



**CIVIL COMMUNICATION IN GOVERNING**  
BY MAYOR JOHN KIRKLAND

Why can't we just be civil in addressing each other? In society today it seems that persons speaking address their neighbor, group of friends club or fraternal organization with a challenge to retaliate. And the tone of speech is often elevated to the level of shouting.

This seeming preferred conduct of personal communication is used at every level of society today. Even the senior members of national government verbally attack fellow members who take a position different from their own. Their exchange does not seek a position of compromise that will move a proposed legislative issue to adoption but rather is this way or no way.

Too many citizens seem to look at these leaders of our national political parties as appropriate role models. So the hostile shouting goes on and is imitated in every forum in the land. I know that many will say that political dialogue has always been that way and they will point to books that detail the "founding fathers" debate and the hostile stance that those revered founders of our

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nation engaged as foundation guide documents were finally adopted. However, the difference in today's world is the instant communication of the verbatim hostility by means of the expanding "social media." This media is, as stated, verbatim and probably contains half-truths or just plain lies.

I pray that we, as a nation, will recognize that this less than civil communication needs to end and we all need to address issues seeking honest and workable compromise respecting the views of all parties.

#### INSIDE THIS EDITION

MAYOR'S REPORT  
PAGE 1

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT  
PAGE 2

WRD/PW REPORT  
PAGE 5

COMING EVENTS  
PAGE 6

COUNCIL MEETING SCHEDULE  
PAGE 7

LEAF & LIMB SCHEDULE  
PAGE 7

ETCETERA  
PAGE 8-9



## **TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT**

BY TOWN MANAGER DELANE JACKSON

Election season is right around the corner. Primary elections for partisan state and federal offices will be held on May 17, 2022 but those primary elections will not impact our municipal elections. River Bend will hold its municipal elections on November 8, 2022. However, something about this election season will be new for River Bend and most other town in Craven County.

Last year, the North Carolina General Assembly passed Session Law 2021-39. It amended the Charter of the Town of River Bend and several other towns. The purpose of the amendment was to change the voting schedule for the offices of Mayor and Council members. The River Bend Town Council consists of a Mayor and five Council members, all of whom are elected to 4-year terms, on a staggered basis and run on a nonpartisan basis. Staggered means that only half of the Council positions are on the ballot for each election. Nonpartisan simply means that candidates do not run as a representative of a party, i.e. Democrat, Republican, Libertarian, etc. in a primary format. All candidates run at the same time without regard to their party affiliation and the highest vote-getters win regardless of their party affiliation.

Historically, most municipal elections in North Carolina have taken place in odd-numbered years (i.e. 2015, 2017, 2019, etc.) and many still do. State and federal elections take place in even-numbered years (i.e. 2016, 2018, 2020, etc.). Prior to the change, the next municipal election in River Bend, and most every other municipality in the state, would have been in November 2021. Since the change has

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taken place, the next municipal election in River Bend will now be in November 2022. Thereafter, municipal elections in River Bend will be held in even-numbered years (i.e. 2024, 2026, 2028, etc.). In Craven County, the towns of Bridgeton, Dover, Havelock and Trent Woods also changed to even-numbered election years and will also begin that schedule in 2022. Cove City will begin even-numbered election years in 2024. New Bern and Vanceboro remain on odd-numbered election years.

The change presented an unusual circumstance for the current Mayor and Council

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members. Since their original terms were for four years and would have expired in 2021, simply moving the election back one year without making other changes, would create a gap in terms between elections. To address that circumstance, the General Assembly also extended the terms of the current Mayor and each current member of the Council by one year. Prior to the change, the Council seats currently held by Buddy Sheffield, Bud Van Slyke, Don Fogle and Barbara Maurer would have been on the ballot in November 2021. Now, all of those terms have been extended by one year and they will be on the ballot in November 2022.

It is important to note that the only reason the seat currently held by Barbara Maurer is on the ballot in 2022 is because she was appointed to that seat to fill a vacancy created by the resignation of Harry McClard when he moved out of town. His resignation created a need for a special appointment and a “special” election. The appointment of Barbara Maurer to complete the balance of his term was made by the Town Council. However, the term of the appointment was only until the next municipal election, not a regular 4-year term. Whoever wins the “special” election for that seat in 2022 will only serve for two years until 2024, which is when Harry’s term would have expired had he not resigned.

As stated above, our Council members are elected to 4-year terms and also serve staggered terms. In a normal election cycle, that means that there is a municipal election every two years, but only for three members (half) of the Council. Therefore, under normal conditions, three Council

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members would be elected in 2022 and serve until 2026. Then in 2024, the other two Council members plus the Mayor (half) would be elected and serve until 2028. There will be a slight difference in the 2022 election. The difference is that there will be four seats on the ballot in 2022 instead of the usual three.

The person who wins the seat currently held by Maurer in the “special” election will only hold that seat until 2024. The winners of the other three seats will hold those seats until 2026, which is the normal 4-year term. The rest of the Council seats, which are currently held by Mayor John Kirkland and Council member Brian Leonard will be on the ballot in 2024, along with the winner of the “special” election in 2022 for the seat currently held by Maurer. The winners of those three seats in 2024 will hold those seats until 2028, which is the normal 4-year term. This will get us back to a normal election schedule with 4-year terms on a staggered basis.

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Why the change? There are multiple benefits to moving elections to even-numbered years. One of the main benefits is cost savings. By law, municipal elections in North Carolina are administered by the Board of Elections within each County. Since that has historically been done in odd-numbered years, municipal offices were typically the only issue on the ballot. That meant that towns were paying the County for the full costs to administer their elections. Moving to even-numbered years will mean that the County will simply add the municipal seats to the election that they will already be conducting in even-numbered years. The towns will still be charged a fee to add their seats to the ballot but the cost will be reduced for each town. In River Bend it will save thousands of dollars in each election.

Another benefit is absentee voting. In the last election, the Town of River Bend did not offer absentee voting. Prior to these voting schedule changes, if the town chose to offer absentee voting, there would be an additional cost the town must pay to the County. Absentee voting is a requirement during all state and federal elections. Therefore, the County will be offering absentee voting options for all municipal elections in 2022 at no additional cost because they will already be offering it for state and federal elections. Another benefit is for the individual voter.

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Before the change, River Bend voters had to get out and vote in municipal elections in odd-numbered years and then get out to vote again in state/federal elections in even-numbered years. Now, elections will be combined with all voting done in even-numbered years starting in 2022.

A possible advantage is improved voter turnout. The average voter turnout during the last three River Bend elections was less than 40%. Typically, turnout in municipal elections is less than that of state/federal elections. Moving municipal elections to even-numbered years should increase voter participation. Hope to see you at the polls for our municipal election, which is November 8, 2022. Primary voting for state and federal elections will be held on May 17, 2022. For River Bend residents, all voting will take place in the Municipal Building located at 51 Shoreline Drive. For more information about voting, elections or to file for office, contact Craven County Election at 636-6610 or click [here](#). No filing, voting or voter registration takes place at the River Bend Town Hall.



## **WRD/PW REPORT**

BY BRANDON MILLS  
DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS

Public Works continued to do a good job with their daily tasks around Town. We repaired several stormwater drainage pipes. Both pipes grout joints were cracked where they entered the catch basin. Our staff re-grouted these joints and backfilled the sink-hole that had formed. Public Works also did a great job at following our snow mitigation plan during the minor storm we had. All of our equipment was set up and inventory checked. Intersections were salted

before we got any ice. Even though we did not get much snow, our snowplow proved to be very valuable once temperatures warmed up to help remove ice that had accumulated.

Water Resources had a couple of collection system service laterals to back up. Our staff with the use of our water jet quickly cleared these lateral lines. These lines are scheduled to be video

inspected as soon as our camera head is repaired by the factory. We had one water line service line leak to repair. The leak was at a bend in the service line and it was quickly repaired by the use of a repair band.

The air relief valves on our water treatment filters were also removed and serviced. Air relief valves purpose on the water filters is to allow any excess air to escape the system. Too much air could air lock the filters or cause customer complaints.

If you have any questions concerning the Water Resources/Public Works Department, please call us at 638-3540, Monday-Friday, 8am-4pm. After-Hours water and sewer emergencies can be reported by dialing the Town Hall at 638-3870. You will be instructed to the dial "9" and follow the directions to contact the on call duty operator. 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 638- 1108, and they will get in contact with the on-call utility systems operator.

**"We had one water line service leak to repair. The leak was at a bend in the service line and it was quickly repaired by the use of a repair band."**

### **REPORTING AFTER HOURS WATER-SEWER EMERGENCIES**

- ◆ Dial Town Hall at 638-3870.
- ◆ Dial "9" and follow the directions to contact the on-call duty operator.
- ◆ 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. They will get in touch with the on-call utility system operator.



# COMING EVENTS

Parks & Rec Advisory  
Board Meeting  
March 2  
7:00 p.m.  
Municipal Building

Library Board Meeting  
March 3  
2:00 p.m.  
Municipal Building

Planning Board Meeting  
March 3  
6:00 p.m.  
Municipal Building

RBCOG Meeting  
March 7  
1:30-4 p.m.  
Municipal Building

EWAB Meeting  
March 7  
7 p.m.  
Municipal Building

CAC Meeting  
March 16  
4 p.m.  
Municipal Building

BINGO Sponsored by  
Parks & Rec  
March 17  
1-4 p.m.  
Municipal Building

Council Work Session  
March 10  
7 p.m.  
Town Hall

Council Meeting  
March 17  
7 p.m.  
Town Hall

CERT Meeting  
March 23  
7 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  
John Kirkland

TOWN COUNCIL  
Don Fagle  
Brian Leonard  
Barbara Maurer  
Buddy Sheffield  
Irving "Bud" Van Slyke, Jr.

TOWN MANAGER  
Delane Jackson

TOWN CLERK  
Kristie Nobles

FINANCE DIRECTOR  
Mandy Gilbert

POLICE CHIEF  
Sean Joll

DIRECTOR OF  
PUBLIC WORKS  
Brandon Mills

ASSISTANT  
ZONING ADMINISTRATOR  
Allison McCollum

GRAPHIC DESIGN &  
TYPOGRAPHY  
Jennifer Barrow  
Deputy Town Clerk

FINANCE ASSISTANT  
Rebekah Pearce

## Leaf & Limb Collection Schedule for 2021-2022

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

### Zone 1 Pick Up Begins

July 5, 2021

*(June 30, 2021)*

September 6, 2021

*(September 1, 2021)*

November 1, 2021

*(October 27, 2021)*

January 10, 2022

*(includes Christmas trees)*

*(January 5, 2022)*

March 7, 2022

*(March 2, 2022)*

May 9, 2022

*(May 4, 2022 )*

### Zone 2 Pick Up Begins

July 12, 2021

*(July 7, 2021)*

September 13, 2021

*(September 8, 2021)*

November 8, 2021

*(November 3, 2021)*

January 17, 2022

*(includes Christmas trees)*

*(January 12, 2022)*

March 14, 2022

*(March 9, 2022)*

May 16, 2022

*(May 11, 2022)*

Pinecones, pine straw and  
leaves must be bagged. For  
additional important informa-  
tion about River Bend's Leaf  
& Limb collection program,  
please see our Ordinance online  
at [www.riverbendnc.org](http://www.riverbendnc.org). ■

## Town Council 2022 Meeting Dates

~~Work Session ..... January 13~~

Regular Meeting ..... January 20

Work Session ..... February 10

Regular Meeting ..... February 17

Work Session ..... March 10

Regular Meeting ..... March 17

Work Session ..... April 14

Regular Meeting ..... April 21

Work Session ..... May 12

Regular Meeting ..... May 19

Work Session ..... June 9

Regular Meeting ..... June 16

Work Session ..... July 14

Regular Meeting ..... July 21

Work Session ..... August 11

Regular Meeting ..... August 18

Work Session ..... September 8

Regular Meeting ..... September 15

Work Session ..... October 13

Regular Meeting ..... October 20

Work Session ..... November 10

Regular Meeting ..... November 17

Work Session ..... December 8

Regular Meeting ..... December 15

### Budget Meetings

Budget Session ..... April 26

Budget Session ..... May 3

Budget Session ..... May 10

Budget Session ..... May 12

Budget Session ..... May 17

Budget Session.....May 19

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.

All Council Budget Sessions will be held  
in the River Bend Town Hall beginning at  
4:00 p.m.

This meeting  
was canceled

*\*Green type indicates a completed leaf & limb collection*



### **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 2022 registration decal. Decals for 2022 were available beginning December 2, 2021.

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 2022 are due by March 31, 2022. All River Bend dogs and cats must be registered annually.

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

Registration is \$10 per pet.

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



### **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.





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**



River Bend has a functional Community Emergency Response Team (CERT). For more information about this group, or to volunteer, please contact the CERT Liaison, Officer Eric Gonzalez and/or visit our web site at [www.riverbendnc.org](http://www.riverbendnc.org).



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.



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.