

PUBLIC HEARING
ADA TRANSITION PLAN

Mayor Tom Stalcup called a Public Hearing to order at 7:00 p.m. on Tuesday, February 18, 2025, in the Council Chambers at City Hall, 111 N. Wood River Avenue, with the recital of the Pledge of Allegiance to receive citizen comments on the City's ADA Transition Plan.

Director of Public Services Michael Velloff read the Introduction and Public Meeting sections from the ADA Transition Plan and presented updates as they pertain to the plan. A copy of the plan is on file in the City Clerk's office.

Bill Rogers raised concerns about the City's compliance with ADA regulations, citing delays despite the act being over 30 years old. He claimed that the City's justification of "lack of funds" was inconsistent with other recent expenditures and urged immediate compliance.

There being no further comments, the Public Hearing adjourned at 7:07 p.m.

AGENDA

A regular meeting of the Wood River City Council was called to order by Mayor Tom Stalcup at 7:07 p.m. on Tuesday, February 18, 2025. 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 Dettmers moved to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of February 3, 2025, as printed, seconded by Councilman Tweedy, and approved by the following vote:

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

APPROVAL OF BILLS:

Councilman Ayres moved to approve the bills submitted for payment for the period January 30, 2025, to February 12, 2025, as printed, seconded by Councilman Dettmers, and approved by the following vote:

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

APPROVAL OF FINANCIAL STATEMENT:

Councilman Tweedy moved to approve the Financial Statement ending January 31, 2025, as printed, seconded by Councilman Ayres, and approved by the following vote:

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

PRESENTATIONS:

Mayor Stalcup and Fire Chief Wade Stahlhut presented the 2024 Firefighter of the Year Award to Engineer/Paramedic Tyler Staicoff and Paid on Call Firefighter Jamie Wells. Chief Stahlhut commended both recipients for their dedication, bravery, and service to the community.

CITIZEN/CITY OFFICIAL COMMENTS:

Bill Rogers raised concerns regarding the City's waiver of bidding for the sale of City equipment. He emphasized the importance of obtaining multiple bids for transparency and fiscal responsibility, especially for high-value items. He also alleged mistreatment by City officials and called for the immediate termination of Police Chief Brad Wells for misconduct.

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City Manager Steve Palen provided an update on Tax Increment Financing (TIF), explaining its role in economic development. He explained that tax increment financing is a method of raising funds to pay for redevelopment from the increase in property value caused by that redevelopment and is expressly authorized under the Tax Increment Allocation Redevelopment Act. Tax increment financing captures the increase in property tax resulting from the improvements and channels the increased tax back into the projects. Tax increment financing is one of the most powerful economic development tools that municipalities have at their disposal. Tax increment financing was created to allow municipalities to eradicate blighted areas by encouraging private investment in redevelopment projects. A municipality initiates a TIF project when it identifies a vacant or deteriorated site which will, if it is developed, enhance the tax base and produce new tax revenue. By definition, tax increment financing is used when the area would otherwise not be improved solely with private funds. Creating jobs and sales tax is a great addition to a TIF project but is not a requirement. The purpose of the TIF Act is to eliminate blighted areas, rehabilitate old buildings, install needed infrastructure, and other TIF eligible projects, all of which are specifically stated in the TIF Act. What a developer can be paid for with TIF incentives is also strictly controlled by the TIF Act. These are spelled out in the statute and include cost of studies, plans and professional services for architectural, engineering, legal, marketing and other services, costs of marketing sites to prospective businesses, developers and investors, costs of land acquisitions, site preparation, site improvements, rehabilitation or demolition of existing buildings, construction of public infrastructure, costs of financing, costs of job training and retraining projects, certain interest costs incurred by a redeveloper, and costs for capital improvements necessary and directly resulting from the redevelopment project. The City of Wood River has a TIF Committee made up of City employees who vet requests from developers. The TIF Committee is not a public body and not subject to the Open Meetings Act. There are no actual votes or minutes. The TIF Committee considers proposals for purposes of determining what will be presented to the City Council for consideration. The TIF Committee has no actual vote on what is approved. Only the City Council can approve a request. City Manager Steve Palen noted that mistakes have occurred with some TIF agreements and how they have been administered; however, none of the mistakes made were material to the substance of the transaction and every TIF dollar paid out on a project has resulted in a redeveloped building. Antiquated and overly cumbersome agreements create burdensome red tape for applicants and City staff. Moving forward all agreements will undergo additional legal review.

To illustrate the success of TIF, the revenues generated since its inception are \$44,000.00 in fiscal year 2020, \$76,000.00 in fiscal year 2021, \$150,000.00 in fiscal year 2022, \$189,000.00 in fiscal year 2023, \$284,000.00 in fiscal year 2024, and \$423,000.00 to be received in fiscal year 2025. These increased revenues from these TIF successes allow the City to invest even more in the TIF area. City Manager Steve Palen then highlighted several businesses that have benefited from TIF, including Cleary Shoes, Brigman Insurance, The Cheesecake Lady, Eagles, Budget Signs, Downtown Delights, Atomic Pinball, Riverbend Family Ministries, Sweet Tooth, Burger Bar, Full Deck Print & Design, Arron DeWerff, C&B Boiled Bagels, Green Tree, Main Street Tattoo, and Tomerlin Accounting.

City Manager Steve Palen expressed his gratitude to the Councilmembers for their role in the City's growth and acknowledged the Department Heads for their contributions in making it possible. He gave special thanks to Director of Finance Karen Weber, whose efforts are instrumental in bringing everything together.

Councilman Dettmers congratulated Mike Young for his achievements at the Illinois Indoor Track and Field Championship, where he secured multiple first-place finishes and a second-place finish.

Councilman Tweedy stated that it is disheartening to see the actions of a City councilmember overshadow the positive momentum in efforts to improve the Wood River community. Constructive criticism and accountability are essential in governance but when the sole focus becomes highlighting mistakes rather than fostering solutions it creates a toxic environment that damages both the City's image and the morale of dedicated City employees who work hard every day to serve the residents. The negativity does not just affect City staff, it sends harmful messages to potential investors, developers, and community partners who are essential to revitalizing the Downtown Business District and driving progress. The City of Wood River should be a place where collaboration, creativity, and optimism thrive, instead the unnecessary focus on fault finding deters those who could bring transformative change and prosperity to the community. Councilman Tweedy urges all members of the City Council to embrace the spirit of cooperation and solution driven leadership to build a city that everyone can take pride in.

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Councilman Tweedy concluded by stating that together the City can achieve so much more when everyone is focused on progress rather than division.

ORDINANCE NO. 25-3: AMENDING CITY CODE 90-7, TITLE IX: GENERAL REGULATIONS, CHAPTER 95: PARKS AND RECREATION, AMENDING SECTION 95.16 BELK PARK GOLF COURSE:

Councilman Tweedy moved to approve an ordinance amending City Code 90-7, Title IX: General Regulations, Chapter 95: Parks and Recreation, amending Section 95.16 Belk Park Golf Course, seconded by Councilman Plank, and approved by the following vote:

AYES: Ayres, Dettmers, Plank, Tweedy, Stalcup (5)

NAYS: None (0)

ORDINANCE NO. 2920: DECLARING PERSONAL PROPERTY OF THE CITY OF WOOD RIVER SURPLUS AND AUTHORIZING ITS SALE, TRADE IN, AND/OR DISPOSAL, SPECIFICALLY A 2008 CRIMSON SPARTAN RESCUE PUMPER:

Councilman Ayres moved to approve an ordinance declaring personal property of the City of Wood River surplus and authorizing its sale, trade in, and/or disposal, specifically a 2008 Crimson Spartan Rescue Pumper, as submitted by the Fire Chief, seconded by Councilman Plank, and approved by the following vote:

AYES: Ayres, Dettmers, Plank, Tweedy, Stalcup (5)

NAYS: None (0)

RESOLUTION NO. 2112: WAIVING BIDS AND APPROVING AND AUTHORIZING THE EXECUTION OF AN AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE CITY OF WOOD RIVER AND BRINDLEE MOUNTAIN FIRE APPARATUS, LLC FOR SERVICES RELATED TO THE SALE OF THE CITY OF WOOD RIVER'S 2008 CRIMSON SPARTAN RESCUE PUMPER:

Councilman Dettmers moved to approve a resolution waiving bids and approving and authorizing the execution of an agreement between the City of Wood River and Brindlee Mountain Fire Apparatus, LLC for services related to the sale of the City of Wood River's 2008 Crimson Spartan Rescue Pumper, as submitted by the Fire Chief, seconded by Councilman Ayres

Fire Chief Wade Stahlhut explained that Brindlee Mountain Fire Apparatus, LLC is a nationally recognized broker for used fire apparatus. When the Fire Department sought the right partner to handle the sale of their 2008 Crimson Spartan Rescue Pumper, they turned to Brindlee Mountain's sister company, Fire Trucks Unlimited. With a broad national reach and a strong track record of success, Fire Trucks Unlimited was the ideal choice to manage the process effectively.

Mayor Stalcup inquired about the total mileage on the truck.

Chief Stahlhut stated that while the truck has just under 70,000 miles, the engine hours are the more critical factor due to extensive idle time, as previously discussed. Depending on the formula used, the idle time equates to approximately 280,000 to 400,000 miles of wear on the engine.

Mayor Stalcup stated that, to his understanding, this company specializes in refurbishing units for potential use by smaller fire departments.

Chief Stahlhut replied in the affirmative.

The resolution was approved by the following vote:

AYES: Ayres, Dettmers, Plank, Tweedy, Stalcup (5)

NAYS: None (0)

RESOLUTION NO. 2113: EXECUTING A SPONSORSHIP AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE CITY OF WOOD RIVER AND SHEPPARD MORGAN & SCHWAAB, INC. 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 Sheppard Morgan & Schwaab, Inc. 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:

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

RESOLUTION NO. 2114: EXECUTING A GOLF COURSE AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE CITY OF WOOD RIVER AND GIMME GOLF CLUB, LLC:

Councilman Plank moved to approve a resolution executing a golf course agreement between the City of Wood River and Gimme Golf Club, LLC, as submitted by the Director of Parks and Recreation, seconded by Councilman Tweedy

Councilman Ayres asked Director of Parks and Recreation, Pat Minogue, if this was the City's second year under the agreement and inquired about the results from the first year. Director Minogue responded that while he did not have the exact figures on hand, the primary change in this year's agreement is an increase in the per-round rate from \$10.00 last year to \$20.00 this year. This adjustment will bring Belk Park Golf Course in line with Spencer T. Olin Golf Course and other comparable courses. Additionally, the change is expected to boost the number of rounds played during off-peak hours.

During the week, members can golf at any time, while on weekends, tee times for members begin after 12:00 p.m. When asked by Councilman Ayres if the agreement was profitable, Director Minogue confirmed that it was.

Director Minogue further explained that members pay a membership fee through Gimme Golf, LLC, which grants access to ten different courses with per-round fees ranging from \$10.00 to \$40.00.

The resolution was approved by the following vote:

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

SOLICIT – EAWR HIGH SCHOOL – GIRLS SOCCER – APPROVED:

Councilman Ayres moved to approve a request from EAWR High School – Girls Soccer to solicit at the intersection of Wood River Avenue & Penning Avenue on Saturday, April 5, 2025, from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm in accordance with City Policy, seconded by Councilman Tweedy, and approved by the following vote:

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

SOLICIT – EAWR HIGH SCHOOL – FOOTBALL – APPROVED:

Councilman Dettmers moved to approve a request from EAWR High School – Football to solicit at the intersection of Wood River Avenue & Penning Avenue on Saturday, April 26, 2025, from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm in accordance with City Policy, seconded by Councilman Ayres, and approved by the following vote:

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

SOLICIT – EAWR HIGH SCHOOL – CHEERLEADERS – APPROVED:

Councilman Plank moved to approve a request from EAWR High School – Cheerleaders to solicit at the intersection of Wood River Avenue and Penning Avenue on Saturday, May 3, 2025, from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. in accordance with City Policy, seconded by Councilman Tweedy, and approved by the following vote:

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

SOLICIT – VFW POST 2859 – APPROVED:

Councilman Ayres moved to approve a request from VFW Post 2859 to solicit at the intersection of Wood River Avenue and Penning Avenue on Saturday, May 10, 2025, from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm in accordance with City Policy, seconded by Councilman Dettmers, and approved by the following vote:

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

SOLICIT – EAWR HIGH SCHOOL – GIRLS BASKETBALL – APPROVED:

Councilman Tweedy moved to approve a request from EAWR High School – Girls Basketball to solicit at the intersection of Wood River Avenue & Penning Avenue on Saturday, June 7, 2025, from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm in accordance with City Policy, seconded by Councilman Ayres, and approved by the following vote:

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

SOLICIT – EAWR HIGH SCHOOL – BOYS BASKETBALL – APPROVED:

Councilman Plank moved to approve a request from EAWR High School – Boys Basketball to solicit at the intersection of Wood River Avenue & Penning Avenue on Saturday, June 14, 2025, from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm in accordance with City Policy, seconded by Councilman Ayres, and approved by the following vote:

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

SOLICIT – WOOD RIVER PROFESSIONAL FIREFIGHTERS LOCAL 2371:

Councilman Plank moved to approve a request from Wood River Professional Firefighters Local 2371 to solicit at the intersection of Wood River Avenue and Penning Avenue on Saturday, August 2, 2025, from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. in accordance with City Policy, seconded by Councilman Tweedy, and approved by the following vote:

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

SOLICIT – EAWR HIGH SCHOOL – SOFTBALL – APPROVED:

Councilman Ayres moved to approve a request from EAWR High School – Softball to solicit at the intersection of Wood River Avenue & Penning Avenue on Saturday, September 6, 2025, from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm in accordance with City Policy, seconded by Councilman Dettmers, and approved by the following vote:

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

SOLICIT – WOOD RIVER KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS – APPROVED:

Councilman Tweedy moved to approve a request from Wood River Knights of Columbus to solicit at the intersection of Wood River Avenue and Penning Avenue on Saturday, September 20, 2025, from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm in accordance with City Policy, seconded by Councilman Dettmers, and approved by the following vote:

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

SOLICIT – LEWIS & CLARK JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL - WRESTLING – APPROVED:

Councilman Plank moved to approve a request from Lewis & Clark Junior High School - Wrestling to solicit at the intersection of Wood River Avenue & Penning Avenue on Saturday, October 4, 2025, from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm in accordance with City Policy, seconded by Councilman Tweedy, and approved by the following vote:

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

OLD BUSINESS: NONE

NEW BUSINESS:

Councilman Dettmers put forth a motion to hold a special meeting on Monday, February 24, 2024, for the purpose of initiating an independent investigation and forensic audit of the City of Wood River, seconded by Councilman Ayres.

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City Attorney Kathryn Warren clarified that although the motion could not be voted on at tonight's meeting and would be voted on at the following City Council meeting, discussion would be allowed.

Councilman Dettmers referenced city ordinance, stating three council members could request a special meeting with 48 hours advance notice.

City Clerk Sneed read aloud the relevant ordinance in Section 32.15 (B).

Councilman Dettmers raised a point of order, questioning why a motion could not be put forth to hold a meeting.

City Attorney Kathryn Warren explained that the request must be made in writing by two Council members, per ordinance.

Councilman Dettmers stated he would like to have a discussion under New Business and requested for the members of the press to come forward to collect documentation.

Councilman Dettmers explained that the discussion was regarding four items: unauthorized distributions, failure to enforce ordinances, contracts, and policies, unauthorized disclosure of confidential information, and public document storage and retrieval. He claimed the City has made at least one, if not more, unauthorized TIF payments; in some cases, he alleges that TIF payments were used by entities to pay their outstanding property tax bills which were required to be paid prior to disbursement. In addition, in September 2024, ordinance 2908 was approved to amend the agreement from July 2023 regarding 1 E. Ferguson. Councilman Dettmers stated the purpose of the change was to amend the payment date from December 1 upon occupancy, to the occupancy permit being issued. Councilman Dettmers recalled that he did not vote in the affirmative on the ordinance, as he knew the provisions of the TIF agreement had not yet been fulfilled. He stated he had sent the TIF Committee an email detailing his concerns about amending the contract, specifying untimeliness with receiving permits and completing construction. Councilman Dettmers claimed that on September 6, 2024, sections 2.1A and 2 were amended without council permission, citing changes in dates, required construction costs, and occupancy requirements. He alleged that \$40,00.00 was distributed in violation of the agreement at the end of September, while occupancy was not obtained until the last couple of weeks.

Councilman Plank asked Councilman Dettmers if he plans to discuss these issues at tonight's meeting and at the Special Meeting.

Councilman Dettmers replied in the affirmative.

Discussion ensued regarding failure to enforce ordinances, contracts, and policies, with a particular focus on 87 E. Ferguson. Councilman Dettmers raised concerns about the failure to enforce ordinances related to Tax Increment Financing (TIF) agreements, stating that they require proper scrutiny. As he was outlining these concerns, Mayor Stalcup interjected to inquire if the subject pertained to the Special Meeting that Councilman Dettmers is requesting. Councilman Dettmers clarified that this was for discussion under new business. Mayor Stalcup then questioned whether this is the same topic planned for the Special Meeting. Councilman Dettmers replied that more information should be made available, but Mayor Stalcup insisted it was time to move forward with the agenda and return to the matter later. When Councilman Dettmers questioned if he was ruling out of order, Mayor Stalcup affirmed that it appeared so. City Attorney Kathryn Warren stated that if a Special Meeting is being held, the topic can be discussed in general terms at tonight's meeting.

Councilman Dettmers continued by stating that violations had occurred concerning 87 E. Ferguson. He alleged that at the September 16, 2024, Council Meeting, false and misleading statements were made regarding TIF agreements, particularly claims that ordinances did not require taxes to be paid in advance, which he argued was in direct conflict with what the ordinance states. As he was providing details, Mayor Stalcup called a point of order, stating that Councilman Dettmers had already outlined the concerns in a written format that the Council could review on their own. Mayor Stalcup then suggested moving forward to determine whether a Special Meeting would be scheduled for February 24, 2025. City Attorney Kathryn Warren explained that such a meeting could not be held unless the Mayor called for it or two Council members submitted a request. Mayor Stalcup stated that he was not calling for a Special Meeting and advised Councilman Dettmers to submit a written notice if he wished to proceed.

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Following this, the discussion shifted toward TIF agreements and legal fees. Councilman Plank requested an overview of the legal fees associated with TIF agreements and sought clarification on whom these fees were tied to. He proposed a reevaluation of TIF agreements to reduce unnecessary burdens on small businesses and applicants, arguing that many extraneous requirements had been added over time. He specifically criticized the requirement for upfront real estate tax payments, noting that the City would receive its tax revenue regardless of when payments were made.

Councilman Dettmers questioned whether the City should provide funds to applicants without restrictions. Councilman Plank clarified that his concern was about removing unnecessary restrictions rather than eliminating oversight altogether. He emphasized that the City should focus on reimbursing capital expenditures without adding excessive bureaucratic requirements.

During the exchange, Councilman Plank formally introduced a motion to reevaluate the TIF agreements and remove unnecessary restrictions. The motion was seconded by Councilman Tweedy. Councilman Tweedy then asked if the motion was meant to be added to the next agenda.

City Manager Steve Palen stated that the matter will be reviewed by legal counsel, who will be handling future TIF agreements, and that each Councilmember's input will be considered moving forward.

Mayor Stalcup congratulated Drake Champlin, who qualified for the state finals in wrestling at East Alton Wood River High School after winning the 215-pound sectional competition. Mayor Stalcup extended the City's best wishes to Champlin for the finals.

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business to come before the Council, the meeting adjourned at 7:55 p.m.



Mayor



City Clerk