

**MINUTES**  
**SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING**  
**Library - Parks and Beautification**  
**2016 Budget**  
**COOK CITY COUNCIL**  
**SEPTEMBER 24, 2015 – CITY HALL – 5 PM**

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**PRESENT:** Mayor Harold Johnston and City Councilors Kim Brunner, Elizabeth Storm and Jody Bixby  
**ABSENT:** City Councilor Karen Hollanitsch  
**OTHERS PRESENT:** Administrator-Clerk/Treasurer Theresa Martinson, Office Assistant Ruth Boudreau, Librarian Crystal Phillips and Tom Klein representing The Timberjay

**CALL TO ORDER:** Mayor Harold Johnston called the Special Council Meeting to order at 5 PM.

The purpose of this meeting is to hold monthly special study sessions to discuss budget planning for 2016. Study sessions will be held at 5 PM prior to the monthly regular council meetings for the remainder of the year to discuss the budget and levy for 2016.

The September Study Session focuses on the budgets for the Library and for Parks and Beautification.

**Library**

Mayor Johnston asked Librarian Crystal Phillips if she felt current library hours were enough to cover the demands of the library users. She has been monitoring the traffic with the aid of a door counter and she feels that an extra 10 hours per week throughout the year for the Librarian Assistant would be beneficial. The library continues to be very busy.

The Summer Reading Program was again successful this year and with positive community interest a BFF Club was also introduced this summer. These programs are successful by utilizing volunteers and purchasing supplies through Friends of the Library. The various reading programs are offered to pre-school, grade school, and older/adult consumers with theme based reading and accompanying activities.

The library equipment fund is to be used for building improvements as approved by the library board. There are some long term remodeling projects such as carpet replacement, interior painting and shelving replacement. The equipment fund is a committed fund. Any unused funds from the book fund at the end of the year will be transferred into the equipment fund. Administrator Martinson stated that currently there is approximately \$7000.00 available for long term projects.

There is in the budget, an ALS Best Seller account, money that comes from the Arrowhead Library System that is to be used for new books. Phillips stated that a new book averages in cost from \$15.00 to \$20.00. A great many books that she orders are a first in the system, when she catalogs them. New books that come into the library must stay in Cook for 3 months before other libraries can borrow them. There are 12 libraries in the ALS. Councilor Storm stated that our library is small but it is also huge, because of the inter library loan system. Phillips says that lots of donations are still coming in. A big factor for consideration is the size of the library's actual space. When new books come in, then some need to go out. It is the same for DVDs. There are approximately 10,600 books in the library. Adult fiction is the most popular with DVDs coming in second at the checkout counter.

Phillips would like to get a policy in place for missing books. Books are considered missing for 3 months and then get classified to lost.

She was asked about membership requirements for the Arrowhead Library System. She stated that one of the requirements is that the library has to be open a certain number of hours per week, and that having library policies are also required. Membership with ALS allows for access to funds from them and also from the State of Minnesota. Membership also allows cataloging that connects the whole world.

The library budget includes donations from area townships and businesses. Individuals also donate to our library. Currently, there are moose track prints on the windows designating donators.

Administrator Martinson discussed annual maintenance costs such as heating, cooling, shoveling, annual cleaning, etc. Also discussed was what the equipment fund should cover.

Phillips feels that the restroom should have more cleaning attention due to the amount of use and asked that the janitor spend an extra hour per week to focus on the restroom.

The library currently has excellent usage with some very good programs being provided by Legacy Grants from ALS. Phillips is going to try scheduling some programs later in the evening to see if a larger target audience can be reached.

Friends of the Library this summer paid \$75.00 each for two Summer Reading Programs. All other expenses and costs of these programs are covered by donations and volunteers. Kristi Sopoci is the main volunteer, and there are now four very good volunteers helping out. Margaret Jarka, Librarian Assistant, has been wonderful.

Crystal would like to start networking more with the Northwoods School and also with Nett Lake School. Nett Lake will send a bus for the programs that there is enough interest for.

Councilor Storm stated that the library now has an E-Newsletter.

Budget for 2016 was increased \$588.00 to \$47,388.00 from \$46,800.00 allocated in 2015.

### **Parks and Beautification**

Administrator Martinson stated that the 2016 budget increased \$45.00, from \$11,500.00 in 2015 to \$11,545.00. The mowing and shoveling, etc. is normally split between Recreation and Parks and Beautification with 60% of these expenses going to recreation and 40% to parks/beautification.

Other expenses for Parks and Beautification include yearly flag replacement, flower beds at City Hall and River Street Park, mural maintenance, Porta John facilities. Expected 2016 expenditures will stay approximately the same.

Flags are replaced every spring before Memorial Day with damages occasionally making replacement necessary again in the fall for some of them, usually the Federal U.S. flag in the River Street Park.

Flower beds in the park and in front of City Hall, are tended to every spring and will need extra attention next spring where the mulch is being used. Something will need to be done along with or instead of the mulch. Nancy Stebbins has been doing a seasonal display in front of City Hall and does an excellent job. Please thank her for her efforts, if you see her. She has gone above and beyond with her attention to the building front.

The Portable John units at River Street Park are used for Timber Days, Music in the Park, and the Farmers Market. It was suggested that the funds being used for the portable units may be put towards a permanent public restroom facility.

The murals were refinished with ultra violet stain in 2015 with the fronts only being done. Volunteers did an excellent job on this project; however, the backs will need to be done next summer in 2016.

The Farmers Market and Music in the Park utilize the benches and tables in the park area. \$2000.00 per year is designated for benches, tables and/or grills. The committed fund could be used for adding more benches, tables or grills. Maintenance has been included in discussions regarding the new styles, types, materials, and permanency of tables and benches to discourage vandalism and theft and to facilitate the ease of mowing etc. Also for consideration is applying for grants that may assist in new park amenities and a new park design.

“Vest Pocket Parks”, safe areas, and walking areas were discussed to add and encourage people to feel more connected and take more ownership of public city areas. The Comprehensive Plan Committee and Andy Hubley have discussed this also and feel that, “a bench means welcome”. 880 Cities is a plan to help cities strive for mobility for ages 8 to 80 to get out and about without the use of cars and autos. Mayor Johnston discussed how there are 3 or 4 areas in town that would make great neighborhood vest pocket parks where a bench would invite people of all ages to sit and chat or just enjoy the area.

The October Budget Study Session will review the Municipal Airport and Recreation budgets.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

Motion by Councilor Storm, second by Councilor Bixby to adjourn the special study session meeting at 5:50 PM. **MOTION CARRIED**

CITY OF COOK – Cook, MN 55723

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Mayor Harold Johnston

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Recorder: Ruth Boudreau, Office Assistant

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Attest: Theresa Martinson, Administrator-Clerk/Treasurer