

**River Bend Town Council
Work Session Minutes
September 11, 2025
Town Hall
5:00 p.m.**

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

Town Manager: Delane Jackson
Town Attorney: Trey Ferguson
Town Clerk: Kristie Nobles
Police Chief: Sean Joll

Members of the Public Present: 3

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Bledsoe called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. on Thursday, September 11, 2025, at the River Bend Town Hall with a quorum present.

At this time the Town Manager presented a video in remembrance of September 11, 2001, Patriots Day.

VOTE – Approval of Agenda

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

Discussion – Constitution Week Proclamation

The Town Manager stated that Donna Stebbins with the Daughters of the American Revolution will give a special presentation at the next Council meeting regarding Constitution Week and the Mayor will present the annual Constitution Week Proclamation.

Discussion – Budget Amendment

The Town Manager stated that since the pickleball court project had been withdrawn, a budget amendment is needed to move the allocated funding back to the original line items. He stated that the Council will need to vote on the amendment at the next meeting.

VOTE —2025 Paving Program Recommendation

The Manager stated that the town had received five bids for the 2025 Street Paving in River Bend. He stated that the bid from Onslow Grading and Paving was less than the other bids. He stated that the town's engineer recommends Onslow Grading and Paving.

Councilman Leonard motioned to award the street paving bid to Onslow Paving and Grading in the amount of \$139,748 as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

VOTE – Draft Personnel Policy Amendment

The Manager stated that the current Personnel Policy has a 60-day probationary period for new hires, and the proposed amended Personnel Policy has a 6-month probationary period, which

is standard practice in the area, other than law enforcement. He stated that this change would apply to all new employees and employees who are promoted within. He stated that the other amendment states that employees have to complete a year of employment to be eligible for a Cost-of-Living Allowance (COLA). Councilman Weaver stated that he understood the withholding the merit pay if an employee has not completed a year of employment, but he understood that the COLA is adjusting an employee's salary for cost of living and things of that nature. The Manager stated that the COLA does not have anything to do with the probationary period and Councilman Weaver stated that an employee must have one year of continuous full-time service. The Manager stated that Councilman Weaver was correct, but if that wasn't the case an employee who has been employed a short time would get, he same COLA as an employee who has worked for years. He stated that this has been the practice for many years and adding this language will avoid any confusion. The Mayor stated that when someone is hired, they agree to the salary, and they are not ready for COLA at that point. The Manager agreed with the Mayor and stated that when someone is hired, they accept the position with the salary and step in writing and there is no guarantee there will be a COLA each year. He stated that depending on when they are hired, they may have to go through an entire budget year and part of the next year before it takes effect.

Councilman Weaver motioned to approve the amendments to Article IV, Section 4 and Article III, Section 7 of the Human Resources Policies and Procedures Manual as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

Discussion – July 4, 2026, Celebration Options

Councilman Leonard stated that July 4, 2026, is the 250th Anniversary of the founding of our country and he thinks that the town should do something more than the traditional events. He stated that there have been some discussions regarding fireworks, or a drone show but those seem to be very cost-prohibited. He stated that he would like the Council to discuss what they would like to do for the event. The Manager stated that he had been in contact with a fireworks "expert" and stated that there is a limited number of licensed display operators in the state and it may be hard to find one with a reasonable price based on the holiday and that it falls on a Saturday. He stated that he is open to holding the event on another day. Councilman Leonard stated that the Council needed to decide on a budget for the event before any of the specifics could be determined. Councilman Leonard suggested that the Council budget \$30,000 for the event. After a brief discussion the Council agreed. The Mayor reiterated that the budget would be \$30,000 for the July 4, 2026, event and the Manager stated that this event would be in lieu of the normal July 4th event. There were no objections.

REVIEW – Agenda for the September 18, 2025, Council Meeting

The Council reviewed the agenda for the September 18, 2025, Council Meeting.

CLOSED SESSION

Councilwoman Noonan motioned to go into Closed Session under NCSG §143-318.11(a)(3)(6). The Council entered Closed Session at 5:37 p.m.

OPEN SESSION

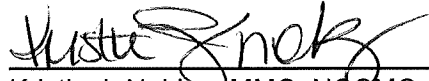
Councilwoman Noonan motioned to return to Open Session at 6:05 p.m. The motion carried unanimously.

VOTE – Town Managers Contract

Councilman Leonard motioned to approve the Town Manager's contract as presented with an expiration date of September 30, 2029. The motion carried unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT/RECESS

There being no further business, *Councilman Sheffield moved to adjourn. The motion carried unanimously.* The meeting was adjourned at 6:06 p.m.



Kristie J. Nobles, MMC, NCEMC
Town Clerk

