

**River Bend Town Council
Budget Workshop Minutes
April 30, 2026
River Bend Town Hall
4:00 P.M.**

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

Absent Council Member: Jeff Weaver

Town Manager: Delane Jackson
Finance Director: Mandy Gilbert
Police Chief: Sean Joll

Members of the Public Present: 4

The Mayor called the meeting back to order at 4:00 p.m.

Councilwoman Noonan motioned to accept the draft agenda as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

The Mayor called upon Manager Jackson to discuss the Eastern Carolina Council (ECC) Membership Resolution. The Manager explained that many members have withdrawn from the ECC. He stated that if the Council wants River Bend to withdraw, the resolution needs to be adopted. The Manager explained that he had received the invoice for FY26-27 ECC membership dues and they remained unchanged and that our total was less than \$1,200. He recommended staying for one more year and reassessing ECC's position during next year's budget process. The Mayor opened the floor for a motion. No motion was presented. The Mayor stated that the matter dies due to the lack of a motion. The Manager stated that meant that the town would remain as a member of ECC for FY26-27.

The Council agreed to pause for public comments/questions after items 18, 21 and 23 on the agenda. The meeting began with a presentation from the Police Chief about the River Bend PD and the PD's budget for next year and a report of their activities during 2025. After his presentation the Chief left.

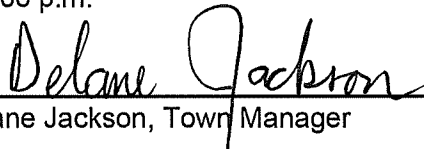
That was followed by a detailed discussion of the following departments: recreation and special events, parks and CAC, emergency services, wetlands and waterways, leaf and limb, planning and zoning, general fund revenues and fund balance. During the P&R and CAC discussions, the Manager discussed the budget requests and the activities that both groups had planned for FY 26-27.

During the revenue discussions, the Manager stated that the local sales tax revenues had been lower than anticipated during the most recent quarter for FY26-27. There was a discussion about Powell Bill revenue and how that impacted the town's ability to fund street paving. There was also a discussion about how the town's tax rate impacted our sales tax revenues. Councilman Leonard noted that leaving the tax rate as-is could reduce our sales tax revenues if other towns increased their rate. The Manager agreed and reported that New Bern has a proposed 4 cent tax increase, but the County has no proposed tax increase. There was some discussion about the ongoing possibility of the state taking steps to restrict all towns' ability to raise tax rates.

Councilman Leonard asked the Manager if there was some other way to generate revenue for street paving. The Manager stated that the vehicle license fee could be raised. He also stated that the town could assess a stormwater impact fee, similar to New Bern's, and use that revenue for stormwater costs and then re-allocate the current property tax revenue which is used to fund stormwater to fund street projects. He stated that would basically be a re-shuffling of revenues to pay for street projects.

The Manager ended the session with several slides that showed the recent history and projections for fund balance. He noted the fund balance projection for FY ending 2026 is 56.2% and the projection for FY ending 2027 is 76.2%. He stated that these are only in-house projections and not the same as the audited fund balance figures. He ended his presentation by saying that he was done with general fund related departments and in the absence of Council action, he intended to move forward as discussed.

Councilman Sheffield motioned to recess the meeting until May 11, 2026 at 4:00 p.m. The motion was unanimously approved. The meeting recessed at 5:06 p.m.



Delane Jackson, Town Manager