

Form 5500 Department of the Treasury Internal Revenue Service Department of Labor Employee Benefits Security Administration Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation	Annual Return/Report of Employee Benefit Plan This form is required to be filed for employee benefit plans under sections 104 and 4065 of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA) and sections 6057(b) and 6058(a) of the Internal Revenue Code (the Code). ▶ Complete all entries in accordance with the instructions to the Form 5500.	OMB Nos. 1210-0110 1210-0089 2023 This Form is Open to Public Inspection
--	---	---

Part I	Annual Report Identification Information
For calendar plan year 2023 or fiscal plan year beginning 01/01/2023 and ending 12/31/2023	
A	This return/report is for: ☐ a multiemployer plan ☐ a multiple-employer plan (Filers checking this box must provide participating employer information in accordance with the form instructions.) ☒ a single-employer plan ☐ a DFE (specify) _____ ☐ the first return/report ☐ the final return/report ☐ an amended return/report ☐ a short plan year return/report (less than 12 months)
C	If the plan is a collectively-bargained plan, check here. ▶ ☐
D	Check box if filing under: ☒ Form 5558 ☐ automatic extension ☐ the DFVC program ☐ special extension (enter description)
E	If this is a retroactively adopted plan permitted by SECURE Act section 201, check here. ▶ ☐

Part II	Basic Plan Information—enter all requested information
1a	Name of plan THE FIRST BANCSHARES, INC. EMPLOYEE STOCK OWNERSHIP PLAN
1b	Three-digit plan number (PN) ▶ 002
1c	Effective date of plan 01/01/2006
2a	Plan sponsor's name (employer, if for a single-employer plan) Mailing address (include room, apt., suite no. and street, or P.O. Box) City or town, state or province, country, and ZIP or foreign postal code (if foreign, see instructions) THE FIRST BANCSHARES, INC. EMPLOYEE STOCK OWNERSHIP PLAN 6480 HWY 98 W P. O. BOX 15549 HATTIESBURG, MS 39404
2b	Employer Identification Number (EIN) 64-0862173
2c	Plan Sponsor's telephone number 601-450-8888
2d	Business code (see instructions) 522110

Caution: A penalty for the late or incomplete filing of this return/report will be assessed unless reasonable cause is established.

Under penalties of perjury and other penalties set forth in the instructions, I declare that I have examined this return/report, including accompanying schedules, statements and attachments, as well as the electronic version of this return/report, and to the best of my knowledge and belief, it is true, correct, and complete.

SIGN HERE	Filed with authorized/valid electronic signature.	10/03/2024	DEE DEE LOWERY
	Signature of plan administrator	Date	Enter name of individual signing as plan administrator
SIGN HERE	Filed with authorized/valid electronic signature.	10/03/2024	DEE DEE LOWERY
	Signature of employer/plan sponsor	Date	Enter name of individual signing as employer or plan sponsor
SIGN HERE			
	Signature of DFE	Date	Enter name of individual signing as DFE

3a Plan administrator's name and address ☒ Same as Plan Sponsor	3b Administrator's EIN 3c Administrator's telephone number
4 If the name and/or EIN of the plan sponsor or the plan name has changed since the last return/report filed for this plan, enter the plan sponsor's name, EIN, the plan name and the plan number from the last return/report: a Sponsor's name c Plan Name	4b EIN 4d PN
5 Total number of participants at the beginning of the plan year	5 1108
6 Number of participants as of the end of the plan year unless otherwise stated (welfare plans complete only lines 6a(1) , 6a(2) , 6b , 6c , and 6d). a(1) Total number of active participants at the beginning of the plan year a(2) Total number of active participants at the end of the plan year b Retired or separated participants receiving benefits c Other retired or separated participants entitled to future benefits d Subtotal. Add lines 6a(2) , 6b , and 6c e Deceased participants whose beneficiaries are receiving or are entitled to receive benefits f Total. Add lines 6d and 6e g(1) Number of participants with account balances as of the beginning of the plan year (only defined contribution plans complete this item) g(2) Number of participants with account balances as of the end of the plan year (only defined contribution plans complete this item) h Number of participants who terminated employment during the plan year with accrued benefits that were less than 100% vested	6a(1) 951 6a(2) 872 6b 0 6c 216 6d 1088 6e 0 6f 1088 6g(1) 674 6g(2) 674 6h 0
7 Enter the total number of employers obligated to contribute to the plan (only multiemployer plans complete this item).....	7

8a If the plan provides pension benefits, enter the applicable pension feature codes from the List of Plan Characteristics Codes in the instructions:
 2I 2O 3H 3I

b If the plan provides welfare benefits, enter the applicable welfare feature codes from the List of Plan Characteristics Codes in the instructions:

9a Plan funding arrangement (check all that apply) (1) ☐ Insurance (2) ☐ Code section 412(e)(3) insurance contracts (3) ☒ Trust (4) ☐ General assets of the sponsor	9b Plan benefit arrangement (check all that apply) (1) ☐ Insurance (2) ☐ Code section 412(e)(3) insurance contracts (3) ☒ Trust (4) ☐ General assets of the sponsor
---	---

10 Check all applicable boxes in 10a and 10b to indicate which schedules are attached, and, where indicated, enter the number attached. (See instructions)

a Pension Schedules

- (1) ☒ **R** (Retirement Plan Information)
- (2) ☐ **MB** (Multiemployer Defined Benefit Plan and Certain Money Purchase Plan Actuarial Information) - signed by the plan actuary
- (3) ☐ **SB** (Single-Employer Defined Benefit Plan Actuarial Information) - signed by the plan actuary
- (4) ☐ **DCG** (Individual Plan Information) – Number Attached _____
- (5) ☐ **MEP** (Multiple-Employer Retirement Plan Information)

b General Schedules

- (1) ☒ **H** (Financial Information)
- (2) ☐ **I** (Financial Information – Small Plan)
- (3) ☐ **A** (Insurance Information) – Number Attached _____
- (4) ☐ **C** (Service Provider Information)
- (5) ☐ **D** (DFE/Participating Plan Information)
- (6) ☐ **G** (Financial Transaction Schedules)

Part III Form M-1 Compliance Information (to be completed by welfare benefit plans)

11a If the plan provides welfare benefits, was the plan subject to the Form M-1 filing requirements during the plan year? (See instructions and 29 CFR 2520.101-2.) ☐ Yes ☐ No

If "Yes" is checked, complete lines 11b and 11c.

11b Is the plan currently in compliance with the Form M-1 filing requirements? (See instructions and 29 CFR 2520.101-2.) ☐ Yes ☐ No

11c Enter the Receipt Confirmation Code for the 2023 Form M-1 annual report. If the plan was not required to file the 2023 Form M-1 annual report, enter the Receipt Confirmation Code for the most recent Form M-1 that was required to be filed under the Form M-1 filing requirements. (Failure to enter a valid Receipt Confirmation Code will subject the Form 5500 filing to rejection as incomplete.)

Receipt Confirmation Code _____

SCHEDULE H (Form 5500) Department of the Treasury Internal Revenue Service Department of Labor Employee Benefits Security Administration Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation	Financial Information This schedule is required to be filed under section 104 of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA), and section 6058(a) of the Internal Revenue Code (the Code). ▶ File as an attachment to Form 5500.	OMB No. 1210-0110
		2023
		This Form is Open to Public Inspection

For calendar plan year 2023 or fiscal plan year beginning <u>01/01/2023</u> and ending <u>12/31/2023</u>		
A Name of plan <u>THE FIRST BANCSHARES, INC. EMPLOYEE STOCK OWNERSHIP PLAN</u>	B Three-digit plan number (PN) ▶	<u>002</u>
C Plan sponsor's name as shown on line 2a of Form 5500 <u>THE FIRST BANCSHARES, INC. EMPLOYEE STOCK OWNERSHIP PLAN</u>		
		D Employer Identification Number (EIN) <u>64-0862173</u>

Part I	Asset and Liability Statement		
1 Current value of plan assets and liabilities at the beginning and end of the plan year. Combine the value of plan assets held in more than one trust. Report the value of the plan's interest in a commingled fund containing the assets of more than one plan on a line-by-line basis unless the value is reportable on lines 1c(9) through 1c(14). Do not enter the value of that portion of an insurance contract which guarantees, during this plan year, to pay a specific dollar benefit at a future date. Round off amounts to the nearest dollar. MTIAs, CCTs, PSAs, and 103-12 IEs do not complete lines 1b(1), 1b(2), 1c(8), 1g, 1h, and 1i. CCTs, PSAs, and 103-12 IEs also do not complete lines 1d and 1e. See instructions.			
Assets		(a) Beginning of Year	(b) End of Year
a Total noninterest-bearing cash	1a		
b Receivables (less allowance for doubtful accounts):			
(1) Employer contributions	1b(1)		
(2) Participant contributions	1b(2)		
(3) Other	1b(3)		
c General investments:			
(1) Interest-bearing cash (include money market accounts & certificates of deposit)	1c(1)	<u>10710</u>	<u>6453</u>
(2) U.S. Government securities	1c(2)		
(3) Corporate debt instruments (other than employer securities):			
(A) Preferred	1c(3)(A)		
(B) All other	1c(3)(B)		
(4) Corporate stocks (other than employer securities):			
(A) Preferred	1c(4)(A)		
(B) Common	1c(4)(B)		
(5) Partnership/joint venture interests	1c(5)		
(6) Real estate (other than employer real property)	1c(6)		
(7) Loans (other than to participants)	1c(7)		
(8) Participant loans	1c(8)		
(9) Value of interest in common/collective trusts	1c(9)		
(10) Value of interest in pooled separate accounts	1c(10)		
(11) Value of interest in master trust investment accounts	1c(11)		
(12) Value of interest in 103-12 investment entities	1c(12)		
(13) Value of interest in registered investment companies (e.g., mutual funds)	1c(13)		
(14) Value of funds held in insurance company general account (unallocated contracts)	1c(14)		
(15) Other	1c(15)		

1d Employer-related investments:		(a) Beginning of Year	(b) End of Year
(1) Employer securities	1d(1)	183353	168002
(2) Employer real property	1d(2)		
e Buildings and other property used in plan operation	1e		
f Total assets (add all amounts in lines 1a through 1e)	1f	194063	174455
Liabilities			
g Benefit claims payable	1g		
h Operating payables	1h		
i Acquisition indebtedness	1i		
j Other liabilities	1j		
k Total liabilities (add all amounts in lines 1g through 1j)	1k		
Net Assets			
l Net assets (subtract line 1k from line 1f)	1l	194063	174455

Part II Income and Expense Statement

2 Plan income, expenses, and changes in net assets for the year. Include all income and expenses of the plan, including any trust(s) or separately maintained fund(s) and any payments/receipts to/from insurance carriers. Round off amounts to the nearest dollar. MTIAs, CCTs, PSAs, and 103-12 IEs do not complete lines 2a, 2b(1)(E), 2e, 2f, and 2g.

Income		(a) Amount	(b) Total
a Contributions:			
(1) Received or receivable in cash from: (A) Employers	2a(1)(A)		
(B) Participants	2a(1)(B)		
(C) Others (including rollovers)	2a(1)(C)	9615	
(2) Noncash contributions	2a(2)		
(3) Total contributions. Add lines 2a(1)(A) , (B) , (C) , and line 2a(2)	2a(3)		9615
b Earnings on investments:			
(1) Interest:			
(A) Interest-bearing cash (including money market accounts and certificates of deposit)	2b(1)(A)		
(B) U.S. Government securities	2b(1)(B)		
(C) Corporate debt instruments	2b(1)(C)		
(D) Loans (other than to participants)	2b(1)(D)		
(E) Participant loans	2b(1)(E)		
(F) Other	2b(1)(F)		
(G) Total interest. Add lines 2b(1)(A) through (F)	2b(1)(G)		0
(2) Dividends: (A) Preferred stock	2b(2)(A)		
(B) Common stock	2b(2)(B)	5155	
(C) Registered investment company shares (e.g. mutual funds)	2b(2)(C)		
(D) Total dividends. Add lines 2b(2)(A) , (B) , and (C)	2b(2)(D)		5155
(3) Rents	2b(3)		0
(4) Net gain (loss) on sale of assets: (A) Aggregate proceeds	2b(4)(A)		
(B) Aggregate carrying amount (see instructions)	2b(4)(B)		
(C) Subtract line 2b(4)(B) from line 2b(4)(A) and enter result	2b(4)(C)		
(5) Unrealized appreciation (depreciation) of assets: (A) Real estate	2b(5)(A)	0	
(B) Other	2b(5)(B)	-15915	
(C) Total unrealized appreciation of assets. Add lines 2b(5)(A) and (B)	2b(5)(C)		

		(a) Amount	(b) Total
(6) Net investment gain (loss) from common/collective trusts.....	2b(6)		
(7) Net investment gain (loss) from pooled separate accounts.....	2b(7)		
(8) Net investment gain (loss) from master trust investment accounts.....	2b(8)		
(9) Net investment gain (loss) from 103-12 investment entities.....	2b(9)		
(10) Net investment gain (loss) from registered investment companies (e.g., mutual funds)	2b(10)		
c Other income	2c		
d Total income. Add all income amounts in column (b) and enter total	2d		-1145

Expenses

e Benefit payment and payments to provide benefits:			
(1) Directly to participants or beneficiaries, including direct rollovers	2e(1)	18463	
(2) To insurance carriers for the provision of benefits.....	2e(2)		
(3) Other	2e(3)		
(4) Total benefit payments. Add lines 2e(1) through (3)	2e(4)		18463
f Corrective distributions (see instructions)	2f		
g Certain deemed distributions of participant loans (see instructions)	2g		
h Interest expense	2h		
i Administrative expenses:			
(1) Salaries and allowances	2i(1)	0	
(2) Contract administrator fees.....	2i(2)		
(3) Recordkeeping fees.....	2i(3)		
(4) IQPA audit fees.....	2i(4)		
(5) Investment advisory and investment management fees	2i(5)		
(6) Bank or trust company trustee/custodial fees	2i(6)		
(7) Actuarial fees	2i(7)		
(8) Legal fees	2i(8)		
(9) Valuation/appraisal fees	2i(9)		
(10) Other trustee fees and expenses	2i(10)		
(11) Other expenses	2i(11)	0	
(12) Total administrative expenses. Add lines 2i(1) through (11)	2i(12)		0
j Total expenses. Add all expense amounts in column (b) and enter total	2j		18463

Net Income and Reconciliation

k Net income (loss). Subtract line 2j from line 2d	2k		-19608
l Transfers of assets:			
(1) To this plan	2l(1)		
(2) From this plan	2l(2)		

Part III Accountant's Opinion

3 Complete lines 3a through 3c if the opinion of an independent qualified public accountant is attached to this Form 5500. Complete line 3d if an opinion is not attached.

a The attached opinion of an independent qualified public accountant for this plan is (see instructions):

(1) ☒ Unmodified (2) ☐ Qualified (3) ☐ Disclaimer (4) ☐ Adverse

b Check the appropriate box(es) to indicate whether the IQPA performed an ERISA section 103(a)(3)(C) audit. Check both boxes (1) and (2) if the audit was performed pursuant to both 29 CFR 2520.103-8 and 29 CFR 2520.103-12(d). Check box (3) if pursuant to neither.

(1) ☐ DOL Regulation 2520.103-8 (2) ☐ DOL Regulation 2520.103-12(d) (3) ☒ neither DOL Regulation 2520.103-8 nor DOL Regulation 2520.103-12(d).

c Enter the name and EIN of the accountant (or accounting firm) below:

(1) Name: **PLITZ, WILLIAMS, LAROSA AND CO.**

(2) EIN: **64-0767134**

d The opinion of an independent qualified public accountant is **not attached** as part of Schedule H because:

(1) ☐ This form is filed for a CCT, PSA, DCG or MTIA. (2) ☐ It will be attached to the next Form 5500 pursuant to 29 CFR 2520.104-50.

Part IV Compliance Questions

4 CCTs and PSAs do not complete Part IV. MTIAs, 103-12 IEs, and GIAs do not complete lines 4a, 4e, 4f, 4g, 4h, 4k, 4m, 4n, or 5. 103-12 IEs also do not complete lines 4j and 4l. MTIAs also do not complete line 4l. DCGs do not complete lines 4e, 4f, 4k, 4l, and 5, and DCGs generally complete the rest of Part IV collectively for all plans in the DCG, except as otherwise provided (see instructions).

During the plan year:

	Yes	No	Amount
a Was there a failure to transmit to the plan any participant contributions within the time period described in 29 CFR 2510.3-102? Continue to answer "Yes" for any prior year failures until fully corrected. (See instructions and DOL's Voluntary Fiduciary Correction Program.)		☒	
b Were any loans by the plan or fixed income obligations due the plan in default as of the close of the plan year or classified during the year as uncollectible? Disregard participant loans secured by participant's account balance. (Attach Schedule G (Form 5500) Part I if "Yes" is checked.)		☒	
c Were any leases to which the plan was a party in default or classified during the year as uncollectible? (Attach Schedule G (Form 5500) Part II if "Yes" is checked.)		☒	
d Were there any nonexempt transactions with any party-in-interest? (Do not include transactions reported on line 4a. Attach Schedule G (Form 5500) Part III if "Yes" is checked.)		☒	
e Was this plan covered by a fidelity bond?	☒		7000000
f Did the plan have a loss, whether or not reimbursed by the plan's fidelity bond, that was caused by fraud or dishonesty?		☒	
g Did the plan hold any assets whose current value was neither readily determinable on an established market nor set by an independent third party appraiser?		☒	
h Did the plan receive any noncash contributions whose value was neither readily determinable on an established market nor set by an independent third party appraiser?		☒	
i Did the plan have assets held for investment? (Attach schedule(s) of assets if "Yes" is checked, and see instructions for format requirements.)	☒		
j Were any plan transactions or series of transactions in excess of 5% of the current value of plan assets? (Attach schedule of transactions if "Yes" is checked and see instructions for format requirements.)		☒	
k Were all the plan assets either distributed to participants or beneficiaries, transferred to another plan, or brought under the control of the PBGC?		☒	
l Has the plan failed to provide any benefit when due under the plan?		☒	
m If this is an individual account plan, was there a blackout period? (See instructions and 29 CFR 2520.101-3.)		☒	
n If 4m was answered "Yes," check the "Yes" box if you either provided the required notice or one of the exceptions to providing the notice applied under 29 CFR 2520.101-3.			

5a Has a resolution to terminate the plan been adopted during the plan year or any prior plan year? ☐ Yes ☒ No
If "Yes," enter the amount of any plan assets that reverted to the employer this year _____.

5b If, during this plan year, any assets or liabilities were transferred from this plan to another plan(s), identify the plan(s) to which assets or liabilities were transferred. (See instructions.)

5b(1) Name of plan(s)	5b(2) EIN(s)	5b(3) PN(s)

5c Was the plan a defined benefit plan covered under the PBGC insurance program at any time during this plan year? (See ERISA section 4021 and instructions.) ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not determined

If "Yes" is checked, enter the My PAA confirmation number from the PBGC premium filing for this plan year _____.

SCHEDULE R (Form 5500) Department of the Treasury Internal Revenue Service Department of Labor Employee Benefits Security Administration Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation	Retirement Plan Information This schedule is required to be filed under sections 104 and 4065 of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA) and section 6058(a) of the Internal Revenue Code (the Code). ▶ File as an attachment to Form 5500.	OMB No. 1210-0110 2023 This Form is Open to Public Inspection.
For calendar plan year 2023 or fiscal plan year beginning 01/01/2023 and ending 12/31/2023		
A Name of plan THE FIRST BANCSHARES, INC. EMPLOYEE STOCK OWNERSHIP PLAN		B Three-digit plan number (PN) ▶ 002
C Plan sponsor's name as shown on line 2a of Form 5500 THE FIRST BANCSHARES, INC. EMPLOYEE STOCK OWNERSHIP PLAN		D Employer Identification Number (EIN) 64-0862173
Part I	Distributions	
All references to distributions relate only to payments of benefits during the plan year.		
1 Total value of distributions paid in property other than in cash or the forms of property specified in the instructions.....		1
2 Enter the EIN(s) of payor(s) who paid benefits on behalf of the plan to participants or beneficiaries during the year (if more than two, enter EINs of the two payors who paid the greatest dollar amounts of benefits): EIN(s): 64-0862173		
Profit-sharing plans, ESOPs, and stock bonus plans, skip line 3.		
3 Number of participants (living or deceased) whose benefits were distributed in a single sum, during the plan year		3
Part II	Funding Information (If the plan is not subject to the minimum funding requirements of section 412 of the Internal Revenue Code or ERISA section 302, skip this Part.)	
4 Is the plan administrator making an election under Code section 412(d)(2) or ERISA section 302(d)(2)? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A		
If the plan is a defined benefit plan, go to line 8.		
5 If a waiver of the minimum funding standard for a prior year is being amortized in this plan year, see instructions and enter the date of the ruling letter granting the waiver. Date: Month _____ Day _____ Year _____		
If you completed line 5, complete lines 3, 9, and 10 of Schedule MB and do not complete the remainder of this schedule.		
6 a Enter the minimum required contribution for this plan year (include any prior year accumulated funding deficiency not waived)		6a
b Enter the amount contributed by the employer to the plan for this plan year		6b
c Subtract the amount in line 6b from the amount in line 6a. Enter the result (enter a minus sign to the left of a negative amount)		6c
If you completed line 6c, skip lines 8 and 9.		
7 Will the minimum funding amount reported on line 6c be met by the funding deadline? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A		
8 If a change in actuarial cost method was made for this plan year pursuant to a revenue procedure or other authority providing automatic approval for the change or a class ruling letter, does the plan sponsor or plan administrator agree with the change? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A		
Part III	Amendments	
9 If this is a defined benefit pension plan, were any amendments adopted during this plan year that increased or decreased the value of benefits? If yes, check the appropriate box. If no, check the "No" box. ☐ Increase ☐ Decrease ☐ Both ☐ No		
Part IV	ESOPs (see instructions). If this is not a plan described under section 409(a) or 4975(e)(7) of the Internal Revenue Code, skip this Part.	
10 Were unallocated employer securities or proceeds from the sale of unallocated securities used to repay any exempt loan?		☐ Yes ☒ No
11 a Does the ESOP hold any preferred stock?		☐ Yes ☒ No
b If the ESOP has an outstanding exempt loan with the employer as lender, is such loan part of a "back-to-back" loan? (See instructions for definition of "back-to-back" loan.)		☐ Yes ☒ No
12 Does the ESOP hold any stock that is not readily tradable on an established securities market?		☐ Yes ☒ No
For Paperwork Reduction Act Notice, see the Instructions for Form 5500.		
Schedule R (Form 5500) 2023 v. 230707		

Part V Additional Information for Multiemployer Defined Benefit Pension Plans

13 Enter the following information for each employer that (1) contributed more than 5% of total contributions to the plan during the plan year or (2) was one of the top-ten highest contributors (measured in dollars). See instructions. *Complete as many entries as needed to report all applicable employers.*

a Name of contributing employer

b EIN

c Dollar amount contributed by employer

d Date collective bargaining agreement expires (If employer contributes under more than one collective bargaining agreement, check box ☐ and see instructions regarding required attachment. Otherwise, enter the applicable date.) Month _____ Day _____ Year _____

e Contribution rate information (If more than one rate applies, check this box ☐ and see instructions regarding required attachment. Otherwise, complete lines 13e(1) and 13e(2).)

(1) Contribution rate (in dollars and cents) _____

(2) Base unit measure: ☐ Hourly ☐ Weekly ☐ Unit of production ☐ Other (specify): _____

a Name of contributing employer

b EIN

c Dollar amount contributed by employer

d Date collective bargaining agreement expires (If employer contributes under more than one collective bargaining agreement, check box ☐ and see instructions regarding required attachment. Otherwise, enter the applicable date.) Month _____ Day _____ Year _____

e Contribution rate information (If more than one rate applies, check this box ☐ and see instructions regarding required attachment. Otherwise, complete lines 13e(1) and 13e(2).)

(1) Contribution rate (in dollars and cents) _____

(2) Base unit measure: ☐ Hourly ☐ Weekly ☐ Unit of production ☐ Other (specify): _____

a Name of contributing employer

b EIN

c Dollar amount contributed by employer

d Date collective bargaining agreement expires (If employer contributes under more than one collective bargaining agreement, check box ☐ and see instructions regarding required attachment. Otherwise, enter the applicable date.) Month _____ Day _____ Year _____

e Contribution rate information (If more than one rate applies, check this box ☐ and see instructions regarding required attachment. Otherwise, complete lines 13e(1) and 13e(2).)

(1) Contribution rate (in dollars and cents) _____

(2) Base unit measure: ☐ Hourly ☐ Weekly ☐ Unit of production ☐ Other (specify): _____

a Name of contributing employer

b EIN

c Dollar amount contributed by employer

d Date collective bargaining agreement expires (If employer contributes under more than one collective bargaining agreement, check box ☐ and see instructions regarding required attachment. Otherwise, enter the applicable date.) Month _____ Day _____ Year _____

e Contribution rate information (If more than one rate applies, check this box ☐ and see instructions regarding required attachment. Otherwise, complete lines 13e(1) and 13e(2).)

(1) Contribution rate (in dollars and cents) _____

(2) Base unit measure: ☐ Hourly ☐ Weekly ☐ Unit of production ☐ Other (specify): _____

a Name of contributing employer

b EIN

c Dollar amount contributed by employer

d Date collective bargaining agreement expires (If employer contributes under more than one collective bargaining agreement, check box ☐ and see instructions regarding required attachment. Otherwise, enter the applicable date.) Month _____ Day _____ Year _____

e Contribution rate information (If more than one rate applies, check this box ☐ and see instructions regarding required attachment. Otherwise, complete lines 13e(1) and 13e(2).)

(1) Contribution rate (in dollars and cents) _____

(2) Base unit measure: ☐ Hourly ☐ Weekly ☐ Unit of production ☐ Other (specify): _____

a Name of contributing employer

b EIN

c Dollar amount contributed by employer

d Date collective bargaining agreement expires (If employer contributes under more than one collective bargaining agreement, check box ☐ and see instructions regarding required attachment. Otherwise, enter the applicable date.) Month _____ Day _____ Year _____

e Contribution rate information (If more than one rate applies, check this box ☐ and see instructions regarding required attachment. Otherwise, complete lines 13e(1) and 13e(2).)

(1) Contribution rate (in dollars and cents) _____

(2) Base unit measure: ☐ Hourly ☐ Weekly ☐ Unit of production ☐ Other (specify): _____

14 Enter the number of deferred vested and retired participants (inactive participants), as of the beginning of the plan year, whose contributing employer is no longer making contributions to the plan for:		
a The current plan year. Check the box to indicate the counting method used to determine the number of inactive participants: ☐ last contributing employer ☐ alternative ☐ reasonable approximation (see instructions for required attachment)	14a	
b The plan year immediately preceding the current plan year. ☐ Check the box if the number reported is a change from what was previously reported (see instructions for required attachment)	14b	
c The second preceding plan year. ☐ Check the box if the number reported is a change from what was previously reported (see instructions for required attachment)	14c	

15 Enter the ratio of the number of participants under the plan on whose behalf no employer had an obligation to make an employer contribution during the current plan year to:		
a The corresponding number for the plan year immediately preceding the current plan year	15a	
b The corresponding number for the second preceding plan year	15b	

16 Information with respect to any employers who withdrew from the plan during the preceding plan year:		
a Enter the number of employers who withdrew during the preceding plan year	16a	
b If line 16a is greater than 0, enter the aggregate amount of withdrawal liability assessed or estimated to be assessed against such withdrawn employers	16b	

17 If assets and liabilities from another plan have been transferred to or merged with this plan during the plan year, check box and see instructions regarding supplemental information to be included as an attachment..... ☐

Part VI	Additional Information for Single-Employer and Multiemployer Defined Benefit Pension Plans
----------------	---

18 If any liabilities to participants or their beneficiaries under the plan as of the end of the plan year consist (in whole or in part) of liabilities to such participants and beneficiaries under two or more pension plans as of immediately before such plan year, check box and see instructions regarding supplemental information to be included as an attachment..... ☐

19 If the total number of participants is 1,000 or more, complete lines (a) and (b):

a Enter the percentage of plan assets held as:

Public Equity: _____% Private Equity: _____% Investment-Grade Debt and Interest Rate Hedging Assets: _____%

High-Yield Debt: _____% Real Assets: _____% Cash or Cash Equivalents: _____% Other: _____%

b Provide the average duration of the Investment-Grade Debt and Interest Rate Hedging Assets:

☐ 0-5 years ☐ 5-10 years ☐ 10-15 years ☐ 15 years or more

20 PBGC missed contribution reporting requirements. If this is a multiemployer plan or a single-employer plan that is not covered by PBGC, skip line 20.

a Is the amount of unpaid minimum required contributions for all years from Schedule SB (Form 5500) line 40 greater than zero? ☐ Yes ☒ No

b If line 20a is "Yes," has PBGC been notified as required by ERISA sections 4043(c)(5) and/or 303(k)(4)? Check the applicable box:

☐ Yes.

☐ No. Reporting was waived under 29 CFR 4043.25(c)(2) because contributions equal to or exceeding the unpaid minimum required contribution were made by the 30th day after the due date.

☐ No. The 30-day period referenced in 29 CFR 4043.25(c)(2) has not yet ended, and the sponsor intends to make a contribution equal to or exceeding the unpaid minimum required contribution by the 30th day after the due date.

☐ No. Other. Provide explanation. _____

Part VII	IRS Compliance Questions
-----------------	---------------------------------

21a Does the plan satisfy the coverage and nondiscrimination tests of Code sections 410(b) and 401(a)(4) by combining this plan with any other plans under the permissive aggregation rules? ☐ Yes ☒ No

21b If this is a Code section 401(k) plan, check all boxes that apply to indicate how the plan is intended to satisfy the nondiscrimination requirements for employee deferrals and employer matching contributions (as applicable) under Code sections 401(k)(3) and 401(m)(2).

☐ Design-based safe harbor method

☐ "Prior year" ADP test

☐ "Current year" ADP test

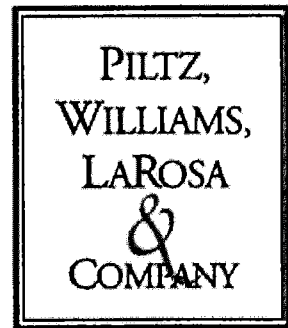
☐ N/A

22 If the plan sponsor is an adopter of a pre-approved plan that received a favorable IRS Opinion Letter, enter the date of the Opinion Letter ____/____/____ (MM/DD/YYYY) and the Opinion Letter serial number _____.

Financial Statements

**The First Bancshares, Inc.
Employee Stock Ownership Plan**

December 31, 2023 and 2022



CERTIFIED PUBLIC ACCOUNTANTS
A Professional Association

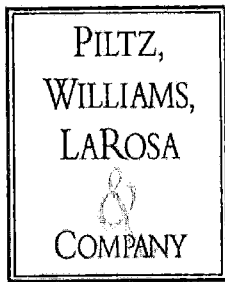
**The First Bancshares, Inc.
Employee Stock Ownership Plan**

Financial Statements

December 31, 2023 and 2022

Contents

	<u>Page</u>
Independent Auditors' Report.....	1-3
Statements of Net Assets Available for Benefits.....	4
Statement of Changes in Net Assets Available for Benefits.....	5
Notes to Financial Statements.....	6-9
Supplemental Information:	
Schedule H, Line 4i – Schedule of Assets (Held at End of Year)	10



CERTIFIED PUBLIC ACCOUNTANTS
A Professional Association

MEMBERS
American Institute of CPAs
AICPA Private Companies Practice Section
AICPA Governmental Audit Quality Center
AICPA Employee Benefit Plan Audit Quality Center
Mississippi Society of CPAs

Eric B. Bland, CPA
David C. Neumann, CPA
Mildrey Egles-Strickland, CPA
Elsé A. Marie, CPA
Jordan R. Church, CPA

Gerald Piltz, CPA (1925-2013)
Stanford A. Williams, Jr., CPA (1935-2017)
Sam J. LaRosa, Jr., CPA (Retired)
William S. Thompson, CPA (Retired)
Gene M. Clark, Jr., CPA (1942-2022)
Darrell L. Galey, CPA (Retired)
Margaret D. Closson, CPA (Retired)
Stephen P. Theobald, CPA
Michael D. O'Neill, CPA (Retired)

Independent Auditors' Report

To the Plan Administrator
The First Bancshares, Inc.
Employee Stock Ownership Plan
Hattiesburg, Mississippi

Opinion on the 2023 Financial Statements

We have audited the financial statements of The First Bancshares, Inc. Employee Stock Ownership Plan, an employee benefit plan subject to the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA), which comprise the statement of net assets available for benefits as of December 31, 2023, and the related statement of changes in net assets available for benefits for the year then ended, and the related notes to the financial statements.

In our opinion, the accompanying financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the net assets available for benefits of The First Bancshares, Inc. Employee Stock Ownership Plan as of December 31, 2023, and the changes in net assets available for benefit for the year then ended in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.

Basis for Opinion on the 2023 Financial Statements

We conducted our audit in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America (GAAS). Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditors' Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements section of our report. We are required to be independent of The First Bancshares, Inc. Employee Stock Ownership Plan and to meet our other ethical responsibilities, in accordance with the relevant ethical requirements relating to our audit. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our audit opinion.

Responsibilities of Management for the 2023 Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America, and for the design, implementation, and maintenance of internal control relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, management is required to evaluate whether there are conditions or events, considered in the aggregate, that raise substantial doubt about The First Bancshares, Inc. Employee Stock Ownership Plan's ability to continue as a going concern for one year after the date that the financial statements are issued.

Management is also responsible for maintaining a current plan instrument, including all plan amendments, administering the plan, and determining that the plan's transactions that are presented and disclosed in the financial statements are in conformity with the plan's provisions, including maintaining sufficient records with respect to each of the participants, to determine the benefits due or which may become due to such participants.

Auditors' Responsibilities for the Audit of the 2023 Financial Statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditors' report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance but is not absolute assurance and therefore is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with GAAS will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control. Misstatements are considered material if individually or in the aggregate, they would influence the judgment made by a reasonable user based on the financial statements.

In performing an audit in accordance with GAAS, we:

- Exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit.
- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, and design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks. Such procedures include examining, on a test basis, evidence regarding the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of The First Bancshares, Inc. Employee Stock Ownership Plan's internal control. Accordingly, no such opinion is expressed.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of significant accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluate the overall presentation of the financial statements.
- Conclude whether, in our judgment, there are conditions or events, considered in the aggregate, that raise substantial doubt about The First Bancshares, Inc. Employee Stock Ownership Plan's ability to continue as a going concern for a reasonable period of time.

We are required to communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit, significant audit findings, and certain internal control-related matters that we identified during the audit.

2023 Supplemental Schedules Required by ERISA

Our audits were conducted for the purpose of forming an opinion on the financial statements as a whole. The supplemental Schedule of Assets (Held at End of Year) is presented for purposes of additional analysis and is not a required part of the financial statements but is supplementary information required by the Department of Labor's Rules and Regulations for Reporting and Disclosure under ERISA. Such information is the responsibility of management and was derived from and relates directly to the underlying accounting and other records used to prepare the financial

statements. The information has been subjected to the auditing procedures applied in the audits of the financial statements and certain additional procedures, including comparing and reconciling such information directly to the underlying accounting and other records used to prepare the financial statements or to the financial statements themselves, and other additional procedures in accordance with GAAS.

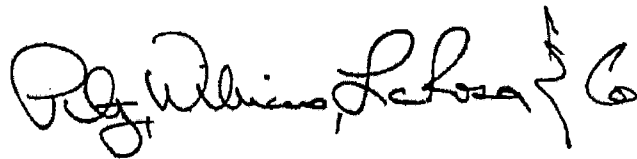
In forming our opinion on the supplemental schedules, we evaluated whether the supplemental schedules, including their form and content, are presented in conformity with the Department of Labor's Rules and Regulations for Reporting and Disclosure under ERISA.

In our opinion, the information in the accompanying schedule is fairly stated, in all material respects, in relation to the financial statements as a whole, and the form and content are presented in conformity with the Department of Labor's Rules and Regulations for Reporting and Disclosure under ERISA.

Other Matter

Auditors' Report on the 2022 Financial Statements

The 2022 financial statements of The First Bancshares, Inc. Employee Stock Ownership Plan were audited by predecessor auditors whose report dated November 9, 2023, expressed an unmodified opinion on those financial statements and included an other-matter paragraph that provided an opinion that the information in the 2022 supplemental schedule was fairly stated in all material respects in relation to the financial statements as a whole.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Williams, CPA", followed by a stylized flourish or mark.

Certified Public Accountants

Biloxi, Mississippi
October 14, 2024

The First Bancshares, Inc.
Employee Stock Ownership Plan
Statements of Net Assets Available for Benefits

4

	December 31,	
	2023	2022
Assets		
Investments at fair value		
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 6,453	\$ 10,710
Employer securities	<u>168,002</u>	<u>183,353</u>
Total investments	<u>174,455</u>	<u>194,063</u>
Net assets available for benefits	<u><u>\$ 174,455</u></u>	<u><u>\$ 194,063</u></u>

See accompanying notes.

The First Bancshares, Inc.
Employee Stock Ownership Plan
Statement of Changes in Net Assets Available for Benefits

5

	Year Ended December 31, 2023
Additions to (deductions from) net assets	
Investment income (loss):	
Interest and dividends	\$ 5,155
Net change in fair value of investments	<u>(15,915)</u>
Total investment loss	<u>(10,760)</u>
Contributions:	
Others	<u>9,615</u>
Total contributions	<u>9,615</u>
Deductions from net assets	
Distributions paid to participants	<u>18,463</u>
Total deductions	<u>18,463</u>
Net decrease in Plan assets	(19,608)
Net assets available for benefits, beginning of year	<u>194,063</u>
Net assets available for benefits, end of year	<u><u>\$ 174,455</u></u>

See accompanying notes.

The First Bancshares, Inc.
Employee Stock Ownership Plan
Notes to Financial Statements
December 31, 2023 and 2022

6

Note A – Description of Plan

The following description of The First Bancshares, Inc. (Company) Employee Stock Ownership Plan (Plan), provides only general information. Participants should refer to the Plan agreement for a more complete description of the Plan's provisions.

General – The Plan is a defined contribution plan covering substantially all full-time employees of the Company who are age 21 or older and have provided one year of service. The Plan provides for retirement and disability benefits and is subject to the provisions of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA).

Contributions – Each year, the Company may make a discretionary contribution as determined by the Company's Board of Directors. Contributions by participants are not allowed.

Participant accounts – Each participant's account is credited with an allocation of (a) the Company's contribution, (b) Plan earnings (losses), and (c) forfeitures of terminated participants' nonvested accounts. Allocations are based on participant earnings or account balances, as defined. The benefit to which a participant is entitled is the benefit that can be provided from the participant's vested account.

Vesting – Gradual vesting is based on years of continuous service with 100% vested after five years of credited service. However, participants become fully vested at any time if they should die, become disabled, reach their normal retirement date, or if the Plan is terminated.

Payment of benefits – A participant entitled to benefits under the Plan shall be provided with options for distributions of benefits according to the terms of the Plan document.

Note B – Summary of Accounting Policies

Basis of accounting – The financial statements of the Plan are prepared using the accrual basis of accounting, except for benefit payments that are recorded when paid.

Investment valuation and income recognition – The Company's stock is not readily tradable on an established securities market, however, it is listed on the National Association of Securities Dealers of Automated Quotations (NASDAQ) and the value as of December 31, 2023, is the amount used to determine the fair value for the year ended December 31, 2023. The value of the Company's stock at December 31, 2023 and 2022 was \$168,002 and \$183,353, respectively. The Company's stock is a significant portion of the assets of the Plan. Therefore, fluctuations in the estimated fair value of the stock could have a material effect on the financial statements of the Plan. See Note D for discussion of fair value measurements.

Purchases and sales of securities are recorded on a trade-date basis. Interest income is recorded on the accrual basis. Dividends are recorded on the ex-dividend date

The First Bancshares, Inc.
Employee Stock Ownership Plan
Notes to Financial Statements
December 31, 2023 and 2022
(Continued)

7

Payment of benefits – Benefits are recorded when paid.

Administrative expenses – Most expenses of maintaining the Plan are paid by the Company and are therefore excluded from these financial statements. Investment-related expenses are included in net appreciation (depreciation) in fair value of investments.

Use of estimates – The preparation of financial statements in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America (“GAAP”) requires the plan administrator to make estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amounts of assets and liabilities and changes therein, and disclosures of contingent assets and liabilities. Accordingly, actual results may differ from those estimates.

Note C – Investments

The Plan’s investments are held by a brokerage investment firm. The following table presents the fair value of investments as of December 31, 2023 and 2022:

	Fair Value of Investments			
	December 31,			
	2023		2022	
	Number of Shares	Fair Value	Number of Shares	Fair Value
Estimated Fair Value				
Cash and cash equivalents	-	\$ 6,453	-	\$ 10,710
Common stock:				
The First Bancshares, Inc.	5,728	168,002	5,728	183,353
Total		<u>\$ 174,455</u>		<u>\$ 194,063</u>

During the year ended December 31, 2023, the Plan’s investments (including investments bought, sold, and held during the year depreciated in value as follows:

The First Bancshares, Inc.	<u>\$ (15,915)</u>
----------------------------	--------------------

Note D – Fair Value Measurements

The fair value measurement accounting literature establishes a fair value hierarchy that prioritizes the inputs to valuation techniques used to measure fair value. This hierarchy consists of three broad levels: Level 1 inputs consist of unadjusted quoted prices in active markets for identical assets and have the highest priority. Level 2 inputs consist of observable inputs other than quoted prices for identical assets (Level 1). Level 3 inputs are unobservable and have the lowest priority. The Plan uses appropriate valuation techniques based on the available inputs to measure the fair value of its investments. When available, the Plan measures fair value using Level 1 inputs because they generally provide the most reliable evidence of fair value.

The First Bancshares, Inc.
Employee Stock Ownership Plan
Notes to Financial Statements
December 31, 2023 and 2022
(Continued)

8

Level 1 Fair Value Measurements

Cash and cash equivalents are public investment vehicles using \$1 for NAV (net asset value).

The value of the Company's securities was determined by using the quoted market value used by the National Association of Securities Dealers Automated Quotations (NASDAQ).

The following tables set forth, by level within the fair value hierarchy, the Plan's investments at fair value as of December 31, 2023 and 2022:

	Assets at Fair Value	
	Total	Level 1
December 31, 2023		
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 6,453	\$ 6,453
Employer securities	168,002	168,002
Total	<u>\$ 174,455</u>	<u>\$ 174,455</u>
December 31, 2022		
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 10,710	\$ 10,710
Employer securities	183,353	183,353
Total	<u>\$ 194,063</u>	<u>\$ 194,063</u>

Note E – Income Tax Status

The Internal Revenue Service has determined and informed the company by a letter dated November 26, 2014, that the Plan and related trust are designed in accordance with applicable sections of the Internal Revenue Code (IRC). Although the Plan has been amended since receiving the determination letter, the Plan administrator and the Plan's tax counsel believe that the Plan is designed and is currently being operated in compliance with the applicable requirements of the IRC and therefore believe that the Plan is qualified, and the related trust is tax-exempt.

Note F – Related Parties

The Plan invests in Company common stock. The Plan sponsor is absorbing most of the administrative cost of the Plan. These are related party and party-in-interest transactions.

Note G – Plan Termination

The Bank reserves the right to terminate the Plan at any time, subject to Plan provisions. Upon termination of the Plan, the Employee Benefits Administration Committee directs the Trustee to pay all liabilities and expenses of the ESOP and to sell shares of financed common stock held as collateral to the extent it determines such sale to be necessary.

Subsequently, the interest of each participant in the trust fund will be distributed to such participant or his or her beneficiary at the time prescribed by the Plan terms and the IRC.

The First Bancshares, Inc.
Employee Stock Ownership Plan
Notes to Financial Statements
December 31, 2023 and 2022
(Continued)

9

Note H – Risks and Uncertainties

The Plan investments consist primarily of the Company's common stock, which is exposed to various risks such as interest rate, market, and credit risks. Due to the level of risk associated with the investment in the common stock and to uncertainties inherent in estimates and assumptions, it is at least reasonably possible that changes in the value of the common stock will occur in the near term and that such changes could materially affect the amounts reported in the statement of net assets available for benefits.

Note I – Put Option

Under federal income tax regulations, the employer stock is held by the Plan and its participants. The Plan stock is not readily tradable on an established market, nor is it subject to trading limitations. The Plan contains a put option, which is a right to demand that the Bank buy shares of its stock distributed to participants for which there is no market. The put price is representative of the current appraised value of the stock. The Bank can pay for the purchase with interest over a period of five years. The purpose of the put option is to ensure that the participant has the ability to ultimately obtain cash.

Note J – Voting Rights

Each participant is entitled to exercise voting rights attributable to the shares allocated to his or her account and is notified by the Trustee prior to the time that such rights are to be exercised. The Trustee is allowed to vote any allocated share for which instructions have not been given by a participant and is required to vote any unallocated shares on behalf of the collective best interests of Plan participants and beneficiaries.

Note K – Subsequent Events

Management has evaluated subsequent events through October 14, 2024, the date on which the financial statements were available to be issued.

On April 18, 2024, the Board of Directors of the Company approved the termination of the Plan. The effective date of the Plan termination is May 31, 2024, and it shall be treated as the last day of the Plan year for all plan administration purposes but shall have no effect on the plan year for purposes of ERISA, including all ERISA reporting and disclosure purposes.

Supplemental Information

The First Bancshares, Inc.
Employee Stock Ownership Plan
Form 5500

10

Schedule H, Line 4i - Schedule of Assets (Held at End of Year)

EIN 64-0862173 – PN 002

December 31, 2023

<u>Identity of Issue</u>	<u>Description of Investment</u>	<u>Cost</u>	<u>Current Value</u>
* The First Bancshares, Inc.	Common stock	\$ 100,541	\$ 168,002
Stone Wealth Management	Cash equivalents	6,453	6,453

* Represents a party-in-interest

See independent auditors' report.

E-SIGNATURE AUTHORIZATION

for

The First Bancshares, Inc. Employee Stock Ownership Plan

64-0862173/002

For Plan Year 01/01/2023 through 12/31/2023

I/We, the undersigned, understand that a 5500 Series filing for the plan listed above must be prepared, electronically signed and electronically transmitted to the EBSA Electronic Filing Acceptance System (EFAST).

I/We authorize T.E. Lott & Company to electronically sign the 5500 Series filing on my/our behalf and to transmit that signed form to EFAST on or before the filing due date.

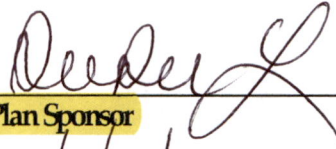
I/We understand that by granting this authority:

- A manually signed and dated Form 5500 that has been provided must be returned to T.E. Lott & Company before they can begin the electronic filing process. I/We will retain a copy of this manually signed form and any schedules and attachments in the plan records.
- T.E. Lott & Company will not be responsible for any late filing penalty assessed under ERISA should I/we not return the manually signed and dated Form 5500 prior to the filing due date.
- An electronic copy of the manually signed and dated Form 5500 showing my/our signatures will be included in the electronic filing and will be posted by the EBSA to the Internet for public disclosure.
- T.E. Lott & Company will maintain a copy of this written authorization in its records.
- T.E. Lott & Company will notify all signers about any inquiries and correspondence it receives about this filing from EFAST, EBSA, IRS or PBGC.
- T.E. Lott & Company shall not be deemed to be a plan fiduciary with respect to this plan solely on account of providing the electronic signature and filing of the 5500 for the plan year listed above.



Plan Administrator
10/3/24

Date



Plan Sponsor
10/3/24

Date

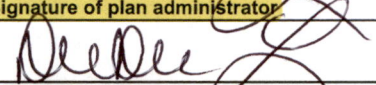
Form 5500 Department of the Treasury Internal Revenue Service Department of Labor Employee Benefits Security Administration Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation	Annual Return/Report of Employee Benefit Plan This form is required to be filed for employee benefit plans under sections 104 and 4065 of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act of 1974 (ERISA) and sections 6057(b), and 6058(a) of the Internal Revenue Code (the Code). ▶ Complete all entries in accordance with the instructions to the Form 5500.	OMB Nos. 1210-0110 1210-0089 2023 This Form is Open to Public Inspection
---	---	---

Part I Annual Report Identification Information		
For calendar plan year 2023 or fiscal plan year beginning <u>01/01/2023</u> and ending <u>12/31/2023</u>		
A This return/report is for:	☐ a multiemployer plan;	☐ a multiple-employer plan (Filers checking this box must provide participating employer information in accordance with the form instructions.)
	☒ a single-employer plan;	☐ a DFE (specify) _____
B This return/report is:	☐ the first return/report;	☐ the final return/report;
	☐ an amended return/report;	☐ a short plan year return/report (less than 12 months).
C If the plan is a collectively-bargained plan, check here	☐	
D Check box if filing under:	☒ Form 5558;	☐ automatic extension;
	☐ special extension (enter description)	☐ the DFVC program;
E If this is a retroactively adopted plan permitted by SECURE Act section 201, check here	☐	

Part II Basic Plan Information --- enter all requested information		
1a Name of plan <u>The First Bancshares, Inc. Employee Stock Ownership Plan</u>	1b Three-digit plan number (PN) ▶ <u>002</u>	
	1c Effective date of plan <u>01/01/2006</u>	
2a Plan sponsor's name (employer, if for a single-employer plan) Mailing address (include room, apt., suite no. and street or P.O. Box) City or town, state or province, country, and ZIP or foreign postal code (If foreign, see instructions) <u>The First Bancshares, Inc. Employee Stock Ownership Plan</u> 6480 Hwy 98 W P. O. Box 15549 US Hattiesburg MS 39404	2b Employer Identification Number (EIN) <u>64-0862173</u>	
	2c Plan Sponsor's telephone number <u>(601) 450-8888</u>	
	2d Business code (see instructions) <u>522110</u>	

Caution: A penalty for the late or incomplete filing of this return/report will be assessed unless reasonable cause is established.

Under penalties of perjury and other penalties set forth in the instructions, I declare that I have examined this return/report, including accompanying schedules, statements and attachments, as well as the electronic version of this return/report, and to the best of my knowledge and belief, it is true, correct, and complete.

SIGN HERE		<u>10/3/24</u>	Dee Dee Lowery
	Signature of plan administrator	Date	Enter name of individual signing as plan administrator
SIGN HERE		<u>10/3/24</u>	Dee Dee Lowery
	Signature of employer/plan sponsor	Date	Enter name of individual signing as employer or plan sponsor
SIGN HERE			
	Signature of DFE	Date	Enter name of individual signing as DFE

3a Plan administrator's name and address ☒ Same as Plan Sponsor	3b Administrator's EIN 3c Administrator's telephone number
4 If the name and/or EIN of the plan sponsor or the plan name has changed since the last return/report filed for this plan, enter the plan sponsor's name, EIN and the plan name and the plan number from the last return/report: a Sponsor's name c Plan name	4b EIN 4d PN
5 Total number of participants at the beginning of the plan year	5 1,108
6 Number of participants as of the end of the plan year unless otherwise stated (welfare plans complete only lines 6a(1), 6a(2), 6b, 6c, and 6d).	
a(1) Total number of active participants at the beginning of the plan year	6a(1) 951
a(2) Total number of active participants at the end of the plan year	6a(2) 872
b Retired or separated participants receiving benefits	6b 0
c Other retired or separated participants entitled to future benefits	6c 216
d Subtotal. Add lines 6a(2), 6b, and 6c	6d 1,088
e Deceased participants whose beneficiaries are receiving or are entitled to receive benefits	6e 0
f Total. Add lines 6d and 6e	6f 1,088
g(1) Number of participants with account balances as of the beginning of the plan year (only defined contribution plans complete this item)	6g(1) 674
g(2) Number of participants with account balances as of the end of the plan year (only defined contribution plans complete this item)	6g(2) 674
h Number of participants who terminated employment during the plan year with accrued benefits that were less than 100% vested	6h 0
7 Enter the total number of employers obligated to contribute to the plan (only multiemployer plans complete this item)	7
8a If the plan provides pension benefits, enter the applicable pension feature codes from the List of Plan Characteristics Codes in the instructions: 2I 2O 3H 3I b If the plan provides welfare benefits, enter the applicable welfare feature codes from the List of Plan Characteristics Codes in the instructions:	
9a Plan funding arrangement (check all that apply) (1) ☐ Insurance (2) ☐ Code section 412(e)(3) insurance contracts (3) ☒ Trust (4) ☐ General assets of the sponsor	9b Plan benefit arrangement (check all that apply) (1) ☐ Insurance (2) ☐ Code section 412(e)(3) insurance contracts (3) ☒ Trust (4) ☐ General assets of the sponsor
10 Check all applicable boxes in 10a and 10b to indicate which schedules are attached, and, where indicated, enter the number attached. (See instructions)	
a Pension Schedules (1) ☒ R (Retirement Plan Information) (2) ☐ MB (Multiemployer Defined Benefit Plan and Certain Money Purchase Plan Actuarial Information) - signed by the plan actuary (3) ☐ SB (Single-Employer Defined Benefit Plan Actuarial Information) - signed by the plan actuary (4) ☐ DCG (Individual Plan Information) - Number Attached _____ (5) ☐ MEP (Multiple-Employer Retirement Plan Information)	b General Schedules (1) ☒ H (Financial Information) (2) ☐ I (Financial Information - Small Plan) (3) ☐ A (Insurance Information) - Number Attached _____ (4) ☐ C (Service Provider Information) (5) ☐ D (DFE/Participating Plan Information) (6) ☐ G (Financial Transaction Schedules)

Part III**Form M-1 Compliance Information (to be completed by welfare benefit plans)**

- 11a** If the plan provides welfare benefits, was the plan subject to the Form M-1 filing requirements during the plan year? (See instructions and 29 CFR 2520.101-2.) ☐ Yes ☐ No

If "Yes" is checked, complete lines 11b and 11c.

- 11b** Is the plan currently in compliance with the Form M-1 filing requirements? (See instructions and 29 CFR 2520.101-2.) . . ☐ Yes ☐ No

- 11c** Enter the Receipt Confirmation Code for the 2023 Form M-1 annual report. If the plan was not required to file the 2023 Form M-1 annual report, enter the Receipt Confirmation Code for the most recent Form M-1 that was required to be filed under the Form M-1 filing requirements. (Failure to enter a valid Receipt Confirmation Code will subject the Form 5500 filing to rejection as incomplete.)

Receipt Confirmation Code _____

[illegible]