

**River Bend Town Council
Regular Meeting Minutes
April 17, 2025
Town Hall
5:00 p.m.**

Present Council Members:	Mayor Mark Bledsoe Buddy Sheffield Lisa Benton Brian Leonard Kathy Noonan Jeff Weaver
Town Manager:	Delane Jackson
Finance Director:	Mandy Gilbert
Police Chief:	Sean Joll
Town Clerk:	Kristie Nobles
Town Attorney:	David Baxter

Members of the Public Present: 33

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Bledsoe called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. on Thursday, April 17, 2025, at the River Bend Town Hall with a quorum present.

VOTE – Approval of Agenda

Councilman Weaver motioned to accept the agenda as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were 6 people who addressed the Council. They voiced their concerns regarding the level of water in the Lakemere Lake and repairs needed on the gates.

CONSENT AGENDA

The Mayor presented the Council with the Consent Agenda. *Councilwoman Noonan moved to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. The motion carried unanimously.* Within this motion, the following items were approved:

- A. Approve:
 - Minutes of March 13, 2025 Work Council Meeting*
 - Minutes of March 20, 2025 Regular Council Meeting*

SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

CAC Median Project – Councilwoman Benton introduced CAC chairperson Brenda Hall to the Council and thanked the CAC for all the work they have put into this project. Mrs. Hall gave a brief background on the project and stated that the CAC had been working on the median project for 2 years, she then introduced Elena Herbert with Elena Ruth Designs. Ms. Herbert then presented a PowerPoint presentation of the CAC's recommendation for the median along a portion of Plantation Drive.

Craven-Pamlico Regional Library – Councilman Leonard introduced Katherine Clowers, Regional Director with the Craven-Pamlico Regional Library. Ms. Clowers then presented the Council with a request for funding in the amount of \$2,920. She stated that any funding would be accepted but most municipalities are donating \$1 per resident to help cover the library's operational expenses.

The Council expressed gratitude to Ms. Clowers for collaborating with the Red Caboose Community Library to bring the book / tech mobile and other events to the town. The Council took no action at this time.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

The Manager gave the following updates:

- The Pickleball Court bid proposal was re-bid and did not receive any bids at this bid opening either.
- The Phase I WWTP re-bid opening was today, and 1 bid was submitted which was 4 million dollars over budget.
- The BIRM media replacement project is complete.
- The Town has received the revised Preliminary Subdivision Plat from Ellis Development, and it will be distributed to the Planning Board at their next meeting.
- The first Budget Workshop is April 28.
- The Town Manager stated that he agrees that the Lakemere gates are defective and need repair and stated that he had already planned to address that issue.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

CAC – Councilwoman Benton

Councilwoman Benton stated that CAC has a Special Meeting scheduled for April 22 at 4:00 and this will be a question-and-answer session with Elena Ruth Designs regarding the Plantation Drive Median Project.

Councilwoman Benton stated that the Council has discussed and revised the proposed Sponsorship Policy over the past few months and the final draft is included in the agenda package.

VOTE – Sponsorship Policy

Councilwoman Benton motioned to approve the Sponsorship Policy as presented. The motion carried unanimously. (see attached)

FINANCE – Councilman Leonard

Financial Report – Finance Director, Mandy Gilbert, presented the financial statement for the month of March to the Council. She stated the total of the Town's Cash and Investments as of March 31, 2025, were \$3,158,707 and Ad Valorem Tax Collections for FY24-25 were \$970,070 and Vehicle Ad Valorem Tax Collections were \$79,648.

ENVIRONMENTAL & WATERWAYS – Councilman Leonard

Councilman Leonard provided the following report from the April meeting.

Chairman Hall called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. There was a quorum of members present. There were no visitors. The minutes for the January 2025 meeting were approved. Councilman Leonard gave a council update and answered members questions. Old Business: Still working to provide fishing line recycling containers, EWAB will make and install the containers. Alligator weed in ponds in several areas was discussed. Question about the volunteer shirts was asked, Councilman Leonard to follow up on this. New Business: Discussion about having a canal clean up in conjunction with local Scouts. Volunteer Hours: 7 The next meeting will be on May 5, 2025, at 7 PM in the small conference room in the municipal building. The public is welcome to attend. The meeting adjourned at 7:33 PM

PLANNING BOARD – Councilman Sheffield

Councilman Sheffield provided the following report from the April meeting. The Planning Board met on April 3rd at 6:00 pm in the municipal building. Chairman Lippert called the meeting to order. There was no public comment. The usual reports were given. The only order of business was a discussion of the town's Comprehensive Plan, which is due to be revised every 5 years. Allison McCollum, the board secretary who is also the town's assistant zoning manager, had created a draft of the new plan. Board members were given copies to take home and study to be prepared to make suggestions for the plan at the next meeting. If the usual schedule is followed that meeting will be May 1st. As always, all citizens are invited to attend the board meetings.

PARKS & RECREATION – Councilman Weaver

Councilman Weaver provided the following report from the March meeting. Easter Egg Hunt is planned for this Saturday, April 19, 2 PM at the River Bend Country Club. This will be our first off-site event. As part of Mental Health Awareness Month and to promote wellness in our community, P&R has planned a Yoga in the Park event on May 17 at 9 AM at Town Commons and a Community Fun Run on May 31 beginning at 10 AM. Given the success of the last bingo night, P&R is planning another night on June 13 and a Music in the Park event on June 22. Food Truck Friday was also very popular and P&R is planning future evenings featuring local trucks. Additionally, P&R will soon begin planning for the Independence Day celebration in collaboration with Town Staff. This is one of the biggest events of the year and volunteers are always needed. The Advisory Board meets the first Wednesday of every month at 6:30 PM and everyone is welcome. You can find more information on the Town's website.

RIVER BEND COMMUNITY ORGANIC GARDEN

Councilman Weaver gave the following report from the March meeting: Gardeners worked 113 hours in March. They harvested 28 pounds of greens. Spring planting started in February and will continue until May. Work schedules include a daily calendar and twice monthly workdays. The primary task is planting vegetables and herbs. The spring plant sale is scheduled for April 26 from 8 am to 1 pm. Plants, garden crafts and baked goods will be available. Garden tours will be offered. The next meeting is scheduled for May 5, 2025 at 1:30 pm in the Municipal building. Guests are always welcome at the meetings and in the garden.

CLOSED SESSION

Councilman Leonard motioned to go into Closed Session under NCSG §143-318.11(a)(6). The Council entered Closed Session at 6:20 p.m.

OPEN SESSION

Councilman Leonard motioned to return to Open Session at 6:34 p.m. The motion carried unanimously.


VOTE – Town Manager Merit Pay

Councilman Leonard motioned to allocate enough funding from the Governing Board's discretionary funds to be combined with the remaining merit pay funding to equal \$10,000. The motion carried unanimously.

Councilman Leonard motioned to award \$5,000 in merit pay to the Town Manager and authorize the Town Manager to award the remaining \$5,000 to staff at his discretion. The motion carried unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, *Councilman Sheffield moved to adjourn. The motion carried unanimously.* The meeting adjourned at 6:37 p.m.



Kristie J. Nobles, MMC
Town Clerk

TOWN OF RIVER BEND POLICY ON DONATIONS AND SPONSORSHIPS

Statement of Policy

The Town of River Bend (hereinafter “Town”) will allow donations to be made to the Town.

In allowing sponsorships, the Town will seek sponsors that further its mission by providing monetary or in-kind support for Town programs or services. The Town recognizes that the public trust and perception of its impartiality may be damaged by sponsorships that are aesthetically displeasing, politically oriented, or offensive to segments of its citizenry. When the Town loses public trust and public perception of impartiality, its ability to govern effectively in the interest of its citizens is impaired. Therefore, the Town permits private sponsorship of government programs or services in limited circumstances as a means to generate funds for improving or expanding those programs and services. The Town maintains its sponsorship program as a nonpublic forum and exercises sole discretion over who is eligible to become a sponsor according to the terms of this policy.

Whenever possible, sponsorships should be linked to specific Town-related activities, events, programs, or publications. The Town will neither seek nor accept sponsors that manufacture products or take positions inconsistent with local, state, or federal law or with Town policies, positions, or resolutions. The establishment of a sponsorship agreement does not constitute an endorsement by the Town of the sponsor’s organization, products, or services.

Definition of Terms

“Donation” is a voluntary monetary or in-kind contribution with no expectation of promotional benefits or sponsorship.

“Sponsorship” is the right of an external entity (for-profit or not-for-profit) to associate its name, products, or services with the Town’s programs, services, properties, or name. Sponsorship is a business relationship in which the Town and the external entity exchange goods and/or services for the public display of a message on the Town’s property acknowledging private support.

The use of a private event space for a Town activity, event, program, or publication, as allowed by § 3.05.005 of the Town’s Ordinances, and subsequent designation of that private event space as the location for an activity, event, program, or publication in promotional materials is not in and of itself a sponsorship. For example, an advisory board event held at a restaurant and advertised as being held at said restaurant shall not be considered a sponsorship of that advisory board event. However, to the extent promotional materials for a Town activity, event, program or publication identifies the provider of a private space as a “partner,” “co-sponsor,” or similar status, that designation would be considered a sponsorship for the purposes of this Policy.

Authority Structure for Review and Approval

The Town possesses sole and final decision-making authority for determining the appropriateness of a sponsorship relationship and/or an offer of a donation and reserves the right to refuse any offer of sponsorship or donation.

Sponsorship agreement proposals and donations offers will be reviewed according to the following procedures and guidelines:

- All sponsorship agreement proposals and donation offers shall be approved in consultation with the Town Manager or his/her designee.
- Sponsorship agreement proposals or donation offers projected to generate \$1,000 or less shall (in actual monetary benefit of estimated in-kind benefit) require the written approval of the Town Manager, who shall inform the Town Council.
- Sponsorship agreement proposals or donations offers projected to generate more than \$1,000 (in actual monetary benefit of estimated in-kind benefit) shall require the written approval of the Town Council.

In the discretion of the Town Manager, any proposed sponsorship agreement or donation offer may be referred to the Town Council for its approval.

Criteria for Sponsorship Proposal Review

Proposals for sponsorship of Town programs or services shall be reviewed on the basis of a draft memorandum of understanding that clearly outlines the forms of support offered by the sponsor and the recognition to be given by the Town. The Town Manager may develop and implement a form that entities may use to submit this draft memorandum of understanding. A memorandum of understanding shall be created for each sponsorship relationship. It shall detail the following information, at a minimum:

- Activities, products, and services of the private entity and its subsidiaries;
- Benefits to be given to the proposed sponsor by the Town, and the estimated monetary value of those benefits;
- Benefits to be given to the Town by the proposed sponsor and the estimated monetary value of those benefits;
- Prominence of the proposed public recognition of support;
- Content of the proposed public recognition of support;
- Duration of the proposed public recognition of support; and
- Conditions under which the sponsorship agreement will be terminated.

The Town recognizes that entering into a sponsorship agreement with an external entity does not constitute an endorsement of the entity or its services and products but does imply an affiliation. Such affiliation can affect the reputation of the Town among its citizens and its ability to govern effectively. Therefore, any proposal for sponsorship of a Town program or service in which the involvement of an outside entity compromises the public's perception of the Town's neutrality or its ability to act in the public interest will be rejected.

The Town shall consider the following criteria before entering into a sponsorship agreement:

- Extent and prominence of the public display of sponsorship;
- Aesthetic characteristics of the public display of sponsorship;
- Importance of the sponsorship to the mission of the Town;
- Level of support provided by the sponsor;
- Inconsistencies between Town policies and the known policies or practices of the potential sponsor; and
- Other factors that might undermine public confidence in the Town's impartiality or interfere with the efficient delivery of Town services or operations, including, but not limited to, current or potential conflicts of interest between the sponsor and Town employees, officials, or affiliates; and the potential for the sponsorship to tarnish the Town's standing among its citizens or otherwise impair the ability of the Town to govern its citizens.

Permissible Sponsors and Message Content

Sponsorships on Town property are maintained as a nonpublic forum. The Town intends to preserve its rights and discretion to exercise full editorial control over the placement, content, appearance, and wording of sponsorship affiliations and messages. The Town may make distinctions on the appropriateness of sponsors on the basis of subject matter of a potential sponsorship recognition message. The Town will not deny sponsorship opportunities on the basis of the potential sponsor's viewpoint. Sponsorship from an organization that is engaged in any of the following activities, that has a mission supporting any of the following subject matters, or that, in the sole discretion and judgment of the Town Manager, is deemed to be unsuitable for and contrary to community standards of appropriateness for government publications, shall be prohibited on any Town property:

- Promotion of the sale or consumption of alcoholic beverages, or promotion of establishments that are licensed to sell and primarily do sell alcoholic beverages, including bars; provided, however, that food service establishments or places of lodging may be authorized only when the sale of alcohol is incidental to providing food service or lodging;

- Promotion of the sale or consumption of tobacco products;
- Promotion of the sale of birth control products or services;
- Commentary, advocacy, or promotion of issues, candidates, and campaigns pertaining to political elections;
- Depiction in any form of profanity or obscenity, or promotion of sexually oriented products, activities, or materials;
- Promotion of the sale or use of firearms, explosives, or other weapons, or glorification of violent acts; and
- Promotion or depiction of illegal products, or glorification of illegal products, activities, or materials.

Permissible Recognition Messages

Sponsorship recognition messages may identify the sponsor but should not promote or endorse the organization or its products or services. Statements that advocate, contain price information or an indication of associated savings or value, request a response, or contain comparative or qualitative descriptions of products, services, or organizations will not be accepted. Only the following content will be deemed appropriate:

- The legally recognized name of the advertising organization;
- The advertiser's organizational slogan if it identifies rather than promotes the organization or its products or services;
- The advertiser's product or service line, described in brief, generic, objective terms. Generally, only one product or service line may be identified; and
- Brief contact information for the advertiser's organization, such as phone number, address, or Internet website. Contact information must be stated in a manner that avoids an implication of urging the reader to action.

The Town will not make any statements that directly or indirectly advocate or endorse a sponsor's organization, products, or services.

No materials or communications, including, but not limited to, print, video, Internet, broadcast, or display items developed to promote or communicate the sponsorship using the Town's name, marks, or logo, may be issued without written approval from the Town Manager.

- Adopted April 17, 2025

LSS: 172732