



**MINUTES
TOWN OF BENTON
MAYOR AND BOARD OF ALDERMEN
105 SIBLEY STREET
BENTON, LOUISIANA
MONDAY, OCTOBER 13, 2025, 6:30 PM**

The Town of Benton met in a regular legal session on the 13th day of October 2025 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. Alderman Carr gave the invocation, and Alderman Lawrence led the Pledge of Allegiance. Deborah Rios called the roll with all members as follows:

Alderman Jackie Carr	PRESENT
Alderman Tiffany Manning	ABSENT (Came in 15 minutes after the roll was called)
Alderman Tammy Brunson	PRESENT
Alderman Arshundae Perry	ABSENT (Came in 15 minutes after the roll was called)
Alderman Terry Lawrence	PRESENT

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

MINUTES APPROVAL:

A motion was made by Alderman Carr, seconded by Alderman Lawrence to approve the August 26th 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: None
ABSENT: Alderman Manning, Alderman Perry
ABSENT: None

A motion was made by Alderman Carr, seconded by Alderman Brunson to approve the September 8th Regular meeting minutes. Mayor Friday called for public comments. There being none, the following votes were recorded:

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

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A motion was made by Alderman Carr, seconded by Alderman Lawrence to approve the September 15th Workshop Minutes. Mayor Friday called for public comments. There being none, the following votes were recorded:

AYES: Alderman Carr, Alderman Brunson, Alderman Lawrence

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Alderman Manning, Alderman Perry

ABSTAIN: None

APPOINTMENT OF TOWN ATTORNEY

Mayor Friday introduced Attorney Chance Nerren as his recommendation for the Town Attorney. Alderman Carr inquired about Attorney Nerren's background with municipalities. He gave a brief history of his time as Attorney for Cullen and is now an active Attorney for Springhill, LA. Alderman Lawrence asked if his meeting in Springhill would be a conflict with Benton's meetings. Attorney Nerren noted that there are no conflicts with meeting times. Alderman Carr asked whether Attorney Nerren understood that, if appointed, he would be representing the town, not any individual. Attorney Nerren, yes. He clarified that the Attorney's role is that of a mediator and advisor. Alderman Manning asked if Attorney Nerren had worked for other municipalities. And he stated yes, for Cullen and now Springhill, LA.

A motion was made by Alderman Carr, seconded by Alderman Lawrence to approve Attorney Chance Nerren as Town Attorney. Mayor called for public Comments. No comments having been made on the following votes were recorded.

Ayes: Alderman Carr, Alderman Brunson, and Alderman Lawrence

Nays: Alderman Manning

Absent: None

Abstain: Alderman Perry

OLD BUSINESS:

RESOLUTION 10 OF 2025

A RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE WATER SYSTEM IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

WHEREAS, the Board of Aldermen of the Town of Benton, Bossier Parish, Louisiana,

desires to improve the water system to provide better service of water to customers; and

WHEREAS the project consists of tower read equipment, smart read meters for continuously monitoring usage, analyzing flow data, and early detection of irregularities, software upgrades will allow customers to monitor consumption in real-time; and

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WHEREAS the smart meters and register changes will be on an as-needed basis.

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 the needs for service improvements to the Benton water system and does hereby approve the water system improvement project.

A motion by Alderman Manning seconded by Alderman Carr to approve Resolution 10 of 2025. Mayor Friday called for Public Comments:

Alderman Carr stated that she could not support this project at this time because it had not been budgeted for in 2025. She also stated that during her time as Alderman that the town has updated the system and felt like due to the cost. She felt that this could be implemented later on and when it is budgeted. Alderman Manning asked what fund this project would come out of. The mayor couldn't answer at that time. Ms Neal asked for clarity on the project. A representative of Core and Main spoke to the council to explain that there are meters that have to be changed regardless of the project being approved, so that is going to be an expense incurred by the town either way. The core project consists of the tower and the equipment on the tower. He explained how the current system only reads one time per month and the upgrade would read three time per day which will help catch leaks earlier and allow customers to monitor their consumption. Alderman Carr stated that it has not been budgeted for in 2025 and feels that if the town is losing money and we have to raise water rates then we should not be spending the money for this project. Mr. Mark Crouch stated that because the mayor could not say where the money was coming from that he felt no one should vote for this project. Mayor called for any other comments: There being none the following votes were recorded:

Ayes: None

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

Absent: None

Abstain: None

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ORDINANCE 609 OF 2025:

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING ORDINANCE 590 OF 2024 TO INCREASE THE RATES FOR WATER SERVICE INSIDE AND OUTSIDE OF THE TOWN OF BENTON

BE IT ORDAINED BY the board of aldermen of the Town of Benton, Bossier Parish, Louisiana, in a regular session convened, that Ordinance 590 of 2024 be hereby amended to increase the rate for water service as follows:

WHEREAS the rate schedule for residential water service inside the corporate limits of Benton shall be increased from six dollars and eighty-nine cents (\$6.89) to seven dollars and eighty-nine cents (\$7.89) per 1000 gallons, and the flat fee will remain at eight dollars and seventy-five cents (\$8.75), and

WHEREAS the rate schedule for compound meters and commercial water service inside the corporate limits of Benton shall be increased from six dollars and eighty-nine cents (\$6.89) to seven dollars and eighty-nine cents (\$7.89) for every 1000 gallons, and the flat fee will remain at nine dollars and zero cents (\$9.00), and

WHEREAS the rate schedule for residential water service outside the corporate limits of Benton shall be increased from seven dollars and sixty cents (\$7.60) to eight dollars and sixty cents (\$8.60) for every 1000 gallons, and the flat rate will remain at fourteen dollars and fifty cents (\$14.50), and

WHEREAS the rate schedule for compound meters and commercial water service outside the corporate limits of Benton shall be increased from seven dollars and sixty cents (\$7.60) to eight dollars and sixty cents (\$8.60) per 1000 gallons, and the flat rate will remain at fourteen dollars and seventy-five cents (\$14.75), and

BE IT FURTHER ORDAINED this Ordinance, having been read in full in legal session, and considered section by section, was introduced on July 14th and set for a public hearing by Alderman Perry, seconded by Alderman Carr. On August 11 a motion by Alderman Carr and seconded by Alderman Manning to table until a work session is scheduled. A work session was held on August 26, and a second on September 15.

A motion was made by Alderman Lawrence and seconded by Alderman Manning to adopt Ordinance 609 of 2025. Mayor called for public comments: Alderman Carr stated that she has a problem with the increase because the Town just purchased a new police truck and she feels that a lot of money. Alderman Manning wanted her constituents to know that she opposes this increase. The Mayor called for any other comments. There being none, the following vote was recorded:

Ayes: Alderman Brunson, Alderman Perry, and Alderman Lawrence

Nays: Alderman Carr, and Alderman Manning

Absent: None

Abstain: None

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NEW BUSINESS:

1. RESOLUTION 11 OF 2025:

The following resolution was offered by Alderman Carr and seconded by Alderman Lawrence:

RESOLUTION 11 of 2025

A resolution providing for canvassing the returns and declaring the results of the special election held in the Town of Benton, State of Louisiana, on Saturday, March 29, 2025, to authorize the renewal of a special tax therein.

BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor and Board of Aldermen of the Town of Benton, State of Louisiana (the "Governing Authority"), acting as the governing authority of the Town of Benton, State of Louisiana (the "Town"), that:

SECTION 1. Canvass. This Governing Authority does now proceed in open and public session to examine the official tabulations of votes cast at the special election held in the Town of Benton, State of Louisiana, on Saturday, March 29, 2025, to authorize the renewal of a special tax therein, and said Governing Authority does further proceed to examine and canvass the returns and declare the result of the special election.

SECTION 2. Election Results. According to the official certified tabulation of votes cast at said Election, there was a total of **101** votes cast **IN FAVOR OF** the Proposition and a total of **104** votes cast **AGAINST** the Proposition, resulting in a majority of **3** votes cast **AGAINST** the Proposition. The Proposition was therefore duly **DEFEATED** by a majority of the votes cast by the qualified electors voting at the Election.

SECTION 3. Promulgation of Election Result. The results of said election shall be promulgated by publication in the manner provided by law, after receipt from the Secretary of State's office of the actual costs of the election, as required by §18:1292 of the Louisiana Revised Statutes of 1950, as amended.

SECTION 4. Declaration. The foregoing results of the Election are hereby declared by this Governing Authority and shall be published as required by law.

SECTION 5. Procès Verbal. A *Procès Verbal* of the canvass of the returns of said election shall be made and a certified copy thereof shall be forwarded to the Secretary of State, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, who shall record the same in her office; another certified copy thereof shall be forwarded to the Clerk of Court and *Ex-Officio* Recorder of Mortgages in and for the Parish of Bossier, who shall record the same in the Mortgage Records of said Parish. Another copy thereof shall be retained in the archives of this Governing Authority.

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Mayor Called for public comments: Ms. Neal asked for clarity on what this resolution is for. Attorney Nerren explained that the elections have to be certified and that the results have to be sent to the state. Alderman Manning inquired about the day after the election and the certification. Attorney Nerren that the election has to be certified. I will look into the specifics.

This resolution, having been submitted to a vote, the vote thereon was as follows:

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

ABSTAIN: None

And the resolution was declared adopted on this, the 13th day of October, 2025.

PROCÈS VERBAL OF THE CANVASS OF THE VOTES CAST AT THE SPECIAL ELECTION HELD
IN THE TOWN OF BENTON, STATE OF LOUISIANA, ON SATURDAY, MARCH 29, 2025.

BE IT KNOWN AND REMEMBERED that on Monday, October 13, 2025, at 6:00 p.m., at its regular meeting place, the Town Hall, 105 Sibley Street, Benton, Louisiana, the Mayor and Board of Aldermen of the Town of Benton, State of Louisiana (the "Governing Authority"), acting as the governing authority of Town of Benton, State of Louisiana (the "Town"), and being the authority ordering the special election held therein on Saturday, March 29, 2025, with a quorum being present, did examine the official certified tabulations of votes cast at the said election, and did examine and canvass the returns of said election, there having been submitted at said election the following proposition to wit:

PROPOSITION
(MILLAGE RENEWAL)

Shall the Town of Benton, State of Louisiana (the "Town"), continue to levy and collect a special tax of 4.90 mills on all property subject to taxation in the Town (an estimated \$94,700 reasonably expected at this time to be collected from the levy of the tax for an entire year), for a period of 10 years, beginning with the year 2026 and ending with the year 2035, for the purpose of maintaining the streets of the Town?

There was found by said count and canvass that there was a total of **101** votes cast **IN FAVOR OF** the Proposition and a total of **104** votes cast **AGAINST** the Proposition, as hereinabove set forth, and it was further found and determined that there was a majority of **3** votes cast **AGAINST** the Proposition as hereinabove set forth.

Therefore, the Governing Authority did declare and proclaim and does hereby declare and proclaim in open and public session that the Proposition as hereinabove set forth was duly **DEFEATED** by a majority of the votes cast by the qualified electors voting at the said special election.

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Results by precinct are available from the Clerk of this Governing Authority during regular business hours or via the Louisiana Secretary of State's website (voterportal.sos.la.gov).

RESOLUTION 12 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 October 8, 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.

A motion was made by Alderman Carr, seconded by Alderman Perry to approve Resolution 12 2025. Mayor called for public Comments.

Ryan Estess with Raley and Associates to update everyone on this development. This was approved by MPC and this is the Master Plat and it is a 32 lot subdivision. The amenities include a walking trail, parking area, concrete streets, and a play area. This development is not going to generate any additional traffic and that was confirmed by DOTD. Alderman Carr asked what the average size of the homes is. Mr. Estess stated that they are going to be three-bedroom homes. Alderman asked about the school bus stop and where will that be located. Mr. Raley stated that it will be on Hwy 162 and that he confirmed it with the Bossier Parish School Board transportation department. He stated that the School stated that they do not go into the subdivision at all and that the bus stop will be located on HWY 162. Sidewalks will be 4 ft wide which is standard. The standard lot have five foot side yards which is standard to the Benton zoning code. He also stated that he will submit a drainage study when the time comes. Alderman Manning has an problem with the fact that children will be made to wait and be picked up on a very busy highway. Mr. Troy Keith who lives on Fifth street (Hwy 162) and is concerned that the run off of this development will make a drainage problem that is already bad. He stated that his property stays wet and has issues with drainage now. Mr. Roberts has a problem with the sewer that already has a cracked line and there is water standing in ditches. He stated that is the same line that the entire subdivision would be connected to the same sewer line and that needs to be looked into. Ryan stated that the sewer line will be evaluated and that if there is a problem that the manhole may need to be checked out. Mr. Estess stated that Mr.

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Russel is the property owner. Shelly stated that her daughter goes to Legendary and she feels it is safe for children to wait at a bus stop on Hwy 162. Chris Redford stated that he thinks that this is something that the Town needs more rooftops. as it will increase property values and hopefully it will bring in some more business. Alderman Manning stated that you don't live in this area. Mr. Redford stated that it does not matter he lives in the same district and lives in this town and it effects everyone. He asked council to vote to approve of this development. Alderman Perry asked about the drainage system that is being discussed. Is it a Town of Benton thing or Core and Main. Alderman Perry stated that the Town is responsible for the drainage and checking into the sewer line and asked the mayor when that can be looked at. Mr. Estess stated that these are common maintenance problems and can be addressed by town maintenance. Mr. Croch asked to see the traffic study. Mr. Estess stated that the state did not require a traffic study. Mr. Keith discussed the traffic problem as it is now. We don't need any more cars adding to the current issue. Alderman Manning (inaudible). Mr. Coch asked the town council to look at this. Mayor called for additional comments. No other comments having been made on the following votes were recorded.

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

Mark Waniewski, President of PMI Resources:

Mr. Waniewski spoke to the council members that PMI is currently conducting a forensic audit on the financials. He proceeded with the following report:

- The 1978 sales tax fund has not been reconciled since February 2025 and had been reconciled in an excel spreadsheet outside of the system.
- The 1989 sales tax fund has not been reconciled since February 2025 and had been reconciled in an excel spreadsheet outside of the system
- The 1998 sales tax fund has not been reconciled since February 2025 and had been reconciled in an excel spreadsheet outside of the system
- The Payroll account has not been reconciled since February 2025
- The Benton MPC had not been reconciled since February 2025

Basically, none of the accounts have been reconciled since February and some accounts have never been reconciled. Alderman Manning asked for a copy. Mr. Waniewski stated he will provide the mayor a copy and then he can distribute it accordingly. Mayor asked why had the auditors not picked up on this. Audit journal entries to close out the year 2024 have not been posted to the general ledger to close out 2024 audit. Alderman Manning asked who's responsibility is it to do the reconciliations. Mr. Waniewski stated the former bookkeeper. After some discussion Mr. Waniewski stated that him and his team is working to catch up the

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accounts but has to get a starting point of good numbers. There are accounts that go back years and years that have outstanding checks and we will work to clear those off your books. We will keep the council updated as we move forward.

Month-to-date financials (AUGUST & SEPTEMBER):

A motion was made by Alderman Lawrence, seconded by Alderman Manning to consider approval of the August Month-to-date financials.

Public Comments: Alderman Carr stated that Sarch Technologies is the Chief of Police's step mother and asked Attorney Nerren if he can look into the legality of that. Attorney Nerren stated that he will.

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

NAYS: Alderman Manning

ABSENT: None

ABSTAIN: None

A motion was made by Alderman Lawrence, seconded by Alderman Carr to consider approval of the September Month-to-date financials. Public Comments: There being none, the following votes were recorded:

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

NAYS: None

ABESNT: None

ABSTAIN: None

ADJOURN THE REGULAR SESSION

A motion was made by Alderman Carr, seconded by Alderman Brunson to adjourn the meeting.

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

ABSTAIN: None

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