

PUBLIC HEARING
PROPOSED BUDGET

Mayor Tom Stalcup called a Public Hearing to order at 7:00 p.m. on Monday, March 16, 2026, 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 Manager's Proposed Budget for Fiscal Year 2026-2027, as required by City Code and State Statutes. Copies of the proposed budget have been on file in the City Clerk's Office and at the Wood River Public Library.

City Manager Steve Palen gave highlights for the Proposed Budget for Fiscal Year 2026-2027. Total expenses proposed for fiscal year 2026-2027 are \$31,037,676, which represents a 24 percent increase from fiscal year 2025-2026. The increase is primarily attributable to additional capital projects planned for the upcoming fiscal year. Operating expenses total approximately \$24,401,653 and capital expenses total approximately \$6,636,023. Of these expenses, \$10,727,547 represents General Fund operating expenses. The General Fund has a projected ending reserve of \$5,020,505, which is approximately six months of operating expenses. City policy is to maintain at least a three-month operating reserve, so this level continues to provide a stable financial position for the City. This budget is balanced through the use of revenues and reserves to offset expenditures. The City also continues its longstanding practice of preparing the budget conservatively by estimating revenues cautiously and budgeting expenses slightly higher than expected. Historically, this approach has resulted in actual revenues exceeding projections and expenses coming in under budget, allowing the City to often end the fiscal year in a stronger financial position than originally projected.

Councilman Dettmers stated that he had an opportunity to meet with City Manager Steve Palen and Director of Finance Karen Weber, and he thanked them for their time and explanation of his questions regarding the budget. In the past, he has requested that certain attention be made to revenues and expenses to be more accurately reflected in the budget and stated that they have done that with this budget. He then stated that he always encourages all department heads to continue to carefully consider the specific categories for the proper allocations for revenues and expenses so that they can be fairly evaluated to see where the needs are for the City. Councilman Dettmers thanked City Manager Steve Palen and Director of Finance Karen Weber again for their time and attention to the matter.

There being no further comments, the Public Hearing adjourned at 7:03 p.m.

PUBLIC HEARING
ILLINOIS ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY (IEPA)
STATE REVOLVING FUND LOAN PROGRAM

Mayor Tom Stalcup called a Public Hearing to order at 7:03 p.m. The purpose of this Public Hearing is to receive citizen comments on the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) State Revolving Loan Program for the State Street Sewer Separation Project, as required by the IEPA. The Facilities Plan for this project will be on file in the City Clerk's Office for a period of 10 days to receive written public comments.

City Manager Steve Palen provided an overview, explaining that this is a continuation of the State Street Sewer Separation Project. He explained that the IEPA requires the City to renew its determination every five years for the project. The City's original determination is running out this year, so it is a renewal of that determination so the City can apply for the Revolving Loan.

There being no further comments, the Public Hearing adjourned at 7:05 p.m.

AGENDA

A regular meeting of the Wood River City Council was called to order by Mayor Tom Stalcup at 7:05 p.m. on Monday, March 16, 2026. The Clerk called the roll and reported that the following members were:

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

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and that a quorum was present and in attendance.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Councilman Plank moved to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of March 2, 2026, 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 Ayres moved to approve the bills submitted for payment for the period February 26, 2026, to March 11, 2026, as printed, seconded by Councilman Tweedy, and approved by the following vote:

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

NAYS: None (0)

APPROVAL OF FINANCIAL STATEMENT:

Councilman Dettmers moved to approve the Financial Statement ending February 28, 2026, as printed, seconded by Councilman Ayres, and approved by the following vote:

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

NAYS: None (0)

CITIZEN/OFFICIAL COMMENTS:

Charles Sinks addressed the Council regarding his interest in opening a cigar shop and lounge in the City of Wood River. He stated that he has prior experience managing a similar business in a nearby community for approximately six years and expressed confidence in his ability to operate a successful establishment. He explained that his proposed business would focus exclusively on premium tobacco products and related accessories and would not include the sale of items such as CBD products, vaping devices, cigarettes, or glass pipes. Mr. Sinks noted that he has encountered a potential obstacle related to the City's indoor smoking ordinance but indicated that state law provides an exemption for businesses where tobacco sales exceed a specified threshold, which he believes would apply to his business. He further stated that he has obtained the necessary licenses and registrations from the state to proceed. Mr. Sinks expressed a preference for locating the business in Wood River due to his familiarity with and connection to the community and identified a specific vacant property he is considering for redevelopment. He concluded by noting that he had provided a copy of his business proposal for the Council's review.

Councilman Dettmers asked Mr. Sinks if he is having any issues with moving his business to the City and asked if there are any changes that need to be considered to accommodate him.

Mr. Sinks explained that he has not successfully gone through the process yet, citing some confusion and back-and-forth communication regarding requirements. He explained that he was informed he would need to submit his business proposal, which he provided, and pay a \$250 fee to appear before the Council for approval, likely related to obtaining a special permit due to the indoor smoking ordinance. Mr. Sinks expressed concern about the financial risk of paying the fee without any indication of whether his request would be approved, noting the limited resources available to him as a small business owner. He further indicated that communication has been somewhat delayed, though he acknowledged that City employees have been busy and did not assign blame. Mr. Sinks emphasized the importance of timing for his business, stating that the second and third quarters are the most profitable periods and that delays could impact his success. He added that he is prepared to move forward quickly, with inventory and furnishings arriving soon, and estimated that he could be operational by mid-April if approval were granted in a timely manner.

Councilman Dettmers asked Mr. Sinks if he has submitted any occupancy permit requests.

Mr. Sinks replied in the negative, stating he has been waiting for answers regarding the special meeting and the special permits.

City Manager Steve Palen explained that this type of business requires a special use permit and must go through the Plan Commission.

Councilman Dettmers inquired about the business's hours of operation.

Mr. Sinks stated that the initial hours of operation will be 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Tuesday through Saturday, with the possibility of expanding to include Sunday and Monday. He noted that, based on prior experience at a previous location on Airline Drive, customer traffic significantly decreased after 5:00 p.m., with little walk-in business observed beyond that time. He added that the hours may be adjusted in the future if customer demand indicates a need for extended operating times, and he expressed a willingness to accommodate such changes.

Councilman Dettmers stated that, having been a business owner himself, he started with nothing and built his business from the ground up. He expressed that he understands the challenges involved, noting that operating a business with inventory presents additional difficulties compared to the service-based business he started. He concluded by wishing Mr. Sinks the very best of luck.

Jeff Weishaupt addressed the Council regarding concerns over a denied Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request submitted to the Wood River Police Department. He explained that he had previously submitted a similar request in another municipality seeking information related to license plate reader cameras, including their locations, model numbers, installation dates, and information related to upkeep and maintenance of the license plate readers. After submitting a comparable request to the Wood River Police Department and receiving a denial, he stated that he filed a revised request seeking only documentation of license plate readers and cameras within the City limits of Wood River, which was also denied. Mr. Weishaupt expressed his belief that he is entitled to this information and noted that he attempted to resolve the matter by contacting the Wood River Police Department's FOIA Officer but has not yet received a response. He indicated his understanding that such cameras may exist within the City and he believes he is entitled to the information. Mr. Weishaupt informed the Council of his intent to continue pursuing the matter, including the possibility of contacting the Illinois Attorney General's Office, and stated that he plans to follow up with the Police Department to discuss the issue further.

City Attorney Mike McGinley stated that the City will reach out to Mr. Weishaupt this week.

Jeff Cooper expressed concerns regarding the proposed short-term rental ordinance, particularly its potential application in R-1 residential zoning districts. He stated that the City has historically worked to reduce multiple dwellings on single properties in such areas and questioned whether allowing short-term rentals could reverse that effort by enabling properties to be divided into multiple units for short-term rental purposes. He voiced concern about the potential impact on neighborhood stability, noting that frequent turnover of occupants could disrupt the character of residential areas. While Mr. Cooper indicated support for short-term rentals in the downtown area, he opposes their presence in single-family residential neighborhoods. He referenced a prior variance case involving a secondary dwelling unit and expressed concern that allowing similar arrangements more broadly could conflict with the City's previous zoning objectives.

City Manager Steve Palen clarified that the ordinance being proposed on tonight's agenda is strictly for the Downtown Business District.

ORDINANCE NO. 26-11: AMENDING CITY CODE 90-7, TITLE XV: LAND USAGE, CHAPTER 155: ZONING CODE, SECTION 155.01 ADOPTION BY REFERENCE, TO INCLUDE CHANGES TO THE CITY OF WOOD RIVER'S ZONING CODE 96-14, ARTICLE 2, DEFINITIONS, AMENDING SECTION 2-2 SELECTED DEFINITIONS:

Councilman Plank moved to approve an ordinance amending City Code 90-7, Title XV: Land Usage, Chapter 155: Zoning Code, Section 155.01 Adoption by Reference, to include changes to the City of Wood River's Zoning Code 96-14, Article 2, Definitions, amending Section 2-2 Selected Definitions, seconded by Councilman Tweedy

Councilman Dettmers stated that he had the opportunity to discuss items six, seven, and eight with City Manager Steve Palen. He briefly reiterated that conversation, noting that he sought clarification regarding the intent. He indicated his understanding that the proposal involves allowing certain buildings in the downtown area to be used for short-term rentals, and he requested clarification on the specific duration being considered for those rentals.

City Manager Steve Palen explained that the proposed timeframe for short-term rentals is 30 days. He noted that extensions beyond this period may be granted with approval, such as in situations where an individual may need housing for a longer duration, for example, six weeks for refinery

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shutdowns. He added that such extensions could be approved by the Building and Zoning Administrator.

Councilman Dettmers stated that his initial concern was whether the proposal would allow events and entertainment uses within the affected properties. He noted that he was informed this was not the intent, and that the proposal is strictly limited to residential-type occupancy rather than event or entertainment purposes.

Councilman Dettmers stated that, following his prior discussion, he had an additional question regarding whether the proposed short-term rental use would be subject to restrictions similar to those imposed on hotels. He also inquired about the type of licensing requirements that would apply to such properties.

City Manager Steve Palen stated that properties would be required to obtain a special use permit same as what is required for upstairs dwelling. He explained that these short-term rentals would also be subject to the same hotel and motel tax currently in place, noting that the taxation would be essentially identical to what is charged for those establishments.

Discussion ensued regarding whether obtaining a special use permit would effectively serve as a licensing process, including inspections like those required for hotels and motels, and what differences, if any, exist between the two. It was explained that while there may not be significant technical differences, short-term rentals are generally intended to accommodate longer stays than typical hotel visits, often filling a gap between nightly hotel stays and month-to-month apartment rentals. The discussion highlighted that these rentals are designed to provide flexible, extended-stay options, without the need to construct new hotel facilities, while still allowing property owners to establish their own rules within regulatory limits.

Further discussion addressed the duration and regulation of stays, with Councilman Dettmers expressing concern about allowing one-night rentals and suggesting a preference for a minimum stay of multiple days. It was noted that, as currently written, the ordinance only limits rentals to a maximum of 30 days, though a minimum stay requirement could be added if desired. Additional clarification was provided regarding licensing and oversight, indicating that while landlords are not required to obtain new occupancy permits for each tenant turnover, the special use permit is required initially and remains with the property owner without renewal, unless ownership changes.

The ordinance was approved by the following vote:

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

NAYS: None (0)

ORDINANCE NO. 26-13: AMENDING CITY CODE 90-7, TITLE XV: LAND USAGE, CHAPTER 155: ZONING CODE, SECTION 155.01 ADOPTION BY REFERENCE, TO INCLUDE CHANGES TO THE CITY OF WOOD RIVER'S ZONING CODE 96-14, ARTICLE 4, REGULATIONS FOR SPECIFIC DISTRICTS, AMENDING SECTIONS 4-9.3 – SPECIAL USES AND 4-9.4 - RESTRICTIONS:

Councilman Dettmers moved to approve an ordinance amending City Code 90-7, Title XV: Land Usage, Chapter 155: Zoning Code, Section 155.01 Adoption by Reference, to include changes to the City of Wood River's Zoning Code 96-14, Article 4, Regulations for Specific Districts, amending Sections 4-9.3 – Special Uses and 4-9.4 - Restrictions, seconded by Councilman Tweedy, and approved by the following vote:

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

NAYS: None (0)

ORDINANCE NO. 26-12: AMENDING CITY CODE 90-7, TITLE XV: LAND USAGE, CHAPTER 155: ZONING CODE, SECTION 155.01 ADOPTION BY REFERENCE, TO INCLUDE CHANGES TO THE CITY OF WOOD RIVER'S ZONING CODE 96-14, ARTICLE 7, SUPPLEMENTARY USE RESTRICTIONS, ADDING SECTION 7-26 SHORT-TERM RENTALS:

Councilman Ayres moved to approve an ordinance amending City Code 90-7, Title XV: Land Usage, Chapter 155: Zoning Code, Section 155.01 Adoption by Reference, to include changes to the City of Wood River's Zoning Code 96-14, Article 7, Supplementary Use Restrictions, adding Section 7-26 Short-Term Rentals, seconded by Councilman Dettmers, and approved by the following vote:

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APPROVED: REQUEST TO ACCEPT THE BID FROM KAMEX, INC.:

Councilman Dettmers moved to approve a request to accept the bid from Kamex, Inc., in the amount of \$612,402.75 for the Edwardsville Road Water Line Improvements Phase 4 Project, as submitted by the Director of Public Services, seconded by Councilman Plank, and approved by the following vote:

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

NAYS: None (0)

SOLICIT – EAWR HIGH SCHOOL – SOFTBALL – APPROVED:

Councilman Tweedy moved to approve a request from EAWR High School – Softball to solicit at the intersection of Wood River Avenue & Penning Avenue on Saturday, September 12, 2026, 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)

RESOLUTION NO. 2169: AMENDING THE CITY MANAGER'S EMPLOYMENT AGREEMENT WITH THE CITY OF WOOD RIVER, ILLINOIS:

Councilman Plank moved to approve a resolution amending the City Manager's Employment Agreement with the City of Wood River, Illinois, seconded by Councilman Tweedy

Councilman Ayres stated that he has concerns regarding the proposed change to the City Manager's employment agreement. The proposed amendment eliminates the residency requirement within City limits. He noted that the City Manager presented his own contract upon being appointed to the City Manager position. Councilman Ayres expressed opposition to removing the residency requirement, stating that he would only support such a change if similar allowances were extended to City Council members to reside outside the City, subject to approval by both the Council and the citizens.

Councilman Dettmers stated that what Councilman Ayres is proposing is impossible.

City Manager Steve Palen stated that his position is currently the only one within the City of Wood River that requires residency within the City limits, noting that no other City employees are subject to such a requirement. He explained that his request to remove the residency requirement is based in part on personal considerations as he approaches retirement, including the desire to explore housing options outside the City that may not be available locally. He further emphasized his long-standing commitment to the community, stating that he has lived in the City for over 20 years, raised his family there, and remains dedicated to serving the City. He added that he does not believe residency within the City is a determining factor in being an effective employee.

Councilman Dettmers stated that nothing would prevent the City Manager from acquiring property outside the City to move to upon retirement, but emphasized that the existing employment agreement, approved in 2022, included a requirement to reside within the City limits. He noted that the proposed amendment seeks to amend the agreement to remove the residency requirement while retaining the position. Councilman Dettmers expressed his agreement with Councilman Ayres' concerns, stating that he believes the City Manager should be required to live within City limits.

Mayor Stalcup stated that the City Manager's employment agreement had previously been presented and approved. He acknowledged that the amended agreement reflects an effort to plan for the City Manager's retirement and provide an opportunity for him and his wife to establish their future. Mayor Stalcup indicated that he does not disagree with this approach. He continued by stating that, once the current City Manager retires and a new City Manager is in place, the Council would have the opportunity to renegotiate and establish a new employment agreement for the City Manager position.

Councilman Tweedy stated that he believes it would be reasonable for the Council to revisit and make changes to the requirements for a future City Manager, if deemed appropriate at that time. He added that he does not have a significant issue with lifting the residency requirement for the current City Manager.

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Councilman Plank stated that his primary concern would arise if the City were recruiting a candidate from outside the area, particularly someone unfamiliar with the community, its infrastructure, and its culture. He noted that, in this case, the current City Manager has experience working for the City and possesses that understanding. Councilman Plank added that this familiarity would better inform decisions in the best interest of Wood River, rather than the specific location of the City Manager's residence.

Councilman Tweedy added that this can be negotiated on a case-by-case basis and Councilman Plank agreed.

Councilman Dettmers responded that the circumstances were the same when the agreement was approved in 2022 and noted that Councilman Plank had voted against it at that time.

Councilman Ayres referred to Section 14 of Exhibit A, specifically page seven, Section 14, number one, regarding termination and severance pay. He noted that the section states termination occurs when a four-fifths majority of the City Council votes to terminate the City Manager. Councilman Ayres indicated that this is not likely an issue, as he believes only a three-fifths vote is required under the City Manager form of government. He suggested that the language in the agreement may have been included as a scare tactic and asked if City Attorney Mike McGinley's opinion aligns with the three-fifths requirement for termination.

City Attorney Mike McGinley confirmed that in a managerial form of government, it takes three out of five votes to terminate.

Councilman Ayres made a motion to amend Page Seven, Section 14, Number One of the City Manager's Employment Agreement regarding termination and severance pay changing four-fifths vote to three-fifths vote, seconded by Councilman Dettmers, and the amendment was approved by the following vote:

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

NAYS: None (0)

The resolution amending the City Manager's Employment Agreement with the City of Wood River, Illinois, with the amendment, was approved by the following vote:

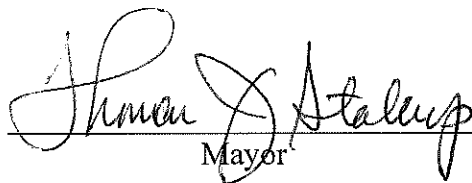
AYES: Ayres, Plank, Tweedy, Stalcup (4)

NAYS: Dettmers (1)

OLD BUSINESS: NONE

NEW BUSINESS: NONE

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business to come before the Council, the meeting adjourned at 7:40 p.m.


Mayor


City Clerk