

**River Bend Town Council  
Budget Workshop Minutes  
May 14, 2026  
River Bend Town Hall  
4:00 P.M.**

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

Town Manager: Delane Jackson  
Finance Director: Mandy Gilbert

Members of the Public Present 2

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.

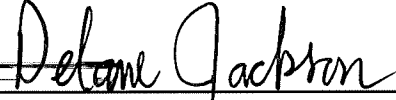
The Mayor recognized the Town Manager. The Manager began by following the budget workshop agenda as scheduled and presented a PowerPoint presentation showing how the 28¢ tax rate would impact revenues for the town along with historical tax rate data. The Manager also discussed the proposed fee schedule and utility rates and fees and stated that there were no changes recommended except changing the terminology from hydrant fee to availability fee.

The Manager asked if any other budget items needed discussion. Councilman Leonard stated that he wanted to revisit the proposed tax rate. After a lengthy discussion, Council members Leonard, Noonan and Weaver said they supported a tax rate increase of 2¢ to 30¢. Council members Benton and Sheffield were opposed to a tax rate increase and suggested cutting items from the budget, such as pickleball, in lieu of a tax increase. There was also a discussion about the on-going progress of the General Assembly taking steps to possibly limit the ability of towns in the state to set their own tax rate and how that might impact future budgets. Councilwoman Benton asked about the town's fund balance projection. The Manager stated it was projected to be around 76% and \$1,700,000 at the end of FY26-27. Councilwoman Benton stated that she believed the town's fund balance was in good shape and reiterated that she did not support a tax increase. The public was given an opportunity to offer comments. Neither opposed the tax increase.

The Manager stated he would modify the budget proposal to include a tax rate of 30¢ but it would not become official until the Council adopts the FY26-27 Budget Ordinance. He also stated that the administration department, in the general fund, needed to be increased to include some salary expenses related to the recently received grants and that he would include those changes in the proposed budget. He stated that he had recently discussed those changes with the Finance Director in an attempt to fund them during the current budget year, but both agreed it would be best to fund those costs in the next fiscal year. All agreed. He then stated that he had all of the information that he needed to complete the budget proposal.

Due to the time, he suggested forgoing the closed session which was on the agenda and recommended adding it to the upcoming Council work session meeting agenda which was scheduled to begin at 5 p.m. All agreed. He stated that he could present the draft budget message at the May 21 Council meeting, as has been done in the past and thus avoid the need for the scheduled May 21 budget workshop. All agreed.

Councilman Weaver motioned to adjourn the meeting. The motion was unanimously approved. The meeting adjourned at 4:42 p.m.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Delane Jackson". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Delane Jackson, Town Manager