



# **Letter To The Editor: Stewart Says He Demands Level Playing Field For Godfrey Cares Program**

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On May 19, 2020, Mark Stewart and the Godfrey Village Board of Trustees unanimously approved the initial plan for a Small Business Community Gift Card voucher program highlighted in the media as the “Godfrey Stimulus program”.

The initial program was initially funded with sales tax monies from the business district fund. The goal was simple: to provide a lift to the businesses, who wished to participate within the business district, in the form of \$10 for \$20 certificates for services or dining.

*“I am very proud to have supported the voucher program and glad to see many of those businesses getting a nice boost out of it! I have supported the program all along, 100%”* stated Trustee Mark Stewart, candidate for Mayor. *“The program has been a great success, but it unfairly left many businesses out and I want it to be fair and open it to all willing businesses.”*

After thorough discussion and negotiation between Stewart, the Trustees, and the Mayor, on February 2, 2021, a new Godfrey Cares program was passed unanimously.

*“The new Cares program has all the features I fought for and wanted to see put in place, including oversight and accountability.”* Stewart said.

The new Cares program will include substantial funding for a voucher program for businesses within and outside the business district who have not previously had the opportunity to participate.

The plan also provides utility reimbursements for the same businesses, if they qualify, up to \$1,000.00 per month for three months. The utility reimbursement will also be available for qualifying businesses, who previously participated in the voucher program, for up to \$500 per month for three months.

*“I demanded that the new Cares program include the voucher program and the \$1000 utility reimbursement for the businesses who were left out, plus the oversight, or I wouldn’t support it and it got done.”* stated Stewart.

*“It comes down to everyone who qualifies having a level playing field and I believe with these provisions; this program does that. Fairness is what I stand for and always will.”*

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