

**COOK CITY COUNCIL  
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
OCTOBER 23, 2014 – COOK CITY HALL – 6 PM**

---

**TIME AND PLACE:** A Regular Meeting of the Cook City Council was held at 6 PM on Thursday, October 23, 2014 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 Kim Brunner, Karen Hollanitsch and Elizabeth Storm. Absent was City Councilor Jody Bixby. Also present were Administrator-Clerk/Treasurer Theresa Martinson, Deputy Clerk/Treasurer Cindy Palm, Airport Coordinator Ernie Seppala, Cook News Herald, The Timberjay, Ruby's Pantry Members Shirley Cheney, Ruth Jacobson, Dan Brinker and Lester and Nancy Erickson, Recreation Commission Secretary Tammy Palmer and Member Tom Beaudry and Access Equipment and Communications Jim Nyhus.

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

**Add:** Public Forum – Recreation Commission request for commission council member.

Access Equipment and Communications Inc. – request for easement and resolution.

**Move:** None

**PUBLIC FORUM:**

**Ruby's Pantry/Recreation Commission – Community Center Use**

Mayor Johnston, Councilor Hollanitsch, Maintenance Technician Don Flack and Administrator Martinson met with both Ruby's Pantry representatives and Recreation Commission members, in September, to discuss a plan for use of the Community Center. There were concerns with damage to the building and no heat, electricity or water to the building with no timeframe for completion available.

Representatives of the group were given council approval in September to utilize the Community Center based on the following intent:

As long as there are no other options within the community, and as long as the group is adequately insured, the council's intent is to allow Ruby's Pantry to use the Community Center, if heat and water are provided, and the purpose is reasonably possible. The floor must be protected and no fee has been established yet, but may change in the future.

After the September Council approval, controversial issues arose regarding the use of the building and lack of communication amongst Ruby's Pantry, the Recreation Commission, Friends of the Park, community members and local newspaper articles. Local newspapers reported the use of the building as approved, rather than the intent of the council, causing concern from what was read.

The Recreation Committee supports Ruby's Pantry 100% but feels the building is a large concern as it is not completed. Final electrical inspection has not been completed, disallowing public use of the building, and it is not going to be completed over the next two months.

Ruby's Pantry members continue to research other options, stating they do not have to leave the school, and could possibly bring in alternative heat sources and portable restroom facilities; however, they may be forced to leave over asbestos issues and want an alternative plan.

The Community Center is for the community to use and the council makes decisions based on advisory recommendations from the Recreation Commission. The Friends of the Park is a non-profit volunteer group who provide finances for both Recreation and Parks and has no decision making authority.

No one wants to see Ruby's Pantry leave Cook as it is a great community service and all groups need to better communicate to avoid animosity and rumors. Ruby's Pantry and the Recreation Commission need to designate a member from each entity to work together in the future. When the building is complete, the Council has given permission to utilize it and in the meantime, Ruby's Pantry will re-approach Redwater Inc. for further discussion regarding further use of the existing building.

Recreation Commission Tammy Palmer requested a council member be appointed to the Recreation Commission and Mayor Johnston appointed himself.

Motion by Brunner, second by Storm to appoint Mayor Johnston as a member of the Recreation Commission.  
**MOTION CARRIED**

Palmer also requested permission to prep the pavilion for skating as the weather turns and is allowed to work with maintenance staff to complete. She encourages the council to come see what has been done at the Community Center.

#### **Access Equipment & Communications Inc. - Jim Nyhus**

Jim Nyhus has requested an easement across approximately 300 feet of city property to run fiber optics to the Disability Specialist building along Ashawa Road. He met with Maintenance Superintendent Bud Ranta and City Engineer John Jamnick to discuss any maintenance or environmental concerns. Jim Nyhus has contracted with Attorney Mark Weir who will finalize his easement upon final recommendation from JPJ Engineer John Jamnick.

Motion by Brunner, second by Storm to allow an easement across approximately 300 feet of city property for fiber optics to the Disability Specialist building, along Ashawa Road, upon final recommendation from City Engineer John Jamnick. **MOTION CARRIED**

Jim Nyhus has requested council support of Resolution 141023A, recommended by City Attorney Mark Weir, on behalf of the City of Cook, to allow Access Equipment and Communications Inc. to act as the legal sponsor for project(s) contained in the Broadband Development Grant Program due October 28, 2014 and that he be authorized to apply to the Department of Employment and Economic Development for funding of this project on behalf of Access Equipment and Communications Inc.

The intent of Jim Nyhus, through this resolution, is to bring fiber optics to the residents of Cook. The City of Cook would be considered the "test process" for this grant with no cost to the city.

Motion by Storm, second by Brunner to approve Resolution 141023A, to allow Access Equipment and Communications Inc. to apply for grant funding, utilizing the City of Cook as the "test process", and bring fiber optics to the residents of Cook at no cost to the City. **MOTION CARRIED**

#### **John Jamnick - JPJ Engineering Project Updates and IRRRB Funding Applications**



The annual renewal of the St. Louis County Unorganized Township 62-17 and 63-17 Fire Protection Service Agreement is due and receives \$14,000 annually towards the Cook Volunteer Fire Department.

Motion by Brunner, second by Storm to accept the St. Louis County Unorganized Township 62-17 and 63-17 Fire Protection Service Agreements and allow Mayor and Clerk to sign necessary documentation.

**MOTION CARRIED**

**OLD BUSINESS:**

**2014 Election – Canvassing Board**

The Canvassing Board (Cook City Council) needs to meet between the third and tenth day after the November 4, 2014 Election to certify the local election results. A Special Meeting will be held on November 13, 2014 at 9 AM at Cook City Hall to certify the local election results.

**LV Trail – ARDC Correspondence – 11/20/14 Meeting Attendance**

ARDC Andy Hubley has requested to be on the agenda for the November 20, 2014 Regular Council Meeting for informative purposes for the proposed Lake Vermilion Trail which may be in the City's jurisdiction.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**Superior Nat'l Forest Public Roads Input – 10/7/14 Press Release**

The Superior National Forest Management invites public input for a roads study to develop a sustainable road system that provides safe travel and protects forest resources. To be included in draft recommendations, public comments must be submitted by December 12, 2014. To learn more visit [www.fs.usda.gov/superior](http://www.fs.usda.gov/superior).

**McDonald's Ribbon Cutting/Grand Re-Opening Ceremony**

McDonald's of Cook is hosting a Ribbon Cutting/Grand Re-Opening Ceremony on Monday, November 3, 2014 at 4 PM and is requesting the Mayor and/or Councilors to attend, if possible.

**Blight**

Blight letters have been sent to five property owners with three responses. The next step would be prosecution through the criminal attorney as advised by City Attorney Mark Weir. A council committee is needed to work with staff for blight direction and follow up for amount of time to deal with.

**Hwy 53 Safety**

Councilor Hollanitsch, Maintenance Superintendent Bud Ranta and Administrator Martinson met with the MNDOT Traffic Engineer James Miles to discuss crosswalk painting, crosswalk blinking signs and turn lane painting for safety concerns on Highway 53 through Cook. Speed signs were promised at the south entrance to Cook on completion of the Highway 53 project.

**Walker, Giroux & Hahne, Ltd. Audit Confirmation for FY end 2014**

Walker, Giroux, Hahne LLC presented a proposal to conduct the 2014 audit in the amount of \$19,600.

Motion by Storm, second by Hollanitsch to accept a proposal by Walker, Giroux, Hahne LLC to conduct the 2014 audit in the amount of \$19,600. **MOTION CARRIED**

**COUNCIL FORUM:**

Councilor Hollanitsch commented on the Halloween decorating around the community and how nice it is to see the efforts residents put into it each year.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

There being no further business brought before the Council, motion to adjourn at 7 PM was made by Councilor Brunner and second by Councilor Hollanitsch. **MOTION CARRIED**

CITY OF COOK – Cook, MN 55723

---

Harold Johnston, Mayor

---

Recorder: Cindy Palm, Deputy Clerk/Treasurer

---

Recorder and Attest: Theresa Martinson, Administrator-Clerk/Treasurer