

Organizational Excellence & Human Capital

Building an Elite Culture That Serves Our Residents

By Benjamin Hunt – updated 9/15/2026

"Every resident's experience with city government is shaped by the people who answer the phone, inspect a building, respond to an emergency, repair a road, issue a permit, or solve a problem. Great government begins with great people."

Chapter Overview

The most valuable asset Bella Vista has is not its buildings, roads, equipment, or its technology. *It is its people.* Every service the city provides is delivered by employees who have chosen careers in public service. Those employees deserve leadership that supports them, equips them, develops them, and empowers them to succeed. Residents deserve employees who are professional, responsive, knowledgeable, and committed to exceptional customer service.

My administration will work to create an organizational culture where employees are proud to serve, leaders are developed from within, and residents consistently experience courteous, efficient, and dependable service.

Mission

To build an organizational culture that attracts outstanding employees, develops exceptional leaders, values accountability, rewards innovation, and delivers elite customer service to every resident.

The Twenty-Year Workforce Challenge

Bella Vista is growing.

As our city grows, so do the demands placed upon our employees. That includes:

- More permits
- More inspections
- More emergency calls
- More maintenance
- More planning
- More financial management
- More technology
- More customer service

Meeting these demands requires more than adding positions. It requires building an organization that recruits, develops, and retains exceptional people.

My Leadership Philosophy

People perform at their highest level when they know:

- What is expected of them
- Why their work matters
- Who supports them
- How success is measured
- Where they can grow

Employees should never feel like they work for City Hall. They should feel they are building Bella Vista's future. Leadership exists to remove obstacles, provide direction, and create an environment where employees can do their very best work.

Strategic Priorities

1. Build an Elite Organizational Culture

Culture does not happen by accident. It is created intentionally. My administration will foster a culture built on:

- Integrity
- Professionalism
- Accountability
- Respect
- Teamwork
- Innovation
- Service
- Continuous improvement

Culture begins with leadership and extends throughout every department.

2. Recruit and Retain Outstanding Employees

Competition for talented public servants continues to increase. Bella Vista should strive to become an employer of choice by supporting:

- Competitive compensation and benefits
- Professional development
- Career advancement
- Leadership opportunities
- Positive workplace culture
- Recognition for outstanding performance

Retention protects institutional knowledge and improves continuity of service.

3. Develop Future Leaders

Leadership succession should never be left to chance. My administration will encourage:

- Leadership academies
- Mentorship programs
- Cross-department training
- Professional certifications
- Supervisory development
- Executive leadership preparation

Preparing tomorrow's leaders strengthens the organization today.

4. Create a Culture of Accountability

Accountability is not about blame. It is about clarity. Employees deserve to know:

- What success looks like
- How performance is measured
- What resources are available
- How they contribute to the City's mission

Clear expectations create confident employees.

5. Deliver Elite Customer Service

Residents should consistently experience:

- Courtesy
- Respect
- Responsiveness
- Professionalism
- Follow-through
- Clear communication
- Problem-solving

Every interaction should leave residents with confidence that City Hall is working for them.

Elite customer service is not a department. It is an organizational standard.

6. Encourage Innovation

Employees often know where improvements can be made. My administration will encourage staff to:

- Recommend better processes
- Eliminate unnecessary bureaucracy

- Improve efficiency
- Adopt new technology
- Share ideas across departments

Innovation should be recognized, encouraged, and celebrated.

Performance Management

Every department should establish measurable performance expectations aligned with the City's strategic goals. Performance discussions should focus on:

- Results
- Professional growth
- Continuous improvement
- Resident service
- Teamwork
- Leadership development

Recognition should be given for outstanding performance, and coaching should be available when improvement is needed.

Employee Engagement

Employees who feel heard are more likely to be engaged. My administration will encourage:

- Regular leadership meetings
- Employee feedback opportunities
- Cross-functional collaboration
- Recognition programs
- Open communication
- Respectful workplace relationships

Strong organizations are built on trust, collaboration, and teamwork.

Workforce Planning

Long-term workforce planning should address:

- Retirement projections
- Recruitment strategies
- Succession planning
- Training investments
- Organizational structure
- Emerging skill requirements

Planning ahead protects service continuity.

Technology and Organizational Support

Technology should help employees serve residents more effectively. My administration will support continued investment in:

- Human resources information systems
- Learning management systems
- Performance management software
- Digital workflow automation
- Employee communication platforms
- Knowledge management tools

Technology should reduce administrative burden and allow employees to spend more time serving residents.

Legal Authority

Municipal personnel administration is governed by Arkansas law, local personnel policies, and employment regulations.

Municipal Administration

- A.C.A. § 14-48-101 through § 14-48-131 – Establishes the city administrator form of government and outlines the roles of elected officials and administrative leadership.

Municipal Employment

- A.C.A. Title 14 – Provides municipalities with authority to establish employment policies, organizational structures, and personnel systems consistent with state and federal law.

Civil Rights and Employment Law

- The City will comply with all applicable federal and state employment laws, including those related to equal employment opportunity, workplace safety, wage and hour requirements, disability accommodations, and anti-discrimination protections.

Workplace Safety

- Arkansas Department of Labor and Licensing requirements.
- Applicable Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) standards.

National Best Practices

My administration will encourage organizational practices consistent with nationally recognized guidance, including:

- International Public Management Association for Human Resources (IPMA-HR) – Public sector workforce planning, leadership, and talent management.
- Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) – Organizational culture, employee development, and performance management.
- International City/County Management Association (ICMA) – Ethical leadership, organizational effectiveness, and professional local government management.

First 100 Days

- Meet with department directors and employees across the organization
- Review workforce demographics, vacancies, and anticipated retirements
- Evaluate employee onboarding and professional development programs
- Review performance evaluation processes
- Assess customer service practices across departments
- Launch an employee suggestion and innovation program
- Begin development of a Citywide Leadership Development Program
- Establish organizational performance metrics aligned with this blueprint

Measuring Success

Residents should experience:

- Faster and more consistent customer service
- Friendly, knowledgeable employees
- Improved communication from City Hall
- Reduced turnover and stronger continuity of service
- A culture focused on solving problems instead of creating obstacles
- Greater confidence that every department is working together to serve the public

Employees should experience:

- Clear expectations
- Opportunities to grow
- Strong leadership
- Recognition for excellence
- A workplace where their ideas matter
- Pride in serving Bella Vista

Closing Thoughts

An exceptional city is built by exceptional people. As Mayor, one of my greatest responsibilities will be creating an environment where employees have the tools, leadership, and encouragement to perform at their highest level. When employees succeed, departments improve. When departments improve, residents receive better service. When residents receive better service, trust in local government grows. That is how an elite city government is built, not through slogans, but through people who care deeply about the work they do and the community they serve.

My commitment is to build a culture where every employee understands one simple truth: Everything we do begins and ends with serving the residents of Bella Vista.