outstanding performance of individual employees.

### **Sources of Revenue**

Revenues from local sales tax grew during FY23. We expect that trend to continue during FY24 but at a lower rate. General Fund revenues are budgeted at \$2,156,391 which is a 5.15% reduction compared to revenue in last year's budget. Fund Balance appropriation in the General Fund is \$198,597, which is a reduction of 31.85% compared to last year's approved amount of \$291,394.

The General Fund receives revenue from several sources, the largest of which is Ad Valorem taxes. Ad Valorem, from the Latin phrase meaning "according to value," is levied upon the property, and measured by the value of the property, not the owner's ability to pay. While important, Ad Valorem tax revenue is forecast to generate \$1,025,566 or only 47.5% of the revenue for our General Fund in FY24. Of that amount, \$90,000 is attributable to taxes on motor vehicles. That means that more than half of the services that we provide in the General Fund are paid for with sources other than local property tax revenue. State law limits the rate a locality may charge for this tax to \$1.50 per \$100 of valuation. Our proposed tax rate is 24¢, which is reduced from last year. The property value is expected to increase by \$113,544,188.

According to the North Carolina Local Government Commission, the average effective tax rate among all reporting municipal governments in North Carolina as of June 30, 2021 (the latest available data) was \$0.3922 per hundred. River Bend contracts with the Craven County tax office to collect our taxes. This enables our residents to receive one tax bill and remit payment to one place. It also allows us to enjoy an excellent collection rate for real and personal property taxes. In FY 23-24, we have budgeted for a collection rate of 99.12%.

The next largest source of revenue comes from our share of the sales tax that we all pay. These are essentially two tax types: the Sales Tax on the retail sale or lease of tangible personal property, services, the rental of hotel rooms, and the Use Tax, which is an excise tax on the right to use or consume property in North Carolina or elsewhere. All taxes are pooled by the State and shared, in accordance with statutory formulas, by all 100 counties. Each county, in turn, shares their portion of the sales tax proceeds with the incorporated cities and towns in that county.



In addition to sales tax revenue, the Town also receives revenue from the State reflecting our statutory portion of tax revenues from telecommunication services, video programming, beer and wine sales, and others. With the exception of funding received under the terms of the Powell Bill, State revenues can be used for any legitimate government function. Powell Bill funding, by law, is restricted for uses related to the maintenance of streets. Historically, River Bend uses 100% of this funding to continue to follow our master street maintenance plan.

### **Fund Balance**

The North Carolina Local Government Commission (LGC) monitors the level of fund balance each unit maintains as a sign of their relative financial strength. Sufficient fund balance is essential to ensure a unit of local government has ample funds to respond to emergencies and opportunities. While not official, the historical benchmark for fund balance that many units recognize as the minimum is 8% of total expenditures. If a unit approaches that level, the LGC may express concern to the unit and direct action to increase the balance. Our audit shows we ended FY22 with a fund balance of \$1,365,837 or approximately 74%. The policy set by the Town Council is to maintain a fund balance of at least 50% of total expenditures. Our unaudited projection for fund balance at the end of FY23 is 54%. According to June 30, 2021 LGC data (the latest available data) the average fund balance for our peer group (Those with General Fund Expenditures of \$1,000,000-\$9,999,999) was \$3,174,166, or 91.97%. The fund balance for River Bend for that same period was \$1,152,751 or 52.98%. I believe the dollar amount of fund balance is more important than the percentage of fund balance. I often say, "Percentages do not pay the bills, dollars do." Also, the average tax rate for this group was 33.52¢. At that time our tax rate was 26¢. There were 190 towns in this group. Only 36 of those levied a lower tax rate than River Bend.

### **Enterprise Funds**

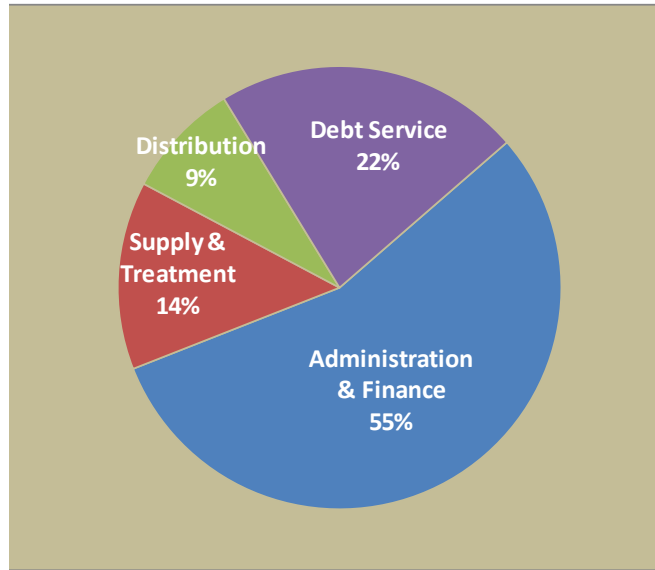
In addition to the General Fund, covering all typical government operations, the Town of River Bend operates two enterprises: the water system and the sewer system. These two enterprises are operated as businesses by having all revenues and expenditures accounted for separately from other functions of the Town and by having rates established that cover all expenditures of the enterprise. River Bend purchased these two businesses from a private company, Carolina Water Service, in 1995. As a result of this purchase, a significant portion of the revenue we receive is dedicated to cover the debt incurred, and amortized with annual payments through fiscal year 2027.

In FY2013, we refinanced the debt in order to take advantage of interest rates that were more favorable than we had in our prior debt structure. The result of this effort was a savings of nearly \$300,000 over the remaining life of the debt. Following a 2021 review, our Standard & Poor's rating was AA+. Following a 2020 review our Moody's A1 stable rating was affirmed. Both ratings remain the same today. These ratings are further evidence of good financial performance.

**Water Enterprise Expenditures**

Expenditures in the Water Fund are divided according to function. There are costs specifically associated with supply and treatment (taking the water from the ground and treating it to make it safe to drink) and costs associated with distributing it to the customer. Other costs, in the administration and finance area, include personnel, vehicles, office rent, utilities, and bond debt service.

As noted earlier, debt service is a large expenditure for this enterprise and is divided from the Administration and Finance department in the chart to illustrate its proportion to overall expenditures. The total budgeted expenditure for the water enterprise in FY23-24 is \$631,835, an increase of \$22,094 or 3.62% from the current fiscal year budget. The graph to the right, shows the percentage of the expenditures that each department represents within the Water Fund.



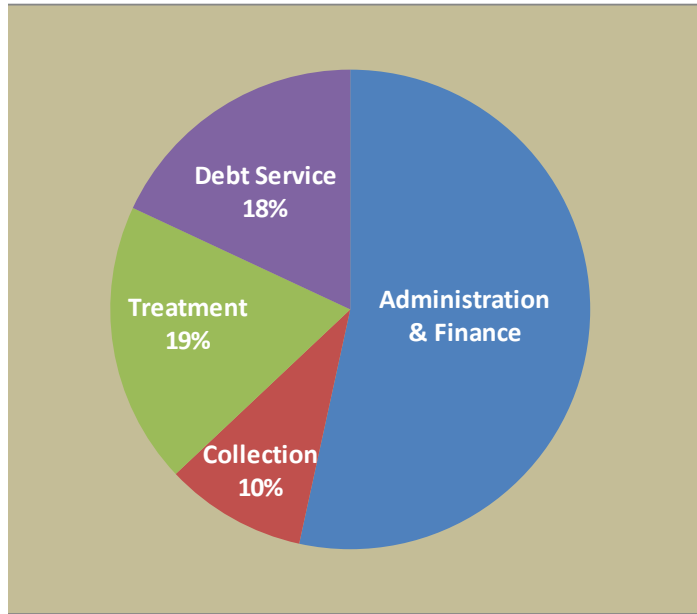
The chart below shows the comparison of the current budget vs. the proposed budget.

Water	22-23	23-24	Change v. prior year	
	Budget	Proposed	%	\$
Administration & Finance	485,741	491,335	1.15%	5,594
Supply & Treatment	75,000	86,800	15.73%	11,800
Distribution	49,000	53,700	9.59%	4,700
<b>TOTAL (less transfer and contingency)</b>	609,741	631,835	3.62%	22,094

The chart above does not include transfers, which in the Water Fund this year, are \$23,500 into the CIP for capital outlay and future vehicle purchases. Including transfers, the total Water Fund expenditures for FY24 are \$655,335 as noted on page 3.

**Sewer Enterprise Expenditures**

Similar to water expenditures, those for the sewer enterprise are also divided according to function. Costs specifically associated with collection (pipes and lift stations) are separated from those associated with operating the wastewater treatment plant. Other costs, in the administration and finance area, include personnel, vehicles, office rent, utilities, and bond debt. As noted earlier, debt service is a large expenditure for this enterprise and is divided from the Administration and Finance department in the chart to illustrate its proportion to overall expenditures. Excluding, transfers, the total budgeted expenditure for the sewer enterprise in FY23-24 is \$675,535, a \$3,490 or 0.51% decrease from the current fiscal year. The graph to the right, shows the percentage of the expenditures that each department represents within the Sewer Fund. The chart below shows the comparison of the current budget vs. the proposed budget.



Sewer	22-23	23-24	Change v. prior year	
	Budget	Proposed	%	\$
Administration & Finance	468,025	482,735	3.14%	14,710
Collection	75,000	64,500	-14.00%	-10,500
Treatment	136,000	128,300	-5.66%	-7,700
<b>TOTAL( Less transfers &amp; contingency)</b>	<b>679,025</b>	<b>675,535</b>	<b>-0.51%</b>	<b>-3,490</b>

The chart above does not include transfers, which in the Sewer Fund this year, are \$3,500 into the CIP for future vehicle purchases. Including transfers, the total Sewer Fund expenditures for FY24 are \$679,035, as noted on page 3.

**Enterprise Fund Revenue**

The budget for these two enterprises received attention in our budget workshop sessions with proposed revenues for current and future years being scrutinized in light of anticipated expenditures. We are fortunate to have a professionally designed rate model for each utility so the impact of the proposed expenditures can be compared to revenue at various rate levels. Based upon the proposed expenditures, proposed revenues from user fees and cash balance, the water utility rates will not change for FY 23-24.

Likewise, both current and future revenues and expenditures for sewer were considered during the budget work sessions. The sewer utility rates will not change in FY 23-24. The current rate structure, combined with conservative expenditures, will allow both utilities to maintain an adequate level of reserves to respond to emergent needs if they arise during the year and through FY 24-25. The cash balance in both funds was substantially reduced in FY 23 due to each fund contributing \$515,879 to fund their portion of the cost of the new Public Works Building. Each year, the Council looks at current and long-range needs of both systems. Next year, the Council will do the same and will consider any necessary rate changes to keep the funds sound.

### **Conclusion**

It is important to concentrate our annual budgeting efforts on maintaining current levels of services and maintenance of Town-owned property and infrastructure, while attempting to maintain a low tax rate and avoid any increase in fees. The budget being presented for your consideration accomplishes those goals. Each year we are faced with different challenges and opportunities. Last year, it was the on-going impacts of COVID-19 Pandemic. While COVID-19 medical impacts seem to be minimal, supply chain issue related to COVID-19 remain. High inflation is still having substantial impacts on our national, state and local economies and budgets. A considerable amount of discussion was devoted to the difficulty of predicting such effects on the town's FY 23-24 budget, specifically related to inflation and on-going efforts to retain quality staff while also rebuilding fund balance.

Maintaining our critical infrastructure and essential services comes at a cost; and River Bend, like towns throughout the State, must manage in a fiscal climate marked with a still uncertain economy. Town Council members should accept their responsibility with great conviction and sincerity and strive to be well-informed and engaged in the operation of this government. This budget reflects the Council's commitment to maintaining and improving this community and positioning it to be financially sound in the future. I believe it to be worthy of your consideration and approval.

I thank the Mayor, Town Council, and Town staff for their commitment to and participation in this budget process. I want to recognize the considerable contribution of Mandy Gilbert, our Finance Director, in the development of this year's budget. However, every member of the staff at Town Hall, along with the Department Heads contributed in some degree to the budget development process. This annual budget represents a true team effort as we all work to preserve the future of this great community.

Respectfully Submitted,



Delane Jackson,  
Town Manager

## Proposed Annual Budget Ordinance

BE IT ORDAINED by the Council of the Town of River Bend, North Carolina that the following anticipated fund revenues and departmental expenditures, together with certain fees and schedules, and with certain restrictions and authorizations, are hereby appropriated and approved for the operation of the Town government and its activities for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2023 and ending June 30, 2024:

### Summary

General Fund	2,156,391
General Capital Reserve Fund	56,900
Law Enforcement Separation Allowance Fund	12,685
Water Fund	655,335
Water Capital Reserve Fund	10
Sewer Fund	679,035
Sewer Capital Reserve Fund	1
Total	3,560,357

### Section 1.                    General Fund

#### Anticipated Revenues

AD VALOREM Taxes 2023-2024	935,566
AD VALOREM Taxes-Motor Vehicle	90,000
Animal Licenses	1,500
Sales Tax 1% Article 39	195,868
Sales Tax 1/2% Article 40	114,635
Sales Tax 1/2% Article 42	97,901
Sales Tax Article 44	13,090
Sales Tax Hold Harmless Distribution	108,195
Solid Waste Disposal Tax	2,200
Powell Bill Allocation	91,000
Beer and Wine Tax	13,225
Video Programming Sales Tax	49,621
Utilities Franchise Tax	112,169
Telecommunications Sales Tax	6,725
Court Refunds	500
Zoning Permits	7,000
Miscellaneous	15,000
Interest-Powell Bill Investments	50
Interest-General Fund Investments	20,000
Contributions	901
Wildwood Storage Rents	18,144
Rents & Concessions	18,000
Sale of Fixed Assets	3,000
Transfer from Capital Reserve Fund	43,504
Appropriated Fund Balance	198,597
Total	2,156,391

Town of River Bend, North Carolina  
Annual Budget for Fiscal Year 2023-2024

Authorized Expenditures

Governing Body	65,000
Administration	304,500
Finance	138,000
Tax Listing	13,700
Legal Services	24,000
Elections	0
Police	744,800
Public Buildings	103,600
Emergency Services	5,700
Animal Control	17,100
Street Maintenance	232,200
Public Works	189,000
Leaf & Limb and Solid Waste	52,384
Stormwater Management	47,000
Wetlands and Waterways	2,900
Planning & Zoning	57,000
Recreation & Special Events	10,500
Parks & Community Appearance	61,000
Contingency	20,807
Transfer to Capital Reserve Fund	55,000
Transfer to L.E.S.A. Fund	12,200
Total	2,156,391

**Section 2. General Capital Reserve Fund**

Anticipated Revenues

Contributions from General Fund	55,000
Interest Revenue	1,900
Total	56,900

Authorized Expenditures

Transfer to General Fund	43,504
Future Procurement	13,396
Total	56,900

Town of River Bend, North Carolina  
Annual Budget for Fiscal Year 2023-2024

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**Section 3. Law Enforcement Separation Allowance Trust Fund**

Anticipated Revenues:

Contributions from General Fund	12,200
Interest Revenue	485
Total	<u>12,685</u>

Authorized Expenditures:

Separation Allowance	0
Future LEOSA Payments	<u>12,685</u>
Total	12,685

**Section 4. Water Fund**

Anticipated Revenues

Utility Usage Charges, Classes 1 & 2	210,591
Utility Usage Charges, Classes 3 & 4	12,428
Utility Usage Charges, Class 5	15,002
Utility Usage Charges, Class 8	4,644
Utility Customer Base Charges	278,811
Hydrant Availability Fee	19,764
Taps & Connections Fees	1,250
Nonpayment Fees	10,500
Late Payment Fees	7,822
Interest Revenue	3,488
Sale of Fixed Asset	0
Appropriated Fund Balance	<u>91,035</u>
Total	655,335

Authorized Expenditures

Administration & Finance [1]	491,335
Operations and Maintenance	140,500
Transfer to Fund Balance for Capital Outlay	23,500
Transfer to Water Capital Reserve Fund	<u>0</u>
Total	655,335

[1] Portion of department for bond debt service: 141,157

**Section 5. Water Capital Reserve Fund**

Town of River Bend, North Carolina  
Annual Budget for Fiscal Year 2023-2024

Anticipated Revenues

Contributions from Water Operations Fund		0
Interest Revenue		10
Total		10

Authorized Expenditures

Future Expansion & Debt Service		10
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**Section 6. Sewer Fund**

Anticipated Revenues:

Utility Usage Charges, Classes 1 & 2		267,170
Utility Usage Charges, Classes 3 & 4		36,679
Utility Usage Charges, Class 5		28,142
Utility Usage Charges, Class 8		16,833
Utility Customer Base Charges		296,108
Taps & Connection Fees		1,250
Late Payment Fees		8,384
Interest Revenue		5,836
Sale of Fixed Asset		0
Appropriated Fund Balance		18,633
Total		679,035

Authorized Expenditures:

Administration & Finance [2]		482,735
Operations and Maintenance		192,800
Transfer to Fund Balance for Capital Outlay		3,500
Transfer to Sewer Capital Reserve Fund		0
Total		679,035

<i>[2] Portion of department for bond debt service:</i>		121,893
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**Section 7. Sewer Capital Reserve**

Anticipated Revenues:

Contribution from Sewer Operations Fund		0
Interest Revenue		1
Total		1

Authorized Expenditures:



Future Expansion & Debt Service

1

**Section 8. Levy of Taxes**

There is hereby levied a tax at the rate of twenty-four cents (\$0.24) per one hundred dollars (\$100) valuation of property as listed for taxes as of January 1, 2023, for the purpose of raising the revenue listed "Ad Valorem Taxes 2023-2024" in the General Fund Section 1 of this ordinance. This rate is based on a valuation of property for purposes of taxation of \$393,280,000 and an estimated rate of collection of 99.12%. The estimated collection rate is based on the fiscal year 2021-2022 collection rate of 99.12% by Craven County who has been contracted to collect property taxes for the Town of River Bend. Also included in this rate is a valuation of \$37,500,000 for purposes of taxation of motor vehicles with a collection rate of 100% by the North Carolina Vehicle Tax System.

**Section 9. Fees and Charges**

There is hereby established, for Fiscal Year 2023-2024 various fees and charges as contained in Attachment A of this document.

**Section 10. Special Authorization of the Budget Officer**

- A. The Budget Officer shall be authorized to reallocate any appropriations within departments.
- B. The Budget Officer shall be authorized to execute interfund and interdepartmental transfers in emergency situations. Notification of all such transfers shall be made to the Town Council at its next meeting following the transfer.
- C. The Budget Officer shall be authorized to execute interdepartmental transfers in the same fund, including contingency appropriations, not to exceed \$5,000. Notification of all such transfers shall be made to the Town Council at its next meeting following the transfer.

**Section 11. Classification and Pay Plan**

Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) for all Town employees shall be 4.4% and shall begin the first payroll in the new fiscal year.

The Town Manager is hereby authorized to grant merit increases to Town employees, when earned, per the approved Pay Plan.

**Section 12. Utilization of the Budget Ordinance**

This ordinance shall be the basis of the financial plan for the Town of River Bend municipal government during the 2023-2024 fiscal year. The Budget Officer shall administer the Annual Operating Budget and shall ensure the operating staff and officials are provided with guidance and sufficient details to implement their appropriate portion of the budget.

**Section 13. Copies of this Budget Ordinance**

Copies of this Budget Ordinance shall be furnished to the Clerk, Town Council, Budget Officer, and Finance Officer to be kept on file by them for their direction in the disbursement of funds.

Adopted this 15th day of June, 2023.

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John R. Kirkland, Mayor

Attest:

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Kristie J. Nobles, Town Clerk

**Town of River Bend**  
**Schedule of Rates and Fees**  
**(Attachment A to Budget Ordinance)**  
Effective July 1, 2023

Amounts due are based upon the Fees and Charges Schedule in effect at the time of payment. It is the Town Council's intention that the Fees and Charges Schedule be revised as needed by July 1st of each year. Some fees and charges may be adjusted during the year as circumstances change.

**GENERAL FUND**

**Administrative**

<b>Ad Valorem Tax</b>	\$ .24 per \$100 assessed valuation
<b>Copies of Public Information</b>	As specified by State Statute
<b>Town Code, entire copy</b>	\$75.00
<b>Notary Fee</b>	\$10.00 per signature after the first
<b>Meeting Rooms</b>	
Four hours or less	\$40.00
Over four hours	\$80.00
<b>Returned Check Processing Charge</b>	\$25, as allowed by G.S. §25-3-506
<b>Administrative Fee for returned bank drafts</b>	\$25.00

**Public Safety**

<b>Pet License Fee</b>	\$10.00
<b>Golf Cart Registration Fee</b>	\$10.00

**Nuisance Abatement Administrative Fee**

<u>Cost of Abatement</u>	<u>Fee</u>
\$1 – 1,000	\$50.00
\$1,001 – and up	5% of total abatement cost (maximum fee \$2,000)

**Parks**

**Town Hall Pavilion Use**

Up to 25 attendants	No charge
26 - 100 attendants	\$25
Over 100 attendants	\$50

**Planning and Zoning**

**Special Exception Use Permit**                      \$200 plus cost of required legal advertisement and postage to notify abutting land owners

**Variance**    \$200 plus cost of required legal advertisement and postage to notify abutting land owners

**Appeal to Board of Adjustment**                      \$200 plus cost of required legal advertisement and postage to notify abutting land owners

**Residential Application**                      Based on amount of project as follows:

Base Fee	\$30
	\$2 for every \$1,000 of project value after first \$1,000 and up to \$100,000; plus, \$1 for every \$1,000 above \$100,000 (All values rounded up to nearest \$1,000)

*Zoning Administrator can use any appropriate means to verify project valuation.*

**Residential Flood Plain Application with Zoning Permit**

40% of the fee for the Town's residential zoning permit and shall be additional to the zoning permit fee for enclosed structures (fences, decks, and other similar exempt from additional fee).

**Commercial Application**                      Based on amount of project as follows:

Base Fee	\$50
----------	------

\$4 for every \$1,000 of project value after first \$1,000 and up to \$100,000; plus, \$2 for every \$1,000 above \$100,000 (All values rounded up to nearest \$1,000)

*Zoning Administrator can use any appropriate means to verify project valuation.*

**Commercial Flood Plain Application with Zoning Permit**

40% of the fee for the Town's commercial zoning permit and shall be additional to the zoning permit fee for enclosed structures (fences, decks, and other similar exempt from additional fee).

**Residential Flood Plain Application without Zoning Permit**

Based on amount of project as follows:

Base Fee      \$30

\$2 for every \$1,000 of project value after first \$1,000 and up to \$100,000; plus, \$1 for every \$1,000 above \$100,000 (All values rounded up to nearest \$1,000)

*Zoning Administrator can use any appropriate means to verify project valuation.*

**Commercial Flood Plain Application without Zoning Permit**

Based on amount of project as follows:

Base Fee      \$50

\$4 for every \$1,000 of project value after first \$1,000 and up to \$100,000; plus, \$2 for every \$1,000 above \$100,000 (All values rounded up to nearest \$1,000)

*Zoning Administrator can use any appropriate means to verify project valuation.*

**Engineering Review**

Charged to applicant at the actual cost of the service as billed by the contracted engineer.

**Zoning Amendment Request (Map or Text)**

\$200 plus cost of required legal advertisement and postage to notify

abutting land owners

**Sign Permit** \$30  
**Tree Harvest Permit** \$50

**Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances** \$25 per set

**Wildwood Storage Rental Rates**

Unit Number	Unit Size	Monthly Rent
BB 01	5x20	\$35
BB 02	5x20	\$35
BB 03	5x20	\$35
BB 04	5x20	\$35
BB 05	10x20	\$75
BB 06	10x20	\$75
BB 07	10x20	\$75
BB 08	10x20	Town Occupied (TO)
BB 09	10x20	TO
BB 10	10x20	TO
BB 11	10x20	TO
BB 12	10x20	TO
GB 15	10x16	\$65
GB 16	10x16	\$65
GB 17	10x16	\$65
GB 18	10x16	\$65
GB 19	10x16	\$65
GB 20	10x16	TO
GB 21	10x16	TO
GB 22	10x16	TO
OP	Open Spaces (40)	\$25
Late Payment Charge		\$10, assessed after the 10 <sup>th</sup> of the month
Interest Charge		1.5% monthly on outstanding balances

**ENTERPRISE FUNDS**

**Water and Sewer - Rates and Fees**

	<b>Water</b>	<b>Sewer</b>
<b>Class 1 and 2 - Residential <sup>(1)</sup></b>		
Customer Base Charge per month <sup>(2)</sup>	15.24	24.18
Usage per 1,000 gallons	-	9.30
Usage 0-4,000 gallons	4.22	-
Usage 4,001-20,000 gallons	4.50	-
Usage 20,001+ gallons	4.55	-
Initial Connection (Tap) charge <sup>(3)</sup>	1,250.00	1,250.00
Nonpayment Fee	70.00	-
<b>Class 3 and 4 - Commercial</b>		
Customer Base Charge per month <sup>(2)</sup>	88.32	141.99
Usage per 1,000 gallons	4.22	9.30
Initial Connection (Tap) charge <sup>(4)</sup>	3,500.00	1,250.00
Nonpayment Fee	100.00	-
<b>Class 5 - Industrial</b>		
Customer Base Charge per month <sup>(2)</sup>	276.24	444.93
Usage per 1,000 gallons	4.22	9.30
Initial Connection (Tap) charge <sup>(4)</sup>	5,000.00	1,250.00
Nonpayment Fee	200.00	-
<b>Class 6 - Early Bird (No longer available)</b>		
<b>Class 7 - Fire Hydrant Charge</b>		
Availability Charge per year	183.00	-
<b>Class 8 - 1" Water Service</b>		
Customer Base Charge per month <sup>(2)</sup>	30.90	49.43
Usage per 1,000 gallons	4.22	9.30
Initial Connection (Tap) charge <sup>(4)</sup>	1,500.00	1,250.00
Nonpayment Fee	100.00	-
<b>Class 9 - Vacant /Out of Use Non-residential Property</b>		
Customer Base Charge per month <sup>(2)</sup>	15.24	24.18
Usage per 1,000 gallons	4.22	9.30
Nonpayment Fee	70.00	-
<b>Class 10 - Vacant Residences</b>		
Customer Base Charge per month <sup>(2)</sup>	15.24	-
Nonpayment Fee	70.00	-

**Special Charges**

<b>Service Call - 2 hour minimum</b>	\$35 per hour - signed by customer to initiate work outside of scheduled work hours of 7:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. on weekdays and 7:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. on weekends
<b>Meter Testing Charge</b>	\$25 - no charge if meter defective
<b>Returned Check Processing Charge</b>	\$25, as allowed by G.S. §25-3-506
<b>Late Payment Charge</b>	10% of amount overdue per month or part of month beginning 30 days after billing date
<b>Irrigation Connection Inspection</b>	\$20

(1) Residential customer deposit may apply. Please refer to Water Resources Department Policy Manual.

(2) Base charges do not include any usage.

(3) The published Initial Connection (Tap) charges are based on the historic River Bend average cost that has been experienced in making connections. There will be cases when, because of the local depth of the service main pipe to which the connection is to be made, or other site specific differences from the norm, the published connection fee will not cover the actual cost of the tap. When the Water Resources Superintendent encounters such conditions, he shall notify the applicant requesting the tap that the cost may exceed the published fee. In those cases, a record of cost associated with the specific tap will be accounted for and if the total cost exceeds the published fee, then the applicant shall pay a fee equal to the actual cost. Initial connection charges are based upon the size of the meter and charged as shown in the appropriate Class above.

(4) The necessary equipment will be provided to the resident at cost. The resident is responsible for installing the irrigation meter on the resident's side of the regular water meter. After installation, the work will be inspected by a Water Resources Department employee.



### Budget “Snapshot”

What follows is a brief “snapshot” of the budgets of all three major funds. These are briefly explained in the Budget Message that precedes these pages, and were discussed in detail during the budget sessions.

#### General Fund Expenditures

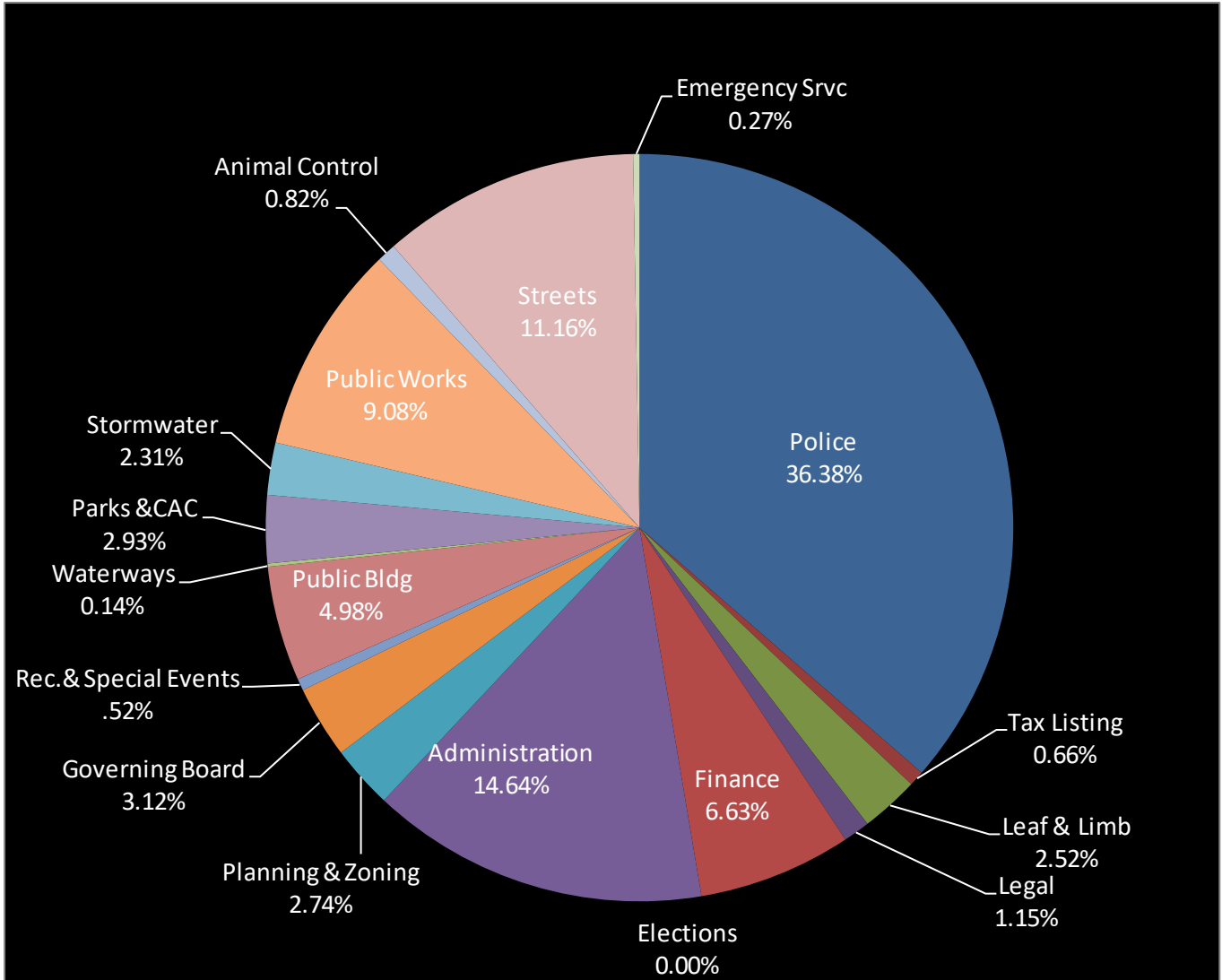
The chart shown below summarizes, by department, the actual, budgeted, projected, and proposed expenditures in the General Fund for the previous three fiscal years, the current fiscal year, and the budget under consideration. This allows the reader to see how expenditures change in each of these departments over the course of several years.

General Fund Expenditure Summary		Change v. prior year					
		20-21	21-22	22-23	23-24	%	\$
Dept #	Department Name	Actual	Actual	Current Budget	Proposed		
4110	Governing Body	20,319	23,790	30,400	65,000	113.82%	34,600
4120	Administration*	255,935	271,051	296,800	304,500	2.59%	7,700
4130	Finance*	130,443	175,220	133,800	138,000	3.14%	4,200
4140	Tax Listing	10,461	10,655	11,600	13,700	18.10%	2,100
4150	Legal Services*	16,000	22,125	29,092	24,000	-17.50%	-5,092
4170	Elections	-	-	1,000	-	-100.00%	-1,000
4310	Police*	565,654	516,846	677,943	757,000	11.66%	79,057
4190	Public Buildings	170,305	109,703	102,300	103,600	1.27%	1,300
4330	Emergency Services	4,463	3,002	3,700	5,700	54.05%	2,000
4380	Animal Control	11,418	5,022	14,600	17,100	17.12%	2,500
4510	Street Maintenance	188,123	158,900	193,000	232,200	20.31%	39,200
4560	Public Works	155,553	129,268	177,500	189,000	6.48%	11,500
4710	Leaf & Limb and Solid Waste	49,223	38,701	51,000	52,384	2.71%	1,384
4730	Stormwater Management*	204,998	7,429	311,395	47,000	-84.91%	-264,395
4760	Wetlands & Waterways	70,946	543	2,900	2,900	0.00%	0
4910	Planning & Zoning*	45,776	45,769	54,800	57,000	4.02%	2,200
6120	Recreation & Special Events	2,805	6,912	7,600	10,500	38.16%	2,900
6130	Parks & CAC*	39,225	38,004	101,200	61,000	-39.72%	-40,200
4915	NCORR Recovery Grant	99,002	-	-	-	0.00%	0
<b>Department Expenditure Total</b>		2,040,649	1,562,942	2,200,630	2,080,585	-5.46%	-120,045
	Contingency (1% per policy)	5,968	17,666	17,931	20,807	16.04%	2,876
	Transfer to Capital Reserve	60,000	107,000	60,000	55,000	-8.33%	-5,000
	Transfer to Capital Project Fund	73,500	482,189		-		
* department amended since adoption as of							
<b>TOTAL</b>		2,180,117	2,169,797	2,278,561	2,156,391	-5.36%	-122,170

Town of River Bend, North Carolina  
Annual Budget for Fiscal Year 2023-2024

The last two columns compare the proposed budget to the current year's budget.

This chart shows the percentage of funding that each department receives of the total budget.



Town of River Bend, North Carolina  
Annual Budget for Fiscal Year 2023-2024

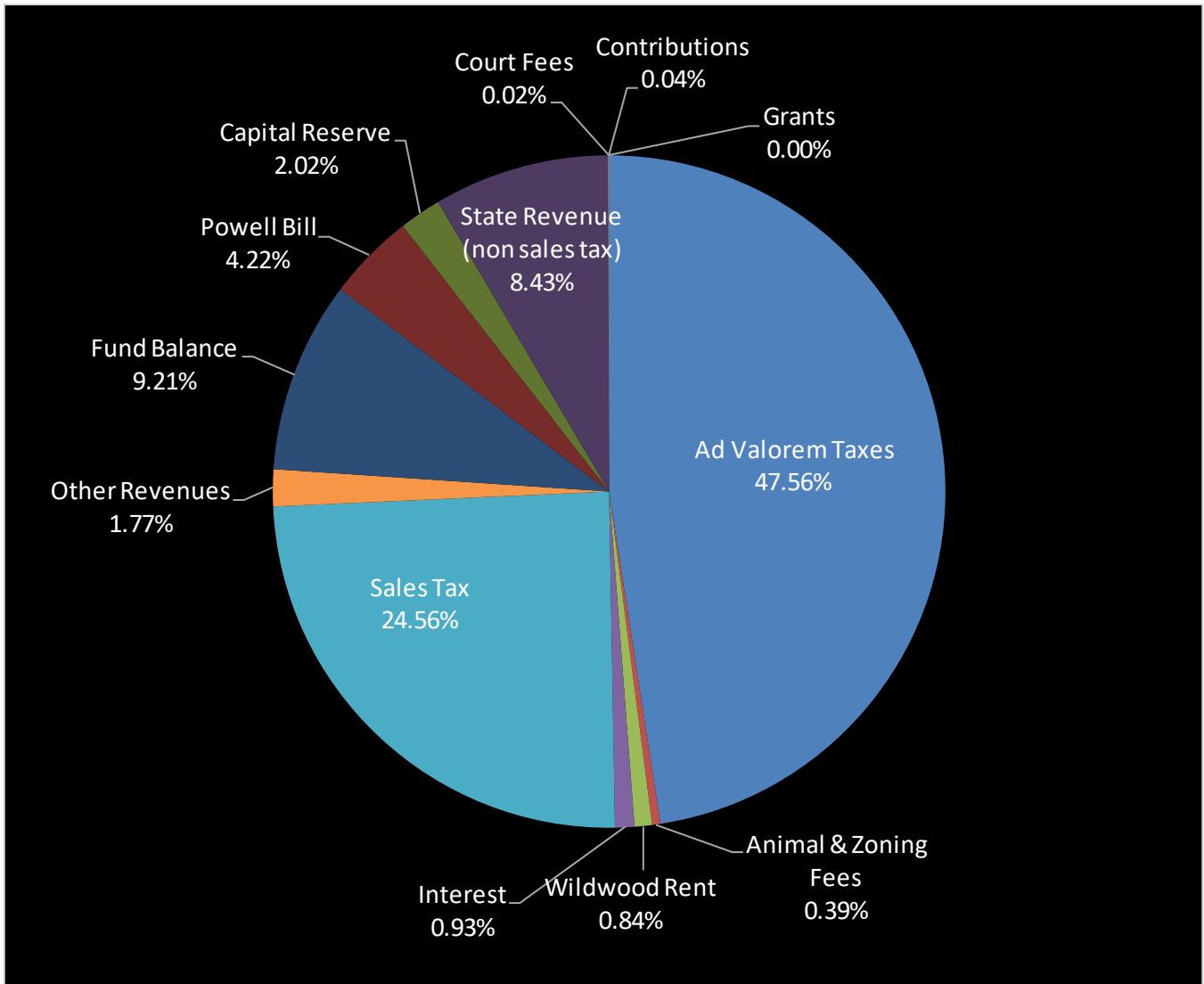
**General Fund Revenue**

The chart shown below summarizes the actual, budgeted, and projected revenue, by type, in the General Fund. Similar to the chart for expenditures, this worksheet gives the reader some historical perspective regarding the changes in sources of revenue.

General Fund Revenue Summary	20-21	21-22	22-23	23-24	Change v. prior year	
	Actual	Actual	Current Budget	Proposed	%	\$
Ad Valorem Taxes	809,357	824,190	814,010	1,025,566	25.99%	211,556
Animal Licenses & Zoning Permits	10,680	17,607	7,000	8,500	21.43%	1,500
Interest	281	1,709	550	20,050	3545.45%	19,500
Wildwood Rents	18,368	20,141	18,144	18,144	0.00%	0
Other Revenue & Rents	34,231	68,126	45,200	38,200	-15.49%	-7,000
Contributions	0	0	421	901	114.01%	480
Powell Bill (includes appropriation)	80,899	94,631	91,000	91,000	0.00%	0
State Revenue (other than sales tax)	182,555	185,250	181,071	181,740	0.37%	669
Sales Tax Revenue	436,068	497,326	479,222	529,690	10.53%	50,468
NCORR Loan/Grant Proceeds	0	0	0	0		
Government Grants (Fed, State & Count)	91,552	36,381	272,170	0	-100.00%	-272,170
Fees (court refund)	311	180	500	500	0.00%	0
Charges to Other Funds	0	0	0	0	0.00%	0
Transfer from Capital Reserve	164,663	43,850	72,787	43,504	-40.23%	-29,283
Transfer from LESA Fund	0	0	0	0		0
Transfer from ARPA Fund	0	482,189				
Appropriated Fund Balance	0	0	291,394	198,597	-31.85%	-92,797
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,828,963</b>	<b>2,271,582</b>	<b>2,273,469</b>	<b>2,156,391</b>	<b>-5.15%</b>	<b>-117,078</b>

The last two columns compare the proposed budget to the current year's budget.

This chart shows the percentage each revenue type contributes to total General Fund revenue.

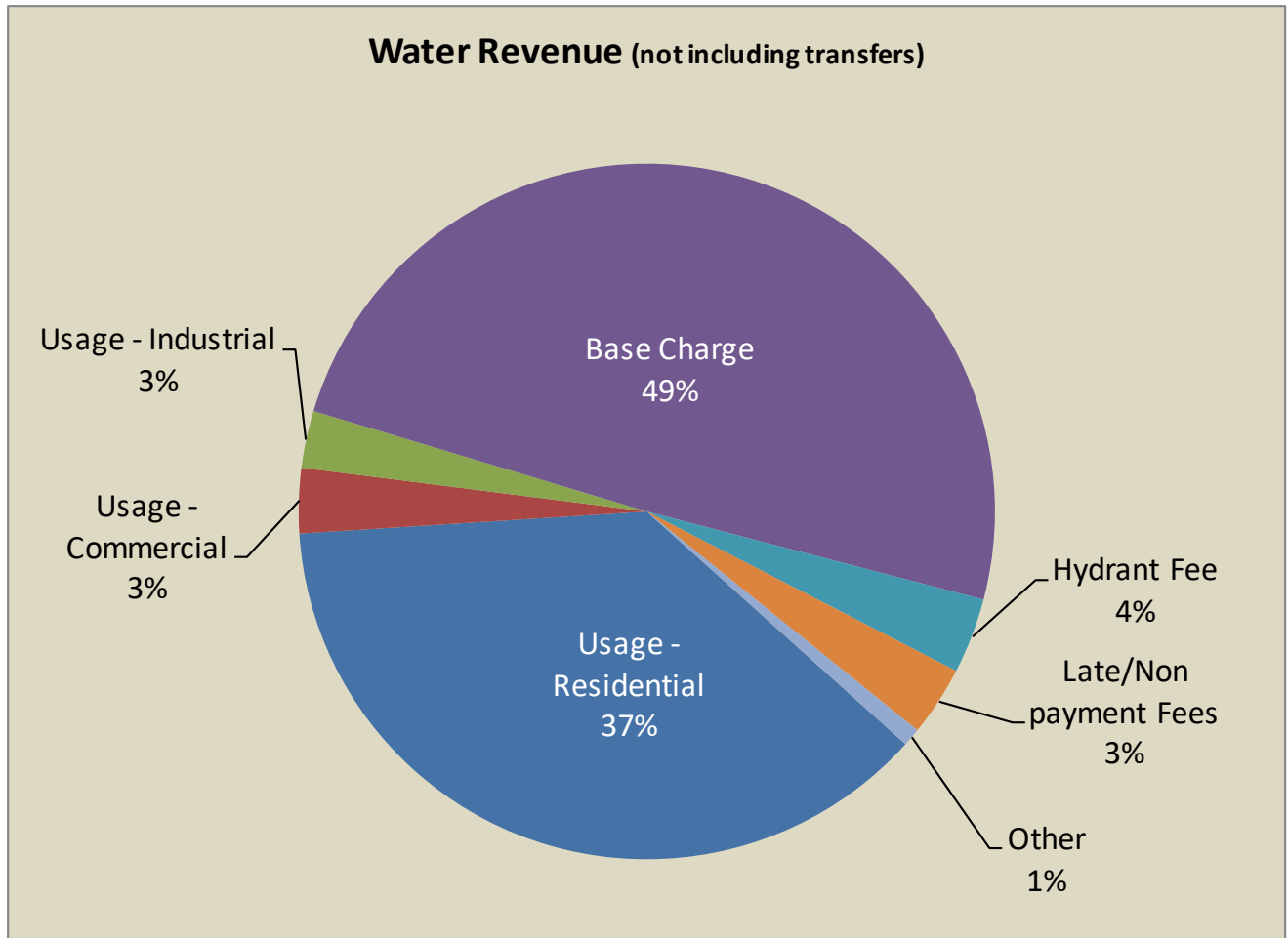


### Water Fund Expenditures

The worksheet shown below summarizes the actual, budgeted, and projected expenditures, by department within the Water Enterprise Fund.

Water		20-21	21-22	22-23	23-24	Change v. prior year	
		Actual	Actual	Budget	Proposed	%	\$
60-7125	Administration & Finance	447,971	500,855	485,741	491,335	1.15%	5,594
60-7132	Supply & Treatment	47,588	42,831	75,000	86,800	15.73%	11,800
60-7134	Distribution	35,880	38,117	49,000	53,700	9.59%	4,700
<b>TOTAL (less transfer and contingency)</b>		531,439	581,803	609,741	631,835	3.62%	22,094

This chart shows the percentage each revenue type contributes to the total received by this enterprise.

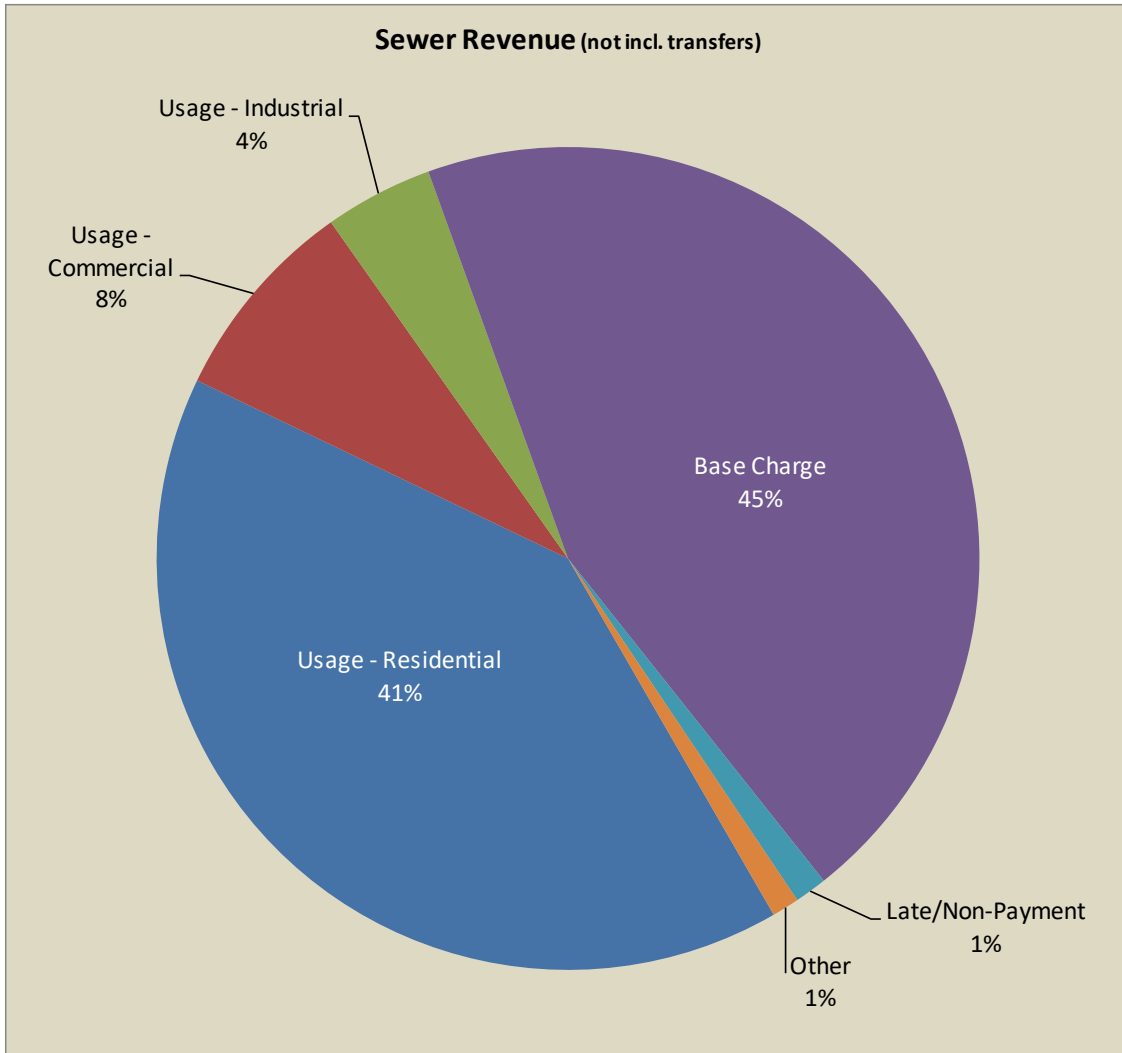


### Sewer Fund Expenditures

The worksheet shown below summarizes the actual, budgeted, and projected expenditures, by department within the Sewer Enterprise Fund.

	Sewer	20-21	21-22	22-23	23-24	Change v. prior year	
		Actual	Actual	Budget	Proposed	%	\$
61-7125	Administration & Finance	442,548	494,414	468,025	482,735	3.14%	14,710
61-7142	Collection	26,651	25,853	75,000	64,500	-14.00%	-10,500
61-7144	Treatment	95,313	101,487	136,000	128,300	-5.66%	-7,700
	<b>TOTAL( Less transfers &amp; contingency)</b>	564,512	621,755	679,025	675,535	-0.51%	-3,490

This chart shows the percentage each revenue type contributes to the total received by this enterprise.



**What Will I Pay?**

This table shows the real estate tax one would pay based upon the assessed value of their property.

To calculate your actual Town tax, multiply the total assessed value of your property by 0.0024. This will show what you pay for the General Fund services that the Town provides.

According to the Craven County Tax Department, the current (May, 2023) average assessed value of a home in River Bend is \$244,807 (note highlighted data).

<b>Assessed Value</b>	<b>Annual Bill at 0.24</b>
95,000	\$228
125,000	\$300
<b>244,807</b>	<b>\$588</b>
190,000	\$456
200,000	\$480
250,000	\$600
300,000	\$720
350,000	\$840
400,000	\$960
500,000	\$1,200
600,000	\$1,440

The following table shows water and sewer rates and their effect upon a residential customer using 3,000 gallons per month. The proposed rates represent no changes in the rates that are in effect as of today. Business, commercial, and industrial base rates and fees are different from the residential base rate and fees. In FY 22, the average water customer used 3,241 gallons of water per month.

<b>Charges for 3,000 gallons per month</b>			
		Current	Proposed
<b>Water</b>	Base	15.24	15.24
	Use	12.66	12.66
<b>Sewer</b>	Base	24.18	24.18
	Use	27.90	27.90
<b>Monthly</b>		<b>79.98</b>	<b>79.98</b>
<b>Per-Bill</b>		<b>159.96</b>	<b>159.96</b>
Monthly Difference			<b>0.00</b>
Per Bill Difference			<b>0.00</b>



This table combines the cost of real estate taxes and the cost of water and sewer to show the total amount a resident of River Bend would pay in a year for real estate taxes

<b>Annual Costs</b>	
Water/Sewer Fees (3,000 gal/month)	\$ 960
Real Estate Tax (\$244,807 home)	\$ 588
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 1,547</b>
Average Per Day Cost for water/sewer/tax	\$ 4.24

on a home valued at \$244,807 and water and sewer fees for 3,000 gallons usage per month. For \$4.24 per day, our average water and sewer user living in our average valued home, receives potable water, wastewater treatment, 24/7 police protection, stormwater management, animal control, planning, zoning, code enforcement, parks, recreational events, street lights, street maintenance, leaf & limb removal, and a host of other services. Our goal is to continue to deliver high quality services at a reasonable price to all who make River Bend their home. Last year the cost was \$3.80 per day. For the average resident, it will cost 44¢ more per day or \$160.60 more per year for these items in River Bend compared to last year.

**Where are my tax dollars spent?**

This table breaks down the proposed tax rate to show how much of that rate goes to fund each of the functions in the General Fund. The total proposed tax rate is 24¢ per one hundred dollars of assessed value.

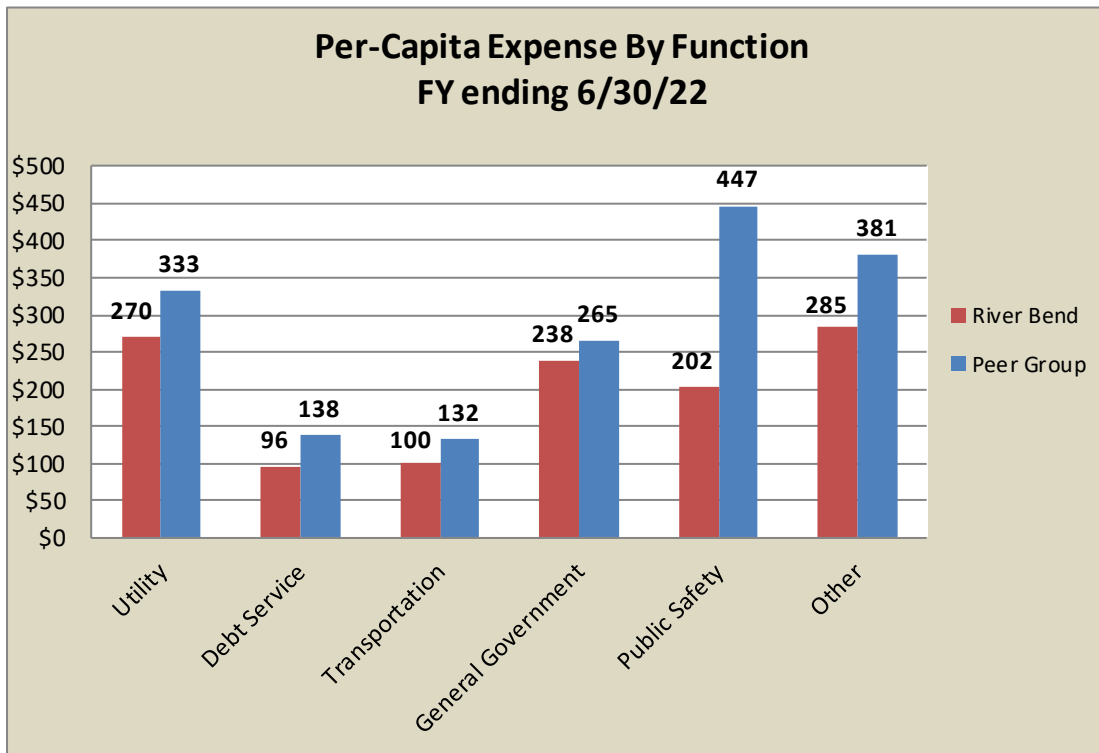
<b>Department</b>	<b>Cents per Hundred</b>
Governing Body	0.723
Administration	3.389
Finance	1.536
Tax Listing	0.152
Legal	0.267
Elections	0.000
Police	8.425
Public Buildings	1.153
Emergency Services	0.063
Animal Control	0.190
Street Maintenance	2.584
Public Works	2.104
Leaf and Limb/Solid Waste	0.583
Stormwater Management	0.523
Wetlands and Waterways	0.032
Planning and Zoning	0.634
Recreation and Special Events	0.117
Parks and CAC	0.679
Contingency	0.232
Transfer to Cap. Res.	0.612
<b>Tax Rate</b>	<b>0.24</b>

**North Carolina Local Government Commission –  
Expenditure and Revenue Per Capita Data**

The North Carolina Local Government Commission (LGC) compiles data based upon a required independent audit and other reports submitted to them for review and approval. This data is collected from all counties, cities, and towns in the State and is reported by locality, and offers comparisons for per capita expenditures and revenue with other similar localities. The charts reflect the latest LGC data, which is as of June 30, 2022.

To make the comparisons fair, the LGC divides all towns into groups by population and they further divide them into groups that do and do not operate their own electric system. The population groups are: 499 and below, 500-999, 1,000-2,499, 2,500-9,999, 10,000-49,999 and 50,000+. There are 551 municipalities in North Carolina. There are 479 units that do not operate electric systems and 72 that do operate electric systems.

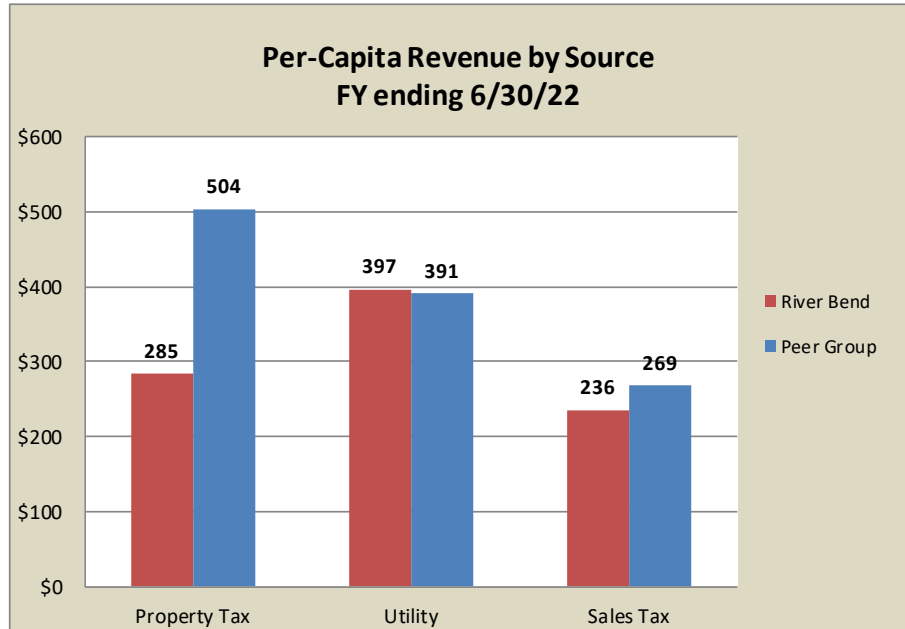
Our peer group is localities with a population between 2,500 and 9,999 residents that do not operate an electric utility. In the fiscal year ending June 30, 2022, there were 122 localities in our peer group.



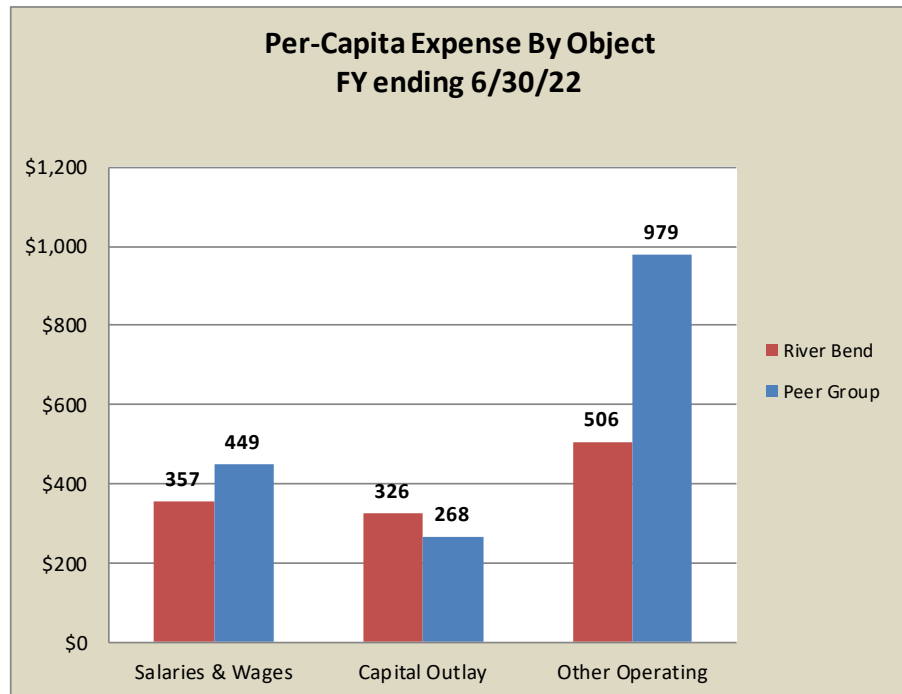
Data from the LGC shows that River Bend’s per-capita expenditures in 2022 were \$1,191 (down \$92 from the previous year) compared to \$1,696 (up \$78 from the previous year) for localities in our peer group. The chart above shows some of the significant expenditures by function and how our expenditures compared with those of our peers. The reader will note that River Bend spends less per capita in all categories compared to our peer group.

Data from the LGC also indicates how we compared with our peer group in fiscal year 2022 in terms of per-capita revenue. The data shows that our total per-capita revenue was \$1,405 compared to \$1,945 for our peers. This means that River Bend residents pay \$540 less than our peer group.

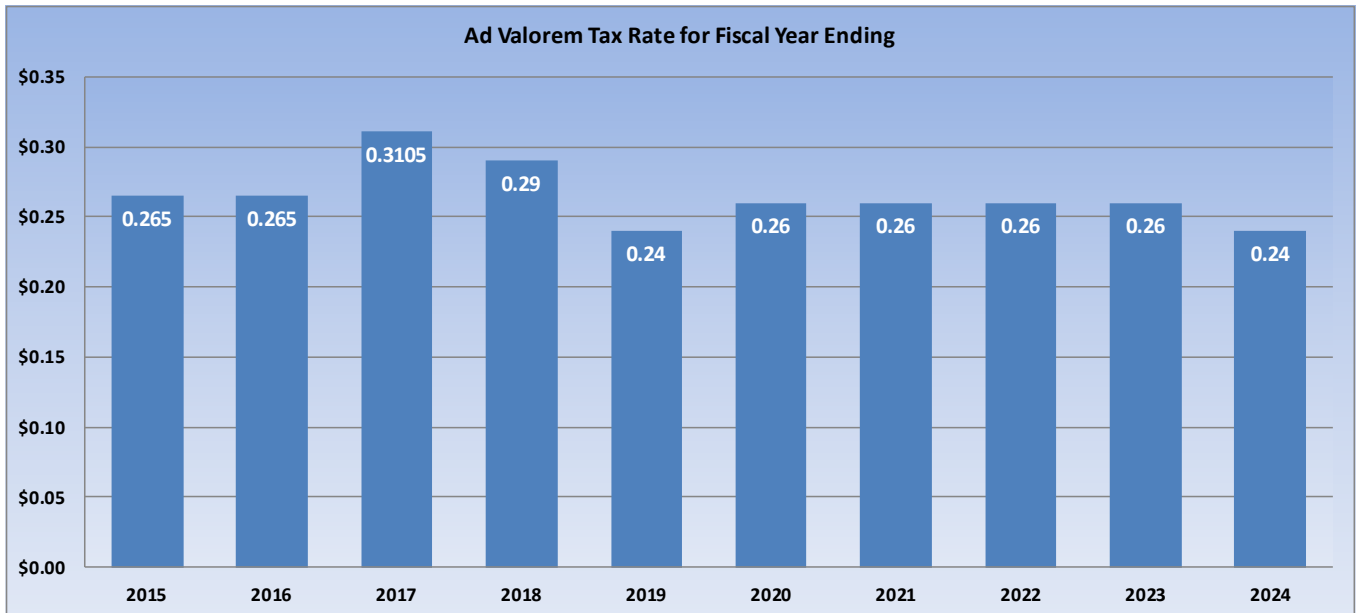
This chart shows 3 of the 7 major revenue categories and how we compare with our peers in each. The reader will note that in 2 of the 3 categories our revenue is lower than that of our peers. Our property tax revenue amount is \$219 less per capita than our peer group. Our utility revenue is \$6 more per capita than our peer group.



This chart shows 3 major expense categories and how we compare with our peers. The reader will note that we spend less per capita in 2 of 3 categories compared to our peer group. Typically we spend less in all three. However, since 2020 we have had several large capital projects, many of which were grant-funded. In the “other” category, we spend \$473 less per capita than our peer group.



## Tax Rate History



The chart above shows the 10-year history of the tax rate for the Town of River Bend, including the proposed rate of 24¢ per \$100 of assessed value for FY 23-24.

## Budget and Finance Recognition

The Town Council realizes that the budget preparation process is likely the most important aspects of operating a municipal government. The budget sets the priorities for not only the next fiscal year but also for future years as well. A considerable amount of planning goes into the annual budget preparation process. After the budget has been approved by the Council, it is handed over to the Town Manager for implementation. Maintaining budget compliance is a year-long responsibility. During the fiscal year, the Council is updated at least monthly on the financial condition of the Town. The Council is ultimately responsible for the financial condition of the Town and takes that responsibility very seriously. The Town of River Bend has often been recognized for its budget preparation, financial reporting and transparency. Some of those recognitions are listed below:

**Excellence in Accounting and Financial Management-** from the NC State Treasurer 2010

**Distinguished Budget Presentation Award-** from the Government Finance Officers Association. We recently received our 12<sup>th</sup> in a row for fiscal year beginning 2021.

**Excellence in Financial Reporting Award-** from the Government Finance Officers Association. We recently received our 11<sup>th</sup> in a row for fiscal year ending 2021. We have applied for and expect to receive our 12<sup>th</sup> award for fiscal year ending 2022 soon.

**The End**