



TOWN OF BENTON
REGULAR SESSION
MINUTES
MAYOR AND BOARD OF ALDERMAN
105 SIBLEY ST., BENTON, LA
MONDAY, JULY 13, 2026, 6:30 PM

The Town of Benton met in a regular session on the 13th day of July 2026 at 6:30 PM in the Council Chambers Benton Town Hall, 105 Sibley Street, Benton, Louisiana. Mayor James Friday called the meeting to order. Alderman Perry gave the invocation, and Alderman Lawrence led the Pledge of Allegiance. Debbie Rios called the roll with all members as follows:

Alderman Jackie Carr	ABSENT	*Arrived late at 6:40 PM
Alderman Tiffany Manning	PRESENT	
Alderman Tammy Brunson	PRESENT	
Alderman Arshundae Perry	PRESENT	
Alderman Terry Lawrence	PRESENT	

Others present included Stephanie Collier, Attorney Joel Murphy, Lt. Cesar Mora, Officer Mitchell Mora, Assistant Chief Larry Weaver and members of the public.

Mayor Friday asked to amend the agenda and add Ordinance 631 of 2026: Amendment of the General Fund Budget: Introduction and Set for Public Hearing. A motion was made by Alderman Lawrence and seconded by Alderman Perry to amend the agenda. Mayor Friday called for comments. There being none, the following votes were recorded:

AYES: Alderman Manning, Alderman Brunson, Alderman Perry, Alderman Lawrence
NAYS: None
ABSENT: Alderman Carr
ABSTAIN: None

REGULAR SESSION AGENDA APPROVAL: A motion was made by Alderman Lawrence and seconded by Alderman Brunson to approve the agenda as amended. Mayor Friday called for comments. There being none the following votes were recorded:

AYES: Alderman Manning, Alderman Brunson, Alderman Perry, Alderman Lawrence
NAYS: None
ABSENT: Alderman Carr
ABSTAIN: None

MINUTES: JUNE 2026 MEETING: A motion was made by Alderman Perry and seconded by Alderman Lawrence to approve the June 8, 2026, minutes. Mayor Friday called for any comments. There being none, the following votes were recorded:

AYES: Alderman Manning, Alderman Brunson, Alderman Perry, Alderman Lawrence
NAYS: None
ABSENT: Alderman Carr
ABSTAIN: None

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The Town of Benton is an equal opportunity employer.



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OLD BUSINESS: ORDINANCE 627 OF 2026: (Amended) Final Vote: AN ORDINANCE AMENDING ORDINANCE 622 OF 2026 ESTABLISHING THE SALARY OF THE BOARD OF ALDERMEN EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 2029. Mayor asked Ms. Rios to read aloud for the record.

WHEREAS the Town of Benton is a municipality created under the laws of the State of Louisiana and adherent to the provisions of the Lawrason Act; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Aldermen for the Town of Benton is empowered with the responsibility and authority to establish the salaries of certain municipal officers, including, but not limited to, the Mayor and Aldermen; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Aldermen for the Town of Benton has reviewed and taken into consideration the salaries of certain municipal officers of municipalities of comparable size in the area and across the State of Louisiana; and

WHEREAS the Board of Aldermen for the Town of Benton desires to establish the annual salaries for the Aldermen for the Town of Benton;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED by the Board of Aldermen of the Town of Benton, in legal and regular session, that Ordinance 622 of 2026 is hereby amended, reducing the salary from \$725.00 per month to \$550.00 per month, effective January 1, 2029.

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED that all Ordinances or parts thereof in conflict herewith are hereby repealed.

Mayor Friday asked for council comments. Manning stated, she wants to remove the language saying the Town 'has reviewed and taken into consideration the salaries of certain municipal officers of municipalities of comparable size in the area and across the state ' that Mrs. Perry didn't do that, and this is her ordinance."

After several comments between Manning, Mrs. Perry, and Attorney Murphy, Mrs. Perry ended the conversation, stating she would not change it and leaving it like it is.

A motion was made by Alderman Lawrence and seconded by Alderman Carr to approve Ordinance 627 of 2026. Mayor Friday called for comments. There being none, the following votes were recorded:

AYES: Alderman Carr, Alderman Brunson, Alderman Perry, Alderman Lawrence

NAYS: Alderman Manning

ABSENT: None

ABSTAIN: None

NEW BUSINESS:

Cypress Black Bayou Board Appointment:

Mayor Friday made the recommendation for Mr. Todd Hollenshead for the board appointment. He stated he spoke with all five other applicants and felt Mr. Hollenshead is the best candidate. Speaking to the council, Mayor stated they have his resume in front of them and asked if they had any questions for him. Mrs. Perry asked how he would benefit the board. Mr. Hollenshead replied that he had the time and skills to give back to a park. He explained that he had enjoyed the park and its facilities since he was a teen. Now he was at a point in his life where he wanted to give back to his community. He saw the opening on



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the board and applied. Mrs. Carr told him she read his “impressive” resume and asked him to tell her, in his words, not in resume format, what would make him a good fit or choice. Mr. Hollenshead reiterated his answer to Mrs. Perry and added that he wanted the things he had enjoyed since the lake opened to continue to do well. He added he was on other boards, had a unique skill set, and the time to give back now. Mrs. Carr asked what would make him more qualified to be the town's pick? Mr. Hollenshead's response was, “You know, something that I would like to see out there is more local people using the park. If you ask what I see when I go to the park, I think it's an untapped resource that maybe a lot of my neighbors, maybe your neighbors, don't go use. So, if I had one thing that I would like to see is maybe attendance go up at the park, more cars going through the gate, more children using the park, more families. And you know, that opportunity's there now. That would be one of my goals. Good utilization.” Attorney Murphy asked if he sat on any other boards currently? Mr. Hollenshead: Yes, the David Rains Community Health Board as previous vice chair and new chairman-elect, and the Louisiana Minerals and Energy Board appointed by the Governor.

A motion was made by Alderman Carr and seconded by Alderman Lawrence to consider Mr. Hollenshead for Cypress Black Bayou Board appointment. Mayor Friday called for any other comments. **Rex Moncrief** stepped forward, remarking, “Since we've got a couple of board members here and one potential board member here, and we kind of have a captive audience, I would like to ask the Town of Benton to use your political sway to the board to get rid of the butt ugly boat stickers that we have to put on our boat to go out there. There is a far better way to do this, and it's not required to put that ugly sticker on the side of my boat. And number two, There's a much easier way; it's called the internet and online commerce to actually be able to pay for said boat stickers that should go away without having to go by the office before 5 pm when they close down. That's my comment”. There being no other comments, the following votes were recorded:

AYES: None

NAYS: Alderman Carr, Alderman Manning, Alderman Brunson, Alderman Perry, Alderman Lawrence

ABSENT: None

ABSTAIN: None

Consider approval of Employee Health Benefits package:

Mayor Friday asked for Michael Guyton, insurance representative, to step forward. He passed out paperwork showing as he explained that we kept our current plan as a buy up plan but switched to a narrower plan, Blue Connect, that allowed the town the opportunity to pay 100% for the employees cost for less than they had previously been paying and 50% for dependents. He was also able to offer a better dental and vision plan for less money also. Lastly, the employees voluntary life insurance pay out increased from \$20K to \$25K and the cost of that went down as well.

A motion was made by Alderman Carr and seconded by Alderman Perry to approve the Employee Health Benefit package. Mayor Friday called for any comments. There being none the following votes were recorded:

AYES: Alderman Carr, Alderman Manning, Alderman Brunson, Alderman Perry, Alderman Lawrence

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

ABSTAIN: None



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Judy Moncrief CPA: 2025 Audit Report: Due to severe weather and flash floods in the Shreveport/Bossier area, Ms. Moncrief called ahead and postponed her report until the next council meeting, August 10, 2026.

Approval of new alcohol permit: A motion was made by Alderman Lawrence and seconded by Alderman Carr to approve the permit for Cocina Express Fresh Mex. Mayor called for comments. There being none, the following votes were recorded:

AYES: Alderman Carr, Alderman Manning, Alderman Brunson, Alderman Perry, Alderman Lawrence

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

ABSTAIN: None

Removal of current Mayor Pro Tem:

Mayor Friday explained the next item on the agenda had to be done by the council and that it had nothing to do with the mayor; removal of the current mayor pro tem. He asked if the council had any questions.

Manning: "Which council member initiated? It has to be initiated by the council, so which council member initiated it?" Mayor: "I'm asking for somebody to talk about it first before a motion. Don't get ahead of us. I'm asking if there are any comments." Mayor called for comments; there being none, we asked for a motion. A motion was made by Alderman Carr and seconded by Alderman Perry to remove Manning as current Mayor Pro Tem. Mayor called for public comments. There being none, the following votes were recorded:

AYES: Alderman Brunson, Alderman Perry, Alderman Lawrence

NAYS: Alderman Carr, Alderman Manning

ABSENT: None

ABSTAIN: None

Appointing new Mayor Pro Tempore: Mayor Friday began by saying tonight he would ask for appointment of a new mayor pro tem. He advised he had asked Mr. Lawrence about it and he would be willing to serve. He asked, "Terry Lawrence, you will accept the job?" Mr. Lawrence answered, "Yes." Mrs. Perry: "I make a motion appointing".

A motion was made by Alderman Perry and seconded by Alderman Brunson to appoint Alderman Lawrence as new Mayor Pro Tem. Mayor called for comments. Rex Moncrief stepped up and asked if the duties of mayor pro tem could be explained to the audience. Attorney Murphy asked if he could explain. Summarizing: *Serve in case of incapacity by the current mayor until the mayor can step back in. *If the mayor was to pass away, step in and assume responsibilities until a special election is held. *Regulate the town employees, town administration, things of that nature. *If mayor is absent for a regular meeting then conduct the meetings of the council.

Mayor called for any other comments. There being none, the following votes were recorded:

AYES: Alderman Carr, Alderman Brunson, Alderman Perry, Alderman Lawrence

NAYS: Alderman Manning

ABSENT: None

ABSTAIN: None



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Consider approval of the Month-to-date financials: Mayor asked if council had any comments or discussion about the financials. Manning had comments about General Funds; noting that in May the vehicle maintenance, under Maintenance, did not have a budgeted amount. Also, some line items had been removed. To which Mayor cordially advised, due to the severe weather at hand, he needed to expedite the meeting and would send her a full explanation within 48 hours. Manning agreed. She added under Police Dept 57-5200 is removed, phone services, under streets the vehicle fuel 5310 removed. And added that all these funds were budgeted at zero, amounts were coming out of them since January and they are not there anymore. Mayor stated, “ Due to the fact that we’ve been working on the budget to get it amended, which is the next item on there (agenda), we would also answer those questions.”

A motion was made by Alderman Lawrence and seconded by Alderman Carr to approve June 2026 financials. Mayor again called for comments. There being none, the following votes were recorded:

YEAS: Alderman Carr, Alderman Manning “with amendment”, Alderman Brunson, Alderman Perry, Alderman Lawrence

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

ABSTAIN: None

Ordinance 631 of 2026: INTRODUCE AND SET FOR PUBLIC HEARING

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING ORDINANCE 613 OF 2025, THE FINANCIAL BUDGET FOR THE FISCAL YEAR 2026 FOR THE TOWN OF BENTON, LOUISIANA IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE LOUISIANA LOCAL GOVERNMENT BUDGET ACT

A motion was made by Alderman Carr and seconded by Alderman Lawrence to introduce Ordinance 631 and set for public hearing. Mayor Friday called for comments. There being none, the following votes were recorded:

YEAS: Alderman Carr, Alderman Manning, Alderman Brunson, Alderman Perry, Alderman Lawrence

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

ABSTAIN: None

Mayor Friday called to adjourn the Regular Session. Manning asked if a member of the audience could speak on a matter. The mayor and Attorney Murphy advised it was not on the agenda. Following the Benton Council Meeting Decorum under ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA: Members of the public who wish to speak on a topic not listed on the agenda must submit a written request to the mayor by 12:00 pm on the day of the meeting. All requests will be reviewed and considered. Only with the Mayor’s approval can comments be made on items not listed on the agenda. Mayor invited her to come talk at the office or submit in writing and speak on next meeting. She politely voiced understanding.

Mayor Friday called again to adjourn the Regular Session. A motion was made by Alderman Carr and seconded by Alderman Lawrence to adjourn.

All In favor 5

All Opposed 0