

**River Bend Town Council  
Special Meeting Minutes  
March 19, 2026  
Town Hall  
5:00 p.m.**

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

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

Members of the Public Present: 20

**Call To Order**

Mayor Bledsoe called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. on Thursday, March 19, 2026, at the River Bend Town Hall with a quorum present.

**VOTE – Approval of Agenda**

*Councilwoman Noonan motioned to accept the agenda as presented. The motion carried unanimously.*

Councilman Weaver arrived 5:01 p.m.

**Opening Comments**

At this time the Mayor called on Manager Jackson. Manager Jackson gave a brief background on the Water Treatment Improvements Project and where the funding stands at this moment.

**Presentation**

Manager Jackson introduced Kevin Cooper and Greg Churchill of Rivers and Associates, Inc. Kevin Cooper presented a PowerPoint slide show detailing the Water Treatment Improvements Project Funding and its impacts on the town's budget and utility customers.

**Public Hearing**

*Councilman Leonard moved to open the Public on the Water Treatment Improvements Project Funding. The motion carried unanimously.*

There were no Public Comments.

*Councilman Leonard moved to close the Public Hearing. The motion carried unanimously.*

**Council Comments**

Councilman Sheffield asked if any other towns in the area get their water from the lower Castle Hayne aquifer and Mr. Churchill stated that the City of New Bern and Jones County do.

Councilman Sheffield asked if there will be a test well and Mr. Churchill stated that there would be.

Councilwoman Benton stated that that the town would get a better quality of water from the lower section rather than what they are currently receiving from the upper section. She asked if the iron and manganese levels were lower in the lower section than the upper section and Mr. Churchill stated that is what he is hoping but cannot say for sure until they drill the actual test well.

Councilman Leonard asked if there would still be a need for residents to use water softeners and Mr. Churchill stated that he did not think so because the new plant will soften the water.

Councilman Sheffield stated that the amount of increase in the utility billing only includes the 1,500 homes in town at this time and there may be 130 more homes built which would lower the amount each home is billed.

Councilman Weaver asked for a timeline when the town would have to stop applying for grants for this project and the Town Manager stated that once the LGC approves the project.

Councilwoman Noonan asked if the increase in the utility billing would be a separate line item on the utility billing and the Town Manager stated that it would not be, it would be included in the rates.


The Mayor asked if once the project starts does the grant opportunities stop, and the Town Manager stated that it is correct.

### **Closing Remarks**

The Town Manager thanked the audience for coming to the meeting.

### **Adjournment**

There being no further business, *Councilman Weaver moved to adjourn. The motion carried unanimously.* The meeting adjourned at 4:53 p.m.

  
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Kristie J. Nobles, MMC  
Town Clerk