

JAMES FRIDAY
MAYOR



STEPHANIE SULLIVANT-COLLIER
CAO/ TOWN CLERK

TOWN OF BENTON

LOUISIANA

REGULAR SESSION

MINUTES

TOWN OF BENTON

MONDAY, APRIL 14, 2025, 6:30 PM

The Town of Benton Council met in a regular legal session on the 14th day of April 2025, in the Benton Council Chambers, Benton Town Hall, 105 Sibley Street, Benton, Louisiana. Mayor James called the meeting to order. Stephanie Collier called the roll with all members as follows:

Alderman Jackie Carr	PRESENT
Alderman Tiffany Manning	PRESENT
Alderman Tammy Brunson	PRESENT
Alderman Arshundae Perry	PRESENT
Alderman Terry Lawrence	PRESENT

Alderman Manning made a motion to amend the agenda by adding Property Standards and Community Comments to the agenda, seconded by Alderman Carr to amend the agenda. Mayor Friday called for public comments. There being none, the following votes were recorded:

Public Comments: None

Ayes: Alderman Carr, Alderman Manning, Alderman Brunson, Alderman Perry, and Alderman Lawrence

Nays: None

Abstain: None

Absent: None

Alderman Manning made a motion to approve the agenda as amended, seconded by Alderman Carr. Mayor Friday called for public comments. There being none, the following votes were recorded:

Public Comments: None

Ayes: Alderman Carr, Alderman Manning, Alderman Brunson, Alderman Perry, and Alderman Lawrence

Nays: None

Abstain: None

Absent: None

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Alderman Carr made a motion to approve the March Public Hearing, Regular Session, and Special Session minutes, seconded by Alderman Lawrence. Mayor Friday called for public comments. There being none, the following votes were recorded:

Public Comments: None

Ayes: Alderman Carr, Alderman Manning, Alderman Brunson, Alderman Perry, and Alderman Lawrence

Nays: None

Abstain: None

Absent: None

Mayor Friday introduced Mark Waniewski, Owner of PMI Resources. He spoke to the council about the approval of a new service contract for Human Resource Services. Mr. Waniewski stated that he has been in business for 35 years. They specialize in Police, Fire, and Municipal employee services. PMI assists with updating employee handbooks and employee policies. We are a full-service company, we provide payroll services, bookkeeping, and employee counseling. Attorney Erwin asked various questions on the type of credentials and qualifications. Our goal will be to provide the Town with the best service ever.

Alderman Carr made a motion to approve the service agreement with PMI Resource, seconded by Alderman Perry. Mayor Friday called for public comments. There being none, the following votes were recorded:

Public Comments: Mrs. Dawn Bushnell stated that she does the payroll for Bossier City, Bossier Fire, and Bossier Police and has been an accountant for 30 years. She asked if there was some kind of problem with the Town hiring a third party. Stephanie Collier stated that we are not contracting for someone to do payroll. The town needs assistance in updating our personnel ordinance and employee handbooks. Steve Maxwell, the Town's insurance agent, stated that one of the insurance requirements for Travelers requires the employee handbooks and policies to be updated by a third party. Alderman Carr asked for clarification on the employee handbooks and asked if the handbooks for the town employees and the police employees are two separate handbooks. Mr. Waniewski stated Yes, they will be separate. Alderman Manning asked if they would be doing payroll. Mayor Friday stated that no, they will not be doing payroll, that the service agreement lists all services available to us, but it does not mean that we will be using all of those services. Stephanie Collier explained the reason for needing a third party to update the handbooks and do all employee onboarding. Alderman Manning stated that she understood. Mr. Waniewski explained his employee onboarding system. Alderman Manning asked if this requires a computer or is this something they can do on their phones. Mr. Waniewski said they do it on their phones. He said it does not require the town to engage in any technology. Alderman Perry asked if we decided we no longer want the service anymore are there records of retention? How does that transition work? Technically the town is public record and there is no shelf life of public records.

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Ayes: Alderman Carr, Alderman Manning, Alderman Brunson, Alderman Perry,
Alderman Lawrence
Nays: None
Abstain: None
Absent: None

Steven Maxwell with Leavitt Insurance agency to discuss the renewal of the Town's liability insurance policy. Mr. Maxwell stated that there really aren't any changes in this policy and gave a brief run-through on the current coverages for the various assets and facility locations, and the contents of all locations, as well as liability on all automobiles and equipment. He explained what third-party liability is and what it covers. Employee benefits liability, public management, and law enforcement liability. Mayor Friday stated that Mr. Maxwell does a lot of work to cover the town of Benton. Alderman Lawrence asked if Stonetrust was the only one not under Travelers insurance. Mr. Maxwell explained the worker comp experience mod and how the renewals are calculated. He explained that the Town has done well

Alderman Perry made a motion to approve the renewal of Travelers and Stonetrust Insurance, seconded by Alderman Lawrence. Mayor Friday called for public comments. There being none, the following votes were recorded:

Public Comments: None
Ayes: Alderman Carr, Alderman Manning, Alderman Brunson, Alderman Perry, and
Alderman Lawrence
Nays: None
Abstain: None
Absent: None

RESOLUTION 5 OF 2025

A RESOLUTION FOR THE ACCEPTANCE OF LOST RIVER ESTATES NORTH UNIT 3 STREETS AND DRAINAGE

WHEREAS, on behalf of the Town of Benton, Balar Engineers have monitored the construction and installation of the streets and drainage and have verified receipt of the two-year maintenance bonds in Lost River Estates North unit 3, and

WHEREAS Balar has recommended the Town of Benton should accept the street and drainage into the town system for permanent maintenance; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Alderman of the Town of Benton convened in regular session does hereby accept the streets and drainage of Lost River Estates North unit 3.

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Alderman Lawrence made a motion to approve Resolution 5, seconded by Alderman Manning. Mayor Friday called for public comments. There being none, the following votes were recorded:

Public Comments: None

Ayes: Alderman Carr, Alderman Manning, Alderman Brunson, Alderman Perry, and Alderman Lawrence

Nays: None

Abstain: None

Absent: None

RESOLUTION 6 OF 2025

A RESOLUTION FOR ACCEPTANCE OF LOST RIVER ESTATES NORTH UNIT 3 WATER AND WASTEWATER INFRASTRUCTURE

WHEREAS, on behalf of the Town of Benton, Balar Engineers have monitored the construction and installation of the water and wastewater infrastructure and have verified receipt of the two-year maintenance bonds in Lost River Estates North unit 3, and

WHEREAS Balar has recommended the Town of Benton should accept the water and sewer infrastructure into the town system for permanent maintenance; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Alderman of the Town of Benton convened in regular session does hereby accept the water and wastewater infrastructure of Lost River Estates North unit 3.

Alderman Carr made a motion to approve Resolution 6, seconded by Alderman Perry. Mayor Friday called for public comments. There being none, the following votes were recorded:

Public Comments: None

Ayes: Alderman Carr, Alderman Manning, Alderman Brunson, Alderman Perry, and Alderman Lawrence

Nays: None

Abstain: None

RESOLUTION 7 OF 2025

A RESOLUTION FOR ACCEPTANCE OF BELEMERE WATER AND WASTEWATER INFRASTRUCTURE UNIT 6 AND 7

WHEREAS, on behalf of the Town of Benton, Balar Engineers have monitored the construction and installation of the water and wastewater infrastructure and have verified receipt of the two-year maintenance bonds in Belemere Subdivision Units 6 and 7, and

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WHEREAS Balar has recommended that contingent on the relocation of the lift station gate, the Town of Benton should accept the water and sewer infrastructure into the town system for permanent maintenance; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Alderman of the Town of Benton convened in regular session does hereby accept the water and wastewater infrastructure of Belemere Subdivision Unit 6 & 7.

Alderman Lawrence made a motion to approve Resolution 7, seconded by Alderman Brunson. Mayor Friday called for public comments. There being none, the following votes were recorded:

Public Comments: None

Ayes: Alderman Carr, Alderman Manning, Alderman Brunson, Alderman Perry, and Alderman Lawrence

Nays: None

Abstain: None

ORDINANCE 603 OF 2025

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING ORDINANCE 576 of 2022 OF THE MAYOR AND BOARD OF ALDERMEN OF THE TOWN OF BENTON, BOSSIER PARISH, ESTABLISHING THE SALARY OF THE TOWN CLERK FOR THE YEAR 2025

WHEREAS, under RS Code 33:404.1, the Board of Aldermen shall set forth the salaries, wages or compensation of the officers of the Town of Benton, who, by law, are entitled to salaries, wages or compensation.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED by the Mayor and the Board of Aldermen of the Town of Benton does hereby amend Ordinance 575 of 2022 by increasing the town clerks hourly pay 12%; and

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED, that this ordinance will be in effect after a Public Hearing and upon passage on May 12, 2025.

Mayor Friday asked for a motion to set a public hearing. Alderman Carr asked out of all the employees who had and had not been given raises when he (Mayor Friday) was in office. Mayor Friday stated that not all employees got pay increases. The only ones were the two ladies in the office and one worker at the maintenance barn. Alderman Carr asked why did the bookkeeper not get a raise? Mayor Friday stated that it is his discretion as to who got pay increases. Alderman Manning asked if there are additional duties added over the past three years. Stephanie Collier Responded that yes not only payroll but all of the taxes, quarterly, and end of the year taxes, W2's. Alderman Manning requested to go on record as she was only inquiring about when will be the appropriate time to discuss this ordinance? At the public hearing or now. Mayor Friday stated that we are just setting it for public hearing tonight. He asked if they wanted to hold a work session Alderman Carr inquired about the length of time since Stephanie's raise. Stephanie explained that I have had one pay increase in a total of six years. It had been three years ago, and it had been three years prior to that last one. The last raise was in 2022 and I was only given a 8% when everyone else had gotten 9% increase. Stephanie asked for someone to explain how I do not deserve a pay increase. Mayor Friday stated that we can have a special session if council would like to discuss it further.

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

Public Comments: None

Ayes: Alderman Carr, Alderman Manning, Alderman Brunson, Alderman Perry, and Alderman Lawrence

Nays: None

Abstain: None

Absent: None

Alderman Manning made a motion to approve the month-to-date financials, seconded by Alderman Carr. Mayor Friday called for public comments. There being none, the following votes were recorded:

Public Comments: None

Ayes: Alderman Carr, Alderman Manning, Alderman Brunson, Alderman Perry, and Alderman Lawrence

Nays: None

Abstain: None

Absent: None

Amended Items added to Property Standards.

Alderman Manning stated that she has some questions about three properties. She said that she has spoken with Mr. Redford about these properties and he confirmed that he has visited with the property owners. Alderman Manning noted that these three properties are burned and dilapidated. Some have junk and debris in the front yard and she feels the structures should be torn down. She asked if there were any updates on these properties. Mayor Friday stated that Mr. Redford is trying to give the property owners time. The property is boarded up and closed to the public, so it is not in compliance. She said that one of these properties has junk and trash in the yard. According to our ordinance, the homeowners should be notified. I guess I am not satisfied with the progress this far. Mayor Friday stated that he will meet with Greg, see where we are on these properties, and get back to you. Alderman Manning also mentioned a mobile home and junk at the end of Second Street around the curve. Chief Collier spoke up and said that anything past the curve is outside of town. He explained where the boundaries are.

Alderman Manning stated that we have one more person who wants to speak. Mayor Friday, go ahead and let Dawn Bushnell speak. She wanted to know how many tickets have been given to people going

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to the ballpark. Chief Collier stated that we have been sitting on Red River, making several stops and writing several tickets. We have been monitoring the speeding situation of people going to the ballpark.

Alderman Carr made a motion to adjourn the regular session, seconded by Alderman Brunson. Mayor Friday called for public comments. There being none, the following votes were recorded:

Public Comments: None

Ayes: Alderman Carr, Alderman Manning, Alderman Brunson, Alderman Perry, and Alderman Lawrence

Nays: None

Abstain: None

Absent: None

Motion / Second to Adjourn

In favor / Opposed

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