



# RIVER BEND NEWS

FROM TOWN HALL

[www.riverbendnc.org](http://www.riverbendnc.org)



**KICK OFF 2026**  
BY MAYOR MARK BLEDSOE



Happy New Year!

Thank you to our residents, community leaders, town staff, and partners for joining us as we begin 2026.

A new year gives us a moment to reflect—and to recommit. While the past year brought real challenges, it also showed the strength of this community. Neighbors looked out for one another. Town employees served with dedication and pride. Because of you, our Town kept moving forward.

We made meaningful progress—investing in public safety, improving infrastructure, supporting economic opportunity, and continuing the work of building a more inclusive and connected community.

As we step into 2026, our focus is clear. This is a year of building—building opportunity, trust, and a future that works for everyone. We will continue investing in our neighborhoods, supporting local businesses, and improving the services residents rely on every day—always with people at the center of our decisions.

## INSIDE THIS EDITION

- MAYOR'S REPORT**  
PAGE 1
- MANAGER'S REPORT**  
PAGE 2
- WRD/PW REPORT**  
PAGE 4
- COMING EVENTS**  
PAGE 5
- COUNCIL MEETING SCHEDULE**  
PAGE 6
- LEAF & LIMB SCHEDULE**  
PAGE 6
- ETCETERA**  
PAGE 7-8

A town is defined by its people, not its buildings or budgets. And I believe deeply in what we can achieve together when we work with purpose and unity.

So, as we begin this new year, I ask each of you to stay engaged, stay hopeful, and stay committed to this town we love. The challenges ahead are real—but so is our capacity to meet them.

Let's make 2026 a year of momentum, progress, and shared success.

Thank you, Happy New Year.



## **TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT**

BY TOWN MANAGER  
DELANE JACKSON

This edition of my report will address closed sessions. This article was originally published in February 2020. Closed sessions regulations are a small part of the State's Open Meetings Statute. That language can be found in Article 33C of the North Carolina General Statutes (NCGS) beginning at Chapter 143-318.9. However, due to limited space and the complexity of the topic, I will not be able to cover every aspect of the Open Meetings Law. The reader should consider my report to be a general overview.

All political subdivisions of the State of North Carolina are subject to the Open Meetings Law. Examples of political subdivisions (aka public bodies) are local town councils, county commissions and school boards. There are others, but these three are probably the most commonly recognized public bodies. Chapter 143 begins with these words- "Whereas the public bodies that administer the legislative, policy-making, quasi-judicial, administrative, and advisory functions of North Carolina and its political subdivisions exist solely to conduct the people's business, it is the public policy of North Carolina that the hearings, deliberations, and actions of these bodies be conducted openly." This is why our Council meetings are open to the public and anyone can attend our meetings. Our regular Council meetings are held on the second and third Thursday of each month. When we conduct a meeting that is not a part of our regular schedule, we must properly advertise that meeting in accordance with the North Carolina General Statutes.

The General Statutes, specifically NCGS 143-318.11, authorizes public bodies to go into closed session. For the purpose of this discussion, a closed session is a meeting of the Council (or any public body) wherein the public is not allowed to attend. Typically, Councils schedule closed sessions as an agenda item for their regular meetings. When they get to that agenda item, they move into another private room to conduct the closed session discussions. However, public bodies can only go into closed session for specific reasons. There are ten categories that permit closed session. Those categories are codified in NCGS 143-318.11 (a)(1-10). Before entering closed session, a motion must be approved in open session by a majority of the public body. That motion must state the purpose(s) of the closed session from at least one of the ten categories. In general, the ten permitted topics which public bodies may discuss in closed session are:

1. Confidential information

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- 2. Honorary degrees, scholarships, prizes and awards
- 3. Consultation with an attorney
- 4. Business location or expansion
- 5. Real property acquisition
- 6. Personnel matters
- 7. Criminal Investigations
- 8. School violence response plans
- 9. Anti-terrorism plans
- 10. Viewing of law enforcement recordings

Minutes of what takes place during closed session meetings are still required to be kept. However, based on the purpose of the closed session, the release of those minutes to the public may be delayed or in some cases, those minutes may remain closed from public view forever. The NCGS requires that each public body have an attorney. One important role for the attorney is to ensure that the public body is in compliance with the State's Open Meetings Law.

SCROLL DOWN TO NEXT SECTION



## WRD/PW REPORT

BY BRANDON MILLS  
DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS

Hopefully everyone was able to enjoy the holiday season, which has always been a special time of year for our community. The Public Works Department took pride in helping to create a festive atmosphere by setting up the town's Christmas tree and holiday lighting throughout areas of town. In addition to seasonal activities, Public Works staff completed several maintenance tasks to support public safety and infrastructure reliability. Multiple storm drain basins were cleaned to ensure proper drainage and to prevent flow obstructions during rain events. Our crew also washed several street signs around town that accumulated algae/mold growth over the years. This helps the signs to be more legible and helps with their overall appearance. Also, routine maintenance was performed on department vehicles, which includes oil/filter changes, wiper replacements and general inspections to keep our vehicles operating safely and efficiently.

Water Resources continued to perform well in operating and maintaining the town's water and wastewater utilities. The wastewater treatment plant rehabilitation project remains on schedule and is progressing smoothly. Contractors on site are performing quality work and maintaining good coordination with us. We also had three lift station pumps that we had to pull due to becoming clogged up. These issues were quickly identified and resolved by our staff. This quick action prevented any sanitary sewer overflows. As a reminder, there is literature on the Town's website on how to properly dispose of some common household items that do not belong in our collection system. If customers have trouble finding this literature, please contact me at 252-638-3870 ext 206.

If you have any questions concerning the Water Resources/Public Works Department, please call us at 252-638-3540, Monday-Friday, 8am-4pm. After-hours water and sewer emergencies can be reported by paging the on-call duty operator at 252-464-4328. You will then be asked to enter your phone number at the sound of the tone. After entering your phone number, the automated system will inform you that your page has been sent. Please be patient and our utility systems operator will return your call. If you do not receive a call back within ten minutes, please notify the Police Department at 252-638-1108 (option 1), and they will get in contact with the on-call utility systems operator.

### REPORTING AFTER HOURS WATER-SEWER EMERGENCIES

- ◆ Page the on-call duty operator by dialing 252-474-4328.
- ◆ Enter your phone number at the sound of the tone.
- ◆ The automated system will inform you that your page has been sent.
- ◆ Our utility operator will return your call.
- ◆ If you do not receive a call back within ten minutes, please notify the Police Department at 638-1108 (option 1). They will get in touch with the on-call utility system operator.

# COMING EVENTS

Preschool Story Hour  
Every Friday  
10:00 a.m.  
115 Wildwood Dr.  
Red Caboose Community  
Library

Book/Tech Mobile  
January 16  
2 p.m.-4 p.m.  
Tech Class 4 p.m.-5 p.m.  
115 Wildwood Dr

Town Hall will be closed  
on Monday, January  
19th in observance of  
Martin Luther King Jr.  
Day

Town Council  
Special Meeting  
January 20  
6:30 p.m.  
Town Hall

CAC Meeting  
January 21  
4:00 p.m.  
Municipal Building

Blood Drive Sponsored  
by Parks & Recreation  
Advisory Board  
January 24  
10:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.  
Municipal Building

RBCOG Meeting  
February 2  
1:30 p.m.  
Municipal Building

EWAB Meeting  
February 2  
7:00 p.m.  
Municipal Building

Parks & Recreation  
Advisory Board Meeting  
February 4  
6:30 p.m.  
Municipal Building

Planning Board Meeting  
February 5  
6:00 p.m.  
Municipal Building

Council Work Session  
February 12  
5:00 p.m.  
Town Hall

Community Watch Meeting  
February 18  
6:00 p.m.  
Municipal Building



## RIVER BEND NEWS

FROM TOWN HALL  
is published monthly by the  
River Bend Town Council for  
the residents of the Town of  
River Bend.

**MAYOR**  
Mark Bledsoe

**TOWN COUNCIL**  
Lisa Benton  
Brian Leonard  
Kathy Noonan  
Buddy Sheffield  
Jeff Weaver

**TOWN MANAGER**  
Delane Jackson

**TOWN CLERK**  
Kristie Nobles

**FINANCE ADMINISTRATOR**  
Mandy Gilbert

**POLICE CHIEF**  
Sean Joll

**DIRECTOR OF  
PUBLIC WORKS**  
Brandon Mills

**ASSISTANT  
ZONING ADMINISTRATOR**  
Allison McCollum

**GRAPHIC DESIGN &  
TYPOGRAPHY**  
Jennifer Barrow

**Contact Us:**  
45 Shoreline Drive  
River Bend, NC 28562  
252.638-3870

## Leaf & Limb Collection Schedule for FY2025-2026

Residents may begin  
placing their yard debris  
street side on the dates  
indicated in parentheses

### Zone 1 Pick Up Begins

July 14, 2025  
*(July 9, 2025)*  
September 8, 2025  
*(September 3, 2025)*  
November 10, 2025  
*(November 5, 2025)*  
December 8, 2025  
*(December 3, 2025)*  
January 12, 2026  
(includes Christmas trees)  
*(January 7, 2026)*  
March 9, 2026  
*(March 4, 2026)*  
May 11, 2026  
*(May 6, 2026)*

### Zone 2 Pick Up Begins

July 21, 2025  
*(July 16, 2025)*  
September 15, 2025  
*(September 10, 2025)*  
November 17, 2025  
*(November 12, 2025)*  
December 15, 2025  
*(December 10, 2025)*  
January 19, 2026  
(includes Christmas trees)  
*(January 14, 2026)*  
March 16, 2026  
*(March 11, 2026)*  
May 18, 2026  
*(May 13, 2026)*

Pinecones, pine straw and leaves must  
**NOT** be bagged. For additional important  
information about River Bend's

Leaf & Limb collection program, please  
see our updated Ordinance online at  
[www.riverbendnc.org](http://www.riverbendnc.org) ■

## Town Council 2026 Meeting Dates

Work Session .....	January 8
Regular Meeting .....	January 15
Work Session .....	February 12
Regular Meeting .....	February 19
Work Session .....	March 12
Regular Meeting .....	March 19
Work Session .....	April 9
Regular Meeting .....	April 16
Work Session .....	May 14
Regular Meeting .....	May 21
Work Session .....	June 11
Regular Meeting .....	June 18
Work Session .....	July 9
Regular Meeting .....	July 16
Work Session .....	August 13
Regular Meeting .....	August 20
Work Session .....	September 10
Regular Meeting .....	September 17
Work Session .....	October 8
Regular Meeting .....	October 15
Work Session .....	November 12
Regular Meeting .....	November 19
Work Session .....	December 3***
Regular Meeting .....	December 10***

\*\*\*Changed due to holiday

## Budget Meetings

Budget Session .....	TBD

All Council Work Sessions will be held in  
the River Bend Town Hall beginning at 5:00  
p.m.

Regular Council Meetings will be held in  
the River Bend Town Hall beginning at 7:00  
p.m. ■

# etc.



## Golf Cart Registration

Town ordinances allow for residents to drive their properly equipped golf carts on River Bend streets provided that they are inspected by and registered with our Police Department. If you plan to drive your golf cart on the roadways, you must display the current year registration decal. Decals for 2025 are available now. Inspection and registration are required annually. The registration fee for each golf cart is \$10. For additional information and to make your inspection reservation, please call the River Bend Police Department at 638-1108.

Click [HERE](#) for more information



## Registration is Required for all Dogs and Cats

River Bend Animal Registrations for 2025 are due by March 31, 2025. All River Bend dogs and cats must be registered annually.

Office hours are Monday-Friday, 8 AM-4 PM.

Owners must present proof of rabies vaccination at the time of registration. Click [HERE](#) for more information.

Registration is \$10.00 per pet.



## Pet I. D. Photos Now Available

The Town of River Bend is now offering residents the opportunity to link a digital photo of their registered pets to our Animal Registration database. When you register your pet this year, you may submit a photo by e-mail, or staff can scan a photo for you if you prefer. This photo database will help reunite lost pets with their owners more quickly in the event a pet becomes lost.

The service is voluntary and free of charge.

## DOG PARK AT RIVER BEND



River Bend dogs have their own exercise area where they can play with other canines. Situated between the Town Park and Ritter Field, the dog park gives dogs a chance to run while their owners socialize. The park is open from sunrise to sunset for dogs with proof of current vaccinations. Separate exercise areas accommodate large and small dogs. For complete list of rules applicable to dog park use, please visit our web site at [www.riverbendnc.org](http://www.riverbendnc.org). Dog park rules are also posted at the entrance to the park.

etc.  
continued

Sign up for our  
**Emergency Notification System**  
and receive timely notifications by phone, e-mail, text messages and more.

**SIGN UP NOW**  
at [www.riverbendnc.org](http://www.riverbendnc.org)

*this service provided by the Town of River Bend through  
**Blackboard**  
connect*

## Special Needs Registry

If you have a medical condition for which you require any type of special medical care during a disaster or if your medical condition requires assistance to evacuate during a disaster, you may wish to apply to Craven County for their Special Needs Registry. The River Bend Police Department can provide you with the appropriate form and provide some basic information about the County's program.

THIS AREA  
OBSERVED BY  
COMMUNITY WATCH  
CITIZENS  
RIVER BEND POLICE DEPARTMENT  
638-1108

River Bend has a very active Community Watch program supported by our Police Department. If you are interested in volunteering, call the River Bend Police Department at 638-1108.



River Bend has a skateboard park to meet the needs of some of our more athletic residents.

A signed parental approval [form](#) is required and helmet use is strictly enforced. For more information about the skateboard park, visit our web site or call the River Bend Police Department at 638-1108.

Click [HERE](#) for more information.