



Recall Election Being Planned Against Wood River City Councilmen

by Dalton Brown, News Reporter
June 20 2023 1:57 PM

WOOD RIVER - A Wood River resident said he plans to file a recall election against City Councilmen Bill Dettmers and David Ayres during the Public Comment portion of the most recent council meeting on June 19.

Jason “J.T.” Thompson said he’s taking these actions after watching and repeatedly disapproving of the way the council members have been conducting business, adding that the current council was elected during a low-turnout election.

“You had 650 votes (each), which is not even a tenth of this town that voted, probably because the town is made up of working-class people,” Thompson said. “Nobody can get off in time, you’ve got to go home, feed your kids, and then come back in and vote, so we get small counts when it comes vote time.”

While any recall election would have to wait about six months, Thompson said he plans to start laying the groundwork for it soon by polling the voters from the last election.

“ six months and one day, Mr. Dettmers, Mr. Ayres, I’m firing the shot across the bow to both of you. I will file a recall election and I’m going to have both of you removed,” Thompson said. “All I’ve seen from both of you is animosity towards women, I’ve seen you guys make bad calls for the city so far. There’s plenty of stuff we can do right now to have you removed, but we have to wait six months.

“You know what it takes to get you guys removed? 10% of who voted for you. 60 people to have a recall election polled up and redone - every time you step into this place and you make one of those bad decisions, you’re making one more enemy in this town.”

Thompson moved to Wood River in 2010 after serving in the military in Afghanistan. In 2014, he founded the U.S. Veterans Foundation, which he described as “one of the largest ones in the Midwest” still going on today. He said he once got word of a City Council threatening to get rid of its Veteran Service Officers (VSOs), so he mobilized 1,200 people to flood the City Council meetings to the point that they had to be held in a different building.

He then said he would do the same in Wood River.

“I’m not scared of anybody. I’m not scared of any City Council, police officers, anybody. If you make a bad call, I will call you on it,” he said. “I have the resources to fill this room and have your phone calls and your phones blowing up so bad that you’ll have to change your numbers.”

He also criticized the council members for not getting along, sending “shots” at each other, and taking actions against women by “voting them off” and “not allowing them on committees,” adding that he has three sons and three daughters and aims for all them to serve on a board, council, or committee for the city someday.

“Do the right thing,” Thompson concluded. “That’s all anybody’s asking you to do, is do the right thing.”

Dettmers said he didn't want to respond to man's thoughts about the recall but said the following:

“It looks like things are moving forward in a positive manner,” he said. “We have been in office seven weeks and people didn’t expect us to come in and know everything and have everything resolved. Of course, we are going to be careful in our decision-making and want to make sure everything turns out best for the community. I have been reviewing each of the downtown business deals making sure we are protecting taxpayer dollars. My hope is we are able to get all these issues resolved with the committees. It looks like we made progress last night. We are not going to take an axe to stuff but be very careful in the decision-making process and work to make Wood River a better place to live.”

A full recording of the June 19 meeting can be watched at the top of this story or on Riverbender.com/video.

