

**MINUTES**  
**WOODSTOCK CITY COUNCIL**  
**WORKSHOP**  
December 7, 2015  
Stage Left Cafe

The special workshop session of the Woodstock City Council was called to order at 3:30 PM by Mayor Brian Sager on Monday, December 7, 2015 at Stage Left Cafe. Notice of this Special Meeting was posted 48 hours in advance at Woodstock City Hall. All media was notified of this Special Meeting. All Council members were notified of this Special Meeting

A roll call was taken.

**COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:** Daniel Hart, Maureen Larson, Mark Saladin, Joseph Starzynski, RB Thompson, and Mayor Sager

**COUNCIL MEMBERS ABSENT:** Michael Turner

**STAFF PRESENT:** City Manager Roscoe Stelford, Finance Director Paul Christensen, Public Works Office Manager Jane Howie, and Grant Writer Terry Willcockson.

**OTHERS PRESENT:** City Clerk Cindy Smiley

Michael Turner joined the proceedings at 3:37 PM.

Mayor Sager stated that he and City Manager Roscoe Stelford are pleased to announce that Jane Howie will assume the position of Executive Assistant in the Office of the City Manager effective with the retirement of Cindy Smiley. Mayor Sager noted Ms. Howie's significant accomplishments in several of the City's Departments, including Finance and Building and Zoning, as well as in her current position as Office Manager in the Department of Public Works. He stated she went through a rigorous recruitment process that concluded this past week and thanked her for her interest and willingness to accept the position, noting he is looking forward to working with her.

**FLOOR DISCUSSION:**

**Proclamation Honoring Marian Central High School State Champion Women's Volleyball Team**  
Mayor Sager informed the Council there is a celebration recognizing the Marian Central High School State Champion Women's Volleyball team scheduled for tomorrow morning. At the request of Mayor Sager and without objection, all Council members approved the proclamation as presented by Mayor Sager, which will be presented to the team at that time.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

There was no comment forthcoming from the Public.

**AGENDA ITEMS:**

**1. Property Tax Levy**

Mayor Sager stated that in the review of the audio recording of the December 1, 2015, meeting in preparation of the minutes, it was noted that a formal motion was not made to approve the Property Tax Levy Ordinance. He noted that, as Mayor, he has the ability to forward a motion and clearly there was a majority vote at that time. He stated further, however, that at the advice of the City Attorney, the

Council is being asked to make a motion and re-vote on the Ordinance, noting there has been no change to the Ordinance since it was voted on at the December 1<sup>st</sup> meeting.

Motion by M. Saladin, second by RB Thompson, to adopt Ordinance No. 15-O-67, as identified as Document No. 1, the 2015 Tax Levy Ordinance of the City of Woodstock, McHenry County, Illinois and confirmation of same as approved previously at the December 1, 2015 City Council meeting.

A roll call vote was taken. Ayes: D. Hart, M. Larson, M. Saladin, J. Starzynski, RB Thompson, M. Turner, and Mayor Sager. Nays: none. Abstentions: none. Absentees: none. Motion carried unanimously.

## **DISCUSSION ITEMS:**

### **2. Budget Discussion**

Mayor Sager stated the purpose of this discussion is to provide staff with some clarification on the items Council wishes to include in the next budget. He noted there are some things Council has instructed staff to move forward with in this fiscal year, but this discussion is specifically directed at the budget for the next fiscal year.

R. Stelford called Council's attention to the sheet provided in the packet showing items staff will look at when sitting down to figure out next year's budget. He stated the items at the top of the page are those that the City is committed to pay and, therefore, must be incorporated into the budget such as salaries.

The items in the middle of the page, he stated, are not as clear. They are commitments but a priority change could be possible. One of the questions related to funding for the Woodstock High School football field. Mr. Stelford noted while there is no contractual obligation for this project, it has been approved for funding this fiscal year. The question is when and if this project will move forward and what priority does Council place on it. R. Stelford stated it is his understanding that the School District has placed this project back in the hands of the fundraisers to raise the additional funds needed, with the District providing minimal funding and that it is unlikely that it will move forward this year. RB Thompson stated he has heard from members of the Backers that this project will, indeed, move forward.

In response to a question from M. Larson, R. Stelford stated it is his understanding that the District is still willing to fund \$100,000 of the project to match the City's proposed contribution.

R. Stelford stated the question for Council is should staff include the full \$100,000 in the budget or remove part or all of it.

He reminded Council that once all dollars are allocated in the budget, no projects are added as it is important for the budget to remain balanced. He stated that is why it is important to rank the proposed projects in order of importance.

R. Stelford stated other items that have been mentioned by Council for proposed funding in next year's budget is another \$100,000 for the marketing program and the addition of two more police officers, both of which come with a cost.

He noted Council can discuss these and any other items they wish included and, as a group, express their desires and rank them. Another option, he stated, is for Staff to proceed as it has in the past and prepare the budget for Council's consideration in April.

R. Stelford stated the next items on the provided sheet are TIF projects which includes items the City is obligated to such as debt service. He then called attention to the decorative rock wall project, which has been mentioned by Council as a priority, and to various improvement projects for the Old Courthouse.

Mayor Sager then reviewed that at the last workshop, Council, by consensus, extended an additional \$25,000 in this fiscal year to Promote Woodstock for the marketing program based upon the fact that the \$100,000 allocated to the football field turf project was not going to be expended. He noted that, at that time, the Council also extended \$25,000 for the Enterprise Zone in this fiscal year. M. Saladin noted that the expenses for the Enterprise Zone are not as large as expected.

Mayor Sager noted that the sheet presented by R. Stelford reflects the allocation of an additional \$100,000 to Promote Woodstock bringing next year's funding level for that project to \$200,000. He stated that EMH Consulting will be presenting a proposal later at this meeting for a one-time allocation of \$25,000. He noted that purchase of additional property for Emricson Park is also on the agenda and that he has couple of other items he would like discussed. He then opened the floor for discussion to give Council the opportunity to forward other projects they would like considered for addition to next year's budget.

M. Saladin stated his opinion that the roadways in Emricson Park are in poor condition. He and other Council members noted several areas in particular.

J. Starzynski noted he would support spending additional dollars toward helping to provide a safer area on the Square, stated that perhaps spending money on the homeless issue may help this. He also suggested that perhaps having a regular patrol presence on the Square may also help.

In response to a question from RB Thompson, Mayor Sager stated that no expenditure of funds by the City has been discussed for the homeless program, other than police services.

Mayor Sager stated Council may certainly discuss increasing the number of police officers but not identify them just for the Square as right now it is part of another beat and CSOs are used to patrol the Square.

R. Stelford discussed the possible use of the Ambassador Program on the Square as the Police are the most expensive personnel to the City. He noted if Council is comfortable with having just a presence on the Square, the Ambassador Program could be implemented.

In response to a question from RB Thompson, P. Christensen stated the \$140,000 figure listed for two police officers does include benefits. M. Turner noted that this will escalate to \$250,000 within two years.

In response to a question from RB Thompson, R. Stelford noted the \$140,000 figure does not include overtime and that most overtime results from covering for the use of sick time.

In response to a question from M. Turner, R. Stelford stated the Ambassador Program would be part of a department other than the Police Department and so would not carry radios. He noted the program

would employ young, enthusiastic people in uniform who would be trained to provide information to visitors to the Square and engage people in a positive manner. He stated they could also look for problems such as overflowing trash cans and contact Public Works and would also be trained to contact the Police and file a complaint should they observe something illegal. Mr. Stelford noted that all City employees have been instructed to contact the Police in this instance.

In response to a question from M. Turner concerning the use of CSOs, R. Stelford stated they do carry radios and are part of the Police Department. He noted that the City currently employs two part-time CSOs year-round to patrol the Square in the afternoons and evenings. He stated a CSO position would cost about \$5,000 more than an Ambassador position.

Discussion followed of the Ambassador Program vs. use of CSOs and the intended goal.

M. Turner inquired as to what are the crime statistics in the City in total, aside from anecdotal reports the Council has been given by members of the Public. R. Stelford replied the City has not seen an uptick that would be expected with the downturn in the economy. He noted, however, that perhaps some of the severity of the crimes has increased, but expressed doubt that this would have been prevented with two more police officers.

Mayor Sager suggested putting the discussion of additional police officers on hold to discuss other programs and items included in the staff memo so that all may be on the table for prioritization.

RB Thompson emphasized the Square would be complete if the rock wall and the capstone could be completed. He also expressed the opinion that the lighting could be consistent with the corner lights and asked that this be completed also. Discussion followed of the wall and the lighting in the Park in the Square, with Mr. Thompson requesting accurate estimates for the lights and capstone.

M. Larson reminded Council and staff that discussion had previously taken place concerning investing in road equipment so that some of the road improvements can be made in-house. R. Stelford stated he does not feel this is realistic this year and the task force requested by Council has just been created and will not deliver its report to Council until May.

M. Turner expressed his opinion that this discussion is now a matter of public record and action cannot wait two years. R. Stelford indicated that it could be possible to do a budget amendment in May, after approval of the Budget, and use fund balance.

It was the consensus of Council that staff continue to follow the process to keep the Task Force working toward a solution.

M. Larson stated she views the Sheriff's House as a different level of investment from the Old Courthouse as there could be an opportunity to put investment into it so that it could be occupied. Mayor Sager noted this could be included in the TIF.

M. Turner discussed issues with the McHenry County Health Department, particularly issues which prohibit Woodstock's restaurants from offering outdoor dining opportunities. Mayor Sager suggested approaching that specific question with the Health Department, rather than exploring creation of a separate Health Department which would require collaboration with other municipalities.

Mayor Sager stated he is interested in working with major retailers to establish a Bagless Program in Woodstock. He noted that some of the retailers are willing to be sponsors and indicated that it is felt

that a good price could be obtained for a quantity of good canvas bags. He stated this program would be similar to the recycling bin program where the City would provide one canvas bag per household. An ordinance would be passed which would require shoppers to take a bag to the retailer or be charged for one at the store, with the revenue being split between the retailer and the bag fund. He stated further that bags would be available at retailers and at City Hall.

Mayor Sager stated that the Environmental Commission, and the Cultural and Social Awareness Commission are taking this issue on and are holding a joint meeting this week to discuss. He expressed his feeling that Woodstock should be doing this as it has been in the forefront of recycling and environmental issues.

J. Starzynski noted he does not buy much and would be supportive of the program. He stated his opinion that the retailers will save money. He further stated that Woodstock is the right community for this and the type of person who comes to Woodstock would be supportive of this. He noted that he likes that Woodstock is taking a leadership position in this area.

M. Turner noted his concern that this is governmental overreach, but stated he will reserve judgement until the program proposal is brought to Council.

Mayor Sager stated he would like Council to consider this, noting a more formal discussion can be held once it moves through the Commission process. He stated he does not know at this time how much funding would be required for the project and would like to look at grant opportunities and sponsorships but still feels that as much as \$50,000 may be needed from the City.

Mayor Sager then stated there are some houses within the community in very poor condition, noting it may be necessary to include some funds in the budget to deal with this issue. R. Stelford noted there currently are funds budgeted for distressed housing. He then stated this process takes months to accomplish, noting that the homes will have to be demolished as most are not able to be rehabbed. A discussion followed of the cost of demolition, including legal fees, and the possibility of then selling the lots to recoup some of the costs. M. Turner stated that in the end this process could end up not costing the City much.

## **2. Belcher Property**

Council then discussed acquisition of the Belcher Property which is adjacent to Emricson Park, including correction of the drainage problems which have plagued the property in the past. Detailed discussion followed of the location of the property, possible uses, topography of the area, and how excavation may improve the site.

M. Turner stated this may be worth exploring to expand the park.

Mayor Sager clarified that Council is interested in exploring this further to include just the farm land parcel. Further, there is interest in exploring the adjacent Centegra parcel and the other privately-owned parcel.

## **5. EMH Consulting Proposal**

Laura Witlox Middaugh and Cary Granat of EMH consulting joined the proceedings, resulting in this item being moved up on the agenda.

Mayor Sager noted a copy of the proposal was included in Council's packet. Ms. Witlox-Middaugh passed out an updated version of the proposal. She stated the last page of the proposal represents the contract that the students will be asked to execute to go through the mentoring program.

Mayor Sager asked Mr. Granat to share his firm's proposal with the Council.

Mr. Granat stated he has gotten to know Woodstock over the past 15 years as he has lived here with his wife and children. He provided Council with some of his experience in the film producing and writing industry, noting he has produced 58 films. He stated he has also worked extensively with other communities and other countries to develop sustainable programs and would like to do this in his community where he could open doors and invite people in to learn how to write and then help them monetize their work. It is his goal to give them channels to sell what they are doing. Mr. Granat went on to state he sees no less than 45 people who want to come in immediately and participate in this program and he is confident he can get jobs for these people.

Mr. Granat stated his goal is to start up in January or February to invite 150 people and offer them training and assistance at no charge. He noted he has established offices on the Woodstock Square with a satellite facility for a distance learning program. Mr. Granat stated he is looking for \$25,000 from the City and he will provide the additional \$300,000 necessary funding personally. He noted he will bring in the mentors with the goal of making the program sustainable. He also stated that the revenue that comes back into the program would be used to pay Woodstock back.

Mr. Granat stated the participants in the program would be required to sign a one-page contract obligating them to pay 15% of whatever they sell to Woodstock up-front and then 10% of the backend to Woodstock also. He stated that he would be operating the program during the first year and would hope to train people to continue to run the program on-going. He noted this request is for a one-time grant of \$25,000 with the program being sustainable going forward.

In response to questioning from M. Turner, Mr. Granat stated the agreement would be reviewed by both parties at the end of the year and it would be Council's decision as to what it would like to do going forward. Mr. Granat stated he has carried out similar programs successfully in 10 countries and many communities on a much larger scale, noting the program is successful because it deals with people who have done this every day.

In response to a question from RB Thompson, Mr. Granat stated he is invested in Woodstock and has donated much to the community already, including bringing Rachel's Challenge to the high school.

Mayor Sager noted Woodstock is fortunate in having a strong commitment to the arts which is supported by the community. He stated the City invests in the Opera House and other arts-related activities and he feels this would be a nice segue in taking students from the schools and bringing them into the community. He noted it seems this would provide an opportunity for an individual to take his or her talents to the next level. He further noted that Mr. Granat has already invested in an area on the Square in which to house his project, which is an incubator concept that has already worked.

Mayor Sager continued to state the City has provided certain other incentive opportunities within the community in the manufacturing, retail, and façade improvement areas and also a revolving loan program. He also noted the City has hired two Economic Development experts to further those efforts and stated his feeling this project seems to be a good fit with Woodstock's other endeavors. He stated the question is does the Council wish to invest \$25,000 in this program.

M. Saladin stated he looks at this as a partnership that he could approve in light of Mr. Granat's background and the fact that it is his goal to really help people.

M. Turner stated his opinion that this is a creative, unique idea, noting it is not, in his opinion a precedent, as the Council makes decisions based upon the merit of individual projects.

In response to a question from Mayor Sager, Mr. Granat stated this is a great opportunity at the moment as Chicago is becoming a bigger production hub. It is his hope that people will relocate and that this will be an opportunity to draw people to Woodstock as a creative hub.

In response to a question from J. Starzynski, Mr. Granat stated he is asking a governmental entity for the \$25,000 because he feels it is important from a leadership basis to form a partnership. He further stated his opinion that this could change the destiny of people in Woodstock and hopes it will be a story the City can use as an example of a successful public-private partnership and of innovation.

In response to further questioning from J. Starzynski, Mr. Granat stated the agreement would be for one-year beginning in January and at the end of the year the parties would sit down and review. It is his hope the partnership would continue.

In response to a question from RB Thompson, Mr. Granat stated that mentors will video-conference in from Los Angeles, but many will also visit Woodstock. It is his hope that when authors visit, the program would work with Read Between The Lines to set up visits for them at the store.

In response to a question from Mayor Sager as to when Mr. Granat would like to receive the \$25,000 if approved, Mr. Granat stated he would like it as soon as possible in order to launch the program and hold a press conference which he hopes to coincide with the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the release of *The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe*.

Following a brief discussion, it was the consensus of Council that City staff work with the staff of EMH Consulting to try to prepare a legal agreement to present to Council at its December 15, 2015 meeting to approve a public-private partnership with a contribution of \$25,000 as outlined by Mr. Granat.

Mayor Sager expressed the City's appreciation to Mr. Granat for his interest in Woodstock

## **6. Old Firehouse**

Mayor Sager gave an update to Council on plans to use this facility to meet the needs of the homeless. He stated a group has been meeting, including representatives from PADS, the Housing Authority, churches, and other service providers, to explore the possibility of turning the Old Firehouse into a type of warming shelter one day per week on Wednesdays. It is also proposed to serve as an intake center which means they will have people there to talk with the homeless individuals and determine their needs with the goal to be getting them to the appropriate resources.

Mayor Sager stated that City staff has worked to clear the area in the downstairs shower and bathroom area and the Methodist church volunteers have done some work painting, etc. He noted that Redeemer Lutheran Church has funds set aside for the project, which they propose to use to construct a wall between the showers to provide for more privacy. Mayor Sager noted that meetings have been held with SEDOM and attempts are being made to find an alternate site for them so the upstairs of the Old Fire Station can be used as the warming shelter. He stated that Redeemer is the site of the PADS overnight shelter on Wednesday evening and would provide transportation and supervision at the day

shelter. He then stated that the volunteers would also construct shelves which would hold supplies such as soap and also racks that would hold clothing. He noted that during their organizational meetings, the group identified the priority needs of the homeless community to be food, clothing, and shelter and it is the goal of this project to provide for these needs as much as possible.

In response to a question from RB Thompson, Mayor Sager stated the group is working with City Attorney Ruth Schlossberg and Chief Lowen to determine if a policy can be enacted which would allow for the removal of someone engaging in prohibited acts. He further noted that currently this site is only proposed for Wednesdays as that is the day PADS overnight shelter is in Woodstock.

In response to a comment from D. Hart that because PADS does not allow individuals to access their shelter if they have been drinking, many times they enter the local businesses, Mayor Sager stated the Housing Authority does not have the same restrictions as PADS and will take individuals who have consumed alcohol into the warming shelter.

In response to a question from M. Turner, Mayor Sager stated this will continue beyond winter. M. Turner responded that the compassionate approach is laudable, but questioned whether this will result in an influx of more homeless. Mayor Sager stated that the discussion has been that Woodstock would be taking care of Woodstock people and the roundtable was vocal that Woodstock cannot provide for other counties' populations. He stated it is estimated that the site would serve 25 – 40 individuals. He also stated that it is possible that the Housing Authority could get some individuals into other housing. Mayor Sager noted it has been made clear that the City cannot provide any staff or funding

M. Saladin stated it is all part of trying to be part of the solution, but that the social service agencies must step up. He noted as a member of TLS, he knows they would help a veteran into transition. Mayor Sager stated this is what Sue Rose of the Housing Authority wishes to accomplish through the intake program.

M. Larson thanked the Mayor for his leadership on this issue. Mayor Sager replied that there is a tendency to look at the problem as "those people" when really they are our residents and should be treated as such.

### **1. Budget Discussion Cont'd**

R. Stelford again noted it would be helpful if a list could be developed of project priorities as Council has made it a priority to have a balanced budget. Those items, for example, that would be the first, second, and third priorities Council would like to see funded and when all funds are allocated, no further projects would be included in the budget. Mr. Stelford further asked whether Council would wish to close out current programs to fund new programs, if there are no additional funds available.

P. Christensen noted the amount of funds available for new programs has been reduced because of the additional funding needed for Police Pension, for example.

M. Turner noted he would like to look at staffing levels and merit increases. P. Christensen noted there is not a lot of flexibility in this area because most salaries are based upon contracts.

Mayor Sager noted the City's previous commitment to match District 200's funding for the turf project. He also noted that the funding for the EMH proposal will come out of this fiscal year. He then noted two of the optional new programs as being Marketing Funds and additional Police officers.

D. Hart stated he would like to further discuss additional police officers. He stated his feeling that there seems to be a concern about safety and that the City is getting a lot of bad press. He wondered if that is a result of already being understaffed.

In response to questions concerning current staffing levels and whether two additional officers would make a difference, R. Stelford noted there are 37 sworn officers on 3 shifts, which is down from 41 officers. He noted that adding police officers is expensive and that crime statistics do not support a significant increase in staffing in the Police Department. He further noted that one of the problems is benefit time; officers having to cover for other officers who are off.

In response to a suggestion from M. Turner that one officer be added, R. Stelford noted that it would probably be the Chief's preference to use that officer as a member of the county-wide Drug Task Force. He stated this program could also come with a revenue component any money that comes from recovery is divided among the member communities.

M. Turner suggested reducing the amount allocated for the turf project by \$25,000.

Discussion followed of video gaming revenue and whether it should be allocated to a specific fund with the Mayor noting it was used to help fund Summer in the Park and also to add to the Hotel/Motel Tax Fund this year. D. Hart suggested increasing the video gaming license fee once the City reaches Home Rule and allocating that money toward two additional police officers.

Mayor Sager suggested reducing the turf contribution to \$75,000 as suggested by Councilman Turner and adding one additional police officer this year and one additional officer next year.

Mayor Sager then suggested looking at possible purchase of the Belcher property, after further evaluation, but over a three-year period. M. Turner opined that the City should make a lower offer to the property owner in exchange for an expedited deal. It was the consensus of Council that these options be explored further.

M. Turner suggested reducing the amount allocated to the marketing program by \$25,000, stating it is time to begin the co-op portion of the Promote Woodstock initiative.

In response to a question from Mayor Sager as to support for allocating \$25,000 to the bagless program, M. Saladin suggested waiting and J. Starzynski expressed the opinion that this was a large sum for this project. In response to a question from M. Larson, Mayor Sager stated the possibility of sponsorships is being explored. He further stated he will explore the possibility of grant funds with Grant Writer Terry Willcockson.

#### **4. Visitor's Center**

Mayor Sager stated there are three proposals on the table for businesses that wish to serve as the City's official Visitor's Center.

R. Stelford described for the Council the three responses that were received in response to this City's request for proposals for a Visitor's Center on the Square. He noted that Read Between The Lynes (RBTL) will provide a larger area dedicated to the Center as well as a dedicated phone line, trained staff, and an inviting environment. This business is also open for extended hours. He further noted that in exchange for serving as the Visitor's Center, Read Between the Lynes would receive a \$250 per month deduction in the payment on their Revolving Loan. He then stated the City does not want to discourage any business from welcoming visitors to Woodstock.

M. Turner stated he would advocate for both Read Between the Lynes and the yogurt shop, noting there would then be one center on both sides of the Square. He suggested the payment of \$250 per month to RBTL in acknowledgement of their trained staff and phone line and a payment of \$200 per month to the yogurt shop as the secondary center.

It was the consensus of Council that Staff formalize this program and bring it back to Council for approval.

**MISCELLANEOUS**

It was the consensus of Council to conduct another Special City Council meeting dedicated to budget discussions on Monday, January 18<sup>th</sup> at 3:30 PM at Stage Left Cafe.

**ADJOURN**

Motion by M. Saladin, second by M. Turner, to adjourn this Special Meeting of the Woodstock City Council to the next regular meeting on Tuesday, December 15, 2015 at 7:00 PM in the Council Chambers at Woodstock City Hall. Ayes: D. Hart, M. Larson, M. Saladin, J. Starzynski, RB Thompson, M. Turner, and Mayor Sager. Nays: none. Abstentions: none. Absentees: none. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 6:05 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Cindy Smiley  
City Clerk