

September 18, 2023

A regular meeting of the Wood River City Council was called to order by Mayor Tom Stalcup at 7:00 p.m. on Monday, September 18, 2023, in the Council Chambers at City Hall, 111 N. Wood River Avenue, with the recital of the Pledge of Allegiance. The Clerk called the roll and reported that the following members were:

PRESENT: David Ayres
Bill Dettmers
Jeremy Plank
Scott Tweedy
Tom Stalcup

and that a quorum was present and in attendance.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Councilman Tweedy moved to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of September 5, 2023, as printed, seconded by Councilman Dettmers, and approved by the following vote:

AYES: Ayres, Dettmers, Plank, Tweedy, Stalcup (5)
NAYS: None (0)

APPROVAL OF BILLS:

Councilman Dettmers moved to approve the bills submitted for payment for the period August 31, 2023, to September 13, 2023, as printed, seconded by Councilman Ayres

Councilman Dettmers asked about the retainer for the Bassett Law Firm in the amount of \$950.00 along with regular services. He said he thought that the retainer would pertain to their prior contract and asked if the City got a new contract with them.

City Manager Steve Palen stated the City did get a new contract with Bassett Law Firm to remain the Prosecuting Attorney for the City. The previous retainer was significantly more than that, so the City negotiated down to a retainer fee of \$950.00 for the new contract.

Councilman Dettmers asked what the special order under the Golf Clubhouse for Johnson for \$908.31 was for.

Director of Parks & Recreation Jason Woody stated that is usually a special-order golf club or some sort of golf equipment for a customer and they pay the City back for the order.

Councilman Dettmers mentioned the interest payment at CNB Bank and Trust for the Non-Home Rule Sales Tax for \$4,234.03 and asked if that would come out of the 1% sales tax or if it would get transferred over to the special account for the Recreation Center.

Finance Director Chris Sobrino said no, the City borrowed 2.5 million dollars to help pay for the State Street Sewer Separation Project via line of credit. The bank is charging monthly interest for the line of credit.

Councilman Dettmers asked if that was the payment the City had to make earlier this year for the Sewer Separation Project.

Finance Director Chris Sobrino said that was a payment to the Army Corp of Engineers and then the City has the line of credit coming in November.

The bills were approved by the following vote:

AYES: Ayres, Dettmers, Plank, Tweedy, Stalcup (5)
NAYS: None (0)

FINANCIAL STATEMENT ENDING AUGUST 31, 2023:

Councilman Ayres moved for approval of the financial statement ending August 31, 2023, as printed, seconded by Councilman Tweedy, and approved by the following vote:

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AYES: Ayres, Dettmers, Plank, Tweedy, Stalcup (5)
NAYS: None (0)

CITIZEN/OFFICIAL COMMENTS:

Pastor Dave Landry stated he saw that the Council is going to have a closed session concerning personnel. He said he was not sure what they were going to be discussing but his concern, along with others in Wood River, is about this being more about wanting to fire the City Manager for simply doing an outstanding job, as his accomplishments speak for themselves, eight months of reserves in the City account to cover any problems that may occur. He said that is pretty much not even heard of in this City. He said the Council and citizens listening to the meeting, this by itself is an extraordinary accomplishment for the City Manager. The City of Wood River is now worth 12 million dollars more this year than last year according to County Clerk's report and the list goes on. He said Councilman Ayres has been the Mayor and he has been on the Council and probably knows a lot of things that have went on in the City throughout the years. He stated this has to be a remarkable job that Steve Palen as City Manager is doing in Wood River. Pastor Landry thinks that is something that Councilman Ayres can agree with. He said if anybody was going to be incompetent in their passion of authority, it would be the City Councilmen that are pursuing this dastardly plot to take down our City Manager. The Director and the Assistant Director, Jason and Pat, are doing a phenomenal job keeping our parks looking great. They only have one full-time employee and if the Council would bother to go look around at our City parks, they are immaculate. The Recreational Supervisor, in his own time, brought in over \$8,000.00 to help the City and operate the food network at the ballparks. Pastor Landry thinks that is outstanding. He said that the City has lost their Finance Director who did an astounding service to Wood River. He stated if this is the constant pursuit of injustice to the City pursuing nepotism and firing and running off employees because they do not line up with the Council's agenda, it needs to stop. He stated that if he was wrong about the meeting tonight, he apologizes. He said if they are wanting to preserve their political career, if that is something they are going after, he thinks running down this rabbit hole is the wrong thing to do. Pastor Landry said he is asking the citizens of Wood River to stand up against this bigoted and targeted hatred and be a voice that they hear. The signs are out there that Wood River is making an effort to rebuild Wood River. He said let us stop all this and be a part of making Wood River a great place to live for our families, our children, and our grandchildren. He said he is asking on behalf of a lot of good, hardworking citizens to stop the vindictive and destructive direction the Council has been in for almost a year and work with the City Manager, the Mayor, and Councilman Tweedy to build our City back to being a prosperous and successful City by bringing taxes down, growing new business, providing better parks, doing road and sidewalk repairs, fixing the outdated water lines, and the list goes on.

Councilman Plank said he knew today was the start of the no cash bail process and asked if Chief Wells would talk about that and what the plans are going forward.

Chief Wells said they have done a lot of internal work to get ready for this. This morning from the click of the calendar from the 17th to the 18th, they switched to Illinois as the only state in the land to be a no cash bail state and they have had a lot of meetings, a lot of preparation with the State's Attorney. They have a lot of procedures in place and feel like they are ready for that. From midnight last night to this morning, they have not had to deal with that issue but by the time the week ends they will determine how that will affect the Police Department. He stated he does not know if other departments are doing this but Wood River Police Department is creating a form just to see how this does affect our community so they can have some stats. He said he would like to do it from now until the end of the year so they can have three and a half months of data that they can see what kind of incidents that they are running into, and they will compare it to how things were to how things are now. He said they have been preparing the City for the last few years for the very same thing. It started with how cases were getting charged, who they were holding in jail, how state parole was starting to allow people that did receive sentences to get out and then once they were on parole, how they were being treated, and the things they were getting by with. He said they are not running people out of town, that is not their intention, but he told Council when he swore in as Chief of Police that it was his goal that everyone has a good neighbor. The rest of it is just responsibilities. He said his idea behind everyone being a good neighbor is that they live the way everyone would like them to live with clean yards, and not vehicles up on blocks and such. He said they are enforcing those type of things to help keep the complaints down. He said they have not seen any problems yet and they will do everything they can to keep the City safe.

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Mayor Stalcup said on Friday he and his wife attended the Riverbend Growth Association LeadHERship Seminar honoring nine women in the area who dedicated their professional lives to their communities. He was proud to say two of the three winners of those awards were the Director of the Public Library, Lindsey Herron, and City of Wood River's Marketing Consultant, Kristen Burns. He said Lindsey and Kristen are great examples of people working tirelessly to improve Wood River and the region for the better way of life for our families and our future. He congratulated Lindsey and Kristen and thanked them for all they do for the City of Wood River.

Mayor Stalcup congratulated Director Woody for being awarded the Metro East Park District Grant for \$64,000, enabling the paving at 6th Street Park for the walking paths and for the parking lot.

Mayor Stalcup congratulated the Roxana Homecoming King and Queen Lincoln Prater and Megan Herrin that were crowned over the weekend.

Mayor Stalcup said East Alton Wood River's Homecoming football game is this Friday, September 22, 2023, with the Homecoming Coronation on Saturday, September 30, 2023.

Mayor Stalcup stated the Halloween Parade float applications are now being accepted and more information can be found on the homepage or the Fire Department's homepage of the website. He said the City of Wood River website has a few new updates. There is a new button for ordinances so it can be easily accessible for citizens to pull up, a job posting button, and the business directory is being updated. There is now a link to fill out business information and add a logo to the listing.

ORDINANCE AMENDING CITY CODE 90-7, TITLE XI: BUSINESS REGULATIONS, CHAPTER 112: ALCHOLIC BEVERAGES, SECTION 112.25 LIMIT ON NUMBER OF LICENSES, (A) CHANGING THE NUMBER OF TAVERN LICENSES IN DISTRICT 2 FROM THIRTEEN TO FOURTEEN AND (C) CHANGING THE NUMBER OF LIQUOR STORE LICENSES IN DISTRICT 2 FROM FOURTEEN TO FIFTEEN:

Councilman Tweedy moved to approve an ordinance amending City Code 90-7. Title XI: Business Regulations, Chapter 112: Alcoholic Beverages, Section 112.25 limit on number of licenses, (A) changing the number of Tavern Licenses in District 2 from thirteen to fourteen and (C) changing the number of Liquor Store Licenses in District 2 from fourteen to fifteen, seconded by Councilman Dettmers, and approved by the following vote:

AYES: Ayres, Dettmers, Plank, Tweedy, Stalcup (5)
NAYS: None

ORDINANCE APPROVING REIMBURSEMENT OF REDEVELOPMENT COSTS WITH THE WOOD RIVER FRATERNAL ORDER OF EAGLES #2773 FOR TIF ASSISTANCE AT 74 E. FERGUSON, AS SUBMITTED BY THE TIF COMMITTEE:

Councilman Ayres moved to approve an ordinance approving reimbursement of redevelopment costs with the Wood River Fraternal Order of Eagles #2773 for TIF assistance at 74 E. Ferguson, as submitted by the TIF Committee, seconded by Councilman Plank

Councilman Dettmers said he saw the Eagles were asking for a reimbursement of 50% of the cost for improvements totaling a little over \$14,000. He said he spoke with the Finance Director Chris Sobrino, and Chris did some checking to make sure that their not-for-profit status was in order, and he believes it is. He asked Chris Sobrino to talk about what the not-for-profit status means.

Finance Director Chris Sobrino stated that not-for-profit means that for federal income tax purposes they are considered tax exempt. There are a lot of different types of not-for-profits but the most common one is 501(c)(3) which is a public charity and usually public charities do not pay property taxes. The Eagles are not a 501(c)(3) account and they do pay property taxes, sales tax, and video gaming taxes, but they do not pay federal income taxes.

The ordinance was approved by the following vote:

AYES: Ayres, Dettmers, Plank, Tweedy, Stalcup (5)
NAYS: None

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ORDINANCE DECLARING PARCEL ID'S 19-2-08-27-06-105-031, 19-2-08-27-06-105-030, AND 19-2-08-27-06-105-029, COMMONLY KNOWN AS 423 AND 441 MADISON AVENUE, WOOD RIVER, IL 62095, AND ZONED MR-3 MULTI-FAMILY AS SURPLUS AND AUTHORIZING REQUESTS FOR PROPOSALS, AS SUBMITTED BY THE CITY MANAGER:

Councilman Dettmers moved to approve an ordinance declaring Parcel ID's 19-2-08-27-06-105-031, 19-2-08-27-06-105-030, and 19-2-08-27-06-105-129, commonly known as 423 and 441 Madison Avenue, Wood River, IL 62095, and zoned MR-3 Multi-Family as surplus and authorizing requests for proposals, as submitted by the City Manager, seconded by Councilman Ayres, and approved by the following vote:

AYES: Ayres, Dettmers, Plank, Tweedy, Stalcup (5)
NAYS: None

RESOLUTION DECLARING THE ACCESSORY STRUCTURE(S) LOCATED AT PARCEL ID 19-2-08-27-06-104-036, COMMONLY KNOWN AS 403 E. FERGUSON, WOOD RIVER, IL 62095, UNSAFE AND A PUBLIC NUISANCE AND AUTHORIZING THE PROSECUTING ATTORNEY TO PROCEED WITH LEGAL ACTION:

Councilman Ayres moved to approve a resolution declaring the accessory structure(s) located at Parcel ID 19-2-08-27-06-104-036, commonly known as 403 E. Ferguson, Wood River, IL 62095, unsafe and public nuisance and authorizing the prosecuting attorney to proceed with legal action, seconded by Councilman Tweedy, and approved by the following vote:

AYES: Ayres, Dettmers, Plank, Tweedy, Stalcup (5)
NAYS: None

RESOLUTION TO APPLY FOR FUNDING FROM THE 2023 ILLINOIS TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES PROGRAM (TAP) FOR A SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL (SRTS) PROJECT:

Councilman Dettmers moved to approve a resolution to apply for funding from the 2023 Illinois Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) for a Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Project, seconded by Councilman Plank

Councilman Dettmers asked if this was for replacement of the sidewalks along Wood River Avenue for the High School.

Mayor Stalcup stated that is correct.

Councilman Dettmers said he would also like to see the Council move forward under infrastructure, some improvements for our sidewalks throughout the City too.

Councilman Plank asked if this just included the block where the High School is.

City Manager Steve Palen stated it is from Chessen to about Eckhard on both sides of the street.

The resolution was approved by the following vote:

AYES: Ayres, Dettmers, Plank, Tweedy, Stalcup (5)
NAYS: None

CLOSED SESSION:

Councilman Plank moved for approval of a recess to hold a closed session to discuss matters pertaining to Personnel (5 ILCS 120/2 (c) (1)), seconded by Councilman Dettmers, and approved by the following vote:

AYES: Ayres, Dettmers, Plank, Tweedy, Stalcup (5)
NAYS: None

The Council recessed at 7:20 p.m. and reconvened at 8:09 p.m.

Councilman Dettmers made a motion to go back into open session, seconded by Councilman Ayres, and approved by the following vote:

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AYES: Ayres, Dettmers, Plank, Tweedy, Stalcup (5)
 NAYS: None

OLD BUSINESS:

Councilman Dettmers asked what the status was with the Facebook comments issue.

Kristen Burns stated she has not heard back from Facebook on the issue. She sent another email to Facebook. She said she is manually monitoring it right now.

Councilman Dettmers said he thought there were some comments that Kristen is not able to eliminate.

Kristen Burns explained that if someone follows someone that makes a comment, they will see their comments because they follow that person. She can manually hide as much as she can but there are some things that Facebook will not let her hide. She said until Facebook can give her a resolution, she cannot hide everything.

Councilman Dettmers stated he would like to refer the issue to the City Attorney to consider what needs to be done if we cannot get it resolved through Facebook.

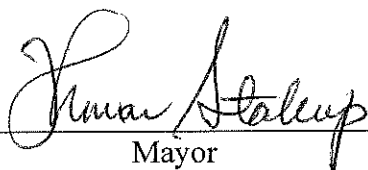
Councilman Dettmers said for the Sewer Separation Project, the bids were rejected because the lowest bid came in 6 million dollars over the estimate. He said he understands there is a possibility that the City may have to go back out for bids. He said he asked Finance Director Chris Sobrino, worst case scenario, what happens if the City cannot get this down lower than 6 million dollars over the original estimate. Chris Sobrino told him the City can handle this, but he is uneasy about where the City is with that. Councilman Dettmers said this is something he has been concerned about for years and he has been mentioning that the City has been taking on an awful lot and the Recreation Center is eating up almost 40-45% of the 1% sales tax and he has been sounding the alarm for years that this could happen. He said he hopes everything works out but if it does not then the City needs to take the steps necessary to make sure that there are not any budget issues. He has always been concerned about the viability of the 1% sales tax because more and more of the sales tax is going to be internet driven and less of it brick and mortar, so he hopes that the City does not find themselves in a bad position by taking all these projects when the City has so much money being dedicated to the Recreation Center. That has been his concern from day one and he hopes that the City does not have a real problem with this, but he will be prepared to take drastic action with the budget next year if the City cannot get this resolved to their satisfaction.

City Manager Steve Palen said the status on the Sewer Separation Project is that the Army Corp of Engineers will enter into negotiations with the two lowest bidders. The third bidder was unreasonable, but they will enter negotiations and if they can get to an affordable amount, they will do that. If they cannot get to an affordable amount, they will re-bid the job.

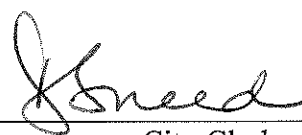
NEW BUSINESS:

Councilman Dettmers stated he has a proposed ordinance that he would like added to the agenda for the next meeting for a vote which would prohibit the City Manager from holding two management positions at the same time. He asked the City Attorney to review this. He said this would require that the City Manager take all steps necessary whenever there is a vacancy, immediate action to fill all vacancies within the department heads and would prohibit the City Manager from serving in two full-time capacities on a permanent basis.

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business to come before the Council, the meeting was adjourned at 8:15 p.m.



 Mayor



 City Clerk