

TALK *of the* TOWN

December 2025



From the **MAYOR'S DESK**

Sherwood's Strong Financial Health

The City of Sherwood has streamlined and modernized operations while making vast improvements over the past three years, all while remaining fiscally sound.

Change can be scary for some and refreshing to others. Sherwood had gotten used to stagnation and the status quo. However, the residents voted me into office to bring about change, not to simply maintain the status quo. And for the record, if you are not moving forward, you are falling behind. Sherwood watched other cities pass us by.

However, things are now moving forward. Street and drainage projects have been completed, sidewalks have been built, street lighting has been improved on Kiehl and Brockington, the Harmon Center received a makeover, the splash pad became free again, rates for seniors were reduced at the Harmon Center, and we are once again pursuing the Silver Sneakers program. Senior programming has grown, youth programming has expanded, we have an amazing July 3rd event, free concert series, Winter Fest, many park improvements, two inclusive playgrounds, new 24-hour pickleball courts, as well as courts at Indianhead and Henson. We have vastly improved communications, improved police pay (patrol positions will be fully staffed for the first time in decades), increased cybersecurity, and modernized our I.T. and Finance Departments. And the city is building a long-overdue Public Works, Police, and Fire Training Facility set to open and be operational in early spring.

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So, what does this mean for Sherwood's reserves?

Here is the history of the reserves:

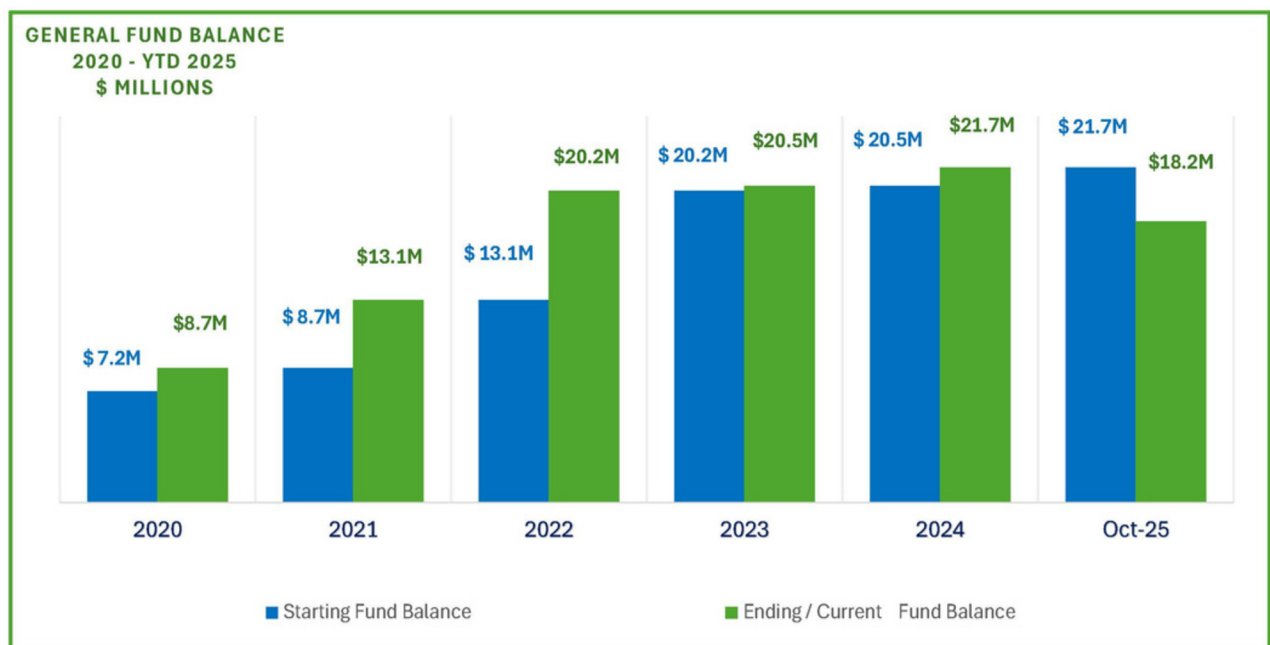
- 2020: the city had \$8.7 million in general fund reserves
- 2021: the city started getting online sales tax and cost savings during Covid, and reserves jumped up to \$13 million
- 2022: the city received ARPA funds, and reserves increased to \$20 million
- 2023: after this administration's first year, reserves totaled \$20.5 million
- 2024: after year 2, reserves totaled \$21.7 million

When reserves are spent, it is best to use them for capital improvements, which are one-time expenses. \$6.2 million was allocated by the City Council from reserves for the new Public Works, Police and Fire Training Facility. As of October 2025, approximately \$3.5 million has been spent, leaving about \$18.1 million remaining. **(SEE GRAPH ON PAGE 2)**

Each year, we use a small portion of reserves to balance the budget. This is a governmental accounting practice. However, we typically do not end up spending this amount due to vacancies, retirements, hiring time, and projects that span multiple years. Sherwood now budgets overtime for police, which promotes transparency because overtime, especially for court, is unavoidable.

CITY OF SHERWOOD
Fund Balances
Year Ending 2020-2024 & YTD 2025

- FY 2021** Net Fund Balance grew by 50%, from \$8.7M to \$13.1M, driven by stronger tax revenue, +\$1.0M, and lower than planned Expenditures, +\$3.4M.
- FY 2022** The Net Fund Balance increased by 54%, from \$13.1M to \$20.2M, driven by \$6.5M of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds.
- FY 2025** Budgeted reduction in Net Fund Balance, driven by the \$6.25M approved expenditures for Public Works construction project.



How does the budget process work? Each department head works with Human Resources and Finance to submit a budget request. As Mayor, I meet with each department head to discuss their budgets and needs. The Finance Director, Human Resources Director, department heads, and I refine these budgets before submitting them to the City Council. During budget workshops, department heads answer questions. The Council may amend the budget and then votes on its approval.

The job of the Mayor is to operate within this approved budget. Projects included in the 2026 budget include Sherwood Acres drainage

improvements; new sidewalk projects on Seminole and Shoshoni to Narragansett Place; Duran Park improvements; Lake Cherrywood spillway improvements; completion of Phase 1 of Jacksonville/Cato and start of Phase 2; the Powerline Bike/Ped Trail; and interceptor wastewater line improvements. Additional projects may arise during the year which City Council will consider at that time.

Overall, there is much for Sherwood to be proud of in recent years. Our reserves are healthy, and we continue to improve the city we all choose to call home. Wishing everyone a happy holiday season. I hope to see you all at Winter Fest! ❄️

Mary Jo Hey-Townell



Sherwood Police Officers Lend a Helping Hand at Local Food Pantry

In November, our officers were given the opportunity by Hesed Pantry to help prepare and distribute food boxes in the community, just in time for the Thanksgiving holiday.

This was a humbling and heartfelt experience for everyone able to join, and we're thankful for Hesed Pantry for the amazing work they do in our community.



CITY COUNCIL MEETING RECAP: NOVEMBER 24, 2025

Watch all meetings at:

<https://www.cityofsherwood.net/watchnow>

(PASSED 7 FOR, TOWNSEND ABSTAINED) An ordinance amending the City of Sherwood zoning code ordinance No. 2214, as amended, for the purpose of revising regulations pertaining to accessory dwelling units; and for other purposes (Mayor Heye-Townsell). This ordinance updates the zoning code to meet the requirements of Arkansas Act 313, which requires cities to allow accessory dwelling units (ADUs). The ordinance sets local standards for ADUs, including adherence to existing setbacks and lot coverage rules, a defined permitting process, and full compliance with building, fire, and utility requirements. It also prohibits using travel trailers as ADUs and ensures utility capacity is verified before approval. These regulations aim to protect neighborhoods and city infrastructure as the new state law takes effect on January 1.

(PASSED UNANIMOUSLY) An ordinance evidencing the intent of the City of Sherwood Arkansas to elect city council members by ward; declaring an emergency; and for other purposes (Mayor Heye-Townsell). This ordinance formally states the City of Sherwood's intent to elect its city council members by ward, as required under a new state law. The Mayor explained that the measure does not change current practices but must be officially adopted to remain compliant. The Municipal League sent a reminder prompting the action.

(PASSED UNANIMOUSLY) An ordinance creating a new department and a new department head for facilities maintenance, and for other purposes (Council Member Broderick). This ordinance establishes a new Facilities Maintenance Department and creates a department head position to formally oversee citywide maintenance responsibilities. The change does not increase the budget, because the funding and the employee already exist. The ordinance simply provides transparency, consistency, and a clear organizational structure.





WINTER FEST

December 6, 2025

Schedule of Events

11:00 am

Sherwood Christmas Parade on Kiehl Ave

12:00 pm

Winter Fest Begins with Marissa & Jacq's Dancers

12:15 - 2:15 pm

Cliff & Susan

2:45 - 3:15 pm

Calvary Academy Choir

4 - 6 pm

Bad HABiT

Christmas Tree Lighting and Holiday Drone Show

Presenting Sponsor



SHERWOOD'S TRAIL of LIGHTS

A PROUD TRADITION SINCE 2001



NOV. 28 - DEC. 30 OPEN DAILY 5 PM - MIDNIGHT 420 DEE JAY HUDSON DR.

First launched in 2001, the Trail of Lights has grown into one of Sherwood's proudest and most beloved traditions. For nearly 25 years, families from across the region have made the illuminated drive-through experience part of their holiday celebrations, and it continues to thrive.

The Trail of Lights has always been a gift to the public, and admission remains free so every family can enjoy it. But keeping this long-standing tradition glowing year after year requires ongoing support. Donations keep the Trail shining brightly year after year. Every contribution helps maintain the displays, expand the experience, and preserve this cherished holiday event for the next generation. Many of the displays purchased with donation dollars are labeled along the route, showing visitors exactly how community giving helps the trail grow.

The Trail is also made possible through the Sherwood Advertising & Promotions Commission, whose funding comes directly from local restaurant A&P tax dollars. When residents dine in Sherwood, a portion of their purchase helps support community events like the Trail of Lights, making every meal enjoyed locally part of what keeps this tradition alive.

Visit the Trail. Enjoy it with your family. Support a Sherwood restaurant while you're out. And if you're able, donate to help keep this treasured tradition shining brightly for years to come.



Donate Here

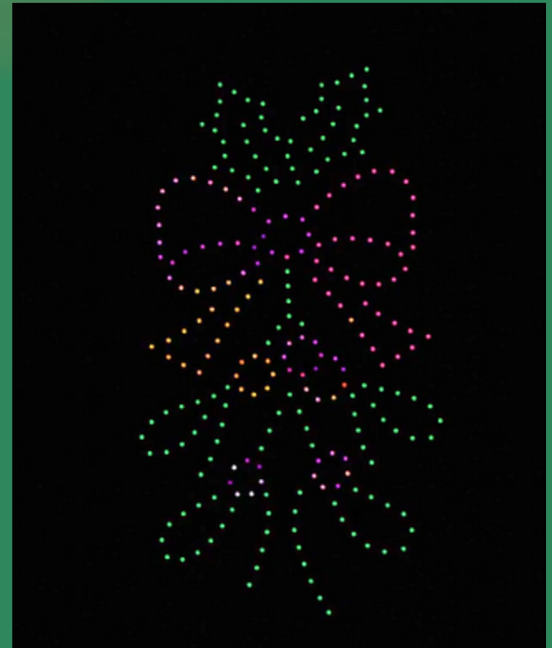
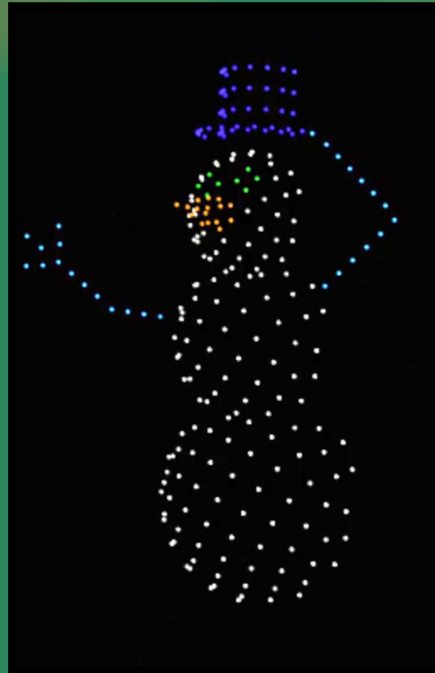
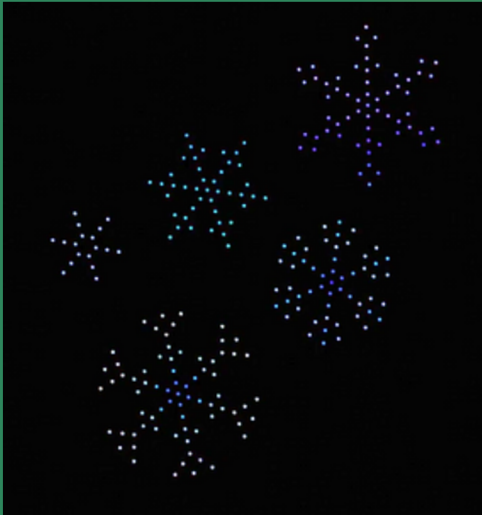


Holiday Drone Show

Get ready to look UP at this year's Winter Fest because we're bringing the very first drone show in Sherwood history to City Hall Park! The Holiday Drone Show will feature 250 drones lighting up the sky with a festive, choreographed holiday display you won't want to miss.

A drone show is a modern twist on a light show, using hundreds of synchronized, computer-programmed drones that take to the sky to create bright, moving images and shapes. Think of it as a giant, glowing story in the night sky: no fireworks, no smoke, just pure holiday magic.

The Holiday Drone Show will happen on December 6th as the grand finale to Winter Fest, immediately following the Christmas Tree Lighting at City Hall Park. Bring your family, your friends, and your warmest holiday spirit. This is going to be a moment everyone in Sherwood will remember!



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city.of.sherwood



Grace Gault Honored for Statewide Recognition

The City of Sherwood is proud to recognize Grace Gault of the Sherwood District Court for receiving a plaque of recognition from the State of Arkansas Administrative Office of the Courts. The award honors Gault for her dedication to the Arkansas Judiciary and her commitment to the efficient operation of the courts, presented on August 15, 2025.



During the October City Council meeting, Mayor Heye-Townsell commended Gault for her years of service and leadership, noting that her work ensures the Sherwood Courts run smoothly and efficiently. Members of the council also praised her for fostering excellence among her team, many of whom have earned their own awards in recent years.

“Grace does a great job of not only taking care of the courts, but also promoting those who work with her,” Mayor Heye-Townsell said. “We’re proud of her hard work and leadership.”

In response, Gault expressed gratitude for the recognition and support from city leaders. “I just want to thank the mayor for all your support for me,” she said. “And I do thank the council. I know some of you don’t know me, but now you do. So just thank you all for your support for me. I not only represent Sherwood on the local level, but I go all the way up to the national level and I do it with pride.”

Congratulations, Grace!

Christmas Holiday 2025

December 24-25, 2025

City offices will be closed December 24-25 for the Christmas Holiday.

- Wednesday’s garbage will be picked up on Tuesday, December 23rd.
- Thursday’s garbage will be collected on Friday, December 26th.
- This is not a regularly scheduled recycle week.



✉ : LARKSNESTVB@AOL.COM

Get updates on all current and future events on the Larks Nest Volleyball Facebook Page or at <https://calendly.com/larksnestvb>

The first-ever Larks Nest Volleyball Clinic is happening on December 13, 2025 at the Bill Harmon Rec Center! This clinic is open to girls ages 9-16 and all skill levels are welcome! Whether you're brand new to volleyball or looking to sharpen your skills, we've got a great session planned.

DECEMBER 13, 2025

BILL HARMON COMMUNITY CENTER
51 SHELBY RD, SHERWOOD, AR 72120



Ages 9-12



Ages 13-16

GIRLS VOLLEYBALL CLINICS

Larks Nest Volleyball

AGES 9-12: 6-7PM

AGES 13-16: 7-8PM

ALL SKILL LEVELS WELCOME

A SIGNED WAIVER IS REQUIRED TO PARTICIPATE. WAIVERS ARE AVAILABLE AT THE REGISTRATION TABLE AND THROUGH THE CALENDLY LINK.

NO SIGN UP REQUIRED, BUT AVAILABLE [HTTPS://CALENDLY.COM/LARKSNESTVB](https://calendly.com/larksnestvb)

\$25 PER PLAYER

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

JOSHUA HILL

Permits Clerk



Joshua, Chelsea and fur baby Georgie

1. How long have you been with the city?

I've worked at Sherwood Permits Office since October 2018. I previously worked as Front Desk (Part-time) at Bill Harmon Recreation Center from 2010 to 2018.

2. What does your job entail?

I greet residents & contractors when they visit the Permits Office. I make sure they have all correct information & application forms to apply for permits. We issue the permits after they are approved. I then make sure they are licensed and bonded. I make sure that Utility Contractors are being billed correctly for monthly permits invoices.

3. What are the toughest challenges you've had at work?

Making sure I take each task separately. Sometimes we get random questions about various types of permits, so I have to make sure I am giving residents and contractors the correct requirements for their specific permit that they need.

4. What hashtags describe your personality best?

I would use #dependable, #hardworker, #funny #multi-tasker #arkansasrazorbackfan

5. What are your secret talents no one knows about?

I can sometimes make funny voice impressions.

6. When you are at work, how do you motivate yourself?

I remember that I am working for the greater good. The way that I interact or help someone can make a difference in their day.

7. In terms of successes, which accomplishments are you most proud of?

In terms of successes, which accomplishments are you most proud of? I am thankful to be married 3 years as of this year. We bought our house a couple years ago. My wife and I both have our cars paid off. My wife and I have been to Walt Disney World & Universal Studios in Orlando 3 different times.

8. Tell us something that is on your "bucket list."

To visit more theme parks & historic sites in other states. We enjoy going to theme parks and museums. We love exploring and having fun together.

9. What is your happy place in Sherwood?

Either out at a park or at church having a good time with my family. I don't get to do it as much as I would like to, but I enjoy fishing. I enjoy going to Sherwood Parks and fishing either on weekends or on my days off. I usually know where to catch fish that are biting.

The *Talk of the Town* newsletter is published by the City of Sherwood Communications Department. Reach us at 501-835-5319 ext. 1336 or email us at publicinformation@sherwoodar.gov

PROMOTING SMALL BUSINESS

JW LAW FIRM

JW Law Firm focuses on estate planning, business law, real estate, and probate. The practice is designed to help individuals and business owners plan ahead, protect their assets, and make informed decisions about their future.

Owner Jessica Witherspoon opened the firm in July 2025 after previously operating her practice across the river. Moving the business to Sherwood was a deliberate decision to serve the community where her family lives. Working locally has allowed her to be more involved in community life from meeting residents throughout the day to visiting parks and local restaurants with her family. As clients from across the region visit the office, she enjoys sharing recommendations for Sherwood dining, shops, and attractions, helping introduce new people to the city.

JW Law Firm distinguishes itself by offering flat-fee pricing for most estate planning and business formation services. Clients receive a clear, all-inclusive cost after a free consultation, allowing them to move forward with confidence. The firm also prioritizes client education, ensuring individuals understand how their plans work and how to maintain them over time.

The business recently held its grand opening on October 23, welcoming around 50 guests. To support residents planning for the new year, JW Law Firm is offering \$250 off estate planning packages for consultations scheduled November through January.



"I wanted to provide services within the community where my husband and I raise our children and become a part of the heart of Sherwood."
-Jessica Witherspoon,
Lead Counsel & Owner

Community support is central to the firm. JW Law is a proud supporter of the Sylvan Hills Wrestling, Dance, and Debate teams, and the firm regularly provides free Lunch & Learn sessions for local businesses. Witherspoon also participated in a recent educational panel at the Sherwood Senior Center focused on estate planning and long-term care topics.

As a small team, the firm values flexibility and continuous learning while delivering strong service to clients. Witherspoon looks forward to continuing to grow her practice in Sherwood and supporting families and businesses throughout Central Arkansas.



501-392-6295



www.jwlawoffice.net



315 W Kiehl Ave

"Reel Memories"

New Art at City Hall Park

A new bronze statue now graces Sherwood's City Hall Park, capturing a tender moment of brotherly love. The piece was purchased by Mayor Mary Jo Heye-Townsell and her husband, Tab Townsell, in memory of Mayor Heye-Townsell's late son, Trey. It was gifted to the City of Sherwood as part of an ongoing effort to bring more public art to the community. The City Council approved the installation of the statue at their September meeting.

Trey was a bright and active seven-year-old who brought joy to everyone who knew him. He loved swimming, reading and time spent outdoors with his brothers. His life, though brief, left a lasting impact on his family and on the Sherwood community, which continues to remember him with love and pride.



This statue is a beautiful addition to City Hall Park. Residents and visitors are invited to enjoy the sculpture as a reminder of the importance of supporting one another and cherishing the special moments that connect us all.

FEMA ANNOUNCEMENT

National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP)

FEMA has announced an important update for anyone with a National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) policy. Because of a lapse in federal program authority starting Oct. 1, 2025, FEMA is giving policyholders extra time to make their renewal or underpayment premium payments so their coverage doesn't accidentally lapse.

What to know:

- If your NFIP policy was set to renew on or after Oct. 1, 2025, you now have until Jan. 15, 2026 or your normal renewal date (whichever is later) to make your payment.
- If you receive an underpayment notice dated Oct. 1, 2025, or later, that deadline is also extended to Jan. 15, 2026, or the date listed on your notice.
- These extensions apply to all NFIP policies, whether issued through NFIP Direct or a Write Your Own insurance company.

Residents should contact their insurance agent for details about their individual policy.

The City of Sherwood will continue sharing updates to help keep our community informed.

Learn more at <https://www.sherwoodar.gov/156/Engineering-Permits-Planning>

Adoptable Pets of the Month

COMANCHE

1 y/o

Mixed Breed

- Laid back guy who needs an adventure partner as cool as he is.
- Will be your best friend for a treat (or two)!
- Incredibly intelligent and eager to learn.

Sherwood Humane
Animal Shelter
501-834-2287



CLAIRE

1 y/o

Hound mix

- The sweetest girl, playful, also loves attention.
- Incredibly smart and would make a wonderful family dog.
- Has never met a stranger.
- Huge fan of squeaky toys!

Sherwood Humane
Animal Shelter
501-834-2287



Neon Year's Eve
Glow Party

DANCE,
GLOW,
REPEAT!

COOKIE DECORATING
BALLOON DROP
LIMBO CONTEST
DANCE PARTY
SPRITE TOAST

GRADES PRE K - 6TH
DATE: DEC 31, 2025
TIME: 10 AM - NOON
SHERWOOD FOREST
1111 W MARYLAND AVE

FREE PIZZA FROM PAPA JOHN'S &
PARTY FAVORS WHILE SUPPLIES LAST!

Summer Day Camp pre-registration (those who attended last summer).
Online registration for new attendees will begin Spring Break 2026!!!!



December EVENTS

Nov 28 - Dec 30: Trail of Lights, Open daily 5 pm - Midnight, see pg 5

Dec 6: Christmas Parade & Winter Fest, see pgs 4 & 12

Dec 9: Senior Luncheon, 11:30 am, Jack Evans Senior Center, RSVP 501-834-5770

Dec 13: Larks Nest Volleyball Clinic, Bill Harmon Recreation Center, see pg 7

Dec 15: City Council Meeting, City Council Chambers, 6 pm

Dec. 24-25: Christmas Eve/Christmas Day – City offices are closed. Wednesday's garbage will be collected on Tuesday, December 23. Thursday's garbage will be collected on Friday, December 26.

Dec 31: Noon Year's Eve Party Glow Party at Sherwood Forest, 10 - noon, see pg 11, 501-835-8909

SAVE THE DATE

Jan 1: New Year's Day, city offices and facilities closed, Thursday's garbage and recycling will be picked up on Friday, January 2.

Jan 19: Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, city offices closed; Trash will be picked up on Tuesday, 1/20.

Jan 26: City Council Meeting, City Council Chambers, 6 pm

DON'T MISS THE SHERWOOD CHRISTMAS PARADE



DECEMBER 6, 2025

11:00 AM

**PARADE ROUTE
BEGINS AT KIEHL AVE
AND LANTRIP ROAD.
IT ENDS AT CITY HALL.**

**❄️ WINTER FEST ❄️
KICKS OFF AFTER THE
PARADE.**