

# **Democracy 2019: The New Wood River Sales Tax**

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**WOOD RIVER** – Wood River voters accepted a one percent sales tax during Tuesday's election.

Despite poor turnout across the county, voters chose the one-percent sales tax 560 to 481. Wood River Mayor Cheryl Maguire said the vote was the perfect portrait of democracy in action. Maguire, who has supported the ballot initiative since its inception, said the city will begin collecting revenue from the new tax by October 2019. As of now, the city is filing paperwork with the Illinois Department of Revenue, which will then disseminate paperwork to local business owners.

“We have to collect taxes for at least a year until the city can propose projects to lending institutions,” she said. “It will be about a year and a half before we can even get a project started.”

When asked what the first project the city wants to start is, Maguire said a 2014 study with some pre-engineering work was done on a retention pond near the Eastwood Subdivision. While that study needs revised, Maguire hinted restructuring that pond to handle larger flooding situations could be among the first projects done by the city, but that could take 18-24 months and general obligation bonds (of which the city currently has none) for that project to even start.

After that first project, Maguire said it could take another 18-24 months for the second one, as the city is limited on the amount of bonds it can issue based on revenue.

These projects have been highlighted by residents of Wood River, Maguire said in interviews prior to Tuesday's election. She said the citizens of her city met with her and discussed some of the city's needs, including better drainage and possibly a future recreation center.

“All of this will be for the good of the citizens of Wood River,” she said. “Every resident in Wood River will benefit.”

Consumers in Wood River will be required to pay an additional one percent sales tax on some items purchased in the city. Notable exceptions to this tax are gasoline, groceries, both prescription and over-the-counter medication and vehicles requiring licenses, including trucks, cars and motorcycles.

“If you went to Wal-Mart and filled your cart with groceries and decided to pick up a package of socks, only the socks would be taxed under the new law.”