

**River Bend Town Council
Work Session Minutes
November 13, 2025
Town Hall
5:00 p.m.**

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

Town Manager: Delane Jackson
Town Attorney: Trey Ferguson
Town Clerk: Kristie Nobles
Police Chief: Sean Joll
Finance Director: Mandy Gilbert
Director of Public Works: Brandon Mills

Members of the Public Present: 7

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Bledsoe called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. on Thursday, November 13, 2025, at the River Bend Town Hall with a quorum present.

VOTE –Addition to the Agenda

Councilman Weaver motioned to amend the agenda by adding Mulberry Project Contract Award as item #7. The motion carried unanimously.

VOTE – Approval of Agenda

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

Discussion – Official Town Spokesperson Role

Councilwoman Benton stated that she would like to discuss using the town's official letterhead for memorandums. She stated that when council members release a memorandum on the town's letterhead it appears as the town's official position. She stated that she would like clarity on how town letterhead should be used and how information is disseminated to the residents of River Bend. She also stated that council members could use letterhead as long as the information is given with a disclaimer, stating that this is an opinion and does not represent the opinion of the town council and the town manager. She asked the Council if they had any input. Councilman Sheffield stated he assumes that she was referring to the memorandum that was included in the agenda package from Councilman Weaver, and he specifically identifies himself as Jeff Weaver, Council Member, which makes it clear that it is him talking and not the town. Councilwoman Benton stated that her position is not on who signed the memo or why but when it is released on official town letterhead it appears to be the official opinion of the town. Councilman Leonard asked the town attorney if there was a disclaimer at the top stating that this is the position of the individual member not that of the Council, would that disclaimer be sufficient to levitate any concerns. The Town Attorney stated that in general when the Council identifies themselves as a council member in a public statement that it is a good idea to use a disclaimer that they are speaking at the individual capacity and not a town representative. The Mayor asked the Town Manager if a consensus from the Council to use a disclaimer would be

suitable and Councilman Weaver stated that if the Council wants a disclaimer to be used, it should be codified. The Mayor asked the Town Manager if this is something he and the town attorney could work on to determine what disclaimer should be used. The Town Manager stated that he could do this if the Council wished to. The Council agreed.

Discussion – Water Committee

The Town Manager stated that Brandon Mills has returned to work for the Town.

Councilman Weaver read the following recommendation:

"I wanted to share a recommendation following the meeting on October 22, 2025, with residents regarding the ongoing water concerns. The discussion was productive and civil. While the residents expressed understandable frustration, they were also open to solutions and genuinely want to be part of improving communication with the Town. One of the suggestions raised was the creation of a citizen "oversight" or advisory board specific to water issues. While I understand where that idea comes from, I don't believe a formal oversight committee is the right structure for a number of operational and regulatory reasons. However, I do think there is real merit in what the residents are asking for, better communication and more opportunities for direct information sharing. As most of you know, the Town has made significant progress toward long-term solutions, securing millions in grants and direct allocations toward a new water treatment facility, increasing flushing frequency in problem areas, and replacing the Binn media, among other efforts. But for those living with the day-to-day effects of water discoloration or odor, that progress isn't always visible. I think part of what we're facing is a communication gap, not because the information isn't available, but because we sometimes take for granted that people know what we're working on. With that in mind, I'd like to recommend that the Town consider hosting a quarterly public Q&A or informational meeting dedicated specifically to water system updates until this issue is finally resolved. It could be an opportunity for residents to hear directly from staff about what's being done, what's planned, and to ask questions in an open, structured setting. Given that project timelines and maintenance schedules often vary, a quarterly format seems more practical and sustainable. In the meantime, residents can continue to reach out during our regular monthly council meetings or by email with any questions or concerns. In addition to improving communication and transparency, I think this format could also benefit us as a council by allowing us to receive feedback or information that we might not otherwise hear. It would help us stay connected to what residents are experiencing firsthand and keep us collectively accountable as we continue working toward a permanent solution. This is just my recommendation based on the feedback I heard, but I welcome everyone's input on how we might structure something like this, or if there are other ideas to help strengthen communication and public confidence moving forward."

Councilman Leonard asked Councilman Weaver "what did he learn at this meeting" and Councilman Weaver stated that it made him realize that more people are dealing with brown water on a daily basis. Councilman Leonard stated he is concerned with adding another meeting that the public will not attend. He stated that the water issue is discussed very often at Council meetings. He said that he is curious what the public get out of another meeting that they are not receiving at the current meetings. Councilman Weaver stated that these Water Committee meetings would allow two-way conversations between the public and the Council, where the regular Council meetings do not allow that. The Mayor suggested that the Council host a meeting and decide after that meeting if another meeting should be held based on the public's attendance. Councilman Leonard asked if this would be considered a Special Meeting and the Town Manager stated that it would be if the majority of the Council attended.

VOTE – Water Committee

Councilman Sheffield motioned to task the Town Manager with working out a system for a Water System Q&A Special Meeting with Councilman Weaver. The motion carried unanimously.

Discussion – Planning Board Member Appointment

Councilman Sheffield stated that a Planning Board member had missed five meetings and has resigned from the board. He stated that the Planning Board has made a recommendation to the Council to appoint Richard Taylor to the board. Councilman Leonard stated that there is a discrepancy in the ordinance regarding excused and unexcused absences and he would like to clarify the ordinance at a later date.

VOTE – Planning Board Member Appointment

Councilman Sheffield motioned to appoint Richard Taylor to the Planning Board with a term beginning on November 13, 2025, and ending on June 30, 2027. The motion carried unanimously.

Discussion – Pickleball Grant Application

The Town Manager stated that he has discovered a possible grant for a pickleball court in River Bend. He stated that he is asking for direction from the Council, whether to apply for the grant or not. He stated that there is no need for him to apply if the Council was not willing to fund the local match.

VOTE – Pickleball Grant Application

Councilman Leonard motioned to direct the Town Manager to apply for a grant for a pickleball court. The motion carried unanimously.

Discussion – Kayak Launch Access

The Town Manager stated that the Wastewater Treatment Project is underway, and the kayak launch is located in that area. He stated that accessing the kayak launch is very dangerous at this time with construction going on around it. He suggested that the Council close the kayak launch until further notice. He stated that he has spoken to the owners at Saltwater Grill and they have agreed to allow kayaks to use their boat launch at no charge.

VOTE – Kayak Launch Access

Councilwoman Noonan motioned to authorize the Town Manager to close the town's kayak launch access as needed during the wastewater treatment plant project. The motion carried unanimously.

Discussion – Mulberry Project Contract Award

The Town Manager stated that the town has received the bids for the Mulberry Project, and the town engineer has reviewed those bids. He stated that The RB Group, Inc. was the lowest bidder and that he recommends awarding the bid to them.

VOTE – Mulberry Project Contract Award

Councilwoman Benton motioned to award the Mulberry drainage improvement contract in the amount of \$26,269 to The RB Group, Inc. The motion carried unanimously.

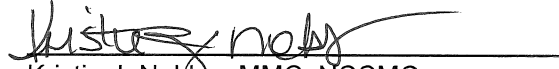
REVIEW – Agenda for the November 20, 2025, Council Meeting

The Council reviewed the agenda for the November 20, 2025, Council Meeting.

At this time, Councilman Leonard asked Councilman Weaver if he knew why the Parks and Recreation Veterans Day event was canceled. Councilman Weaver stated that the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board only has 3 volunteers and in the past this event had low turnout from the community. Councilman Leonard stated that as far as he can remember the Town has always held this event and he asked that if an event is canceled in the future that the Council be notified.

ADJOURNMENT/RECESS

There being no further business, *Councilman Sheffield* moved to adjourn. The motion carried *unanimously*. The meeting was adjourned at 6:04 p.m.



Kristie J. Nobles, MMC, NCCMC
Town Clerk