

City of Bull Shoals Council Meeting Minutes
Thursday June 25, 2026, at 6:30pm
Bull Shoals City Hall Council Chambers
706 C.S. Woods Blvd Bull Shoals, AR 72619

The meeting began with the Pledge of Allegiance. Acting Mayor Travis Fancher, Councilman Hutchison, Councilman Webb, Councilman Meinking, Councilman Grede, and Councilman Howell are all present. We have a quorum.

Updating the job description for Recorder. The recorder will be responsible for FOIA's when they come in, working with the heads of the departments to complete those FOIA requests when they come in. Pay rate for the FOIA work will be \$14.50 per hour and \$50 per meeting. Motion to accept and seconded. Yes-6, No-0.

Council interviewed Sherry Bushre and Jessica Wilkinson for the Recorder position. Councilman Grede made a motion to choose Jessica Wilkinson for the Recorder position. Yes-6, No-0. Jessica Wilkinsom was sworn into the Recorder position by JP Sandra Lee.

Approval of Minutes: Minutes from May 28, 2026. Motion to approve from Councilman Hutchison. Yes-4, No-2.

Treasurer Report: 2023 Audit is still in process, Doshier lost records. No updates on the 2024 audit. The council would like to see Amber Knowles get the CSA training she needs; she will make a list for the council. Amber is working on reconciling bank statements and getting numbers for the next meeting. The council would like to see a forensic audit done. Amber to investigate this. Councilman Grede motioned to wait until next month to accept the Treasurer's Report. Yes-6, No-0.

Department Reports:

Police/ Fire/ Public Works updates:

Police- Coffee with a Cop is Saturday at 9:00am. Fire- We are on track for the 4th of July fireworks. Public Works- Since hiring maintenance Tech, he has fixed two dead lawn mowers and a couple of vehicles are fixed. Planning and Zoning- No questions or updates. Park Committee- 22 sites at Dam Site are filled for 4th of July weekend. Dam Jam parking has been mitigated. We need to get the section of fencing on the baseball field taken down. Councilman Meinking made motion to accept department reports; Councilman Grede seconded. Yes-6, No-0.

ADEQ- They are providing an engineer, we are to do smoke testing and working on the lines we can get to, everything else will be written up in a proposal as it must be 100% replaced. We need to get this written and there are grants and loans at 0% interest and some forgivable. Next meeting will be a site visit to cover different alternatives.

Citizen Comments on agenda items: Tim Curtis, he has been saying for years to get a forensic audit. It is time we passed a motion to get this done. Another citizen seconded Tim's comment.

Sick Policy- Ranger gets 5 days per year. Sick times run from January to January and when you use sick time you get points. If you are out for 3 days and bring in a Dr. note, you only get charged one point. Points drop after a year. If you get up to ten points in a year you could be terminated. The council still wants to investigate a sick policy.

Mayors' Comments-

We need to place ads for employment. We are looking for the Public Works Department. Councilman Grede made motion to accept, and Councilman Meinking seconded. Yes-6, No-0.

Working on a Resolution to make sure all funds get reappropriated in the correct places. The Maintenance Tech position was run in the paper for four weeks and was also on the air. We had three applicants; one wanted \$28 an hour, and one wanted \$25 an hour. They all went through the interviewing process.

Public Works has only done about a quarter of the town for tree limbs and needs to get a chipper. We can rent one for a month for \$4600 or weekly for \$2000. Current chipper will cost about \$6000-\$7000 to fix. Another idea is to burn the limbs; this can be done but someone must watch the fire till it is out. That could be hours. The city does not have the manpower to do this all at once. We may need to rent the chipper for a week here and there to get it completed and not have everything else back up, like mowing and filling potholes. Motion to accept renting chipper for a week at Merle's discretion, seconded. Yes-6, No-0. Police Salaries- Looking into resolution regarding police department salaries. Did the department take a pay cut? Resolution needs to be worded properly.

Ordinance 2026-07- Off Premise Sales- For businesses to sell alcohol from 10am to midnight Sundays. Keep tax dollars in town. Councilman Howell motion to accept, Councilman Meinking second. Yes-6, No-0. Motion to read by title only, seconded 6 Yes, 0 No. Motion to read by title only, seconded 6 Yes, 0 No.

Resolution 2026-15- Authorizing the appropriation and active expenditure of municipal funds by the city of Bull Shoals to cover all necessary expenses for the special election concerning Sunday's off-premises sales of alcohol. The council has approved Ordinance 2026-07. Motion to accept made and seconded. Yes-6, No-0.

Citizen Comments-

To Travis Fancher- Tim Curtis: You are one of the best acting mayors I have ever seen. You have accomplished more in one week on a lot of bad problems. I really commend you. In the next election, I hope you run for Mayor sir.

Adjournment: Motion to adjourn from Councilman Howell, second by Councilman Webb. Yes-6, No-0.

Summary:

- Recorder appointment and FOIA duties
- Jessica Wilkinson was nominated and appointed as City Recorder and sworn in.
- Updated job description assigns the reporter to handle FOIA requests and work with department heads to complete them.
- Pay for the reporter/FOIA duties: set at \$14.50 per hour for FOIA work, plus \$50 per meeting attended for FOIA-related duties. Meetings' compensation discussed as \$50/meeting and "three-quarter pay for meetings."
- FOIA response timeline discussed as three days unless government agencies are involved.

- May minutes and formal actions
- Minutes from May 28, 2026 were approved.
- A motion related to the new recorder and/or related actions was discussed and approved; details were a bit informal in the transcript but the action to appoint and swear in the recorder was completed.

- Treasurer report and financial governance
- Amber provided a treasurer update:
- 2023 audit is still in progress; Dozier reportedly lost records in a flood and is redoing them.
- 2024 audit has no current updates.
- Goal to post monthly bank statements (through April) and reconcile with CSA support; plan to get water/sewer statements out soon.
- Training for CSA and software use is needed; emphasis on Amber receiving proper training to improve accuracy of reports.

- Discussion about ongoing forensic auditing and the possibility of engaging a forensic auditor to investigate past financial matters; several members urged moving forward if warranted.

- Forensic audit
 - Strong sentiment among some members and citizens that a forensic audit is needed to determine what happened financially over the years.
 - The council discusses obtaining cost quotes and timelines; no final contract signed yet. The notion is to gather costs and consider proceeding.

- EPA/ADQ sewer project update
 - Councilor Collins summarized a meeting with EPA/ADQ:
 - An engineer is assigned; major transmission line work is being planned with the government agencies “in the driver’s seat.”
 - The agencies expect many issues to be treated as needing replacement; grants and low-interest/forgivable loans (e.g., state revolving funds) are being explored.
 - A site visit is planned for the next meeting; this is viewed as a positive trajectory toward resolving sewer issues.

- Budget, staffing, and operations
 - Maintenance/position and hiring: discussions about the maintenance tech ad and applicants indicated concerns about process and transparency; data on applicants and wages were reviewed to address potential improprieties.
 - Chip reclaimer (wood chipper) issue:
 - The city needs to clear large piles of limbs; the team discussed renting a chipper.
 - Debate over duration: week vs month; concerns about manpower and scheduling.
 - The council motioned to rent for a week, with option to extend if needed; Merle to lead its deployment.
 - Police salaries: some members highlighted the need to revisit the salary ordinance to ensure compliance with state requirements and to avoid unintended pay cuts.
 - Sunday alcohol off-premises sale ordinance (Ordinance 2026-07):
 - Discussion on the ballot language; the council identified an adjustment to restrict to “residents” in the ballot language (instead of including “visitors” as well) to avoid ambiguity.
 - Committee proceeded with readings and prepared for the referendum; the measure would be placed on the November 3, 2026 ballot.
 - Election funding (Resolution 2026-R-15): authorization to appropriate funds for the special referendum election concerning Sunday sales, including costs for ballot prep, poll

workers, etc.

- Estimated cost ranges were discussed; the county election office indicated a ballpark figure similar to prior local measures (roughly around \$1,500 to \$4,600 in the ballpark; exact figure to be confirmed).
- Public comments and citizen input
- Citizens pressed for timely forensic auditing and accountability for past financial issues.
- A caller emphasized the need to start the forensic audit now and provided a local business example to illustrate urgency.
- Discussion also touched on sick-time policies, park maintenance, and other operational concerns.
- Adjournment
- The meeting concluded with a motion to adjourn.

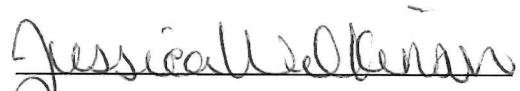
Conclusions and implications

- Financial governance and accountability are at the top of the agenda
- The council recognizes significant past and ongoing financial governance issues (audits, reporting accuracy, and possible mismanagement concerns).
- There is clear intent to improve financial reporting (monthly postings, training for the treasurer, and more robust use of CSA resources).
- A forensic audit is being seriously considered, with cost quotes to be pursued. If pursued, this could shape future governance and transparency.
- Strengthening administrative capacity
- The appointment of a dedicated recorder and FOIA focus is a step toward clearer record-keeping and responsiveness to public records requests.
- Training for the treasurer via CSA is prioritized to ensure financial data accuracy and timely reporting; potential existing “prepaid” training hours are being explored.
- Revenue enhancement and fiscal planning
- The Sunday alcohol sales referendum represents a potential revenue tool, with careful attention to ballot wording (resident-only eligibility) to avoid confusion and potential legal issues.
- A dedicated resolution to cover election costs demonstrates prudent budgeting for a special municipal referendum.
- The sewer project with EPA/ADQ offers potential access to grants and favorable financing

(state revolving funds, forgivable loans), which could significantly advance critical infrastructure work.

- Operational and staffing decisions
 - Chip disposal/limbing cleanup is being addressed with a rental chipper plan; timeline and manpower are being calibrated to avoid overstretching staff.
 - Police salary ordinance issues require careful review to ensure compliance with state regulations and avoid unintended pay reductions.
 - There is an ongoing need for transparency in hiring practices (maintenance tech), with data and processes being reviewed publicly.
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- Next steps and actions to watch
 - Obtain formal cost estimates for a forensic audit from multiple providers and decide on scope/funding.
 - Finalize staff training plans for Amber (treasurer) with CSA, including scheduling and budget for training hours.
 - Confirm and finalize the Sunday off-premises sale ordinance readings and ensure the residents-only ballot language is incorporated.
 - Secure the budget and logistics for the November 3, 2026 referendum, including publication and polling support.
 - Monitor the EPA/ADQ site visit and the related grant/financing opportunities; prepare for possible site-specific expenditures and reporting.
 - Move forward with the chipper rental (initial week) and reassess after the week to determine long-term needs.
 - Review and, if necessary, revise the police salary ordinance to ensure compliance with state requirements and avoid retroactive wage issues.

Approved: 
Mayor


Recorder