



## TOWN OF BENTON

### REGULAR SESSION MINUTES MAYOR AND BOARD OF ALDERMAN 105 SIBLEY ST., BENTON, LA MONDAY, MAY 11, 2026, 6:30 PM

The Town of Benton met in a regular legal session on the 11<sup>th</sup> day of May 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. Alderman Perry gave the invocation, and Alderman Manning led the Pledge of Allegiance. Debbie Rios called the roll with all members as follows;

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

Others present were Chief Collier, Deputy Chief Bates, Assistant Chief Weaver, Attorney Joel Murphy, and members of the public.

#### APPROVE MINUTES APRIL MEETING:

A motion was made by Alderman Carr and seconded by Alderman Lawrence to approve the minutes for the April 13<sup>th</sup> meeting. Mayor Friday called for any council or public comments. Manning commented:

Mayor Friday again called for any council or public comments. There being none, the following votes were recorded:

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

#### REGULAR SESSION AGENDA APPROVAL:

A motion was made by Alderman Carr and seconded by Alderman Perry to approve the regular session agenda. Mayor Friday called for any council or public comments. There being none, the following votes were recorded:

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

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## TOWN OF BENTON

OLD BUSINESS:

Mayor Friday asked Debbie Rios to read all the following ordinances and resolutions aloud for the record.

ORDINANCE 626 OF 2025 Vetoed 04/13/26/ Alderman Perry resubmission for consideration of an override.

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING ORDINANCE 542 OF 2016 SETTING THE SALARY OF THE CHIEF OF POLICE OF THE TOWN OF BENTON, LOUISIANA, FIXING THE ANNUAL SALARY AT \$62,400.00, AND REPEALING ALL ORDINANCES IN CONFLICT HEREWITH.

WHEREAS, the Town of Benton, Louisiana operates as a Lawrason Act municipality governed by the provisions of Louisiana Revised Statutes Title 33; and  
WHEREAS La. R.S. 33:404.1 grants the Board of Aldermen the authority to fix the compensation of municipal officers by ordinance; and  
WHEREAS the current annual compensation for the Chief of Police is \$58,240.00; and  
WHEREAS, the Board of Aldermen has determined that an adjustment in compensation is necessary to adequately reflect the time, duties, and responsibilities required of the office; and  
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED by the Mayor and Board of Aldermen of the Town of Benton, Louisiana, in legal session convened, that:  
SECTION 1. The annual compensation for the chief of police is hereby fixed at the sum of Sixty-two thousand, four hundred dollars and no/100 (\$62,400.00) per year.  
SECTION 2. This salary increase shall be effective upon adoption of this Ordinance and upon the Town's appropriation of sufficient funds in the Town's annual budget.

Mayor Friday asked for council comments. There being none, Alderman Lawrence made a motion and Alderman Perry seconded to approve Ordinance 626 of 2026. Mayor called for public comments.  
Mayor explained that Mrs. Perry requested a vote for override.

There being none, the following votes were recorded:

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

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## TOWN OF BENTON

### NEW BUSINESS:

RESOLUTION 3 OF 2026: Consider approval of the Preliminary Plat and the Final Plat on B&R Subdivision. Ryan Estess with Railey & Associates

WHEREAS, the Benton-Parish Metropolitan Planning Commission (the "MPC") conducted a public hearing on April 2, 2026, approving the application made by Bryant Boyd Emergency Medicine, LLC., to approve the Preliminary Plat and the Final Plat of B&R Subdivision, being 0.999 acres more or less, located in Section 29, Township 20 North, Range 13 West of the Louisiana Prime Meridian, Northwestern Land District, Benton, Bossier Parish, Louisiana; and

WHEREAS the B& R Subdivision Preliminary Plat and the Final Plat were approved under the Benton MPC regulations and procedures, and the MPC 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, that the Preliminary Plat and the Final Plat of B&R Subdivision are hereby approved, subject to the Town of Benton renovating the drainage ditch.

Mayor Friday asked for council comments. There being none, a motion was made by Alderman Perry and seconded by Alderman Carr to approve Resolution 3 of 2026. The mayor asked for public comments, and Mr. Barnett approached the podium. He said he did not disagree with progress, but he felt the space was too small for three houses. He also expressed concerns that the ditch could cause problems for the homeowners in the future. Manning questioned the mayor about what the problem is with the ditch. The mayor stated that he and the town engineer walked the entire length of the ditch, and we have a plan to resolve any problems. The mayor asked if there were any other public comments. There being none, the following votes were recorded:

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

ABSTAIN: None

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## TOWN OF BENTON

ORDINANCE 627 OF 2026: Presented by Alderman Perry  
Consider the introduction and setting for the public hearing on June 8, 2026

### AN ORDINANCE AMENDING ORDINANCE 625 OF 2026 ESTABLISHING THE SALARY OF THE BOARD OF ALDERMEN

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

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

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

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

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED by the Board of Aldermen of the Town of Benton, in legal and regular session, acting as the "Governing Authority" of the Town of Benton, after a public hearing with legal notice, adopt said ordinance as outlined herein.

BE IT ORDAINED by the Board of Aldermen for the Town of Benton, Louisiana shall be paid a monthly salary of \$550.00

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

Mayor Friday called for council comments. Manning stated that Mrs. Perry voted to approve the first ordinance approving the council's pay, and an elected official's pay cannot be decreased. Attorney Murphy stated that, regardless of whether the ordinance passes, if the funds are not in the budget, the council will be paid the same amount until the budget is amended. The mayor called the meeting to order and stated to move on. A motion was made by Alderman Lawrence and seconded by Alderman Brunson to introduce and set for public hearing on June 8, 2026, Ordinance 627 of 2026. The mayor called for public comments. There being none, the following votes were recorded:

YEAS: Alderman Brunson, Alderman Perry, Alderman Lawrence

NAYS: Alderman Carr, Alderman Manning

ABSENT: None

ABSTAIN: None

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## TOWN OF BENTON

ORDINANCE 628 OF 2026: Town Seal – Consider introduction and set for public hearing on June 8, 2026.

### AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE BENTON CODE CHAPTER 2. ARTICLE 1. ADDING SECTION 2.8

WHEREAS the Town of Benton code is hereby CHAPTER 2. ADMINISTRATIVE, ARTICLE 1. IN GENERAL, adding SECTION 2.8, UNLAWFUL USE OF THE TOWN OF BENTON SEAL shall read as follows:

WHEREAS the Town Seal of Benton is an official symbol representing the authority, identity, and integrity of the Town government; and

WHEREAS, unauthorized use of the Town Seal may mislead the public, imply official approval where none exists, or undermine public trust;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED by the Town Council of the Town of Benton:

#### Section 1. Purpose

The purpose of this ordinance is to protect the official Town Seal from unauthorized use and to ensure that it is used only for legitimate governmental purposes.

#### Section 2. Definition

For the purposes of this ordinance, the term “Town Seal” shall mean the official seal, emblem, logo, or insignia adopted by the Town of Benton for official municipal use.

#### Section 3. Authorized Use

The Town Seal may be used only:

1. On official communications, documents, records, notices, and publications issued by the Town of Benton; and
2. By duly elected or appointed Town officials, employees, or agents acting within the scope of their official duties; and
3. For purposes directly related to official Town business.

#### Section 4. Prohibited Use

It shall be unlawful for any person, business, organization, or entity to:

1. Use, reproduce, display, alter, or distribute the Town Seal without express authorization from the Town of Benton;
2. Use the Town Seal for personal, commercial, political, or promotional purposes;
3. Use the Town Seal in any manner that implies official Town sponsorship, endorsement, or approval when none exists.

#### Section 5. Enforcement and Penalties

Any person found to be in violation of this ordinance shall be subject to a fine of \$250.00 for the first offense and \$500.00 for each additional offense thereafter. Person(s) in violation will have three (3) days to remove the seal, and each day of unauthorized use thereafter shall constitute a separate offense.

#### Section 6. Severability

If any section, subsection, or provision of this ordinance is held invalid, such invalidity shall not affect the remaining provisions, which shall continue in full force and effect.

#### Section 7. Effective Date

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## TOWN OF BENTON

This ordinance shall take effect immediately upon adoption.

Mayor Friday call for council comments. There being none, a motion was made by Alderman Carr and seconded by Alderman Lawrence to introduce Ordinance 628 and set for public hearing June 8, 2026. The Mayor explained that there are people out there using our seal to impersonate the Town. Mayor called for public comments. Rex Moncrief states the town will have a problem with the First Amendment right. Steve Stewart, is it lawful for the town council to use that in communications with Multiple public speakers? The Mayor stated that we will look into this further and be sure it is compliant with the law. The mayor called for any other public comments. There being none, the following votes were recorded:

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

NAYS: Alderman Manning

ABSENT: None

ABSTAIN: None

ORDINANCE 629 OF 2026: Consider introduction and set for public hearing on June 8, 2026.

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE BENTON CODE CHAPTER 2. ARTICLE 1. SECTION 2.6 BY ADDING PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURES AND RULES OF DECORUM FOR THE MAYOR AND THE BOARD OF ALDERMEN

WHEREAS Chapter 2. Administration, Article 1. In General, Section 2.6 Regular Meetings of the Code of Ordinances, Town of Benton, Louisiana, is hereby amended to read as follows:

WHEREAS the Town of Benton is organized and governed pursuant to the Lawrason Act, La. R.S. 33:321 et seq. and the Louisiana Open Meetings Law, La R.S. 42:11-28; and

WHEREAS, La. R.S. 33:405 provides that the Mayor shall preside over meetings of the Board of Aldermen and requires meetings of public bodies to be conducted openly, with proper notice, agendas, public participation, and recorded votes; and

WHEREAS, it is necessary and desirable to adopt clear procedures governing council meetings to ensure orderly conduct, fair public participation, legal compliance, and efficient transaction of public business; NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED

by the Mayor and Board of Aldermen of the Town of Benton:

### SECTION 1. ADOPTION OF COUNCIL MEETING PROCEDURES POLICY

The Council Meeting Procedures and Rules of Decorum Policy, attached hereto and incorporated herein by reference as Exhibit "A", is hereby adopted as the official rules governing all meetings of the Mayor and Board of Aldermen.

### SECTION 2. AUTHORITY AND APPLICATION

A. This ordinance and the adopted policy shall govern:

- Public hearings
- Regular meetings

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- Special meetings
- Emergency meetings
- Continued or rescheduled meetings

B. This policy applies to:

- The Mayor
- All Aldermen
- Municipal officers and staff
- Members of the public attending meetings

### SECTION 3. PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY

Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised, shall serve as a supplemental parliamentary authority only where:

1. State law is silent, and
2. Municipal ordinances and adopted policies are silent, and
3. No conflict exists with Louisiana law.

In the event of conflict, state law and municipal ordinances shall control.

### SECTION 4. PRESIDING OFFICER

Pursuant to La. R.S. 33:405, the Mayor shall preside at all meetings of the Board of Aldermen. In the absence of the Mayor, the Mayor Pro Tempore shall preside, and in the absence of both, another Alderman may preside as authorized by law.

### SECTION 5. ENFORCEMENT

The Mayor, as presiding officer, is authorized and directed to:

- Maintain order and decorum;
- Enforce time limits and procedural rules;
- Rule on Points of Order;
- Ensure compliance with all applicable statutes and adopted procedures.

### SECTION 6. SEVERABILITY

If any provision of this ordinance or the adopted policy is held invalid, such invalidity shall not affect the other provisions, which shall remain in full force and effect.

### SECTION 7. REPEAL OF CONFLICTING ORDINANCES

All ordinances or parts of ordinances in conflict herewith are hereby repealed to the extent of such conflict only.

### SECTION 8. EFFECTIVE DATE

This ordinance shall take effect immediately upon adoption.

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Mayor Friday called for council comments. There being none, a motion was made by Alderman Lawrence and seconded by Alderman Carr to introduce Ordinance 629 of 2026 and set for public hearing on June 8, 2026. The Mayor stated that we can hold a workshop to discuss this before the June meeting. Mayor called for public comments. There being none, the following votes were recorded:

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

ABSTAIN: None

ORDINANCE 630 OF 2026: Consider introduction and setting for public hearing on June 8, 2026

### AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND BENTON CODE CHAPTER 18, ARTICLE III, BY ADDING SECTION 18:238

BE IT ORDAINED by the Board of Aldermen of the Town of Benton, Bossier Parish, Louisiana, does hereby amend t

WHEREAS the Town of Benton owns and operates a municipal water system for the benefit of its residents and customers; and

WHEREAS, water meters are essential for accurate billing, system maintenance, leak detection, and public health protection; and

WHEREAS, obstructed, buried, covered, damaged, or inaccessible water meters impede meter reading, maintenance, repairs, and emergency response;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED by the Mayor and Board of Aldermen of the Town of Benton, Bossier Parish, Louisiana, hereby amends the Benton code CHAPTER 18 – SEWER AND WATER, ARTICLE III – WATER, adding SECTION 18: 268 to read as follows:

#### SECTION 1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this ordinance is to ensure that all water meters serving customers of the Town of Benton Water System remain visible, accessible, unobstructed, and properly maintained to allow for accurate meter reading, inspection, maintenance, and repair.

#### SECTION 2. APPLICABILITY

This ordinance applies to all customers of the Town of Benton Water System, including residential, commercial, industrial, and governmental accounts.

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### SECTION 3. PROHIBITION AGAINST OBSTRUCTION OR COVERING OF WATER METERS

- A. No customer shall cover, enclose, obstruct, block, bury, or restrict access to any water meter, meter box, meter lid, shut-off valve, or related appurtenance.
- B. Prohibited obstructions include, but are not limited to:
  1. Soil, mulch, gravel, rocks, or debris
  2. Concrete, asphalt, or pavement
  3. Landscaping, shrubs, plants, trees, or root systems
  4. Fencing, structures, decks, sheds, or utility enclosures
  5. Vehicles, storage containers, or construction materials
- C. Water meters shall remain:
  1. Clearly visible
  2. Free of standing water, mud, debris, or ice
  3. Accessible always for Town personnel

### SECTION 4. CUSTOMER RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. The customer is responsible for:
  1. Always maintain clear and safe access to the water meter
  2. Preventing damage to the meter and meter box
  3. Keeping the meter area clear within a minimum three (3) foot radius around the meter box
- B. Customers shall promptly report to the Town of Benton Water Department:
  1. Damaged meters or meter boxes
  2. Leaks, breaks, or malfunctions
  3. Missing or tampered meter lids
  4. Any condition affecting meter accuracy or accessibility

### SECTION 5. INSPECTIONS AND NOTICE OF VIOLATION

- A. Authorized Town personnel may inspect water meters at reasonable times to ensure compliance with this ordinance.
- B. If a violation is found, the Town may:
  1. Leave a door hanger giving notice of violation.
  2. Verbal notice when conditions require immediate correction
  3. The notice shall specify the violation and provide a reasonable time for correction, except in emergency situations where immediate action may be taken.

### SECTION 6. PENALTIES AND ADDITIONAL CHARGES

Failure to comply with this ordinance may result in penalties assessed as additional charges on the customer's water bill, as follows:

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- A. First violation: Door hanger warning of violation, allowing three (3) days to remove the obstruction. If the obstruction has not been removed after three (3) days, it will constitute a second violation.
- B. Second violation: A fee of \$20.00 will be added for each day the violation has not been corrected.
- C. If the Town must remove obstructions or perform corrective work, all associated costs, including labor and equipment, will be billed to the customer as an additional charge on the water bill.

### SECTION 7. LIMITATIONS OF OTHER REMEDIES

The penalties provided under this ordinance do not limit the Town's authority to pursue any other remedies or enforcement actions allowed by law.

### SECTION 8. SERVABILITY

If any section, subsection, sentence, or provision of this ordinance is held invalid, such invalidity shall not affect the validity of the remaining portions of the ordinance.

### SECTION 9. EFFECTIVE DATE

Mayor Friday spoke about the issues we have been having lately concerning accessing the water meters. Joey Plunkett, Meter Technician for the Town, spoke out about the ordinance and that the ordinance was written to cover all issues; however, all it needs to say is not to let the grass grow over it. I need to locate the meter.

Mayor Friday called for council comments. Ms. Perry asked that the ordinance be amended to remove the section about the mud and ice. Ms. Carr asked about the damage meters and how a citizen would know if it has been tampered with. Mr. Plunkett spoke again, stating that all he needs the ordinance to cover is he needs to be able to see the meter. A motion was made by Alderman Carr and seconded by Alderman Perry to introduce Ordinance 630 of 2026 and set for public hearing June 8, 2026. Mayor called for public comments. There being none, the following votes were recorded:

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

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Consider approval of monthly financials:

Mayor Friday called for council comments. Manning mentioned that we have talked about the use of Sarsh and the use of family members. The mayor stated that he had the attorney check into it and that it is ok if we have done business with the company prior to the family members working for the municipality. Manning asked about lines 166 and 167, the liability insurance payment. Manning asked about line 177, the uniforms for them to use, a company that was used years before any possible conflict existed. Attorney Murphy reminded Manning of the discussion at the last meeting, when the Insurance Company was here presenting it to the council for the renewal of the liability policy. A motion was made by Alderman Carr and seconded by Alderman Perry to approve the monthly financials. The mayor called for public comments. There being none, the following votes were recorded:

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

### ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Attorney Murphy spoke about the conversation he had with the Attorney General's office about the letter. He stated that the ongoing fighting has drawn the attention of the Attorney General herself. The AG's office has strongly recommended that the board attend training on July 21<sup>st</sup> in Baton Rouge. They want everyone to attend training together, and if the board refuses, a lawsuit will be filed in the District Court against the town. He said that the training lasts half a day. Attorney Murphy explained that under the Lawrason Act there is no requirement for a sponsor of an ordinance. Anyone can request that legislation be submitted for consideration; no sponsor is required. He went on to explain that the budget does not need to be amended for clerical errors involving line items with no budget. Manning asked about any line items that were not budgeted for originally, but money has been spent in those line items. Attorney Murphy was not sure of what Manning was talking about.

Mayor Friday spoke about Gary Wyche retiring from the CBB Board, and a vacancy will occur on July 1. So if anyone knows anyone interested in sitting on that board.

Announcement of the 2026 Property Tax millage will be up for a Public Hearing on June 8, for renewal of the property taxes.

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Mr. Barnett asked to comment on the problem with the mess the contractors are leaving behind in people's yards. And concerned about the ditch.

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

YEAS: 5

NAYS: 0

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