

**River Bend Town Council
Regular Meeting Minutes
September 17, 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
Public Works Director: Brandon Mills
Police Chief: Sean Joll
Town Clerk: Kristie Nobles
Deputy Town Clerk: Jennifer Barrow
Assistant Zoning Administrator: Allison McCollum
Town Attorney: David Baxter

Members of the Public Present: 63

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Bledsoe called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. on Thursday September 17, 2026, at the River Bend Town Hall with a quorum present, followed by invocation and the pledge of allegiance.

RECOGNITION OF NEW RESIDENTS

None

VOTE – Additions to the Agenda

Councilman Sheffield motioned to amend the agenda by adding a Proclamation for the Town Manager as item 10B. The motion passed with 4 ayes and 1 nay with Councilwoman Benton voting nay.

VOTE – Approval of Agenda

Councilman Sheffield motioned to approve the agenda as amended. The motion carried unanimously.

ADDRESSES TO THE COUNCIL

Steve Kleber – 423 Gatewood Drive – Addressed the Council regarding a zoning violation he had received about a fence.

James Myers – 111 Portside Lane – addressed the Council and stated that he is very disappointed in the current Council. He stated that since he announced he is running for Council that some are painting the picture that he is doing it to get rid of Delane (Town Manager) and he stated that is not the case. He stated that the quality of his water is getting worse. He spoke on the grass mowing schedule for town properties and stated that residents are getting letters of violation regarding their grass not being mowed when the town isn't mowing its own.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

James Crozier – 101 Sextant - spoke on the Council meeting time, and how it was changed from 7:00 pm to 5:00 pm. He stated that residents find it difficult to make the 5:00 pm meetings.

Skip McQuiston – 507 Plantation – stated that he is very disappointed in the Council for approving the property tax increase. He stated that he felt that the Council does not represent the people of River Bend and that drainage should be the #1 concern, but the Council is arguing over pickleball.

Patrick O'Toole – 217 Shoreline – stated that what Mr. McQuiston spoke about was very important. He stated that the Council is there to serve the town and they have no idea what they are doing. He also stated that when he ran for Council, that the town's infrastructure needed to be fixed and there are places that still flood.

Robert Clymore – 106 Sextant – stated that he was there to speak about municipal ethics and the conduct of Councilman Weaver. He stated that Councilman Weaver posted a public statement on social media that fails to uphold the standards of conduct, ethics and decorum required of an elected official representing the town. He asked the Council to review this matter through all available administrative and legal channels. He stated that if Councilman Weaver does not voluntarily resign that the Council pursue the appropriate disciplinary actions or removal procedures permitted under the town charter and state law.

Victoria Stuppy – 298 Shoreline – stated that she wanted to speak on the social media page that was proposed at the previous meeting. She stated that social media can be a useful tool if in the right hands, but many in the town weaponize it and use it to spread misinformation. She stated that if the need for social media is about transparency, she thinks the town provides that on the town's website, meetings and more. She stated that the town goes above and beyond what is required by law. She suggested making the website easier to find information.

Debbie Alkoff – 114 Mariners – stated that she had a package that was delivered to the wrong address in River Bend and was not returned to her. She stated that she felt it is time that the community started being neighborly again.

Jon Herrin – 110 Outrigger – stated that he is running for Town Council and running to replace one of them. He stated that the actions of the current Council demonstrate exactly what the town needs, which is change. He stated that the Council does not have to agree with the residents, but they should listen, explain their decisions, answer reasonable questions and should never make citizens feel intimidated or unwelcomed because they disagree with the Council. He stated that it is time that the citizens of River Bend be heard.

Sandra Barta – 404 Gatewood – stated that she has heard time and time again that the River Bend Community Page is a governance page, and she feels that it is not. She stated that the Council and the Town Manager do not share town information with them. She stated that they ask questions but do not get answers. She also stated that the community page is volatile but can be a source of information for those in the community. She stated that Ms. Benton shares information on the Facebook page and if it isn't liked, to get over it, don't look at it or find a way to reach out to this community.

Chris Barta – 404 Gatewood – stated that the Council has indicated that what Councilman Leonard stated in an email to Mr. Herrin was inappropriate, but they do not have the fortitude, ability or ethical ability to publicly admit this and address this issue so the citizens of River Bend can have a little bit of confidence in the elected board. He stated that the bulk of River Bend citizens have little to no confidence in the Mayor or Council. He ended with two quotes, "Stand for what is right, even if you stand alone" and "Ethics is knowing the difference between what you have the right to do and what is right to do."

Jon Segal – 420 Gatewood – stated that the Town Manager is doing a really good job and he has no complaints with the Council. He stated that the Town is moving forward with the needed utility projects. He stated that he does not agree with all of the Council but isn't ready to throw anyone under the bus. He stated that he wasn't wild about the property tax increase, because he pays as much as anyone, but costs are going up and he expected his taxes to go up at some point. He stated he is happy about pickleball and getting another amenity in town. He stated that someone suggested a 6:00 pm meeting time and he felt that was a good idea. He thanked the Council for doing a good job and for allowing him and others to speak.

Ellen Nettles – 509 Plantation – stated that she and her daughter relocated here in 2022 and fell in love with the town. She stated that she contacted the Council regarding the property tax increase and only two councilmembers responded. She stated that the amenities in town are a mess. She stated that she doesn't know why the town doesn't connect to the City of New Bern's water system.

Sandy Bruno – 27 Pier Point – stated that she and her husband moved back to River Bend in 2001 and that they love living here. She stated that she thinks the town Council is doing an amazing job and they work hard for all of River Bend. She stated that there are so many other places to live in New Bern and River Bend is the safest and most beautiful community. She thanked the Council and Town for everything they are doing.

Chena Alford – 204 Channel Run – She stated that she urges the Council to change the meeting time to 6:00 or 7:00 in the evening. She stated that she sent an email to the Council and the Mayor and Lisa Benton were the only ones to respond. She stated that the Council is held to a higher standard. She also stated that she does not think everyone is against the Pickleball Courts, she thinks that people are against the fact that there is no plan with maintenance of the courts.

Richard Taylor – 298 Shoreline – he stated that there seems to be a lot of anger, belligerence and disrespect from the previous speakers. He stated that he hopes that everyone can remember that everyone is a resident of a small community and treat each other with more respect. He stated that the town staff are being treated badly and it takes a toll on them. He stated that if he had to hire a manager, a director, a vice president, he would hire Delane Jackson. He urged the citizens to read the first amendment rights, and they will see that their rights have not been violated. He stated that he can't say whether the property tax increase is right or wrong, but he can say that during the budget workshops there were basically three people in attendance at every workshop, and they had a chance to speak at those meetings. He stated that a majority of the funding for the pickleball courts came from a grant.

At this time Councilman Weaver attempted to speak as a resident. The Town Attorney stated that the Council needed to address that Councilman Weaver is a sitting councilmember making up part of the quorum of the Council. He stated that the Council would need to make a decision if they are going to let sitting councilmember speak during the public comment period. He stated that if the Council chooses to allow him to speak during this time, they will need to vote to excuse him from the board for the purpose of calculating a quorum.

Councilman Sheffield motioned that Councilman Weaver be allowed to speak from his desk as a councilman for 3 minutes if he chooses to do so. Councilman Sheffield withdrew his motion.

Councilman Leonard stated that he did not want to set a precedent without discussing it. Councilwoman Benton stated that she agreed and that it is public comment.

Councilwoman Noonan asked if Councilman Weaver could be excused, and the Town Attorney stated that the Council could vote to excuse him as a member of the Council if they wished to do

so. He stated that the Council could amend the agenda to allow him to speak as a separate agenda item if the Council wished to do that instead.

Councilman Sheffield motioned to allow Councilman Weaver to speak for 3 minutes at the dias after the public comment is over. Councilman Sheffield withdrew his motion.

Councilman Leonard asked the Town Attorney if it was improper for any of the Council to request a moment of personal privilege to make a statement during the meeting. The Town Attorney stated that Councilman Weaver could do that, and Councilman Leonard asked if Councilman Weaver could do so during his reports on his committees and the Town Attorney stated that he could do that as well. Councilman Leonard stated that he felt that would be more appropriate.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

None

CONSENT AGENDA

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

A. Approve:

*Minutes of August 13, 2026 Work Council Meeting
Minutes of August 20, 2026 Regular Council Meeting
Minutes of September 4, 2026 Special Council Meeting*

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

The Manager gave the following updates:

- Preconstruction meeting for the test well was held earlier today.
- Pickleball Courts contract has been executed.
- Effective Monday, September 21, 2026, Brandon Mills will be acting Town Manager as Town Manager Jackson will be on extended medical leave.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

PLANNING BOARD – Councilman Sheffield

Councilman Sheffield provided the following report:

The regular meeting of the Planning Board was held on September 3rd at 6pm in the Community building. A quorum was present. Chairman Kohn called the meeting to order. The usual reports were given. Under Public Comment the two candidates for appointment to the board who were in attendance spoke. The board members voted on which candidate they would recommend to the council for appointment. They voted unanimously for Barbara Maurer. The board then took up the subject of changing town ordinances regarding fences, walls, driveway markers, etc. After considerable discussion, it was decided that board member Richard Taylor would work on the wording of the potential changes which would then be voted on at the next meeting. That meeting is scheduled for October 1st. As usual, any interested parties are welcome to attend.

Councilman Sheffield presented the Town Manager with a proclamation for his dedication and work for the town.

PARKS & RECREATION – Councilman Weaver

Councilman Weaver gave the following updates:

Parks and Recreation held a Special Meeting on September 16. He stated that this was a joint meeting with CAC to discuss upcoming events. A Fall Festival is being planned for October 30 and the last market day. The next meeting is October 7 and the board currently has several vacancies and is in need of volunteers.

RIVER BEND COMMUNITY ORGANIC GARDEN

Councilman Weaver gave the following report:

Gardeners worked 143 hours in August, for a year-to-date total of 1094 hours. The month's harvest totaled 476 pounds, most of it from cantaloupe and watermelon. Twelve percent went to Interfaith Refuge Ministries. Rows are being cleared of summer vegetables that are "done." Fall planting plans will start in mid-September. The Swap-a-Plant space is open to everyone. Anyone may take a plant or drop off a plant in the designated area. The next meeting is scheduled for October 5 at 1:30 pm. Guests are always welcome at the meetings and in the garden.

At this time Councilman Weaver read the following statement:

"Mayor and members of the council,

I want to address a complaint filed against me. I am doing this from the dias as a citizen not from the podium. The interaction Mr. Clymore is complaining about was between two individuals. I did not speak on behalf of this council. I did not use my position to silence him, prevent him from speaking, or use the authority of the town against him. He chose to make comments about me personally, including my character and my military service, which he knows nothing about. And I responded. He has every right to criticize me. He has every right to criticize my service, this council, or the government. I support that right completely. But the First Amendment protects your right to speak. It does not give you the right to control someone else's response. He chose to make it personal. So, I responded personally. I don't apologize for defending myself. If you want to debate government, let's debate government. If you want to challenge a vote, challenge the vote. If you think I'm wrong, tell me I'm wrong. But when you cross the line from discourse into disrespect, there can be consequences. Not governmental consequences. Not retaliation. Simply the consequence of the person you disrespected having the right to respond. You don't get to throw the punch and then complain that someone had the audacity to punch back. And we're all human. We get frustrated. We get angry. Sometimes our emotions get the better of us. But being human doesn't mean we're entitled to treat other people however we want and then demand that everyone else absorb it quietly. Respect has to go both ways. One final point. A handful of people do not represent River Bend. There are roughly 2,500 adults in this town. The overwhelming majority are working, raising families, helping their neighbors, coaching kids, volunteering, and simply living their lives. They're just not as loud. Loud doesn't mean large. Angry doesn't mean representative. A handful of people who have decided every disagreement needs to become a fight do not get to define this community."

VOTE – Flag Policy

Councilman Weaver stated that the Flag Policy was presented at the previous work session and the amended policy is presented with the requested language that the Council requested.

Councilman Weaver motioned to approve the Flag Policy as presented. The motion carried unanimously. (see attached)

FINANCE – Councilman Leonard

Financial Report – Finance Director, Mandy Gilbert, presented the financial statement for the month of August to the Council. She stated the total of the Town's Cash and Investments as of August 31, 2026, were \$2,578,792 and Ad Valorem Tax Collections for FY26-27 were \$1,882 and Vehicle Ad Valorem Tax Collections were \$17,525.

VOTE – Address to Council Policy

Councilman Leonard stated that the Address to Council policy was presented at the previous work session and there were no changes to the presented policy since that meeting.

Councilman Leonard motioned to adopt the Address to Council policy as presented. The motion carried unanimously. (see attached)

VOTE – Authorized Agent Grant Resolution

Councilman Leonard called on the Town Manager. The Town Manager stated that the presented resolution is required if the Council wishes to apply for a Water Supply Well Replacement grant.

Councilman Leonard motioned to approve the Authorized Agent Grant Resolution as presented. The motion carried unanimously. (see attached)

VOTE – Updated Asset Management Plan Resolution

Councilman Leonard called on the Town Manager. The Town Manager stated that the presented resolution amends the town's Asset Management Plan with the Water Capital Improvement Program updated within. He stated adopting this resolution will earn the town additional points on the grant application.

Councilman Leonard motioned to approve the Updated Asset Management Plan Resolution as presented. The motion carried unanimously. (see attached)

CAC – Councilwoman Benton

Councilwoman Benton stated that the CAC met on September 16 at 4:00 pm. She stated that the board is planning a joint fall event with Parks and Recreation on October 30. She stated that the commission has 2 vacancies and the next meeting is on November 18 at 4:00 pm.

Mayor's Report

The Mayor read the following report.

Rebuilding Our Community. Thank you for being here tonight. We are here because we care about this town. But we are also here because we know something is wrong. Lately, the atmosphere in our community has shifted. We have all felt it-the growing tension, the sharp words, and a rising sense of animosity among us. It is completely normal for a town to have disagreements. We are individuals with different backgrounds, different beliefs, and different ideas for our future. Passion is a good thing. But when that passion turns into hostility, it stops moving us forward and starts tearing us apart. When we view our neighbors as adversaries, everyone loses. The local problems we need to solve are left behind while we argue. So, what can we do for our community right now? First, we can choose to listen to understand, not just reply. We need to bring respect back to our public spaces and our online forums. Second, we can look for common ground. We all want a safe place to live, a thriving local environment, and a bright future for our children. Our goals are remarkably similar, even if our ideas on how to get there differ. Finally, we can choose kindness over conflict. Let us commit to treating each other with the dignity that every member of this town deserves. Let's resolve our differences through constructive conversation, not personal attacks. Tonight, I'm also going to ask that our council take a break from making social media posts for the next 30 days. I believe our town needs a few moments to breathe without comments coming from us. Our community needs time to heal, reflect, and think about how we can lift one another up rather than tear each other down. This pause is an opportunity for all of us to step back, listen, and focus on moving forward together with compassion and respect. Let's choose to be a community that lifts each other up, even when we don't see eye to eye. Thank you.

VOTE – Proclamation Honoring Manager Jackson

Councilman Sheffield motioned to approve the proclamation honoring Manager Delane Jackson. The motion passed with 4 ayes and 1 nay with Councilwoman Benton voting nay.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, *Councilman Weaver moved to adjourn. The motion carried unanimously.* The meeting adjourned at 6:31 p.m.



Kristie J. Nobles, MMC
Town Clerk

Town of River Bend

Flag Policy

(A) The Governor of North Carolina has the authority to direct the lowering of flags to half-staff on state-owned property. The Town of River Bend shall comply with such directives as issued by the Governor for flags flown on town-owned property.

(B) The Town of River Bend may also direct the lowering of flags to half-staff on town-owned property during special circumstances as directed by the Mayor with input from the Town Council.

Adopted September 17, 2026

Town of River Bend

Address to Council Policy

The Address to Council period shall be reserved as an item of business on the agenda for the Council's regular session, which is currently held on the 3rd Thursday of each month. All Addresses to the Council during this period shall be subject to the terms of this policy. The purpose of an agenda is twofold. They are: 1) To inform each Council member of the items that will be discussed during the meeting, and 2) To allow each Council member an equal opportunity to review those items in advance of the meeting where they will be discussed. This process allows Council members to be equally informed of agenda items and to have a reasonable amount of time to prepare for discussions related to those items.

1. In accordance with the town's Agenda Policy, all persons who wish to address the Council at the regular meeting must submit their request form to the Town Clerk's office no later than 9:00 a.m. two business days prior to the scheduled meeting. Generally, each requestor will be allotted five minutes to speak. However, in cases where more than three (3) people have requested to address the Council, the allotted time may be reduced. In such cases, the Mayor will determine the time allotment for each speaker and make that announcement before the addresses begin. The time limit will be the same for all speakers.
2. Once the request has been approved, the speaker will be notified and informed of their anticipated maximum time limit.
3. Each speaker shall be limited to a maximum time of five (5) minutes. Each speaker will only be allowed to speak once during the period. A staff member shall serve as timekeeper and will promptly announce when the speakers' time has expired.
4. No time may be yielded or transferred from one speaker to another. In order to avoid repetition and delay, groups of people supporting the same position are encouraged to designate a spokesperson for the group, if possible.
5. If the speaker has information, data, documents, maps, etc. they plan to use during the Address, they shall provide a copy of all such data to the Town Clerk when they submit their request so that it can be included in the agenda packet.
6. The Address to Council period is not intended to require the Council and/or any staff to answer any impromptu questions. After the speaker's time has expired, the Council may refer inquiries made during the Address to the Town Manager or an appropriate staff member. If necessary, the item may be added to the agenda of a future meeting, thereby providing the staff an opportunity to research the item and provide data to the Council for consideration and review.
7. Speakers will address comments to the entire Council as a whole and not one individual member. Discussions between speakers and members of the audience will not be permitted during the Address to Council period.

8. Speakers who have prepared written remarks are encouraged to leave a copy of such remarks with the Town Clerk.

9. Speakers shall be courteous in their language and presentation. Profanity or other inappropriate language or gestures will not be tolerated.

10. In order to provide for the maintenance of order and decorum in the conduct of the meeting, the Mayor may declare "out-of-order" any person who fails to comply with this policy. The Mayor shall caution any such person to abide by the provisions of this policy. Refusal to do so shall be grounds for removal of the speaker from the meeting.

Adopted September 17, 2026

RESOLUTION BY GOVERNING BODY OF APPLICANT

WHEREAS, The Town of River Bend has need for and intends to construct, plan for, or conduct a study in a project described as Water Supply Well #3 Replacement, and

WHEREAS, The Town of River Bend intends to request State loan and/or grant assistance for the project,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, BY THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF RIVER BEND:

That Town of River Bend, the **Applicant**, will arrange financing for all remaining costs of the project, if approved for a State loan and/or grant award.

That the **Applicant** will provide for efficient operation and maintenance of the project on completion of construction thereof.

That the **Applicant** will adopt and place into effect on or before completion of the project a schedule of fees and charges and other available funds which will provide adequate funds for proper operation, maintenance, and administration of the system and the repayment of all principal and interest on the debt.

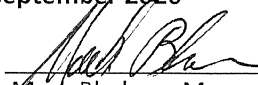
That the governing body of the **Applicant** agrees to include in the loan agreement a provision authorizing the State Treasurer, upon failure of the Town of River Bend to make a scheduled repayment of the loan, to withhold from the Town of River Bend any State funds that would otherwise be distributed to the local government unit in an amount sufficient to pay all sums then due and payable to the State as a repayment of the loan.

That Delane Jackson, Town Manager, the **Authorized Official**, and successors so titled, is hereby authorized to execute and file an application on behalf of the **Applicant** with the State of North Carolina for a loan and/or grant to aid in the study of or construction of the project described above.

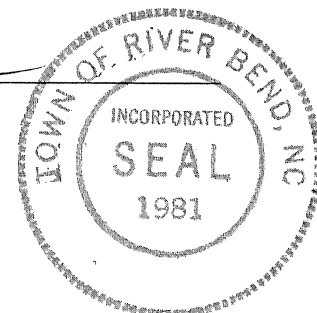
That the **Authorized Official**, and successors so titled, is hereby authorized and directed to furnish such information as the appropriate State agency may request in connection with such application or the project: to make the assurances as contained above; and to execute such other documents as may be required in connection with the application.

That the **Applicant** has substantially complied or will substantially comply with all Federal, State, and local laws, rules, regulations, and ordinances applicable to the project and to Federal and State grants and loans pertaining thereto.

Adopted this 17th day of September 2026

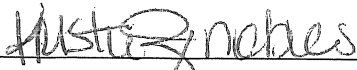

Mark Bledsoe, Mayor


Kristie J. Nobles, Town Clerk



CERTIFICATION BY RECORDING OFFICER

The undersigned duly qualified and acting Town Clerk of the Town of River Bend does hereby certify:
That the above/attached resolution is a true and correct copy of the resolution authorizing the filing of
an application with the State of North Carolina, as regularly adopted at a legally convened meeting of
the Town Council duly held on the 17th day of September 2026; and, further, that such resolution has
been fully recorded in the journal of proceedings and records in my office. IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I
have hereunto set my hand this 17th day of September, 2026.



Kristie J. Nobles, Town Clerk, MMC

(SEAL)



RESOLUTION BY THE TOWN COUNCIL OF RIVER BEND, NORTH CAROLINA

Adopting and Implementing the Town of River Bend's Updated Water and Wastewater Systems Asset Management Plan

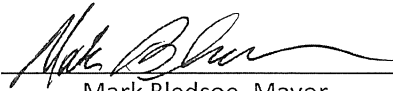
RESOLUTION BY GOVERNING BODY OF APPLICANT

- WHEREAS, The Town of River Bend has made a comprehensive effort to compile available information into a single document that presents an inventory and condition assessment of the water and wastewater systems infrastructure; and includes a 10-year Capital Improvements Plan with cost estimates; and includes an Operations and Maintenance Plan to ensure the proper management of the water and wastewater systems assets; and
- WHEREAS, The plan, as designed, will be updated regularly and will serve the Town well as a management tool for the planning and operation and maintenance of the water wastewater systems; and
- WHEREAS, The plan was presented to the Town Council of River Bend during the regular Council meeting held on September 17, 2026, for Council members' review, comment and adoption.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, BY THE TOWN COUNCIL OF THE TOWN OF RIVER BEND

that the updated Town of River Bend's Water and Wastewater Systems Asset Management Plan is hereby adopted this date by the Town Council of the Town of River Bend.

ADOPTED, this 17th day of September 2026 at River Bend, North Carolina.



Mark Bledsoe, Mayor

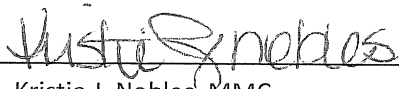


Kristie J. Nobles, NCCMC, MMC, Town Clerk



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Kristie J. Nobles, MMC
Town Clerk

(SEAL)

