

MAYOR'S ANNUAL REPORT TO THE BELLA VISTA CITY COUNCIL
FOR THE YEAR 2017
AS REQUIRED BY STATE STATUTE 14-58-302
February 26, 2018

We ended 2017 in a very healthy financial position. Our cash and investments had a closing balance of \$7.5M, which is \$957K higher than year end 2016 and \$1.4M higher than our projected beginning balance cited in our 2018 budget. Our combined funds (General Funds and Street Funds) revenue for 2017 was \$729K greater than our budget of \$15.9M. Our combined funds expenses were \$847K lower than our projected 2017 budget of \$17M. As a result our year end net actual contribution to reserve was \$493K, rather than the budgeted draw on reserve of \$1.1M. Our sales tax revenue (city and our 11.98% share of county) was \$714K greater than the previous year (2016)! I extend our thanks to our residents and visitors who continue to invest in our community and shop locally!!

Of the 16 projects cited in my report of last year, 15 have been completed or are in progress. The one outstanding item is legislation to ensure rental homes are safe and clean for our residents. We continue to work on this project and hope to finalize this year.

Much more has been accomplished. Our ISO rating for the Fire Department has been upgraded from 6 to 4 for most of the city. A two point jump is very unusual and strengthens our resolve to attain an eventual rating of 3. Our new housing permits for 2017 totaled 198 versus 98 in 2016 and 68 in 2015. That is phenomenal growth for a mature community!! We hired a consulting company, Gould Evans, to help us design a Comprehensive Land Use Plan out to the year 2040. The city was audited by the Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality and there were no adverse findings. Indeed they extended kudos to our Streets Dept. The first "Back 40 Fall For All" was hosted at our newest trail head, the Bella Vista Community Church. We hope this will be an annual event. The usage of the Back 40 Trails continues to grow beyond our initial estimates. In 2017 we added water fountains at three of the trail heads and hosted monthly informational guided hikes which were very well attended. The city funded a left turn lane at Mercy Way for traffic on north bound U.S. 71. There are more than 1,000 small lots platted in 1928 in Old Bella Vista that are not large enough to accommodate the size of home that is typically built in Bella Vista. As a result we created a new zoning code to accommodate tiny homes and assigned this new zoning to these smaller lots.

Exciting times are ahead for Bella Vista in 2018. Some goals are as follows and some have already been completed.

- Build a sand/salt facility on the east side across from Blue Mountain storage which will enable faster response to weather events.
- Re-surface another 40 miles of road.
- Relocate the Farmers Market to Sugar Creek Shopping Center.
- Continue to seek partners for more commercial development, especially a hotel and more restaurants.

- Hire four new police officers and nine more firemen, install computers in at least 13 police cars and create a Training Officer position within the fire department.
- Continue to upgrade and modernize our IT network which includes consistent wireless in all city buildings.
- Update Library outdoor signage at the intersection of Dickens Way and Lancashire and upgrade their computer system.
- Replacing a very outdated fire truck mid-year that has been on loan from the County. This is our third new truck in the last three years!
- Completely revamp our city website.
- Decrease the number of court cases still within the Bentonville court jurisdiction.
- Partner with the University of Arkansas to host mandatory management training classes for all existing City managers as well as future management hires and promotions. We believe this is a first for any city in Northwest Arkansas!
- Develop a Five Year Financial Plan along with funding options.
- Complete the design and obligate federal construction finding for the Riordan Road trailhead project and begin construction of a High-intensity Activated crosswalk (HAWK) across Dartmoor Road near Cooper Elementary.

We continue to work closely with our colleagues in the Bella Vista Village Property Owners Association and Cooper Communities. Our joint projects in 2017 included new wayfinding signs, a hydrological study of Sugar Creek, trail maintenance and economic development collaboration. We also extend our thanks to the many volunteers in our community who tirelessly help at the Animal Shelter, trail maintenance, the Recycling Center, the Museum, through our churches, community groups and service clubs. Our community is strong. We stand firm in one spirit, striving side by side for goodness.

Truly, without question, BELLA VISTA is indeed *"A PLACE TO CALL HOME!"*