

BELLA VISTA CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING

November 24, 2025 6:00 PM

Bella Vista District Court 2483 Forest Hills Boulevard

MINUTES

Call to Order by Mayor Flynn at 6:00 pm.

Pledge of Allegiance recited.

Roll Call called by Clerk Krug. Council Members Honchell, Harp, Hughes, Newport, Wilms, and Isbell were present. Mayor Flynn was present.

Mayor Flynn thanked the citizens who came out to vote on the Bond. He expressed appreciation for showing confidence in the City and for passing it at over 70%.

Citizen Input Mayor Flynn called up the following citizens, in order:

Joanne Mallett, 9 Rudston Ln. Ms. Mallett came to speak regarding the condition of the access road to the Animal Shelter. The road is city-owned and maintained, but has deteriorated due to heavy use by Republic Waste Service trucks. She encouraged the city to partner with Republic Waste in resurfacing the road with a weather-resistant, hard surface, and trimming back the roadside vegetation. She thinks it would reflect positively on the city's shared investment in animal welfare and public service. She passed out two sets of pictures to show the severity of the deterioration.

J.P. Bollinger, 14 Kiswick Drive. Justice of the Peace Bollinger thanked Council Members Harp, Hughes, and Newport for their positive comments on the funding issue of The Children and Family Advocacy Center (CAFC) of Benton County. He explained federal budget cuts totaling \$600,000, and urged Council Members to consider putting in the Bella Vista allocation of \$30,000. This allocation would benefit the most vulnerable population of children in Benton County.

Mike Armstrong, 3602 NW Creeksway, Bentonville. Mike is running for Family Court Judge in Benton County. He stated that Arkansas has the highest divorce rate in the country, and that is his main motivation for running. He has worked over 20 years on behalf of Benton County families and children, including time as a Child Sex Abuse Prosecutor with the CAFC. He knows the importance of an experienced judge on the bench, one who works for the good of families and children to turn them in the right direction. He believes that he can do that, and asks for the consideration of the Council to support him.

Gordon Brown, 4 Kirkpatrick Pl. Gordon came to speak about short-term rentals. He has confronted first-hand an attitude of non-compliance from short-term rental owners in Bella Vista. He believes home construction intended solely for short-term rentals should be limited by size of square footage. Although there

are limits on how many, regulatory infractions seem to be lacking. He thinks infractions by operators may need to be on a point system, where they could lose their permit at a certain amount. He is concerned about all the residents who moved here to be in residential, and find themselves in an STR business district.

Darin Callahan, 645 W. Lancashire Blvd. Darin came to discuss the rezoning ordinance on the agenda. He bought his dream home there 12 years ago in a residential zone, not a commercial zone. He is against putting any business in that location. He asked the Council to consider how they would feel in his shoes, having purchased property and home on the residential side of the road.

Natalie Tibbs, 2221 Little Flock Dr. Natalie, Director of the Children's Advocacy Center, expressed appreciation for the opportunity to meet with each of their municipalities. Due to the recent loss of federal grant money administered by the state, they are now challenged to explore ways to sustain these vital services to families and children in crisis in Benton County. She explained how services provided by the CAFC work hand in hand with law enforcement. She urged the Council to consider Bella Vista's investment in meeting the needs of children through their services of advocacy support, forensic interviews, medical examinations, counseling, and long-term residency. Bella Vista represents about 5% of the CFAC's clientele.

Matt Sanders, 7 Nantwich Cir. Matt came to speak about STR violations and the need for enforcement. He spoke specifically about a wild party on Nov. 8 in a next-door STR with over 50 minors present. He came to ask Chief Graves and the Council to enforce the codes that are already in existence, and to enforce 0 tolerance for STR violations in order to cite the party goers. He also came to express his frustration with trying to research the inspections and permitting for his past home construction, stating that it involved FOIA requests.

Tim McDonald, 104 Ruth Ln. Tim is running for Circuit Court Judge in Benton County and came to speak about the roles and responsibilities. He is not running against Mr. Armstrong. He is running for Circuit Judge Division 8, a new division created to address the increase in criminal cases in Benton County. A new courtroom is being built close to the Juvenile Justice Center. He described the new positions being created, and the changes that will take place. Half of the judges will be turning over, and Tim believes experienced judges are needed. He has been a prosecutor for the past 10 years, and worked as a Judge Advocate in the Army. He believes Bella Vista residents should become informed because some of the hardest cases he dealt with involved young children from Bella Vista. He said we are all affected, whether we know it or not.

Council Member Reply Council Member Harp thanked the citizens for coming out. He expressed his support of Mr. Bollinger and Natalie Tims for the CFAC funding. He said that he feels Matt Sanders' portrayal of STR owners in Bella Vista is the exception and not the norm. He believes most owners are not heard about because they are following the rules. He doesn't see STRs as a business in

a residential area. Council Member Hughes thanked J.P. Bollinger and Natalie for coming to discuss the CFAC funding, and she voiced support for their work with Benton County children and families in crisis. She said she understands J. Mallott's concern about the access road to the animal shelter, and hopes more communication with the city will bring about a resolution to the problem. She doesn't think any change to our city's STR ordinance will come soon, as they are waiting for a decision in an active case in the Arkansas Supreme Court. She urged everyone who has a problem with STR violations to keep calling them in, because that is the way to get enforcement and compliance. Council Member Newport thanked Joseph, Natalie, and Tim for speaking on behalf of the CFAC. She said she plans to introduce a resolution next month, so the Council can unite and send a letter to all of our officials. She supports funding the CFAC. Council Member Isbell said she hears the complaints of those who are affected by the non-complying STR owners and understands the problems. She also urged our police to actively enforce the code and address the minority who do not comply, because they give everyone a bad name. She said we want to support those who are acting respectfully towards their neighbors, but those who do not need to be addressed and cited. Mayor Flynn thanked all citizens who spoke on the various issues.

Reports

Monthly Financial Report ending September 30, 2025: Mayor Flynn reported that Total Operating Revenues are up 11.9% over last year. City Sales Tax is up 13.8% over last year and continues to be encouraging. The County Sales Tax is up 3.4% over last year. On the Operating Expense side, the City is \$1.1 million under budget through September.

(The Chair will entertain a motion to suspend the rules of order and procedure to allow all ordinances on the agenda to be read by title only.) Council Member Wilms made a motion to approve, seconded by Council Member Newport. **Roll Call Vote: (Ayes: 6/Nays: 0) Passed 6-0.**

Consent Agenda

Approval of Minutes:

October 27, 2025, City Council Regular Meeting Minutes

November 12, 2025, City Council Special Meeting Minutes

RESOLUTION: ACCEPTING A GRANT FROM WALTON FAMILY FOUNDATION AND AMENDING THE BUDGET TO RECOGNIZE SAID GRANT FOR \$117,600.00, THE 20% LOCAL REQUIRED MATCH, FOR THE 71 CORRIDOR PLAN AND TO FUND UPDATING THE TRAILS AND GREENWAY PLAN

RESOLUTION: AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR AND CITY CLERK TO ENTER INTO A CONTRACT WITH CEI ENGINEERING ASSOCIATES, INC. FOR ENGINEERING SERVICES RELATED TO POLICE IMPOUND LOT EXPANSION

Mayor Flynn introduced the items on the Consent Agenda. Council Member Hughes made a motion to approve, seconded by Council Member Newport. **Roll Call Vote: (Ayes: 6/Nays: 0) Passed 6-0.**

Unfinished Business

ORDINANCE: ESTABLISHING A BUSINESS LICENSE REQUIREMENT FOR QUALIFYING BUSINESSES OPERATING WITHIN THE CITY, PROVIDING FOR CLASSES AND EXEMPTIONS, REQUIRING ANNUAL RENEWAL, ESTABLISHING FEES, PROVIDING PENALTIES FOR VIOLATIONS, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES Third Reading Mayor Flynn read the Ordinance for the third and final time. Council Member Wilms spoke at length against it, and Council Member Harp stated that he is also against it for now. Council Member Wilms made a motion to approve, seconded by Council Member Honchell. **Roll Call Vote: (Ayes: 4/Nays: 2 Wilms, Harp) Passed 4-2.**

ORDINANCE: AMENDING THE BELLA VISTA ZONING ORDINANCE AND MAP TO REZONE PROPERTY DESCRIBED IN REZONING PETITION NO. 2025-59940 (COUNTY PARCEL NO. 16-43269-000) FROM R-E, RESIDENTIAL ESTATE DISTRICT TO C-2, LOCAL COMMERCIAL Second Reading Mayor Flynn read the ordinance for the second time. Council Member Harp made an amendment to change the zoning from C-2 to C-1, which was acknowledged as written down by Attorney Kelley. Council Member Harp made a motion to approve the amendment, seconded by Council Member Newport. Council Member Wilms said he would be more comfortable if this was sent back to the Planning Department to render their view on a change to C-1. Council Member Hughes agreed with Council Member Wilms. Council Member Honchell spoke about why he is against this ordinance. He believes if we allow this change, it opens a door across the city for similar residential areas. He believes there are other avenues that could be pursued. Council Member Harp made a motion to approve the amendment, seconded by Council Member Newport. **Roll Call Vote: (Ayes: 4/Nays: 2 Wilms, Honchell) Passed 4-2.** Council Member Wilms made a motion to send it back to the Planning Commission to determine if C-1 is appropriate, since it is a Planning matter, seconded by Council Member Hughes. Council Member Harp asked clarifying questions, to which Attorney Kelley responded. Council Member Newport stated that she does not support moving this back to the Planning Commission. **Roll Call Vote: (Yays: 2/Nays: 4 Newport, Isbell, Honchell, Harp) Failed 2-4.** Council Member Newport made a motion to suspend the rules and waive three readings, seconded by Council Member Harp. Council Member Honchell said he would like each Council Member to visit the property and talk to the neighbors before casting a final vote. After more discussion, Council Members Newport and Harp withdrew the motion and the second. **The decision was made to move to third and final reading in December.**

New Business

ORDINANCE: AMENDING SECTION 16-41 PERMIT REQUIRED OF THE CODE OF ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF BELLA VISTA TO PROVIDE FOR MORE STREAMLINED RENEWALS OF SHORT-TERM RENTAL PERMITS *Staff requests move to Third and Final Reading Mayor Flynn read the ordinance. Council Member Hughes made a motion to suspend the rules and move to third and final reading, seconded by Council Member Wilms. Roll Call Vote: (Ayes: 6/Nays: 0) Passed 6-0.* Mayor Flynn read the ordinance for the third and final time. Motion to approve made by Council Member Wilms, seconded by Council Member Honchell. **Roll Call Vote: (Ayes: 6/Nays: 0) Passed 6-0.**

RESOLUTION: APPROVING AND ADOPTING A FEE SCHEDULE FOR CITY OF BELLA VISTA PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT RELATED PERMITS AND APPLICATIONS Mayor Flynn read the resolution for the second time. Council Member Harp explained he is voting against this resolution because Council didn't have a say in setting the fees. Council Member Newport reminded the Council that Planning Director Robertson said at the last CC meeting that this is a 33% fee recovery. She added she would like to move toward 100% fee recovery. Council Member Wilms differed in his opinion. Council Member Honchell said there is a cost to doing business, and we need to be efficient in recovering city costs. Council Member Newport made a motion to approve, seconded by Council Member Hughes. **Roll Call Vote: (Ayes: 4/Nays: 2 Wilms, Harp) Passed 4-2.**

RESOLUTION: AWARDING BID AND AUTHORIZING A CONTRACT WITH GEOSTABILIZATION INTERNATIONAL IN AN AMOUNT OF \$225,335.82, PLUS AN ADDITIONAL 20% PROJECT CONTINGENCY, FOR A TOTAL AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$270,402.98, FOR OLDHAM ROAD SLOPE STABILIZATION AND REPAIRS, AND AMENDING THE 2025 CITY BUDGET Mayor Flynn read the resolution. He called on Assistant Street Supt. Downing to explain the Oldham Road slope stabilization and repair situation. Council Member Hughes and Council Member Newport applauded the Street Department's thorough research and work. They both support this resolution. Council Member Wilms asked detailed construction questions, answered by Assistant Supt. Downing. Council Member Hughes made a motion to approve, seconded by Council Member Wilms. **Roll Call Vote: (Yays: 6/Nays: 0) Passed 6-0.**

RESOLUTION: APPROVING AMOUNTS OF LIENS TO BE CERTIFIED TO THE BENTON COUNTY TAX COLLECTOR AGAINST CERTAIN REAL PROPERTIES AS A RESULT OF GRASS CUTTING EXPENSES AND ABATEMENT OF OTHER NUISANCES BY THE CITY OF BELLA VISTA Mayor Flynn read the resolution. He opened a time of public hearing. Attorney Kelley stated the property owner had received lawful notice of this hearing, and legal requirements had been

met. No one appeared for the public hearing, so Mayor Flynn closed it. Council Member Wilms asked Chief Graves several questions, which he answered. Council Member Isbell stated that she thinks this matter is inconsistent because other properties also have overgrown grass. She will be voting no. Chief Graves asked her and everyone to make a complaint if they saw other unkept properties in the city, because it is impossible to find all of them in a 35 square mile area. Council Member Wilms made a motion to approve, seconded by Council Member Harp. **Roll Call Vote: (Ayes: 4/Nays: 2 Hughes, Isbell) Passed 4-2.**

RESOLUTION: SETTING THE MEETING SCHEDULE OF THE BELLA VISTA CITY COUNCIL FOR CALENDAR YEAR 2026 Mayor Flynn read the resolution. He noted that he added a date for the Work Session in early December. Council Member Hughes made a motion to approve, seconded by Council Member Newport. **Roll Call Vote: (Yays: 6/Nays: 0) Passed 6-0.**

RESOLUTION: ESTABLISHING SALARIES FOR MAYOR, CITY COUNCIL MEMBER, AND CITY CLERK TO BEGIN JANUARY 1, 2026 Mayor Flynn read the resolution and explained his reasoning behind the numbers. The Council members presented a variety of different perspectives. Council Member Hughes made an amendment that lowered the Mayor's and City Council Members' salary increases to 3%, and left the City Clerk's salary increase at 7%. Council Member Honchell suggested more discussion is needed, and Mayor Flynn said that Dec. 2 after the Budget Meeting might be a possibility. Council Member Harp made a motion to table until the December meeting, seconded by Council Member Honchell. **Roll Call Vote: (Yays: 4/Nays: 2 Newport, Honchell) Passed 4-2. Tabled until December meeting.**

Announcements

- Next City Council Work Session: 5:30 pm Monday, December 8, at Bella Vista Police Training Room
- Next City Council Regular Meeting: 6:00 pm Monday, December 15, at Bella Vista District Court
- Planning Commission Work Session: 4:30 pm Thursday, November 27, at Bella Vista District Court **Canceled**
- Planning Commission Regular Meeting: 4:30 pm, or immediately following BZA, Monday, December 8, at Bella Vista District Court
- Board of Construction Appeals: 3:00 pm Tuesday, December 9, if necessary, at Fire Station #4 Conference Rm, 1639 Forest Hills Blvd.

Adjournment Mayor Flynn adjourned the meeting at 7:31 pm.

Wanda Lepillez Krug
City Clerk Wanda Lepillez Krug

John D. Flynn
Mayor John D. Flynn

