

KANISHER WOOTEN CALDWELL

1. What is the greatest need for your constituents that you would like to address? One of the most important needs I would like to address for my constituents is health disparities with an emphasis on mental health and parity and working towards the development of a mental health crisis center for the Delta. As a healthcare provider with over 23 years in the medical arena, I have seen time and time again the effects of the lack of mental health in our society. Mental health is a cornerstone of our well-being, yet it remains an issue that's often overlooked. Parity and mental health care is not just a goal, it's a necessity for the well-being of our communities. We cannot afford to ignore it any longer for the welfare and safety of ourselves and our children. As a candidate I am committed to ensuring mental health parity, advocating for policies that provide equal access to mental health care, breaking down stigmas surrounding mental illness, and promoting comprehensive mental health education. Together, we can build a future where mental health is given the attention and resources it deserves, fostering a society where everyone has the opportunity to thrive, both physically and mentally.

2. How do you plan to work with local governments to facilitate ongoing and future capital improvements? I plan to work with local governments to facilitate ongoing and future capital improvements by engaging in open communication with local officials. These exchanges would include identifying key issues, collaborating on solutions, and establishing regular meetings to discuss ongoing and future improvements.



I am committed to fostering a vibrant future for our community through robust infrastructure and sustainable economic growth. I understand the profound impact that well-maintained roads, bridges, and reliable utilities have on our daily lives. Beyond bricks and mortar, investing in our infrastructure means investing in the livelihoods of hard-working families, ensuring safer communities, and creating opportunities for local businesses to thrive. I believe in a vision that merges compassion with progress, where economic development isn't just about numbers but about lifting each member of our community toward a brighter, more equitable future. Together, we can build a tomorrow where every voice is heard, every neighborhood flourishes, and every individual has a chance to succeed.

3. How do you address funding to further support UAPB, an HBCU institution? As your future State Representative for District 65, I understand the importance of adequately funding HBCUs like the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff. The 1890 Second Morrill Act was passed and was specifically aimed to support historically Black land-grant colleges. However, many of these institutions, including the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff the Flagship of the Delta, have historically faced challenges related to underfunding and unequal resource allocation compared to predominantly white institutions.

Underfunding of land grant institutions can be attributed to various factors including historical discrimination, systemic inequalities, and budgetary priorities. Advocacy and policy changes have been made to address these disparities over the years, but the issue of underfunding remains a concern for all. My commitment is to advocate for increased state allocations, explore and establish working partnerships with private entities, and pursue federal grants/funding that will help ensure equitable resources for academic excellence and student success at UAPB.

4. What is your plan for helping to improve safety among young people? To improve safety among young people, we must develop a comprehensive safety education program in collaboration with the local government, parents, youth, and community members. Strengthening ties between the citizens and law enforcement is one step that will aid in fostering trust and collaboration. Initiatives that address bullying, violence prevention and emergency preparedness are needed. Establishing a mental health crisis center will help my constituents gain access to mental health services and awareness programs to support emotional well-being among the youth. Also, leveraging technology for educational campaigns, reporting mechanisms, and community alerts to enhance safety awareness.

5. How do you plan to help your district regain its standing as a retail hub (for example: bringing in more department, supply stores)? As your state representative, I will advocate for policies that will support entrepreneurs, promote the growth of local businesses, and improve the infrastructure of not only Pine Bluff but also Altheimer, Jefferson, Humphrey, and Wabbaseka. One of the policies I will propose, with the interest of my district growing and establishing economic gain, would be to provide tax incentives for businesses to locate or relocate to District 65.

Engaging with the local businesses in each city and listening to them to understand their needs will help guide my efforts in creating legislation that will promote economic development and attract retailers. Additionally, working with relevant stakeholders and participating in community initiatives will help contribute to the overall vibrancy of the retail sector in District 65.

LLOYD HOLCOMB JR.



1. What is the greatest need for the city at the moment that you would like to address? The greatest need for the city at this time is for all its citizens to come together, honor the work that is taking place and add plans to make the city better. As a sitting council member and candidate, I am focused on solutions.

2. What is the greatest need for your ward that you would like to address? The greatest need for Ward 1 is a thorough formulated and funded plan that addresses public safety, streets and economic development. Also, the housing stock within Ward 1 needs to be upgraded. We must have quality affordable housing options. Southern Crossing was the last subdivision coming to the former Southeast School site. We must re-establish a grocery store on the east side of town and continue downtown development. All these needs demand a thorough, formulated and funded plan. I am committed to developing that with all stakeholders.

3. With the defeat of the current 5/8-cent sales tax, how do you plan to work with the city government to facilitate ongoing and future capital improvements? The citizens need to know that you cannot easily replace a funding source such as the 5/8-cent sales tax. I currently serve on the city council's Ways and Means Committee and have served faithfully. That source has been significant funding for our city, particularly when you account for the amount of private funds that have followed that tax. Moving forward, the Ways and Means Committee will work with the mayor to monitor revenue and budget capital improvement projects.

4. Which improvements are of most importance to you? I am a public servant and therefore projects that benefit the citizens of Pine Bluff are most important to me. I've sat in multiple listening sessions and heard firsthand citizens say that we need better streets and lighting, restaurants, entertainment, better parks, blight control, code enforcement, housing and more. That is a thorough formulated and funded plan that is needed, and that's important to me and it is my commitment.

5. Eleven of the 28 homicide victims in Pine Bluff last year were 18 or younger. What is your plan for helping to improve safety among young people? Judge Earnest Brown introduced the Group Violence Intervention to the city council, and I co-sponsored the legislation and supported the initiative. It has a proven track record, and we are in the early stages of that program. I have confidence that it will have a positive impact and reduce the amount of violence among our teenagers. We must stay committed to that Group Violence Intervention process.

6. How do you plan to help Pine Bluff regain its standing as a retail hub for southeast Arkansas? (example: bringing in more department, supply stores).

The mall was a major retailer lost in Ward 1, and it will be difficult to replace the shopping magnet that it was. However, I must recognize the existing and new businesses that have come to Jefferson Square. Also, new restaurants have opened on Olive Street that give citizens an option. As a council member, I am committed to making it easier for people to do business in Pine Bluff. I want to remove barriers for businesses and therefore citizens can enjoy more options.

7. What is your plan for attracting families of potential employees at GTL Americas, which will be built 15 miles north of the city but in Jefferson County, to live in Pine Bluff? We must prepare our existing citizens with the skills to be employed by the GTL plan. Further, if we want to attract people in Pine Bluff and work 15 miles north, we must develop a thorough formulated and funded plan that is executed to make our city attractive. That plan must address all issues and be done expeditiously. This is an urgent matter.

MARLETTE BOALES

- 1. What is the greatest need for the city at the moment that you would like to address? Unity. We need to pull the departments together and work in one accord. We can make that happen through transparency and accountability. Get back to the basics, and the basics are the citizens.**
- 2. What is the greatest need for your ward that you would like to address? A safe haven for youth; crime prevention with the youth being the majority on the violent-crime end; and creating an environment where the community feels safe by building relationships with local law enforcement and its citizens.**
- 3. With the defeat of the current 5/8-cent sales tax, how do you plan to work with the city government to facilitate ongoing and future capital improvements? After trust is back instilled in the people of Pine Bluff, then the council as a collective can present new growth that will include transparency and accountability with detailed safeguards that the people can get behind. The new place will include surveys or research that should include everyone, not just certain classes of people or areas of town. We need to audit our current finances and work with what we have before submitting any new issues.**



- 4. Which improvements are of most importance to you? At the end of the day, the people rule. I need to establish good communication between the people and the council. In today's world, there are tons of ways to communicate so everyone's voice is heard. The majority of the people I speak with have similar complaints. Let's start by addressing those complaints. Create opportunities and the youth, disabled and elderly in the community (community centers, walking trails, educational/life skill forums).**
- 5. Eleven of the 28 homicide victims in Pine Bluff last year were 18 or younger. What is your plan for helping to improve safety among young people? I think the crime and youth run hand-in-hand. Intervention, you should start at a very young age and not wait until they are in high school to talk about crime. They should have resources to help walk them through issues, conflict resolution and the ability to make better decisions. Through my work at a nonprofit, I am knowledgeable about the term "Pipeline to Prison." These are real things that happen. Again, starting with the youth's comfort with law enforcement is a great start to building better relationships.**

6. How do you plan to help Pine Bluff regain its standing as a retail hub for southeast Arkansas? (example: bringing in more department, supply stores). Being flexible on zoning and tax. Help develop land options. Use current infrastructure that the city owns to rehab and offer incentives to lease or purchase directly through the city.

7. What is your plan for attracting families of potential employees at GTL Americas, which will be built 15 miles north of the city but in Jefferson County, to live in Pine Bluff? Make the current residents safe and secure and the people would be the ones to attract new residents. We have instilled trust in our current residents when they feel good about Pine Bluff which will radiate into others. The newcomers will feel a sense of community that I am accustomed to when I come home.

YVONNE DENTON

1. What is the greatest need for the city at the moment that you would like to address? The greatest need for the city at the moment is jobs. We should utilize our economic development center and the Pine Bluff Chamber to recruit and retain businesses. We should leverage our incentive programs to foster business incentives in our community.

2. What is the greatest need for your ward that you would like to address? In Ward 2, the greatest need is to address flooding, community safety, code enforcement with dilapidated housing, and vacant [properties should be cleaned.

3. With the defeat of the current 5/8-cent sales tax, how do you plan to work with the city government to facilitate ongoing and future capital improvements? Open communication with the mayor, city clerk and other elected officials. Review the current capital improvement budget and recommend adjustments for improvement. Attending public forums to explain the capital improvement budget.

4. Which improvements are of most importance to you? The improvements most important to me are street reconstructions and improvement. The effects of flooding on our streets and how we can better provide upkeep and maintenance. Our current internet and cable infrastructure is also in need of further upgrades and development.

5. Eleven of the 28 homicide victims in Pine Bluff last year were 18 or younger. What is your plan for helping to improve safety among young people? As an educator for more than 35 years, we have to reach youth within the community where they are



most inclined to gather, as parks, local sports and amusement activities. To improve safety among our young people, we should establish safety zones within our schools and community centers. Provide adult mentors and role models for our youth and educate them on improving social skills, becoming a mental health advocate, and providing interaction with others.

6. How do you plan to help Pine Bluff regain its standing as a retail hub for southeast Arkansas? This refers to our greatest need in Pine Bluff, building up our economic alliances, recruiting and providing incentives for business. Moreover, we should think of our affordable housing initiative, and use this tool as a recruiting tool for young families.

7. What is your plan for attracting families of potential employees at GTL Americas, which will be built 15 miles north of the city but in Jefferson County, to live in Pine Bluff? GTL Americas will provide the competitive salary needed by young families to build a thriving family in the area. We will focus on our award-winning school districts, and the wonderful family-oriented activities we have developed and will continue to build in our community. Our beautiful parks and recreational areas will foster their children's physical, mental and social development.

GLEN BROWN SR.

1. What is the greatest need for the city at the moment that you would like to address? This is a great question, but it is related to many of the needs of Pine Bluff. We need a better tax base, lending institutions to produce businesses and a quality of life that creates an environment that people would be happy to visit and reside here.

2. What is the greatest need for your ward that you would like to address? Not only in my ward, but all wards need to address flooding, littering and illegal dumping problems.

3. With the defeat of the current 5/8-cent sales tax, how do you plan to work with the city government to facilitate ongoing and future capital improvements? I'm not against a tax that would help Pine Bluff with capital improvements, but we must be reminded that the citizens of Pine Bluff pay some of the highest taxes in the state already. With more shopping areas and department stores, taxes will increase for the residents who live here, as well as visitors who travel through our city.

4. Which improvements are of most importance to you? Rebuilding houses on vacant lots would be one of the most central improvements, especially in the east and west areas of Pine Bluff. We also need improved street lighting and flooding issues repaired.

5. Eleven of the 28 homicide victims in Pine Bluff last year were 18 or younger. What is your plan for helping to improve safety among young people? We will continue to fund our police department and find ways to convey to our youth that there are negative



consequences of committing crimes. I would like to see homicide rates reduced. I understand that law enforcement cannot be in every place in which a crime takes place. However, a program that serves to educate our youth on positive alternatives to crime and crime prevention tips would certainly be a step in the right direction. Weekly family meeting nights with parents and youths could provide a positive dialog between law enforcement and families.

6. How do you plan to help Pine Bluff regain its standing as a retail hub for southeast Arkansas? I have been constantly having conversations with the mayor about asking the chamber to bring more shopping areas and restaurants to Pine Bluff. Some of these issues are for council members to handle, and some are not. As council members, we can make suggestions and assist from a city perspective. Sure, the stores we currently have in the city are great, but I would love to see an Olive Garden, TGIF, IHOP, Marshall's, TJ Maxx, Home Depot, Ross, and other stores in Pine Bluff. With the addition of these stores, nine counties would benefit greatly.

7. What is your plan for attracting families of potential employees at GTL Americas, which will be built 15 miles north of the city but in Jefferson County, to live in Pine Bluff?

I'm not sure about how to get families to move into our area with GTL Americas. That is sometimes a personal matter concerning where to live, but I think that this company will be a great asset to our area, and it will certainly bring new employment opportunities to Jefferson County.



KENNETH GRAY SR.

1. What is the greatest need for the city at the moment that you would like to address? The city of Pine Bluff has so many needs and therefore it is important to have progressive leadership that will collaborate with the mayor to tackle issues, particularly for Ward 3. The top of the list is probably revenue. This is the catalyst to address all of the other issues plaguing our progress or growth. Without this, practically everything is idling or on a decline in all areas. No administration would outright reject this with a conscionable mindset if they are putting the city first.

2. What is the greatest need for your ward that you would like to address? Ward 3 needs leadership that progresses crime prevention with more surveillance cameras and drug task force missions. Ward 3 is over-run with vacant/abandoned structures that need to be removed, particularly in the Westside loop area. If the houses are going to be removed, we need a land redevelopment plan. We also need leadership that focuses on bringing socioeconomic resources to improve social and economic well-being. These resources exist but need a connector. I am prepared to serve in that capacity.

3. With the defeat of the current 5/8-cent sales tax, how do you plan to work with the city government to facilitate ongoing and future capital improvements? In the absence of a dedicated tax to grow the city, our focus must shift toward retention, expansion, and the start of new business.



It is my goal to engage the Westside Business Association and other business owners in the Third Ward to understand what would assist in the retention and growth of their business. The city needs to aggressively control spending in the hope of not losing our essential services and at the same time complete those projects that will generate immediate revenue. It is going to require critical thinking and business practices through those that can leverage their influences to attract more dining options, and shopping choices that adapt to the needs of the people without jeopardizing the local businesses that have long been established. I can bring those opportunities to the city council in the form of legislation.

4. Which improvements are of most importance to you? It is important that we prepare the next generation of entrepreneurs to start new businesses. The UAPB incubator and The Generator are important to developing that talent. I also refer to my first statement on city/Ward 3 needs. We must clean up and redevelop our residential and commercial districts so that we can retain and recruit population. These actions will sustain and increase revenue to continue capital improvements.

A most notable improvement would be to remove the negative stigma associated with our public display of the city council as the outsiders look upon us as a joke or believe that we can't understand simple legislation as presented through repetitive questions and failing to recognize the response as given. This drama alone can deter investors, entrepreneurs, or probable new residents wanting to locate here or move back home to where they once resided. No matter how much we promote our city, the city council's public display is a huge part of the equation. All these issues and more are important and are linked. To improve the city and show an impact, we must address education, jobs, housing, blight and social welfare all at the same time.

5. Eleven of the 28 homicide victims in Pine Bluff last year were 18 or younger. What is your plan for helping to improve safety among young people? The Group Violence Intervention is an excellent start to keeping youth safe in our community. I attended the seminar when other city representatives visited Pine Bluff and discussed the effectiveness GVI has had on their community. I support the GVI and would advocate for more funding for that work. I also know developing more relationships between our parks and recreation department and our schools can help with safety. We need to keep our children active and focused on their future.

6. How do you plan to help Pine Bluff regain its standing as a retail hub for southeast Arkansas? We must improve our unemployment rate and overall workforce so that retailers know there is income in Pine Bluff to support their stores. Site selectors for stores are very detailed and if the economy doesn't match their product, they don't come. Therefore, working with our schools to make sure graduates are ready to contribute to the economy is essential. Also, and as stated earlier, we must grow entrepreneurs and their interests. The next William Dillard is living in the Third Ward, but we will never see that entrepreneur manifest if we don't provide opportunities for their development. The Sixth and Main retail and restaurant project is a prime example of the types of action needed.

7. What is your plan for attracting families of potential employees at GTL Americas, which will be built 15 miles north of the city but in Jefferson County, to live in Pine Bluff? As the County seat, Pine Bluff should be a community of choice for everyone getting a job at the GTL plant. We need to create a safe zone surrounding our city. Understanding what other well-mannered cities are doing and bringing those best practices forward through legislation and then enforcing them systematically and broadly in every aspect with a no-tolerance attitude. However, that is not the case, and it has much to do with the challenges I've mentioned in my responses. However, with the progressive leadership that I want to bring to the council alongside other like-minded leaders, we can re-establish the choice designation in our community. Our leaders need to immediately assess the needs of the GTL plant and confer with the local colleges to adapt courses to fulfill those jobs such as technical, welders, chemical technology, environmental specialist, etc. so as the plant progresses to production the workforce will have readily available trained employees

WILLIAM FELLS

1. What is the greatest need for the city at the moment that you would like to address? Improving our quality of life is a great need. To keep residents and attract new ones, we must cultivate good environments. There are areas in the Third Ward that need more street lights, better road conditions, speed humps, and new street signs. We also need a municipal clean team to help reduce roadside waste. The county has a juvenile clean team that works on weekends, which I think we should preserve, but we can cover more ground if the city has a team to cover weekdays.

2. What is the greatest need for your ward that you would like to address? See answer #1.

3. With the defeat of the current 5/8-cent sales tax, how do you plan to work with the city government to facilitate ongoing and future capital improvements? There should be ways to maximize the revenue the city is already collecting. For example, most city departments don't spend their entire budgets each fiscal year. That means they have funds left over at the year that can be redirected toward key priorities. The city should also continually pursue energy efficiency, and investigate ways to reduce our utility expenses in municipal buildings. Our savings may be marginal from this, but when operating on a tight budget, every penny counts. Finally, as a council member, I would support the grant department by identifying grant opportunities that align with the city's objectives and helping them apply for those funds.



4. Which improvements are of most importance to you? Many residents want to see better road conditions, more street lighting, better drainage systems, and more sidewalks. They want the City to hold property owners accountable for blighted structures. They want the City to do its part in creating opportunities that can reduce crime, and attract more activities for families and children. These are important priorities for me because they're important to 3rd Ward residents.

5. Eleven of the 28 homicide victims in Pine Bluff last year were 18 or younger. What is your plan for helping to improve safety among young people? When young people can't find support or opportunity through positive means, they're more likely to search for those things in the wrong places. As responsible adults, from family members to community leaders, we have to work together in providing constructive pathways to support and opportunity. The Group Violence Intervention Program (GVI) was created to do that. The purpose is to connect young people to jobs, mentors, health services, and other resources they need to find support and opportunity. My plan is to support the GVI program by holding the GVI team accountable and making sure they have the resources and staffing they need.

I also plan to do my part in building partnerships with parents, schools, and community organizations, in whatever capacity the City can, to make Pine Bluff a better environment for young people to grow up. Because government officials alone can't succeed in uplifting young people. We also need families to help by promoting structure, discipline, and positive opportunities in children's lives.

6. How do you plan to help Pine Bluff regain its standing as a retail hub for southeast Arkansas?

When I worked for the City, we took the initiative in identifying businesses that people would like to see in Pine Bluff. We contacted those businesses to persuade them to locate here. I plan to continue that outreach as a council member. We can't simply wait for business to come here. We have to knock on their doors, advocate for Pine Bluff, and tell them about our strengths. There is a myth that businesses won't come here because they can't succeed in our market, but that is not accurate. If the right businesses are set up at the right locations, they will succeed. People will patronize them from all over the region. People from all over Southeast Arkansas come to Pine Bluff now regularly to eat and acquire services. Due to our location, we can offer the demand to sustain businesses that people in the region want to patronize.

Once a company does show interest in coming here, we also have to be open to providing incentives they may need to do business here. As long as the incentives are reasonable and benefit the community, I would support them. Finally, to bring in more businesses, we must also work to improve our workforce so they can operate here. As a council member, I would work to connect residents with training programs that are available in the community. Building a stronger workforce is key to not only attracting businesses but also retaining the ones that are here.

7. What is your plan for attracting families of potential employees at GTL Americas, which will be built 15 miles north of the city but in Jefferson County, to live in Pine Bluff? Improving the quality of life is a critical part of attracting new residents. Some areas need better street lighting, road conditions, and drainage. Blighted structures need to be remedied. We need to be business-friendly toward developers to grow our housing supply. The community must have more activities for families to enjoy, whether that's a quality park space or a walking trail down the road from one's house. I plan to work with city departments to cultivate these improvements. The city should also work with local schools to do everything we can in a municipal capacity to create better learning environments, from cleaning up neighborhoods around local campuses to uplifting students through the GVI Program. Helping our school districts create good schools is important because that's what families look for when choosing where they will live. Good schools will also enable local students to obtain jobs at the GTLA facility when it becomes operational. We have several years before the facility becomes operational, but now is the time to start preparing so we'll be well positioned when that time comes.

MAR'TAVIUS PROCTOR

1. What is the greatest need for the city at the moment that you would like to address? The greatest need for our city at the moment that I would address is enhancing the quality of life here in Pine Bluff. This includes job creation, strengthening our education system, community revitalization, and improving public safety.

2. What is the greatest need for your ward that you would like to address? Ward 4 is in dire need of attention. In Ward 4, I would address the lack of litter prevention that we are faced with. As a councilman, I will propose legislation to create a clean team whose primary job is to maintain our neighborhoods and keep them clean.

3. With the defeat of the current $\frac{5}{8}$ -cent sales tax, how do you plan to work with the city government to facilitate ongoing and future capital improvements? With the defeat of the $\frac{5}{8}$ -cent sales tax, I plan to work [with] city government to facilitate ongoing and future capital improvements by ensuring transparent decision-making and collaborating with other officials to create a comprehensive plan.

4. Which improvements are of most importance to you? As a councilman, I will engage with residents and stakeholders to gather input, assess priorities, and ensure transparency. I will also work with our Mayor and other officials to develop and implement a long-term strategic plan that prioritizes capital improvements based on the needs of the community and growth projections.

5. Eleven of the 28 homicide victims in Pine Bluff last year were 18 or younger. What is your plan for helping to improve safety among young people?



My plan to help improve safety among young people is simply to invest in their well-being. I am committed to working with city departments to find ways to invest in measures to improve neighborhood safety, such as increased street lighting, pedestrian infrastructure, and crime prevention initiatives. I also plan to ensure that the City increases its youth outreach and engagement. As an Alderman, I will actively engage with young people through town hall meetings, youth councils, and other forums to listen to their concerns and involve them in the decision-making processes. I will also support and work closely with local schools and programs that provide positive outlets for young people and keep them engaged in constructive activities.

6. How do you plan to help Pine Bluff regain its standing as a retail hub for southeast Arkansas? : I plan to work with the Mayor and other elected officials to help Pine Bluff regain its standing as a retail hub for Southeast Arkansas. This could be achieved by offering financial incentives to retailers willing to open stores in Pine Bluff, especially in underserved areas or areas targeted for revitalization. I would also work with city departments to reduce bureaucratic hurdles and invest in infrastructure improvements. I also would work to actively recruit retailers and highlight the benefits of doing business in Pine Bluff.

7. What is your plan for attracting families of potential employees at GTL Americas, which will be built 15 miles north of the city but in Jefferson County, to live in Pine Bluff? I plan to work with the mayor and city departments to implement various strategies to attract families to live in Pine Bluff. These strategies would be geared toward improving our education systems, creating family-friendly amenities, increasing the availability of affordable housing, and enhancing public safety measures.



CEDRIC JACKSON



1. 2023 saw an almost total meltdown of the Quorum Court operation and much of county government. What could you do (or what did you do) as JP to improve the situation? I respectfully disagree with the characterization of a "total meltdown." It's sad to see and witness certain individuals going to media outlets to discredit members of the Quorum Court and their procedures when it comes to running county government. As a current Justice of the Peace who has been a very dedicated member during my tenure on the Court, I have worked diligently with my colleagues and the county judge to make sure that each procedure has been followed and all principles have been upheld. Issues that we have had to overcome this year on the Quorum Court weren't issues that dealt with individuals not wanting to work together. There were issues where members of the court were forced to decide outside of what needed to be done when it came to supporting the elected officials and the community. The problems we encountered in 2023 primarily came as a result of the county judge wanting power over the elected officials such as what items being placed on and addressed on the monthly agendas. When it comes to the Quorum Court and the County Judge, we are supposed to assist one another, not control one another.

In 2023, we experienced a split court, which included having to deal with several lawsuits that were filed. During this time, we had to seek advice from the prosecuting attorney and retain legal counsel. This was a troubling time for the Court because we were provided with legal advice on guidelines related to the duties of the Court and those of the county judge.

We experienced even more pushback from the judge and the other Quorum Court members to the point where the judge disregarded any information that we provided from counsel. There were several discussions with the judge about procedures and the role of each member. Again, the judge disregarded the information we received from legal counsel and stated that the Quorum Court members violated the law. He then proceeded to do things his way. So, improving the situation is difficult due to the several attempts that have been made to resolve issues with the judge and other Quorum Court members. In reference to that, my role is to continue to work as an elected official by upholding the integrity of the law and to be dedicated to holding myself accountable as well as the other elected officials.

2. What are two goals you would have as a JP in the next term and how would you pay for them if financing is required? In my first term on the Court, I served as the Chair of the Educational Committee, but for some reason that committee was dissolved. My goals for the upcoming term will focus on education and programs for the youth. One of my goals is to enhance and improve relationships with the community, the county, and the local college institutions.

This focus will assist the students with planning a better future once they complete high school. Some of the issues that I see are that students need to be better informed about their options and gain the necessary tools they need while in school. I have been employed by UAPB, my alma mater, for 20-plus years, and some of the things I hear the incoming students say is that they wish they were provided with more information and resources before enrolling in college. This also helps the county to provide a wider range of assistance when students are incorporated into the plan.

My next goal is to focus on programs that assist the youth with after-school programs along with activities that can be implemented during the summer months. This can help the youth find mentoring opportunities. Also, meals can be provided during these sessions, and certain education outlets can be provided for the youths, such as strategies to assist them with testing. These programs will give the youth much-needed support during the summer months so that their learning won't be stopped or delayed.

The funding for these initiatives can be through partnerships within educational institutions, the churches within the community, and grants. For this to work, there must be a joint effort between the Quorum Court and the County Judge. Considering the issues that we have had to overcome this past year; some type of mediation or conflict resolution strategy must be utilized if a problem arises. Because I have found that if some members or the judge don't support the efforts, your recommendation will not be put on the agenda. There have been certain disagreements between the members and the judge and all of us need to be on the same page.

3. What are some of the key issues associated with your district and how would you address them?

Some of the issues associated with my district are concerns with the court being transparent, the division between members of the court and the county judge, accountability of government funds,

and neglected roads that are in immediate need of repair. When it comes to transparency, it's important to have regular updates with the members and not wait until the meeting. This helps the members have a smooth transition during the meetings by having all questions that need to be asked about bills, payments, or any documentation that comes through the county. Allowing the members to see these documents can help us answer questions as a body and within the community. It's important that if something is being done or paid for by the county, the members are provided with the invoice or the necessary documents. Holding each member accountable is very important. Some procedures and policies focus on how the county should operate and how each elected official should handle their expenditures. Each elected official should be held accountable for their budgets and follow the necessary guidelines that are set in place. As we hold these individuals accountable, the yearly audits should be discussed in the monthly meeting after the members have received their copies so that the findings can be discussed. (There has been a motion every year since I've been on the Court to add these discussions to the agenda but the judge refuses to allow them to be added).

Being a member of the court and more importantly a citizen in my district for over 40 years, I'm dedicated to serving my community for another 40-plus years.

4. We have heard complaints from county residents about the condition of the roads. Is the county doing enough to keep them in good shape? And what can a JP do to improve them? County roads have not been given the attention they need. It is assumed that the JPs are holding up the progress of the county roads. However, the county judge oversees the road department supervisor and the staff that administers the daily operations of the road department. During the previous administration, there have been a lot of open discussions in reference to the roads and why they haven't been fixed. In my opinion, there shouldn't be an issue with having the roads fixed or serviced if the reason is that we don't have the manpower to run the equipment.

Due to the budget and monies that have been received, the work can be contracted out to agencies or businesses for people to be able to travel in safe conditions. Before the equipment is purchased, there is a need to make sure that you have the employees to operate it. There's another point of accountability. Overspending the budget has caused a major delay with these roads also, because not only will it cause the roads to be delayed, but the vendors are also not paid on time. The JPs can continue to pass ordinances, just as we have done previously related to road improvements. But it's left up to the county judge to make sure that the work is performed or carried out. Depending on what road or when that road will be worked on or repaired, is solely controlled by the county judge. This issue has raised a lot of turmoil within the Quorum Court, the members of the court respect the authority of the county judge. But it's disheartening for the judge to make statements accusing the JPs of holding up progress when it comes to the roads being repaired or fixed. (That control or decisions come solely from the Judge who then directs his staff).

5. One of the jobs of the Quorum Court is to levy the various millages in the county. This year, because of the dysfunction previously mentioned, the levying of taxes went down to the wire and was approved at the last minute, putting at risk all of these millages and the operations those tax dollars fund. School superintendents and mayors became highly concerned because the inaction of the Quorum Court would have had catastrophic consequences for their operations. Can you say how you reacted during this period as a JP and why OR say how you would have reacted as a JP during this period? To address the statement about the taxes going down to the wire, I have to say that statement is not accurate when it comes to the JPs approving the taxes. The JPs met, most of the members voted to approve these taxes in November and a few other members, along with the County Judge were not present. The tax was passed, but the county judge vetoed that item. Once the members were notified of the veto, we exercised our rights and overrode the veto.

So, it was clear that the taxes were passed in November. The reason for the meeting and addressing the taxes was for the judge to add an address other to the agenda that had already been denied by most of the members. We must agree that the taxes were passed on time, but like other pieces of legislation, the county judge refuses to place certain items on the agenda. Items that have been approved and passed by a majority vote of the Quorum Court members aren't recognized by the judge because again, he wants to have control of the Quorum Court proceedings.

6. Anything else you want to say?

2023 was a challenging year for me personally as a member of the Quorum Court. I had to endure personal attacks from a certain local radio personality on the air and in person, the county judge, members of the community on social media platforms, etc. These individuals have tried to defame my character and spread untrue statements. Along with myself, other elected officials have had to endure the same mistreatment along with not being able to operate smoothly in their positions by refusing to sign certain invoices and providing them with funding to function.

I'm seeking reelection for the same reason that gave me the drive to run in previous terms. Whether I opposed it or not, my hard work and consistency will still be matched with my determination to make sure the county is operated while holding everyone, including myself, accountable. As I stated in my recent address to the community, I come from a family of business-minded individuals who have provided great service to the community, and to add my 15-plus years as a businessman and over 20-plus years in education as well as providing services for the youth. My work speaks for itself. I am a dedicated member of my community and I want to continue to work for the citizens of Jefferson County. I hope that the people will re-elect me to continue the work I've started.

PATRICIA ROYAL JOHNSON



1. 2023 saw an almost total meltdown of the Quorum Court operation and much of county government. What could you do (or what did you do) as JP to improve the situation? 2023 can be described as an "almost total meltdown" partially because of the great progress members of the previous Quorum Court achieved by working together with our County Judge and elected officials prior to 2023. In the few years before the 2023 Quorum Court, I supported and witnessed the construction of three new county buildings, major improvements in our county budget and finances, and multiple bonuses and raises for our employees, to name a few. I felt we had the right kind of momentum going into 2023 and that momentum positioned us well if we kept our foot on the gas and continued to keep doing what was working. To do anything different, in my opinion, was to risk taking steps backward. That's why in 2023 I continued to show up and participate in official meetings, ask questions before and after meetings about ordinances, and urged other members of the Quorum Court to continue the same spirit of cooperation that we had prior to the court membership changing in 2023.

2. What are two goals you would have as a JP in the next term and how would you pay for them if financing is required? 1. Jefferson County was the first county in the state to complete a solar project. I think there is room to dive even further into solar to bring more savings and energy independence to our county. The financing could be structured similarly to our initial energy efficiency plan.

2. The county should add a grant writer to assist every county department with obtaining and managing state and federal grants. This individual (or team if necessary) could ultimately pay for themselves with the funds they bring in and with support from all of our elected officials. We are potentially leaving millions in funding on the table without a coordinated, countywide grant process.

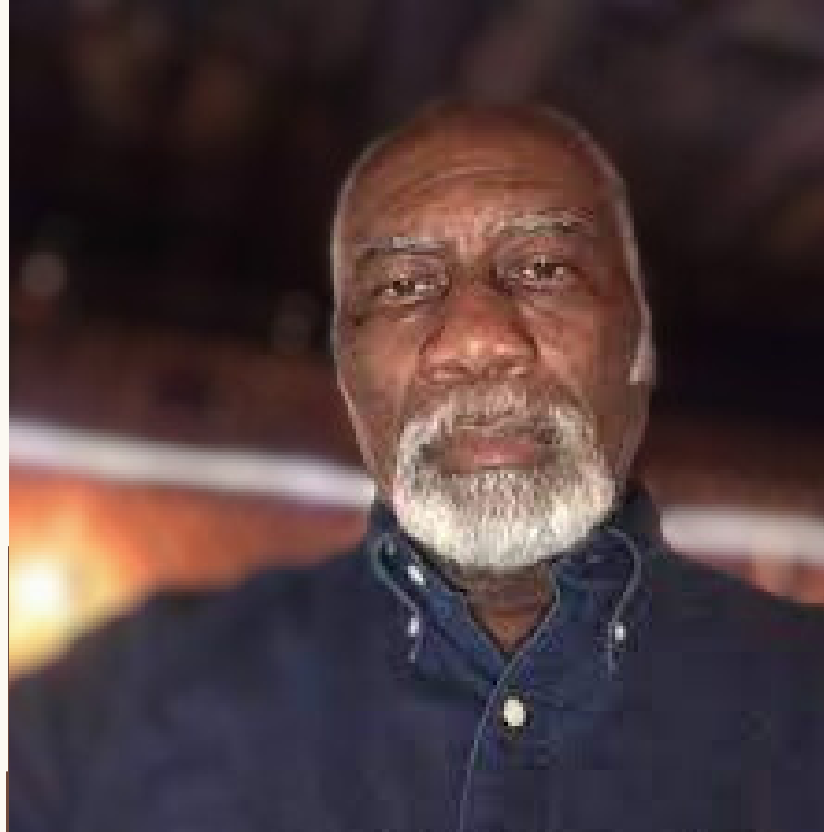
3. What are some of the key issues associated with your district and how would you address them? One of the problems that I find is that we don't have enough street lighting. I understand, for my area, that it's a city issue we should look into cooperating with the city on that issue.

4. We have heard complaints from county residents about the condition of the roads. Is the county doing enough to keep them in good shape? And what can a JP do to improve them? Roads are a big concern for our county and they have been for decades. I regularly communicate with our road department and County Judge. County Judge Gerald Robinson's road department has completed more miles of resurfaced county roads than any previous judge on record. It's important that when residents have an issue with roads I advocate for them and communicate with the Judge about their needs.

5. One of the jobs of the Quorum Court is to levy the various millages in the county. This year, because of the dysfunction previously mentioned, the levying of taxes went down to the wire and was approved at the last minute, putting at risk all of these millages and the operations those tax dollars fund. School superintendents and mayors became highly concerned because the inaction of the Quorum Court would have had catastrophic consequences for their operations. Can you say how you reacted during this period as a JP and why OR say how you would have reacted as a JP during this period? I was very upset about it. I felt that we should have approved it without reservation and I stated publicly multiple times that what some of the Court was doing was not correct and that we needed to support and take care of the needs of Jefferson County immediately.

GARLAND TRICE

1. 2023 saw an almost total meltdown of the Quorum Court operation and much of county government. What could you do (or what did you do) as JP to improve the situation? Beginning with the second part of the question, having lived in Justice of the Peace, District 1, for over 35 years my concerns surfaced long before the 2023 meltdown. When I saw the construction of new buildings and I monitored who was doing the work, looking and watching for Black-owned contractors, I saw none. It bothered me enough to contact the County Judge's Office. I was very surprised and happy to learn that the financial arrangement for the construction was for minorities and folks who looked like myself were doing the work. Plus many other folks were working. The County Judge kept me informed along the construction process and I attended the Veteran's grand opening, a very nice facility. What I witnessed was an Elected Official finally doing something positive in my community. Then I learned 2023 early on that chaos existed and Rules Of Procedures had not been established during the first meeting, a mandatory requirement, and worst case they should be implemented during the second Quorum Court's meeting. The best that I can tell, the rules have not been put in place for 2023 and 2024. My First concern, if elected, is to follow the rules and learn the JP handbook that governs JP members. Although not elected, I attend committee meetings and regular Quorum Court meetings to show my concerns. Plus, I decided to run for the District 1 seat when I saw firsthand a major problem. I knew that now was the time to step up and try to continue the progress that I had witnessed.



Two final thoughts: 1. When I go to a Quorum Court meeting I will have reviewed the agenda and prepare myself for the meeting. 2. I will always be on time.

Finally, my 40-plus years of business experience have caused me to listen. If Elected I will visit and listen to all residents in District 1 and Jefferson County. I will work with JPs and the County Judge. I will host a Town Hall Event every JP term. Yes, 2023 was a disaster that never should have happened. Note: Written Rules of decorum, maybe even a dress code may be in order if we learned anything about 2023.

2. What are two goals you would have as a JP in the next term and how would you pay for them if financing is required? Goal 1: Connect the Downtown area to Highway 79 North by extending Convention Center Drive to Highway 79 North close by and along the waterway and walking track, exiting just North of PJs on Highway 79 North. I believe that this project should be a joint venture with the County and City 50/50. I would seek out the help of the First Ward Alderman and Alderwoman for their help with business input and raising funds, grants, governor office funds, multiple agencies and participation from Core of Engineers and the Arkansas State Hwy.

If all else fails then maybe some type of bond initiative. Also, SBA should be considered. No tax should ever be on the table for this goal.

Goal 2: Extend and expand the current solar systems located behind the juvenile center to other County Departments. All sources of money listed above should be considered for goal # 2. Please

- consider the benefit of the goals listed such as**
- Homecoming traffic flow, eliminating traffic jams.**
 - Jefferson County residents north of the River Bridge can shortcut to downtown and the Casino without fear ever of homecoming traffic.**
 - Farmers have a direct route to grain mills and other businesses in the industrial area in the Packing Town area.**
 - Student safety around the college area.**
 - Bicycle trail from Downtown to UAPB.**

Now is the time to grow our Population by giving people reasons to move back or to visit our city and county. Now is the right time for a high-profile new business zone and recruit new businesses to raise our tax base. I believe that this facility should be visible from a main highway.

3. What are some of the key issues associated with your district and how would you address them? JP District 1 is right in the middle of Ward 1 in the city of Pine Bluff. Streetlights are key to a safer city. Police cameras throughout District 1 are needed because Ward 1 and District 1 are home to the majority of our major businesses and city and county offices. I have run and fought for these issues for many years. The question, now in my mind, is can county funds overlap within our city limit. In my opinion, they should and I will inquire if elected to Distract 1.

I have not ever seen a street-level benefit in the community but I have raised the issues with the County Judge. I will use the legislative methods, Resolutions and Ordinances in achieving outcomes.

4. We have heard complaints from county residents about the condition of the roads. Is the county doing enough to keep them in good shape? And what can a JP do to improve them? The Jefferson County Road Department before 2023 under the leadership of the current County Judge and before the 2023 meltdown, had acquired new heavy equipment. Now county roads and bridge work will be noticed. The workforce level needs to be enhanced to meet the resident's demands to fix potholes. JPs will have to pay close attention to their District and this will require a level of patience from the public because of hundreds of miles of county roads.

Although District 1 is totally within Ward 1, there are no county roads in District 1. Allows me time to visit other districts and help inform our citizens on what is being done to improve their lives and county roads and bridges. Jefferson County would benefit from a hotline to better address the resident's concerns and needs. I will introduce a resolution to the Jefferson County Quorum Court for a Complaint Registry. For too long our citizens have gotten lots of false promises and lies without any accountability whatsoever. Yes, in my opinion, the response time for complaints has been timely. The bottom line is a line of communication that will give notice to our citizens that elected officials are working on their behalf.

5. One of the jobs of the Quorum Court is to levy the various millages in the county. This year, because of the dysfunction previously mentioned, the levying of taxes went down to the wire and was approved at the last minute, putting at risk all of these millages and the operations those tax dollars fund. School superintendents and mayors became highly concerned because the inaction of the Quorum Court would have had catastrophic consequences for their operations. Can you say how you reacted during this period as a JP and why OR say how you would have reacted as a JP during this period? Folks let me be clear, I am a long-time business person and I have run large statewide nonprofit organizations that levied taxes and fees within, and if someone failed to do their part, that created a strain on the overall health of our organization.

I witnessed firsthand JPs' illegal actions and unofficial meetings and their failure to pay County bills, yet those eight JPs Stand like BOZO TO GET PAID FOR THEMSELVES. Their conduct was shameful and a disgrace. Holding meetings without proper notice to the public and the press, not to mention the levels of chaos and bedlam by the ring leaders, even I was even confronted by my opponent for videoing him during a Quorum Court meeting. My clear intentions were to pressure my opponent to do the right thing and pass the yearly tax levy legislation that affects a broad section of our community. The local businesses, school officials, local fire departments and minority-owned businesses are not being paid. Even women-owned businesses were not being paid made any sense at all and were a public disgrace. Not to mention the county's inability to levy taxes for the entire next year told the story about those eight JPs' actions designed to enrich themselves and take over the County Government. The real question in my mind is whether those eight JPs fit this prestigious office. I don't think any of those eight deserve another day in our County Government. The public played a pivotal and important role in forcing those eight JPs to do the right thing and not cause a county-wide shutdown. Never would I cause my community any fear or harm to businesses in which you are elected to serve. If elected, county business shall always be front and center in my deliberations.

6. Anything else you want to say? My bold thought and vision for Pine Bluff and Jefferson County, Arkansas is a MAIN ATTRACTION that will cause persons, couples and whole families to visit our city and county, maybe even considering making our city and county their home. My hope and wish are that my thought does not fall on deaf ears.

WIN TRAFFORD

- 1. 2023 saw an almost total meltdown of the Quorum Court operation and much of county government. What could you do (or what did you do) as JP to improve the situation? I am not certain I would call it an almost meltdown. I would call it a complete lack of willingness to compromise and come together to properly handle the business of the county. As a previously elected official, I am concerned about the total disregard of respect for our tax-paying citizens a few showed.**
- 2. What are two goals you would have as a JP in the next term and how would you pay for them if financing is required? We need a quorum court that properly handles the business of the county for its tax-paying citizens. Let's get all of our county roads fixed and properly maintained for our citizens so they can traverse them during all aspects of weather and emergency vehicles can handle emergencies with no issues. Neither of these should require extra financial assistance.**
- 3. What are some of the key issues associated with your district and how would you address them? My district is comprised of the heart of the city limits of Pine Bluff, and the main issue I see is the lack of communication and cooperation within our quorum court to handle the county's business properly. I hope to be the voice of reason that can be that change.**
- 4. We have heard complaints from county residents about the condition of the roads. Is the county doing enough to keep them in good shape? And what can a JP do to improve them?**



While my district has no county roads, I have heard about and seen terrible conditions on many county roads. The county has not done enough to properly maintain the roads so citizens can access their properties during rainy conditions. While a JP cannot improve them, they can work with the county judge and county road department to implement a plan that will solve the issues over a short period. I will work on all of this, even though it is outside of my district.

5. One of the jobs of the Quorum Court is to levy the various millages in the county. This year, because of the dysfunction previously mentioned, the levying of taxes went down to the wire and was approved at the last minute, putting at risk all of these millages and the operations those tax dollars fund. School superintendents and mayors became highly concerned because the inaction of the Quorum Court would have had catastrophic consequences for their operations. Can you say how you reacted during this period as a JP and why OR say how you would have reacted as a JP during this period? I believe it is a travesty that the lack of cooperation and communication between different groups within the quorum court and county judge's office caused such a concern in our cities, communities and school districts.

Had I been a JP during that time, I would have done my best to reach out individually to every other quorum court member and the county judge to see if we could reach an agreement to satisfy all, and allow our cities and school districts to continue handling their own business without the worry of the county failing to vote to levy and collect these taxes.

6. Anything else you want to say? As a lifelong citizen of this county, I value all of our people and am excited about the future if we can all work together for the betterment of our county. I promise to be a part of the solution and vow to never be a part of the problem. I look forward to working with everyone in a respectful manner.

BRUCE CARMAN

1. 2023 saw an almost total meltdown of the Quorum Court operation and much of county government.

What could you do (or what did you do) as JP to improve the situation? Whether you like or dislike someone, it's not about yourself. You have a duty to your district and the people to carry out their business.

2. What are two goals you would have as a JP in the next term and how would you pay for them if financing is required? My goal is a better quality of life and better roads. I will work with the volunteer fire department to ensure they have what they need to protect and serve their area. The road department is funded but may need more and the fire department. The county judge is working with them to see where they may be short of funding.

3. What are some of the key issues associated with your district and how would you address them? It would be public safety and security. I will keep them at the forefront of all the meetings.

4. We have heard complaints from county residents about the condition of the roads. Is the county doing enough to keep them in good shape? And what can a JP do to improve them? Make sure the road department has the funding it needs to do their job.



5. One of the jobs of the Quorum Court is to levy the various millages in the county. This year, because of the dysfunction previously mentioned, the levying of taxes went down to the wire and was approved at the last minute, putting at risk all of these millages and the operations those tax dollars fund. School superintendents and mayors became highly concerned because the inaction of the Quorum Court would have had catastrophic consequences for their operations. Can you say how you reacted during this period as a JP and why OR say how you would have reacted as a JP during this period? No comment.

6. Anything else you want to say? As the candidate for District 13, my interest lies with the towns and people in District 13. It's not about self or gains, it's about the people, I have a duty to them and Jefferson County.

JOSEPH O'NEAL



1. 2023 saw an almost total meltdown of the Quorum Court operation and much of county government. What could you do (or what did you do) as JP to improve the situation? To know that the county government was on the brink of a shutdown was unsettling. And for what good reason? It was a perfect example of Community Treason. This was done by certain members of the Quorum Court. If I had been in the position of a JP, at that time, I would have without hesitation stood against the tyranny. I would've stressed the importance of not losing sight of what we were invested to do, and by whom. It doesn't take much to respect one another, even while resolving conflicts. It's perfectly fine to disagree but disagreements should never turn into personal tirades, nor should they hinder progress. If we create a positive environment, everyone benefits.

2. What are two goals you would have as a JP in the next term and how would you pay for them if financing is required? Seeing what took place over the course of this past year, two goals I would have are improving infrastructure and promoting understanding between the Justices. I would explore options for government grants, private-public partnerships, and also allocating funds from the county's budget. I understand how important it is to find cost-effective ways to make county goals a reality for the benefit of the community. And understanding would only cost us a little of our time and patience to listen to the next person.

3. What are some of the key issues associated with your district and how would you address them?

As I am still getting input on the needs, from the residents in my district. But I have been made aware and seeing many concerns and about the road conditions. I do believe that the County Judge has made great efforts to create plans to drastically minimize this issue and I would be dedicated to making sure that this issue along with any other concerns continues to get attention as long as the problem is valid. If necessary, I would also advocate for increased funding for road maintenance.

4. We have heard complaints from county residents about the condition of the roads. Is the county doing enough to keep them in good shape? And what can a JP do to improve them? See #3.

5. One of the jobs of the Quorum Court is to levy the various millages in the county. This year, because of the dysfunction previously mentioned, the levying of taxes went down to the wire and was approved at the last minute, putting at risk all of these millages and the operations those tax dollars fund. School superintendents and mayors became highly concerned because the inaction of the Quorum Court would have had catastrophic consequences for their operations. Can you say how you reacted during this period as a JP and why OR say how you would have reacted as a JP during this period?

Again, this County should have never experienced the dysfunction that caused the desertion of the Quorum Court's responsibility. Justices must prioritize the well-being of the community at all times. Citizens have put their trust, their lives and their families in our care. I take that very seriously and it would be an honor to be trusted with such responsibility. The smooth functioning of essential services is a must. The Quorum Court has to be proactive, communicate effectively, and ensure that the operations funded by these millages are not put at risk. I would be dedicated to making sure this does not happen again.

6. Anything else you'd like to say? We are all responsible for this County's wellness; every last resident. But there are a few that are tasked with the responsibility to lead. There must first be a genuine love for people. While in the capacity of a Justice of the Peace, the residents must come first at all times.

JIMMY FISHER SR.



1. 2023 saw an almost total meltdown of the Quorum Court operation and much of county government. What could you do (or what did you do) as JP to improve the situation? I would have reminded my colleagues why we were elected by the people and what our responsibilities are in the County Government. Also, let it be known that yes we are the legislative body of the County but it doesn't operate independently of itself but works in lockstep with one another and the Judge.

2. What are two goals you would have as a JP in the next term and how would you pay for them if financing is required? My first goal would be to finish the road work that has been neglected to restore the confidence in the people of this County. My second goal would be to build back the working relationship with my fellow colleagues so we all can work hand and hand with the Judge on new ideas that will move this County forward.

3. What are some of the key issues associated with your district and how would you address them? One issue I see is that some of the public is not knowledgeable of how the County Government differs from the City Government. We must find a way to educate all of the different.

4. We have heard complaints from county residents about the condition of the roads. Is the county doing enough to keep them in good shape? And what can a JP do to improve them? As I stated in my answer to question # 2 still holds fast. During my last term as JP District # 5, there were records settings of resurfacing of roads.

We must pick up where we left off and finish what we started.

5. One of the jobs of the Quorum Court is to levy the various millages in the county. This year, because of the dysfunction previously mentioned, the levying of taxes went down to the wire and was approved at the last minute, putting at risk all of these millages and the operations those tax dollars fund. School superintendents and mayors became highly concerned because the inaction of the Quorum Court would have had catastrophic consequences for their operations. Can you say how you reacted during this period as a JP and why OR say how you would have reacted as a JP during this period? My reaction to the Quorum Court taking a stand of such nature was very dangerous. Without levying taxes, many entities come to a stop.

6. Anything else you want to say? As a Quorum Court member known as Justice of the Peace must know what our responsibilities are. Where they begin and where they end.

MARGARETTE WILLIAMS



1. 2023 saw an almost total meltdown of the Quorum Court operation and much of county government. What could you do (or what did you do) as JP to improve the situation? I am not aware of what you have termed as a "total meltdown of the Quorum Court operations." Contrary to what is consistently portrayed in the media, Jefferson County legislative officials can document the passage of significant numbers of legislation for the 2023 year.

2. What are two goals you would have as a JP in the next term and how would you pay for them if financing is required? I would love to sponsor and/or support legislation to build economic development for training our youth and young adults as county interns throughout the county. These individuals can work alongside county officials to learn the operations of county government while advancing their skills and crafts in the present and for future employment opportunities in the workforce of Jefferson County.

Jefferson County Mental Health collaborations with schools, children, youth, family services and county government are, in my opinion, opportunities to build capacity for advancing the county from several pillars of strength within this community.

3. What are some of the key issues associated with your district and how would you address them? I live in District 6 of Jefferson County, a majority rural and county geographical area.

Key issues for my district include the expansion of broadband infrastructure and capability, new and improved construction for county roads, drainage for ditches, keeping county roads clean and generally free from debris, grass-cutting service along the highways, and communicating with the constituents in the area. Adequate communication is necessary for the people to know they have an advocate on the court who is concerned about what is important to persons living in rural Jefferson County.

4. We have heard complaints from county residents about the condition of the roads. Is the county doing enough to keep them in good shape? And what can a JP do to improve them? I believe the county can do more; specifically, in the area of communicating how and when roads are selected across the county for service. Whether the service is a complete resurfacing and building up of a road or just to fill in potholes, gaps, and damages in the road due to age and deterioration, I would like to see more timeline approaches to selecting and completing road work. With that being stated, the county completed 39.52 miles of road resurfacing in 2023. This is a positive increase in work completed on roads for 2022. A resurfacing plan for 2023 includes several roads that are located in District 6.

We realize that work for some roads will carry over to 2024. In 2023 and here in 2024, allocations were passed beyond the already approved road budget by the Quorum Court, in excess of 1.2 million dollars to maintain operations and upkeep of county roads. The Jefferson County Road Department is responsible for repairs and for maintaining the integrity of all roads in the county. The County Judge and road department staff oversee the day-to-day operations of road repairs and services.

5. One of the jobs of the Quorum Court is to levy the various millages in the county. This year, because of the dysfunction previously mentioned, the levying of taxes went down to the wire and was approved at the last minute, putting at risk all of these millages and the operations those tax dollars fund. School superintendents and mayors became highly concerned because the inaction of the Quorum Court would have had catastrophic consequences for their operations. Can you say how you reacted during this period as a JP and why OR say how you would have reacted as a JP during this period? The tax millage was indeed passed in a timely manner by the Quorum Court. An actual vote of eight to five was provided by the County Clerk's office to the County Judge's office. Why that information was not passed on to the public can be best answered by the County Judge.

6. Anything else you want to say?

I will continue to work diligently for the constituents of District 6 and all of Jefferson County in 2024 as I did in 2023, my first year serving as a Justice of the Peace on the Quorum Court.

ALFRED CARROLL SR.



1. 2023 saw an almost total meltdown of the Quorum Court operation and much of county government. What could you do (or what did you do) as JP to improve the situation? First, let me say, that I did not remember my Bible, Ephesians 6:12. I regret not knowing to what extremes the County Judge would go to maintain absolute power; ignoring the Arkansas Constitution, state laws and/or his unfamiliarity with parliamentary procedures. What citizens witnessed and the news media reported, was not a meltdown of county government, but rather the County Judge refusing to follow Arkansas Laws, Roberts Rules of order and respect for the separation of powers of the three branches of government.

I did not know he would use my Republican colleagues and the County Attorney to hold the Democratic majority hostage. Nor did I know the County Judge would use tax payer's money (\$400-\$800) monthly to pay Mr. Donald to harass quorum court members in person and on the radio station he works for. I will continue appealing to my Republican colleagues to follow the Arkansas Constitution when deciding Quorum Court issues. Secondly, I will appeal to the Judge to demonstrate more transparency in his management style. I will also ask the County Attorney to be more, straightforward with his legal opinions, stop rebuffing questions from certain court members and stop requiring certain Quorum Court members to submit their questions to him in writing after meetings have ended. I hope to study proposed legislation more closely and continue to demonstrate respect for Robert's Rules of Order and Parliamentary Procedures.

Most importantly I will seek more community involvement and better inform citizens of the workings of county government. Finally, I will reach out more to the media, use more social media and hold public meetings to get the truth out. More transparency and inclusion will be a great start in restoring trust and a sense of comradery among all County elected officials.

2. What are two goals you would have as a JP in the next term and how would you pay for them if financing is required? During the remainder of my current term, I have already begun to give more attention to the Youth Program i.e. Group Violence Intervention program, an incentivized reading program for our Juvenile detainees, and recognition of area school Valedictorians and Salutatorians in area schools. Some monies have been appropriated. Additional conversation must be had on how it is spent. As county officials we simply need to get more involved. I have made a personal financial pledge to the recognition of the school's Valedictorians and Salutatorians and will ask other interested persons to do the same. Schools where detainees normally attend would be asked to assist with some of the record-keeping and reading literature.

Grant monies or private donations would be used to provide incentives and would be awarded to participating detainees upon their release.

Secondly, I want to see a full-time computer-savvy director of veteran services hired. Military officials suggest that area veterans and Jefferson County are missing hundreds of thousands of dollars in benefits, revolving revenue and taxes because of a lack of service. Thirdly, I will continue proposing new legislation consistent with the Arkansas Constitution and the County's needs that will institute more transparency and be a legislative reference for future County Elected Officials.

3. What are some of the key issues associated with your district and how would you address them? As the elected District 1 Justice of the Peace and Citizen, I am deeply concerned that, District 1 has become a food desert. There is not one grocery store in the boundaries of District 1. While I have communicated with elected City officials, I have not been invited to participate in a possible solution. This, I believe, is the most urgent concern of citizens living in District 1. On this issue I believe we should be advertising, making appeals and seeking out grocery store providers that have a history of providing services in heavily populated African American communities and/or are looking to establish a footprint in the South.

Secondly, all of downtown Pine Bluff, the seat of Jefferson, is within the boundaries of District 1. I think all elected officials ought to be involved in helping to develop ideas/plans to revive/improve downtown.

We see some of the work City Government/Urban Renewal is involved with, but the citizens don't know the how, why or what they can do to help.

It might even be feasible for the county to renovate one or combine two properties close to the Court House, creating a more spacious, more modern, public-accommodating Quorum Court meeting facility.

I think it would be a great action to hold bi-monthly meetings with the citizens of District 1, to share progress and some of the whys behind government actions. The various levels of elected officials need to have a designated time to meet and share information. Citizens expect me, as an elected official to know something about every situation.

4. We have heard complaints from county residents about the condition of the roads. Is the county doing enough to keep them in good shape? And what can a JP do to improve them? The truth is, as a JP, I know very little about the plans of the County Judge when it comes to the repair or the normal scheduled maintenance of county roads. Members of the Quorum Court have asked for a schedule of planned road work, but it has not been presented. This is an area that needs greater transparency. I want to know and Jefferson County citizens need to know. The County Judge, alone, is in complete control of all road work. There are rumors that the county has little road work equipment on hand. Some equipment appears to have been auctioned off. The fixing of county roads may be performed mostly by private contractors, meaning Jefferson County roads have to take a number. A published schedule for the repair and upkeep of county roads should be placed on the Jefferson County website. However, I would continue asking citizens who are negatively impacted by county roads that are in disrepair, to call the County Judge's office, come to Quorum Court meetings and even ask Quorum Court members to visit/travel roads in question.

5. One of the jobs of the Quorum Court is to levy the various millages in the county. This year, because of the dysfunction previously mentioned, the levying of taxes went down to the wire and was approved at the last minute, putting at risk all of these millages and the operations those tax dollars fund. School superintendents and mayors became highly concerned because the inaction of the Quorum Court would have had catastrophic consequences for their operations. Can you say how you reacted during this period as a JP and why OR say how you would have reacted as a JP during this period?

Because of Judge Robinson's refusal to recognize the 2024 Procedural Ordinance drafted (2/24) and approved (6/24) by a majority of the Quorum Court and his pending lawsuit, filed (9/24) the Quorum Court has been forced to work between two competing agendas. [A. C. A. 14-14-904 (b)(1)(A)(i)], requires the Tax Levy to be passed by the Quorum Court in its regular November/December meeting. The tax levy ordinance was first listed on the Finance Committee's agenda on November 7, 2023. The measure passed 8 to 0 during a roll call vote. The Tax Levy Ordinance was placed on the Quorum Court's agenda on November 20, 2023. The measure was passed 8 to 0 in a roll call vote. On November 28, 2023, Judge Robinson vetoed this and 4 other pieces of legislation.

In keeping with ARKANSAS CODE 14-14-912 (a) A measure to overturn Judge Robinson's veto was placed on the Quorum Courts December 11, 2023, agenda. Judge Robinson denied Quorum Court members, access to the Quorum Court Room. The meeting was moved to the Circuit Courtroom. The County Judge refused to chair the meeting. Quorum Court members acted, ACA 14-14-904 and voted that Justice Carroll would preside over the meeting. Under ACA,14-14-912 (a) by a roll call vote of 8 to 0, Quorum Court members, voted and overturned the judge's veto. The minutes were recorded by the County Clerk's office. Proceedings were broadcast by the Pine Bluff Commercial News Media.

This was man made crisis. The County, our schools, and public services were never in jeopardy. During this period, I communicated with City/State elected officials, Educators, Clergy and citizens; so the Quorum Court would not fail to pass the Tax Levy. In the future, I will reach out to the media more, use more social media and hold public meetings to get the truth out.

6. Anything else you want to say? Interested persons should read Amendment 55, Arkansas Laws A.C.A. 14-14-904, and others, that pertain to the functions of county government and elected officials.

Readers would discover that many of the actions taken/demonstrated by our current County Judge are not in keeping with the spirit of the law and his constitutional authority.

They would also learn that the Quorum Court has the legal responsibility to create ordinances/rules. The County Judge has the responsibility to carry out these rules. Only a Justice of the Peace can sponsor an ordinance and appropriate county tax dollars. Quorum Court members are not under the authority, direction or control of the County Judge or persons on his staff. The County Judge by law is to preside at Quorum Court meeting without the right to enter into debate or vote.

I would ask our citizens, why are a majority of Quorum Court members refuse to blindly support some proposed actions pushed by the County Judge and why is nearly \$60,000 of Jefferson County taxpayer dollars being funneled to a local radio DJ, his family and associates to denigrate county officials that speak truth to power?

Additionally, I would ask our citizens questions why three years of State Audit reports have not been placed on a Quorum Courts agenda, why \$70,000 was misappropriated in the Judges office, why 25 cell phone accounts were paid for with County tax money and why a proposed \$20,000 raise for his Administrative Assistant.

The public needs to know, that every year thousands of dollars are budgeted for the road department for up upkeep of county roads. A maintenance schedule for the repair of county roads should be placed on the Jefferson County website.

LLOYD FRANKLIN JR.



1. 2023 saw an almost total meltdown of the Quorum Court operation and much of county government. What could you do (or what did you do) as JP to improve the situation? I must respectfully denounce the mischaracterization of the democratic process. It is disheartening to witness the distortion of facts, especially regarding the delicate balance of power among the branches of our government. As a Justice of the Peace and a dedicated member of the legislative body for Jefferson County Government, I have diligently sought to uphold the principles of our democratic system. The challenges faced by the Quorum Court in 2023 were not a result of internal breakdowns but rather a reflection of the fundamental importance of preserving the separation of powers.

The suggested "meltdown" stemmed from the Executive branch's overreach, particularly by the County Judge, who infringed upon the constitutional rights and duties of the legislative branch. It is essential to recognize that no single branch possesses unchecked authority, and each must operate within its prescribed limits. Throughout this tumultuous period, I sought legal counsel, including guidance from the county prosecutor, to ensure an unbiased interpretation of the separation of powers doctrine. Despite clear legal advice affirming the authority of the Quorum Court, the County Judge chose to disregard counsel and pursue a path of unilateral control. I made numerous attempts, both through oral arguments and written communication, to direct the County Judge to the pertinent laws supporting the position of the Quorum Court.

Regrettably, these efforts were met with indifference and a refusal to acknowledge the established legal framework. In light of these challenges, it is imperative that we reaffirm our commitment to the principles of democracy and the rule of law. Upholding the integrity of our governmental institutions requires vigilance and a steadfast dedication to ensuring accountability and transparency at every level.

2. What are two goals you would have as a JP in the next term and how would you pay for them if financing is required? The opportunity to share my vision for the upcoming term as a Justice of the Peace is vital. In addressing the pressing issues facing our legislative body, the Quorum Court, I believe that fostering a greater adherence to the principles of the separation of powers doctrine, as outlined in the Arkansas Constitution, is paramount. Here are two goals I would pursue and how we can fund them if necessary.

Education and Advocacy: One of the primary goals would be to enhance education and advocacy efforts regarding the separation of powers doctrine. Many may not fully understand the importance of this constitutional principle or its implications for our local governance.

By organizing seminars, workshops, and informational sessions, we can empower both our constituents and fellow officials with the knowledge needed to uphold the integrity of our governmental structure. Funding for such initiatives could be sought through partnerships with educational institutions, community organizations, and grants earmarked for civic education programs.

Mediation and Conflict Resolution: Another crucial objective would involve implementing effective mediation and conflict resolution mechanisms to address disputes arising from breaches of the separation of powers. When disagreements occur between the Quorum Court and the County Judge, it's essential to have structured processes in place for resolving conflicts amicably and in accordance with legal principles. Investing in professional mediation services and training for officials in conflict resolution techniques could be financed through budget allocations specifically designated for improving inter-branch relations and promoting governmental efficiency.

In achieving these goals, collaboration and cooperation among all stakeholders will be key. It's imperative that we transcend partisan divides and prioritize the collective interests of our community. By fostering an environment of mutual respect, open dialogue, and a shared commitment to the principles of democratic governance, we can ensure that the business of the people is conducted effectively and without discord.

3. What are some of the key issues associated with your district and how would you address them?
Through conversations with constituents, it's evident that one of the primary concerns is the need for greater transparency in county government, coupled with accountability for public funds. Additionally, many residents have expressed a desire for a county judge who respects the separation of powers doctrine between the legislative (quorum court) and executive (county judge) branches of government.

Democracy thrives on transparency, accountability, and the effective functioning of its branches. As your elected Justice of the Peace, I am committed to addressing these concerns in several ways:

Transparency Initiatives: Implementing measures to enhance transparency within the county government, such as regular public updates on budget allocations, expenditures, and decision-making processes. This could involve hosting town hall meetings and maintaining an accessible online portal for residents to track county finances.

Accountability Measures: Advocate for policies and procedures that promote accountability for the use of public funds. This includes more rigorous oversight of county expenditures, and adherence to budgetary guidelines to ensure fiscal responsibility and integrity.

Respecting Separation of Powers: As a Justice of the Peace, I will continue to uphold the principles of the separation of powers doctrine by collaborating with fellow members of the quorum court to exercise legislative authority responsibly. It is essential to maintain a healthy balance of power between the legislative and executive branches, ensuring that each operates within its designated scope of authority.

Engagement and Outreach: Facilitating open channels of communication between county officials and constituents is crucial for fostering trust and promoting civic engagement. I will continue to actively engage citizens and elected officials to ensure that their voices are heard and their concerns are addressed.

By prioritizing transparency, accountability, and the principles of democratic governance, I am dedicated to serving the best interests of Jefferson County Quorum Court District 5 and its residents.

4. We have heard complaints from county residents about the condition of the roads. Is the county doing enough to keep them in good shape? And what can a JP do to improve them? Insufficient attention is directed towards county roads, and county courthouse parking lots including simple striping to identify regular and handicap parking designations necessitating clarification of responsibilities outlined in Arkansas Code Annotated A.C.A. § 14-14-502(b)(1)-(3) governing county government divisions. The Quorum Court and the County Judge possess distinct roles in planning and constructing public roads. A.C.A. § 14-14-502(b)(1)-(3) delineates the divisions and separate powers of county government: legislative (quorum court), executive (county judge), and judicial (county court). Regarding funding for road maintenance, the Quorum Court has diligently fulfilled its constitutional duties. Under County Judge Gerald Robinson's Administration, appropriations totaling \$29,492,368.70 exceeded those of the three preceding County Judges by an annual average of \$5,898,473.74. Unfortunately, mismanagement by Judge Robinson depleted the County Road Emergency Reserve Fund, necessitating unprecedented supplemental appropriations from alternative funds, exceeding \$1,000,000.00, not traditionally allocated for road projects. Judge Robinson's allocation of taxpayer dollars to vendors and contractors in exchange for campaign contributions is evident in his campaign financial report. Perhaps campaign donors are more of a priority for Judge Robinson or Justices like Danny Holcomb who has been a benefactor of a brand-new road improvements completed to the road his personal residence is located. Although the Quorum Court may pass ordinances regarding roads or road plans, it lacks authority to restrict the County Judge's jurisdiction over county roads. Establishing a county planning board, as authorized by A.C.A. § 14-17-203, could improve roads by drafting an official road plan and holding town hall meetings to gather public input on road conditions. Presently, such input is restricted by the County Judge's control over the agenda during full Quorum Court meetings.

In conclusion, while the Quorum Court respects the County Judge's authority over county roads, it remains committed to fostering constructive dialogue and exploring avenues for improvement.

5. One of the jobs of the Quorum Court is to levy the various millages in the county. This year, because of the dysfunction previously mentioned, the levying of taxes went down to the wire and was approved at the last minute, putting at risk all of these millages and the operations those tax dollars fund. School superintendents and mayors became highly concerned because the inaction of the Quorum Court would have had catastrophic consequences for their operations. Can you say how you reacted during this period as a JP and why OR say how you would have reacted as a JP during this period? In response to the assertion that the levying of taxes by the Quorum Court went down to the wire and was approved at the last minute. I must strongly reject this notion as it does not accurately represent the proceedings and commitment of the Quorum Court members. Contrary to the suggestion of disinterest, the majority of Quorum Court members took their responsibilities seriously. It is regrettable that the local media failed to report that the Quorum Court, by the majority, convened on November 20, 2023, in the absence of the County Judge, to levy tax rates for 2023 as mandated by A.C.A. § 14-14-904. Following this, County Judge Robinson exercised his authority to veto those items, as allowed by A.C.A. § 14-14-911(a). However, the Quorum Court, adhering to the provisions of the Arkansas Constitution, Amendment 55, § 4, duly exercised its power to override the veto. Therefore, it was clear at that time that the issue had passed. The subsequent meeting held on December 20, 2023, was merely to reiterate the levy of ad valorem tax rates, prompted by County Judge Robinson's attempt to portray the issue as unresolved. His actions were aimed at adding other items to the agenda that had previously been rejected by the majority of justices. It is essential to understand that the Quorum Court members remain steadfast in their commitment to the advancement of Jefferson County, despite any disagreements with other branches of government."

As a Justice of the Peace, I stand firm in affirming that the Quorum Court acted diligently and responsibly throughout this process, ensuring that the essential operations funded by these tax dollars were not put at risk. It is imperative to set the record straight regarding the timeline and actions taken by the Quorum Court members.

6. Anything else you want to say? I am seeking reelection for the same purpose that drove me to run for this office during the previous term: at the behest of countywide elected officials who have faced mistreatment and insufficient funding. Upon assuming office, I set forth two primary objectives: establishing a fair and transparent budgeting procedure and providing an open and transparent agenda accessible to all elected officials. I have successfully achieved these goals and remain committed to upholding accountability, fairness, and transparency within county government moving forward. While it may not be widely acknowledged, Jefferson County is currently facing a critical juncture. The county is entangled in numerous lawsuits due to the practices and commitments of Judge Gerald Robinson's administration in conducting business which includes support from compromised Justices of the Peace who blindly support this behavior. These issues range from illegal contracts, the absence of competitive bidding processes for sums of millions of taxpayers' money to instances of outright theft of funds and property from the county, as identified by the Arkansas Legislative Audit Report (2020, 2021). Lawsuits settled in secrecy and/or under the cover of darkness, thieves, conspirators and co-conspirators allowed to leave the employment of the county unpunished are examples of the current standard. Kickbacks and corruption run afoul in Jefferson County. All individuals who defraud the county must be held accountable to the fullest extent, including prosecution. Power tends to corrupt; absolute power corrupts absolutely (Lord Acton). I pledge to exhaust all available resources at my disposal to pursue individuals who misuse, abuse, or misappropriate public funds and/or property.

I hail from a family of public servants, equipped with a business-oriented mindset, backed by over 20 years of experience, coupled with 8 years of service as a Justice of the Peace. I know the policies, I know the law, I know the job

LORETTA WHITFIELD



1. Why are you running for treasurer? I am running for City Treasurer to restore transparency and accountability to the city's finances. I also want to continue serving the citizens of Pine Bluff by utilizing the municipal training my employment has provided me for over 30 years. I was the City Clerk for 16 years of my 34-year career.

2. What is your experience in bookkeeping? As the City Clerk, I processed financial transactions for more than 20 million dollars annually. I developed powerful skills in managing my own department's budget. I also prepared financial reports for the City's Non-uniform Retirement system.

3. What are some of the specific steps you would take if elected? If elected, I will seek to restore public trust and enhance transparency and accountability. I plan to make financial information easily accessible to the public by creating a website for all citizens to view all financial reports at their leisure.

4. What will be your top three goals or initiatives as treasurer? As City Treasurer, my goals are financial transparency, accountability, and community engagement.

5. The treasurer cannot vote on ordinances but plays a vital role in the city's government. What do you believe is the most critical duty of the treasurer, and why? The City Treasurer's most critical duty is to enhance public trust by ensuring the accuracy of the financial information provided by the city and the bank are identical.

6. The treasurer's office tends to be opaque to residents. How will you, as treasurer, work to make the treasurer's office more transparent and responsive to residents' concerns? I would make the treasurer's office more transparent and responsive to residents by making financial information easily accessible to citizens through a City Treasurer's Website, which I plan to create.

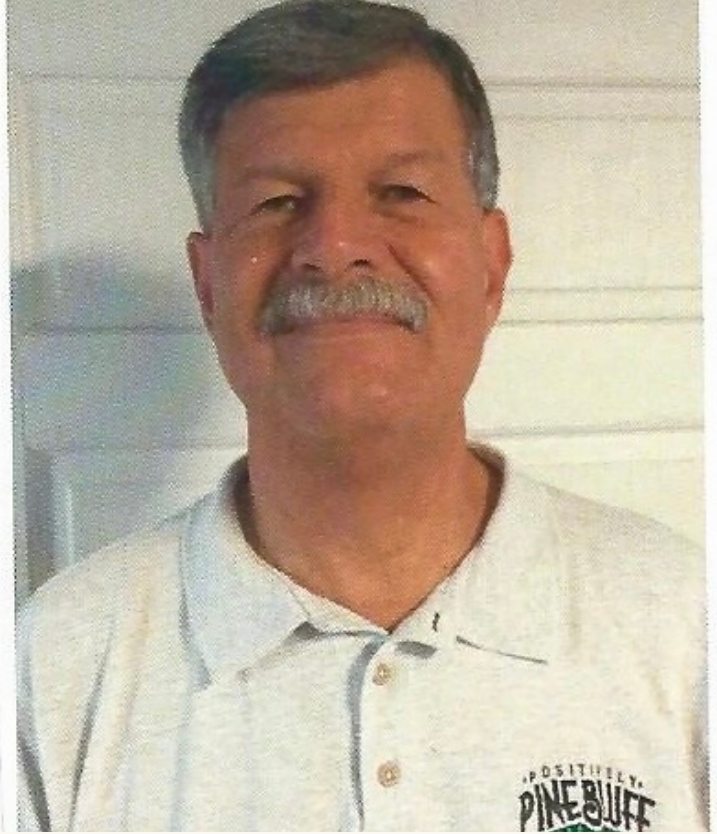
7. What are ways you will collaborate with other city officials to make Pine Bluff's budget process more efficient and participatory with residents? By law, the mayor and city council prepare the budget. However, I would work closely with the Finance Department and City Clerk's Office to monitor and ensure the numbers are accurate. I will prepare monthly reports that are filed with the city council, which will help residents have faith in their elected officials.

8. What distinguishes you from other candidates? The depth and breadth of my experience with law enforcement and municipal administration set me apart from my opponent. I worked with the Police Department in every division for 18 years. Consequently, I oppose white-collar crime and public corruption.

As the City Clerk, I worked with the Finance Department for 16 years. I oversaw monthly financial reports on the City's Non-Uniform Retirement System for more than 400 employees. I processed invoices and printed checks for all 14 departments weekly for 16 years. I managed the City Clerk's budget each year and successfully maintained clean audits from the Legislative Auditor.



GREGORY GUSTEK



1. Why are you running for treasurer? I am running for re-election because I enjoy my position and I am doing important work for my hometown.

2. What is your experience in bookkeeping? Manager for Music Land, Business Manager for Jefferson Motors, General Manager for Vic Brown Motors, Director of the Pine Bluff Convention & Visitors Bureau and Executive Director of the Pine Bluff Festival Association. Every position required me to keep records, make contracts and stay within budget parameters with twenty-four years of experience as City Treasurer. In the Convention & Visitors Bureau (taxpayer's money) I was director for 14 years, prepared the budget each year, and in that time I never had to request a budget adjustment.

3. What are some of the specific steps you would take if elected? The job description for City Treasurer is determined by the State of Arkansas' State statutes, which I follow and have abided by my whole tenure. If I have an issue or concern, I meet with our City Attorney to make sure I am in compliance.

4. What will be your top three goals or initiatives as treasurer? To keep doing my 7 pages of reports that I do each month, so the Mayor and Council are aware of the city's financial status.

Continue to handle any banking issues that arise and fix them immediately.

Continue to work well with the Mayor, Council, other elected officials and Department Heads.

5. The treasurer cannot vote on ordinances but plays a vital role in the city's government. What do you believe is the most critical duty of the treasurer, and why? The Treasurer is listed as the checks and balances, and the banker. I do my monthly reports separately from the Finance Department. My reports are not even done on the city's bookkeeping system. They are done on my computer, a different system and then taken into the Finance Department and are balanced with the Internal Auditor. The great news is we balance to the penny. There is no rounding off of numbers, by my rules we must balance to the penny or we find the problem and fix it. As a Banker, if there is an issue on an account or problem, I am informed and I contact my high-ranking officers at the financial institutions to get it fixed.

6. The treasurer's office tends to be opaque to residents. How will you, as treasurer, work to make the treasurer's office more transparent and responsive to residents' concerns? The finance office, because of security is really not open to the public. The Treasurer is a position that is never really off, I am on duty all the time and the public can and has contacted me to ask questions and get answers in the past.

However, some questions cannot be answered because of security issues. If I do not know the answer I will do my best to find someone that does. My email is greggl@cityofpinebluff-ar.gov.

7. What are ways you will collaborate with other city officials to make Pine Bluff's budget process more efficient and participatory with residents? The budget process takes a lot of meetings with department heads, the mayor, and appropriate city council members. The finance director handles that which is her job as she is over all of the day-to-day operations of the finance department. I have attended meetings through the years, and have never seen a person from the public. Any committee meeting is open to the public as it is to the press.

8. What distinguishes you from other candidates? Twenty-four years of experience and have great working relations with the Mayor and City Council, Department Heads and the financial institutions, which means if we have an issue we work together and resolve it. And besides: I AM PINE BLUFF PROUD!

MARY LIDDELL

1. Why are you running for city clerk?

I am running for City Clerk because I excel in administrative work. My skills go beyond just typing. I have project management skills, leadership skills, and sound decision-making skills. I can prioritize my work, I have outstanding listening skills, and I love working and talking to people. I would like to utilize my former work skills as a Loan Officer and Processor to make sure the city clerk's office is run efficiently. As a retired educator, I would like to continue the work ethic that I use in and out of the classroom. It is important to have a great relationship with the employees that you work with.

2. Do you have prior experience working with local government? If so, what position did you hold?

For the last 7 years, I have worked as a floater for the City of Pine Bluff. I visit at least 15 of the offices in the building. I was the City of Pine Bluff's 2020 Census Coordinator. I had over 100 people working to make sure that all citizens in Pine Bluff were counted. I worked at the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff as the USDA Liaison Officer making sure that the university and USDA worked hand in hand to help students find jobs during the summer and after graduating from college. The city clerk's office acts as a liaison between the city council and the general public ensuring transparency and communication.

3. Describe your experience preparing ordinances, resolutions, or proclamations for execution, recording, archiving, or distribution. As a floater, I worked many times in the mayor's office preparing resolutions and proclamations for the general public.



I prepared ordinances and other documents when I worked for the Farmers Home Administration (FMHA) and the National Bank of Commerce making sure that the mortgage loan paperwork was completed, filed and recorded.

4. How do you go about ensuring the city is compliant with all laws, regulations, and standards that apply to your department?

The city clerk must understand the ordinances that are passed by the city council. If a city ordinance is violated there should be a consequence. The violation could be a fine. It is important to check the specific ordinance and local regulations to understand the exact consequences of a particular violation.

5. How organized are your fiscal records and accounts, and what one thing would improve the ability of others to easily access the records? At present, I have no fiscal records and accounts that I am responsible for as it relates to the City Clerk's office. Records should be kept in a secure place and kept safe. They should be accessible for use by the public and city officials (except as restricted by law).

6. What steps do you take to maintain transparency and open communication with the public?

Without the citizens, there would be no job for the city clerk. The city clerk must maintain a relationship with all citizens, not just a few. Strong communication abilities are essential for effective interaction with all citizens and stakeholders. I will have an open-door policy and use sound judgment when dealing with any situation.

7. Describe your experience in collaborating with other departments within the city government.

Working as the 2020 Census Coordinator it was important for me to visit every office in city hall and to meet the department heads. The purpose was to explain the importance of the Census and to get them to allow me to have small workshops and meetings with the employees. It was important to establish a working relationship not only with the employer but also with the employees.

8. What steps would you take if you discovered a potential violation of city ordinances or policies?

I will make sure that I report the violation to the proper department. If it is a violation of a city ordinance or policies that falls within the city clerk's office, I would do the following:

- 1. Convince the violator to voluntarily cease the violation.**
- 2. Report the violation to the regulatory agency.**
- 3. File a formal complaint.**
- 4. Take the complaint to the next level.**
- 5. Apply political pressure.**
- 6. Take direct action.**
- 7. Initiate legal action if necessary.**

9. Can you describe your understanding of the roles and responsibilities of a Municipal Clerk?

A municipal clerk is responsible for a variety of legal, clerical and administrative tasks within a municipality. During the city council meetings, municipal clerks record minutes. He/she edits and finalizes the minutes before distributing them to relevant staff members and municipal officials.

Municipal clerks schedule appointments and manage official forms and documentation. Prepare and maintain official reports, reference materials, and legal documents. They ensure accurate record-keeping and compliance with regulations. Provide clerical assistance to the City Council. Invoices are also processed through the City Clerk's office.

10. Why do you believe you are the right candidate for this City Clerk position? I have been blessed with many skills that I would like to utilize to carry out the task as the City Clerk. Having leadership skills, computer skills, and administrative skills, will be a plus for the City Clerk's office. Since moving back to Pine Bluff I have spent the last seven years volunteering my services to help citizens in everything that affects their livelihood. I would like to continue helping the Pine Bluff residents but in the capacity of the City Clerk.

I care for the future of Pine Bluff. I know that the work that the City Clerk does impacts everyone who lives in the city. I want to contribute to doing good work, which eventually means contributing to a better life for all citizens.

JANICE ROBERTS

1. Why are you running for city clerk?

I am grateful to the citizens of the City of Pine Bluff for electing me in 2020 as THEIR City Clerk! I want to continue improving systems and public services. I ask that the citizens "KEEP ME WORKING FOR THEM!" Vote to re-elect Janice L. Roberts for the City of Pine Bluff City Clerk on Tuesday, March 5, 2024.

By being re-elected, I can continue to deepen the connection between the community and local government. With my proven experience, I can highlight important topics and share helpful information regarding services provided by the Office of the City Clerk. I will continue to promote and apply transparency and greater access to City records and the legislative and democratic processes. As I have done during my first term, I will continue to communicate without bias or advocacy and disseminate information to residents through the City's website, social media, neighborhood watch groups, churches, University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff, Southeast Arkansas College (SEARK), community outreach programs, and other avenues easily accessible by the citizens of Pine Bluff.

When I ran for City Clerk in 2020 and won, I did so with the commitment to respect the past and strengthen the future of this elected position. I fully understand that I was "elected" by the citizens of Pine Bluff and greatly appreciate the confidence the citizens of this great city have placed in my leadership in this public office. I am truly honored to be doing this vital work, and I ask for the citizen's continued support and vote to be re-elected as their Pine Bluff City Clerk.



2. Do you have prior experience working with local government? If so, what position did you hold?

Yes. Currently, Pine Bluff City Clerk, Pine Bluff City Council 2004-2010. Also, the State of Arkansas Bureau of Legislative Research - Bills/ Recordkeeper 2006-2007, AR Department of Workforce Services - State Program Management Analyst 2007-2020, and the United States of America (Federal) Economist 1980-200.

3. Describe your experience preparing ordinances, resolutions, or proclamations for execution, recording, archiving, or distribution.

The City Attorney's Department drafts the ordinances and resolutions. My role as City Clerk is to make sure that all ordinances and resolutions are placed on the City Council agenda for discussion. I properly document the votes for the passage of these ordinances and resolutions. Once an ordinance or resolution is passed, I determine if the ordinance or resolution needs further action such as recording at the courthouse, publication in the newspaper, or some other further action. I am responsible for attesting that the mayor's signature is on all the passed ordinances and resolutions. The resolutions and ordinances are numbered then the completed document is scanned electronically as well as the original file in a binder for proper record-keeping

All ordinances are submitted to Municode for codification. We also now have all ordinances and resolutions uploaded to Munidocs for easier public viewing. The best way to prepare proclamations for either recording or distribution is to follow a template developed by the Arkansas Municipal League (AML) Legal Division, the Arkansas City Clerk's, Recorder's & Treasurer's Association (ACCRTA), or the International Institute of Municipal Clerks. Doing this ensures the proclamations for execution are presented in the same format each time, making them easy to understand and follow, and also assists in obtaining 100% legislative compliance with all laws, regulations, and standards that apply to the City Clerk's Department.

4. How do you go about ensuring the city is compliant with all laws, regulations, and standards that apply to your department?

Making sure the city remains compliant with all laws, regulations, and standards is a key element of the City Clerk's job. We monitor and review all laws, regulations, and standards set by federal, state, and local governments, to ensure the procurement, bidding, policies, etc. are enforced. Any questions concerning interpretation are discussed with the City Attorney's office or through the City Clerks' (CRT) community portal.

5. How organized are your fiscal records and accounts, and what one thing would improve the ability of others to easily access the records?

I am proud of the status of our records and how well they are organized. The vast majority of our fiscal records and accounts are stored electronically in our Financial Management Information Software System or are stored on the clerk's database in the computer. For those records that are still not stored electronically, we are aggressively looking into software; however, the other city departments would also have to be on board with purchasing new software.

6. What steps do you take to maintain transparency and open communication with the public?

All files/records/invoices/documents that come through the clerk's office are kept for record-keeping purposes according to the A.C.A. 14-59-114 schedule.

Under the Freedom of Information Act a resident of the state of Arkansas can request information. If the clerk's office is the custodian of such requested records, we make sure to provide the information according to the statute.

The public has the right to attend any public meeting.

Any issues that are discovered in the clerk's office are immediately brought to the attention of council members, the mayor, and the city attorney.

7. Describe your experience in collaborating with other departments within the city government.

As the City Clerks looks at "making real" changes to Pine Bluff's City Government, we dispelled the notion that it is acceptable for the government to "just" consult with the community on the important issues affecting them, and engage/connect the community at all levels.

We interact with other departments in the city daily. Customer service and professionalism are priorities for the City Clerks when interacting daily with all city departments and the general public. If information is requested, we are set to provide the information expeditiously.

- Operate in a common theme of government by communicating data entry issues, providing assistance with obtaining proper documentation to ensure compliance, walking in late payments to utility companies, and/or directly contacting vendors to request pay extension; is this good business practice... NO; but to drive the department's operability/achievability and provide required services to the general public...! DO!

- **Make sure the department heads and data entry staff are on the same page (clear understanding and knowledge) of all laws, regulations, and standards set by federal, state, and local governments**
- **Ensure the departments abide by the procurement laws, bidding process, invoice policies and procedures clearly defined and understood.**

8. What steps would you take if you discovered a potential violation of city ordinances or policies?

- **Conduct detailed internal investigations to determine whether actions violate relevant city, state and federal rules and regulations.**
- **Enforce regulatory compliance necessitates adherence to city, state and federal laws, rules and regulations.**
- **Collaborate with the City Attorney, City Council and Mayor on findings of deceptive actions.**

9. Can you describe your understanding of the roles and responsibilities of a Municipal Clerk?

The Office of City Clerk is an elected position with duties prescribed by the Arkansas State Constitution (PDF) through various Arkansas General Assembly legislative acts. The City Clerk is the person responsible for legislative operations of the City in conjunction with the Mayor, City Council, City Attorney, City Treasurer, and Municipal Judges.

The Office of the City Clerk serves as an information center whose services impact a diverse clientele, including the public, the media, and other government entities. Although the City Clerk's Office is traditionally associated with municipal election petitions and recording the minutes of the City Council Meeting, its daily scope of business demands versatility, alertness, accuracy, and patience when providing the services listed below.

The Clerks serves as the official day-to-day Administrative Services Administrator for the City of Pine Bluff. Develops, Plans, and Implements the goals and objectives of the City Clerk's office by providing high-level administrative directions:

- **Performs legislative research for Council Members.**
- **Engages the Religious Community in City Council meetings and other events as requested.**
- **The Clerk makes recommendations/suggestions to the Council Members based on public calls and complaints received in the Clerk's Office.**
- **The Clerk develops, Establishes, and Implements monthly Retirement Reports.**
- **The Clerk is the City's Non-Uniformed Pension Administrator.**
- **The Clerk is the Secretary and a Voting member of the Non-Uniformed Retirement Pension and Depository Boards.**
- **The Clerk develops, implements, and maintains the Clerk's Annual Budgets.**
- **The Clerk is the City's Bill Payment Processor.**
- **Maintains Revenue Bonds Reports.**
- **The Clerk is the Processor and Point of Contact for the City's Department's Contractual Bids.**
- **The Clerk presides over all City's Departments Bid Openings.**
- **The City Clerk's Office coordinates and prepares agendas for the City Council Regular and Special Called Meetings, signs and countersigns ordinances, resolutions, and other official documents.**
- **Assists and coordinates with other City Departments to carry out city legislation.**
- **Researches City, County, State, and Federal Codes and Statutes.**
- **Responsible for codification of Codes for the City of Pine Bluff Code Books.**
- **Maintains and preserves the City Seal.**
- **The Clerk maintains and archives all (historical) ordinance and resolution books.**
- **Attends all meetings of the City Council, reads according to established order of procedure, all motions, resolutions, and ordinances listed on each agenda, if needed.**
- **Records and transcribes minutes of each City Council meeting and others as required.**

- **Records and publishes ordinances and resolutions of each Pine Bluff City Council Meeting as required by State Statute or ordinance, ensuring compliance with those laws.**
- **Assigns numbers to ordinances and resolutions passed or adopted by the Pine Bluff City Council with distributions of ordinances and resolutions processed for Department Directors and others, as designated.**

The City Clerk has signature and seal authority required on all ordinances and resolutions and other official documents of the City. The City Clerk's Office is a City-wide information and document resource center.

The Mission of the Pine Bluff City Clerk's Office: It is to address and approach the challenges of the 21st Century, such as digital transformation and increasing public expectations, effectively and efficiently by addressing all statutory obligations with respect to elections petitions, records, and legislation of the City of Pine Bluff.

The vision of the Pine Bluff City Clerk's Office: The vision of the City Clerk's Department is to develop and implement cutting-edge systems for exceptional values to support the citizens, city council members, colleagues (City Attorney, Mayor, and Treasurer) and other professions; to maintain excellence in the area of record management and grow into current technology that will give access to the public, showing our government commitment of transparency.

10. Why do you believe you are the right candidate for this City Clerk position? Simple - PROVEN EXPERIENCE! I am the current City Clerk with the "DIRECT EXPERIENCE AND KNOWLEDGE" of this elected position and the city, state and federal rules and regulations for local government administration. Since 2021, I have continually improved the vital services of the Clerk's Office core commitment. I have maintained the office operations of transparency, service, and integrity.

Because of my ethical morals and government operational values that drive my professional actions:

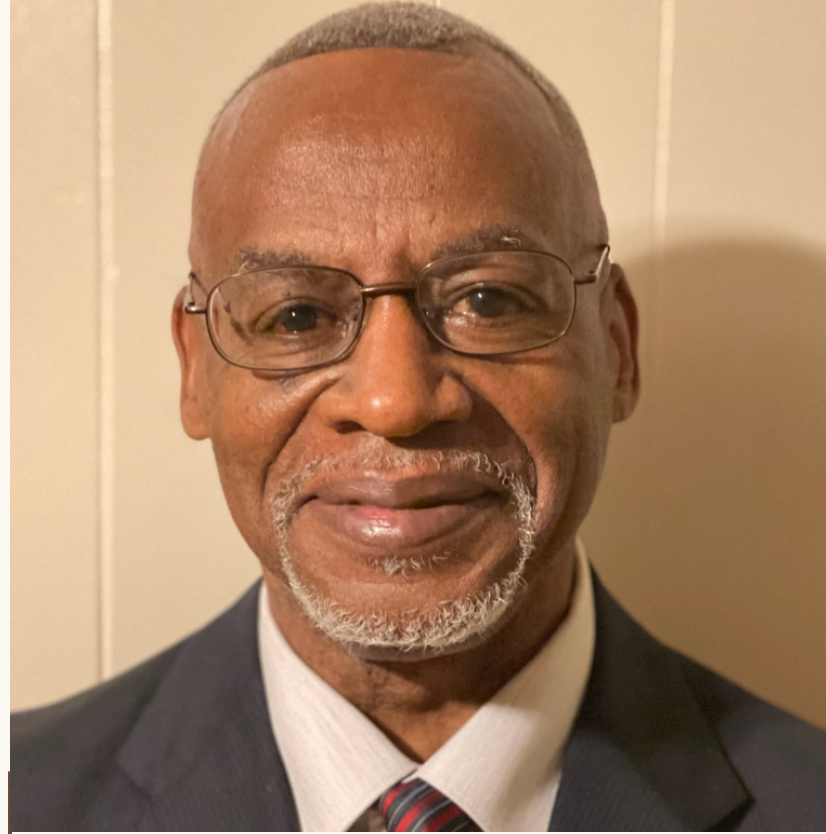
- **Respecting rules and ethical obligations;**
- **Thinking forward and anticipating complications;**
- **Developing positive professional relationships;**
- **Being hardworking, dedicated, professional, and "going above and beyond" the call of duty;**
- **Knowing and staying abreast of city, state, and federal laws and regulations, enactments, and coercive measures;**
- **Being responsible; and**
- **Defining processes.**

The promise I make about the approaching four years is the one I made when I was first elected City Clerk; that is: "The Office of the City Clerk will be progressive and proactive in connecting the residents to City Government.

As we conclude 2023 and enter the 2024 election year, it has been the honor of my life to serve the City of Pine Bluff. Being the City Clerk has also been a great privilege and learning experience. The knowledge I have gained continues to guide me in this upcoming race, with the approval of the voters and will culminate in another term of continued PROGRESS for our City.

I, humbly, ask for an opportunity to KEEP ME WORKING FOR THE PEOPLE OF OUR BELOVED CITY.

CHARLES WASHINGTON



1. Why are you running for mayor? I am running for mayor, first and foremost, because I know that I am qualified to hold the position, I have lived in Pine Bluff since 2000. In that time I have gotten to know the good people of this city, I served the city as an exemplary police officer for over 10 years and I have developed a rapport with the citizens, the government, the police department and the business community, as a result of that service. Pine Bluff is in dire need of a strong, accomplished, forward-thinking and progressive leader to chart a course into the next decade and far beyond. I am the candidate who can deliver.

2. What is your previous political experience? I have very little experience in the political arena, but I do know that government exists at the will of the people, with the sole purpose of serving the people. The Constitution of the United States is the guiding document and the cornerstone of government on the federal, state and local level. My actions as mayor will be by the constitution and the laws of this city. I will not deviate from those laws, neither through deceit, ignorance nor dereliction. As the mayor and a novice, I would be remiss (derelict) in my duty if I did not quickly educate myself, to be able to expeditiously carry out the duties I have been elected to perform as mayor.

3. In what areas do you see the most problems and what is your suggestion to solve them? I see citizen apathy, lack of a cohesive community identity and cultural segregation as some of the problems. I will not have any citizens feel as if they are excluded from the protections and services provided by this city. At the same time, I would beg the public to either talk to their representative or to me to resolve any issue they may have

4. Accessing the recent performance of Go Forward Pine Bluff and the 2017 sales tax, would you support the return of the Go-Forward sponsored tax, support a different tax, or feel no new tax is needed for the progression of the city? Could you explain your answer? Go Forward Pine Bluff was voted down by what I hope was an informed set of voters. I would not try to revive it, as the people have already spoken. As the mayor, I would not attempt to institute any new taxes unless it can be shown that the city will not progress without some form of additional tax. Any proposed tax would have to be time-specific, meaning it would have a start and end date and it would have to be geared toward the betterment of the entire city and not just to a select or privileged group or concern.

5. What do you plan to accomplish in your first 30 days? During the first 30 days of my term, I plan to look at the projects, plans and initiatives of the present administration and get status reports on all of them I will request an audit of the present budget and an evaluation of the present accounting procedures. I will meet collectively and individually with all the heads of entities that fall under the authority of the mayor. I will discuss budgets, equipment and infrastructure status, personnel shortages, procedures and adherence to same, employee morale and efficiency of effort. I will seek funds for a telescope to be placed in or near the library complex so that the citizens of Pine Bluff can see the universe from a closer perspective.

6. What downward trend in your city's last five years are you most proud of? What trend is most worrisome? Explain. When I became a Pine Bluff police officer, crack cocaine and opiate use were the driving forces behind high property crime rates. There has been a downward trend in the use of those drugs, which has led to a reduction in property crimes. That is a statistic we can all be proud of. I now worry about the uptick in the use of designer and other street drugs by our youth and young adults. Most of the drugs are not produced in a laboratory under controlled conditions. They are more likely produced in someone's basement and then cut with other unknown substances to produce an enhanced effect. The buyer/user has no idea what is contained in the drug and that should be worrisome to us all.

7. Given the existing budget constraints and the financial situation that the city is in, how would you stretch taxpayer's dollars and still execute the basic needs of the city? To be an effective fiscal manager, a leader must be able to look at processes, procedures and products and analyze how to get the most for the city's dollar.

As mayor, I will closely monitor the spending within each section and search for ways to stretch the budget by utilizing emerging technologies that offer the same services at a reduced cost and I will look at streamlining some of the procedures to remove redundancies that unnecessarily consume City funds.

8. What plans do you have in place for effective policing and crime prevention? How do you plan to secure funding for the needs of public safety? The police department of Pine Bluff has a great relationship with the citizens, but there is always room for improvement. One avenue of improvement is the area of training. I will insist all officers are properly trained in de-escalation, use of force, cultural diversity and verbal combat. I will meet with the police chief to examine the present plan and offer the benefit of my 15 years in policing to further enhance the policies and procedures already in place. I will address any funding shortages by requesting assistance from state and federal agencies. To ensure a safe city I will obtain funds through tax initiatives, if necessary.

9. How do you plan to achieve community policing goals in a city with an understaffed police department? If the required number of officer are budgeted for, then I will talk with the chief and develop a hiring plan that is designed to recruit, train and retain qualified officers. If the funds are lacking, then I will use what manpower assets are available and look at making changes to the community policing model, while searching for funding sources.

10. How will you address the growing concerns about affordable housing? If there are plans and initiatives on the drawing board that have begun to address the issue of affordable housing. The housing market and affordable housing are driven by many factors that are not addressed by a rising or falling economy in Pine Bluff.

As mayor, I will search for developers willing to invest in the local housing market at below-competitive rates and I will also look to state and federal agencies for grants or other forms of assistance.

11. What is your plan to attract new businesses and jobs to our city? Businesses looking for opportunities in Pine Bluff must be assured that there is an available workforce. We, as a city, must get our young people off the street and trained in trades and other aspects of the business world. Not every company that wants to locate here is looking for a CEO or Executive Assistant. They are looking for a trained and educated workforce. To attract new business, the city has to reduce the crime rate through effective policing, thus demonstrating that Pine Bluff has a safe and nurturing work environment. As the chief ambassador for the city, I will represent that the city has the infrastructure to support its manpower, logistical and transportation needs, with plans in the works to strengthen and expand both infrastructure, shipping and transportation.

12. How will you address homelessness, and what long-term solutions are you advocating for? I would first have to know the circumstances that led to the situation. Can the individual, with effort on their part, remedy the situation themselves? Is the homeless person in need of mental health services, domestic abuse intervention and counseling, temporary or permanent shelter, etc? I know there are programs within the city government to assist in homeless cases. If the needed services are not available, then it is my job as mayor to ensure the city implements some program that provides services to that person. This is the growing and prospering city of Pine Bluff where no one should have to live on the streets.

13. What measures will you take to ensure that the city's infrastructure can support new developments? The majority of the city's present infrastructure was designed with progress in mind, As new industries express an interest in coming to Pine Bluff, I will consult with engineers to submit ideas on how to best expand our outlying areas to better serve both established and new businesses.

14. How do you plan to repair and maintain the aging roadways and bridges in our city? I will work closely with the street department and other entities to inspect, repair and maintain those structures. All repairs will be done on a priority basis, with the most neglected or most utilized being first in line. I will also direct the applicable departments to institute an inspection, and maintenance schedule.

15. What are the most pressing issues in the office you are seeking to address? The most pressing issue I see with the mayor's office is the lack of trust from the public. I want the trust of the people, so I will implement multimedia platforms.

16. What is your strategy for improving the quality of life for all residents? Quality of life comes when a person can feel safe and secure in their own home or en route to the homes of others or wherever life might take them. Quality of life is a by-product of good government. I will epitomize good government, thus ensuring a higher quality of life.

17. How would you describe your management style? I would describe my management style as team-oriented. I must know what is going on in every section of the city's government. It is not my job to be the duty expert. I depend on the members of my team to keep me informed and I will be in frequent contact with them so that I am prepared to speak to the public on any issue at a moment's notice.

18. What is your long-term vision for the city's infrastructure development? The long-term plans for infrastructure are at present a fluid situation. As the city grows, I will look at and adjust the plan accordingly.

19. What do you see as your primary role as mayor? My role as the mayor is to be a good steward of the public's monies, ensure that the citizens live in safe, secure neighborhoods with clean and drivable streets, make sure the students are provided quality education in an environment that is conducive to learning and to be transparent in all my actions.

20. How will you ensure that the voices of all city residents are represented in your administration? To demonstrate my commitment to transparency, I will utilize a variety of technologies and communications platforms to speak to the public in real time to personally dispel any rumors, innuendo, or accusations of malfeasance by me or any of my staff. I will have proof on hand to either exonerate or condemn any individual accused of corruption. I am not corrupt and I will not stand for it in my administration. I will restore confidence in the government of Pine Bluff by making sure that every citizen has access to all aspects of the city's business through recorded media that will be available online or a designated line that they can call to talk to either me or my representative during normal working hours. I plan to be more proactive and meet and inform more and more citizens, as I go about the daily activities that take me away from my office.

21. How would you enhance transparency and openness in government proceedings? See #20

22. What specific approach will you take to handle citizen feedback and complaints? See #20

23. How will you combat corruption and promote ethical conduct within city government? See #20

24. Which measures will you implement to ensure that your administration's decisions are data-driven and evidence-based? Project research and data analysis are key drivers in decision-making. As the mayor. I will not only look at the research, data, and public opinion polls, but I will also have someone verify or dispute my interpretation of the numbers.

25. What are your strategies to audit and improve government efficiency throughout the city's departments? Part of my first 30 days in office consists of an audit of my office and the offices of my staff. I will also order an inventory of certain real properties under each section.

26. What systems will you put in place to monitor the performance and success of your initiatives? I will poll the people and ask them how they feel our initiative is progressing.

27. How do you plan to make your policy decisions and the reasons behind them more accessible to city residents? I have addressed that when I spoke of transparency in government.

28. How do you plan to foster partnerships between local schools and businesses or universities? I will be proactive and take the schools to the businesses. The students get to learn in a real-time environment and the business gets to meet its future employees

29. What distinguishes you from other candidates? I have Department of Defense and Department of State level experience.

30. What legacy do you hope to leave behind at the end of your term? He made a change when change was needed.

STEVEN MAYS

1. Why are you running for mayor? Campaigning for Public Office (Mayor) has always been my goal while being in Pine Bluff, Arkansas.

2. What is your previous political experience? Pine Bluff Arkansas City Council Member.

3. In what areas do you see the most problems and what is your suggestion to solve them? Working together and lots of prayers, real prayers.

4. Accessing the recent performance of Go Forward Pine Bluff and the 2017 sales tax, would you support the return of the Go-Forward sponsored tax, support a different tax, or feel no new tax is needed for the progression of the city? Could you explain your answer? No comment.

5. What do you plan to accomplish in your first 30 days? Community reaching goals.

6. What downward trend in your city's last five years are you most proud of? What trend is most worrisome? Explain. No comment.

7. Given the existing budget constraints and the financial situation that the city is in, how would you stretch taxpayer's dollars and still execute the basic needs of the city? Praying without ceasing.

8. What plans do you have in place for effective policing and crime prevention? How do you plan to secure funding for the needs of public safety? Pine Bluff, Arkansas is a great place to live and raise a family.



9. How do you plan to achieve community policing goals in a city with an understaffed police department? No comment.

10. How will you address the growing concerns about affordable housing? Working together for a better Pine Bluff.

11. What is your plan to attract new businesses and jobs to our city? Clean up all areas that need special attention and fix it now. Today!

12. How will you address homelessness, and what long-term solutions are you advocating for? Helping to solve real everyday issues together by including all citizens.

13. What measures will you take to ensure that the city's infrastructure can support new developments? Rebuild and restore our great communities in Pine Bluff, Arkansas.

14. How do you plan to repair and maintain the aging roadways and bridges in our city? No comment.

15. What are the most pressing issues in the office you are seeking to address? Working together.

16. What is your strategy for improving the quality of life for all residents? Praying without ceasing and working together.

17. How would you describe your management style? Awesome.

18. What is your long-term vision for the city's infrastructure development? No comment.

19. What do you see as your primary role as mayor? Doing the best job I can do as the mayor of Pine Bluff, Arkansas.

20. How will you ensure that the voices of all city residents are represented in your administration? No comment.

21. How would you enhance transparency and openness in government proceedings? Listening to all citizens.

22. What specific approach will you take to handle citizen feedback and complaints? Just listen to everyone.

23. How will you combat corruption and promote ethical conduct within city government? No comment.

24. Which measures will you implement to ensure that your administration's decisions are data-driven and evidence-based? No comment.

25. What are your strategies to audit and improve government efficiency throughout the city's departments? No comment.

26. What systems will you put in place to monitor the performance and success of your initiatives? No comment.

27. How do you plan to make your policy decisions and the reasons behind them more accessible to city residents? Listen to all citizens.

28. How do you plan to foster partnerships between local schools and businesses or universities? No comment.

29. What distinguishes you from other candidates? I'm a true man of God. I work for all citizens.

30. What legacy do you hope to leave behind at the end of your term? No comment.

JONI ALEXANDER ROBINSON



1. Why are you running for mayor? I'm not satisfied with the current administration, having worked with them I know the deficiencies firsthand and the knowledge and experience to address them.

2. What is your previous political experience? I've been in Municipal Government for nearly a decade, worked for two elected officials in the City Clerk's office, and as Chief of Staff to Mayor Hollingsworth. I also served on the Pine Bluff City Council.

3. In what areas do you see the most problems and what is your suggestion to solve them? The day-to-day operations at City Hall. City Hall and its departments need a positive change set in motion by real data and a perspective that regards Pine Bluff as a system of interrelated parts.

4. Accessing the recent performance of Go Forward Pine Bluff and the 2017 sales tax, would you support the return of the Go-Forward sponsored tax, support a different tax, or feel no new tax is needed for the progression of the city? Could you explain your answer? I no longer have confidence or trust in GFPB. With the loss of population, increase in revenues, and the inefficiency of the services that citizens are currently paying taxes for; To burden the citizens with an additional tax, when the taxes that they are currently paying are not properly utilized is not necessary.

5. What do you plan to accomplish in your first 30 days? Fix the pay scale for Public Safety, identify and address the lack of internal controls, meet with all departments, evaluate all departments and audit all departments.

6. What downward trend in your city's last five years are you most proud of? What trend is most worrisome? It speaks volumes that I can't honestly answer the first part of this one. The trend that is the most worrisome is that we've gotten away from addressing the needs and operations of the City Departments and employees. With the increase in revenue our city services and operations are lacking more than with previous administrations that had less revenue and more population.

7. Given the existing budget constraints and the financial situation that the city is in, how would you stretch taxpayer's dollars and still execute the basic needs of the city? Make our departments more efficient. Even with a population decrease, we've had more revenue in the past 7 years than in decades. How is it that we have more revenue, fewer people, and worse performance?

8. What plans do you have in place for effective policing and crime prevention? How do you plan to secure funding for the needs of public safety? Effective Policing: Fixing their pay scale, addressing internal issues, increasing patrol and part-time pay, and putting a measurable plan in place.

Crime prevention: Bringing back initiatives like weed and seed and safe team.

Funding: With a safer city, revenue will increase.

9. How do you plan to achieve community policing goals in a city with an understaffed police department? The responsibility of community policing isn't just on officers. It will be a plan that focuses on partnerships, problem-solving, support, communication, and education with all major stakeholders.

10. How will you address the growing concerns about affordable housing? By utilizing the Economic and Community Development Department. They have many resources and funding that if restructured could address a lot more of the social issues in Pine Bluff.

11. What is your plan to attract new businesses and jobs to our city? Making sure that the businesses that we already have are attracted to our city.

12. How will you address homelessness, and what long-term solutions are you advocating for? Allocate the underutilized positions in the Economic and Community Development Department to focus specifically on homelessness. Implement long-term and short-term solutions in collaboration with shelters, social services, and community organizations, and a strategic plan that implements programs for housing, job assistance, support, etc.

13. What measures will you take to ensure that the city's infrastructure can support new developments? Better planning. Currently, we're either piece-milling projects or relying on gut feelings and hope rather than evidence, reasoning, economics, statistical analysis, and shared goals.

14. How do you plan to repair and maintain the aging roadways and bridges in our city? Organizing our street department with measurable goals, long-term planning, better resource allocation, and maintenance of capital assets.

15. What are the most pressing issues in the office you are seeking to address? Day-to-day operations. Despite the city having 12 departments that directly serve its citizens, many residents can only name a fraction of them, hindering their ability to fully engage with and benefit from municipal services.

16. What is your strategy for improving the quality of life for all residents? A healthy government has four main purposes: planning and directing society; meeting social needs; maintaining law and order; and managing relations. I have a framework and multiple plans to address those responsibilities as the Mayor.

17. How would you describe your management style? Policy-driven, direct, evidence and data-based planning, measurable goals, fair, and ethical.

18. What is your long-term vision for the city's infrastructure development? Better maintenance of our infrastructure so we can be less reactive and more preventative with our planning. This will lead to more sustainability.

19. What do you see as your primary role as mayor? As Chief Executive Officer of the city, the Mayor has a statutory duty to oversee the enforcement of city policies, ordinances, administrative rules, and State laws, as well as direct city offices and employees to discharge their duties. The role of a mayor is multi-faceted and we must consider the full scope when running for this position.

20. How will you ensure that the voices of all city residents are represented in your administration? Give support to the city council, improve city hall customer service, provide opportunities for multiple forms of communication, and accessibility, and identify and build on current deficiencies in communications.

21. How would you enhance transparency and openness in government proceedings? Follow the rules and statutory obligations set in place.

22. What specific approach will you take to handle citizen feedback and complaints? Make sure that each complaint/feedback is documented and resolved. After following up with citizens, analyze patterns for continuous improvement in day-to-day operations.

23. How will you combat corruption and promote ethical conduct within city government? I will make sure my administration operates ethically and holds everyone to the same standard.

24. Which measures will you implement to ensure that your administration's decisions are data-driven and evidence-based? Leverage technology, identify trends, pinpoint areas for improvement, and ensure data integrity and accuracy.

25. What are your strategies to audit and improve government efficiency throughout the city's departments? Currently, the city's internal auditor works under the director who also works under the mayor. Making this position autonomous will empower the internal auditor to fulfill their mandate effectively, serving as a critical safeguard against fraud, waste, and abuse in government, and promoting the efficient and responsible use of taxpayer dollars.

26. What systems will you put in place to monitor the performance and success of your initiatives? No comment. Be more involved and hold employees accountable.

27. How do you plan to make your policy decisions and the reasons behind them more accessible to city residents? I could include a narrative that is readily accessible online or by request.

28. How do you plan to foster partnerships between local schools and businesses or universities? Asking them what they need and being of assistance.

29. What distinguishes you from other candidates? My background is in city government. I am the only candidate so far with a plan presented to the public. I also have a 90-day, 1-year, and 2-year plan and I answer the questions!

30. What legacy do you hope to leave behind at the end of your term? Create a solid foundation in our government upon which future administrations can continue to build.

VIVIAN FLOWERS

1. Why are you running for mayor? I am running for mayor to ensure that Pine Bluff citizens have a winning choice for change to systemic progress. I'm running to put my over 30 years of public service/policy/political experience to ensure that we prioritize our Youth, Economy, and Safety in a way that ensures measurable and significant progress.

2. What is your previous political experience? I have served as Arkansas State Representative for District 65 since 2015. Prior to that, I was appointed by three governors to serve on the Arkansas Minority Health Commission for a decade (Chair for three years during my tenure on the commission). I worked as Committee Secretary for the Arkansas Bureau of Legislative Research and staffed the House Rules, Public Health, Agriculture & Economic Development Committees, and the Arkansas Legislative Black Caucus. Upon returning to school and securing employment with the Arkansas Division of Agriculture, I was also contracted by the Arkansas Legislative Black Caucus to serve as its staff and later the Executive Director. I also served on the Arkansas Service Commission as well as the Pine Bluff Historic District Commission. My internship experience includes the Pulaski/Perry County Prosecutor and the 92' Clinton Presidential Campaign. Finally, I have worked on numerous political campaigns as paid staff and as a volunteer for presidential, congressional, state legislative, judicial, and local races.



3. In what areas do you see the most problems and what is your suggestion to solve them? There is little to no effort being paid to addressing our homicide/violent crime epidemic, our infrastructure, or uplifting our youth. All three of these priorities directly impact our ability to reverse the tide of population and job loss. Further, the lack of communication, transparency and accountability have caused a loss of public trust that has impacted the city's ability to operate in unity and partnership.

- **PUBLIC TRUST** - To restore the city, we must first restore the public trust. Utilizing and expanding transparency and accountability, along with the way we communicate with the public will be one of my day-one priorities.
- **VIOLENT CRIME/PUBLIC SAFETY** - What is a clear problem is the violent crime that has pervaded Pine Bluff for decades. Short-term solutions include reinstating the violent crimes task force and PBPD youth camp, investing in the vast improvement of Pine Bluff's public lighting, and upgrading public safety department software systems.

Long-term solutions include establishing a Real-time Crime Center, expanding community and neighborhood policing beats/programs, and strengthening first responders' incentives, benefits and compensation packages.

· **INFRASTRUCTURE** - Our physical and administrative foundation must be sound for the city to run effectively for the people, for neighborhoods, for the business community, and community institutions in the non-profit sector. The Street Department, our airport/ports/interstate/rail infrastructure and partnerships, broadband and water/electric/gas utility infrastructure all undergird the foundation for our families, schools, and businesses. We must shore up our infrastructure in a way that creates businesses, protects property values and attracts home-buying families. I will prioritize our infrastructure by seeking out state and federal funding, public-private partnerships and public funding that creates a win-win for the city, our citizens and the business community.

· **YOUTH UPLIFT & ENGAGEMENT** - There must be a much more robust relationship with Pine Bluff youth if the city is to restore its population of middle and upper-middle-income workers and entrepreneurs. Among numerous programs and activities that don't solely center on sports, Pine Bluff must create meaningful partnerships with its public school districts as well as SEARK, our 2-year college and especially UAPB, our 4-year university.

4. Accessing the recent performance of Go Forward Pine Bluff and the 2017 sales tax, would you support the return of the Go-Forward sponsored tax, support a different tax, or feel no new tax is needed for the progression of the city? Could you explain your answer? I WILL ONLY support a sales and use tax that provides for ALL of the following in the language of the ballot measure: (1) transparency and accountability standards that ensure consistent, public reporting of tax revenue, expenditures, and contracts; (2) targeted funding categories that promote economic development, infrastructure repair/development, and public safety;

(3) specific standards for private projects proposed for funding that require feasibility, budget, timeline and impact data.

The previous tax model was rife with omissions and challenges that led voters to end the current tax in May AND November 2023, which will take effect in September. The perceptions and reality that grew from these issues rest squarely with city leadership, which turned over some of its authority along with public dollars to one private partner. To restore the public trust, city leadership must never give away its authority vested by the people, but instead engage as many vetted and committed private partners as possible. This is why I would NOT support a Go Forward-sponsored tax.

5. What do you plan to accomplish in your first 30 days?

- Planning meetings with citizens in every ward.
- Assessment meetings with city department directors to determine the status of departmental funding/budget, capacity and leadership
- Begins process toward securing forensic auditor.
- Planning meetings with city council members
- Reach out to Pine Bluff business, community, education, faith, and youth leaders to begin work toward establishing a Pine Bluff Action Committee
- Complete and disseminate a code of transparency and accountability, including a legislative packet to be introduced
- Establish a citizen communication system to document and process all communications to the mayor's office to ensure messages, requests, complaints, and ideas are received and responded to, whether transmitted via phone, postal mail, email, or in-person
- Appoint a Whistleblower Ordinance Task Force, that will research and recommend a municipal whistleblowers ordinance designed to prevent corruption as well as protect city employees and citizens from retaliation for blowing the whistle on fraud, waste and abuse and other areas of corruption in the City of Pine Bluff

6. What downward trend in your city's last five years are you most proud of? What trend is most worrisome? DOWNWARD TREND PROUD OF: The Pine Bluff Police Department's rate of unsolved crimes has decreased. MOST WORRISOME TREND: Population Decline. Pine Bluff has lost over 10,000 people (and over 10,000 jobs) since the 2010 population census. This directly impacts the city's ability to grow, and attract industry/jobs/entrepreneurial investment. Population decline leads to decay. Population decline assures the "brain drain" effect that ultimately impacts all institutions and resources within a city. Even with some business expansions and development, people are not only moving to other cities like Redfield and White Hall, they are taking Pine Bluff dollars with them. This is why we MUST focus on our youth, economy and safety!

7. Given the existing budget constraints and the financial situation that the city is in, how would you stretch taxpayer's dollars and still execute the basic needs of the city?

- Departmental efficiency by consolidating positions where employees are already performing the jobs
- Technology that might require an initial investment but save money in the long run (upgraded software or GIS system)
- Outsourcing jobs that local businesses can perform well while saving money on overhead (for example - street overlay paving and grass mowing)

8. What plans do you have in place for effective policing and crime prevention? How do you plan to secure funding for the needs of public safety? ·

Develop a comprehensive, data-driven Crime Prevention Unit

- Establish Real-time Crime Center
- Improve public lighting
- Upgrade PBPB software systems, tools and equipment
- Expand community and neighborhood policing beats/programs
- Reinstate the PBPB Violent Crimes Task Force as well as the PBPB Youth Camp

- Strengthen and stabilize first responders' incentives, benefits and compensation
 - Implement the Victims of Violent Crime Support program (previously passed by the City Council)
- More efficient use of existing dollars as well as federal Department of Justice grants could easily fund most of the aforementioned plans. If the voters approved a targeted and transparent sales and use tax, I would dedicate a portion of those dollars to stabilizing police officers' compensation packages to improve retention.

9. How do you plan to achieve community policing goals in a city with an understaffed police department? In the short term, enhance benefits for PBPB officers, like uniform allowance, overtime, and bonuses. Long-term solutions would include expansion of housing programs/partnerships, grow-your-own initiatives, and development of a scholarship incentive program in partnership with the private sector.

10. How will you address the growing concerns about affordable housing? Pine Bluff's housing stock once accommodated a population of nearly 60,000 people. Today, our population is around 38,000. While our owner-occupied housing rate is 53%, 13% below the state average, our median owner costs with a mortgage is \$1103 and median gross rent is \$819, 11% and 6% lower than the state average. The most important census statistic is Pine Bluff's median income: \$39,411, 30% lower than the state average.

The bottom line is that Pine Bluff has an aging housing stock much larger than our population, which is why there are so many abandoned homes. The issue is not enough housing or even the cost of that housing. The issue here is the low wages/incomes coupled with the declining population. People will buy homes, develop multi-family housing and build homes in Pine Bluff when we restore the city by investing in our YOUTH and education, grow our ECONOMY to increase jobs and entrepreneurship and improve the SAFETY of our neighborhoods throughout the city.

11. What is your plan to attract new businesses and jobs to our city?

- First address violent crime/homicide (previously detailed)
- Better partner with the Chamber, UAPB, SEARK and other prospective small business engines to engage, prepare and support high school and college students in their efforts to start small businesses.
- Restore economic vitality to targeted corridors, beginning with Harding Avenue - expansion of Pine Bluff Regional Airport Grider Field and repurposing of the Pines Mall
- Infrastructure Initiative focused on Pine Bluff Regional Airport Grider Field, Port of Pine Bluff, and Downtown Pine Bluff

12. How will you address homelessness, and what long-term solutions are you advocating for?

- Homelessness must be addressed first and foremost by preventive measures - access to affordable housing, provision of wrap-around services in partnership with local shelters, aggressive partnering with anti-poverty organizations
- Better utilize the Economic and Community Development Department to secure and maintain grant funding to expand existing shelters to adopt the "Our House" model.

13. What measures will you take to ensure that the city's infrastructure can support new developments?

First, establish city infrastructure as its top economic development priority. Second, identify and pursue more state and federal funding resources, particularly through existing programs (Example: TAP-Transportation Alternatives Program administered by the Arkansas Department of Transportation). Finally, I will examine and support other funding measures that support investment in citywide public works projects and ensure future sustainable infrastructural stability.

14. How do you plan to repair and maintain the aging roadways and bridges in our city?

- Provide Street Department leadership and staff with vision and resources to develop a strategic plan and communication framework to better and more fairly.
- prioritize overlay and other projects
- communicate with city council representatives and citizens
- advertise and announce competitive bids and department projects
- Conduct a comprehensive needs assessment of city roadways, bridges and drainage system
- Advance an open and city-wide process to determine the funding mechanism(s) the city will use to repair and restore city streets and drainage systems.

15. What are the most pressing issues in the office you are seeking to address?

- Restoring the public trust through immediate, comprehensive, and consistent transparency/accountability/communication
- Youth engagement, education and training
- Economic development with emphasis on city infrastructure and heritage tourism
- Safety with the greatest emphasis on violent crime/homicide and public lighting

16. What is your strategy for improving the quality of life for all residents?

- Communicating with all residents, including listening to people's concerns and community-driven solutions
- Applying tax dollars and solutions to problems across all wards and neighborhoods, versus a lion-share of the resources going toward downtown and other already well-maintained and resourced areas.
- Utilize funding, partnerships and policies to invest in preventive solutions and attack problems at their root (For example - investment in crime prevention versus solely fighting after crimes have occurred).
- Partner with the Chamber, A&P Commission and city communications to launch retail/entertainment initiatives to better recruit and promote activities, entertainment and businesses to Pine Bluff.

17. How would you describe your management style? My management style is collaborative, transparent, communicative, fair, respectful and professional as well as tough when necessary.

18. What is your long-term vision for the city's infrastructure development? My long-term vision for Pine Bluff's infrastructure includes:

- fully funded and staffed street department operating a prioritized and public system that meets all maintenance needs of the city's roads and drainage system
- airport expansion that not only serves as a commercial distribution hub through partnerships with companies like UPS (which already has an industrial park presence in Pine Bluff), but offers commercial flights to at least one national airport like Memphis or New Orleans.
- port expansion that leverages Pine Bluff's rail system to add an intermodal yard
- fiber internet build-out downtown

19. What do you see as your primary role as mayor? I see my primary role as mayor as an elected CEO-chief executive officer, which requires many hats for sure. The mayor oversees the departmental operations of the city; delegating department directors to advance the executive vision while implementing city ordinances and resolutions. However, presiding over city council meetings, and representing the entire city before state and national audiences as well as funding partners are equally important roles. Finally, communicating and connecting with citizens and perhaps the most important role as we work together to repair the public trust and chart a new course for the city's restoration.

20. How will you ensure that the voices of all city residents are represented in your administration?

- Amend the public comment portion of public city council meetings to better engage public comments.
- Structure city government transparency standards to include full utilization of internet, social media and SMS technologies.

- Propose a position that provides the city council a constituency services coordinator to document and facilitate constituent requests in conjunction with communications between city council members, constituents as well as the mayor's office and city departments.

21. How would you enhance transparency and openness in government proceedings? The mayor's office will work with the City Council to establish a public comments process that promotes and recognizes written as well as in-person public comments. This process would be enhanced to better interact with citizens offering comments in a more timely and interactive but still orderly manner.

22. What specific approach will you take to handle citizen feedback and complaints? In our first 30 days, the mayor's office will establish a citizen communication system to document and process all communications to the mayor's office to ensure messages, requests, complaints, and suggestions are received and responded to, whether transmitted via phone, postal mail, email, or in person.

23. How will you combat corruption and promote ethical conduct within city government?

- Instituting a transparency standard that provides optimal "sunshine," fiscal safeguards, and reporting on the front end.
- Appointing a Whistleblower Ordinance Task Force, that will research and recommend a municipal whistleblowers ordinance designed to prevent corruption as well as protect city employees and citizens from retaliation for blowing the whistle on fraud, waste and abuse and other areas of corruption in the City of Pine Bluff.

24. Which measures will you implement to ensure that your administration's decisions are data-driven and evidence-based? Rather than a measure to implement, data and evidence will be a standard set by the mayor's office, which I will commit to apply as a cultural shift and way of doing business throughout city government.

25. What are your strategies to audit and improve government efficiency throughout the city's departments? In the first 100 days, the mayor's office will include in its assessment of city government, how each department documents and records financial and HR activity, uses software and other technology, interfaces with citizens to communicate and provide services, and complies with city transparency ordinances. This assessment will be used to determine possible areas of improvement, centralization, savings, training, needs and effectiveness.

26. What systems will you put in place to monitor the performance and success of your initiatives? Collaboration, transparency and outreach will be at the root of how the city sets, documents, works toward and reports on city-wide and departmental goals and objectives.

27. How do you plan to make your policy decisions and the reasons behind them more accessible to city residents? Transparency is at the forefront of how I have served and led as a state legislator, and how I will serve and lead as mayor. While private discussions, working papers, non-disclosure agreements and confidentiality can often be a part of formulating policy, there must be balance as well as a high bar set for the level of transparency the city and its officials exercise regarding city dollars, public meetings, introduced legislation and elections. Ultimately, the city will share as much information as possible on the front end, following F.O.I.A laws, and adhere to our ordinances, and establish a professional communications team and processes to share with the public and press accordingly.

28. How do you plan to foster partnerships between local schools and businesses or universities? Pine Bluff will serve as a connecting force between all of our K-16 academic institutions to cultivate synergy between academic curricula/programs/performance and workforce/entrepreneurial as well as the corporate/foundation/non-profit sectors.

29. What distinguishes you from other candidates? I am the only candidate with the following:

- 30+ years of public service, policy and political experience with proven leadership, relationships and results at the state, local and national levels of government**
- nearly a decade of executive professional/leadership experience, encompassing organizational management, policy, delegation, budget, program, HR and procurement skills and experience**
- who opposed Go Forward for sound policy reasons, but has always and remains supportive of a transparent, targeted economic development sales and use tax to address youth, economic growth, and safety priorities.**
- Among the candidates with any elected experience, I'm the only one you didn't already give four to twelve years and \$32 million extra tax dollars to make the difference you're still seeking from city leadership.**

30. What legacy do you hope to leave behind at the end of your term?

- An open, efficient, responsive, transparent, and accountable city government.**
- A safe, unified, prosperous, fully restored and growing Pine Bluff.**
- A city in which #TogetherPineBluffWins.**

SHIRLEY WASHINGTON

1. Why are you running for mayor? Seven years ago, I was faced with a decision. As someone who has faith, worked in education and has spent most of my adult life in Pine Bluff, I noticed that our community was heading in the wrong direction. Because of my deep belief in our city, I made a choice that was completely new to me - I decided to run for public office.

Thanks to the support, and resilience of our community, as the Mayor of Pine Bluff, I have been able to lay a strong foundation for progress. While our city is still far from perfect, it is undeniably in a better state than when I first took office.

Once there were vacant and deteriorating buildings on Main Street, we now have a modern library and learning center that fits well into the 21st century, with a new elementary school next door. The Arts and Science Center has been expanded to include two newly renovated areas, the Arts Space and the Art Works. We have also established the best aquatic center in the state and renovated the Pine Bluff Community Center (Merrill Center).

In addition, we have secured \$32 million in federal funding for drainage improvements in our neighborhoods. Notably, new businesses like Underwater Seafood and Chick-fil-A have chosen to open their door here.



We have developed a home buyers assistance program and raised salaries for our first responders, helped teachers get Master's Degrees to improve education, as well as expanded after-school and summer youth work programs, and invested in new evidence-based strategies to keep people safe through the Group Violence Intervention Program (GVI).

There is so much that still needs to be done to build on this momentum. I believe I have the experience and vision to finish the job strong and build a Pine Bluff we can all be proud to call home.

2. What is your previous political experience? Prior to becoming the City's first Female African American Mayor, I dedicated 38 years of my life to working as a teacher and school leader within the Pine Bluff Schools. During this time, I served as President of the Pine Bluff Education Association, the Jefferson County Library Board, Arts & Science Board of Directors, and held many leadership positions within my church and other community organizations.

These invaluable experiences allowed me to witness the incredible potential and aspirations of the young individuals and their families in our city. It was a privilege to collaborate with a dedicated group of educators and community members who were committed to supporting our students in achieving their dreams.

I consistently encouraged my students to aim high and strive for greatness. I firmly believed that with hard work and teamwork, they had the ability to accomplish anything their future held.

My time in Pine Bluff schools served as a catalyst for my decision to run for Mayor. I am deeply passionate about ensuring that every young person and their families in our community have access to the necessary resources for success.

Just as I encouraged my students to think big, I strongly believe that the City of Pine Bluff should adopt this mindset as well. By working together, as we did within the walls of my classroom and school, we can tackle even the most challenging obstacles that lie ahead of us.

3. In what areas do you see the most problems and what is your suggestion to solve them? I firmly believe that the most effective approach to overcoming the challenges faced by Pine Bluff and fostering a safer and more prosperous city is by investing in our people and cultivating a community that instills pride in all its residents. We need to prioritize our youth and quality of life. To do this, we should continue investing in the Group Violence Intervention Program. The purpose of this program is to connect youth with jobs, mentors, and other social services that exist in the community, which can help them overcome situations that lead to violence. This is an evidence-based initiative that has reduced violence in other communities. The city has invested \$500,000 into the initiative, and we must continue to support it.

The city must also continue working with developers to bring more housing to Pine Bluff, as a lot of people need affordable homes to have a good quality of life. Right now, we are working with a developer who plans to build an affordable housing development on the Southeast School property, which the City acquired and cleared. We should continue to support this project with the incentives needed to complete the development. Additionally, we should continue to develop relationships with investors who will bring affordable housing throughout the community.

We are renovating the old First Ward School building to create a shelter for people who are homeless called the Opportunity House. There are a lot of people in Pine Bluff who don't have a place to live, and the purpose of this facility is to shelter them while also connecting them to opportunities they need to live stable, independent lives. We have secured an operator, and we should continue to support this shelter once it opens later this year. We should continue contacting businesses to recruit commercial and retail opportunities to Pine Bluff. Additionally, we should invest in upgrading our parks and road conditions.

Building our community means keeping up our momentum. Progress does not always come in a straight line. It can be messy. It can be contentious. It can create challenges that tempt us to lose hope. However, we must remain steadfast, Pine Bluff. Let us never lose faith in one another or in the potential of our community. We cannot afford to regress now, not after how far we have come and with so many important objectives on the horizon.

4. Accessing the recent performance of Go Forward Pine Bluff and the 2017 sales tax, would you support the return of the Go-Forward sponsored tax, support a different tax, or feel no new tax is needed for the progression of the city? Could you explain your answer?

The voters have chosen not to renew Go Forward, and that should be respected. After witnessing the outcomes of both GFPB elections, I have come to realize the importance of unity in Pine Bluff. We must collaborate as a single entity to devise a comprehensive strategy that promotes the most promising ideas for enhancing and investing in our city. Once the election concludes, I will gather representatives of all ages and backgrounds to participate in a planning process to determine the investments they want to see in their neighborhoods. If it is determined that future revenue initiatives are needed, they should be managed exclusively by the mayor and city council.

5. What do you plan to accomplish in your first 30 days? One of my main priorities will be to identify a diverse group of stakeholders from throughout the community to identify key projects and investments that need to be made in our neighborhoods and infrastructure and develop the best path to funding those major projects.

6. What downward trend in your city's last five years are you most proud of? What trend is most worrisome? I take great pride in the progress we have achieved together in Pine Bluff. Our community has become stronger over the past seven years, evident in the completion of the Main Street Streetscape and the establishment of key facilities such as the Pine Bluff Aquatics Center, Community Center, library, and community garden. The opening of the casino has not only created hundreds of job opportunities but has also paved the way for the arrival of new businesses like Chick-fil-A.

However, amidst these positive developments, I am deeply concerned about the persisting violence within our community, particularly among our young population. As both a parent and an educator, this issue holds a personal significance for me. I am committed to taking any necessary measures to ensure the safety of our community. It is imperative that we increase our investments in programs that provide the people of Pine Bluff with opportunities for growth and success.

7. Given the existing budget constraints and the financial situation that the city is in, how would you stretch taxpayer's dollars and still execute the basic needs of the city? In my role as Mayor, I have dedicated myself to maximizing the potential of our city's resources. Collaborating with the casino, I successfully established a new source of revenue that benefits our community. Additionally, I have spearheaded the creation and expansion of a city grant writing department, which has been instrumental in securing millions of dollars in funding from philanthropic organizations, state programs, and federal initiatives and will continue to generate funds by seeking matching grant opportunities. We will continue to apply for state funding such as the ARDOT State Street Aid Funding where we recently received \$300,000 to fund the street overlay project.

Moving forward, I am committed to identifying further opportunities for accessing resources that will serve the needs of our citizens. My goal is to build partnerships with organizations that will embrace our vision and make financial contributions to our projects much like the \$1 million donations to the completion of the 601 Main Project and continue leveraging these resources to benefit our community and enhance the quality of life for all residents.

8. What plans do you have in place for effective policing and crime prevention? How do you plan to secure funding for the needs of public safety? In my role as Mayor, I have prioritized the improvement of our police and fire departments by implementing salary increases for our first responders. This measure is aimed at enhancing our departments' competitiveness, ultimately leading to a stronger capacity to combat crime and protect our residents.

Additionally, we have taken the necessary steps to secure funding for the implementation of the Group Violence Intervention (GVI) program. To ensure its successful execution, I intend to foster collaboration among various entities, including the police department, juvenile court, county sheriff's office, prosecuting attorney, local schools, state law enforcement, and other vital community partners.

By working hand in hand, we can effectively implement the GVI program and make significant strides in addressing the issue of violence. We will continue to collaborate with other communities across the country to explore crime-fighting initiatives such as in Pennsylvania, where the four our team visited in 2023.

Moving forward, my commitment to making Pine Bluff a safer city remains unwavering. I will continuously explore innovative approaches to invest in public safety, ensuring that our community thrives under secure conditions.

9. How do you plan to achieve community policing goals in a city with an understaffed police department? I am working closely with our police department to enhance their recruitment efforts, ensuring a steady influx of new police officers. We are dedicated to equipping these officers with comprehensive training, ample support, and competitive salaries to encourage their commitment to serving and safeguarding our community.

In partnership with Enterprise, we have made substantial progress in expanding our police fleet. This expansion has enabled all patrol officers to have take-home police vehicles, resulting in increased law enforcement presence within our neighborhoods. This heightened visibility serves as a deterrent to criminal activity and further enhances public safety.

Furthermore, we have undertaken the remodeling of the Detective Kevin D. Collins Center, transforming it into a state-of-the-art training facility for our police department. This facility will provide our officers with an optimal environment to enhance their skills and knowledge, further improving the effectiveness of our law enforcement efforts.

At the same time, we know that law enforcement can not create a safe community by themselves. They need residents, businesses, educators, faith-based leaders, and many more to get involved. We have been building on this through initiatives like the Group Violence Intervention Program which has a range of community partners. We have also worked with a variety of youth organizations, substance abuse programs, health organizations, and school leaders to meet social needs in the community that law enforcement is unable to provide.

By prioritizing these initiatives, we are demonstrating our steadfast commitment to ensuring the safety and well-being of our community, while also providing a supportive and conducive environment for our dedicated police officers.

10. How will you address the growing concerns about affordable housing? We are doing it now and we need to finish the job. We are working with a developer who plans to build an affordable housing development on the Southeast School property which the city acquired and cleared. We should continue to support this project with the incentives needed to complete the development. This will offer housing options for families and seniors. We also need to ensure the completion of the Flats on Sixth as well as initiate other affordable housing initiatives throughout the city. We are committed to seeing our goals through to completion, especially when it comes to providing affordable housing and safe neighborhoods for our families. This is why I am dedicated to ensuring the successful development and completion of projects like the Flats on Sixth, as well as initiating other affordable housing initiatives throughout our city.

11. What is your plan to attract new businesses and jobs to our city? I am working relentlessly to reach out to potential employers, recruit them to Pine Bluff, and secure the incentives they need to come here. We have even created a dedicated staff position in the Economic and Community Development Department to oversee this effort.

This is how we secured Chick-fil-A, for example. We also plan to collaborate with more workforce training programs in Pine Bluff so we can connect those services to residents who can benefit from them. We have to be as focused on retaining the businesses that we have as we are on attracting new ones. That means strengthening our workforce.

12. How will you address homelessness, and what long-term solutions are you advocating for? I firmly believe it is the city's responsibility to care for the most vulnerable members of our community. Toward this effort, the city is now remodeling the old First Ward School building and turning the facility into a transitional center, the Opportunity House. It will have programs to put them on a path to independence and stability. We have identified an operator, and the center is expected to open in 2024. I'm running to make sure this project is successful and to support other projects that embrace people who are homeless in Pine Bluff. In the most recent winter storm, I rallied with community members to open a warming center and provide necessary resources for our most vulnerable citizens during difficult times.

13. What measures will you take to ensure that the city's infrastructure can support new developments? I am collaborating closely with my team at city hall to enhance the infrastructure processes for new developments in Pine Bluff. This includes installing new sewer lines in areas like Olive Street and University Drive where new developments are either happening or should be incentivized. Additionally, we have secured \$30 million in federal funding to upgrade our drainage system which will transform the city's infrastructure and its capacity to support new developments.

14. How do you plan to repair and maintain the aging roadways and bridges in our city? I intend to foster strong collaboration with our street department to optimize the utilization of our current resources.

Additionally, I will actively seek out opportunities to apply for state and Federal grants, including those provided by the Bipartisan Infrastructure law, to make substantial investments in the improvement of Pine Bluff's roads and bridges. By doing so, we can enhance the infrastructure of our city and ensure safer and more efficient transportation for our residents and visitors. We must also make strategic investments to upgrade and replace equipment in the department to make operations more effective.

15. What are the most pressing issues in the office you are seeking to address? I firmly believe that one of the most crucial responsibilities of the Office of the Mayor is to envision the future of Pine Bluff and unite our community toward a common goal. My primary focus is on addressing key priorities, such as ensuring accessible and affordable housing for all residents, fostering opportunities for our youth, and driving economic development.

By prioritizing affordable housing initiatives, we aim to create a community where every individual has a safe and affordable place to call home. Additionally, by investing in programs and resources tailored to empower our youth, we can provide them with the tools and opportunities necessary to thrive and succeed. Furthermore, through targeted economic development strategies, we can stimulate growth, attract new investments, and create job opportunities, ultimately bolstering the overall prosperity of Pine Bluff.

By diligently working towards these goals, we can shape a vibrant and inclusive future for Pine Bluff while fostering a sense of unity and collaboration among all members of our community.

16. What is your strategy for improving the quality of life for all residents? As Mayor, I am steadfast in my commitment to invest in our Parks and Recreation department, ensuring that more neighborhoods have accessible and enjoyable gathering spaces.

This includes working with the city council to develop a new park in the 3rd Ward. It is important that we replace and upgrade outdated equipment, revitalize park facilities, and enhance the overall recreational experiences for our residents.

Furthermore, I recognize the importance of maintaining well-functioning streets within our city. To achieve this, I will work closely with the street department and engineers to spearhead innovative approaches to fix and maintain our roads, ensuring safer and more efficient transportation systems for our community.

Our young people deserve a nurturing environment that offers abundant opportunities for growth and success. This is why, I will continue to prioritize the development of programs and the provision of resources that cater to our youth. My aim is to establish a year-round Youth Employment Program, designed to equip young individuals with the skills and experiences necessary for future career success.

Additionally, I am committed to fostering economic growth by attracting new employers and commercial developments to Pine Bluff. Building on our recent success with Chick-fil-A, I will continue the City's recruitment efforts to secure investments that provide residents with expanded shopping options, diverse entertainment opportunities, and a variety of sit-down restaurants for families to enjoy.

Through these initiatives, I aim to create a vibrant and prosperous community that offers abundant opportunities for residents of all ages to thrive and enjoy a high quality of life.

17. How would you describe your management style?

Throughout my journey, from the classroom as a teacher to holding the position of Mayor in City Hall, I have consistently embraced a transformational management style.

This transformational mindset of excellence is expressed through my vision as we unite and collaborate on effective measures for organizational progress. My goals are to motivate as well as inspire others to achieve remarkable things in our beloved city. The potential for greatness in our community is limitless, and with our collective effort, anything is achievable.

18. What is your long-term vision for the city's infrastructure development? One of our biggest projects is implementing city-wide drainage improvements that will be funded by the \$32 million we received for flood prevention. This will be a ten-year project with multiple phases that will have a long-term effect on drains. I also believe the city should continue seeking additional funding opportunities from federal initiatives like the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law to upgrade roads and bridges. We have been making incremental upgrades through partnerships with ARDOT and the Corp of Engineers.

Under my administration, we have witnessed tremendous advancements in the development of Pine Bluff's infrastructure. Where vacant and deteriorating buildings once stood, we have successfully transformed the landscape with the establishment of a state-of-the-art library and learning center that caters to the needs of the 21st century. Additionally, we take pride in the construction of an outstanding aquatic center, which stands as a benchmark for excellence in the state. Furthermore, we have proudly opened a new elementary school that excels in providing a high-quality education to our students. These achievements serve as a testament to our commitment to progress and investment in the future of Pine Bluff.

In Pine Bluff's central neighborhoods, we have undertaken a project to revitalize the Pine Bluff Community Center, providing the youth with a facility they truly deserve. Additionally, on Cherry Street, we have established a community garden that follows the seed-to-table concept. Moreover, we have made improvements to various parks by enhancing seating, lighting, and fencing. It is essential to maintain this positive momentum to create a Pine Bluff that we can all take pride in calling home.

19. What do you see as your primary role as mayor?
My primary role is to work with city departments to provide services to residents and visitors and act as an advocate for the city to attract investors, spur economic development, and forge community partnerships that benefit the community. I consider it my responsibility to transform our vision for Pine Bluff into a reality. I am fully committed to unifying my team within the city and collaborating with community partners to develop a Pine Bluff that fills us all with pride as our cherished home. I am willing to go above and beyond to accomplish this goal.

20. How will you ensure that the voices of all city residents are represented in your administration? As mayor, I work intentionally to listen to the voices of all of our citizens. I hold frequent town halls and forums to hear from community members. I also created the Mayor's Youth Council to hear specifically from our young people. Our website also offers opportunities to connect with city staff and share feedback.

21. How would you enhance transparency and openness in government proceedings? Under my administration, significant efforts have been made to renovate our city council chambers, ensuring a suitable and updated space for conducting local governance. All meetings are publicized and open to the public. Furthermore, we have effectively utilized our city's social media platforms to provide regular updates on the activities and initiatives led by the city council.

Through these channels, we actively encourage citizen engagement by sharing information about public projects and inviting their participation.

22. What specific approach will you take to handle citizen feedback and complaints? Upon assuming office, one of the initial systems we implemented was the establishment of a citizen call log. This log enables us to effectively keep track of feedback and complaints received from citizens. Collaborating closely with various city departments, we work diligently to address these concerns and ensure their resolution. Additionally, by analyzing the trends and patterns within the call log, we gain valuable insights into the common challenges faced by our constituents, allowing us to develop targeted solutions and improvements.

23. How will you combat corruption and promote ethical conduct within city government? A number of local and state measures are in effect to ensure accountability. The City Clerk's Office has independent oversight over city procurements. The City Attorney's Office provides independent and expert analysis to personnel on conducting city operations. For several months each year, Arkansas Legislative Auditors establish work sites at city hall to review all city finances. City Council members, as well as the general public, also have the right to scrutinize city transactions, budget line items, procurements, and financial documents at any time. If any impropriety is detected by my office, it is reported to the appropriate authorities immediately for investigation and subsequently, further action is taken based on the findings. Within my office, I wholeheartedly embrace a culture of excellence and integrity, upholding the highest standards to faithfully represent the citizens of Pine Bluff. I expect nothing less from my team, as we collectively strive to serve our community with utmost dedication and professionalism.

24. Which measures will you implement to ensure that your administration's decisions are data-driven and evidence-based? To address the significant challenges faced by Pine Bluff, my administration has diligently studied and researched national best practices. For instance, we have embarked on extensive travels across the country to gain valuable insights on implementing effective programs such as the Group Violence Intervention Program and the My Brother's Keeper program. In Collaboration with our community partners like the Juvenile Court, Southeast Arkansas Behavioral Center, the Pine Bluff Police Department, the Jefferson County Sheriff's Department, and the Jefferson County Prosecuting Attorney, we are partnering with academic professionals to not only evaluate the program but to build a database that can create more informed decision-making. intentional exploration has allowed us to gather the necessary knowledge and resources to create tailored solutions that cater to the specific needs of our young people, ensuring their well-being and success.

Our police department will utilize Map Line Software along with ADSI GEO information to track and analyze data in Project Neighborhood to put people and resources in areas where they are needed most.

25. What are your strategies to audit and improve government efficiency throughout the city's departments? Each department sets out its goals and objectives for the year. My office works with the departments to track the progress of these objectives. We also participate in regular department head meetings to collaborate and troubleshoot problems to ensure major projects are completed. We have also invested in IT ticketing systems and identified software systems that allow employees to process information and manage their workflow as efficiently as possible. Some of these systems are internal processes that may not be noticeable to residents, but they make a difference in modernizing city operations and enhancing our ability to meet public needs.

26. What systems will you put in place to monitor the performance and success of your initiatives? I actively monitor the progress and success of my initiatives in close collaboration with my office team. With a focus on long-term sustainability, I strive to embed these initiatives within city departments. By fostering integration at this level, we ensure that these initiatives become ingrained within the fabric of our city's operations. This strategic approach allows us to sustain and build upon these efforts, creating lasting positive change for our community. For example, for law enforcement initiatives, we maintain records such as how many stops are made, weapons collected, and illegal substances confiscated, among other information. For parks and recreation events or programs, we analyze information such as attendance data, revenue intake, and operational expenses to determine performance and success. I believe we should continually evaluate our methods and enhance them as needed.

27. How do you plan to make your policy decisions and the reasons behind them more accessible to city residents? In my administration, we have fully embraced a range of diverse communication channels to effectively engage with the community. Through platforms such as social media, radio, and in-person forums, we strive to transparently communicate policy decisions and provide opportunities for citizens to get involved. We also utilize the city's website to share information. I plan to be more conscious of engaging these mediums even more to increase accessibility. Utilizing these various channels, we aim to reach a wide audience and ensure that every community member has access to information and avenues for active participation in shaping policies and initiatives.

28. How do you plan to foster partnerships between local schools and businesses or universities? I firmly believe that the success of our students is reliant on the collective support of our entire community. To reinforce this collaborative approach, I have taken the initiative to establish an education alliance.

Through this alliance, we aim to support Pine Bluff teachers by facilitating their certification and providing opportunities for them to pursue Master's Degrees. By fostering this network of educators, we create an environment where teachers can continuously enhance their skills and knowledge, ultimately benefiting our students and their educational journey.

Furthermore, the city can extend its support beyond the confines of the classroom by allocating funds for summer and after-school programs. In our commitment to empowering the youth, we have already made substantial progress by expanding the Summer Youth Employment Program, offering hundreds of job opportunities to young individuals from various backgrounds within our community. As part of my re-election plans, I aim to expand this program further, transforming it into a year-round opportunity for our young people. By doing so, we can provide continuous support and valuable experiences that will positively shape their futures.

We will continue working with the Group Violence Intervention Program to connect students with social and mental health services in our schools. Additionally, through Economic and Community Development, we intend to work with workforce training programs in the community to increase the skills and education of our labor force. That includes working with our college and university. We also intend to work with local schools to beautify the areas around their campuses.

29. What distinguishes you from other candidates? I have served as mayor for seven years. Pine Bluff is better today than it was when I took office. Seven years ago, we didn't have a top-quality Community Center, now we do. We didn't have \$32 million in federal funding for flood prevention, now we do. We didn't have a Chick-fil-A, but now we do. We didn't have an aquatic center, but now we do. We didn't have an evidence-based Violence Prevention Program. Now we do.

People couldn't drive down Main Street, now there is a library, school, and art facilities that serve people of all ages and backgrounds from throughout Southeast Arkansas. Our successes are the result of hard work and collaboration with residents and community partners. I haven't done everything right, but I have the experience and vision to finish the job I started of building a stronger, and safer community. With the experience and vision, I possess; I am fully equipped to complete the task I initially embarked upon.

My dedication to this cause remains unwavering, and I am determined to see it through to the end. By leveraging my experience and utilizing my foresight, we will create a community that thrives, ensuring the well-being and unity of our beloved Pine Bluff.

30. What legacy do you hope to leave behind at the end of your term? I aspire to establish a lasting legacy, one that accentuates the unity of Pine Bluff and emphasizes the strength derived from working together. Undeniably, the path ahead may present its share of difficulties. Yet, with your unwavering faith and ongoing support, I am confident that we can confront our toughest challenges collectively, thus ensuring persistent success. For generations to come people will remember that, We are One Pine Bluff Stronger Together!

As the March 5th primary approaches in 2024, I humbly request your valuable vote. Furthermore, I implore you to sustain your support for our shared endeavor to transform Pine Bluff into a place that fills us all with immense pride and a profound sense of belonging.

SAMUEL GLOVER



1. Why are you running for mayor? To fight for the future of our city, our culture, and our children. I must become a bridge, connecting our generations, and finding a common unity for a prosperous future. My "Priority Pine Bluff Plan" can blaze a path for a prosperous future by creating hope and stability for the development of our community and the generations to come. If we build the capacity and capabilities of the people, the people will in turn build the city. Finally, I truly want to amplify the goodness of God, in that he can take a young man from west central Pine Bluff, the Central Park neighborhood, and empower him, to use his power, influence, resources and abilities on behalf of others to impact the world.

2. What is your previous political experience? This is my first turn in the political field from a sense of running a campaign and the nuance of politics. However, years in executive management at the municipal level as a department head and in the education field have afforded me the opportunity to directly manage over 75 employees/contractors yearly, create and implement dozens of community programs, oversee 20 million dollars in capital improvement projects, manage a budget of approximately 5 million annually. As director of the nationally renowned event, the King Cotton Holiday Classic, I was able to be a visible and vocal ambassador for the city of Pine Bluff on a local, state, and national stage.

3. In what areas do you see the most problems and what is your suggestion to solve them? Like a well-balanced nutritional plan, there must be a healthy balance that will incorporate the needs of all our

residents and infrastructure in planning our future while taking innovative action today.

- The Image and Culture of Pine Bluff- Create a Marketing and Communications department to facilitate the communication of the latest news and events through multiple avenues for national brand awareness for the city. Collaborating with the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff and SEARK College to re-brand Pine Bluff as a college town. We will celebrate the greatness of Pine Bluff at every opportunity.**
- Meaningful impact in the lives of our youth- my plan involves a three-pronged approach to address the needs of our youth at each developmental level they progress through. Pre-K to 5th-grade children by elevating our free Sports and Discovery Camp facilitated by the Parks and Recreation Department. Sixth-grade to 8th-grade children will be enriched by collaborative programming through local nonprofits such as the Generator, the library, as well as the school districts undergirded by city resources. Capitalizing on the youth job programs by expanding and allocating more resources, dedicated to providing effective jobs and training in a safe environment.**

- **Public Works and Safety-Creation of a Public Works Department to improve our city's infrastructure, drainage and beautification while modernizing our police and fire to be up to date with 21st century standards.**
- **Communication Barriers between municipal government and citizens- Create a Marketing and Communications Department disseminating information accurately and consistently to citizens. We must invest in our current and future citizens through consistent engagement to equip them in a knowledge-based economy.**
- **Quality Affordable Housing- Fostering the creation, affordability and diversity of Pine Bluff's housing supply will be a focus of development as we create centers of neighborhood success through our community anchors such as Central, J.C Jeffries, Bryant Street parks and our schools. New housing policies will promote balanced development and equal prosperity for Pine Bluff.**

4. Accessing the recent performance of Go Forward Pine Bluff and the 2017 sales tax, would you support the return of the Go-Forward sponsored tax, support a different tax, or feel no new tax is needed for the progression of the city? Could you explain your answer? Having been involved firsthand with the implementation of the 2017 sales tax through capital improvements to parks infrastructure, such as the Aquatic Center, Pine Bluff Community Center and Regional Park Softball Complex; Cultural attractions like the King Cotton Classic as well as outdoor recreational events such as The Big Bass/Catfish Extravaganza. I believe the GFPB tax added value to the city. However, after two tax renewal efforts, the people seem to be requesting a moratorium on the subject or simply exhausted with the idea. In lieu of this fact, we must maximize our efforts to be proactive in prioritizing our fiscal spending toward projects, programs, and partnerships that best serve our community. However, after a 9-18-month period of monitoring and analyzing the situation, a conversation about the necessity or viability of a new city tax must be discussed with the citizens and city leaders.

5. What do you plan to accomplish in your first 30 days? I approve of a strategically aggressive approach to address complex issues attacking municipal issues on multi-dimensional fronts.

- **Identify funding for a state-of-the-art command center for Pine Bluff police, Pine Bluff fire/emergency services and MECA.**
- **Legislation to align services to our citizens through restructuring city departments for efficiency and efficacy. In addition, evaluation and analysis of each city department and its function.**
- **Introduce legislation to ensure the facilitation and operation of the King Cotton Holiday Classic for the next 4 years.**
- **Institute a night patrol in the animal control department to address stray dog nuisances accompanied by stricter aggressive animal ordinances.**
- **Immediately begin the process of becoming a more professional government by starting the process for national accreditation of all city departments, especially police and fire.**
- **Establish a Public Works Department and Marketing Communications Department. Followed by submission of job titles to the Administration Committee for approval of positions. Hire directors/coordinators for each.**
- **Introduce legislation to address the menace of drag racing in the city by developing a city wrecker service with the depot, maximum fines for offenders, and speed humps for park areas.**
- **Submit a plan for high-quality wayfinding signs to match our new city entry signs to regional planning for approval. Wayfinding signs will have an immediate impact on the brand and value of our community.**
- **Mobilize the city leaders to seek new business and investment from across the country.**
- **Start a citywide fundraising campaign for MLK Unity Playscape, Townsend Park Splash Park Addition and Saracen Landing Wharf and Event Center.**

6. What downward trend in your city's last five years are you most proud of? As a proponent of silver linings, I am proud to see the saturation of negative press toward our city taking a turn for the better. I am proud of the work that has been done to promote Pine Bluff as a point of destination. Events such as King Cotton and the Black rodeo as well as the diverse offerings of the Arts and Science Center, the success of local high school sports, and the Aquatic Center are blocks of success we can build upon. The decline of our urban centers surrounding our schools, parks, and major thoroughfares is troublesome. The change in both the property values and housing inventory has created a void in home ownership. Research shows that the tenants who rent are less likely to maintain an acceptable level of quality and maintenance to a property causing a hike in dilapidated or abandoned structures. These areas become havens for crime and degradation. Safety and development will equal prosperity in these areas.

7. Given the existing budget constraints and the financial situation that the city is in, how would you stretch taxpayer's dollars and still execute the basic needs of the city? It is worth noting that there is both an upward trend in our city resources and currently enough in current city budgets to conduct a baseline of city business, with responsible spending. We will implement austerity measures to cut back on inessential spending to bolster our surplus. In addition, adding staffing and resources to the city grant writer will create alternative revenue streams through support grants for program development, matching grants, in-kind donations and sponsorship deals for naming rights of places like the convention center, library and new community/multipurpose centers. As parks director from 2018-2023, our department garnered over 3 million dollars in grants to the city for infrastructure and programs.

8. What plans do you have in place for effective policing and crime prevention? Safer communities start with prevention and intervention, end with rehabilitation and are fueled with effective action. We will elevate the stance on prevention by investing in a state-of-the-art command center, upgrading the equipment and renovating fire station facilities, evaluating funding to revolutionize training methods and investing in school-based programs such as the Junior Cadet Program. Collaborating with non-profits and state programs for rehabilitation will plummet the unacceptably high recidivism rates in Jefferson County. Investing in the recruitment, development and retention of officers will fortify our department. I believe that enough time will have passed to determine, through data and research, the viability and/or necessity of an exclusive public safety tax used to specifically address 4 targeted areas of resource deficiency.

9. How do you plan to achieve community policing goals in a city with an understaffed police department? We must use compassion in our decision-making and our approach to Public Safety. Modernizing our public safety division will make our goals more attainable and realistic. Technology is a great neutralizer. More traffic cameras with automatic ticketing capabilities, new lighting and crime-stopping methods such as infrared drone patrol centers throughout the city will increase our crime-fighting capacity and capability.

10. How will you address the growing concerns about affordable housing? I will be committed to encouraging housing preservation and creation for all income levels and household sizes citywide through policy initiatives, public/ private partnerships and public/non-profit partnerships like Habitat for Humanity and Homes for Our Troops. Engaging investors willing to build new contemporary, mid-sized subdivisions, is a high priority to address the new construction inventory shortage. My administration will be mindful of the need to consistently encourage quality, sustainable design and appearance for all new developments.

There will be a standard for appearance. Fostering the creation, affordability and diversity of the Pine Bluff housing supply would be a central project for the tenure of my time in office.

11. What is your plan to attract new businesses and jobs to our city? Having a strong Marketing and Communications Department will expand our opportunities to attract businesses that align with our community needs as well as explore options that will add to the vitality of the local business base. Building upon the brand and narrative of Pine Bluff will increase the chances of attracting and retaining investors. Simultaneously, introducing updated, progressive legislation that accommodates incentive zoning, and some levels of contextual form-based city codes and we will strategically align the city's interests with industries that focus on air/railway transportation, research/development of STEM, technology/software creation and distribution such as Amazon and Walmart. This will create opportunities for infrastructure grants, tourism and development incentives, and income tax credits which can be a selling point for new businesses and investors.

12. How will you address homelessness, and what long-term solutions are you advocating for? Development and collaboration equal prosperity for Pine Bluff. We must act immediately to prevent a rise in vagrancy we are not equipped to handle. While attending the National Parks and Recreation Conference in Phoenix, AZ in 2022, I was alerted to the impending homeless surge by my colleagues on the West Coast. The overcrowded homeless population was headed our way. We must communicate with our national counterparts for best approaches and practices while collaborating with local partners to provide social services and skills training.

- Form a task force to address 4 major areas homeless patrons face: mental health, lack of resources, drug and alcohol abuse, and shelter. SEARK Behavioral, United Way of SE Ark, ADC, Jefferson County Extension Services, JRMC and the nonprofit sector are our essential partners in this front.
- Seek federal funding for treatment and housing.
- Legislation for tiny home communities for temporary housing quarters.
- Advocate for a low-cost and/or in-kind Rehabilitation Counseling services program collaborating with health providers, workforce development, and job training.

13. What measures will you take to ensure that the city's infrastructure can support new developments? Culturally we must decide whether we are ready to launch into the future or remain the same. Being forward-thinking in identifying areas for redevelopment will keep us on the cutting edge of renewal and restoration in Pine Bluff. After accessing environmental and utility considerations we must initiate a process to consolidate, eliminate and strengthen any area within the community that fits the guidelines for the protocol set through newly adopted city ordinances which will create a landscape for opportunity. Holding absentee property owners accountable for the blight they have left in our city is a top priority. Establishing legislation to streamline the abatement process will aid in our mission to clean our neighborhoods of abandoned properties and burnouts.

14. How do you plan to repair and maintain the aging roadways and bridges in our city? Currently, Economic Development and the Street Department have an active comprehensive plan to address both issues. State turnback funds provide a measure of resources the city uses to accomplish repair and maintenance. However, combined these departments are understaffed and over-obligated.

15. What are the most pressing issues in the office you are seeking to address?

- Departmental efficiency models and customer service
- Public trust and Perception
- The public/private partnership model universally accepted
- Internal controls
- Re-branding of Pine Bluff

16. What is your strategy for improving the quality of life for all residents? Parks, schools, and safety. We will have to be mindful that every citizen requires different to cater to their needs. It is our job to create and sustain family fun in the city of Pine Bluff.

17. How would you describe your management style? I identify closely with a mixture of Laissez-faire and transformational leadership. Accountability is high on my priority list, but I have found that a more relaxed work environment gets the best out of your people and they feel valued. Especially when you are working with highly skilled individuals who know their job. The goal of how I lead is to create a lasting positive impact while uplifting my team to achieve their full potential and drive success and innovation while fostering creativity. Having worked closely with most of the current department heads in city government, I find my leadership style very appropriate for the task ahead as we seek to usher in a fresh wind and a new vision for our city.

18. What is your long-term vision for the city's infrastructure development? We must realize that renewal is not a quick fix but a series of consistent actions that produce the desired result. The vision requires solutions that are formulated from interconnected concepts that will provide us with cultural, social and physical resiliency in our infrastructure. The goal is to revitalize and synergize areas of urban development to create strong safe neighborhoods. Creating small units of success mixed with infills of new construction, rebuilds, greenspaces, parks and schools.

By connecting each of these restored community anchors we will have created a network of stabilized neighborhoods that will become the resurrected Pine Bluff we all desire. Wayfinding signs, adequate lighting, strategic surveillance, landscaping and code-enforced neighborhoods will undergird the cultural aspect of our community. Frequent city events, festivals, activities, sports and targeted marketing will galvanize our community pride and strengthen us socially. This is the community I want my children's children to thrive in.

19. What do you see as your primary role as mayor? To be the lead ambassador of the city, to oversee and manage people, projects, programs, and partnerships while driving innovation, development and investment to create hope and stability of our culture and community for generations to come.

20. How will you ensure that the voices of all city residents are represented in your administration? Our success will be tied to our connections to each other, the Delta and the state of Arkansas. Creating the Communications and Marketing Department is vital to our success. 90% of all failures or success comes from effective communication. Launching a 411-style program will accommodate citizens who have pressing issues. Similarly, we will be more intentional with our citizens by regularly organizing city-wide listening sessions, ward-specific town halls, and engagement events at our schools and churches. Expanding the training duties of our city employees will aid in customer service. Additionally, I intend to work diligently with the city council to increase engagement with their constituents.

21. How would you enhance transparency and openness in government proceedings? Providing accurate, consistent and updated information is vital to our success. Educating our citizens on processes and procedures will illuminate controls that are currently in place. Continuing taping and videos all public meetings and making them readily available through a QR code, mailed out to every citizen, placed on the website distributed through social

media and promoted accordingly through the new Communications and Marketing Department.

22. What specific approach will you take to handle citizen feedback and complaints? Three forms of technology will provide our citizen with diverse methods to conveniently and consistently communicate with their city government.

- 411
- AI-based platform
- QR Codes/ Digital Complaint Forms
- Quarterly listening tour for executive leaders

23. How will you combat corruption and promote ethical conduct within city government? By resolution, make it mandatory for departments to conduct a self-audit of budget spending, mandatory semi-annual training for departmental administration staff in procurement, municipal procedures, employee handbook refreshers, New World which is the financial software currently used by the city for all financial matters.

24. Which measures will you implement to ensure that your administration's decisions are data-driven and evidence-based? One way to be consistent is to adopt measurable objectives like tracking economic indicators and collecting performance reports to keep apprised of the work. Collaborations with cities across the country will offer us considerations for best practices to potentially adopt.

25. What are your strategies to audit and improve government efficiency throughout the city's departments? Recent allegations of mismanagement, concerning a former city department head, caused deep mistrust in the community. The city has an internal auditor on staff and is audited by the State of Arkansas each year. The software system used to mitigate the financial business of the city has 3 layers of security in place requiring 3 signatures of electronic approval from different departments plus signatures from the mayor and city clerk's office.

A responsible leader has the responsibility to educate our citizens on the systems of checks and balances currently in place. I would add additional duties to the internal auditor and implement a rubric for auditing practices and reporting to our department heads and require quarterly reports from each department on finances.

26. What systems will you put in place to monitor the performance and success of your initiatives? Annual departmental reports, Monthly department head and council committee meetings, and bi-monthly city council meetings are currently municipal norms. Making sure our goals are attainable and measurable are standard best practices. Municipal employees are held in high regard and will be held equally accountable.

27. How do you plan to make your policy decisions and the reasons behind them more accessible to city residents? Marketing and Communications personnel will ensure citizens are equipped with the most accurate updated information that is easily accessible. I believe it to be equally important to educate our community on a foundational level on policy, procedure and protocol of municipal government.

28. How do you plan to foster partnerships between local schools and businesses or universities? Collaborations equal prosperity for Pine Bluff. Expounding on the current educational alliance, the office of the mayor should be the number one advocate for quality education, job training and entrepreneurship in a safe productive environment. I intend to use my platform to facilitate an upwardly mobile feeder system for academia, skill trades, sports, the arts and business galvanizing the next generation.

29. What distinguishes you from other candidates?

The record of my experience directly translates to the job and purpose of the office. The mayor of Pine Bluff must manage people, projects, programs and partnerships but most of all, be the lead ambassador for the city. Uniquely, my diverse experience qualifies that statement. I have 9 years of executive management experience, four years directing K-8 school culture, 5 years directing one of the largest city departments that annually oversaw a budget of 5 million dollars, 100 employees/contractors, 34 parks and facilities, federal and state liaison to FEMA/ADEM, processed 4200 invoices, contracts and agreements yearly, project manager over 20 million in capital projects, 2.5 million in departmental grants, \$500,000 in departmental revenue each year and managing 25 events/festivals for the city. Directing King Cotton has allowed me to champion the brand of Pine Bluff as a destination city with safe, family-fun events that impact our quality of life. Being the lead ambassador of an event that landed Pine Bluff in the pages of the Washington Post and at a viewership of 38 million Americans. As former board president of the United Way of SEARK, the public/private partnership collaborations from the non-profit sector have impacted the everyday lives of Pine Bluff citizens. I embody a bridge in our community, connecting our generations. I resonate with our seniors; I am relevant to my generation and I am relatable to our youth. Having made a positive impact in public, private, non-profit and educational sectors, I align with the heartbeat of the people of Pine Bluff.

30. What legacy do you hope to leave behind at the end of your term? For it to be known that Sam Glover was an agent of positive change who cared about the people of Pine Bluff and created hope and stability for the next generation.