

MINUTES
WOODSTOCK CITY COUNCIL
January 18, 2016
Stage Left Café

The Special City Council Workshop of the Woodstock City Council was called to order at 3:30 PM by Mayor Brian Sager on Monday, January 18, 2016 at Stage Left Café. The Agenda for this Special Meeting was posted no less than 48 hours in advance of the meeting and the Media and all Council members were notified of the meeting.

Mayor Sager stated that the purpose of this meeting is to consider the budget and questions concerning the proposed roundabout in a Workshop setting and that, should time permit, updates may be given on other projects.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT: RB Thompson, Maureen Larson, Mark Saladin, Joseph Starzynski, Michael Turner, and Mayor Brian Sager

COUNCIL MEMBERS ABSENT: None

STAFF PRESENT: City Manager Roscoe Stelford, Finance Director Paul Christensen, Public Works Director Jeff Van Landuyt, Opera House Director John Scharres, Police Chief Robert Lowen, Deputy Chief of Police John Lieb, Economic Development Director Garrett Anderson, and Grant Writer Terry Willcockson.

OTHERS PRESENT: Transportation Commission Chairman Andrew Celentano and City Clerk Cindy Smiley.

FLOOR DISCUSSION

There was no Floor Discussion

PUBLIC COMMENT

There was no comment forthcoming from the Public

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

1. Development of FY16/17 Budget

Mayor Sager noted that this year, at the suggestion of City staff, a different approach is being taken for budget development. He expressed appreciation to the Council for its willingness to consider the budget differently this year and to Staff for bringing this idea to Council. He noted that previously Staff would develop and Council reviewed the CIP. Following this, Staff would prepare the Budget after which the Budget Public Hearing would be held and then the Council Budget Workshop. At Staff's suggestion, this year, Council has already held one Budget Workshop to consider financial opportunities and provide input in the development of the budget. He noted the purpose of this second Budget Workshop is to further discuss the budget primarily in two different areas: 1) Areas Council wishes to look at for the expenditure of new dollars; i.e., new project dollars; 2) Other processes that might be implemented to track revenue, especially video gaming dollars.

Mayor Sager noted that Staff has prepared very preliminary budget figures to give a broad picture from which Council can work. In addition, he noted, the report includes some examples of new expenditures such as the addition of a new Police Officer which would require additional dollars. He stated using this information, Council should consider two questions: 1) What new programs/expenditures would Council like Staff to include in the Budget this year; 2) where is the money coming from and how does Council wish to prioritize these new programs. Mayor Sager also

noted there is a question of what the State will do regarding possible cuts and the State's budget, which no one can predict.

Paul Christensen stated the report referenced by Mayor Sager was created without much input from the Department Directors and assumed the departments would hold expenditures flat with the exception of salaries and raises. He noted this would be easier for Departments whose operations use a lot of gasoline, as prices for that commodity have declined. Mr. Christensen stated based upon the information contained in the report, he projects a \$138,000 deficit, but it is likely this can be eliminated without cutting programs.

Discussion followed of revenues, including property taxes. In response to a question from M. Turner, R. Stelford explained that in the report supplied to Council dollars that would have been previously allocated to the General Fund have been moved to Police Protection to more accurately reflect where the funds end up. M. Turner requested that Staff prepare a one-page report for Council's use in communicating with the public concerning property taxes, showing what was taken in from property taxes, what was spent by the City, and the trend. Mayor Sager stated when communicating with the public Council should be sure to note of the total tax bill, only 16% of that bill goes to the City with the rest going to other taxing bodies. He asked for Staff to prepare five bullet points that Council can use in talking with the public.

R. Stelford suggested including in next year's Property Tax Levy report information concerning what the impact would have been to tax bills if Council would have taken PTELL. Mayor Sager stated this could include how much money the City did not take and how much the taxpayers saved.

In response to a question from J. Starzynski concerning the increase in expenses in the General Government Department, R. Stelford stated many new programs were funded through that department including the Special Census and the marketing campaign as examples.

Discussion followed comparing expenditures for the past few years. Some of the factors noted included the spike in salt prices, the retirement of several long-term employees, and the implementation/continuation of a hiring freeze in which departing employees were not replaced. Mayor Sager noted Council's gratitude to the City's employees who stepped up to perform tasks outside of their job descriptions and did what was needed to be done so that services to the residents were not affected. He noted there is or will be a point of no return, however; at which time Staff may not be able to cover all of the vacant positions as the demand for services does not decrease, but continues to increase.

RB Thompson expressed his concern with the condition of the City's roads as indicated by the recent Pavement Management Report. He stated his opinion this is a result of the City's rapid growth in past decades which resulted in the building of new roads, which now cannot be maintained with the current static population which has plateaued. R. Stelford stated the City has already seen value from the Infrastructure Task Force that was created to address this issue. He noted that Algonquin dedicates its Home Rule Sales Tax to road resurfacing. M. Turner stated Algonquin's ability to do this is a result of residential and retail growth, with more households meaning more spending creating more sales tax dollars. He stated if Woodstock is going to deal with budget and infrastructure issues, growth is essential.

Mayor Sager asked Council to discuss and identify new programs and assign priorities to them. He reviewed some of the new programs included in the Staff report:

- 1) An additional Police Officer in the fiscal year being discussed at a cost of \$70,000
- 2) An additional Police Officer in the following fiscal year
- 3) Doubling the Marketing Campaign budget, adding an additional \$100,000 for a total of \$200,000
- 4) Enterprise Zone expenditures in the amount of \$35,000
- 5) Incentive Program for Bull Valley Ford.

R. Stelford provided information on this possible incentive agreement with the owner of Bull Valley Ford and how this would help the business complete improvements which are being required by Ford Motor Company. Completion of these improvements would help ensure that the business would not close or relocate to another community. Mr. Stelford also stated that the owner anticipates seeing an increase in sales and service with the completion of these improvements.

In response to a question from M. Larson, Mr. Stelford stated that Bull Valley Ford is an important tax generator for the City.

Mr. Stelford gave further details on the terms of the agreement, noting these are still tentative with discussions continuing with the owner and the figures provided by him preliminary.

Discussion turned to the location of the business, with G. Anderson noting there is sufficient room for the improvements to be made at the present location and that the owner has taken the proposed improvements to Rt. 47 into consideration. Mr. Stelford noted that the owner has already made significant improvements to the property to gain more useable space.

Council expressed support to pursue this agreement and provide more specific information in the future.

- 6) Stone façade around in Park in the Square in the amount of \$150,000.

RB Thompson expressed his wish to also replace some of the lights in the Park in the Square so that all match. He also complimented John Scharres on the new perimeter lights.

In response to a question from Mayor Sager, J. Van Landuyt estimated cost of the lights to be at least \$25,000 each to replace. P. Christensen reminded those present that there are only so many dollars in the TIF with which to pay for projects, including the Old Courthouse and Sheriff's House. M. Larson stated her opinion that if the City were to get the Sheriff's House to a place where it could be rented, this would provide a return on investment.

Mayor Sager requested an accurate estimate for the lights and stated he is adamant about completing the stone façade this year but not necessarily the lighting project.

Noting the total for all of these projects is \$400,000+, Mayor Sager requested Council's opinion on priorities. R. Stelford noted the façade project does not compete with the others for funding, as those funds come out of the TIF.

P. Christensen stated funding for the Enterprise Zone and the Bull Valley incentive agreement were built into the figures provided to Council. In response to a question from M. Turner, Mr. Christensen stated the initial \$100,000 for the marketing program was carried over into the figures, but not the additional \$100,000.

The discussion turned to item #1, the addition of a Police Officer. In response to a question from M. Turner, Chief Lowen stated he did not believe the addition of one officer would make a huge difference in the number of officers on the street. He stated he would want this additional officer to allow the Department to join the Drug Task Force because most crime is related to drugs. R. Stelford noted to add one to manpower for a 24/7 operation would require five additional officers, but that it would be valuable to have an officer on the Drug Task Force. J. Starzynski expressed his support for the addition of a Police Officer.

In response to a question from M. Saladin concerning funding for the football turf, Mayor Sager noted the amount approved for the football field has already been reduced to \$75,000. M. Turner stated he would be supportive of reducing this even further in favor of keeping the additional funding for the marketing program at \$100,000. He noted Promote Woodstock is on the verge of being in a position to solicit funds from the co-op that was originally discussed as part of the program, but feels that funding from the City is essential to the success of this solicitation. M. Saladin stated he would prefer to fund the marketing program and a new police officer even if it means cutting the turf funding even further.

M. Saladin noted there are two entities interested in applying for the Enterprise Zone, so this program is on the verge of bearing fruit. Mayor Sager noted the City is obligated to fund the Enterprise Zone.

A brief discussion ensued concerning the additional revenue that can be realized from an increase in the video gaming licensing fees should the City attain Home Rule status.

Mayor Sager again noted the programs that have been discussed for inclusion in the budget are the Enterprise Zone, Bull Valley Ford incentive, a new Police Officer, and the Marketing Program. After a brief further discussion, it was the consensus of the Council to accept these as priorities, in the order listed and to attempt to find funding for all items.

Noting the City now has new, more pressing priorities, Mayor Sager stated the City needs to move forward with all of the identified items and sacrifice the funding for the football field if necessary. He further stated it is the Council's wish to see all of these items in the Budget and he would also like to see a more modest contribution made to the School Board for the turf, perhaps \$25,000. He noted this would free up \$75,000 in the budget to cover the City's obligations. It was the consensus of the Council to reduce the turf funding to \$25,000.

In response to a question from R. Stelford, it was agreed that should there only be \$75,000 remaining after funding the other items, this would be the amount allocated to the Marketing Program as this is the #4 item in the list of priorities.

Mayor Sager turned the discussion to the TIF and those expenditures that would come from that revenue source. There was a brief conversation of improvements to the Sheriff's House. Mayor Sager stated he would like to see the lights done also, but does not support that for inclusion in this year's budget. It was the consensus of Council to put off the lighting improvements, with Councilman Thompson stating he reserved his opinion until a more detailed review of the dollars. Mayor Sager stated the stone façade should be a priority.

Further discussion of the TIF ensued, including the revenue generated vs. the expected expenses for the Old Courthouse and the years remaining on the TIF. P. Christensen noted it is expected there will be a deficit in the fund. In response to a question from M. Larson concerning the potential use of a staff member for some of the repairs, including the window repairs, R. Stelford stated this employee has

retired. In response to a suggestion that he be brought back as a part-time employee, J. Van Landuyt noted there have been discussions with this employee concerning this opportunity and he seems reluctant to take on such a project in his retirement. Following additional discussion regarding the windows and suggestions on how this may be done with less expense, including the historic nature of the work, Mayor Sager suggested this be turned over to staff to investigate opportunities to do this work in the most timely, manageable, and responsible way possible.

Following a discussion of identifying specific revenue sources, such as video gaming revenue, for specific items, it was the consensus of Council that the video gaming revenue be tracked and allocated for quality of life issues.

Discussion ensued of salary and raises. Mayor Sager expressed his appreciation for the efforts of the City staff members, including their willingness to work outside of job descriptions. He noted this must be taken into consideration when discussing wages and salaries, but must also be balanced with calls from the public to hold down expenses and also with the status of the State of Illinois. He stated the City must not undervalue its employees, but must be responsible to the taxpayers.

Following further discussion, it was the consensus of Council that the following pay plan be reflected in the budget:

- COLA increase of 1% plus;
- Merit increase of 0% for those employees in the bottom category;
- Merit increase of .75% for those employees in the “Meets Expectations” category;
- Merit increase of 1.5% for those employees in the “Exceeds Expectations” category;
- Merit increase of 2% for those stellar employees who always exceed expectations.

In response to a question from R. Stelford, it was the consensus of Council that this workshop process was a valuable experience and that it wishes to continue it for budget preparations in future years.

2. Roundabout – Madison/South/Lake – STP Funding

R. Stelford noted that this project was accepted for partial funding by the McHenry County Council of Mayors through its FY2016-2020 Surface Transportation Program (STP). Noting that according to policy, if a commitment is not made by the City of Woodstock to initiate funding for the Phase I Engineering by March of 2016, the Council of Mayors can drop the project. He asked for Council’s direction as to whether this project is a priority for the City.

A discussion of this project ensued, with J. Van Landuyt providing estimates of the costs for this project through to construction. P. Christensen noted there is a funding source for this project by borrowing from the Utility Capacity Fund and repaying this when the bond payment ceases for the Police Department in 2021. He stated this could be done in the form of an agreement which would be binding on future Councils.

Discussion continued of how this project will improve this area which is a gateway to the City. It was noted that this is an approximately \$1.4 million project, \$900,000 of which will be paid through the Council of Mayors with the opinion being expressed it would be irresponsible to lose these funds. R. Stelford explained the Council of Mayors’ process. It was the consensus of Council that the City move forward with this project and that Mr. Christensen’s funding method be used.

Miscellaneous**Peace Park Artwork**

Mayor Sager showed those present a depiction of artwork which is being suggested by the Bull Valley Garden Club to be placed in the labyrinth area of Dick Tracy Way Park. In response to a question from M. Turner as to where funding for this art will come from, R. Stelford stated it will be paid for with funds in the budget for the Peace Park.

Visitors' Center

Discussion followed of the proposed Visitors' Center. It was noted that Read Between the Lynes will be the main visitor's center with a dedicated phone line and employees who are trained to provide information to visitors for which Ms. Lynes will be paid per her agreement with the City. Discussion followed of other possible locations and the various aspects of the program including maintenance of the racks and payments and locations of other possible satellite centers. Discussion also followed of the Chamber's role in this program and the logo. M. Larson requested that the Real Woodstock logo be included on the sign and on the brochure racks.

It was the consensus of the Council that staff draft an agreement, which will be brought to Council for consideration, with Read Between the Lynes for the Visitor's Center. It was Council's feeling that four or five other locations could be identified as satellite locations for brochure racks, with some suggested locations being Harley-Davidson, the Woodstock Theatre, the yogurt store on the Square, and hotels, with no payments to be made to satellites and that these businesses need not be Chamber members. It was suggested that Garrett Anderson and the Chamber of Commerce work out details which can be discussed by Council at a later date.

ADJOURN

Motion by M. Turner, second by M. Saladin, to adjourn this special workshop of the Woodstock City Council to the next regular meeting on Tuesday, January 19, 2016 at 7:00PM in the Council Chambers at 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 5:34PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Cindy Smiley
City Clerk