MIKE WILLINGHAM FOR MAYOR

WILLINGHAM: IT'S TIME TO SOLVE THE WASTEWATER PROBLEM

Statement from Mike Willingham for Mayor

Sherwood has been studying wastewater for nearly two decades. We have engineering reports from 2009, 2025 and 2026, an independent UALR study from 2014, millions in potential infrastructure improvements and now a lawsuit with North Little Rock.

At this week's Wastewater Committee meeting, Chairman Eric Fleming called one City-commissioned engineering study **"worthless and fictitious"** and described information about Sherwood's wastewater problems as **"propaganda and misinformation."** At this point, arguing about the reports is less important than deciding what we're going to do about what they tell us.

The biggest question may be the simplest: **who pays?** Crist has identified approximately $18 million in conceptual improvements, with additional work potentially pushing the cost beyond $20 million. We're talking about a system serving roughly 2,400 customers. If Sherwood keeps it, those costs don't disappear. They have to be paid through wastewater rates, outside funding or another source that could spread the cost beyond those 2,400 customers.

That's why I'm open to negotiating an agreement that allows North Little Rock Wastewater to assume responsibility for the portion of the system it is seeking. Before Sherwood agrees to anything, we need to know exactly what North Little Rock would assume, what Sherwood would still owe, what happens to customer rates and how Sherwood residents are protected.

Put the options on the table and put the numbers beside them. If keeping the system makes financial and operational sense, show us. If an agreement with North Little Rock reduces Sherwood's long-term financial exposure and better serves those customers, we should be willing to negotiate it.

Sherwood has spent enough **time and taxpayer money** studying this problem and defending the status quo. The next mayor should be prepared to negotiate, protect Sherwood's interests and make a decision based on the numbers.

We've kicked this can down the road for nearly two decades, and the bill is getting bigger. **We're running out of road.**

Mike Willingham
Candidate for Mayor of Sherwood