

FROM THE MAYORS DESK of BULL SHOALS, ARKANSAS

10-9-2025

Greetings Citizens of Bull Shoals,

It has been a while since my last letter to you all. I apologize for that fact, but I have truly been busy working on issues that have not been addressed for several years, and we have been correcting those issues during the past 10 months. The state of the city has improved over the past 10 months, for example since January 1st, 2025, the city had in all accounts \$ 3,313,817.69 and on September 30th, 2025, the city has \$ 3,584,711.41 that is an increase of \$ 270,893.72.

The hardest issue I have faced is finding employees that have a good work ethic, honesty, integrity, and a willingness to go over and above, volunteering some of their own time to help this city move forward. It has taken a few months to find some of these qualities, but we have made great progress fulfilling the city's needs. We have a community-oriented Police Chief Johnathan Babb, A new and upcoming Police Officer Dominick Castagna, Officer Joesph Beasley, and Officer Michael Patterson working our streets and answering calls. We welcome back to city hall the previous District Court Clerk, Jessica Wilkinson. We have a new Water Clerk, Erica Harper, and a new Office Manager/Human Resource, Susan Walling and the Cities Recorder/Treasurer, Paula Reynolds. Paula has been able to pick up the new CSA accounting software quickly, making it easier for the city to make a proper budget (which hasn't been the case in past years), making it more transparent and understandable to the taxpayers. The city has had 9 months of figures so far and those figures have been posted after approval from the city council on the city website. We are presently working on the water and sewer budget this week and should have an amended 2025 budget ready to at next council meeting on the 30th of October.

I have made several committees and appointed several commissioners since I took office. I feel this is your town and we need your help, so I have asked for volunteers to help the city move forward in a positive way. I have a Parks and Recreation Committee, Law Enforcement Committee, Budget Committee, Water/ Sewer Committee, and have appointed with council approval 5 new Planning and Zoning Commissioners. Most of these individuals are our residents and are willing to help make this city a better place to live and visit. We can always make room for more individuals who want to volunteer and help prosper in our community. I still would like to develop a Helping Hands Committee which their mission would be to help other citizens in our community that truly need it, such as maintaining their house, property, picking up groceries, medications from our pharmacy, etc.

I personally do not go on Facebook, but I have heard from concerned citizens that there are individuals who want to discredit our community, stay anonymous, and post false information on what is happening in the city. This can only tell you the character of the individual while posting as anonymous or under a false made-up name. These same individuals do not care about this town, because if they did, they would be volunteering with the city on improving this town and promoting it for what it truly is "Gods Little Paradise".

I have been working with EPA through a grant program on the sewer infrastructure since the first part of April 2025. The city and this group are collecting data on all our sewer lines within our system trying to pinpoint where we are getting rainwater infiltration from during heavy rain events which in the past has

caused the final sewer lift station that feeds the sewer plant to go into a survival mode, per say, and by engineering design does have an overflow outlet on Rivercliff Road. My main concern has always been, even back in 2011, when I first learned of this overflow problem was to get started on a new sewer plant. The one we had was supposed to have lasted 30 years and at that time it was 32 years old. As Public Works Director from 2010 to January 2015, I conducted smoke testing on the sewer lines sending non-toxic smoke down the manholes and we found over 250 infiltration points from ground or rainwater entering our sewer lines ranging from manhole covers leaking to broken cleanouts on residential property, and all got repaired. Now that I am your mayor, my top priority is to find out why and where all this sewer and excess rainwater comes from during heavy rain events. For someone to say or come up with mimes stating I don't care are outrageous lies. We have done smoke testing on our sewer lines throughout the town this year and have found numerous broken cleanouts on residential properties, and other locations that we have and are still getting fixed.

In 2014 my next step was to rebuild the access easement roads where the sewer transmission lines run from the higher elevations to the lower elevation to the last lift station #16 that pumps the sewage to the sewer plant. This needs to be done so we can get equipment down to them to make repairs if needed, but the new Mayor that took office in 2015 decided to fire me, for I did not fit into his agenda. That mayor resigned after 2 years, and the council appointed a new mayor to take his place. Mayor Powell and I started working on getting a new sewer plant back in 2010 which continued with some changes. The city has a new sewer plant now that can handle 4 times the volume of sewage, but the rain events have increased and no one as far as city officials before me have tried to find out where this excess rainwater is coming from, until I took office on December 9th, 2024. I assure you, my employees and this new administration, which includes the city council, want to fix this ASAP (as soon as possible). This will take time and unfortunately money to fix this problem and as I told the Arkansas Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ), who can fine this city for up to \$10,000.00 a day for every day, we are in violation, we will need that money to fix our system. By me talking with ADEQ they saw that since I took over as mayor, we have been working with agencies to help locate our problem areas and that is why they reduced the fine from \$10,000.00 to \$2,000.00 and I told them I really could use that \$2,000.00 for any repairs we may find in the future and they stated but this was going on since 2019 and they felt they had attach a fine to get the city's attention. You as a citizen of Bull Shoals should be asking why previous administration did not address this issue back in 2019.

I do have to state that when we find these trouble areas they will be fixed and will cost money lots of money if we are unable to get grant money it will be up to us the residents and business owners to step up and pay the bill this is a fact, but as long as I am here I will do whatever I can to ease this burden on this community. My plea to you all in this community, if you have experience of writing grants come help us research and apply for these grants that may be out there so that the full economic burden doesn't just fall on us, the citizens of Bull Shoals.

There have been statements about this administration wanting to destroy what resorts we do have in town. Again, STOP THE LIES. The Planning and Zoning Ordinance states that resorts cannot have long term rentals they are for transient people and that is a person traveling through the area stopping here for a day or 30 days according to webster and the State of Arkansas definition. Like most things in our lives, time brings change like it or not. I would like to see this administration, which includes the council, to work with our resort owners that do have a hard time making it through the slow times during the year to

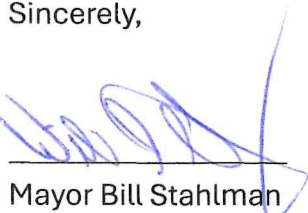
get a conditional use permit with the city that would allow them to have the opportunity to book transients to stay consecutive months at a time like someone who is building a house in the area, or contractor crew needing a place to stay while they have a local contract to fulfill, or snow birds want to get away from real cold weather. There can be many reasons. The resort owners will make more money from daily rentals over a month rent this is a fact. Until the city can increase the volume of visitors or transients to this town, we need to help these resort owners to survive. This administration is trying to do just that. This did not happen overnight, and it will take time to bring people back to this area. As a result of tourists or vacationers returning, they will need a place to stay the night as tourism expands, and people want to book at our resorts. The resorts will be available to rent out a room. Resorts not having a long-term contract with anyone would make this easier for them to accommodate transients. The resort owners would get a conditional use permit that would state how many units they are requesting to have during slow months. By doing this monthly, if the resort owner has a problem with a transient, they will have the ability to remove them at the end of the month or sooner. This would be a win-win for both the city and resorts. The city needs to offer people a reason to visit and stay here first and this will take time, but we are working on it. When that occurs, these transients will need to stay at a place that is clean, comfortable, and affordable, which will then be up to the resort owners to accommodate them.

This administration has found numerous problems with previous employees and officials and investigations have been started, this also will take time to complete on the criminal side and civil side of the law. We have many irons in the fire and good things will come to our great city. If you have questions on what is happening in our city and can't find the answer on our website or on the official City Facebook page come on to city hall and meet with me my door is always open. Don't believe what you may read on other Facebook pages those folks are just trying to stir the pot, making this town look bad and guess what they are bringing your property value down with all the negative posting and mimes.

I also want our citizens to know we are working with our banks to find out when the cities depreciation fund accounts were closed. We have discovered that under Mayor Hotchkiss had his final budget presented by Mr. David Nixon and the council passed the following recommendations offered by Mr. Nixon, \$5,000 was taken out of the Police and Fire Depreciation fund, \$46,142 was taken from the Meeting Place Depreciation Fund, \$50,000 was taken from the Parks Depreciation Fund, \$17,295 was taken from the General Depreciation Fund, and \$48,664 was taken out of the street dept and put into the General Fund. This all occurred at the City Council Special Meeting on May 30th, 2017, you can find these minutes on the city website. You must ask the question why this administration at the time had to use a lot of the depreciation funds to cover the overspending in 2017, and now those funds no longer have money in them.

Until the next "From the Mayor's Desk" have a blessed and Happy Day.

Sincerely,



Mayor Bill Stahlman
City of Bull Shoals