

AN EVALUATION OF THE CANDIDATES FOR BELLA VISTA MAYOR

Bella Vista Mayoral Candidate Evaluation | August 2026
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JOHN FLYNN	WENDY HUGHES	BEN HUNT
C+	C	A-
Experience & continuity	Community & new vision	Leadership & execution

Why Ben Hunt Stands Out

I looked at each candidate's platform, marketing, social media, and website. My conclusion is that **Ben Hunt makes the strongest case for mayor**.

I did not base that on who has the longest resume, the best slogan, the most endorsements, or the most years in local government. I focused on a simpler question:

Which candidate appears most prepared to lead Bella Vista through the challenges and opportunities of the next 10-20 years?

For me, that means looking at the problems each candidate identifies, the solutions they propose, how specific those solutions are, how they would actually carry them out, and what kind of leadership they would bring to City Hall.

Three Different Cases for Mayor

John Flynn: Experience and Continuity

John Flynn has the strongest traditional municipal resume. As the incumbent mayor and a former City Council member, Mayor Pro Tempore, and Streets Committee chairman, he knows Bella Vista government firsthand.

- Keeping taxes low
- Supporting first responders
- Protecting Bella Vista's quality of life
- Expanding broadband
- Increasing side paths along major roads

Those are reasonable goals. His strongest argument is experience and continuity. Because he is the incumbent, voters also have a real record to judge: whether they want Bella Vista's current direction, pace of improvement, and approach to growth to continue.

Wendy Hughes: Community Engagement and a New Vision

Wendy Hughes makes a different case. As a current City Council member, she combines local government experience with a campaign centered on change and community involvement.

- Public safety
- Economic development
- Government transparency
- Smart growth
- Connected communities
- Fiscal responsibility
- Modern infrastructure
- Preserving Bella Vista's natural environment

She also emphasizes accessibility, listening to residents, and being active in the community. Those are real strengths. Her platform identifies many of the right issues and sets broad goals for addressing them.

Ben Hunt: Leadership, Systems and Execution

Ben Hunt presents a fundamentally different case. He is not asking voters to choose him because he has spent the most time inside city government. His argument is that leadership outside government - business management, construction, negotiation, accountability, and problem-solving - may be exactly what Bella Vista needs at this point in its growth.

His background includes 17 years of military service and more than two decades of commercial and residential construction business ownership. But what separates him most, in my view, is his preparation.

He tries to answer the question: **What would you actually do with the organization once you became mayor?**

Hunt Has Developed an Operating Plan

Most political platforms tell voters what a candidate supports. Hunt spends more time explaining how he thinks city government should operate. His Mayor's Blueprint addresses the major functions of city government while applying a common management philosophy across the organization:

PROFESSIONAL LEADERSHIP. EXCEPTIONAL CUSTOMER SERVICE. COMPLETE ACCOUNTABILITY.

- Mayor & Administration
- Communications
- Finance
- Streets & Infrastructure
- Planning & Development
- Building & Inspections
- Fire & EMS
- Police
- Economic Development
- Human Resources
- Information Technology
- Legal Services
- Library Services

That matters because Bella Vista's challenges are connected. Roads affect development. Development affects water and sewer. Growth affects police and fire coverage. Infrastructure affects economic development. Economic development affects revenue. Permitting affects homeowners, builders, and the tax base. City finances affect almost everything.

Hunt's approach treats Bella Vista as one connected organization instead of a collection of separate departments. To me, that is an executive approach to municipal government.

The Biggest Difference May Be Growth

Bella Vista's next mayor will not just manage today's city. The next mayor will help determine what Bella Vista becomes. Growth means more residents, houses, vehicles, development, public-safety calls, water demand, wastewater demand, road maintenance, and infrastructure.

The real question is whether Bella Vista prepares for those pressures before they become bigger problems.

STOP REACTING TO GROWTH. START PLANNING AHEAD OF IT.

That means asking now what Bella Vista will need 10 and 20 years from now:

- Where will road capacity become inadequate?
- Where will additional fire coverage be needed?
- What will population growth mean for police staffing?
- Can water and wastewater infrastructure handle future development?
- What infrastructure investments should begin now?
- How can commercial development increase city revenue?
- How can the city create predictable development standards without compromising safety?

Those are not flashy campaign questions. They are management questions, and they are exactly the kind of questions I think Bella Vista's next mayor should be asking.

Hunt's Approach to the Mayor's Job

Another difference is how Hunt defines executive leadership. He does not argue that the mayor should personally be the city's best engineer, planner, firefighter, police officer, building inspector, or financial professional. Bella Vista already employs people with specialized expertise.

Instead, he describes the mayor's job as setting the mission, hiring and supporting good people, listening to experts, removing obstacles, coordinating departments, setting expectations, measuring performance, demanding accountability, and getting things done.

That distinction matters. The mayor is not simply another policymaker. The mayor is the city's chief executive, so the ability to lead an organization should be one of the most important things voters consider.

The Comparison

Area Evaluated	John Flynn	Wendy Hughes	Ben Hunt
Primary case	Experience & continuity	Community & new vision	Leadership & execution
Municipal experience	Extensive	Strong	Limited
Outside executive/business perspective	Professional/legal	Professional/community	Extensive business ownership
Military leadership	-	-	17 years
Public safety priority	Yes	Yes	Yes
Infrastructure priority	Yes	Yes	Yes
Growth planning	General	Significant	Central campaign theme
Transparency	General	Major priority	Performance/dashboard approach
Economic development	Limited emphasis	Major priority	Revenue-focused strategy
City customer service	Limited emphasis	Accessibility emphasized	Central management standard
Department-by-department plan	Limited	Broad strategic priorities	Comprehensive Blueprint
Measurable accountability	Limited detail	Transparency-focused	Central management principle
Long-range 10-20 year planning	Limited emphasis	Future growth emphasized	Central campaign principle
Operational/execution strategy	Continuity	Strategic vision	Detailed management approach

A limited emphasis or lack of detail in campaign materials should not be read as opposition to an issue. This comparison is about the priorities and level of detail the candidates themselves chose to emphasize publicly.

Conclusion

All three candidates bring legitimate strengths. John Flynn brings the most Bella Vista municipal experience. Wendy Hughes brings City Council experience, community engagement, and a broad vision for change. Ben Hunt brings executive leadership, business experience, military leadership, a long-range philosophy, and the most developed operating plan for changing how Bella Vista city government functions.

That last distinction is what makes Hunt the strongest candidate in this evaluation.

Bella Vista does not lack intelligent people, dedicated city employees, or residents who care deeply about the community. What I think the city increasingly needs is executive leadership that can bring those resources together around a common mission and prepare the organization for what comes next.

The city is growing too quickly to manage tomorrow's problems with yesterday's assumptions. Bella Vista needs someone asking what our roads, infrastructure, water, sewer, police, fire, development processes, and finances need to look like years before the pressure arrives.

It also needs measurable expectations throughout city government and a mayor focused not just on identifying problems, but on solving them.

My Bottom Line

Based on the platforms, leadership philosophies, priorities, and governing plans these candidates have presented, **Ben Hunt makes the strongest case for mayor.**

But voters should not simply accept my conclusion. Read the candidates' platforms. Study their plans. Examine their records. Listen to what they say. Ask them difficult questions.

Then ask one question that cuts through almost everything else in this election:

WHO HAS THE STRONGEST PLAN TO LEAD BELLA VISTA INTO THE NEXT 20 YEARS?

Based on the information these candidates have presented to the public, my answer is:

BEN HUNT