

AGENDA

A regular meeting of the Wood River City Council was called to order by Mayor Tom Stalcup at 7:00 p.m. on Monday, May 18, 2026. 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 Ayres moved to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of May 4, 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 Tweedy moved to approve the bills submitted for payment for the period April 30, 2026, to May 13, 2026, as printed, seconded by Councilman Plank, and approved by the following vote:

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

PRESENTATIONS:

Midwest Members Credit Union presented a sponsorship check to Mayor Stalcup in support of the City's upcoming IL250 4th of July Celebration.

APPROVAL OF FINANCIAL STATEMENT:

Councilman Dettmers moved to approve the Financial Statement ending April 30, 2026, as printed, seconded by Councilman Ayres

Councilman Ayres asked about the City's municipal tax receipts and non-home rule tax sales for March through May, noting that revenues are down 10 percent compared to the same period last year.

Finance Director Karen Weber stated that the decrease was only for one month and that she was waiting on the state to send the detailed report so she could determine the cause of the decline.

Councilman Ayres asked whether the report reflected a full quarterly report or just the monthly report.

Director Weber stated that the reports are monthly and the figures reflect what the City received during the month of May.

Councilman Ayres asked whether this was the final report for May.

Director Weber replied in the affirmative.

The Financial Statement was approved by the following vote:

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

CITIZEN/OFFICIAL COMMENTS:

Christopher Bugg, a resident of West Jennings Avenue addressed the City Council regarding ongoing concerns about alleged criminal and nuisance activity at a neighboring residence located at 46 West Jennings Avenue. The resident stated that the issues have persisted for approximately three

May 18, 2026

years and described the property as a “drug house” and “flop house,” alleging frequent traffic, thefts, disorderly conduct, and suspicious activity occurring at the residence. The resident expressed concern for the safety of neighborhood children, including reports of individuals attempting to interact with children in the area, and stated that many neighbors no longer feel comfortable allowing children to play outside. The resident further stated that multiple calls have been made to the Police Department by numerous neighbors over the years and that a petition signed by area residents had been circulated regarding the matter. Mr. Bugg requested that the City consider possible actions or processes to address the ongoing concerns and improve neighborhood safety.

ORDINANCE NO. 26-14: AMENDING CITY CODE 90-7, TITLE XI: BUSINESS REGULATIONS, CHAPTER 112: ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES, AMENDING SECTION 112.25 LIMIT ON NUMBER OF LICENSES, (G) CHANGING THE NUMBER OF RESTAURANT/BAR LIQUOR LICENSES IN DISTRICT ONE FROM TWO TO THREE:

Councilman Ayres moved to approve an ordinance amending City Code 90-7, Title XI: Business Regulations, Chapter 112: Alcoholic Beverages, amending Section 112.25 Limit on Number of Licenses, (G) changing the number of restaurant/bar liquor licenses in District One from two to three, seconded by Councilman Plank

Councilman Ayres inquired as to why the City is adding a liquor license.

City Manager Steve Palen explained that the increase is in anticipation of a business opening at 53 E. Ferguson Avenue.

The ordinance was approved by the following vote:

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

NAYS: None (0)

ORDINANCE NO. 3000: DECLARING REAL PROPERTY OF THE CITY OF WOOD RIVER SURPLUS AND AUTHORIZING ITS SALE PURSUANT TO 65 ILCS 5/11-76-1 AND 65 ILCS 5/11-76-2, SPECIFICALLY 13 WHITELAW AVENUE, WOOD RIVER, ILLINOIS 62095:

Councilman Tweedy moved to approve an ordinance declaring real property of the City of Wood River surplus and authorizing its sale pursuant to 65 ILCS 5/11-76-1 and 65 ILCS 5/11-76-2, specifically 13 Whitelaw Avenue, Wood River, Illinois 62095, seconded by Councilman Plank, and approved by the following vote:

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

NAYS: None (0)

ORDINANCE NO. 3101: AUTHORIZING A REDEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE CITY OF WOOD RIVER AND JAME PROPERTIES LLC FOR TIF FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE AT 53 E. FERGUSON:

Councilman Plank moved to approve an ordinance authorizing a Redevelopment Agreement between the City of Wood River and JAME Properties LLC for TIF Financial Assistance at 53 E. Ferguson, seconded by Councilman Tweedy

Councilman Dettmers stated he needed to apologize, as he had requested financial information from the City Manager, who sent it on Friday, but he had overlooked it and had not yet had a chance to review the information he requested. He stated he would like to ask a couple of quick questions to better understand where the TIF district stands. He noted that the numbers had been revised since the last financial cash flow report he received and asked whether the \$1 million approved for transfer from the 1% sales tax fund to the TIF fund had, in fact, been transferred.

City Manager Steve Palen explained that the funds had not yet been transferred and stated that the money would be moved over on an as-needed basis.

Councilman Dettmers stated that his quick review appeared to show that the funds had not yet been transferred and said he wanted to confirm that understanding. He then asked Director of Finance Karen Weber whether the cash flow numbers included the requests before the Council this evening, specifically the \$40,000.00 per year request and the \$11,000.00 request.

Director Weber replied in the affirmative.

Councilman Dettmers stated that it appeared the City was projecting a positive cash flow, or positive cash balance, at the end of the fiscal year of nearly \$172,000.00 at this time.

Director Weber replied in the affirmative.

Councilman Dettmers asked whether it was the Council's intention to change its current approach to TIF incentives, noting that every proposal brought before the Council for TIF thus far had involved upfront financing. He asked what the trigger would be for the City to stop offering incentives in which developers receive money upfront in excess of the cash flow generated by their property within the TIF district. He further asked whether there had been any discussion about shifting to a reimbursement-style approach, where developers would instead be paid only from revenues received by the City as they come in, and whether there had been any discussion or consideration regarding when that approach might begin to be used.

City Manager Steve Palen responded that those discussions have taken place. He explained that it is somewhat of a "chicken or the egg" situation, where the City would need to do some things differently upfront to stimulate activity within the district. He stated that the hope is to eventually reach a point where the City could rely solely on the tax increment generated by the developments and use a reimbursement-style approach as described by Councilman Dettmers. However, he stated he does not believe the City has reached that point yet. He added that, as additional projects move forward and more developments become established and operational over time, he hopes the City will eventually reach that stage, noting that it is the objective.

Councilman Dettmers stated that his concern is that he would prefer to see future TIF agreements structured on a "pay-as-you-go" basis, where developers are reimbursed only from revenues received by the City. He referenced the agreement involving the Envirotech property, stating that he supported and voted in favor of that agreement because he was very pleased with its structure. He further stated that he was somewhat skeptical of using TIF funds to finance property purchases upfront, even though the statute permits it. He explained that he would rather see a business owner purchase the property first and then return to request reimbursement funds that could include the purchase price, paid overtime based on the revenues generated and received by the City on an annual basis. He stated that this was ultimately the direction he would like the City to move toward and concluded by stating those were his concerns.

The ordinance was approved by the following vote:

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

NAYS: None (0)

ORDINANCE NO. 3102: AUTHORIZING A REDEVELOPMENT AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE CITY OF WOOD RIVER AND AMERICAINS LLC FOR TIF FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE AT 84 E. FERGUSON:

Councilman Tweedy moved to approve an ordinance authorizing a Redevelopment Agreement between the City of Wood River and AMERICAINS LLC for TIF Financial Assistance at 84 E. Ferguson, seconded by Councilman Plank

Councilman Dettmers stated that he wanted to add that he appreciates the businesses' interest in locating in Wood River and encourages new businesses to come to the community. He stated that he appreciates the applications being submitted. He further stated that he has concerns about the request under consideration. He explained that, based on his review of the application materials, he believes the property has an assessed value between \$125,000.00 and \$145,000.00, as reflected by annual property taxes of roughly \$4,000.00. He stated that if the purchase is completed at the reported purchase price of \$22,000.00, the taxable value of the property could potentially be reduced, resulting in annual property taxes dropping from approximately \$4,000.00 to \$2,000.00. Councilman Dettmers stated that the application was requesting \$11,000.00 from the TIF fund, representing roughly half of the purchase price. He expressed concern that, by participating in the agreement, the City would effectively be contributing funds toward a transaction that could reduce the amount of property tax revenue distributed to the county and other taxing bodies. He stated that, in his view, it did not make sense for the City to provide \$11,000.00 in TIF assistance in exchange for what he believed would be a reduction of approximately \$2,000.00 per year in property tax revenue. He concluded by stating that he did not believe approving the request was a good idea.

May 18, 2026

City Manager Steve Palen responded that he believes the assumption that the county assessor will reduce the property's assessed value to match the \$22,000.00 purchase price is likely a stretch. He stated that the assessor might reduce the valuation somewhat, but noted that, in his experience, the assessor has not typically lowered assessments significantly. He explained that any adjustment to the property's assessed value would ultimately be determined by the assessor.

City Manager Steve Palen further stated that even if some property tax revenues were potentially lost, the City would still be gaining a new business, a renovated building, additional sales tax generation, increased foot traffic, and other forms of economic activity the City has been encouraging for downtown. He reiterated that he still believed the agreement represented a good deal for the City, while acknowledging that he could not predict what action the assessor might ultimately take regarding the property valuation.

Councilman Plank commented that the Equalized Assessed Value (EAV) for the downtown area is approximately \$13 million and noted that on a percentage basis this ask is relatively small.

Councilman Dettmers reiterated that his concern was the City providing \$11,000.00 in assistance while, based on information he had received from the County, the property tax revenue generated by the property could potentially decrease from approximately \$4,000.00 per year to around \$2,000.00 per year if the property sale at \$22,000.00 is completed. He acknowledged that the final determination would be up to the assessor but stated that he does not believe that outcome represented a good idea for the City.

The ordinance was approved by the following vote:

AYES: Plank, Tweedy, Stalcup (3)

NAYS: Ayres, Dettmers (2)

APPROVED – REQUEST TO HOLD THE ANNUAL YOUTH LEAGUE PARADE ON SATURDAY, JUNE 6, 2026, BEGINNING AT 10:30 A.M.:

Councilman Ayres moved to approve a request to hold the Annual Youth League Parade on Saturday, June 6, 2026, beginning at 10:30 a.m., as submitted by the Director of Parks & Recreation, seconded by Councilman Plank, and approved by the following vote:

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

NAYS: None (0)

APPROVED: REQUEST FROM THE WOOD RIVER BUSINESS ALLIANCE TO USE THE DOWNTOWN PARKING LOT ON MADISON AVENUE ON THURSDAY EVENINGS FROM 3:00 P.M. TO 7:00 P.M. FOR THE 2026 FARMERS MARKET SEASON BEGINNING THURSDAY, JUNE 11, 2026, AND ENDING THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 2026:

Councilman Tweedy moved to approve a request from the Wood River Business Alliance to use the Downtown Parking Lot on Madison Avenue on Thursday evenings from 3:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. for the 2026 Farmers Market Season beginning Thursday, June 11, 2026, and ending Thursday, September 24, 2026, seconded by Councilman Ayres, and approved by the following vote:

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

NAYS: None (0)

APPROVED: REQUEST TO SEEK BIDS:

Councilman Ayres moved to approve a request to seek bids for Wood River Recreation Center Gymnasium Acoustic Treatment Improvements, as submitted by the Director of Parks and Recreation, seconded by Councilman Tweedy, and approved by the following vote:

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

NAYS: None (0)

APPROVED: REQUEST TO SEEK BIDS:

Councilman Dettmers moved to approve a request to seek bids for Belk Park Clubhouse HVAC System Replacement, as submitted by the Director of Parks and Recreation, seconded by Councilman Plank, and approved by the following vote:

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

NAYS: None (0)

OLD BUSINESS:

Councilman Dettmers stated that he had questions about the process used to bring funding agreements before the Council. He referenced his prior involvement in a lawsuit against the City regarding the use of the 1% non-home rule sales tax, explaining that he believed the statutory purpose approved by voters had been altered by the City Council. He stated that the original approved purposes were property tax relief, municipal operations, and public infrastructure. He further stated that in 2022 he had requested that the ordinance be changed back to what he believed had been approved by voters, and that he had also requested an explanation from the City Attorney at the time regarding the statutory authority for using the 1% non-home rule sales tax in the manner it was being applied. He stated that, based on advice from his attorney, "public infrastructure" did not qualify for the use being made of the funds, which led him to file a lawsuit. Councilman Dettmers then asked at what point the City Council or City Manager engages with the City Attorney regarding funding decisions and agreements, stating that he assumed such discussions occur. He directed the question to City Manager Steve Palen, asking whether the City meets with the City Attorney to discuss funding matters as part of the process.

City Manager Steve Palen responded that, typically, there are email exchanges and discussions with the City Attorney regarding redevelopment agreements.

Councilman Dettmers asked if the City asks for written explanations or legal opinions or if they are typically verbal.

City Manager Steve Palen added that the agreements are generally standard, with relatively consistent language from one agreement to another. He stated that the primary elements that typically change are the dollar amounts and the financial terms within the agreements.

Councilman Dettmers asked whether there are ever instances where the City proceeds in a way that goes against the recommendation of the City Attorney.

City Manager Steve Palen responded that the City Attorney drafts the ordinances based on direction provided by City staff, including the financial terms associated with each agreement.

Discussion ensued regarding the role of the City Attorney in redevelopment agreements. It was stated that City staff does not simply defer to legal counsel's direction, but rather that the process begins internally, where the group evaluates the condition of the TIF district and reviews submitted applications collectively. After this evaluation, City staff directs the City Attorney to draft the ordinance and prepare the redevelopment agreement.

It was further explained that the City Attorney is primarily responsible for drafting the formal ordinance and agreement based on the City's direction, rather than independently providing advisory recommendations on the substance of the financial terms. City Manager Steve Palen clarified that the legal role is more focused on preparing the documents, while the City staff collectively evaluate and determine the terms beforehand.

Further discussion ensued regarding whether opinions or recommendations are being sought from the City Attorney during the redevelopment agreement process. It was clarified that there is not typically a formal exchange of legal "opinions" in that context.

It was explained that the process generally begins with receipt of an application, after which City staff collectively review the proposal and determine whether to proceed and under what general terms. That direction is then forwarded to the City Attorney, who prepares the redevelopment agreement and enabling ordinance based on the terms provided by the City.

Councilman Dettmers stated that, in his view, an ordinance presented in 2019 related to the 1% non-home rule sales tax had been drafted by the City Attorney and adopted without challenge. He referenced his subsequent lawsuit and stated that after it was filed, the City Attorney, while representing the City in that litigation, indicated that the ordinance needed to be changed, which the City then did. He stated that, based on this history, he was questioning whether City staff or officials ever challenge or critically review the legal advice or documents provided by the City Attorney. He reiterated his concern that an ordinance passed at that time had, in his view, altered provisions approved by referendum, which he believed was not permitted under state statute.

May 18, 2026

He then asked again whether anyone within the City ever questions the opinions or guidance provided by the City Attorney.

City Manager Steve Palen responded that, speaking generally, he believed that City Attorney Kathryn Warren could likely attest that he does, in fact, question and engage with the City Attorney's guidance often.

Discussion continued regarding whether City officials would question or follow legal advice from the City Attorney in situations such as changes to the % sales tax ordinance. It was stated that the scenario being referenced was hypothetical and related to actions taken several years prior. City Manager Steve Palen stated that he does, in fact, ask questions and engage with the City Attorney's opinions when necessary. However, it was also explained that the City retains legal counsel specifically to provide legal opinions, and that, in practice, those legal opinions are typically followed once provided.

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

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

NAYS: None (0)

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

The Council recessed at 7:32 p.m. and reconvened at 7:43 p.m.

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

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

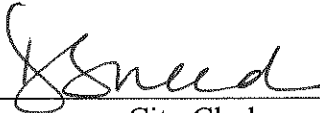
NAYS: None (0)

NEW BUSINESS: NONE

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business to come before the Council, the meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m.



Mayor



City Clerk