River Bend Town Council
Regular Meeting Minutes
August 20, 2026
Town Hall
5:00 p.m.

Present Council Members:	Mayor Mark Bledsoe Buddy Sheffield Lisa Benton Brian Leonard Kathy Noonan 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:	40

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Bledsoe called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. on Thursday August 20, 2026, at the River Bend Town Hall with a quorum present, followed by invocation and the pledge of allegiance.

RECOGNITION OF NEW RESIDENTS

Charlie Myers – off Plantation – has lived in River Bend for 14 years.

VOTE – Approval of Agenda

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

ADDRESSES TO THE COUNCIL

Jon Herrin – 110 Outrigger – Mr. Herrin stated that he was going to forgo the first item on his request due to the time limit. Mr. Herrin stated that he is speaking tonight to formally request the town Council's official stance on deeply concerning emails between himself and Councilman Leonard regarding maintenance of the town's parks grounds. He stated that in the email exchange Councilman Leonard utilized his town email address and explicitly signed off as his public title, Town Councilman. He stated that when citizens engage with an elected official through official government channels, they expect a professional and accountable response. He stated that Councilman Leonard wrote that, "I was no longer interested in playing your game and that you will not be satisfied with any answers unless it meets your narrative and if you think you can do a better job, run for Council. By the way I will no longer spend any money in your store and encourage my friends and family to do the same." Mr. Herrin stated that this is not a private dispute. This is a public sitting official using taxpayer funded email and his official title to launch a personal attack, dismiss constituents' legitimate questions and concerns about public parks and explicitly threaten a boycott against a small business. He stated that he stands here today to petition the Council to ensure safeguards are installed so no other citizen should have to endure such threats. He stated that on July 7 and August 1, 2026, he asked the Council to investigate if the comments by Councilman Leonard violate the code of ethics or code of conduct. He stated that the Mayor visited him and stated that they don't see Councilman Leonard did anything wrong, just don't like the tone. Mr. Herrin stated that this isn't about the tone, this is about what was said. He stated that this is about threatening retaliation by a government official to suppress our first amendment right. He stated that many in the public audience are there because he asked them to be, to stand in solidarity against being bullied by our town. He stated that people are afraid of retaliation by the elected officials. He stated that he is disappointed and ashamed of you as town leaders due to this type of behavior and the silence on the matter. He stated that "therefore tonight I am asking each Councilmember to answer the following – "Do you condone an elected official using public transparent channels to threaten citizens and businesses?" He asked - Does this behavior align with the town Council's code of ethics and conduct for public service? What official actions will the Council take to ensure the citizens can question their government without facing personal constitutional economic retaliation from our own town government?" Mr. Herring stated that he looks forward to their formal response in writing.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

James Myers – 111 Portside – Spoke in support of Jon Herrin and apologized to him for what he was going through. He stated that he is not shocked at what is going on with the Council, but what does shock him is that the Council is failing to do anything about it. He stated that Councilman Leonard threatens citizens and their businesses. He stated that his wife made a comment to him saying, "Why don't you do something about it?" He stated that she is right. He stated that, "he may not have enough write in votes to replace one of you, but I am going to try". He stated that the Council's actions tell alot about them and what they do. He also stated that, "I hope you write me in because I am going to do everything I can to replace them."

PUBLIC HEARINGS

None

CONSENT AGENDA

The Mayor presented the Council with the Consent Agenda. *Councilman Sheffield moved to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. The motion carried unanimously.* Within this motion, the following items were approved:

A. Approve:
   Minutes of July 16, 2026 Regular Council Meeting

At this time Councilman Sheffield stated that he wanted to recognize Egon Lippert who served on the Planning Board over 20 years and most of that time he was the chairman. He presented Mr. Lippert with a gift for his many years of service volunteering for the town.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

The Manager gave the following updates:

- The State of North Carolina has authorized a tentative award for the test well.
- Phase I of the Wastewater Treatment Plant is near the end and with the projected completion date of December 2026.
- Phase II of the Wastewater Treatment Plant scope of work engineering services is proceeding.
- Senator Bob Brinson and Representative Steve Tyson recently met with the Town Manager to tour the Wastewater Treatment Plant.
- Hurricane Preparedness Workshop is August 31 at 3:00 pm in the Municipal Building at 51 Shoreline Drive.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

ENVIRONMENTAL & WATERWAYS – Councilman Leonard

Councilman Leonard provided the following report:

EWAB August 3rd, 2026.Chairman Hall called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM. There was a quorum of members present. There were no visitors. The minutes for the April 6th, 2026, meeting were approved. Old Business: Canal clean up scheduled for August 29th, 2026, at 10 AM. New

Business: Paige Ackiss resigned as a member. New officers elected: Jeff Myers Chair, Jon Hall Vice Chair, and Patty Leonard Secretary. Recommendation to name the kayak launch for long-term member Jim Stevens. There are four vacancies on EWAB. Councilman Leonard gave a Council update and answered members questions. Next meeting October 5th, 2026, at 7PM in the municipal building in the small conference room. Volunteer Hours: 5. The public is welcome to attend. The meeting adjourned at 7:31 PM.

VOTE – Accept Bid for Manhole Rehabilitation Project

The Town Manager stated that Manhole Rehabilitation Project is a rollover project that was budgeted in the previous year and was not completed. He stated that town completed the informal bid process and the low bidder is B&C Utility Contracting, LLC in the amount of $13,920. He stated that the Council budgeted for $25,000 for three manholes, but the bid came in under that amount, so he recommends utilizing the entire budgeted amount to rehab additional manholes.

Councilman Leonard motioned to accept the bid from B&C Utility Contracting, LLC for the manhole rehabilitation project in the amount of $13,920 and to authorize additional work up to $11,080 for a total of $25,000. The motion carried unanimously.

PLANNING BOARD – Councilman Sheffield

Councilman Sheffield provided the following report:

The regular meeting of the Planning board was held on Thursday, Aug. 6th at 6pm in the Community Building. Vice Chairman Bob Kohn called the meeting to order and recognized the long service of Chairman Egon Lippert who has chosen to end his time on the board.

Councilman Sheffield then took control of the meeting while the election process for a new chairman was conducted. Bob Kohn was unanimously elected chairman. Richard Taylor was elected Vice Chairman and Allison McCollum was elected secretary. New Chairman, Bob Kohn then took over the meeting. The usual reports were given. There was no public comment. The applicants for board membership were acknowledged and invited to speak. It was decided that the selection of the new board member would be postponed until the September meeting since all of the applicants were not present. There was a presentation by Manager Jackson about potential changes to the town's ordinance regulating walls, fences and driveway markers. No action was taken. The matter will be discussed at the next meeting, which will be held on September 3rd. The public is invited to attend.

VOTE – Memorandum of Agreement with NCLM for Grant Project

The Town Manager stated that the town had been awarded a grant from the North Carolina League of Municipalities in the amount of $2,500. He stated that the grant would be used to review and update the Town's Human Resources Policy. He stated that the grant is a match grant and the town would need to match the grant awarded to utilize the grant.

Councilman Sheffield motioned to approve the Memorandum of Agreement with North Carolina League of Municipalities for Human Resource Management Services as describes therein with matching funds paid from the Governing Body discretionary line. The motion carried unanimously. (see attached)

PUBLIC SAFETY – Councilwoman Noonan

Councilwoman Noonan stated that Community Watch is in need of volunteers and that the next meeting is October 21, at 6:00 pm at the Municipal Building.

VOTE – Adoption of Flag Policy

Councilwoman Noonan motioned to adopt the Flag Policy as presented.

After discussion among the Council, it was decided the policy needs to be tabled for further discussion.

Councilwoman Noonan rescinded her motion.

PARKS & RECREATION – Councilman Weaver

Councilman Weaver gave the following updates:
The board met on August 12 and scheduled the following events: Community Yard Sale, September 26: Fall Festival joined with CAC, October 30; Game Night, November 20; Holiday Tree Lighting, December 4. Officers were elected. Victoria Stuppy, Chair; Kay Thomson, Vice Chair; Beth Stokes, Secretary.

RIVER BEND COMMUNITY ORGANIC GARDEN

Councilman Weaver gave the following report:
Gardeners worked 150 hours in July, for a year-to-date total of 951 hours. Due to the heat, most volunteers start work about 6:30 am and finish before 9. The month's harvest totaled 311 pounds of vegetables and herbs. Fall planting plans are underway. The Swap-a-Plant space is open to everyone. Anyone may take a plant or drop off a plant in the designated area. Mustard greens will be planted as a cover crop on the beds that had root knot nematode this summer. The next meeting is scheduled for September 8 at 2:30 pm. It is a special meeting due to a date change. Guests are always welcome at the meetings and in the garden.

VOTE – Pickleball Courts Construction Bid

Councilman Weaver asked the Town Manager for clarification on the funding of the Pickleball Courts and if the Town Manager has any additional information. The Town Manager stated that the Town has been awarded a $75,000 grant, thanks to the effort of Representative Steve Tyson. He stated that he was informed that the Town could be reimbursed for the project dating back to July 1, 2026. The Town Manager then presented a PowerPoint providing information on the proposed pickleball courts. He stated that the Public Works Director, Police Chief and himself conducted a noise assessment of measuring the noise decibels of a hammer and a 2X4 from 242' to 293', which registered at 55 decibels.

Councilwoman Benton raised concerned regarding the materials that were used to conduct the noise assessment. She stated that the materials that were used were not reasonably comparable to a pickleball and a paddle. Councilman Weaver stated that the decibels were not measured at the site of the hammer and the board, it was measured from a distance away. Councilwoman Benton stated that she appreciated that the Town Manager tried to do a test to see what type of noise he could get out of the test, but it is not a noise abatement survey that would actually use the correct equipment to give a good reading of what the noise would look like. She stated that there are 9 municipalities across North Carolina being sued right now because of pickleball courts and she does not want to see that happen in this town. She stated that, "I want to be real clear, to be clear, I want pickleball courts, but I want them and I want them done right, and I don't want our neighbors blowing up our emails and town hall complaining about pickleball noise." Councilman Weaver asked Councilwoman Benton regarding the cases, "Is it two pickleball courts, or is it 4-8?" Councilwoman Benton stated that it is 2. Councilwoman Benton expressed concern for site preparation fees, administration, maintenance and flood zone area. She stated that she suggests that the Council put the vote off on it until the Council can talk about it some more.

Councilman Weaver motioned to accept the Pickleball Court Construction Bid from Outer Banks Tennis Contractors LLC in the amount of $105,649 and to authorize up to $10,564 in contingency as needed, for a total of $116,213. The motion passed with Councilwoman Benton voting nay.

FINANCE – Councilman Leonard

Financial Report – Finance Director, Mandy Gilbert, presented the financial statement for the month of July to the Council. She stated the total of the Town's Cash and Investments as of July

31 2026, were $271,450 and Ad Valorem Tax Collections for FY26-27 were $1,254,048 and Vehicle Ad Valorem Tax Collections were $153,000. She stated that this is the first month in fiscal year 2026-2027.

VOTE – Accept Offer for Sale of Surplus Property

The Town Manager stated that the Town passed the deadline to receive upset bids for the property located at 111 Starboard Drive. He stated that there were not any other bids on the property and the Council could move forward with the sale of the property.

Councilman Leonard motioned to approve the sale of surplus property located at 111 Starboard Drive to Corey M. Thomas in the amount of $18,000 under the term of the offer to purchase and contract as presented and to allow the manager to sign all documents on behalf of the town. The motion carried unanimously.

CAC – Councilwoman Benton

Councilwoman Benton gave the following report:
Called to order: 4:07 PM by Chair Brenda Hall Members present: Jon Hall, Pat Lieback, Steve Sarge, Jackie Herbster (all members present) Minutes: Approved from the last meeting; a correction/adjustment was made to the March meeting minutes Pet Waste Station Survey CAC will conduct a survey to inventory existing pet waste stations throughout River Bend and identify gaps where additional stations are needed. Chair Brenda Hall will reach out to the Town Manager to discuss the survey and confirm current station locations. Veterans Memorial Flower Beds CAC discussed an ongoing weed problem this year in the raised flower beds at the Veterans Memorial, which CAC maintains. The commission plans to plant different plant varieties next year to help cut down on weeds; this will be revisited at that time. Fall Festival Collaboration with Parks & Rec Victoria Stuppy, Chair of Parks & Recreation, joined the meeting to discuss combining CAC's planned hayride with Parks & Rec's fall festival, coinciding with a River Bend Market on the same Friday night. The two advisory boards agreed to run this as a joint event, which will include Fall Festival awards. Parks & Rec will attend CAC's next meeting to continue planning. Brenda will also reach out to the Country Club manager about possibly hosting the hayride on the golf course. Arbor Day Arbor Day was a big success this year. CAC will look to collaborate with the Environmental Waterways Advisory Board (EWAB) again next year for Arbor Day. Crab Pot Workshop & Luminaries The crab pot workshop for Christmas luminaries will be held November 14, 2026, in two sessions: 9:00 AM–12:00 PM and 12:00–2:00 PM. Holly Trolley Still on schedule for December 18, and will include Christmas Festival awards. Next Meeting Wednesday, September 16, 2026, 4:00 PM, Municipal Building. Outstanding items — including hayride location and awards logistics — will be finalized at this meeting. Adjournment 6:05 PM

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, *Councilman Weaver moved to adjourn. The motion carried unanimously*. The meeting adjourned at 6:01 p.m.

Kristie J. Nobles
Kristie J. Nobles, MMC
Town Clerk

MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT

PERSONNEL SERVICE

TOWN OF RIVER BEND

THIS AGREEMENT is made and entered into this 26 day of August, 2026 by and between the North Carolina League of Municipalities, an unincorporated association, hereinafter called "League", and the Town of River Bend, an incorporated municipality hereinafter called "Town."

WITNESSETH

In consideration of the amounts of money hereinafter agreed to be paid, and in consideration of the other conditions hereinafter agreed to by the Town of River Bend, the League offers to perform the following services:

Scope of Services. The League agrees to provide through its subcontractor The MAPS Group the services described and set forth in Attachment "A", Scope of Services, which is incorporated into and made a part of the Memorandum of Agreement by reference.

Time for Performance. The time for performance will be approximately three (3) months. The contract can begin in October 2026 or at a time mutually agreed upon between The MAPS Group and the Town.

Cost. The fee for the proposed work is $5,000.00.

In consideration of the services performed by the League, the Town agrees to abide by and perform the following:

The MAPS Group will bill the Town for one payment of $2,500.00 at the beginning of the project, and a final payment of the same amount when the project is completed. The Town agrees to remit payment to The MAPS Group upon receipt of each of the statements referred to above.

Execution. If this Memorandum of Agreement is not executed and returned to the League Office within thirty (30) days from the submission date, the time frame for performance may have to be renegotiated.

E-verify. The MAPS Group certifies that it currently complies with the requirements of Article 2 of Chapter 64 of the North Carolina General Statutes.

Iran Divestment Act Certification. As of the date of this Agreement, The MAPS Group certifies that it is not listed on the Final Divestment List created by the State Treasurer pursuant to

NCLM
NC LEAGUE OF MUNICIPALITIES

N.C.G.S. 147-86.58 and that The MAPS Group will not utilize any subcontractor found on the State Treasurer's Final Divestment List.

Governing Law. This Agreement shall be construed and interpreted in accordance with the laws of the State of North Carolina. Venue shall lie in Wake County.

If the terms of this contract are acceptable, please sign two (2) copies and return one to the League office.

SUBMITTED BY:

NORTH CAROLINA LEAGUE OF MUNICIPALITIES

Lou Bunch
Lou Bunch
Senior Municipal Human Resources Consultant

8/6/2026
Submission Date

ACCEPTED BY:

TOWN OF RIVER BEND

Delane Jackson
Name

Town Manager
Title

8-26-26
Date

This instrument has been pre-audited in the manner required by the Local Government Budget and Fiscal Control Act.

Amanda B. Gilbert
(Signature of Finance Officer)

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ATTACHMENT "A"

SCOPE OF SERVICES

PERSONNEL POLICY PROJECT

SCOPE OF SERVICES

Objectives of Study

The primary purpose of the study is to conduct a comprehensive review of the Town's current personnel policy. The MAPS Group will review and make recommendations for updating the Town's personnel policy to be consistent with modern and effective human resource management and current laws and regulations.

The personnel policy will be reviewed for policy versus procedural language and is recommended to meet a balance of providing guidance without including unnecessarily restrictive or detailed procedures.

Communication with the Town

During the study, MAPS principals will be available to Town management to clarify any questions or concerns about personnel policy recommendations, or other issues related to the study by phone or email. A draft of the policy will be sent to management for review and MAPS will discuss management reactions to the study prior to finalizing it. After the draft review, the MAPS Group will make a presentation to the Town Council/Board of Commissioners, if requested. Any additional trips will require additional fees.

Results of the Study

The study will result in the publication and delivery to the Town of the required number of personnel policies for management and the Board/Council. The MAPS representative will formally present the study to the Town Council/Board and be available to respond to questions.

Project Staff

The project team will be lead by Erika Phillips and additional team members will be subject to approval by the Town.