

A regular meeting of the Wood River City Council was called to order by Mayor Tom Stalcup at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, January 21, 2025, 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
Jeremy Plank
Scott Tweedy
Tom Stalcup

ABSENT: Bill Dettmers

and that a quorum was present and in attendance.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Councilman Ayres moved to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of January 6, 2025, as printed, seconded by Councilman Tweedy, and approved by the following vote:

AYES: Ayres, Plank, Tweedy, Stalcup (4)

NAYS: None (0)

APPROVAL OF BILLS:

Councilman Tweedy moved to approve the bills submitted for payment for the period January 1, 2025, to January 15, 2025, as printed, seconded by Councilman Ayres, and approved by the following vote:

AYES: Ayres, Plank, Tweedy, Stalcup (4)

NAYS: None (0)

APPROVAL OF FINANCIAL STATEMENT:

Councilman Plank moved to approve the Financial Statement ending December 31, 2024, as printed, seconded by Councilman Tweedy, and approved by the following vote:

AYES: Ayres, Plank, Tweedy, Stalcup (4)

NAYS: None (0)

CITIZEN/CITY OFFICIAL COMMENTS:

Bill Rogers stated that he is still waiting for an answer from the City regarding his power bill. He stated that the City caused the problem; therefore, the City should pay his bill. He then stated that two weeks ago there was an item on the agenda about charging a fee for vacant buildings and based off how it was worded, he assumes that it is for commercial buildings downtown. He believes this is a money grab, a desperation move by the City and will become harassment. The City would not need to go to such elaborate measures if this committee would provide the oversight that it was supposed to provide. He stated that the City throws money at developers and TIF applicants and if they do not comply, the City does not demand the money back. He then stated that the City has awarded money to people claiming to be nonprofits when they were not and the City has approved applications that were incomplete. The vetting on the applications should be just as demanding and just as extensive as if somebody were walking into their bank to apply for a business loan because in essence they are. He believes that this kind of ordinance shows that the City is grabbing at straws for revenue sources other than sales tax revenue. If that is the case, maybe the City needs a forensic audit to show where the money is going. Surviving on sales tax revenue alone is not going to be sustainable. He stated that downtown does not have anything to draw people in and without foot traffic, no business downtown is going to succeed as it is just not sustainable. He asked since the City has passed the vacant structure ordinance, who is going to enforce it. He also asked if it is going to be enforced upon, not only TIF recipients, but City employees who buy commercial properties. In his opinion, Building Inspector Cody Ellis has an ego, attempts to instigate things, and thinks working for the City gives him the right to do whatever he wants. Also, in his opinion, Police Chief and Building and Zoning Administrator Brad Wells has a conflict of interest by working two full-time positions for the City, abuses his authority, fails to properly supervise his departments, and fails to take disciplinary action on subordinates up to and including termination for misconduct. He believes that Chief Wells and City Manager Steve Palen should have been fired months ago. The measure that the City passed is taxation by citation and it would not be necessary if those in charge simply did their job and monitored and supervised people like developers who got hundreds of

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thousands of dollars from the City to develop a property and make sure they comply with the terms of their agreement.

Mayor Stalcup invited Mr. Rogers to City Hall to discuss his issues and concerns. Mayor Stalcup does not believe that Mr. Rogers has any backing for any of the issues or concerns that he has. Mayor Stalcup stated that he is sick and tired of Mr. Rogers bashing the City's department heads and Mayor Stalcup welcomes the idea of meeting with Mr. Rogers to discuss his issues and concerns.

Mr. Rogers stated that there are certain department heads that are not doing their job.

Mayor Stalcup stated that he would like Mr. Rogers to show him how they are not doing their job and then he will listen to Mr. Rogers more intelligently. Mayor Stalcup then stated that for Mr. Rogers to throw darts at the City's department heads who run the City in a very good manner is very wrong on his part. Mayor Stalcup concluded the discussion by stating that his door is wide open.

Mayor Stalcup read Letters of Commendation from Police Chief Brad Wells to Sergeant Jeremiah Buerke, Officer Geoffrey Fester, Detective Evan Ford, Officer Nathan Hawkins, Officer Nicole Morris, and Detective Sergeant Brent Rombach for their exceptional actions and dedication to duty during the robbery investigation that occurred on January 11, 2025, in the 600 block of Whitelaw Avenue in Wood River, Illinois.

Councilman Plank asked Police Chief Brad Wells to explain the status of the incident.

Police Chief Brad Wells explained that there were three people taken into custody, one adult and two juveniles, and the case was referred to the State's Attorney's Office. He then explained that under the SAFE-T Act, there is a detention hearing, and the Police Department objected to any kind of release of anyone. There was an article in one of the media outlets on Tuesday, January 21, 2025, that indicated that the adult had been released with electronic monitoring and that is a result of the SAFE-T Act.

Councilman Plank stated that the adult who was released can be tracked but asked if the electronic monitoring has limitations.

Chief Wells explained that there is a history of people cutting them off, removing them, and not being compliant with the electronic monitoring. He stated that he is not saying that is the case with this circumstance and from his understanding, the person is confined with the electronic monitoring to their home.

Councilman Plank stated that he was a little alarmed to read that as a result of the SAFE-T Act, that the persons are back on the street.

Chief Wells stated that it is one of the dangers of the SAFE-T Act.

Councilman Plank asked if the Police Department has to rush to get the evidence in for a decision to be made.

Chief Wells replied in the affirmative and explained that if the Police Department takes someone into custody, the time is on the department to get the evidence up to the courts, but the Police Department is resilient, and they make it happen.

Councilman Tweedy asked the exact location of the incident.

Chief Wells explained that it was at the very end of the parking lot in the 600 block of Whitelaw and Eaton.

Councilman Tweedy stated that the newspaper said it happened at the Recreation Center.

Chief Wells stated that the Recreation Center had nothing to do with the incident. The information has been corrected through the media outlet, and they were apologetic about publishing misinformation.

Mayor Stalcup congratulated Mickey Sabolo and his staff at Belk Park Golf Course for the highest revenue for the month of December in 31 years.

Mayor Stalcup congratulated East Alton Wood River High School Wrestler, Drake Champlin, for breaking the school record in wins with 152 career matches this past week. Drake remains undefeated this season and the City wishes him and the rest of the Oiler Wrestling Team good luck with the rest of the season.

Mayor Stalcup announced the blood drive that will be held at the Wood River Police Department on Wednesday, January 29, 2025, from 10 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. in the training room.

Mayor Stalcup announced the launch of the City's new, user-friendly Zoning Map on the City's website replacing the outdated 1993 version. The updated map is designed to enhance accessibility for residents, prospective homeowners, and businesses. This improvement is a significant step toward making our City more appealing for all.

City Manager Steve Palen clarified that TIF payments are reimbursements for expenses already incurred. He then asked Chief Wells to speak about Item #7 on the agenda.

Police Chief and Building and Zoning Administrator Brad Wells began with explaining that 876 State Street was previously owned by the Pentecostal Church who sold the church to another group. The new owners intended to use the property as a church, but the sale occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic and the church was dilapidated. The Pentecostal Church assisted the City in contacting the new owners, who then gave the property over to the City in lieu of the City having to spend funds on condemnation. Chief Wells stated that the City Council approved receiving the property; afterwards, a development group approached the City to purchase the property with the intent to convert the church into multi-family housing. However, zoning only allows the property to be used as single-family housing or as a church under special use. Chief Wells explained further that the church is in a residential district, and if the property sits empty for more than 12 months, it would be classified as a non-conforming lot. Another individual then asked the development group to take possession of the property with the intent to demolish the church, as they considered rehabilitating the building cost prohibitive. Chief Wells stated that if the individual demolished the property, it would save the City funds on demolishing the church itself; in addition, the individual wanted the property as his mother lived next door to the church. The individual took ownership of the property in June 2024 and Chief Wells had been in contact with him regarding the start date of demolition. On October 7, 2024, Chief Wells learned that the property had been sold again. He reached out to the new owner, who stated that demolishing the property was still the plan. Later that month, roofing was being installed on the church. Chief Wells then issued a stop-work order and discovered that the new owner was Sara Nguyen. Chief Wells explained that he met with Ms. Nguyen to explain the zoning of the property and the owner's obligation to contact the City when desiring to change the intended use of the property. According to Chief Wells, Ms. Nguyen desired to convert the church into multi-family housing, which is not permitted. Chief Wells and Building Inspector Cody Ellis were periodically in contact with Ms. Nguyen when late last week, she requested to give the property back to the City.

Councilman Plank clarified that the City sold the property to the development group for \$1.00 and then will receive the property back for \$0.00, questioning if anyone at the City benefited from the transaction.

Chief Wells confirmed that no one benefited from the City re-acquiring the property; in fact, if the developer or subsequent owner had demolished the property, it would save the City funds by demolishing the building themselves. Also, property taxes would have been able to be collected on the property under other owners.

Councilman Plank questioned whether any portion of the \$20,000.00 the property was sold for between other owners was given to the City.

Chief Wells confirmed that the City did not receive any funds.

Councilman Plank stated that the two options were to develop or demolish the property, each option costing money. Councilman Plank continued that the City would have to demolish the church to return the property to the property tax rolls.

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Chief Wells confirmed that the City will have to demolish the church, but the lot is a conforming lot which could have a single-family home placed on it.

Councilman Plank asked for a timeline on demolition if the City re-acquires the property.

Chief Wells responded that demolition could occur quickly; however, he does not anticipate Ms. Nguyen to do anything with the property if the City does not take the property back as her intention was to convert the church into multi-family housing and rehabilitating the property is not financially viable due to the condition of the church. Also, Chief Wells does not think a judge would be very sympathetic to the City on ordinance violations when the judge finds out that the City originally owned the property, and the owner tried to give it back, but the City did not take it.

Councilman Plank asked per the agreement if the person gifting the property to the City would be absolved of any sort of future benefit or liability if the City decides to take the property back, therefore making it possible for someone else to purchase the property in the future.

Chief Wells replied in the affirmative.

ORDINANCE NO. 25-2: AMENDING CITY CODE 90-7, TITLE XV: LAND USAGE, CHAPTER 150: BUILDING REGULATIONS, AMENDING SECTION 150.017 FEES:

Councilman Plank moved to approve an ordinance amending City Code 90-7, Title XV: Land Usage, Chapter 150: Building Regulations, amending Section 150.017 Fees, seconded by Councilman Ayres, and approved by the following vote:

AYES: Ayres, Plank, Tweedy, Stalcup (4)

NAYS: None (0)

ORDINANCE NO. 2919: AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION OF A QUIT CLAIM DEED WITH SARA NGUYEN, AND TO PURCHASE PARCEL ID 19-2-08-21-11-202-059, COMMONLY KNOWN AS 876 STATE STREET, WOOD RIVER, ILLINOIS 62095, FOR \$1.00 FROM SARA NGUYEN, FOR PURPOSES OF ERADICATING BLIGHT, FACILITATING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, AND OTHER PUBLIC PURPOSES:

Councilman Tweedy moved to approve an ordinance authorizing the execution of a Quit Claim Deed with Sara Nguyen, and to purchase Parcel ID 19-2-08-21-11-202-059, commonly known as 876 State Street, Wood River, Illinois 62095, for \$1.00 from Sara Nguyen, for purposes of eradicating blight, facilitating economic development, and other public purposes, seconded by Councilman Plank

Councilman Ayres stated that he had a situation where he owned property locally and he could not use the property for what he originally intended, and the property was a lot more money than \$20,000.00 or \$1.00. He explained that for 20 years he had to find other uses for the property. Finally, someone wanted the property bad enough that he ended up giving the property to a municipality. Councilman Ayres then stated that caveat emptor is everywhere and whoever buys property from a municipality or from an individual must do their due diligence.

The ordinance was approved by the following vote:

AYES: Plank, Tweedy, Stalcup (3)

NAYS: Ayres (1)

RESOLUTION NO. 2105: APPROVING THE 2025-2026 MFT MAINTENANCE PROGRAM IN THE AMOUNT OF \$936,964.54:

Councilman Ayres moved to approve a resolution approving the 2025-2026 MFT Maintenance Program in the amount of \$936,964.54 as submitted by the Director of Public Services, seconded by Councilman Tweedy, and approved by the following vote:

AYES: Ayres, Plank, Tweedy, Stalcup (4)

NAYS: None (0)

RESOLUTION NO. 2106: APPROVING MFT FUNDS TO PAY FOR THE APPLICATION FEE TO EAST WEST GATEWAY COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS FOR THE 2025 SURFACE TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM APPLICATION FOR EDWARDSVILLE ROAD PHASE 3:

Councilman Plank moved to approve a resolution approving MFT funds to pay for the application fee to East West Gateway Council of Governments for the 2025 Surface Transportation Program application for Edwardsville Road Phase 3, as submitted by the Director of Public Services, seconded by Councilman Tweedy, and approved by the following vote:

AYES: Ayres, Plank, Tweedy, Stalcup (4)

NAYS: None (0)

RESOLUTION NO. 2107: EXECUTING A SPONSORSHIP AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE CITY OF WOOD RIVER AND REPUBLIC SERVICES FOR MARKETING IN SUPPORT OF THE WOOD RIVER RECREATION CENTER:

Councilman Plank moved to approve a resolution executing a sponsorship agreement between the City of Wood River and Republic Services for marketing in support of the Wood River Recreation Center, as submitted by the Director of Parks and Recreation, seconded by Councilman Ayres, and approved by the following vote:

AYES: Ayres, Plank, Tweedy, Stalcup (4)

NAYS: None (0)

RESOLUTION NO. 2108: EXECUTING A SPONSORSHIP AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE CITY OF WOOD RIVER AND WERTS WELDING & TANK SERVICE FOR MARKETING IN SUPPORT OF THE WOOD RIVER RECREATION CENTER:

Councilman Tweedy moved to approve a resolution executing a sponsorship agreement between the City of Wood River and Werts Welding & Tank Service for marketing in support of the Wood River Recreation Center, as submitted by the Director of Parks and Recreation, seconded by Councilman Ayres, and approved by the following vote:

AYES: Ayres, Plank, Tweedy, Stalcup (4)

NAYS: None (0)

RESOLUTION NO. 2109: AUTHORIZING THE APPLICATION FOR THE 2025 MADISON COUNTY RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM ENVIRONMENTAL GRANT FOR \$15,000.00:

Councilman Plank moved to approve a resolution authorizing the application for the 2025 Madison County Resource Management Program Environmental Grant for \$15,000.00, as submitted by the Director of Public Services, seconded by Councilman Tweedy, and approved by the following vote:

AYES: Ayres, Plank, Tweedy, Stalcup (4)

NAYS: None (0)

RESOLUTION NO. 2110: ENDORSING THE GREAT RIVERS & ROUTES TOURISM BUREAU AS THE STATE CERTIFIED BUREAU FOR THIS REGION:

Councilman Ayres moved to approve a resolution endorsing the Great Rivers & Routes Tourism Bureau as the State Certified Bureau for this region, as submitted by the City Manager, seconded by Councilman Plank, and approved by the following vote:

AYES: Ayres, Plank, Tweedy, Stalcup (4)

NAYS: None (0)

APPROVED: RECOMMENDATION TO ACCEPT THE BID FROM KAMADULSKI EXCAVATING & GRADING CO., INC. IN THE AMOUNT OF \$20,450.00 FOR THE DEMOLITION OF THE STRUCTURE(S) LOCATED AT PARCEL ID 19-1-08-21-19-401-008, COMMONLY KNOWN AS 210 N. OLD SAINT LOUIS ROAD:

Councilman Ayres moved to approve a recommendation to accept the bid from Kamadulski Excavating & Grading Co., Inc. in the amount of \$20,450.00 for the demolition of the structure(s) located at Parcel ID 19-1-08-21-19-401-008, commonly known as 210 N. Old Saint Louis Road, as submitted by the Director of Public Services, seconded by Councilman Plank, and approved by the following vote:

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AYES: Ayres, Plank, Tweedy, Stalcup (4)
 NAYS: None (0)

APPROVED: RECOMMENDATION TO ACCEPT THE BID FROM SEI CONTRACTING, INC. IN THE AMOUNT OF \$20,920.00 FOR THE DEMOLITION OF THE STRUCTURE(S) LOCATED AT PARCEL ID 19-2-08-27-08-202-025, COMMONLY KNOWN AS 901 E. LORENA:

Councilman Tweedy moved to approve a recommendation to accept the bid from SEI Contracting, Inc. in the amount of \$20,920.00 for the demolition of the structure(s) located at Parcel ID 19-2-08-27-08-202-025, commonly known as 901 E. Lorena, as submitted by the Director of Public Services, seconded by Councilman Plank, and approved by the following vote:

AYES: Ayres, Plank, Tweedy, Stalcup (4)
 NAYS: None (0)

APPROVED: RECOMMENDATION TO ACCEPT THE BID FROM SEI CONTRACTING, INC. IN THE AMOUNT OF \$16,270.00 FOR THE DEMOLITION OF THE STRUCTURE(S) LOCATED AT PARCEL ID 19-2-08-28-11-202-024, COMMONLY KNOWN AS 434 KORRECK:

Councilman Plank moved to approve a recommendation to accept the bid from SEI Contracting, Inc. in the amount of \$16,270.00 for the demolition of the structure(s) located at Parcel ID 19-2-08-28-11-202-024, commonly known as 434 Korreck, as submitted by the Director of Public Services, seconded by Councilman Ayres, and approved by the following vote:

AYES: Ayres, Plank, Tweedy, Stalcup (4)
 NAYS: None (0)

CLOSED SESSION:

Councilman Tweedy moved for approval of a recess to hold an executive closed session to discuss matters pertaining to the setting of a price for sale or lease of property owned by the public body (5ILCS 120/2 (c)(6)), seconded by Councilman Ayres, and approved by the following vote:

AYES: Ayres, Plank, Tweedy, Stalcup (4)
 NAYS: None (0)

The Council moved across the hall to hold the executive closed session.

The Council recessed at 7:29 p.m. and reconvened at 7:38 p.m.

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

AYES: Ayres, Plank, Tweedy, Stalcup (4)
 NAYS: None (0)

RESOLUTION NO. 2111: REJECTING ALL BIDS FOR PURCHASE OF PARCEL ID 19-2-08-27-06-102-031, COMMONLY KNOWN AS 401 E. ACTON, WOOD RIVER, ILLINOIS 62095:

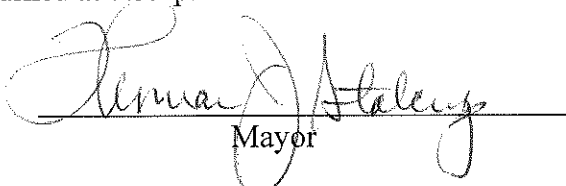
Councilman Tweedy moved to approve a resolution rejecting all bids for purchase of Parcel ID 19-2-08-27-06-102-031, commonly known as 401 E. Acton, Wood River, Illinois 62095, seconded by Councilman Ayres, and approved by the following vote:

AYES: Ayres, Plank, Tweedy, Stalcup (4)
 NAYS: None (0)

OLD BUSINESS: NONE

NEW BUSINESS: NONE

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business to come before the Council, the meeting adjourned at 7:39 p.m.


 Mayor


 City Clerk