

**COOK CITY COUNCIL  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
JUNE 25, 2015 – COOK CITY HALL – 6 PM**

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**TIME AND PLACE:** A Regular Meeting of the Cook City Council was held at 6 PM on Thursday, June 25, 2015 at the Cook City Hall.

**CALL TO ORDER:** Mayor Harold Johnston called the meeting to order at 6 PM.

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Mayor Harold Johnston.

**ATTENDANCE:** Present at roll call was Mayor Harold Johnston and City Councilors Jody Bixby, Kim Brunner and Elizabeth Storm. Absent was City Councilor Karen Hollanitsch. Also present were Administrator-Clerk/Treasurer Theresa Martinson, Deputy Clerk/Treasurer Cindy Palm, Cook News Herald, The Timberjay, Rick and Betsy Clark, Jack Luecken, Frandsen Bank and Trust VP Peter Koskinen.

**ADDs/DELETES:** Mayor Harold Johnston read into the record the revisions to the original agenda.

**Add:** Public Forum - JDL Enterprises Inc. DBA The Old Muni Bar and Lounge

**Move:** None

**PUBLIC FORUM:**

**JDL Enterprises Inc. DBA The Old Muni Bar and Lounge**

Former Owner, Jack Luecken, is resuming ownership of The Old Muni Bar and Lounge and was present to discuss liquor licensing, utility rates, River Street lighting, law enforcement concerns, new housing construction and the Chamber of Commerce.

Jack feels that city utility bills are an excessive cost for operating a business, and was informed that current residents and businesses are paying debt service for a new and expanded infrastructure and that funds were not put away in the past for replacement. He was also told that he needed to conserve on usage as there has been issues of running toilets in the near past that can add excessive usage to the utility bill. He was dissatisfied that some business owners don't pay for utilities but use his facilities at his business. Administrator Martinson commented that a seasonal porta john is provided in River Street Park for all public and that future park design could result in a permanent structure to be utilized in downtown Cook, if feasible. Councilor Storm suggested Jack attend budget study sessions for Water and Sewer held later in the year to understand the impact to the services provided.

Jack questioned the need for the current River Street lighting and requested bulbs are removed from some of the street lights or the lights are dimmed. He was informed that the Council has researched cost saving approaches and the system does not allow operation with the removal of bulbs but utilizes energy-efficient bulbs. The street lighting project design and grant funding did not allow for council discretion as it was a county sponsored project on a county street. The lighted street is also a crime deterrent.

Jack also questioned the presence of St. Louis County Sheriff's Department deputies in Cook. Jack was informed that the deputies utilize office space in the former police office and the City does not contract with the Sheriff's Office for service. If Jack has concerns, he should contact St. Louis County Commissioner, Tom Rukavina, or the Sheriff's Department.

Jack addressed the lack of new housing in Cook. Realtors Rick and Betsy Clark shared that many abandoned and foreclosed homes in Cook have been recently purchased and remodeled. Compared to nearby mining communities, there may be more new home construction but higher rates of foreclosure.

Jack was also frustrated with the attendance at meetings and the focus of the Cook Chamber of Commerce. He questioned why funds were not provided to the Timber Days Committee. It was noted that funds were available from the Chamber of Commerce for the Timber Days Committee and the last Chamber meeting had two in attendance with one being a City Councilor. Businesses need to support the Cook Chamber of Commerce.

Jack Luecken is requesting council approval to re-activate his liquor license for The Old Muni Bar and Lounge.

Motion by Bixby, second by Storm to approve a liquor license for JDL Enterprises Inc. DBA The Old Muni Bar and Lounge contingent upon all requirements being met by the State Alcohol and Gambling Division as well as other licensing and that all coverage is in place. **MOTION CARRIED**

**Scenic Rivers Health Services – Refinance Opportunity**

Scenic Rivers Health Services, located in the City of Cook, is conducting a refinance of principal debt and in order for the financing to be tax exempt, the IRS requires the financing to go through the municipality it is located in. There is no liability or any affect for borrowing to the city and legal bonding is conducted by Mary Skala with Fryberger, Buchanan, Smith & Frederick PA.

Resolution 150625 calls for a public hearing to be held at 6 PM on July 23, 2015 for the purpose of conducting a public hearing on the proposal that the Issuer issue its revenue obligations under MN Statutes, Chapter 469.

Motion by Storm, second by Bixby to approve Resolution 150625 for a Public Hearing at 6 PM on July 23, 2015 on the proposal that the Issuer issue its revenue obligations under MN Statutes, Chapter 469.  
**MOTION CARRIED**

**JPJ Engineering Project Updates/Funding:**

**Vermilion Motel Infrastructure Project**

Owner Tom Musech has reported that the project has the official go ahead and is ready to start.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** See Consent Agenda.

**CONSENT AGENDA:** Motion by Storm, second by Brunner to approve the Consent Agenda.  
**MOTION CARRIED**

A. Approval/correction of the Regular Council Minutes of May 28, 2015

B. Bill Presentation

C. Reporting of the May 2015 Liquor Store Sales

|      | <u>MTD</u>           | <u>YTD</u>           |
|------|----------------------|----------------------|
| 2015 | \$ 153,196.35        | \$ 479,542.67        |
| 2014 | <u>\$ 153,075.26</u> | <u>\$ 467,840.74</u> |
|      | \$ 121.09            | \$ 11,701.93         |

D. Resolution – May 2015 Donations Designated

**COMMISSION AND STAFF REPORTS:**

**Community Center**

Volunteers are needed to complete the new Community Center and an informational update of projects to be completed has been provided. Recreation Commission Members can be contacted, if interested in volunteering. To date, the project has raised approximately \$312,000 including two IRRRB grants in the amount of \$50,000 each.

**OLD BUSINESS:** None

**NEW BUSINESS:** None

**COUNCIL FORUM:**

Councilor Storm reported that the Cook Lion's Club Sale set its best record in sales for 2015 and future mini sales will be held in late October. Space has been rented for next year. The Library Book Sale and the Farmers' Market, all going on at the same time, were successful and the city was very busy during the weekend.

Other activities going on are Music in the Park with St. Paul's Lutheran Church selling food items, Northwood's Friends of the Arts and the Library Summer Reading Program with publicity to reach out to the public.

Rick and Betsy Clark, realtors from Tower, were asked what brought them to Cook. They like Cook and was time to try something new, they see Cook as doing well in the market with foreclosures being remodeled and houses selling.

Cook has Comprehensive Planning in progress, a new Housing Redevelopment Authority Director and wants people to come to Cook.

There being no further business brought before the Council, motion to adjourn at 6:55 PM was made by Councilor Storm and second by Councilor Brunner. **MOTION CARRIED**

CITY OF COOK – Cook, MN 55723

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Harold Johnston, Mayor

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Attest: Theresa Martinson, Administrator Clerk/Treasurer

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Recorder: Cindy Palm, Deputy Clerk/Treasurer