

**MINUTES  
SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING  
2013 PROPOSED BUDGET AND LEVY  
COOK CITY COUNCIL  
NOVEMBER 15, 2012 – CITY HALL – 5 PM**

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PRESENT: Mayor Harold Johnston, Councilors Kim Brunner, Elizabeth Storm and Karen Hollanitsch  
ABSENT: Councilor Jody Bixby  
OTHERS PRESENT: Administrator-Clerk/Treasurer Theresa Martinson and Deputy Clerk/Treasurer Cindy Palm

Mayor Harold Johnston called the special council meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

The purpose of this meeting is to hold monthly special study sessions to discuss budget planning for 2013. The *final* November study session focuses on all departments and allows an opportunity for questions and comments before finalizing the 2013 budget at the regular council meeting on December 20<sup>th</sup>, 2012.

The council was presented with a 3% cost of living increase for full time employees for 2013. A presentation was provided detailing the national and Midwest cost of living increases to be at 2.2% each. Employees in neighboring communities are seeking 3% as well for non-union positions. There is no PERA retirement increase for 2013, employees are paying higher out of pocket health insurance expenses and the FICA employee wage deductions will increase from 4.2% to 6.2% as well in 2013. The total cost of living increase is less than 1% of the total general fund budget and senior employees are either maxed out or receive incremental wage increases every other year in the city adopted step structure.

At the October Regular Council Meeting, the council was presented with a change in the wage step structure for Part-Time Liquor Store Clerk/Stockers. It was requested and approved that the step structure minimum starting wage be increased from \$8.50 to \$10.00 due to market-based adjustments and to attract and retain employees due to the part-time position and evening and weekend hours. Administration is requesting the annual step increment percentage be decreased from 2.75% to 2% since the starting wage was increased by such a large margin.

Motion by Storm, second by Brunner to approve a 3% Cost of Living increase for full time employees for 2013 and to approve a decrease in the step increment percentage (based on an increased starting wage) from 2.75% to 2% for Part-Time Liquor Store Clerk/Stockers. **MOTION CARRIED**

The proposed tax levy has decreased from 6% to 4% since the preliminary adoption in September. Operating expenses have been reduced as much as possible while considering inflation factors.

The primary and continued focus for the City of Cook is to increase economic development by pursuing planning for the business park and increasing the tax base.

A 5 year CIP Plan has been completed and is annually reviewed with department heads. This list tracks completed, future and in progress projects and is a well utilized tool for budget planning.

The final budget will be approved at the Truth in Taxation Hearing at the regular council meeting on December 20<sup>th</sup> at 6 p.m.

Motion by Brunner, second by Storm to adjourn the meeting at 5:40 p.m. **MOTION CARRIED**

Respectfully submitted,  
Cindy Palm  
Deputy Clerk/Treasurer