



**TOWN OF BENTON
MAYOR AND BOARD OF ALDERMEN
105 SIBLEY STREET, BENTON, LOUISIANA**

**REGULAR SESSION MINUTES
MONDAY, JANUARY 12, 2026, 6:30 PM**

CALL TO ORDER:

The Town of Benton met in a regular legal session on the 12th day of January 2026 at 6:30 PM in the Benton Council Chambers, Benton Town Hall, 105 Sibley Street, Benton, Louisiana. Mayor James Friday called the meeting to order. Attorney Nerren gave the invocation, and Alderman Brunson led the Pledge of Allegiance. Stephanie Collier called the roll with all members as follows:

Alderman Jackie Carr	ABSENT (Came in approximately 10 minutes late)
Alderman Tiffany Manning	PRESENT
Alderman Tammy Brunson	PRESENT
Alderman Arshundae Perry	ABSENT
Alderman Terry Lawrence	PRESENT

Others present were Deborah Rios, members of the press, and members of the public.

A motion was made by Alderman Carr, seconded by Alderman Lawrence to approve the November 10th minutes. Mayor Friday called for public comments.

Manning: I do have comments on this. At the 10th meeting, I wrote Mr. Chance out, and he gave me permission to call him Mr. Chance. I emailed to express my concerns about the minutes from November 10th. Actually, November 10th, 17th, and December 8th. So, I will read it. After reviewing the November meeting minutes, I am attempting to...

Mayor: Where are we at in the minutes that you're reading?

Manning: After reviewing the November meeting minute, I am intending to address this matter internally, and outside of public discussion. However, if this issue is not corrected, I will raise it during a public meeting, which it has not been or addressed to my knowledge. This correspondence serves as a formal complaint and a demand for corrective actions regarding the November regular meeting minutes prepared by Ms. Collier. The minutes contain numerous inaccuracies, omissions, and misrepresentation of statements made, questions raised, and discussions that occurred during that meeting. Specifically, the minutes contained numerous inaccuracies, omissions, and misrepresentation, Specifically, critical comments made by the mayor and other board members were omitted while selective emphasis was placed on things that I personally presented as if I was the only person at the meeting. Selectively, Ms.

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Carr's remarks were added due to the support of the chief's pay increase, notably absent of Ms. Carr's specific concerns regarding the community garden, despite the fact that both she and the mayor made several comments on this topic. Additionally, Ms. Perry's concerns and questions related to the community garden, and it was Ms. Perry, not myself, who asked about how the board members could receive a pay raise, pay increase, the minutes inaccurately attributed or omitted these statements. Further, key information concerning forensic audit discussion and other important matters were excluded, which materially alters the public understanding of that meeting. These omissions are not clear. They constitute injurious documentation that misrepresent the official record. This targeted and biased presentation undermines the board's role and responsibilities as elected officers and cannot be allowed. Accordingly, I am requesting the following corrective action. Immediately resubmit the November regular meeting minutes for publication, with confirmation provided to the council board once corrected. Preparation and submission of full verbatim minutes from November meeting so the public record accurately reflects the proceedings rather than selective, summaries or subjective narrative. Implementation of verbatim transcriptions for all meetings moving forward to ensure transparency, eliminate bias, editing, or selective documentation. Given that the meetings are recorded and the clerk has administrative support, this should not pose an undue hardship. I'm addressing these matters internally out of respect for the process. However, if these are not corrected properly, I will bring them publicly before the court for transparency and accountability.

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

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

A motion was made by Alderman Carr, seconded by Alderman Lawrence to approve the November 17th Workshop minutes. Mayor Friday called for public comments. No comments having been made, the following votes were recorded:

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

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A motion was made by Alderman Carr, seconded by Alderman Lawrence to approve the November 17th Special Session minutes. Mayor Friday called for public comments. No comments having been made, the following votes were recorded:

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

A motion was made by Alderman Carr, seconded by Alderman Lawrence to approve the December 8th minutes. Mayor Friday called for public comments.

Manning: Yes, we do not have the minutes for a December 8th meeting present. We did have a meeting. It was a quorum and there's and we had discussion. There's no minutes. It says there's no comments and there were a lot of comments. Can we have those also verbatim?

Alderman Carr: In our regular meeting on December 28th, the council was emailed from Stephanie wanting to move our regular meeting until I believe it was December 15th. There cannot be a move that meeting because it's set by ordinance. So, the Board of Aldermen came here and we voted no to that meeting being moved because there was a quorum here. The Board could not vote on anything. We had a one-line item on the agenda. We had no financial, no ordinances, nothing. Because I'm going to assume the clerk and the mayor, they did not provide us with the package. So, there was no business handled on December the 8th. December the 8th. December the 8th, yes. So. Maybe please have those comments published for the board. So, the last financial that this council had would have to be at the regular meeting on... There was a December 29th meeting, and because they called it a regular meeting, that meeting was null and void. It's like it did not happen because it should not happen. It was not a regular meeting because our regular meeting was on December 8th. So, we don't know anything about any financials or anything that the town has done since November 10th.

Mayor: You don't have the regular session minutes in your packet?

Alderman Carr: I'm not talking about this. I'm talking about the 29th. As I said, by law, the December 29th meeting should not have happened. You can look it up. It should not have happened because it was... It was called a regular meeting, and it was not a regular meeting. Now, if you had called it a special session or a continuation of the December 8th meeting, then that would have been fine. But since it was called a regular meeting, that meeting is null and void. Plus, there was no quorum. Is that correct?

Attorney: I'm trying to figure out exactly which data you're talking about. You're talking about the meeting where there wasn't a quorum, right?

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Carr: Right.

Attorney: So you're saying that meeting should not have happened.

Carr: Yes.

Attorney: Right, but there wasn't a quorum, so nothing did happen. So there aren't any issues with the characterization of the meeting, because since nothing was done, we don't even have to worry about whether or not it was void, because we weren't able to do anything with the lack of a quorum. Okay. Um, whether or not, um, it was a special or regular, I would have to go back and check to see either what was said before the meeting or what was posted to be 100% sure. But, um, I wouldn't worry about us. I'm going to go back.

Carr: I guess I just wanted to be clear for transparency. Why there was no business conducted on December 8th and why on December 29th, um, there was a scheduled regular session meeting.

Attorney: Okay. So do you have any questions for me specifically, or if you just wanted to do that for transparency

Carr: And another thing too, um, you know, we talked to that and Mr. Nerren made me aware that he doesn't receive the package, our agenda. Now I feel as the town attorney, and if we want him to, if we want to be fair to the town attorney, when we ask him a question, I feel like that he should be provided with the agenda.

Attorney: I'll be honest with you i've been some other towns i've worked in sometimes they give it to me sometimes they don't so it's not um uncommon to not get it i guess i'd say but if you would like i can start specifically requesting it and that way we don't we don't have any of those concerns yes we wouldn't have to thank you.

Manning: The question that i have in my mind is that on december 8th we had a regular meeting on december 29th it was called a regular meeting. I'm concerned about the regular meeting terminology speaking with LMA. It can be called anything else besides the regular.

Attorney: Is that a question. So regular meetings are the regularly scheduled meetings that occur once a month or set by ordinance. If the board is to meet at any time that is not set in the ordinance, what a regular meeting would be, then the mayor at the mayor's request, they have special meetings or workshops, whatever you call it. But the regular meeting is a term of art that specifically refers to the meeting that is scheduled monthly by ordinance. Is that what you want to know?

Manning: And I think what Ms. Carr is saying is that the December 29th meeting was labeled regular session. It's inappropriate.

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Attorney: And what I'll do moving forward, I honestly, I don't remember if it was labeled that way or not. It may very well have been. What I'll do moving forward is if anything is set, I will make sure that it is monitored, correctly. Okay. Like I said, I'm not saying, I just didn't remember, but I'll make sure that it is labeled correctly moving forward.

Mayor no other comments have been made, the following votes were recorded:

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

A motion was made by Alderman Carr, seconded by Alderman Lawrence, to approve the December 15th minutes. Mayor Friday called for public comments. No comments having been made, the following votes were recorded:

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

OLD BUSINESS:

Ordinance 610 of 2025

AN ORDINANCE, GRANTING UNTO SOUTHWESTERN ELECTRIC POWER COMPANY, THE RIGHT, PRIVILEGE AND FRANCHISE TO ACQUIRE, CONSTRUCT, ERECT, MAINTAIN, REPAIR, RECONSTRUCT, REMOVE AND OPERATE A SYSTEM OF ELECTRIC POWER LINES, WIRES, TRANSFORMERS, COMMUNICATION CABLES AND OTHER RELATED AND NECESSARY OR DESIRABLE APPURTENANCES IN, UNDER, OVER, ACROSS, THROUGH AND ALONG ANY AND ALL OF THE PRESENT AND FUTURE STREETS, AVENUES, ALLEYS, THOROUGHFARES, ROADS, HIGHWAYS, SIDEWALKS, BRIDGES AND PUBLIC GROUNDS AND PUBLIC PLACES OF THE TOWN OF BENTON, LOUISIANA, FOR THE PURPOSE OF TRANSMITTING AND DISTRIBUTING ELECTRIC POWER TO THE TOWN AND ITS INHABITANTS AND ANY OTHER PERSON OR PERSONS, FIRMS AND CORPORATIONS FOR A TERM OF TWENTY FIVE YEARS; REGULATING THE USE OF STREETS BY THE COMPANY AND REPAIR AND RESTORATION OF THE STREETS DISTURBED BY CONSTRUCTION;

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PROVIDING FOR COMPENSATION TO BE PAID TO THE TOWN; PROVIDING THAT THIS FRANCHISE SHALL NOT BE EXCLUSIVE; PROVIDING THE COMPANY'S OBLIGATIONS TO FURNISH EFFICIENT SERVICE; PROVIDING FOR INDEMNITY BY THE COMPANY TO THE TOWN; PROVIDING FOR CONDITIONAL FORFEITURE IN EVENT OF DEFAULT BY THE COMPANY; MAKING MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS RELATIVE TO THIS GRANT OF FRANCHISE; PROVIDING FOR ACCEPTANCE BY COMPANY; PROVIDING A SEVERABILITY CLAUSE; AND PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE DATE.

A motion was made by Alderman Lawrence, seconded by Alderman Carr for FINAL VOTE OF Ordinance 610 of 2025. Mayor Friday called for public comments. There being none, the following votes were recorded:

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

Ordinance 611 of 2025 (T-16-25)

ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 130, ARTICLE 7, SECTION 130-182 OF THE TOWN OF BENTON CODE OF ORDINANCES

A motion was made by Alderman Lawrence, seconded by Alderman Manning, for FINAL VOTE OF Ordinance 611 of 2025. Mayor Friday called for public comments. There being no comments, the following votes were recorded:

AYES: Alderman Manning, Alderman Lawrence
NAYS: Alderman Carr
ABSENT: Alderman Perry
ABSTAIN: Alderman Brunson

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ORDINANCE NO. 614:

AN ORDINANCE REQUIRING ADVANCE DELIVERY OF COUNCIL MEETING PACKETS

A motion was made by Alderman Lawrence, seconded by Alderman Carr for **FINAL VOTE OF Ordinance 611 of 2025**. Mayor Friday called for public comments. There being no comments, the following votes were recorded:

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

NEW BUSINESS:

1. RESOLUTION 13 of 2025

RESOLUTION APPROVING MASTER PLAN PLAT OF LONG PINE SUBDIVISION UNIT 1

WHEREAS, the Benton-Parish Metropolitan Planning Commission (the “MPC”) conducted a public hearing on Tuesday, December 16, 2025, and approved the application made by Corey Russell to approve the Master Plan Plat of Long Pine Subdivision Unit 1, being 8.215 acres more or less, located in Section 29, Township 20 North, Range 13 West Benton, La. (North of 5th Street & East of Montgomery Lane) (Town Council District 2) (Police Jury District 4); and

WHEREAS the Long Pine Subdivision Master Plan Plat was approved under the Benton MPC regulations and procedures and has made the recommendation for approval by the Board of Aldermen.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Aldermen of the Town of Benton, Louisiana, does hereby approve the Master Plan Plat of Long Pine Subdivision Unit 1.

Upon a motion by Alderman Carr seconded by Alderman Lawrence, Mayor called for public comments:

Ryan Estes, Rayleigh & Associates, 4913 Shedd Road, here on behalf of the... the owner on Long Pine Subdivision unit number well Long Pine Subdivision unit number one which would be its only unit I was I was here several months back I don't remember the date I think it was sometime in October discussing

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the previous plan that plan was a planned unit development. We requested two different things on that plan and it had 32 lots since then because we were denied by the board we've come back with a a straight subdivision the previous one had a couple of variances the they were requesting a a 60-foot right-of-way, requesting it narrowed down to a 50 foot right of way and an inverted crown street instead of a curve and gutter asphalt street we were going to give a concrete street so those are the only two changes this preliminary plat of long pine subdivision is a straight subdivision it was unanimously passed by the board or by the mpc the planning commission as was the previous one and and we are meeting every ordinance um the town has uh on this piece of property it's zoned correctly we've done all our due diligence in the town. We've met with the town engineers, We've met with the planning commission or discussed with the planning commission. We've had conversations with the Department of Transportation and Development, communications with the fire district, the school district. So I'll be more than happy to answer any questions y'all have regarding this development.

Manning: Did you bring the street study or the drainage study?

Ryan: They're not required at this time.

Manning: The drainage study? And the traffic?

Ryan: Traffic study wasn't warranted. The engineer stated that the traffic was going to be feasible. Yes ma'am. In fact, I have DOTD's communications right here. Jim Oye, he's the guy that reviews all that. His email communications right here. I've had preliminary approval through his site. Now they're just waiting on set of construction plans. They did not require a traffic impact study because it was not warranted. If this development was only, well, it was at 32 lots. Now it's at 29. It essentially generates zero traffic.

Manning: I mean, 28 homes still would be like 70 cars.

Ryan: Excuse me, ma'am. I mean, if you're thinking about two cars per house, it would still be like 70 more that was not on the road or in that area. Well the way they do traffic studies the way they do traffic studies is based on a peak hour um okay peak hour and it doesn't work like that there's not a one-to-one relationship uh in fact it's it's probably a you most people say oh well it's 29 lots uh you have two cars per house on average well with 29 times two that's roughly 58 uh new cars on the road that's not the way it actually works um in discussions with uh the Department of Transportation and Development whose this road is under their jurisdiction and their jurisdiction only um they it doesn't generate anywhere uh near that amount of traffic in the peak hours such that that you know they did not request a traffic study and uh we did not provide one because it is it was not requested by the by the authority having jurisdiction over the road,

Manning: Okay, well, I know that there was a lot of complaint. So, could you provide the board with that?

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Ryan: So, we can satisfy and the drainage studies. Neither one of those are required by ordinance at this time. When, if this, uh, if this, uh, project is approved by you, we will definitely be giving you a drainage study. The traffic study. We're not willing to commit to because the authority have a jurisdiction. It says we don't need one essentially would be a waste of my clients money and time in order to provide that.

Manning: So, with the residents having concerns about this and with the residents having concerns with the drainage. would your boss or the person that you're representing want to provide that.

Ryan: We have to come back to y'all and uh for final plat approval uh or pre-construction layout final plant pre-construction layout approval and at that time uh actually the town engineer is here um he will have reviewed that the uh, drainage study and made any comments and we've adjusted those comments so and so we'll have dotd because uh it's i'm connecting to their roadway it'll be under their jurisdiction also, so both of those both that drainage study will be reviewed by the department of transportation and development as for the traffic study i don't know what we would study um because dotd is it's said this is not a traffic generator essentially and there is not a need for a study so it like i said again it is, I mean, it would just be literally spending money to spend money when the authority having jurisdiction who manages the traffic on Highway 162 says you don't need this. Don't even provide it. Manning: So there will be no need for traffic impact. Ryan: Correct. I asked him. That's I mean, in the town, the town engineer can attest to that. If you would like him to speak to that, he can attest that we followed every normal jurisdiction, every normal step that we do on the development.

Manning: Okay. Well, I know there was a storage building that was trying to, you know, be back there and they had drainage concerns. So can you explain to us what's the difference from a storage building to home? how significant it's

Ryan: It's a lesser intense use um with storage buildings you typically have more uh what they call impervious areas um they have more like concrete more um i guess rooftops like metal rooftops where it directly enters they would still have to do everything that i'm doing or will do um as far as a drainage impact study to ensure that we do not have any adverse impacts to the surrounding neighbors and or residences and or streams um so whatever the current flow is under the existing wooded um development of existing wooded piece of property i'm required to mitigate that which means bring that back down after the post development through a retention pond to the same level it is today or better, And that's done on every development in Bossier Parish, Bossier City. It's standard practice around the nation. And we're going to do that. I do it on every development. I mean, David's reviewed many of them. So, you know, I would, you know, say that this is a – we think it's going to be a great need for the town. I know that right there north of town there's going to be an AI center or a potential AI center that's coming. And, you know, people are going to need houses to live in. I mean, compared to what's going on right there, this traffic is going to be a drop in the bucket of what's coming to the town of Benton. It's going to – town of Benton is going to be growing. Town of Benton is going to be getting – it's going to be getting bigger i mean i think later on in the agenda y'all are approving, um sewer expansions there's going to be a major water line running down highway so you know the town in the next five to ten years will look dramatically different than it does today and people need houses to live in

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and that's that's the um that's the product we're providing to the town or providing to the public for them to um to get to look at and participate.

Mayor: All right any other questions we have the uh there's a preliminary drawing it's in the uh two percent out here while back in the drawings now that we get to the list so we need to vote on this for approval. Oh, is there any other public comments?

David Roberts, 725th Street. Okay. So they say peak hours, what are the peak hours? You have 28 houses going in there, and if they have one child that goes to school that's adding more traffic with the buses going up and down the street, they're not going to want their kids to go to this bus stop that they had planned before because it's right on a major highway. They don't want their kids to get hit by cars, right? I wouldn't want my kids to be hit by a car. And then you have this retention pond bringing mosquitoes, bringing anything else that flies that lives in water. Then you have it's not going to be an impact to traffic. Well, how is that when 28 houses, that's 56 cars, two cars per house. And then they say, oh, the data center. Cool. Why bunch up and let them expand it, go somewhere else, build these houses, not in somebody's backyard and making Benton traffic this. Yeah, data center down here. They're riding up and down Benton Road. Benton Road already has traffic. Why make traffic here? Instead of building it down in a different area. It just doesn't make sense to me.

Mayor: Thank you, sir. Anyone else?

Hello, Allie Keith 714 5th Street. Just want to reiterate all the things that we've already said in front of the council about this. We have concerns. We've lived here in Benton for 25 years. We've had a business in Benton for 20 years. This impacts our home life. It's right in our backyard, all the way behind our yard, all the way up our side fence. Traffic's horrible. I back out onto this road every single day. Bringing in all these cars is not going to help. I'm never getting out of my way. I'm never getting in my driveway. We just have a concern. We've poured our heart and soul into Benton. This is just not something that we need.

Ryan: I'm sorry. In the other comments, I'd just like to rebuttal, just if I could. I want to make sure that everybody realizes that the properties... In front of this was always meant to be developed. The properties in front of that's Courtney place unit number two, which is a subsequent part of Courtney place unit number one, which is adjacent to it. It was always meant to be a spur and a future development back here. That's I mean, we could easily call this instead of longtime subdivision. We could easily call this Courtney place unit number three, which would have been the original name for this subdivision. At that time, again, regarding the traffic and the bus stops, and you know, we've gotten every authority having jurisdiction over the traffic to approve our conceptual plan and say, present us the traffic, the traffic or present us the construction plans when you have prepared them. You know, I said, do you need anything else at this time? And Jim Ollier, DOTD, who reviews everything, says no. Please submit this through the portal so we can get on with the construction plans. And regarding, you know, the school bus on Highway 162, I'd like to read an email. An email I've responded back from that I've gotten from Aaron McGee with the Bossier Schools. He's the head of the

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transportation, Bossier Parish Transportation Director, so he controls the buses. And he wrote me back in Halloween day, said, good morning. It is a procedure for transportation to not use cul-de-sacs to turn buses. There are many issues with the cul-de-sacs. The turn radius on a bus is very large, and the cul-de-sacs, we might need a spotter to help the driver. If there are vehicles parked in the cul-de-sacs, sometimes you can't turn a bus. And I want to go on. I'm in state. It says. Also, it appears that the total distance of the subdivision is less than a half of a mile, so less than a mile, so even with the cul-de-sac, which we will most likely not have, most likely not enter the subdivision and allow students to walk the Highway 162, we have many stops on Highway 162, so the highway, so the users of the highway are used to watching for school buses. We have done everything we have possibly, could possibly have done by this development, so to make sure that we're following all the proper procedures, dotting our I's, crossing our T's, to ensure that, you know, this development is adequate for the town. It's zoned properly, and we're meeting every ordinance that the town has. I wish we, you know, could have looked at doing the previous, but we are here today, and we're going to make this work.

Alderman Lawrence: So what would be the next step would you if you would go

Ryan: They had to do a drainage study and construction plans and then you got to come back and come back to the MPC and come back to this board after uh the town engineer behind us has uh vetted reviewed and approved all of the plans um so i'll be back in front of y'all um if y'all approve this today um in several months um and it's a public meeting and these people will have all of the construction documents drainage studies for the review for for them to look at all this document all today's vote does for my client it basically says proceed to the next step and which is construction plans i'll have to have dotd approval i have to have all of those approvals before i come back to y'all and amendments, and they've dotted all around town and y'all are lawful for lawsuit.

Manning: On that note, Mayor. I would like to make this information, because I did do my research. Okay, by sending the text message only to the three Aldermen who voted this down, The mayor was not just sharing information; he was specifically targeting the swing vote to lift the outcome. This is called a serial meeting, which is in violation of open meeting laws. Those three Aldermen was Ms. Carr, Ms. Manning, and Ms. Brunson. On December 29, 2005, Mayor Friday initiated a private group text message specifically to us three, who had previously voted against the Long Pine subdivision. This was not a general notice from him. It was a targeted effect to poll and coerce a quorum of board. three of five members into changing their votes by telling this quorum that they were expected to pass this resolution. The mayor engaged in a serial meeting, violation of LARS 42:14, effectively conducting the town's business behind digital curtains. I want to make sure that the entire board see the communication that was sent to a quorum of us on December 29th. The mayor can talk to us individually, but when he puts a quorum of us, the specific three who voted no on this matter into a group chat to tell us that we are expected to vote, he has created an illegal meeting. He has bypassed the public and the other two members of the board. The mayor told the three of us that we were expected to pass this to keep us from being sued. This is legislative coercion. If the town gets sued because we vote no, the town's insurance and the town attorney defends the case, not the mayor and not us on the board personally. By

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threatening us with a lawsuit to change our vote, the mayor is interfering with our official duties. It states that...

Mayor: Let's let the attorney speak on that. He's got a copy for us.

Manning: I'm not finished.

Mayor: I understand you're not finished.

Manning: The text message states... On tonight's agenda, Resolution 13 of 2025, the approval of the master plan of Long Pine subdivision. That's the subdivision you all turned down on Sibley Street 162. If you got some questions regarding subdivision for approval to keep us from being sued, we will be expected to pass this resolution from the mayor. If you have any questions concerning this, feel free to call Mr. Nerren, our town attorney. He has said that he reached out to you regarding the subdivision. Or if you'd like to call my office, thank you and have a blessed day. So, yes, you have the right to call it individually. But to have a quorum to entice our vote, that's illegal.

Attorney: For the record, a lawsuit of that type that you're referring to, insurance is not going to cover.

Manning: But you are our attorney, so you will defend that. And it's not the mayor's place to tell any of us on this board that we have to vote for a resolution.

Attorney: It's my place as town attorney to tell you what the options were, and I did do that.

Manning: Yes, you did.

Attorney: I spoke to each and every one of y'all individually. What I'm saying is just so we're all clear, a lawsuit of this type, your insurance does not cover.

Manning: But the town lawyer will represent us.

Attorney: Any money that would come out of this type of lawsuit is going to come from taxpayer dollars.

Manning: And the town lawyer will represent us. Correct?

Attorney: It's my job to find you the best legal representation and help out, but you said insurance. Insurance is not going to cover this type of stuff.

Manning: Scratch that out of the comment. Insurance, but our town lawyer, our town attorney will represent us or find you will find...

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Attorney: Sure, absolutely, but I did just want to make sure that that part is clear because I don't think your insurance is going to help you in this type of scenario.

Manning: Well, we can erase the insurance, but I did talk to you.

Carr: So that I would have clarity. I asked for an advisory opinion so i would have clarity. I want to make sure because, to be honest, that text should not have happened. Mr. Friday was out of order for it, but there's neither good nor there. So to keep me from coming up here arguing with you or the mayor. I just asked for an advisory opinion and to be honest with you, I would, table this vote until we get that opinion because there are legalities for this. So like I said, I did, I sent out an advisory opinion because I wasn't sure and after you told me that you don't get the agenda. So I know where I can get an opinion to make sure that this. So i could make sure that this was not a violation.

Attorney: You are taking about the group message.

Carr: yeah, I'm specifically taking about the text.

Attorney: Yeah, I didn't know anything about the group message, I just wanted to make sure I had, addressed any of those questions about the vote. I don't know anything about the message.

Manning: However, this would be considered a walking quarum.

Attorney: You requested an advisory opinion, we'll see what they say. I didn't know anything about it, can't fix it now.

Manning: Okay, I agree with Ms. Carr, we should table this until we get our advisory opinion.

Ryan: Can I ask a question?

Mayor: Go right ahead.

Ryan: I mean, if you do table this, the advisory opinion that you're requesting clarification, on... Is it have anything to do with this case or it has to do with the text messages Mayor Friday sent?

Manning: It has been influenced.

Carr: So let me just let me say this and I'm talking for myself. I'm not talking for anybody else. To be honest, when I read this, I did feel because I don't want the town to be sued. You know, we all live here. So after I read this, I did feel to be honest with you, I felt compelled to just vote yes, just let's do it.

Ryan: Well, my client doesn't want to get into a lawsuit either.

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Carr: Yeah, but you all can sue us.

Ryan: I mean, I think there's, he can probably speak to it, but there's precedent through the 26th Judicial Court that deals with particular cases like this. And that's not the road we're wanting to go down. However, What would be happening is you're essentially taking this man's property out of commerce. He has to be able to do what's allowed within the rules and the ordinances that he's allowed to do. And he's zoned R1. The last thing we want to do is tie this up in any sort of legal matters. However, he can't do anything with the property. because if you take the ability from him to do residential on that piece of property, you're not going to approve commercial residential as the most or the least intrusive. The type of development that you can have, other than just leaving it as was.

Carr: I understand.

Ryan: But, yeah, so, you know, you're essentially taking the man's property out of commerce, and I'll leave it at that. I mean, he has no other recourse to it.

Carr: I understand.

Manning: He could sell it.

Carr: If the text had been worded a different way, it wouldn't have been a problem. But basically, he is telling us, and he only sent it to the three aldermen that voted no. And he is telling us that we are expected to pay it. None of us want to see the town get sued, even though you guys said that, but he alluded to that.

Ryan: And I'll add one. If you did table this matter to the next public meeting, when would that meeting be? Is it the first, or I guess it would be the second Tuesday of, second Monday of February?

Carr: Monday

Ryan: Okay. I don't know.

Manning: You have four months, right?

Ryan: Ma'am?

Manning: You have four months to get all this together, right? So you started over December what?

Ryan: I started over.

Manning: When you did this to the MPC?

Ryan: I do not recall.

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Manning: It was in December, right?

Ryan: I do not recall. It was either November or December. December would have made sense because it was, let's say, early December.

Manning: So you have four months to complete the whole process.

Ryan: I have four months to complete what whole process?

Manning: All this taking care of all of what you're trying to do bring this to the board all that, right? Is there a four-month thing?

Ryan: I don't know if there's any I mean I don't know if there's any timelines that are required

Manning: When developers come to you up to the MPC do y'all give them a timeline, to get, Everything. I mean you do you guys. I talked with Carlotta and she told me every development and She let them know that they have four months. Is that true?

Reyenga: Well, it's just like the Brunson. piece of property wanting to develop a trailer park they'll have to come back before with a master plan, i think that uh mr estes came to us in october did you not uh

Ryan: october on the original plat

Reyenga: and then he had to come back with and he hasn't come back and then just like he has to come back before you guys before anything is started with actual work to it

Ryan: it's really a procedural

Manning: it's a four month process right

Reyenga: just about sometimes longer sometimes less.

Manning: thank you that's that's all i wanted um

Ryan: just to make sure you realize that it's a four month process but that has nothing that that's just the timeline that it usually takes to get through to, to where we are today yeah

Manning: okay the deeper issue that i have thank you mr uh ryan i totally understand where you're coming from, The issue that I do have with this is that the mayor has coerced three board members concerning this information. And our votes could have been tainted. You cannot say that it has not had an influence.

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Mayor: I don't think I implied anything.

Manning: Plus, you called and you told me that.

Ronnie Jones: Can I say something? Please. Can I sign in?

Manning: And by a vote, we will understand

Ronnie: Ms. Reyenga, could you join me up here for a second? I want to ask you something. As I understand it, I've been on this board a long time. I was on the MPC a long time. There's only like two or three things that they can lawfully turn down the subdivision that is zoned properly and all that stuff like he is. And I think one of them is a drainage problem. One of them would be like some kind of waste on the property like creosote or something like that. Are there any other reasons?

Reyenga: Well, when Mr. Estes came before the MPC, the MPC had to say yes because he met all the ordinances that were established for what he's wanting to do. So we couldn't say no to Mr. Estes. So when that happens, because we're not over inside the city limits. Then it moves from us to the board.

Ronnie: And they should, by law, give him the opportunity to do his studies and come back to them. And then they can turn it down if there's a reason, if there's a drainage problem or if there's a waste or...

Reyenga: I would think they can turn it down at any point they wanted to because it's their jurisdiction once it leaves us.

Ronnie: Right, yeah. So, but legally...

Reyenga: But I think the point they were bringing up here wasn't necessarily passing it for Mr. Estes as it was. They felt like they'd been pressured into a yes vote rather than voting their conscience. That's what I'm gathering here.

Ronnie: Well, all that aside, though, I feel like... Because I've seen this happen before. The town is probably going to get sued if it's turned down. Not even him, not giving him a chance to bring it to you. You know, with the flood, whatever else the issues may be, you can require maybe to put up a fence or whatever it is, and then he has to agree to that. And if he doesn't, then you can turn it down. But just to turn him down before you even give him a chance, because it is zoned properly. Neighbors can't come in here and say, I don't want him there because I've been here for 20 years and I don't want any houses back here. You can't do that. I mean, you can say it, but you can't do it. So if he's zoned properly, and all this other stuff that y'all are talking about, about what the mayor did or didn't do, shouldn't really come into this. It shouldn't. I mean, that's something you can do separately, sure, if you want to do something about that after this. But I think this is something that needs to be passed on to the next. To the next step and then if he comes back after his engineers look at the flood and whatever else the neighbors are concerned

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about and it doesn't come out right, then turn it down. But you should at least give him a chance to present.

Carr: Mr. Jones, tonight it doesn't have anything to do with the subdivision as a whole. That's not what I'm saying at all. And I do believe that he has everything that he needs. I do believe that. But what I'm saying is sending out a text message,

Ronnie: that's a separate...

Carr: it can't be separate because it's about that subdivision. I mean, it's his words. He sent this. So, if you're going to send this to the, I wouldn't have felt some type of way if you wouldn't send it to all five of them, but he targeted the ones that voted no from the last time. That's illegal, Mr. Jones.

Ronnie: He probably didn't realize that was illegal. I don't know anything about all that either, but I'm not concerned. I'm just trying to address what's happening.

Carr: No, I believe that the subdivision has everything that they need.

Attorney: And if I can, real quick, I understand y'all's concern. Obviously, advisory opinion is coming down. My legal opinion is, though... the risk that you're taking by delaying the vote or voting no is still going to exist regardless. of what that advisory opinion is which is why i mean i called everything one of you personally, and told you what could possibly happen anyway in the scenario okay i talked to everybody personally

Carr: I called you.

Attorney: I called everybody and if you called me first whatever i talked to everybody personally, that fact is not going to change and we're undergoing a lot of risk by delaying and voting and delaying the vote

Carr: but you called us individually

Attorney: yes

Carr: individually

Attorney: yes that's, true

Carr: that's not a problem that's not that's not a walking quarum and you did not tell us that if we didn't that the town would be sued

Attorney: i told you yeah i told you what could possibly happen

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Carr: yeah but you didn't tell us that we would be sued you didn't tell us that we were expected to pass this, At least that's not the conversation you had with me. So if you had, I would've said something.

Attorney: What I said, and I guess since we're airing it out, what I said was I can't control what the business owner does, but they'll certainly have the right to do it. And what y'all's vote is is completely up to y'all. I think I've said that.

Carr: exactly, But that's not what text says.

Attorney: Right, and I'm not talking about the text.

Carr: What I'm saying is- But that's all we're talking about is Mr. Friday. That's the problem. Not the subdivision, but what he sent out to the Alderman trying to, basically trying to intimidate us. Telling us that if we don't pass this- That they're going to sue us.

Manning: And towns get sued all the time.

Attorney: I understand your concern. That's not what I'm saying. I'm trying to bring the focus back to the vote on the neighborhood and try to keep the town from getting sued. This issue here, if you send it away for an advisory committee, then we'll have to get their opinion back anyway. But this is not going to change the vote and the risk of the vote on the neighborhood itself. So delaying the vote could just create risk, and it's my job to take it up. Because y'all talked about tabling it, that creates risk. And we're just open up for the possibility of a lawsuit, but that's up to y'all. My job is to inform you, and that is what I've done this entire step, and that's what I'm doing now. So I would recommend legally going ahead and having the vote, because the advisory opinion is not going to change any legalities as far as the neighborhood vote is concerned. But obviously that's up to y'all.

Manning: This issue on the table, even if someone would have wanted to vote no, it has been an intimidation factor to the board with this communication. That's why I'm bringing this communication up. Even if we did vote no, then there are procedures around representation for the town. That would just be the situation we would find ourselves in. And that is something that you have to give this board the opportunity to make an informed decision based on their own merit, like this woman stated. And so this type of communication is what I'm deeply concerned about.

Mayor: Well, this communication. I did not tell anybody how to vote. If y'all would take time to listen, I'll read it to you right quick. On tonight's agenda, Resolution 13 of 2025, the approval of the Master Plan for Long Pine Subdivision, that the subdivision that you all turned down on Sibley Street or 162, if you've got some questions regarding the subdivision for approval to keep us from being sued, now tell me what that's telling you how to vote. We will be expected to pass this resolution if you have any questions concerning this. Feel free to call Mr. Nerren, our town attorney, or he has reached out to you regarding the subdivision, or if you'd like, you can call my office. Thank you and have a blessed day.

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Carr: So did you not just read that we will be expected to pass this resolution?

Mayor: Yes, your business. Yes. It's expensive to pay it. If you keep us from being sued, you'll be expected to pass the resolution. Because if he dots all his I's and crosses all his T's...

Manning: You don't know that.

Carr: Did you ask him?

Mayor: We had a conversation on the phone.

Chris Redford: Are we still open for public comment?

Carr: Mr. Friday, let me just say this.

Mayor: You can have public comment just a second.

Carr: Let me just say this. When you sent this text out, you might not have even meant it to be what it is.

Mayor: Well, that may be true.

Carr: Because, you know, sometimes I think you get a little bit confused yourself. But, I mean, it clearly says what it says.

Mayor: Okay, well, I've read it. Everybody's heard it. It's on record. So, let's... We've got somebody who wants to speak. Chris, you're on the record here.

Chris: 520 Lee Street, I would just like to say, as a taxpayer, tonight's decision is not going to cost anything. It's just letting them go to the next step. So you guys are supposed to be good stewards of our tax money. But Tiffany Manning just said, well, all towns get sued. Well, I'd rather not get sued if we can help it. You know, you guys are wanting to pay a raise later in the meeting, but maybe before we taxpayers decide you guys need more money, you need to be better stewards with our money. Tonight's vote will not cost the city of dime. And that's all that's at hand. The text messages are its own thing. But as someone who pays taxes, and I paid them this year, I paid them last year, I would like for you guys to make a decision because it's not going to cost a dime. It's not saying yes or no to this subdivision. It just lets him go to the next step. But don't sit here and ask us for pay raises if you're going to waste our money on a frivolous lawsuit that you can avoid right now.

Allie?: I'm also a taxpayer in Benton, and 25 years worth, and a business, and I've paid a lot of taxes that are way worse than this, so.

Mayor: All right, we have a roll call vote, please.

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Erin Roberts: On the topic of, you guys are saying you feel coerced, and from the public, who has no, oh, I'm sorry, Erin Roberts, 725th Street, be right in the, this neighborhood's going in my backyard. And regardless of the vote, I've sat here and listened to these ladies say they felt coerced, and then I watched three, four gentlemen get up here and then try to coerce them further by threatening just lawsuits and suing. So, regardless of whether you have or have or anything, I have no, like I said, if you want to go to the next stage and we can get that drainage report, great, but what these ladies are saying is they feel coerced, and then all you gentlemen did was then try to further coerce them in front of all of us.

Carr: Now, Mr. Redford, I don't even, I honestly, I don't, I don't even know you.

Chris: I don't know you either.

Carr: So, but what I'm saying is.

Chris: You don't need to talk, she's speaking. Thank you.

Manning: Can we get him removed?

Chris: No. She is speaking to me.

Attorney; Hold on, hold on. Exactly. She asked him a question.

Chris: Ms. Carr is speaking to me.

Manning: But he's talking to me.

Attorney; Okay, hold on. Ms. Carr, did you ask Mr. Redford a question?

Manning: And Mr. Redford is talking to me.

Attorney: Will you restate, please?

Carr: I haven't, I don't think I asked you yet, did I?

Chris: No, we're just talking, we established we don't know each other.

Carr: So, Mr. Redford, what I was saying is, I don't have a problem with that subdivision. I'm all for affordable housing, especially in my district, which is a minority district. But I just kind of take issue of you acting like I'm not a good steward. I do my job. The best that I can so

Chris: well, I'm not for or against the subdivision. I don't live there, but I'm for a property, but I'm saying that if we can avoid the lawsuit with just a vote tonight, that's not going to cost anything. I don't see the problem with letting him to a study and then come back when they see the study, we come up with a compromise.

Carr: I'm just one vote. My vote. I'm just one vote

Chris: I spoke to everybody. I think I looked at every single person

Carr: just because I said that I feel like that was that we should table it. Doesn't mean that Mrs Manning want to table it, Mrs Brunson, Mr. Lawrence. I'm just, I'm just one vote.

Chris: Mrs Manning mentions tabling it as well.

Carr: Okay, well.

Chris: Okay.

Carr: I'm not gonna speak for Miss Manning.

Chris: Well, I mean, I was here, I saw it.

Carr: Okay, so...

Chris: But I'm saying I don't have a problem with the subdivision on the wrong against it. I've been in their shoes. I didn't want that dollar store. My neighbors and I were right here, and thank God, the dollar store withdrew their application, so we didn't have to go this far. But I've been where they've been. And

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I've been to every meeting. I've been to every meeting where they're ... Well, every meeting does affect me, because I'm a taxpayer and I live in Benton. So I don't wait for something to happen in my front yard or backyard to come to a meeting. But my thing is, if we're going to table it, and it just gives this would-be or could-be lawsuit even more beef, then why? We can avoid a lawsuit, at least for tonight, by voting to go to the next step. That's all I'm saying. It's not a cover of my insurance. It's directly our money.

Carr: the only one talking about a lawsuit with the mayor. I didn't hear this gentleman threaten a lawsuit.

Chris: Okay, well, is the lawsuit not out there now? I mean, was I the only one that heard something about the lawsuit tonight? It's been established that there could be a suit. Mr. Nerren mentioned it. So I didn't pull that out of thin air. We could be sued.

Carr: Mr. Nerren only mentioned it because of the text. So if Mr. Friday would not have sent us this text, then we wouldn't be able to see it.

Chris: Look, when I was trying to get a subdivision, that other subdivision that was going on on the other side of Palmetto threatened to sue. Because Mayor Shelly came to my house. So it's common knowledge that, like you said, you're keeping this landowner from doing what he wants with it. So that's the lawsuit. I mean, you don't have to sit up here and have it brought out to you if I was a property owner. And once again, I don't have a dog in that plot of land. But I am a taxpayer of Benton, and I would like to see Benton grow. As I said last meeting, I'm tired of Bossier Parish getting all this money, and then we're just sitting here wishing we had it. You know, we're just giving it away, and if we do put down a data center, then we can use it.

Carr: I've been here for 25 years. I, too, would like to see our town grow. I would. But I'm also an alderman. So, sitting right here on this board, I like to do things that are proper and in order. That's it. I want it to be my decision. I don't want to feel like...

Chris: It should be your constituent's decision. No, you guys work for us.

Attorney: Hold on. Okay. We're getting probably to the end of your three minutes anyway.

Chris: Yeah, I know.

Attorney: Right? And I think we'll open or shut it down here, because I think everybody knows where your position is, and we can take your time. But we're going to cut it there at the end of three minutes. We'll move on. We've got one more public comment, or at least one more public comment.

Mark Crouch: Mark Crouch, 65 Old Plain Dealing Road, Benton, Louisiana, which is in the city limits of Benton. I think, and I'm just like Mr. Redford, I don't have a dog in this hunt because I live across the tracks, okay? I think what is going on right now, and I understand what Ms. Carr and Ms. Manning is talking about. I understand, I think, that the reason they want to table this is until they get a clarification on what Ms. Carr filed about this. And, I agree with Mr. Redford. All y'all, and I feel like I'm putting myself in y'all's shoes, and I feel like... that y'all have been threatened by the text message that the mayor sent to you and i feel like that y'all think since he sent that text message to y'all in a certain manner and it might not have been uh it might not have come across that away but i feel like y'all think that and i'm not defending nobody up here because i don't have a dog in this hunt i feel like that y'all. think by the mayor texting y'all that y'all feel like that he was more or less and i'm going to use the word threatened that y'all needed to vote for this, Okay, I think that's how y'all feel if I'm correct me if I'm wrong. I feel like that's how y'all feel, okay, and, All y'all are voting for and I understand these people that live over there if I live over there. I would be bringing up issues also just like if it was in the mayor's backyard or mr. Lawrence's back They would have questions and they would be concerned about it. Just like y'all, It's all y'all are

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voting on, Tonight is to y'all not voting to go ahead and start building this subdivision Y'all are voting to give this company the right and the authority. To move forward to the next stage that they've got to move forward to to get this thing going, that's all y'all are voting for tonight is to let these people and i don't know none of them i think, y'all need to give them the opportunity to move forward to the next step that's all you're voting for you're voting to give this company the authority to move to the next step nothing's going to happen because when they start the next step they are going to have to come up here before y'all and present everything they're going to have to present everything they've got to present the plat they're going to present everything to y'all

Attorney: on that note, you are passed your three minutes. Sum it up.

Ryan: you know that's all i got one more last quick comment uh procedural question from uh mr Nerren uh we are missing one um alderman here. So there's only four votes. I wanted to know if it's a two-two tie, what happens?

Attorney; Seems that's a resolution. Mayors break ties on any quorum votes. Ordinances operate a little differently, but it's a resolution, so mayors break ties.

Ryan: Thank you.

Carr: We can go on.

Manning: Mayor, i have a question.

Mayor: no. All right, we have had our public comment, we've had our counsel, we've had our motion and a second. It's time for roll call vote.

Stephanie Collier: Are we roll calling on approving the resolution or tabling?

Mayor: Yes. No.

Stephanie: approving?

Mayor: I don't know. We did not hear a, we did not have a resolution, with a second to table it. There was a motion to table it. All we had was somebody mentioned about table it, two people mentioned it, but nobody had a. A motion or a second for it?

Stephanie: So a motion and a second to approve the resolution.

Mayor: Yes.

Stephanie: Ms. Carr?

Carr: No

Stephanie: Ms. Manning?

Manning: No.

Stephanie: Ms. Brunson?

Brunson: Yes

Stephanie: Mr. Lawrence?

Lawrence: Yes.

Mayor: And the mayor votes yes. All right, moving on.

Manning: So with Ms. Brunson being one of the three that was coerced to change the vote.

Public-walking out: I agree with them. Corruption. Absolute corruption.

Manning: I, I don't. I don't.

David: I do have a comment on that.

Attorney: The public comment on this one's done.

Mayor: Yes.

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Attorney: Um, since the vote is done.

David: Well, I wanted to make a comment before y'all did the vote, but he said everybody talked. She seen me when I said I wanted to. It's the fact that they were all coerced into voting yes and your legal opinion was for them to still vote. That's all I have to say.

Manning: So, therefore, it brings me further to believe that this text message that was presented to us did have influence on a member's voting. I will make a word to the board of ethics.

Ryan Thank ya'll. Have a wonderful day.

David: Thank ya'll.

Mayor: I appreciate you. Go ahead and make a comment.

There being no other comments made, the following votes were recorded:

AYES: Alderman Brunson, Alderman Lawrence, Mayor Friday (tiebreaker)

NAYS: Alderman Carr, Alderman Manning

ABSENT: Alderman Perry

ABSTAIN: None

2. RESOLUTION 14 OF 2025:

A RESOLUTION TO AWARD THE CONTRACT FOR REMOVAL AND REPLACEMENT OF A 60" ARCHED LINE ON THE SOUTH SIDE OF SIMPSON STREET

WHEREAS, the Town of Benton, Bossier Parish, Louisiana by proper notice, solicited bids for construction of the 60" line, in accordance with Louisiana RS 38:2212;

WHEREAS proposals were submitted on October 27, 2025, and bids were received, according to law; and

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Board of Aldermen of the Town of Benton, Bossier Parish, Louisiana, in legal session convened, that it has considered all proposals and hereby awards the service contract to Pulley Construction for the amount of \$57,700.00.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board of Aldermen does hereby authorize the mayor to execute and administer said contract with Pulley Construction.

Upon a motion by Alderman Carr seconded by Alderman Lawrence, this resolution was adopted on the 12th day of January 2026. There being no public comments, the following votes were recorded:

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Alderman Perry

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ABSTAIN: None

3. RESOLUTION 15 OF 2025:

A RESOLUTION TO AWARD THE CONTRACT FOR THE WASTEWATER COLLECTION SYSTEM IMPROVEMENTS PROJECT

WHEREAS, the Town of Benton, Bossier Parish, Louisiana by proper notice, solicited bids for construction of the wastewater collection system improvement project, in accordance with Louisiana R.S. 38:2212; and

WHEREAS bids were opened and tabulated according to the Louisiana Public Bid Law in October 2025. A letter of recommendation from Balar Engineers for the contract be awarded to ASB Utilities; and

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Board of Aldermen of the Town of Benton, Bossier Parish, Louisiana, in legal session convened, that it has considered all proposals does hereby award the contract for the Wastewater Collection System project to ASB Utilities for \$2,770,796.00.

Upon a motion by Alderman Lawrence seconded by Alderman Carr, this resolution was adopted on the 12th day of January 2026. There being **comments annotated below**, the following votes were recorded:

Manning: That's like this text message you just sent out that we just discussed. For you to tell us this is already approved without giving us the opportunity to vote on it is is again out of order.

Mayor: so, noted.

Manning: Thank you.

Mayor: Alright, moving right along. Do we have any other comments from the council? Any other comments?

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Alderman Perry

ABSTAIN: None

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4. RESOLUTION 16 OF 2025:

A RESOLUTION TO AWARD THE CONTRACT FOR THE WASTEWATER TREATMENT PLANT IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

WHEREAS, the Town of Benton, Bossier Parish, Louisiana by proper notice, solicited bids for construction of the wastewater treatment plant improvement project, in accordance with Louisiana R.S. 38:2212; and

WHEREAS bids were opened and tabulated according to the Louisiana Public Bid Law in October 2025. A letter of recommendation from Balar Engineers for the contract be awarded to Dixie Overland Construction LLC; and

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Board of Aldermen of the Town of Benton, Bossier Parish, Louisiana, in legal session convened, that it has considered all proposals does hereby award the contract for the Wastewater Treatment Plant Improvement project to Dixie Overland Construction LLC for \$4,092,000.00; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board of Aldermen does hereby authorize the mayor to execute and administer said contract with Dixie Overland Construction LLC.

Upon a motion by Alderman Carr seconded by Alderman Lawrence, this resolution was adopted on the 12th day of January 2026. There being no public comments, the following votes were recorded:

Carr: Yea, Mr. Friday. What exactly is this wastewater about?

Mayor: Jim, If you would, you could explain it better than I could. This is our engineer.

Jim: Thank you, Mrs. Carr. This is a project to basically run a pipeline from the Palmetto plant to the plant on the west side of town. All the sewer will come to that plant and be discharged into the Red River. The town applied for \$5.6M and got that money. \$5.6M about a year ago. It was designed and advertised for bids. It was over \$5.6M and we worked with the contractors, the two lowest bidders to come up with some ideas to save money. We were able to pull it back into budget. The town will have one less sewer plant to worry about. Hopefully it'll save some money and hopefully it'll be a good thing.

Carr: Okay, thank you.

Manning: Thank you for bringing that back to our remembrance.

Mayor: any other council comments?

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Alderman Perry

ABSTAIN: None

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5. Approve Audit firm proposals for the 2025 Legislative audit.

Alderman Manning questioned the mayor as to why the council had not been informed of the auditors resignation. Mayor stated that vendors come and go all the time and did not feel it was necessary to bring it to the council at the time the letter was sent. Alderman Carr asked if they were included in the correspondence, and her and Manning asked for a copy of the letter be provided to the council. Stephanie Collier explained that in their packets there are three proposals. Alderman Carr asked what their credentials. Stephanie explained that the Legislative Auditor's website lists certified auditors. I accessed the list and called all the auditors in the Bossier-Shreveport area. There were some who were not taking new clients and these three are the only ones who sent proposals. Two of the proposals are very in depth due to they offer services outside of the auditing services and the third proposal was the lowest bid and no other services were offered. signed. Mayor Friday responded that they had a conflict in scheduling and had to reduce their client list. The Mayor stated that the lowest bid belongs to Judy Monclief CPA and if the council agree I need a motion and second to award the contract to the lowest bidder.

A motion by Alderman Carr seconded by Alderman Lawrence to approve Judy Moncleif CPA firm to do the 2025 Audit: Mayor Friday called for any other comments: There being none the following votes were recorded.

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

AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND ORDINANCE 613 OF 2025 AMENDING THE 2026 GENERAL FUND, WATER SEWER ENTERPRISE, AND 1978 SALES TAX FUND BUDGETS

Upon a motion by Alderman Carr seconded by Alderman Brunson, this resolution was adopted on the 12th day of January 2026 by the following votes: There being no public comments, the following votes were recorded:

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

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6. Ordinance 616 of 2026: Introduce and set for public hearing

Manning: Yes, um. The ordinance that I had are individualized and that's how I want to present them.

Carr: Stephanie? Stephanie?

Manning: and that's it.

Carr: um, when its talking about something to doing something with the budget, can you explain that to me, please.

Stephanie: I'm sorry. What?

Carr: Um, when its talking about something about the budget, can you explain that to me, please?

Stephanie: She had wrote all these as individual ordinances. Usually when we amend General Fund, its in one ordinance. If there are parts of it that you don't agree with, amend it out. But its always been in one ordinance.

Mayor: any other questions?

Manning: oh, I made my statement. These...I want these in individual ordinance. Cause this is what I presented. So, don't change the ordinance.

Stephanie: well, they are all in one ordinance. If you want to amend some of them out of the ordinance...

Manning: That's not how I presented it.

Stephanie: it doesn't matter how its presented. It's how its suppose to be done.

Mayor: we are setting this for a public hearing. We can discuss it in public hearing.

Manning: Chance. Umm, Mr. Chance, can these individualized? I know we talked and um, I would like for them to be indivisualized.

Attorney: Can they? I'd have to look. I know most of the time a lot of your budget changes are done in the same ordinance. Which is what Mrs. Stephanie is talking about but I will look to see if the legality of it...um, but I don't know the answer off the top of my head.

Manning: Oh. Well when you and I talked, you told me that it should be individualized because it will...it may reject the whole...all of them. That's the reason why I put them individually instead of putting them together in one ordinance. I went based on your advisement.

Attorney: (in audible) But I'm sorry if you were confused. Uh, What I was talking about was significant changes to the budget made for check in the original budget. We are passed that now. I'm sorry if I confused you. I don't remember saying it. But I can look it up and see and get you a clear answer on this specific issue.

Manning: okay.

Attorney: uh, but like I said I...

Manning: before the next meeting? Because...

Attorney: yea, I mean I can probably do it this week.

Manning: Okay. i was just wondering.

Attorney: It's uh...I'm sure it's a quick question to answer. I just don't know it off it top of my head.

Manning: okay. Yeah. That's fine. I just want to make sure. I'm not saying that you are wrong Stephanie or anything of that nature. I was asking...

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Stephanie: (in audible) they can't all be the same number. They'll be different number ordinances. That will each need to be submitted for public hearing.

Attorney: unless you amend them. I'll look and see what the procedure is. I don't want to say something here and let's make a decision based on it and it be wrong and have to redo it. But I can find the answers to those questions probably some time this week.

Mayor: alright. We have a motion and second already. We didn't have public comments and council (in audible) if so, we'll have a roll call vote.

Manning: Just to make clear. Stephanie, so you didn't say...so, just so I understanding for me. Take out or youre saying take out the one that... one of them or any of them that we're not wanting to collborant.

Stephanie: (in audible) you can amend it out just like we amended ordinance before that we are voting on. Um, but if parts of it still goes through then those will remain in there...

Manning: Okay.

Stephanie: but as whole. But if you want to individualize each one of these as its own ordinance because of...I don't know whatever reason you would want to do that but then mostly likely..I know he said he would check on it but they'll have to be resubmitted as individually numbered ordinances amending the General Fund.

Manning: Okay. And so I think one of the reason why it wasn't submitted is because we...well...the board...council...the...rejected the amendment to have these discussed. So now...

Stephanie: You have them individually listed in different ordinances but (in audible) the budget itself. You can't do that.

Mannig: oh, I get that. I'm just saying...

Stephanie: So, those weren't...so, (in audible) never seen ordinance individually submitted. Its always been gathered.

Manning: I understand

Stephanie: that's the way its always been.

Manning: I understand what you're saying. I clearly get that. Thank you again for explaining. But what I was saying is that these were not presented because it was rejected. At the last minute to be on...

Stephanie: No.

Attorney: you tried to amend the agenda, right? And she was trying to put on and it was shot down. So its being introduced today, right? You submitted them for reintroduction and this is where we are.

Stephanie: (in audible) submitted to this meeting (inaudible)

Manning: No, I did not. No, I did not.

Attorney: You wanted both of them?

Manning: individually. When you get your research then yea, I do want them introduced.

Attorney: so, you do want them introduced like this?

Manning: correct. That's what we had talked about. When you do your research and get back with us. Then we'll be able to.

Attorney: okay.

Manning: because I know I didn't. we did not even...once um it was voted down, we moved onto the next (inaudible)

Mayor: unanimous decision.

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Manning: exactly. He he know.

Stephanie: but you did (inaudible) in your recording that council meeting.

Manning: I don't know. That's why we need to minutes verbatim. So, we know next time. But thank you. I got it. And I... We'll be waiting on Chance's umm...

Mayor: Alright, so we're going to set this for public hearing so we need a roll call vote, please.

AN ORDINANCE OF THE BOARD OF ALDERMEN OF THE TOWN OF BENTON ESTABLISHING THE SALARIES OF MUNICIPAL OFFICERS

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;

WHEREAS the Board of Aldermen for the Town of Benton desires to establish the annual salaries for the Mayor, Aldermen, and the Chief of Police;

BE IT ORDAINED by the Board of Aldermen for the Town of Benton, Louisiana:

SECTION 1. The Mayor of the Town of Benton, serving as a "full-time" Mayor and holding no outside employment, having been paid \$40,000.00, shall be increased to \$47,060.00 annually.

SECTION 2. The Aldermen of the Town of Benton, each having been paid \$5,100.00, shall be increased to \$6,000.00 annually.

SECTION 3. The Chief of Police of the Town of Benton, having been paid \$58,240.00, shall be increased to \$62,400.00 annually.

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED that if any provision or item of this Ordinance or the application thereof is held invalid, such invalidity shall not affect other provisions, items, or applications of this Ordinance which can be given effect without the invalid provisions, items, or applications, and to this end, the provisions of this Ordinance are hereby declared severable.

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

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Upon a motion by Alderman Carr seconded by Alderman Manning, this resolution was adopted on the 12th day of January 2026 by the following votes: There being comments made above, the following votes were recorded:

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

7. November 2025 and December 2025 Financials Month-to-Date budget.

Upon a motion by Alderman Carr seconded by Alderman Lawrence, this resolution was adopted on the 12th day of January 2026 by the following votes: There being no public comments, the following votes were recorded:

Manning: I sent an email to uhh Stephanie this evening. If you weren't able to get that, can you get that to me tomorrow.

Stephanie: (inaudible)

Manning: Oh, I requested some information. Umm, Shannon Hammond. Can we get her contract?

Mayor: who?

Manning: Shannon Hammond

Mayor: yea

Manning: Okay. And do you know what day she worked, Mayor?

Stephanie: Tuesdays and Thursdays.

Mayor: thats correct.

Manning: Tuesdays and Thursdays. Okay.

Stephanie: she worked eight hours both of those days.

Manning: like is it from 8 to 12? Or...or its random?

Mayor: 8-5

Manning: 8-5? She work 8-5?

Stephanie: 8-12? She works 8 hours.

Manning: oh. Oh okay. 8-5. Thank you.

Mayor: any other questions on the expenditures? I mean the financials. There are none. Roll call vote please.

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

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ADJOURNMENT

Upon a motion by Alderman Carr seconded by Alderman Lawrence to adjourn the meeting on the 12th day of January 2026 by the following votes: There being no public comments, the following votes were recorded:

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

**POSTED BY _____ AT 105 SIBLEY STREET, BENTON,
LA @12:00p ON January 7, 2026**

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