

BELLA VISTA CITY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING

June 22, 2026 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 Newport, Wilms, Isbell, Honchell, Harp, and Hughes were present. Mayor Flynn was present.

Citizen Input Mayor Flynn explained the 3-minute per-person rule for Citizen Input. He proposed a motion to extend the total Citizen Input time to more than 30 minutes, due to the 11 citizens signed up to speak. Council Member Harp made a motion to approve, seconded by Council Member Wilms. **Roll Call Vote: (Ayes: 6/Nays: 0) Passed: 6-0.** Mayor Flynn proceeded to call each person on the list, in turn.

Carol Quinn, 1 Teresa Dr. Carol came to speak about civic engagement in our city. Carol thanked Mayor Flynn for his efforts to answer questions from residents in a professional manner. She disapproved of Council Member Hughes filing an ethics complaint against Mayor Flynn published in the Gazette and Weekly Vista over his *Coffee with the Mayor* events and city photo. A lawyer of 40 years, Carol said it would be better to avoid this kind of toxicity for minor complaints and engage in a direct conversation instead.

Darecca Jensen, 17 Kensington Dr. Darecca came to speak about her residential camper parking violation. She thinks the camper parking regulation in Bella Vista is excessive and requested a review to modify the language to make it more accessible to residents who own campers. She has parked the camper behind a 6 ft. fence at the back of her property for the past five years, and now must comply with the ordinance and place her camper in storage or build a taller fence. She would like to find an alternative solution.

Mary Alice Estes, 77 McKenzie Dr. Mary Alice spoke about her concerns for traffic safety and speed on Gordon Hollow Road. She said when one crosses from Arkansas to Missouri there is no striping. She requested someone on the Council reach out to McDonald County and work collectively to get striping on the road for public safety. She reported the increase in heavy-duty construction traffic that makes it more dangerous. She said she contacted the Mayor and a Council Member but has not heard back on the issue, and would like a

response.

Sandra Quinn, 58 Kensington Dr. Sandra is opposed to raising the STR cap to 687 due to her experience living with several Airbnbs on Kensington Drive. She said visitors do not care about keeping the property clean, the parking problems or the septic issues, and it is difficult for residents to have constant strangers in the neighborhood. Her neighborhood has changed drastically with the STR increase. She also complained about the problem of bikers on the winding, narrow streets of Bella Vista, due to safety concerns. She stated she is pro-biking and biking trails, just not on the streets.

Gary Elbert, 17 Mary Kirk Ln. Gary spoke about STR permits for the second time this year. He reported his lakefront street with 10 homes recently lost its fourth home to an STR. He is opposed to the current proposal on the Agenda to increase the cap from 600 to 687. A short-term rental ban wasn't his intent, but balance. He urged the Council to consider a concentration limit, such as no new permits for sites within 200 ft. of a permitted STR property. Many of his neighbors stood to demonstrate the number of residents within 200 feet of an STR property.

Cliff Westphal, 2 Bilston Ln. Cliff, a BV resident for 29 years, came to speak about speeding problems near Lake Windsor. He reported that many of the new people do not know how to get to Lake Windsor even with the signage on 340. He thinks better signage is needed on Bromwich and Cannock Streets with clear directions to Lake Windsor. People speed on the two streets out of frustration to find the lake, and he wants something to be done to slow cars down due to children in the neighborhood.

Suzanne Saltz, 15 Marykirk Ln. Suzanne came to speak in opposition to the proposed STR ordinance to raise the cap to 687. She said since 2024, every home sold in her neighborhood has been turned into a rental. 40% of the homes on her lakeside block are now short-term lodging, a pattern that is changing the character of her neighborhood. She believes the problem lies with investor-owned short-term rentals: people from outside BV who are buying homes and using them as businesses in BV neighborhoods. She cited other cities in Northwest Arkansas that placed limits on short-term rental numbers and said if BV followed Fayetteville's standard of 1%, our cap would be about 152. Suzanne urged the Council to vote against the proposed ordinance to raise the cap to 687. Likewise, she hopes Arkansas residents will stand up against state legislators who would like to take STR regulations away from municipalities.

Ben Hunt, 21 Harborough Ln. Ben came to speak as a candidate for Mayor of Bella Vista in the 2026 election. Ben serves as a First Sergeant in the Air Force and is a veteran. He also owned and operated a construction business for over 20 years. He thinks BV leadership should be focused on prioritizing the residents. He reported that his entire career was centered around solving problems, building relationships, creating accountability and delivering results. His goals include building a culture of accountability, professionalism, communication, and elite

customer service. He believes one of the main responsibilities of the mayor is chief negotiator: negotiating with developers, regional partners, state leaders, and organizations that impact our future. He thinks each negotiation should begin and end with the same question. What is best for the city of Bella Vista? Matt Sanders, 7 Nantwich Cir. Matt began by quoting Micah 6:8 from the Old Testament. He reported he spoke to the Council on Jan. 27, 2025 about his new home construction that was erroneously issued a certificate of occupancy by a city building inspector. He said his home needed \$150,000 worth of repairs to bring his house to code, so he went to get a permit for additional work and that permit #63528 was voided by Inspections for filing a false permit application and false permit. He reported that he was then arrested and now faces over \$6,000 in fines and up to 3 years in jail. He has reached out to the Mayor and to his Ward 1 Council members to no avail. He requested help from the Council. Maribel Childress, 26 Norwood Dr. Maribel, principal of Cooper Elementary, spoke about an outstanding collaboration between the Bella Vista Planning Department and 4th graders at Cooper. She explained that Cooper is a School of Innovation with different Academies, and one is the Business and Entrepreneurship Academy. This Academy partnered with the City of Bella Vista to find out what it takes to become a business owner and entrepreneur in BV. Planning Director Taylor Robertson and her staff put together a presentation on zoning, development review, and licensing, with only a 2-week notice. They taught students about zoning maps, fire safety rules, traffic, parking, business codes, non-profits, and for-profit businesses. Maribel said she received the highest compliment when Taylor asked if she could keep the students' business plans to post in her office. Eric Wells, 50 Lavendon Cir. Eric came to speak out against STRs. He moved his family to Bella Vista from a small town in Montana where STRs slowly took over and the soul of that town quietly disappeared. Now he is facing the same issues in Bella Vista. He reported calling the police on numerous occasions for code violations at an STR directly across from his house that hosted 6 chaotic parties over the last year. When one weekend booking outweighs the cost of a citation, nothing changes, he reported. He urged the Council to increase fines, raise licensing and permitting fees, and make operating a short-term rental in BV a serious commitment, not a business that profits from our streets while BV families pay the price.

Council Member Reply Council Member Hughes thanked the citizens for coming to speak. She told Mary Alice she would get her connected with the Streets Department Director, Karen Hunt. She suggested Cliff might reach out to the POA since his situation could be related to lakes, and she would be happy to help coordinate that. Council Member Honchell spoke to Mary Alice regarding Gordon Hollow Road. He said he shares her concerns as well, because he also lives near Scottsdale. He stated that he has been in communication with the

Director of Streets, Karen Hunt, about getting the trail cleared, getting a low water bridge, and the big potholes. He said Karen has a good relationship with the street department in McDonald County, and he will speak to her later about the striping. Council Member Wilms stated he talked to the commissioner at McDonald County Highway, and their policy is not to stripe their center lines anywhere on county roads, but it may be a different standard than in Arkansas. He recounted that back in 2012, the city received requests from citizens to make a better connection between Scottsdale and the state line for access because it was a back narrow gravel road, just one and a half lanes. The City of Bella Vista took on that project and paid for the construction of that road. It was paved and striped, and he thought that McDonald County was the primary contractor. When the paint wears off in Bella Vista, we continue to paint the stripes, but McDonald County does not according to their policy. Council Member Harp thanked the citizens for coming out to engage on issues that are important to them. He reminded everyone if they have a problem with guests at STR properties adjacent to or nearby their homes, to notify the police so they have record of it. He thinks one way to decrease the demand for STR permits is to allow the transfer of an STR permit when the house is sold. He appreciated hearing citizens speak about many different topics.

Mayor Flynn said he appreciated everyone who came out to speak. Then he said that he wished people would give a little more thought before they submitted FOIA requests. He said a recent request asked for every email on STRs since 2015 and that turned out to be 50,000 pages. Several employees needed to put their own work on hold and go through those 50,000 pages. He noted that the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) law is very liberal and everyone likes open government. But he encouraged people to try and be helpful; some people don't realize the heavy demand these requests put on busy municipal workers.

Reports

Certificate of Recognition for Master Gardeners Debbie Bodnar, Dory Hammeke, and Judy Stokes: Mayor Flynn read the Certificate of Recognition for the three Master Gardeners and called them forward to receive their certificates and have their picture taken. The recognition was for their work with the Benton County Master Gardeners on the revitalization of the BV community garden located at Mercy Hospital, resulting in not only a vibrant garden but a productive food source growing nearly 2,000 pounds of produce for the NWA region via the Mercy food pantry.

Monthly Financial Report through April 30, 2026: Mayor Flynn briefly summarized the financial statements ending April 30, 2026. Total operating revenues were up 7.2% compared to last year. The surplus over the budget was \$694,000 after just four months. The city sales tax was up 9.5%. The county sales tax turned negative the previous month, but by April

it was up 5.1%, which is encouraging news. For operating expenses, they were below budget by \$943,000 for the first four months, and the city continues to have a safe reserve.

Mayor Flynn stated that Attorney Jason Kelly could not make the meeting due to medical reasons, but that he would be fine. Attorney Kelley went 12.5 years without missing a regular meeting and Mayor Flynn wanted everyone to know what a positive asset Jason is for us. He said people don't realize how much he comes through for us time and time again.

(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.)

*Motion approved by Council Member Wilms, seconded by Council Member Hughes. **Roll Call Vote: (Ayes: 6/Nays: 0) Passed: 6-0.***

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

Approval of Minutes: May 26, 2026, City Council Regular Meeting

Unfinished Business

ORDINANCE: AMENDING SECTION 16-43 ACTIVE PERMIT MAXIMUM OF THE CODE OF ORDINANCES OF THE CITY OF BELLA VISTA TO INCREASE THE MAXIMUM NUMBER OF SHORT-TERM RENTAL PERMITS FROM 600 TO 687, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES *Second Reading Mayor Flynn read the ordinance for the second time. Council Members expressed their approval and disapproval of this proposal, and Mayor Flynn moved the ordinance to third and final reading in July.*

New Business

ORDINANCE: APPROVING FINAL PLAT FPL-2026-64569 AND ACCEPTING PUBLIC RIGHTS-OF-WAY AND EASEMENT DEDICATIONS THEREIN *(staff requests 3rd and final reading)* Mayor Flynn read the ordinance. Council Member Hughes made a motion to move to the third and final reading, seconded by Council Member Isbell. **Roll Call Vote: (Ayes: 6/Nays: 0) Passed: 6-0.** *Motion to adopt made by Council Member Harp, seconded by Council Member Hughes. **Roll Call Vote: (Ayes: 6/Nays: 0) Passed: 6-0.***

ORDINANCE: REQUIRING ORIENTATION AND CONTINUING EDUCATION FOR ELECTED OFFICIALS OF THE CITY OF BELLA VISTA, ARKANSAS; ESTABLISHING MINIMUM TRAINING REQUIREMENTS; PROVIDING FOR REPORTING OF COMPLIANCE; AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES. Mayor Flynn read the ordinance. Council Member Hughes explained the reasons she proposed the ordinance. Council Members discussed their varying opinions on the value of this ordinance. Mayor Flynn moved the ordinance to second reading in

July.

RESOLUTION: AUTHORIZING THE CITY TO INITIATE LEGAL PROCEEDINGS AGAINST BELLA VISTA VILLAGE PROPERTY OWNERS ASSOCIATION, INC. TO FACILITATE CONDEMNATION AND POSSESSION OF REAL PROPERTY FOR PURPOSES OF COMPLETING THE PUBLIC SAFETY RADIO TOWER PROJECT, AND FURTHER AUTHORIZING SETTLEMENT IN THE TOTAL AMOUNT OF \$67,000.00

*Mayor Flynn read the resolution. He called Chief Graves forward to speak about it. He explained this radio tower project was part of the 2025 bond money allotted to the police department. This resolution is to acquire the property needed for the third tower because the POA owns it. They can't sell it to the city outright because of the rules. So the city has to go to court for a non-hostile condemnation to which the POA has agreed. It is a legal formality. Council Member Hughes made a motion to approve, seconded by Council Member Wilms. **Roll Call Vote: (Ayes: 6/Nays: 0) Passed: 6-0.***

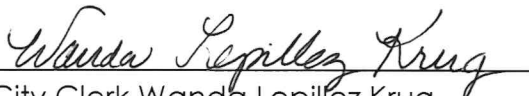
RESOLUTION: AUTHORIZING THE MAYOR AND CITY CLERK TO ENTER INTO A CONTRACT WITH SUPERIOR AUTOMOTIVE GROUP OF SILOAM SPRINGS, PURSUANT TO A STATE PROCUREMENT CONTRACT, FOR THE PURCHASE OF FIVE (5) DODGE DURANGO AWD PURSUIT VEHICLES WITH EQUIPMENT UPFITS AND TWO (2) 2026 CHEVROLET SILVERADO PICKUPS WITH EQUIPMENT UPFITS, IN A TOTAL AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$394,601.21 FOR USE BY THE POLICE DEPARTMENT Mayor Flynn read the ordinance and explained this was approved in the 2025 Bond. Council Member Hughes asked Chief Graves why the numbers had changed slightly since the Work Session. Chief Graves said it was because of a computer clerical error on the upfit sheet from Superior Automotive. The original sheet didn't list all the communication equipment on two of the trucks. Council Member Wilms made a motion to approve, seconded by Council Member Isbell. **Roll Call Vote: (Ayes: 6/Nays: 0) Passed: 6-0.**

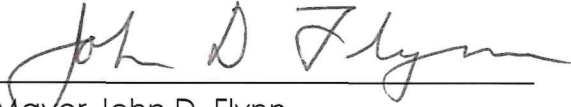
RESOLUTION: AMENDING THE 2026 CITY BUDGET TO APPROPRIATE \$120,000.00 IN DEVELOPMENT IMPACT FEE REVENUE RELATED TO PUBLIC SAFETY BUILDING ADDITIONS Mayor Flynn read the resolution. He called Police Chief Graves forward to explain the resolution. Chief Graves said this was to use development impact fee revenue for Public Safety Building additions. A public sidewalk needs to be built to meet a requirement that wasn't met when the Police Department was built several years ago. A sidewalk will be built from the south side of the property along Forest Hills Blvd. all the way to the north side along the Streets Department and butting up against the VA property. Council Member Hughes made a motion to approve, seconded by Council Member Wilms. **Roll Call Vote: (Ayes: 6/Nays: 0) Passed: 6-0.**

Announcements

- Next City Council Work Session: 6:00 pm Monday, July 20, at Bella Vista District Court
- Next City Council Regular Meeting: 6:00 pm Monday, July 27, at Bella Vista District Court
- Planning Commission Work Session: 4:30 pm Thursday, July 2, at Bella Vista District Court
- Planning Commission Regular Meeting: 4:30 pm, or immediately following BZA, Monday, July 13, at Bella Vista District Court
- Board of Construction Appeals: 3:00 pm Tuesday, July 14, if necessary, at Fire Station #1 Conference Rm, 103 Town Center.

Adjournment


City Clerk Wanda Lepillez Krug


Mayor John D. Flynn

