

Chapter 1

Executive Leadership

Building a Culture of Excellence

"An organization will never consistently outperform its leadership."

Chapter Overview

Cities do not become exceptional by accident. They become exceptional because leaders establish a clear vision, develop outstanding people, create accountability, make informed decisions, and build a culture where every employee understands the mission.

- Roads do not improve themselves
- Budgets do not balance themselves
- Departments do not naturally work together
- Customer service does not improve on its own
- People make those things happen
- Leadership makes people successful

As Mayor, my most important responsibility will not be performing the work of each department. My responsibility will be creating an environment where every department has the leadership, resources, communication, accountability, and support necessary to perform at the highest level. That culture begins with executive leadership.

The Mission

To build the most trusted, professional, responsive, and forward-thinking municipal government in Arkansas by **prioritizing our residents**, empowering our employees, and preparing Bella Vista for the next twenty years.

Leadership Philosophy

I believe government should operate like the very best organizations in America and successful organizations have several characteristics in common.

- They know exactly where they are going

- Everyone understands the mission
- Leadership removes barriers instead of creating them
- Employees are empowered to solve problems
- Performance is measured
- Communication flows in every direction
- Innovation is encouraged
- Accountability exists at every level

Those same principles should define city government.

The Mayor's Role

- The Mayor is not the City's best engineer
- The Mayor is not the City's best police officer
- The Mayor is not the City's best firefighter
- The Mayor is not the City's best accountant
- The Mayor is not the City's best building inspector

The Mayor's responsibility is much larger.

- The Mayor provides vision
- The Mayor establishes priorities
- The Mayor builds the leadership team
- The Mayor develops future leaders
- The Mayor negotiates with other governments and agencies
- The Mayor ensures responsible stewardship of taxpayer dollars
- The Mayor creates accountability
- The Mayor builds relationships
- The Mayor sets expectations
- The Mayor protects the culture of the organization

Most importantly...

The Mayor represents every resident of Bella Vista.

Executive Leadership Priorities

Every decision made by my administration will support the following 6 priorities:

1. Residents First

- Every department exists to serve residents
 - Convenience for government should never outweigh service to the public
 - Before any major decision is made, one question should be asked. Does this improve the experience of the residents we serve
 - If the answer is no, we will rethink the decision
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2. Plan Twenty Years Ahead

Growth is no longer a future possibility.

Growth is our present reality.

Roads...

Water...

Sewer...

Police...

Fire...

Technology...

Every department must plan not only for today's population but for the community Bella Vista is becoming.

Reactive government is expensive.

Prepared government is responsible.

3. Build an Elite Team

Great cities are built by great people.

My administration will recruit, develop, train, and retain exceptional employees.

Every employee should understand:

- Their mission
 - Their authority
 - Their expectations
 - Their opportunities for advancement
 - Their importance to our residents
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4. Create a Culture of Accountability

Accountability is not punishment. Accountability is clarity.

Every department will understand:

- Expected outcomes
 - Performance measures
 - Deadlines
 - Responsibilities
 - Authority
 - Support available
 - Recognition for success
 - Opportunities for improvement
 - People succeed when expectations are clear
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5. Improve Communication

Many organizational problems are actually communication problems.

- Departments should not operate independently
 - Planning affects Public Works
 - Public Works affects Fire
 - Fire affects Planning
 - Technology affects everyone
 - Executive leadership must ensure departments communicate before problems occur
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6. Continuously Improve

Government should never stop improving.

- Technology changes
- Resident expectations change
- Construction methods change
- Economic conditions change
- Our city government should improve every year
- Continuous improvement will become part of our organizational culture

Preparing Bella Vista for Twenty Years of Growth

Bella Vista is entering one of the most significant periods of growth in its history. Population growth will increase demand for nearly every municipal service including:

- Road capacity
- Water supply
- Wastewater treatment
- Stormwater management
- Police staffing
- Fire protection
- Emergency medical response
- Parks (if we get one)
- Technology
- Public facilities
- Financial management

Waiting until infrastructure reaches capacity is not responsible leadership. Every department will maintain a twenty-year planning model updated annually using population trends, development activity, infrastructure capacity, and financial forecasting. Growth will not surprise this administration. We will prepare for it.

Organizational Excellence

My administration will operate under the following organizational standards.

- Professionalism
- Treat every resident with respect
- Responsiveness
- Return calls
- Answer emails
- Provide updates
- Follow through
- Transparency
- Communicate openly
- Explain decisions
- Share progress

- Measure performance publicly whenever practical
 - Innovation
 - Seek better ways to deliver services
 - Use technology wisely
 - Reduce unnecessary bureaucracy
 - Stewardship
 - Treat taxpayer dollars with the same care expected in our own homes and businesses.
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Decision-Making Framework

Every major decision should pass five tests.

1. Is it legal?
2. Is it ethical?
3. Does it improve service?
4. Does it prepare us for future growth?
5. Is it a responsible use of taxpayer resources?

If the answer to any of those questions is no, the proposal deserves further review.

Performance Management

Every department will establish measurable performance indicators.

Examples include:

- Permit turnaround times
- Road maintenance completion rates
- Emergency response times
- Budget performance
- Employee retention
- Resident satisfaction
- Capital project completion
- Technology implementation
- Financial reserves
- Customer service metrics

Residents deserve to know how their government is performing.

Performance should be measured—not assumed.

Legal Authority

Bella Vista operates under Arkansas law as a municipality with a city administrator form of government. The Mayor's leadership responsibilities exist within that statutory framework and are shared appropriately with the Board of Directors and the City Administrator.

Arkansas Constitutional Authority

- Arkansas Constitution, Article 12 – Establishes the authority of municipal corporations and recognizes that cities exercise powers granted by the State.

Arkansas Municipal Government

- A.C.A. Title 14 – Local Government. This title provides the statutory framework for municipal government in Arkansas.

City Administrator Form of Government

- A.C.A. § 14-48-101 through § 14-48-131 – Governs cities operating under the City Administrator form of government, including the powers and responsibilities of the Mayor, Board of Directors, and City Administrator.

Municipal Affairs

- A.C.A. § 14-43-601 – Defines "municipal affairs" and recognizes broad local authority over matters pertaining to the municipality, except where state law provides otherwise.

Municipal Powers

- A.C.A. § 14-55-101 – Authorizes municipalities to enact ordinances necessary to provide for the safety, health, prosperity, morals, order, comfort, and convenience of the city and its inhabitants.

Executive Authority Matrix

The Mayor

- Provides executive leadership.
- Builds consensus among the Board of Directors.
- Represents the City publicly.

- Establishes strategic priorities.
- Appoints members to boards and commissions where authorized.
- Serves as the chief ambassador and chief negotiator for Bella Vista.
- Leads regional partnerships and intergovernmental relationships.

Board of Directors

- Adopts ordinances.
- Approves the annual budget.
- Authorizes major expenditures.
- Establishes municipal policy.
- Approves long-term capital investments.

City Administrator

- Directs the day-to-day operations of city government.
- Supervises department heads.
- Implements policies adopted by the Board.
- Administers municipal services.
- Prepares and executes the annual budget.

First 100 Days

- Meet individually with every department director.
- Conduct a citywide operational assessment.
- Review organizational structure and reporting relationships.
- Establish executive performance expectations.
- Launch monthly department leadership meetings.
- Begin development of a citywide strategic dashboard.
- Initiate a comprehensive twenty-year strategic planning process.
- Identify opportunities to improve customer service across all departments.

Measuring Success

Residents should notice tangible improvements in how their city government operates. Success will be reflected in:

- Faster response to resident concerns.
- Better communication across departments.

- Improved customer service.
 - Greater transparency.
 - Better long-term planning.
 - Increased employee engagement.
 - Stronger public confidence in city government.
 - Measurable progress toward preparing Bella Vista for the next twenty years.
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Closing Thoughts

Leadership is not measured by speeches, titles, or campaign promises. It is measured by the culture that is created, the people who are developed, the trust that is earned, and the results that are delivered. If elected, my goal is not simply to manage City Hall. My goal is to build a culture of excellence where every employee understands that their work matters, every resident feels respected, and every decision moves Bella Vista closer to becoming one of the best-managed cities in Arkansas. Everything that follows in this blueprint is built upon that foundation.