

COUNCIL WORK SESSION MINUTES

**October 21, 2019 – 5:00 p.m.
4th Floor Conference Room - City Hall**

A Council work session was held to discuss a request for funding assistance for Missouri Western State University (MWSU) student volunteer program.

Attending: Mayor Bill McMurray and Councilmembers Brenda Blessing, Madison Davis, PJ Kovac, Russell Moore, Marty Novak, Kent O'Dell and Gary Roach.

J. Bruce Woody, City Manager; Bryan Carter, City Attorney; Chris Connally, Police Chief; Mary Robertson, Asst. to City Manager/Communications & Public Relations Manager; and Rita K. Domini, Deputy City Clerk.

Mayor Bill McMurray called the meeting to order.

J. Bruce Woody, City Manager, said Matt Wilson, President of MWSU, wishes to talk to the Council about a new program to promote volunteerism at MWSU.

President Wilson spoke about a new initiative they are rolling out at MWSU and soliciting support for. He said the university is in a difficult spot in terms of its finances. Part of his mission at MWSU is to try to stabilize the finances and see what they can do to ensure that St. Joseph continues to have a university. There will be some restructuring, new ideas and innovative approaches as they try to position themselves in going forward. He is a big believer in fiscal conservatism and student supporting faculty and making sure the institution is strong and they are looking at creative ways to do that. One of the things they have tried to do is find some ways to attract students and most recently they announced a new scholarship program called the Griffin Guarantee Scholarship. They will also be doing some creative things with the schedule and putting in a program called Gold Fridays, where the schedule will be Monday through Thursday and Friday is designed to enable students to do internships, meet with faculty, research with faculty, engage in service and perform extra-curricular activities. Another thing they recently announced and is the primary reason for this meeting and that is really looking not only for ways to a make MWSU distinctive but also to find a way to bring the City together with the university. He spoke about how volunteering at a Center for the Blind had an impact on his son. He said out of that came this idea of a university-wide center for service which he believes can transform this community. The faculty is in the process of developing a service learning course. The idea would be if the students can go and do some service learning that will have some learning outcomes and the university would validate the service. The student, either individually or as a group, would get involved in the government, a non-profit, any organizations that serve the community and then if the student completes 40 hours of community service that's been validated, then they would either get one credit towards their degree at no cost. Not only will this build students skills, it will build their confidence and they will get to love this community and will stay in this community. They will put together a secondary cocurricular transcript for the student. They will also put out a call for volunteers in the community for people who want to volunteer for the center of service in the community. They are calling this the Senior Intern Project. What they have done is given the student an equivalent of a \$1,000 scholarship towards their tuition. From their end they are taking a risk. They already have dire financial straits but he sees this as an opportunity to help the community thrive and to hopefully drive people to MWSU so we understand

the value of the university and to bring the community together. He is looking for ways to potentially fund this center for service. He has talked to Buchanan County representatives and they have indicated a desire to assist them. He has talked to private industry in terms of being sponsors or partners with them. He hopes that the City can look at this as a great means to promote economic development, a great way to promote the community, to engage and to uplift and move forward. The official rollout of the program is Fall 2020. They will be piloting it next Spring with some of the student organizations. He is probably looking at \$300-350,000 a year to operate the Center for Service with the university's total investment in the program at almost \$1,000,000.00 per year. The way this program is structured and set-up, he thinks it would be very important to have an ongoing multi-year deal.

President Wilson answered the Councilmembers questions about the program and there was discussion on how much the university would be asking the City to contribute to the program.

President Wilson spoke about the agreement the university has had to host the Kansas City Chiefs for the past ten years, which has come to an end. He said the Kansas City Chiefs has put out an RFP (Request for Proposal) that is due by the end of November. The Chiefs are looking at making a decision by the end of December.

The meeting adjourned at 6:00 p.m.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Paula Heyde". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Minutes transcribed by Paula Heyde, CMC, City Clerk.