

**River Bend Town Council  
Regular Meeting Minutes  
October 16, 2025  
Town Hall  
5:00 p.m.**

Present Council Members: Mayor Mark Bledsoe  
Buddy Sheffield  
Brian Leonard  
Kathy Noonan  
Lisa Benton

Absent Council Member: 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: 6

**CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Bledsoe called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. on Thursday, October 16, 2025, at the River Bend Town Hall with a quorum present, followed by invocation and the pledge of allegiance.

**VOTE – Deletion to the Agenda**

*Councilwoman Benton motioned to amend the agenda by removing item #10 and tabling it until the November Work Session. The motion carried unanimously.*

**VOTE – Approval of Agenda**

*Councilwoman Benton motioned to accept the agenda as amended. The motion carried unanimously.*

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

No Public Comments

**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 September 11, 2025, Work Council Meeting  
Minutes of September 18, 2025, Regular Council Meeting*

**TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT**

The Manager gave the following updates:

- The Annual Shred Event is Saturday, November 1, 8:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. at 115 Wildwood Drive.
- The contract for the Mulberry Lane project has been sent to the contractor.
- The notice to proceed for the 2025 Paving Project has been issued.

Chief Joll reviewed the monthly statistics for the police department. He stated that National Night Out was on October 7 and expressed gratitude to everyone who participated. He stated that there will be a Trunk or Tent Halloween event on Halloween at the Municipal Building.

## **ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS**

### **FINANCE – Councilman Leonard**

Financial Report – Finance Director, Mandy Gilbert, presented the financial statement for the month of September to the Council. She stated the total of the Town's Cash and Investments as of September 30, 2025, were \$2,536,611 and Ad Valorem Tax Collections for FY25-26 were \$99,341 and Vehicle Ad Valorem Tax Collections were \$23,283.

### **VOTE– Water Resources Department Policy Manual Amendments / Deposits, Other**

The Manager stated that the proposed amended Water Resources Department Policy Manual is included in the agenda. He stated that the only change that is included since the last meeting is removing the wording that allows the removal of late fees if an account meets certain guidelines. He stated that the School of Government stated that this practice is unconstitutional, and the Town Attorney agreed.

*Councilman Leonard motioned to adopt the Water Resources Department Policy Manual Amendments as presented. The motion carried unanimously. (see attached)*

### **VOTE– Notary Public Service Guidelines**

The Manager stated that the proposed amended Notary Public Service Policy was presented at the work session and there have been no changes to the presented policy since that meeting.

*Councilman Leonard motioned to adopt the Notary Public Service Policy Amendments as presented. The motion carried unanimously. (see attached)*

## **ENVIRONMENTAL & WATERWAYS – Councilman Leonard**

Councilman Leonard provided the following report from the September meeting.

Vice Chairman Ackiss called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. There was a quorum of members present. There were no visitors. The minutes for the August 2025 meeting were approved. Old Business: Fishing line recycling containers have been installed. Discussion about having a canal clean up in conjunction with local Scouts, P&R, and CAC. There is still one vacancy on EWAB. New Business: No new business. Councilman Leonard gave a council updated and answered members questions. Volunteer Hours: 15 The next meeting will be on November 3rd, 2025, at 7 PM in the small conference room in the municipal building. The public is welcome to attend. The meeting adjourned at 7:25 PM

## **PLANNING BOARD – Councilman Sheffield**

Councilman Sheffield provided the following report from the October meeting.

The meeting was held on October 2 at 6 pm in the Municipal building. Chairman Lippert was absent, so the meeting was chaired by Vice Chairman Bob Kohn. First item of business was the election of officers. Ms. McCollum took over the running of the meeting during the election process. Board members nominated Egon Lippert for chairman, and he was elected unanimously. Bob Kohn was unanimously elected Vice Chairman and Allison McCollum was elected secretary. The zoning report was given. Councilman Sheffield was not present, so no council report was given. The next item of business was the town's fencing ordinance. After much discussion the board directed the town staff to draft an ordinance change to allow fences on corner properties facing the street other than the one the property's address is officially listed on. Under new business the board discussed the updated draft of the town's Comprehensive Plan. Assistant zoning manager McCollum brought to the board's attention a potential conflict in the

language of the plan and the town ordinance that limits lot coverage to 24%. The board asked for a draft of the ordinance that would clarify this at the next meeting. Board members asked that the Comprehensive Plan be shared with all other advisory boards to get their input before the new plan is adopted. The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, Nov. 6th at 6pm. Aside from the meeting, Chairman Lippert has recently received a resignation from board member Jon Hall. All applications to fill the position will be provided to the council and action on a replacement is expected at the November council meeting.

**PUBLIC SAFETY – Councilwoman Noonan**

Councilwoman Noonan stated that Community Watch met on Wednesday, October 15 and there are 13 new volunteers who signed up at National Night Out. She stated the next meeting is on February 18.

**PARKS & RECREATION – Councilwoman Noonan for Councilman Weaver**

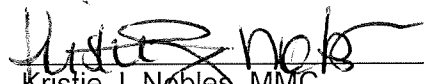
No Parks and Recreation update was given as Councilman Weaver was absent.

**RIVER BEND COMMUNITY ORGANIC GARDEN**

Councilwoman Noonan gave the following report from the October meeting:  
The fall planting plan is complete. Workdays continue to be well attended, and most days were filled on the daily schedule. The harvest weight for September was 339 pounds. Harvest total to date is 2,736 pounds. This year Interfaith Refugee Ministries is on schedule to receive about 12% of the total garden harvest. 127 work and administrative hours were recorded for September. Year-to-date work hours are 1,171. RBCOG will have a table at National Night Out on October 7th. The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, November 3rd at 1:30 pm in the Municipal building. Guests are always welcome at meetings and in the garden.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, *Councilman Sheffield moved to adjourn. The motion carried unanimously.* The meeting adjourned at 5:19 p.m.

  
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Kristie J. Nobles, MMC  
Town Clerk

## Water Resources Department Policy Manual

The policies and procedures contained in this document are intended to define the relationship between the customer of water and/or wastewater services and the Town of River Bend. These policies are, by delivery to a customer, made part of the contract for service entered into by the customer. By contracting for service, the customer acknowledges the applicability of these policies and procedures and agrees to abide by them.

### **Section 1 - River Bend Water Resources Department**

#### **A. Establishment**

The Town of River Bend (Town) owns and operates water and wastewater utilities in accordance with applicable State and Federal regulatory requirements and under permits issued by the State of North Carolina. These rules and regulations, as amended from time to time, are adopted by the Town Council of the Town to govern the relationship between the Town and its water and sewer customers.

The Water Resources Department (hereinafter referred to as Department) is operated as a Town Department as authorized in Title V of the Town Code of the Town of River Bend. Operational authority of the Department rests with the Town Manager while the Council retains governing authority of the utilities. The terms Department and Town may be used interchangeably in this document.

#### **B. Authority**

The enactment of standard utility policies requires the approval of the Town Council. As fee schedules, rates and other specific policies are updated; it will be the responsibility of the Town Manager or designee to make sure the policy manual is revised.

The Town Manager is authorized as the hearing or grievance officer for customers. As such, the Manager is authorized to hear concerns and complaints, settle disagreements, and reconnect any customer disconnected for nonpayment or other reason while the concern is investigated, if that official deems necessary. Hearings are addressed in Section 6, Discontinuing Service.

All grievances should be heard and addressed by the Town Manager prior to an item appearing before the Town Council.

#### **C. Office and Service Hours**

The Town of River Bend Water Resources Office is located in the Town Hall at 45 Shoreline Drive.

The office is open from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday. Routine and regular service work will be performed from 7 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday and 7 a.m. to 2 p.m. Saturday and Sunday, except for municipal holidays. Service work for unusual conditions may be arranged at other times upon request at a pre-arranged fee.

A 24-hour drop box is available for customer's convenience in the parking lot of Town Hall. Payments made at the drop box after 4 p.m. are posted the next business day.

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Emergency restoration work is performed 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Please call us at 638- 3540 for emergency service. For after-hours emergencies, please call 252-464-4328 and enter your call back phone number when prompted. If you do not hear back from the on-call operator within 15 minutes, call the River Bend Police non-emergency number at 638-1108 (or select option 1 when you call the town's main number at 638-3870).

### **D. Continuity of Service**

All reasonable efforts are made to assure continuity of services to customers. Notice is given by posting signs, by mass calling using the Town's emergency notification system, or by personal contact of predicable interruptions to services resulting from systems maintenance operations or repairs. The Department may suspend water and sewer services as a result of accidents requiring major repairs, loss of the water supply, public health emergencies, at the direction of the courts or public authorities or as a result of strikes, riots, war, fire, flood or other disasters.

### **E. Scope**

This Manual is not meant to be all-inclusive but offers direction and guidance for the Town Manager and employees of the Town.

The intent of these policies is to provide the customer, and the employees of the Town a helpful guide with uniform procedures for providing utility service. The Town desires to treat its citizens in a fair and nondiscriminatory manner while recognizing that each customer has distinct needs and requirements.

Employees of the Town have been empowered and well trained to use these policies to deliver high quality service to customers. Employees are expected to deal with each decision with empathy and understanding, listening carefully to the needs and requirements of individual customers. Ultimately, the Town Manager is the final authority on these policies. However, every customer has the right to appeal any decision before the Town Council.

These policies are not meant as a substitute for personal initiative on the part of employees. It will serve as a guide for reasonable response to customer needs while meeting the requirements of good business practices on the part of the Town.

### **F. Application of Policies**

These policies apply to every customer or applicant for utility service and they may be revised, amended, supplemented, or otherwise changed from time to time by action of the Town Council. Customers are encouraged to seek answers to any questions by calling the Water Resources Office.

Although the Town uses its good faith effort to see that utilities are delivered safely, the Town is not responsible for any damage caused by turning on or off utility services.

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### G. Customer Request for Policies

Customers may obtain a copy of the Town's policies at the Department's office or on the Town's website. Customers may also request a verbal explanation of the Department's policies.

### H. Privacy

Our application/agreement requests that the potential customer provide their social security number. We request this number to verify identity, perform a credit check and collect delinquent balances once a customer vacates a property. There is no statutory or other authority requiring any customer to provide a social security number.

Customer billing data is not considered public information. The Town will ensure that customer information, including billing data, is adequately safeguarded against unauthorized use as required by Section 18.01 of the River Bend Code of Ordinances.

## Section 2 - Rights and Responsibilities

The customer and the Town have unique rights and responsibilities in connection with utility service. These responsibilities and rights are detailed throughout this Manual, some of which are summarized here.

### A. Customer Responsibility

1. To establish credit in one of these ways:
  - a. Provide proof of ownership of the property to which service will be provided.
  - b. Pay a utility deposit in accordance with the policies herein described.
2. Allow Water Resources Department personnel unobstructed access to property to set up and maintain service.
3. Pay bills by the Due Date shown on each bi-monthly bill. The customer must notify the Town before the normal due date if (a) a bill has not been received or (b) questions concerning the amount of the bill (either too much or too little). **Failure to receive a bill or failure of the delivery of payment does not exempt the customer from payment responsibility or from being charged any late penalties.**
4. Notify the Water Resources Office, through an application form, of the identity of other persons (i.e. relatives or power of attorney) a customer would like to receive duplicate billing, notice of service interruption for nonpayment of bills, or other information.
5. Notify the Water Resources Office if there is someone in the household who is either chronically or seriously ill, disabled, or on a life support system. This may require verification from a doctor that the utility is necessary to sustain life. The customer has the responsibility to carefully handle the customer's account so that service will not be interrupted for failure to pay. With the medical alert designation, the Water

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Resources Office will make a good faith effort to make personal contact with the customer or member of the customer's household before service is terminated.

6. Notify the Water Resources Office of questions or complaints about service.
7. Be aware of and provide unobstructed access to property owned by the Town at the customer's home/business and safeguard it.
8. Install, maintain, and repair plumbing in the home/business that conforms to all applicable laws, rules, and regulations. If the Town deems the property cannot receive service in a safe manner, service will not be connected until the problems are remedied.
9. The Town provides utility service for the sole use and convenience of the premises under contract. The customer will ensure that utility service is not given or resold to anyone, including a neighbor. Violation of this policy will be cause for immediate disconnection of service. (See Section 5 – Discontinuing Service)
10. The customer is responsible for ensuring that the Town has accurate address, billing and contact information for the customer. If any such information changes after the original application, the customer must notify the Town of the changes.
11. In the event of a payment issue involving a bank or third party, the customer is responsible for addressing/resolving any payment/banking issues with the banking institution or payment vendor that they utilize. An error by the bank or vendor does not exempt the customer from any fees. The Town does not negotiate with banks or vendors on behalf of a customer. A late payment made by a bank or vendor will be recognized as a late payment from the customer. If a fee has been assessed due a banking/vendor error, the customer should seek relief or reimbursement for any fee from the bank/vendor, not the Town.

### **B. Customer Rights**

1. A customer has a right to request that the customer's deposit be refunded, if made, when the customer discontinues service from the Town.
2. The customer has a right to request, free of charge, historic billing and usage information. If a utility department employee cannot find any reason for usage changes, the customer may request one free meter test. The customer has a right to the results of this test.
3. The customer has a right to request a review of any complaint according to the Town's grievance procedure.

### **C. Municipal Responsibility**

1. Refund the customer's deposit if conditions are met.

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2. Give written notice on a regular bill and a separate second notice at least 7 days before service is interrupted for failure to pay. The notice will explain the reason for disconnection, when service will be eligible for reconnection, and explain how the customer can avoid service interruption. The notice will respect a customer's right to privacy regarding publication of debt.
3. Do not disconnect for nonpayment during extreme weather conditions, as determined by Town Manager or their designee.
4. Do not disconnect for nonpayment on a Friday, on a weekend, or on a municipal holiday.
5. Provide and explain rate schedules, how meters are read, and other additional, reasonable information.
6. Respond to questions or complaints from customers. The Town may not agree with the complaint but pledges prompt, courteous, and honest answers.
7. Provide historic billing and usage information when requested by the customer.
8. Provide water usage and conservation information.

### **D. Municipality Rights**

1. Obtain unobstructed access to the Department's equipment and utility facilities. If unobstructed access is not permitted, then services will not be connected until free access is available.
2. To require proof of residency in the form of rent receipts or lease agreements, etc. prior to the establishment of service. Service will not be established if any member of the household has an outstanding account with the Town.
3. To receive notice of changes in address, status of utility service, or problems with utility service.
4. To receive timely payment for services delivered to customers.
5. The appropriate department of the Town is allowed to take action in court or as otherwise permitted by law regarding equipment tampering or financial delinquencies.
6. The Town may disconnect services and remove its apparatus from the premise for violation of any Department regulations; i.e., nonpayment of any portion of a bill regardless of the service which the bill or portion thereof represents, or false information on the application of services. (See Section 6 – Discontinuing Service)
7. The Department requires that charges for all services presented on the bill be paid in full prior to the reconnection of services to a location. This will include additional fees such as, but not limited to, nonpayment fees and/or deposits.

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8. The Town is not responsible for any damage caused by turning on or turning off utility services.

### Section 3. - Establishing Service

#### A. Connecting to the System

New customers who want to connect or are required by Town Ordinance (15.01.101 and 15.02.066) to connect to the water and sewer systems may apply for the desired services as follows:

1. New customers may apply for service where the necessary water distribution and sewer collection pipes exist beneath or adjacent to streets abutting the property. Such new customers will be required to complete a Service Application acknowledging responsibility for payment of bills, pay the Initial Connection (Tap) Fee, and pay, if applicable, the Capital Investment Fee (CIF) charge set forth in the Rate Schedule, or Class 7 Customers may request water service to property where an Early Bird Special payment was made.
2. If service is requested where the necessary water distribution and sewer collection pipes DO NOT exist beneath or adjacent to streets abutting the property the owner/developer of said property shall be responsible for the cost of extending service to the property.
3. The Town owns and operates a potable water system (WS) and wastewater treatment plant (WWTP). The WS produces, treats and distributes potable water to users. The WWTP receives, processes and treats raw sewer conveyed to it from the town's sewer collection system and then discharges it to the receiving stream. Both of these systems are licensed and regulated by the State of North Carolina. Both the WS and the WWTP have limited capacity. An application for water and/or sewer service must be submitted to the Town and approved by the Town prior to any new water and/or sewer customer being connected to the Town's systems.
4. Once the application is submitted to the town, the Public Works Director will review the application and determine if the Town's system(s) have the capability and capacity to provide the requested service. The Public Works Director will consider what impact approving the service request will have on the operation, performance and/or reserve capacity of the Town's systems. The permit limits, system capabilities, and the state's formula for estimating flow and use, along with any other data relative to the operation of the systems, may be used as a guide in making this determination. No service or line extension shall be connected to the Town's system without approval by the Town's Public Works Director. Additionally, when an extension of either system is requested, the customer may be required to submit additional data to indicate the amount of use associated with the proposed application. Extensions that will be connected of the Town's systems may be subject to approval by the State of North Carolina. If extensions are required, the customer shall provide all data necessary to complete the state application process and pay all costs associated with submitting the application.

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The applicant shall also pay for any engineering review that the Town requires in order to consider the application.

Any application for service that will require a single or multiple service connections (such as a residential subdivision, business development, planned development, industrial or commercial operation, etc.) wherein such services are estimated to utilize more than 20% of the Town's reserve water production capacity or reserve sewer treatment capacity must also be approved by the Town Manager. Any application for service that is estimated to utilize more than 35% of the Town's reserve capacity of either system must be approved by the Town Council. If the system that is being requested to be used is operating at 80% or more of its permitted capacity at the time of application, or if approval of the application would result in the system reaching at least 80% of its permitted capacity, no service shall be connected to the Town's system without approval of the Town Council. The Town reserves the right to limit the total number of water and/or sewer service connections made to the Town's system as a part of any multi-lot development. The number of permitted connections will be determined by the Town Council.

If connections are limited by the town based on estimated current flow data and/or current reserve capacity and either of those variables change in the future, then the applicant may apply for additional services or extensions based on actual flows and/or changes in reserve capacity. However, no application for additional services may be submitted for a previously approved project within 6 months following completion of the approved project. This 6-month waiting period will be used to establish data on actual flows of the completed project.

Any permitted project not started within 180 days of permit issuance may be subject to revocation and required to re-apply. Any project that requires allocation of water or sewer reserve capacity, which is not completed within 3 years of issuance of the permit, shall forfeit any connections and reserves allocated to them for the unfinished portion of the project. The applicant may, within 6 months prior to expiration of the 3-year term, request an extension of no more than 1 year to complete the project. If after the expiration of the 3-year term or any extension thereof, the project is not completed, the applicant may submit a new request for enough allocation to complete the unfinished portion of the project. For example, if a project was originally approved for 200 sewer connections to serve 200 homes and was allocated 72,000 gallons per day of sewer use, and after 3 years, only 100 homes have been constructed, then the applicant, having only completed 50% of the project, would forfeit 50% of the originally approved sewer connections (100 connections) and 50% of the originally approved sewer allocation (36,000 gallons per day).

For the purpose of determining the Town's reserve capacity, the average daily usage of the applicable system, as published in the Town's monthly financial report, for the immediate 12- month period prior to submission of the application, will be compared to the Town's permitted capacity to determine reserve capacity (example: permitted capacity of system minus previous 12- month average daily use = reserve capacity).

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### **B. Service to Existing Connections**

Service may be provided to existing connections upon the completion of a Service Application available at the Department's office or on the Town's website. This application form may be submitted in person, via mail, or via facsimile. However, in order to verify identity, a government issued identification document (driver's license, passport, state identification card, military identification card, etc.) is required to be presented in person.

### **C. Service to Commercial and Industrial Accounts**

Accounts established for non-residential service will require a Federal Tax ID number and a signature by a duly authorized representative of a business entity. For a business not operated by a recognized legal entity the account will be listed in the name of a responsible person (owner, manager, etc.). That person accepts the personal responsibility for payment of the account and must notify the Department of any changes in ownership.

### **D. Time and Place of Application**

Customers may request utility service at the River Bend Town Hall during regular business hours (M-F 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.).

### **E. Time of Connection**

The Department will strive to meet each customer's needs for connection of service. Normal connection will be made in a timely manner during regular work hours. The Department reserves the right to inspect the premises prior to connection to determine if utility service can be received at the premise in a safe manner.

Water customers who request connection or reconnection of water service shall have a representative present in the residence when service is established to ascertain that damage is not being caused by water in the resident's water system as the connection is re-established. The Town shall not have liability in such instances.

### **F. Out-of-Town Connection Requests**

If a customer wants to obtain service prior to arrival in the Town, the Department may provide the requested service and mail, fax, or email a Service Application and Water Resources Policies Manual to the customer. Mailed information shall include acknowledgment of the establishment of service and an application for services for the customer to sign. However, in order to verify identity, a government issued identification document (driver's license, passport, state identification card, military identification card, etc.) is required to be presented in person. The customer should also be notified of any required deposit and fees and should pay those fees within 10 days or the service will be discontinued and the account closed.

### **G. Temporary Turn-on and Turn-off at Permanent Premises**

The Department shall assess an additional fee (refer to the fee schedule) to be paid for the

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expense of turning on and off utilities maintained for less than 30 days at a permanent premises.

### **H. Estate Account**

The Department may request legal documentation from the executor or the person responsible for administering an estate. The account will then be set up in the estate's name. It is the responsibility of the executor or other person administering the estate to notify the Department of any changes in account status. The deposit requirement for the account will have to be reviewed as a new account.

### **I. Customer Responsibility for Piping**

Each customer is responsible for the installation, care, maintenance and repair of water and sewer piping on his property. The Town is not responsible for any piping between the customer's home/building and the service meter. Typically, the line of demarcation for where the customer's responsibilities and property ownership begins is marked by the placement of utility fixtures such as fire hydrants, utility poles, meter boxes, utility pedestals and utility transformers, etc. The customer is responsible for obtaining any permits, approvals and inspections. Installation is governed by the Craven County Building Codes and inspection of such new water and sewer piping is done by the Craven County Inspection Department. All piping shall be maintained in accordance with the applicable building code. Failure to do so may subject the service to disconnection until the piping is in compliance with the applicable building code. Sharing services between buildings on different properties, except for condominiums and group residences, is not permitted.

### **J. Prior Debts**

The Department will refuse to furnish new service to an applicant who is indebted to the Town for service previously furnished at any address in the Town. Also, service will not be established if any member of the household has an outstanding account with the Town. The Town may require proof of residency in the form of rent receipts or lease agreements, etc., prior to the establishment of service.

The Department will also refuse service to an applicant requesting service at an address where the owner of those premises is delinquent in paying the account at that address. If however, the delinquent customer is not the owner of the premises to which the services were delivered; payment of the delinquent account may not be required before providing services at the request of a new and different tenant or occupant of the premises. This restriction will be subject to some interpretation if more than one tenant is occupying premises and such tenants attempt to request, receive and not pay for service. In such event the "new and different tenant or occupant" requirement may not be met.

### **K. Deposits**

The Town may not make the provision of a social security number (SSN) mandatory for service. However, election not to provide a valid social security number will subject the

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customer to an increased deposit amount as described below. Service will be denied to any person who is in debt to the department for current or past service until such debt is paid in full, including any fees and/or penalties.

Deposits must be paid in cash or by credit card (through a third-party provider). Deposit funds will be held by the Town and will be returned, without interest, in accordance with the policies herein described.

Service Level	Utility Deposit Amount with SSN	Utility Deposit Amount without SSN
Water Only	\$200	\$250
Water and Sewer	\$300	\$350

### L. Future Deposits

Any customer whose service is involuntarily terminated for nonpayment, meter tampering, or other reasons will be required to pay a deposit and/or bring their current deposit up to the amount, as specified in Section 3 (K), prior to reconnection of service. This includes all customer accounts, including owner occupied addresses. Any customer that submits more than one check which is returned as not paid, for any reason, shall be required to pay a deposit and/or bring their current deposit up to the amount, as specified in Section 3 K, on that account within 5 days of being notified or that service may be disconnected.

### M. Refunding of Deposits

A deposit will be refunded promptly and automatically when service is voluntarily discontinued and all bills are paid. All outstanding amounts on the final bill will be deducted from the deposit amount. Refunds for less than \$3.00 will not be issued. The deposit will not be refunded if the customer has another account with a past due balance. The remaining credit on the account will be transferred to another account with a balance.

## Section 4 - Rates and Fees

### A. Customer Classes

There are ten customer classes for billing purposes as follows:

Class 1 - Connected to a 5/8" (typical domestic service) water meter and to the sewage collection system. Includes condominiums and group residences with a single common meter and a single bill instead of individual customers' bills.

Class 2 - Connected to a 5/8" (typical domestic service) water meter with no sewer connection. Class 3 - Connected to a 2" water meter and to the sewage collection system.

Class 4 - Connected to a 2" water meter with no sewer connection.

Class 5 - Connected to a 4" water meter and to the sewage collection system.

Class 6 - Has a 5/8" water service installed at property line during system expansion - Converts to Class 2 when used.

Class 7 - (Hydrant Fee) Town residents within 1,000 feet of a fire hydrant who are not water service customers.

Class 8 - Connected to a 1" water meter with or without sewer collection system.

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Class 9 – Connected to a water meter greater than 5/8” (typical domestic service), with or without sewer connection, where the use served is vacant or otherwise out of use. In order to qualify for this Class, the property must be vacant or otherwise out of use, the customer must use less than 2,000 gallons per two month billing cycle, and must request, in writing to the Water Resources Department, to be changed to this Class. If more than 2,000 gallons are used in a subsequent two- month billing cycle, the customer shall automatically revert to the Class appropriate for the connection served.

Class 10 – Connected to a 5/8” (typical domestic service) water meter and to the sewage collection system, where the use served will be permanently vacant. This class is intended to accommodate owners that do not anticipate that their property will be occupied again during their ownership and therefore not serviced by an active user account. In the event that an owner requests to return to an active user account, the owner will be required to pay a reactivation fee. See Section 7, Item I (Vacant Residences) for more information.

### **B. Rate Setting**

The Town Council reviews rates each year during the budget process. Using a professionally designed rate model, the Council examines current and future needs (including adequate reserves) of the systems in order to establish rates that are adequate to meet these needs. The rates are included in a Fee Schedule adopted annually with the Budget Ordinance and sets forth the charges to be used for customer billing purposes.

## **Section 5 - Billing for Service**

### **A. Billing Cycle**

1. Bi-monthly bills are mailed out no later than the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the billing month – January, March, May, July, September and November (odd-numbered months).
2. A bill is past due if not paid by 4:00 p.m. on the 30<sup>th</sup> day following the bill date. A 10% late payment fee will be assessed on all past due accounts, and a second notice including the late payment fee will be mailed the following day.
3. No third notice will be mailed. The Department may attempt a call using our automated notification system to a phone number provided by the customer alerting the customer as to the planned date of disconnection. Disconnections will only be made Monday through Thursday in order to give customers the opportunity to make payment and have service reconnected before a weekend.
4. Service is scheduled to be discontinued if payment is not received by 4:00 p.m. on the 45<sup>th</sup> day following the bill date. The nonpayment fee will be charged to any customer whose bill is unpaid at 4:00 p.m. on the 45<sup>th</sup> day following the bill date. The fee and past due balance must be paid in full before service is reconnected.
5. No service will be reconnected between the hours of 4:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m.
6. A charge, as noted in the Section 7.D. of these policies, will be imposed against any

## Water Resources Department Policy Manual

customer who reconnects the customer's own meter.

### B. Meter Reading

Customer water meters are read bi-monthly and the water consumption is calculated accordingly. Should meter reading data be unavailable for any reason, an estimated consumption for the billing period based on prior billing data may be used. Any adjustments resulting from subsequent more accurate data will be made part of the next bill.

The Department utilizes state of the art water meter reading (radio read) technology that does not require a meter reader to read each individual meter. However, the technology is dependent upon the customer maintaining the area of the meter box serving the property in a manner that keeps it unobstructed by shrubs, grass, weeds, mulch, dirt, or other similar materials. Similarly, vehicles may not be parked over the water meter. If a "radio read" meter fails to transmit reading data, an operator will visit the location. If the failure to transmit is due to customer (or their agent) obstruction or due to damage caused by a customer (or agent), notice will be given to the customer, and a fee to recover repair costs shall be invoiced and applied to the customer's account.

### C. Application of Payments and Payment Options

Partial payment of balances due on a customer's account shall be applied in the following order:

1. Charges and fees – such as, but not limited to, late payment penalties, nonpayment fees, and charges resulting from damage to Department equipment and/or property.
2. Sewer service charges (if applicable)
3. Water service charges

**Payment Drop-Box:** A drop-box is located in the center island of the Town Hall parking lot for check and money order payments. Cash payments are accepted in Town Hall during regular business hours, Monday – Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Any payments placed in the drop-box after 4pm will be posted the next business day.

**Direct Bank Draft:** Customers can have their bill drafted directly from their bank account each billing cycle. A completed Enrollment Form along with a voided check is required to sign up for this service.

**On-line or by Phone:** The Town accepts payments by credit cards, debit cards, and electronic checks through *ACI Payments, Inc.*, a third party company. Payments may be made through Official Payments by using their secure web site or interactive voice response phone system. Their web-based service provides a record of payment, and the phone system a confirmation

number. ACI Payments, Inc. will charge a separate convenience fee for credit card payments and E-Check payments. Please note, ACI Payments, Inc. will charge a return

fee for returned E-Check payments. These fees will show up as a separate charge on your credit card or bank statement. Visit their web site at [www.officialpayments.com](http://www.officialpayments.com) or call 1-800-272-9829 to use their phone payment option with your credit card or "PIN-less" debit card. To properly process your payment, you will need to provide your River Bend nine

## Water Resources Department Policy Manual

digit account number and River Bend's unique "jurisdiction number" which is **3963**.

### D. Billing Adjustments

If the Department has overcharged or undercharged a customer for service, the Department will correct this error subject to the following procedures:

1. If the Department has overcharged a customer for service, the Department will, at the Department's option, refund to the customer or credit the customer's account, without interest, the excess amount, subject to the following limitations:
  - a. If the time period over which the mistake occurred can be determined, the Department should credit or refund the excess amount charged the account for that entire interval, provided that such time period shall not exceed two (2) years.
  - b. If the time frame of the problem cannot be determined, the Department should refund the excess amount charged during the previous 12 months.
  - c. If the exact amount of excess charge cannot be determined, the Department should estimate the amount due.
  - d. If an overcharged customer owes a past due balance to the Department, the Department may deduct that past due amount from any refund or credit due the customer.
  - e. If an overcharged customer owes the Department on another account, the Department will apply the credit to that past due account.
2. If the Department has undercharged a customer for service, the Department will collect the additional amount due the Department in installments over the same amount of time as the undercharge. However, in no instance shall the time period for which the undercharge is calculated and time period for collection, exceed three (3) years.

If the period of time over which the undercharge occurred cannot be determined, the Department will calculate the undercharged amount based on the 12 months of activity before the undercharge was discovered or by using historical meter readings. If the exact amount of the undercharge cannot be determined, the Department will estimate the amount due.

3. If an undercharge has occurred because of tampering or bypassing a meter or because of other fraudulent or willfully misleading action of the customer, the Department shall collect the entire undercharged amount in a lump sum and seek such other rights and remedies as are permitted by law.

### E. Service Changes

Customer service changes are of three kinds: (1) Service Connection where Department pipes, shutoff valve and water meter and/or sewer connection, if applicable, are initially

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installed at the customer property, (2) Service Disconnection where the installed water meter is taken out of service by the Department, and (3) Service Reconnection where a water meter is restored to service in previously used Department piping. Provision of sewer service coincides with the status of the associated water meter. Changes in service are authorized by written application of the customer or his agent to the Department. Charges for service changes are as set in the Rate Schedule.

### **F. Billing Changes**

It is the responsibility of the property owner or designee to advise the Department to whom, and to what address, bills are to be sent (i.e. new owner or renter). Billing change forms acknowledging legal responsibility for the payment of bills are available from the Department.

### **G. Address Changes**

Customers must advise the Department of any change in the address to which bills are to be mailed. There is no charge for such changes. **Failure to receive a bill sent by mail will not excuse late payment of bills.**

### **H. Transfer of Existing Customer to New River Bend Location**

If an existing Department customer moves from one River Bend residence to another River Bend residence, base charges will be pro-rated to the date of the service change and consumption charges will be billed based upon actual closing and initial meter reading. Customers may transfer service from one location to another as long as any bills are not past due. The remaining amount owed and any fees from a previous service may be transferred to the new account.

If the customer has an account that is past due, the customer will have to pay that amount before the account can be transferred. The deposit from the previous account will be transferred and an additional deposit may be required depending on the services provided.

### **I. 1998 Water System Expansion**

In 1998, the water system was extended to the parts of the Town not being served at that time. Class 6 was set up where potential customers paid a reduced Early Bird water service connection fee giving them or subsequent owners of the property the right to connect to the water system at no additional charge. Class 7 was set up for residents who are not Department customers as a way to pay off the debt service incurred in providing fire hydrants to serve their homes.

Class 7 Fire Hydrant charges are included in the Rate Schedule and are payable each July at the beginning of the fiscal year.

### **J. Class 7 Customers Transferring To Class 1 or 2**

Class 7 customers who elect to become Class 1 or 2 water service customers will have any

## Water Resources Department Policy Manual

paid up Class 7 Fire Hydrant Availability Charge monies credited to their new Class 1 or 2 account for each full or partial month of the Town's fiscal year.

### Section 6 – Discontinuing Service

#### A. Closing a Utility Account

After an account has been closed by either customer request or demand of the Department, all funds (including deposits, refunds, and overcharge credits) will be applied first against amounts owed the Department on the closed account. Remaining funds will then be used against any amounts owed on any other accounts the customer may have or previously had with the Department. This includes any joint accounts the customer may have/had with the Department. When those accounts have been cleared, a check for the remaining money will be issued to the customer for any net credit over \$3.00.

#### B. Forced Closing of a Utility Account

Within 15 days after termination of utility service, the account will be closed. All fees and credits are then added to the balance and a "final" bill will be issued to the customer. Any balance owed to the Department will remain a receivable until paid.

All legal means of collection for a delinquent account in arrears will be taken, even if the account is not in "closed" status.

#### C. Termination of Service

1. **Requesting Discontinuance of Service:** Any customer requesting discontinuance of service will inform the Department's employee of the location, date service is to be disconnected and the forwarding mailing address for the final bill. Due to privacy issues, the account holder must be the one to request the termination of service. In the event that the account holder has become incapacitated or deceased, legal documentation must be provided that the person requesting termination of service is an authorized representative of the customer.
2. **Disconnection Scheduling:** Under normal conditions, disconnection from the Town's utility system will be performed the same day if the request is received prior to 2:00 p.m. A request received after 2:00 p.m. will be normally fulfilled the next working day.
3. **Final Bill:** A customer's final bill will be mailed in a timely manner to encourage collection and customer understanding. Base charges will be pro-rated to the day of disconnection and billed along with consumption charges and any other amounts due.

#### D. Customer's Rights Prior to Discontinuance of Service

1. **Reasonable Opportunity:** The Department will discontinue utility service to customers for nonpayment only after giving the customer a reasonable opportunity to question the accuracy of the bill. Reasonable opportunity is defined as the period of time from the

## Water Resources Department Policy Manual

issuance of the bill until the date of potential disconnection as described in Section 4.

2. Disputed Bill: If a customer disputes the accuracy of the customer's bill, the customer shall:
  - a. First contact the Department's office for clarification.
  - b. If the customer, after this conversation, still disputes the bill, the customer has the right to file a written appeal to the Town Manager. This appeal should include the reason for the dispute and any evidence proving the inaccuracy of the bill.
  - c. Written appeals must be made within 15 days of the mailing date of the bill.
  - d. The Town Manager will review the appeal and send a written reply within a reasonable amount of time to the address shown in the billing system, noting the decision regarding the appeal and any substantiation for the decision.
  - e. If the customer remains unsatisfied with the resolution of their dispute, they may make an appeal to the Town Council for a hearing on the dispute.
  - f. A request for a hearing before the Town Council shall be made in writing at least four business days before the scheduled Town Council Work Session. Hearings will only be conducted at duly advertised Town Council Work Sessions, and NOT at the regular Town Council Meeting.
3. Exceptions: Under special circumstances, the Department may choose not to interrupt service during extreme weather or when the meter serves an elderly, handicapped or critically ill person, or a person on life support equipment about whom the Department has prior written notice.
4. No Disconnection: Disconnections for nonpayment will only be made Monday through Thursday in order to give customers the opportunity to make payment and have service reconnected before a weekend.
5. Hearing: The Department will discontinue utility service for nonpayment only after notice has been given and the customer has had the opportunity to be heard on disputed bills or waived their right to dispute by failing to timely make an appeal.

### **E. Involuntary Discontinuance of Service**

1. The Department may discontinue utility service for any one of the following reasons:
  - a. Failure of the customer to pay bills for utility service as required in by these policies.
  - b. Failure of the customer to pay deposits as required in the Section 3, (Establishing Service), of this policy.
  - c. Upon discovery of meter tampering including bypassing the meter or altering its

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function. The account holder is responsible for the payment of all fees associated with repairs made by the town for any damages that are a result of meter tampering.

- d. Failure of the customer to permit municipal employees access to their meters at all reasonable hours. Locked gates, loose dogs, parking cars over meters, etc., are considered to be a denial of access.
  - e. Use of service for unlawful reasons.
  - f. Discovery of a condition which is determined to be hazardous or unsafe.
  - g. Reselling water.
  - h. Violation of any of the Department's other utility service policies and procedures, as they may change from time to time.
2. A notice for disconnection must include a clear explanation of the reasons for the termination, a statement that cutoff is imminent and the date it will occur; a statement advising the customer of the availability of a hearing with the right to contest the bill and the disconnection; the address, phone number, and office hours of the customer service employee to contact regarding the payment, the hearing, and the dispute.

### **F. Disconnection for Prior Debts**

The Department can disconnect customers with prior debts only if:

1. The current services are in the name of the customer(s) with the prior debt. The Department will not allow any customer to continue service if there is any outstanding debt due to the Department either by an agreement signed by the customer or by another person who is currently or previously been a member of the household or who resides at the service address.
2. The customer has been delinquent for 10 days and the Department has notified the customer of their intent to disconnect and has given the customer reasonable time to respond.

### **G. Reconnections**

When it becomes necessary for the Department to discontinue services for any of the reasons listed in this Section, service will be restored only after payment of all of the following which apply to the account: (1) all past due bills due the Department, (2) any deposit as required, (3) any material and labor cost incurred by the Department, according to the Fee Schedule, and (4) all fees and charges required by this policy.

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### Section 7 - Operational Policies

#### A. Meter Testing

Customers may request that the Department test their water meters for accuracy once at no cost to them. If they request a meter test more frequently, there will be a charge assessed as set in the Rate Schedule unless the meter reads high by more than five percent (5%). If

a customer believes his meter reading is inaccurate, the current bill shall be paid. Any adjustment will be made in the next billing period.

#### B. Responsibility for Leakage

The Department is responsible for correcting leaks in the streets and up to the water meter. The customer is responsible for leakage in the piping on his property on his side of the water meter and will be charged for water based on water use as indicated on the meter.

In cases where the Public Works Director determines that excess charges have occurred as a result of a leaking water line on the customer's side of the water meter and the leaking water did not enter the wastewater treatment system, the Town will adjust the customer's bill for sewer service (if a subscriber to this service) by substituting using actual usage if available through the Town's radio read software or an average usage based on previous usage.

1. The adjustment will be the difference between the billed usage and the actual usage if available through the Town's radio read software or the average for the prior twelve (12) months or since inception of the customer's sewer service, whichever is less.
2. The customer may apply for relief from the scheduled charges according to the following rules:
  - a. The customer must apply for relief within fifteen (15) days of the date of the bill in question.
  - b. The Public Works Director must certify that leakage actually occurred. Customers requesting an adjustment are encouraged to document evidence of a leak in a specific location and its repair, such as pictures, receipts from plumbers or other type documentation. This documentation can be used by the town to determine if an adjustment is appropriate.

Upon certification of the Public Works Director, relief shall be granted in an adjusted bill for the period in question according to the following formula:

$$\text{Sewer Usage relief} = \text{Sewer Rate} \times (X - Y)$$

Where:

X = Gallons billed for the period in question:

Y = Gallons as calculated by 1) actual usage if available through the Town's radio read

## Water Resources Department Policy Manual

software, or 2) average usage based on previous usage

Customers who disagree with the Director of Public Works' decision may appeal to the Town Manager in writing within fourteen (14) days of the date of the Director's decision. The Town Manager will issue a final decision within fourteen (14) days of receipt of the appeal.

### **C. Damage to Plants and Shrubs**

The Department is not responsible for damage to plants and shrubs which may be dug up or cut/trimmed in the course of work on the underground piping system or other apparatus located beyond a customer's property line or within a utility easement. A reasonable effort will be made to minimize or repair any resulting damage. The customer is responsible to ensure that the water meter is not obstructed by plantings, mulch, grass, or any other means. If the Town must, in the opinion of the Public Works Director relocate a meter due to obstruction by landscaping, or other obstructions, the owner of the property will be charged for labor and materials to complete the necessary work.

### **D. Tampering With Water and Sewer System Equipment**

In accordance with North Carolina General Statutes 14-151.1, unauthorized persons found tampering with Town water meters or other water and sewer system piping or equipment can be fined up to \$500.00 plus triple the amount of any losses or damages sustained for each tampering incident. The Town may also discontinue service in accordance with these policies.

### **E. Damage to Department Equipment**

Any damage caused by the customer, property owner, or their agent(s) to the Department's equipment or property serving a customer shall be the responsibility of the customer. The Department shall make necessary repairs and charge the customer for materials and labor to effect said repairs. Such damage includes, but is not limited to, damage from mowing, vehicles, landscaping, or excavation.

### **F. After Hours Service Calls**

A charge will be made for service calls made by Department personnel outside their normal working hours of 7:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on weekdays and 7:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. on weekends that are initiated by customers or their agents. The hourly rates for such services are included in the Rate Schedule. Each request must be documented on a Department Service Request Invoice by the customer acknowledging responsibility for charges that may accrue.

### **G. Swimming Pool Filling**

Upon request, swimming pools may be filled once per fiscal year (July 1-June 30) without the customer having to pay a sewer usage charge on the water used to fill the pool. This is known as a "pool adjustment" and is only available for River Bend sewer customers. Pool

## TOWN OF RIVER BEND NOTARY SERVICE POLICY

### I. OBJECTIVE

To establish a policy and procedures for providing Notary Services to the public.

### II. PROCEDURE

#### A. Notary Service Availability

Notary services may be provided to the public, by town employees who are licensed as a Notary Public, at Town Hall during regular business hours.


#### B. Cost of Notary Services

All notary fees, as established by the North Carolina Office of the Secretary of State and assessed to the public, shall be paid directly to the Notary Public. An employee who provides such services to the public under the terms of this policy agrees to provide Notary service to the Town of River Bend government at no charge.

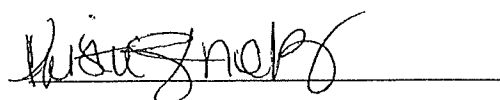
### III. INTERPRETATION

Questions concerning interpretation or clarification of this procedure should be referred to the Town Manager.

Adopted this 16th day of October, 2025.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Mark Bledsoe, Mayor

ATTEST:

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Kristie Nobles, Clerk