

RIVER BEND NEWS

FROM TOWN HALL www.riverbendnc.org



**RIVER BEND N.C.
NOW AND FUTURE**
BY MAYOR JOHN KIRKLAND

The Town of River Bend is now, and from its origin has been, a bedroom community to New Bern. It thrives when the governing body accepts that fact and it struggles when the governing body believes that a commercial development will allow the town to stand separate from New Bern. River Bend was incorporated and chartered by the North Carolina General Assembly in 1981 as a town governed by the Mayor-Council form of governance. In October 2001 the Council voted to hold a referendum to incorporate as a Council-Manager form of governance. This action was supported by a 2 to 1 approval of persons casting votes and the General Assembly granted the change of the town charter. The Council in November 2004 agreed that extending the terms of the Council office from two years to staggered four year terms would stabilize the conduct of actions of Council. Again the referendum on this proposal was approved by voters on a 2 to 1 margin and the General Assembly again modified the town charter to reflect this change in terms of office.

The Town operates the water and wastewater utilities as enterprise funds. This arrangement resulted when the Town purchased the utilities from Carolina Water Service in 1995 funded by the issuance of bonds. These utilities operate under permits issued by the state agency responsible for regulating all water and wastewater utilities in the state.

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The Town is unique in the area of street maintenance. The only street maintained by NCDOT is Old Pollocksville Road going south from Shoreline Drive. All of the other streets are maintained by the Town. Like all other North Carolina municipalities the Town receives Powell Bill funds under the formula that is based on population and the miles of streets maintained. The maintenance of streets requires that all the Powell Bill funds, in most years nearly \$50,000 of general fund money, is added to keep streets in good repair.

The Town collects and pays for disposal of vegetative debris (leaf and limb pick up) from all residential areas of town. As the plantings around town age, more debris will be generated and the cost of this service will continue to increase.

The Town Council needs to approach the development of the annual budget considering all the variables that will impact the budget being developed for the following fiscal year. Certain specific budget inputs will not be known and best estimates must be made to finalize the budget as required by the State. A healthy reserve fund should be retained to meet unexpected emergency expenditures. This need for reserve funds is often questioned by citizens who will advance a recommendation that the tax rate should be reduced and the reserves reduced thus making the rate reduction possible.

The Town has been blessed by having a talented Manager and Staff who remain current on state regulatory requirements and current practices of professional groups that they communicate with. The Town's future will be secure and prosperous if the elected Council will follow sound budget practices and work with the regional cities and towns to achieve positive solutions to issues that impact all municipalities. This practice of cooperation is often at risk when a member, or members, of the area municipalities endeavor to pursue a parochial developmental approach to planning.

The Town Council must act with an eye toward the future aiming at their vision of the future. They need to recognize that the foundation of good planning is constantly changing. The result is the need to be well informed of the constantly changing environment in which they must budget.

Perhaps the most difficult task for a councilmember is to inform a fellow resident or friend that the favor he/she requests is not a request that can be granted by a single member of council. It is also possible that the requested favor is contrary to one or more of the Town's ordinances. The councilmember office places a demand for time on every member and a lot of reading in preparation in advance of meeting votes. What the Council does in a given year will directly impact what the Town will be in the future.



TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

BY TOWN MANAGER DELANE JACKSON

With the recent passage of North Carolina Session Law 2021-39, the North Carolina General Assembly amended the Charter of the Town of River Bend. The purpose of the amendment was to change the voting schedule for the office of Mayor and Council members. The River Bend Town Council consists of a Mayor and five Council members, all of which are elected to 4-year terms and on a staggered basis.

Historically, in North Carolina municipal elections have taken place in odd-numbered years (i.e. 2015, 2017, 2019, etc.). State and federal elections have taken place in even-numbered years (i.e. 2016, 2018, 2020, etc.). Following that schedule, 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 taken place, the next municipal election in River Bend will now be in November 2022. Thereafter, municipal elections will be held in even-numbered years (i.e. 2024, 2026, etc.).

That change presents an unusual circumstance for the current Mayor and Council members. Since their original terms were for four years, simply moving the election back one year without making other changes, would create a void 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

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one year. Prior to the change, the Council seats held by Buddy Sheffield, Bud Van Slyke, Barbara Maurer and Don Fogle would have been on the ballot in November 2021. It is important to note that the only reason the seat held by Barbara Maurer would have been on the ballot in 2021 is because she was appointed to that seat to fill a vacancy created by the resignation of Harry McClard. Had McClard not resigned, he would have held that seat until 2023 following his election in 2019.

It is important to remember, as stated above, that 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. Under normal conditions, three Council members would have been elected in 2017 and serve until 2021. Then in 2019 the other two Council members plus the Mayor would have been elected and serve until 2023. That is how it works during normal election cycles. Over the past few years, the elections in River Bend have been abnormal due to three resignations from the Council since 2019. When there is a resignation, a new “special” election scenario goes into effect. In an attempt to avoid making it even more complicated, we will not address those “special” election scenarios in this article.

In order to keep the voting on a staggered term basis, the General Assembly extended the term of each current Council member by one year. Now, in November 2022 the seats held by Buddy Sheffield, Bud Van Slyke, Barbara Maurer and Don Fogle will be on the ballot. The person that wins the seat currently held by Maurer will only hold that seat until 2024. The winners of the other three seats will hold those until 2026. 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 these three seats will hold those seats until 2028.

In summary, there will be no municipal election in 2021. In 2022, four seats will be on the ballot. Three of those four will be for 4-year terms and end in 2026. One will be for a 2-year term and end in 2024. Then in 2024 there will be another municipal election for three seats. One of those seats will be for Mayor and the other two will be for Council members. All of those will be for 4-year terms and all will end in 2028. Then River Bend will be back on track with 4-year terms and evenly staggered elections.

In River Bend, the Town Council unanimously supported the change and sees it as a win-win situation for residents and voters. Additionally, every town in Craven County made the same move except Vanceboro and New Bern. New Bern is waiting for 2020 Census results to determine how their voting districts may be impacted. After that data has been released they may change to even-numbered elections years also.

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 likely 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 (not an option) during all state and federal elections. Therefore, the County will be offering absentee voting options for all municipal elections at no additional cost because they will already be offering it for state and federal elections. Another advantage is for the individual voter. Before the change, voters had to get out and vote in municipal elections in odd years and then get out to vote again in state/federal elections in even years. Now, elections will be combined with all voting done in even-numbered years.

Another 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.



WRD/PW REPORT

BY BRANDON MILLS
DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC WORKS

Public Works continued to trim limbs along the roadway. We do this to keep any limbs from hitting motor vehicles. There are still several streets around town that we have on our agenda to trim. Several sinkholes/potholes were filled in along the edge of a couple of streets in town. We fill in any low areas along the road edge to prevent the roadway from becoming damaged. A couple of storm water catch basins were cleaned out around town. Occasionally, catch basins have to be cleaned out to remove any debris or sediment build up that could impede storm water flow.

Water Resources this month had one water leak that had to be repaired. This leak was on a 2-inch service line and was repaired by our team. We were able to repair this leak without any loss of pressure to any of our customers in the system. During our water system flushing back in April, a fire hydrant on Pirates Rd was found to be faulty. We quickly ordered the parts needed and repaired it. The hydrant is fully functional now and I would like to thank my guys for a job well done. We also installed “KOP”

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kits on our water treatment phosphate pumps. KOP stands for Keep On Pumping. This is routine maintenance that we do on a yearly basis to ensure our pumps keep working properly.

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 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.

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

-CANCELLED-
Planning Board
July 1
6:00 p.m.
Municipal Building

-TO BE RESCHEDULED-
Independence Day Celebration
River Bend Golf & Country
Club
July 2
7-9:30

RBCOG Meeting
July 5
1:30 p.m.
Municipal Building

-CANCELLED-
EWAB Meeting
July 5
7 p.m.
Municipal Building

-CANCELLED-
Parks & Rec Meeting
July 7
7 p.m.
Municipal Building

Library Board Meeting
July 8
2 p.m.
Municipal Building

-CANCELLED-
Council Work Session
July 8
5 p.m.
Town Hall

Council Meeting
July 15
7 p.m.
Town Hall

CERT Meeting
July 28
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 ADMINISTRATOR
Margaret Theis

POLICE CHIEF
Sean Joll

DIRECTOR OF
PUBLIC WORKS
Brandon Mills

ASSISTANT
ZONING ADMINISTRATOR
Allison McCollum

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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. ■

Town Council 2021 Meeting Dates

Work Session January 14
Regular Meeting January 21
Work Session February 11
Regular Meeting February 18
Work Session March 11
Regular Meeting March 18
Work Session April 8
Regular Meeting April 15

Work Session May 13
Regular Meeting May 20
Work Session June 10
Regular Meeting June 17

Work Session July 8
Regular Meeting July 15
Work Session August 12
Regular Meeting August 19

Work Session September 10
Regular Meeting September 16
Work Session October 14
Regular Meeting October 21

Work Session November 10
Regular Meeting November 18
Work Session December 9
Regular Meeting December 16

Budget Meetings

Budget Session April 27
Budget Session May 4
Budget Session May 11
Budget Session May 18
Budget Session May 20

All Budget Meetings have been completed

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.

An updated Leaf & Limb Schedule will be
mailed on July 9th with the next utility billing

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

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 2021 registration decal. Decals for 2021 were available beginning December 2, 2020.

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

All River Bend dogs and cats must be registered annually.

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

Registration is \$10.00 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. 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

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, Corporal Brandon Rhors and/or visit our web site at 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.