

**River Bend Town Council
Budget Workshop Minutes
April 27, 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
Town Manager:	Delane Jackson
Town Clerk:	Kristie Nobles
Finance Assistant:	Mandy Gilbert

The Mayor called the meeting to order at 4 p.m. The Mayor stated- "This is the most important thing that the Council does in the whole year. You put this budget in place and once it's approved the Manager executes it and if you, the Council, add any additional projects to it, it has to be covered with a budget amendment." He then recognized the Town Manager.

The Manager presented a resolution in opposition to House Bill 401 and Senate Bill 349. Councilman Sheffield motioned to approve the resolution as presented. The motion was unanimously approved. (see attached)

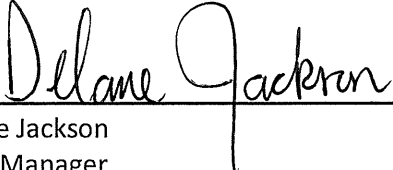
The Manager then began discussions of the Proposed Budget for FY2021-2022, which included a PowerPoint presentation. The Manager presented the Council's priorities and vision statement that were approved at the January 21, 2021 budget kick-off meeting.

The Manager followed the advertised agenda and presented details related to employee compensation, staffing levels, capital improvement plans, utility and fuel prices, the vehicle replacement plan, IT and various budget related topics. 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.

During the meeting the Manager stated that the proposal would return the Public Works department to its pre-Hurricane Florence level when the NCORR grant expires. There were some discussion about the fund balance in the general fund. Councilman Leonard stated that he thought that having a target dollar amount of cash on hand was more important than having a percentage as our target for fund balance. Councilman Fogle said that if we do decide to make a specific dollar amount as the target, that we should officially make that statement at a Council meeting.

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 4, 2021 at 4 p.m. The motion was unanimously approved. The meeting recessed at 6:18 p.m.



Delane Jackson
Town Manager



**RESOLUTION OPPOSING HOUSE BILL 401 AND SENATE BILL 349 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, which in turn, residents have relied upon in making one of their most important financial investments, the purchase of their homes; 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, municipalities in the State of North Carolina have their own unique characteristics and challenges so that "one size" does not "fit all," and statewide zoning mandates thus may have unintended negative consequences for the residents of the State; and

WHEREAS, HB401/SB349 is now pending in the North Carolina General Assembly, and would force municipalities to allow duplexes, triplexes, quadplexes, and townhouses into all residential zoning districts, for the stated purpose of expanding housing opportunities in cities; and

WHEREAS, although HB401/SB349 has been touted as a way to provide "affordable housing", in actuality there is nothing in the bill which actually controls costs or ensures affordability; and

WHEREAS, HB401/SB349 is an attack on local land-use planning and the ability of local government, the government closest to the people, to hear from and respond to the needs of our citizens in the long-standing planning and zoning forums granted by law,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Town Council of the Town of River Bend, North Carolina as follows:

1. That the General Assembly not adopt either HB401 or SB349;
2. That if passed, the Governor, the Honorable Roy Cooper, veto these measures;

Approved this 27th day of April, 2021.



ATTEST:

Kristie J. Nobles
Kristie J. Nobles, Town Clerk

John R. Kirkland
John R. Kirkland, Mayor

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

Present Council Members:	Mayor John Kirkland Don Fogle Brian Leonard Barbara Maurer – remotely via phone Buddy Sheffield Bud Van Slyke
Town Manager:	Delane Jackson
Police Chief:	Sean Joll

The Mayor called the meeting back to order at 4:00 p.m. The meeting began with a presentation by the Police Chief about the police department. That was followed by a detailed discussion of the following departments: recreation and special events, park and CAC, emergency services, animal control, wetlands and waterways, leaf and limb, planning and zoning and then discussions about general fund revenues and fund balance in the general fund.

During the meeting Councilman Leonard asked if the body cameras in the proposed police budget would be purchased early or delayed. The Manager stated that if the Council wanted them purchased early, they could be ordered on July 1. Councilman Fogle stated he would like for them to be purchased as soon as possible. Councilman Leonard also asked if code enforcement action only took place if a resident complained. He said that he had been asked by residents why the codes were not being enforced. The Manager explained that Allison, police officers and he often initiated code enforcement without ever hearing about the violation from a citizen. Councilman Leonard stated that he was aware of an RV that had been parked in violation of the ordinances for several weeks. The Manager explained the often time-consuming legal process that was involved in official code enforcement actions. Councilman Fogle stated that he thought Allison was just trying to be nice while conducting code enforcement and that he thought that was a good thing.

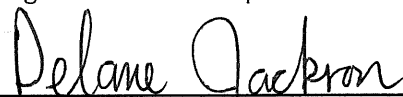
During the revenue discussions, the Manager stated that the local sales tax revenues had been much better than anticipated in FY20-21 and that COVID had not impacted those revenues nearly as much as had been expected statewide. Councilman Leonard stated that it appears that many state revenues may be declining and are not as reliable. He stated that in the future the Town may need to consider looking at other ways to generate revenue. The Manager stated that the next property revaluation was scheduled to become effective as of January 1, 2022 and that the five-year forecast, which would be discussed later, did not include a tax rate reduction after the revaluation. There was a discussion about the declining Powell Bill revenue and how that impacted the Town's ability to fund street paving.

The Manager ended the session with several slides that showed the recent history and projections for fund balance in the general fund. He noted that due to the \$1,000,000 BUS project, the Town's fund balance had dipped below the 50% goal during FY20. He noted the fund balance projection for year-ending 2021 was for it to return to 57% and the proposal for year-ending 2022 was 55%. There was a lengthy discussion about how the last two fiscal years were unusual due to the BUS project and continuing recovery from Hurricane Florence and FEMA funded projects related to Hurricane Florence.

The Manager explained that increased spending due to all of these factors had a negative impact on the Town's usually very high fund balance. He explained how the fund balance was stated as a percentage of the general fund expenditures. Councilman Sheffield stated that the best way to rebuild fund balance was to not do anymore big capital projects. There was a general agreement that the lower fund balance for the next few years was a concern, but the Council was also aware of the main reasons for the lower fund balance.

The Manager stated that the BUS project was complete and that all FEMA projects should be completed during the current fiscal year and that would get spending associated with those out of our budget process. He pointed out that the Council had previously had discussions about a goal of keeping \$1,000,000 in fund balance. He said that he thought \$2,000,000 was a more reasonable goal. He stated he felt that way because we quickly spent \$1,000,000 after Hurricane Florence and that having \$2,000,000 would allow us to spend \$1,000,000 on emergency response and still have \$1,000,000 for other things. The Council agreed to continue to closely monitor fund balance and take appropriate action as needed in the future to keep it stable.

With no further questions, Councilman Sheffield motioned to recess the meeting until May 11, 2021 at 4:00 p.m. The motion was unanimously approved. The meeting recessed at 6:14 p.m.



Delane Jackson
Town Manager

**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.

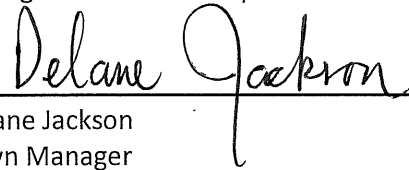
The Manager presented the proposed water and sewer rate model and stated that the proposal contained no increases to the residential rates. He noted that the non-residential water customers had enjoyed a 1-year break from the water rate increase that took place in April, 2020. He also clarified that 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.




John R. Kirkland, Mayor

ATTEST: 
Kristie J. Nobles, Town Clerk

River Bend Town Council
Budget Workshop Minutes
May 13, 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

Town Manager: Delane Jackson

The Mayor called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. He then recognized the Town Manager. The Manager began the meeting with a PowerPoint presentation, which included information about the Town's total property assessment, the formula for calculating tax bills, the five-year forecast for the general fund, utility rates and fees and the proposed schedule of rates and fees.

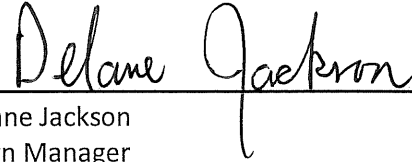
During the meeting there was considerable discussion about the current and future status of the Town's fund balance. Councilman Leonard expressed his concern of the trend of the declining fund balance. He said that we are okay currently but there may be trouble on the horizon because our costs are going up and some revenues are going down. He said that he did not want to get to the point where we were forced to do something about the fund balance. Councilwoman Maurer stated that she wanted to address the issue before we got to a critical point and she thinks we are at a critical point now. The Mayor stated that these discussions were good but he felt the projections were very conservative and we just need to take a closer look after the next property reevaluation. Councilman Leonard stated that if a tax rate adjustment was necessary in the future to help rebuild fund balance, he would rather do it in small, incremental steps rather than a single, large step. Councilwoman Maurer stated that the budget was being balanced with a contribution from fund balance and she thought the ideal way to balance it would be without a fund balance appropriation. She also mentioned that the Council was considering establishing a fund balance goal of \$2,000,000 and that we were a long way from that.

The Town Manager presented the revenue and expenditures assumptions for the general fund and noted that the next county property reevaluation was scheduled for January 1, 2022 and the five-year forecast did not contain a tax rate reduction after the reevaluation. Councilman Sheffield said he thought that property values were on the rise and that we would probably be pleased with the values from the next reevaluation. The Council agreed that while there was no need for great concern now about the amount of fund balance, there is a need to closely monitor it over the next few years.

The Manager reviewed the proposed schedule of rates and fees and pointed out that the non-residential fees would again be subject to the standard equivalent units, which are associated with the utility rate model formula. He explained that while it was not technically a rate increase, it would increase those utility bills. He also noted that the Class 9 customer base charge would increase to \$13.24 from \$10.24 to be in line with the Class 1 and 2 base charge.

The Town Manager stated that while he received much of the focus during the budget process, it was truly a team effort. He expressed his praise to the whole staff in their assistance in preparing the budget proposal during a very unusual and demanding time.

With no further questions, Councilman Sheffield motioned to adjourn the meeting. The motion was unanimously approved. The meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Delane Jackson". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Delane Jackson
Town Manager