

**MINUTES  
REGULAR MEETING  
COOK CITY COUNCIL  
APRIL 24, 2008 – CITY HALL – 6 PM**

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PRESENT: Acting Mayor Dan Manick, Councilors David Danz, Karen Hollanitsch and Elizabeth Storm

ABSENT: Mayor Edblom

OTHERS PRESENT: Jon Minne – RLK Kuusisto, Cook News Herald, The Timberjay, Luke Whitney, Irvin Gustafson, Kay & Florence Young, Utility Superintendent Bud Ranta, Lee Phillips, Administrator-Clerk/Treasurer Theresa Martinson and Deputy Clerk/Treasurer Lynda Hanninen

Acting Mayor Dan Manick called the meeting to order at 6 PM.

Kay and Florence Young were present to request the City Council to institute a jake breaking ordinance. They stated that they have talked with the State of Minnesota regarding jake breaking on Highway 53. They were told that the State does not have anything to do with jake braking ordinances.

Administrator Martinson stated that she had spoken with Police Chief Al Hietala regarding jake braking. In 20 years he has been approached regarding jake braking two times. Signs would have to be put up within the city limits.

Kay Young stated that the State Patrol indicated to him that the City Council would need to add jake breaking to their ordinance. Administrator Martinson stated that she would do research about how other communities handle jake breaking. Councilor Storm thanked Kay and Florence Young for bringing jake braking to the city's attention.

Irvin Gustafson was present to request that two culverts be replaced at his residence at 518 Third Avenue SE. He requested that the ditching be done near his property as there is a problem with water flowing down to his neighbor's property. Councilor Storm stated that the project could extend further than doing ditching at Irvin Gustafson's property. Utility Superintendent Bud Ranta commented that the project cost would be approximately \$17,000.

Councilor Danz questioned if there was a less expensive alternative to fixing the problem. Bud Ranta stated that there are less expensive alternatives but these would not be a permanent solution. Bud Ranta commented that the culvert is deteriorated.

Lee Phillips was present to comment regarding Timberdays. The planning committee would like to have main street closed on Sunday for the parade. They would also like the River Street blocks between Second Avenue and Vermilion Drive to be closed on Saturday from 10:00 to 3:00 for the car show. Approval is requested for the Chamber of Commerce to have alcohol at the recreation center for softball Friday and Saturday.

The lots by Lakes Gas will be used for a petting zoo and pony rides. Administrator Martinson stated that a blanket statement to use city property should be approved.

Lee Phillips stated that there is going to be a battle of the bands on Friday at the school. A lumberjack show will be held again this year. There will not be fireworks on Friday night. An Elvis impersonator will be performing two shows with a maximum capacity of 750 people at the school.

Motion by Hollanitsch, second by Danz to approve a temporary liquor license for the Chamber of Commerce, street closings, and use of city property for the Timberday's celebration the weekend of June 13 - 15, 2008. **MOTION CARRIED**

Jon Minne – RLK Kuusisto updated the council regarding the River Street Revitalization Project. A project memo will be submitted to the State of Minnesota Department of Transportation.

Jon Minne updated regarding the well project. A meeting was held with Jim Walsh. Well sites have been identified to develop a stronger ground water model. Jon Minne requested permission to solicit quotes to do exploratory drilling to determine geological formations.

Motion by Storm, second by Danz to approve soliciting quotes for exploratory drilling. **MOTION CARRIED**

Administrator Martinson questioned Jon Minne if reimbursement is available from funding agencies for the exploratory drilling. Jon Minne replied that it would be reimbursed.

Jon Minne stated that a contingency plan to maintain a water supply would be to drill a temporary well at the treatment plant site in an emergency situation. Jim Walsh had stated that it is an acceptable site. Jon Minne stated that the Minnesota Department of Health needs to approve the plan in case of the need to drill a temporary well.

Motion by Storm, second by Danz to approve preparation plans and specifications to drill a temporary well. **MOTION CARRIED**

Councilor Danz questioned if the water would be potable and if it would have to be treated. Jon Minne stated that it would have to be treated and it would run through the existing system.

Jon Minne and Administrator Martinson met with Rural Development regarding the water tower project. The City will be receiving a letter from Rural Development detailing the funding that may be available. Jon Minne recommended submitting the water tower project to St. Louis County Development Block Grant. This application is due by May 15, 2008.

Motion by Danz, second by Storm to submit the water tower project application to CDBG. **MOTION CARRIED**

The Iron Range Resources Public Works Grant applications are due by April 30. The City can submit up to three projects. These projects need to be prioritized. Jon Minne recommended submitting the economic development project for Spectrum, the well project and the water tower project. IRR is looking for projects that are ready to go.

Motion by Storm, second by Hollanitsch to submit pre-applications for the Spectrum Healthcare development, the well project and the water tower project to Iron Range Resources for the Public Works Grant. **MOTION CARRIED**

Administrator Martinson stated that a meeting should be held with Spectrum Healthcare to form a development agreement and discuss other details of the project.

Councilor Hollanitsch commented regarding the Cook Nursing Home. The Healthcare District Board has been concerned about the loss of \$1,000,000 each year. Discussion will be held regarding the importance of the nursing home. Councilor Storm questioned the amount of taxes people are willing to bear to keep the nursing home open. Councilor Hollanitsch stated that the State determines the amount of charges that can be billed, the level of care that is provided and what salary is paid to employees. There are a number of options that the board has to decide upon.

The Old Muni Bar has requested extending their licensed liquor premises to include the parking lot behind the building for the Timberday's celebration. The area will need to be fenced in and touching the building and a certificate of insurance will need to be provided. All regulations have been reviewed with owner Tracy Luecken.

Motion by Hollanitsch, second by Danz to approve the extension of the licensed premises for the Old Muni Bar for the Timberday's celebration contingent on all regulations being followed. **MOTION CARRIED**

Motion by Storm, second by Hollanitsch to approve the consent agenda as follows:

- A. Approval/correction of Regular Council Minutes of March 27, 2008.
- B. Acceptance of the March Police Department Report

C. Reporting of the March Liquor Store Sales

	<u>MTD</u>	<u>YTD</u>
2008	\$73,817.45	\$209,455.44
2007	\$70,650.39	\$199,236.93
(+)	\$ 3,167.06	(+) \$ 10,218.51

D. Bill Presentation

Paid since last presentation	\$45,363.96
Presented for payment	<u>\$90,751.24</u>
	\$136,115.20

E. Parks and Recreation Committee Minutes – April 15, 2008

F. April Airport Operator's Report

**MOTION CARRIED**

The sealed bids for the sale of the airport dump truck were opened.

Conrad Nelson bid \$1,111.00

Ernie Seppala bid \$ 251.00

Motion to approve the sale of the airport dump truck for the highest bid of \$1,111.00 to Conrad Nelson. **MOTION CARRIED**

Motion by Storm, second by Hollanitsch to approve Resolution 080424 to approve the radio grant from the State of Minnesota Department of Transportation. **MOTION CARRIED**

The liquor store currently has an opening for a liquor store clerk. Paul Ness has completed a summary of market area salary ranges. Approval is requested for a pay increase of liquor store clerks from a starting wage of \$7.15 in pay grade three to a starting wage of \$8.19 in pay grade four.

Motion by Danz, second by Storm to approve the liquor store clerk wage increase for the senior clerk, recently hired clerk and new hires at \$1/hour. The liquor store clerk position will be in Pay Grade 4 of the Part-Time Pay Structure. **MOTION CARRIED**

Administrator Martinson and Liquor Store Manager Deb Lindgren requested approval to proceed with the liquor store clerk hiring with Human Resources Consultant Paul Ness. The City Council will have final authority.

Motion by Storm, second by Hollanitsch to approve Administrator Martinson to proceed with Paul Ness to hire a liquor store clerk. **MOTION CARRIED**

Discussion was held regarding Wingfest. Wingfest donations totaled over \$11,000. Councilor Storm stated that Wingfest had great advertising, good ideas and great people.

Councilor Manick stated that the high school baseball field dedication to Dan Swanson will be held on Tuesday, April 29, 2008. There will be a free barbeque. Senator Douglas Johnson will serve the first pitch and Acting Mayor Dan Manick will present a plaque to the Swanson family. (Note date change to May 13, 2008)

Councilor Storm recommended requesting \$1,000 from the St. Louis County School District #2142 for maintenance of the field at the recreation center. Administrator Martinson stated that she will send a letter.

A petition was signed by individuals who utilized the recreation center over the winter months to keep the center open beyond the closing date of March 31, 2008. Councilor Manick stated that he would like these individuals to be patient as the City does not have the funding to keep the center open longer at this time.

The Parks and Recreation Commission have made a recommendation to move ahead with the proposal for the design phase with DSGW and assistance from Chris Ismil. The fee will be \$9800 for architectural drawings and the money needs to be paid up front.

Councilor Manick stated that he would request a guarantee that the City will get reimbursed. Administrator Martinson stated that labor can be donated but the project will need to be bid out. Councilor Storm commented that the proposal is not acceptable. She stated that DSGW needs to meet with the City Council at City Hall. She questioned the verbiage of the youth center. She stated that the verbiage needs to say community center. Councilor Danz questioned the 4500 square foot building design. The plans show a 3500 square foot building. Councilor Manick questioned the initial design to show a concession stand and stated that the changes need to be clarified.

Motion by Danz, second by Hollanitsch to accept the proposal from DSGW with the changes being noted regarding the square footage, community center verbiage, meeting with City Councilors at City Hall and designate funding from the building fund.

**MOTION CARRIED**

The Police Commission will conduct interviews on April 26, 2008 for the Police Chief position. The commission will present a list of candidates to the Council.

Five applicants will be interviewed that met the qualifications. Approval needs to be given for the new background information packet that has been received from St. Louis County. St. Louis County will be performing the background checks using this information.

Motion by Hollanitsch, second by Storm to approve the background information packet received from St. Louis County. **MOTION CARRIED**

Councilor Storm updated regarding Emergency Preparedness. The week of April 21, 2008 is Tornado Awareness Week. Councilor Storm stated that the warning siren did not work. The Safety meeting will be held on April 28, 2008 at 10:00 a.m. at City Hall. Paul Lee with St. Louis County will be at the meeting and the emergency preparedness plan for the City of Cook will be shared to get ideas to better our process.

Administrator Martinson stated that she contacted Carol Udovich regarding the garbage service. Udovich Garbage would like to have a survey conducted to determine what residents would like to have the service. Councilor Hollanitsch questioned if Udovich Garbage had indicated what the charge would be for the garbage service. Administrator Martinson stated that they indicated that they might charge more for the bags.

Administrator Martinson presented a letter from Mediacom requesting the renewal of their contract with no cost to the City.

Administrator Martinson informed the Council of the resignation of Deputy Clerk/Treasurer Lynda Hanninen. This resignation was accepted.

The Deputy Clerk/Treasurer job description has been updated. Councilor Hollanitsch questioned the statement – and assists the Office Assistant. Recommendation was made to remove this statement.

Motion by Danz, second by Storm to approve the revised job description for the Deputy Clerk/Treasurer position with the removal of the statement - and assists the Office Assistant. **MOTION CARRIED**

A recommendation was made by Paul Ness to have a starting salary range of the minimum step to step four. The starting pay range for the Deputy Clerk/Treasurer position will be \$12.12 to \$13.13. Paul Ness did not recommend moving the pay grade.

Motion by Storm, second by Hollanitsch to approve the starting salary range for the Deputy Clerk/Treasurer position. This range will be from the minimum step to step four which will be \$12.12 - \$13.13. **MOTION CARRIED**

Administrator Martinson requested volunteers from the Council to do the interviewing for the Deputy Clerk/Treasurer position. Councilors Storm and Hollanitsch agreed to volunteer.

Administrator Martinson requested approval to consult with Paul Ness regarding the Deputy Clerk/Treasurer position.

Motion by Danz, second by Storm to authorize Administrator Martinson to consult with Paul Ness regarding the Deputy Clerk/Treasurer position. **MOTION CARRIED**

Administrator Martinson requested approval of the new credit and background reporting forms submitted by Paul Ness.

Motion by Hollanitsch, second by Storm to approve the new credit and background reporting forms for new hires. **MOTION CARRIED**

Councilor Storm requested that the Council consider using assessments because of the financial situation of the city.

Councilor Storm stated that the city needs to think about families and where they will live. There is a growing elderly population and they will be looking at cities that provide services. Councilor Storm expressed regret regarding not being able to have a Board of Review in 2009. She complimented the city crew, Administrator Martinson and Officer Dan Nylund regarding the flooding. The MN Duty Officer was called. Councilor Storm requested that all people who walk their dogs to remove any feces from their dogs and dispose of it.

Councilor Hollanitsch commented regarding the stressful situation that Administrator Martinson will be facing. She stated that if there is anything that the Council can do, please let us know. Administrator Martinson thanked the Council for their support.

Councilor Manick commented on a study session and stated that he would look forward to it. He also commented that the Girl Scouts did a good job on cleaning the park.

Administrator Martinson stated that she would write a thank you letter to the Girl Scouts.

Motion by Storm, second by Hollanitsch to adjourn the meeting at 8:00 p.m. **MOTION CARRIED.**

Respectfully submitted,

Lynda Hanninen  
Deputy Clerk/Treasurer