

**River Bend Town Council
Regular Meeting Minutes
January 15, 2026
Town Hall
5:00 p.m.**

Present Council Members: Mayor Mark Bledsoe
Buddy Sheffield
Kathy Noonan
Lisa Benton
Jeff Weaver

Absent Council Member: Brian Leonard

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: 3

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Bledsoe called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. on Thursday, January 15, 2026, at the River Bend Town Hall with a quorum present, followed by invocation and the pledge of allegiance.

VOTE – Approval of Agenda

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

PUBLIC COMMENTS

No Public Comments

CONSENT AGENDA

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

A. Approve:

*Minutes of December 4, 2025 Work Council Meeting
Minutes of December 11, 2025 Regular Council Meeting*

SPECIAL PRESENTATION – Audit Presentation for Fiscal Year 2024-2025

Mr. Sam Potts, CPA with Thompson, Price, Scott, Adams & Co., P.A. gave an audit presentation and stated that the River Bend staff was pleasant and cooperative. He said that his firm has issued an unmodified opinion on River Bend's FY 2024-2025 audit, which is the best rating an auditor can give. The Council expressed gratitude to Mr. Potts and the staff at Thompson, Price, Scott, Adams & Co.

VOTE – ACCEPT AUDIT REPORT

Councilwoman Benton motioned to accept the Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Audit Report as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

FY26-27 Budget Kick-Off Presentation

Manager Jackson presented a PowerPoint presentation outlining the budget process for the FY26-27 budget. The Council reviewed their Priorities and Vision Statement and the proposed meeting schedule for the FY26-27 budget workshops. Councilman Sheffield stated that he felt that the Council Priorities needed to be updated regarding the priority labeled "Provide safe drinking water and quality treatment of wastewater through sound maintenance of the current systems" as he felt that they are doing everything they can to create a new system. The Town Manager stated that the Priorities are decided by the Council and Mayor and he would make any changes agreed to. The Mayor stated that a decision does not have to be made at this moment and the priorities could be discussed as a later time.

VOTE –BUDGET CALENDAR

Councilwoman Benton motioned to approve the Fiscal Year 2026-2027 Budget Schedule as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

The Manager gave the following updates:

- There is a Town Council Special Meeting scheduled for January 20, 2026, at 6:30 p.m. at Town Hall to conduct a question-and-answer session regarding the town's potable water system.
- He stated he has applied for two grants with North Carolina Emergency Management, and he is pursuing additional grants for funding for the Water Treatment Plant so it would lower the amount needed in loans.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

COMMUNITY APPEARANCE COMMISSION – Councilwoman Benton

Councilwoman Benton stated that the Holley Trolley event was very successful with 135 residents participating. She also stated that CAC has 2 vacancies and one application on file.

PLANNING BOARD – Councilman Sheffield

Councilman Sheffield stated that he had announced at a previous meeting that there may be a special meeting on January 22 but at this time there will not be a special meeting. He stated that the Planning Board is scheduled to meet on February 5.

PARKS & RECREATION – Councilman Weaver

Councilman Weaver gave the following report:

He stated that the January meeting has been cancelled but there is a blood drive scheduled for January 24. He stated that events will be limited in 2026 due to the lack of members on the board.

RIVER BEND COMMUNITY ORGANIC GARDEN

Councilman Weaver gave the following report:

The total harvest weight for 2025 is 2,976 pounds, the third highest year in the garden's thirteen years. Interfaith Ministries received 18.2% of the harvest. Total work hours for 2025 were 1,431. The total number of work hours for the garden's thirteen years is 34,615. The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, February 3rd at 1:30 pm in the Municipal building. Guests are always welcome at the meetings and in the garden.

FINANCE – Councilwoman Benton

Financial Report – Finance Director, Mandy Gilbert, presented the financial statement for the month of December to the Council. She stated the total of the Town’s Cash and Investments as of December 31, 2025, were \$2,914,291 and Ad Valorem Tax Collections for FY25-26 were \$779,314 and Vehicle Ad Valorem Tax Collections were \$53,867.

MAYORS REPORT

Mayor Bledsoe gave the following message:

Good Evening, and Happy New Year. Thank you to our residents, community leaders, town staff, and partners for joining us as we begin 2026. A new year gives us a moment to reflect—and to recommit. While the past year brought real challenges, it also showed the strength of this community. Neighbors looked out for one another. Town employees served with dedication and pride. Because of you, our Town kept moving forward. We made meaningful progress—investing in public safety, improving infrastructure, supporting economic opportunities, and continuing the work of building a more inclusive and connected community. As we step into 2026, our focus is clear. This is a year of building—building opportunity, trust, and a future that works for everyone. We will continue investing in our neighborhoods, supporting local businesses, and improving the services residents rely on every day—always with people at the center of our decisions. A town is defined by its people, not its buildings or budgets. And I believe deeply in what we can achieve together when we work with purpose and unity. So, as we begin this new year, I ask each of you to stay engaged, stay hopeful, and stay committed to this town we love. The challenges ahead are real—but so is our capacity to meet them. Let’s make 2026 a year of momentum, progress, and shared success. Thank you, Happy New Year.

CLOSED SESSION

Councilwoman Noonan motioned to go into Closed Session under NCSG §143-318.11(a)(3). The Council entered Closed Session at 5:49 p.m.

OPEN SESSION

Councilwoman Noonan motioned to return to Open Session at 7:05 p.m. The motion carried unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Councilman Weaver moved to adjourn. The motion carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 7:05 p.m.



Kristie J. Nobles MMC
Town Clerk