

May 26, 2022

A special meeting of the Wood River City Council was called to order by Mayor Tom Stalcup at 5:30 p.m. on Thursday, May 26, 2022 in the Council Chambers at City Hall, 111 N. Wood River Avenue, with the recital of the Pledge of Allegiance. The Deputy Clerk called the roll and reported that the following members were:

PRESENT: Sonya Hagaman  
Jeremy Plank  
Scott Tweedy  
Tom Stalcup

ABSENT: Leroy Duncan

and that a quorum was present and in attendance.

Mayor Stalcup advised Councilman Duncan was not able to attend due to health reasons and wished him a quick recovery. He also stated that he did not see the urgency of this meeting and asked if someone on council could explain why the meeting was called.

Councilwoman Hagaman stated there wasn't an urgency to meeting so much but her understanding was that everyone agreed, and it was decided it was best that there should be a special meeting to take care of the agenda items. She was told that everything on the agenda was backed by Mayor Stalcup and that he was not going to call the special meeting, so she and Councilman Tweedy called the meeting. The only reason for a special meeting is the extension of time between the meetings because there is a 5<sup>th</sup> Monday.

Councilman Plank stated the formal notice, signed by both Mr. Tweedy and Mrs. Hagaman says it cannot wait until the next regularly scheduled meeting. He is at a loss to understand the urgency.

Mayor Stalcup stated no matter the outcome of the meeting tonight he wanted to thank Chief Stahlhut for stepping up when the City needed his help to manage and has done an outstanding job. Mayor Stalcup apologized for the steps taken recently and thanked Chief Stahlhut for his efforts.

Councilwoman Hagaman commented that this is not disparaging to Wade. He stepped up when he was asked to an interim position that was meant to be a band-aid, not a permanent fix. Wade has done an exceptional job but also has a full-time job as a Fire Chief.

Councilman Plank asked Mayor Stalcup at what point he was made aware of the requests that were made. Mayor Stalcup advised he was made aware last Friday about the situation. Councilwoman Hagaman spoke up and stated she was made aware Sunday and the papers were drawn up and signed on Monday.

Councilman Plank wanted to know if there was any thought to ask the Mayor on what his opinion was.

Councilman Tweedy stated that Wade has done a good job, his door is always open, and they have had lengthy conversations. Wade filled a void. Councilman Tweedy said he had a conversation with Chief Wells on Thursday and after that meeting his understanding was that the Mayor was onboard and the only reason he didn't know before is because the Mayor was out of town.

Mayor Stalcup feels this was abruptly brought forward and if this was going to take place why couldn't they follow the regular process of council. He does not believe that this meeting was necessary and could have been done at the next Council meeting.

Councilman Plank asked when Chief Stahlhut was made aware. Mayor Stalcup and Chief Stahlhut both spoke up and stated Sunday. Councilman Plank also asked if Mayor Stalcup had any involvement in changing the language to relax the nepotism policy. Mayor Stalcup stated no but that he was on a thread of emails.

Councilwoman Hagaman stated she brought up the changing of the nepotism rule a week to two weeks ago. She doesn't believe it's the council's authority to limit who can run for public office. There are several people who have expressed interest in running but are currently unable to because they have

family members who work full-time.

Mayor Stalcup feels this discussion should have been in closed session and the proposed ordinances brought before the city attorney.

Councilman Plank clarified that the nepotism policy on the agenda relaxes the rule for more flexibility for the City Manager role. Councilwoman Hagaman stated it does it with all positions and is more in line with most nepotism rules in neighboring cities and that ours is stringent. Councilman Plank feels our policy should be more stringent because nepotism has been part of the issue over the years within the City and not understanding the will of the voters. Public meetings were held in 2018 regarding the Rec Center and people in the community were not aware they were occurring.

Councilwoman Hagaman made a motion to table agenda items 3, 4, & 5 since Councilman Duncan was not able to attend the meeting, seconded by Councilman Tweedy, but was not approved by the following vote:

AYES: Hagaman, Tweedy (2)

NAYS: Plank, Stalcup (2)

CITIZEN/OFFICIAL COMMENTS:

Bill Dettmers commented regarding the 2018 meetings. No meeting minutes were taken, and the meeting were in violation of the open meetings act. The former Mayor sent notifications to numerous members of the community to attend that meeting. He received this information from documents on a FOIA request. Mr Dettmers also had an objection on item number 2. The city position on nepotism needs to be more restricted to avoid conflicts of interest. He sees no need in adding an ordinance to add an Assistant City Manager position. He asked council to please reconsider the agenda items.

Rosalie Huebener stated about 5 days ago there was an article in the Telegraph that the Madison County Townships will have assessed values increase by 5%. The figures provided by the assessor's office will increase her and her husband's taxes \$127 a year. Her taxes cover multiple taxing districts. Three members of the council, despite the overwhelming vote, are determined to build an \$11 million Rec Center. She does not feel the City is in a position to build a Rec Center at this time and feels the council should reevaluate.

Chuck Johansen feels what is happening is backroom politics. It makes the community leery of the people elected to do what is right for the voters. Taxes will keep going up and water bills will keep going up. There is a communication and trust problem. Things should be done correctly and slowed down. In one year alone this City went through three City Managers. The City needs a full-time Police Chief and not to add on more layers of government. He stated the community wants to get rid of our City Council Government and go back to Mayoral. There is no nepotism law, it's just the logistics of it. Organizations that allow nepotism cannot move forward.

ORDINANCE: CHANGING RULE 4.1-5 OF THE PERSONNEL MANUAL

Councilwoman Hagaman made a motion to approve an ordinance changing rule 4.1-5 of the personnel manual (nepotism), seconded by Councilman Tweedy,

Councilman Plank asked for clarification from either the City Manager or the Mayor on what the changes were from the nepotism policy.

Mayor Stalcup asked for an explanation from the Human Resources Coordinator.

Payroll/Human Resources Specialist, Kara Hill, stated that portions of the policy are being changed and removed. Mayor Stalcup asked what input Human Resources had on the changes. Kara stated she was not asked about the nepotism policy except by Interim City Manager Wade Stahlhut.

Mayor Stalcup asked for Kara's opinion on the changes submitted.

Kara stated her opinion would be to leave the current policy as is or to make the policy stricter, not more lenient. Department Heads and employees are put under more pressure and scrutiny if family members are supervising other family members. The City Manager oversees budgets, contract negotiations, payroll, leave request, disciplinary actions, hiring, and firing. Kara does not see how the City Manager

could be impartial.

Councilwoman Hagaman stated she appreciated where Human Resources was coming from but the change does indicate it could not be under direct supervision of the family member. The City does have a City Manager style of government but there are five council members who reside over the City Manager.

Councilman Plank asked if voting one of the candidates in, would be a violation of either the current nepotism policy or the amended version policy.

Councilwoman Hagaman stated she has discussed with the City Attorney and since it was an Interim position it would not be in violation. Councilman Plank clarified that because it is temporary and even though the City Manager would be over everyone in the City it would not be problematic to oversee their relative. City Attorney stated because it was a temporary situation there could be a provision regarding the policy.

Discussion ensued on the matter of conflict of interest. There is the matter of a union buffer and any conflict that Steve would have as the City Manager the union, Fire and Police Board, or City Council could step in regarding any impartiality.

The ordinance was not approved based on the following vote:

AYES: Hagaman, Tweedy (2)  
NAYS: Plank, Stalcup (2)

ORDINANCE: ADDING CHAPTER 31.94 TO THE CITY CODE BY CREATING AN ASSISTANT CITY MANAGER POSITION:

Councilman Tweedy made a motion to approve an ordinance adding Chapter 31.94 to the city code by creating an Assistant City Manager position, seconded by Councilwoman Hagaman,

Councilwoman Hagaman stated that Chief Wells has decided to take on this mantle with no additional compensation. Chief Wells has brought a lot of economic development downtown.

Mayor Stalcup stated his concern that Chief Wells is already Police Chief, Building & Zoning Administrator and now the additional task of Assistant City Manager.

Councilman Plank questioned what would be changing besides adding on the title of Assistant City Manager.

Police Chief Brad Wells stated he would continue the current responsibilities and in the absence of the City Manager step in as Assistant.

Councilman Tweedy feels it would be positive for the City if the two individuals work together in the City Manager capacity.

Councilman Plank asked Kara Hill, Human Resource Specialist if anything had been received describing job responsibilities. Kara Hill answered no.

The ordinance was not approved based on the following vote:

AYES: Hagaman, Tweedy (2)  
NAYS: Plank, Stalcup (2)

APPOINTMENT: INTERIM CITY MANAGER

Scott Tweedy made a motion to approve Steve Palen as Interim City Manager effective immediately, seconded by Councilwoman Hagaman,

Councilman Plank questioned the urgency of the approval when the City already has an Interim City Manager and if the City looked externally. Mayor Stalcup stated no external candidates have been reviewed.

Councilman Tweedy stated he is not interested in looking at external candidates.

Discussion ensued between Councilwoman Hagaman and Mayor Stalcup as to why no action was taken to look externally while Chief Stahlhut was Interim City Manager.

The appointment was not approved based on the following vote:

AYES: Hagaman, Tweedy (2)  
NAYS: Plank, Stalcup (2)

Mayor Stalcup and Councilman Tweedy discussed adding these items on to the agenda of the next regularly scheduled meeting.

Councilwoman Hagaman requested a closed session, to discuss personnel, be added to the agenda of the next regularly scheduled meeting.

Councilman Plank requested a legal opinion prior to adding the items onto the next agenda.

Mayor Stalcup asked Chief Stahlhut if he would remain Interim City Manager until a decision can be made. Chief Stahlhut stated he would remain Interim City Manager on a short-term basis.

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business to come before the Council, the meeting adjourned at 6:14 p.m.

  
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Mayor

  
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Deputy City Clerk