

**MINUTES
SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING
2014 PROPOSED BUDGET AND LEVY
AND
STREETS AND ALLEYS
COOK CITY COUNCIL
AUGUST 22, 2013 – CITY HALL – 5 PM**

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

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 2014. 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 2014.

The August study session focuses on the budgets for Streets and Alleys and to propose and adopt a Preliminary Budget and Tax Levy for 2014 and set the Truth in Taxation Hearing date.

Streets and Alleys

A CIP Plan for Streets and Alleys was presented to the council to review projects that have and have not been completed.

Signage

St Louis County will be contacted for retro reflective law changes for street signage for 2014 as this requirement may be diminished. Councilor Brunner commented that the street signs are difficult to see. She also commented on vehicles not stopping at 3rd Ave and 5th Street and large vehicles with trailers utilizing this route which is difficult for vehicles of this capacity to move through and has requested that a large capacity vehicle route be considered for establishment.

Streets

The maintenance department will address snow removal at the community center parking lot after all city streets and emergency routes are cleared first. Snow removal will not be considered while the community center is idle, but will need to be addressed for safety access to the building for ambulance and fire. Research will be done to determine if completed by city maintenance or contracted out.

Taconite Distribution Funds have been distributed to the City of Cook and will be utilized to pave city streets. The City of Cook will receive \$766,207 with \$574,655 designated for street improvements and \$191,552 for waterline replacement. JPJ Engineering has met with Maintenance Supervisor Bud Ranta and submitted the project for bid to start in 2013.

Street light bulb replacement is done at one time on a routine maintenance plan contracted through Martinson Electric. It is expensive to replace one bulb at a time by contracting labor and equipment out per street light.

Ditch mowing is not at this time a high council priority as there is no safety concerns or complaints for street ditches. This could be considered a possible beautification issue.

Buildings

The equipment garage is in need of replacement as daylight can be seen through the walls, heating bills are excessive and it is difficult to move and store equipment in the building. A design with no cost figures has been provided by JPJ Engineering and funding opportunities will continue to be researched.

Maintenance would like to construct the garage near the water treatment plant and tower to utilize the same entrance and group all buildings in one area. This project is a high priority on the CIP Project List.

Equipment

Current lawnmowers are 13 years old with one budgeted for replacement in 2013 and one in 2015. The equipment replacement fund is allotted \$7500 annually and funds will be utilized in this designated account for lawnmower replacement.

Maintenance Supervisor Bud Ranta has reviewed the lawn equipment specifications for bids from L&M Supply and Duluth Lawn and Sport on three different lawnmowers and considered local repair issues. He is interested in purchasing two new units under the budgeted amount. The current lawnmowers would be sold on bid at \$1200 minimum bid as compared to trade in value.

Maintenance reported that once the street paving is completed there will be less need for a grader. Ranta recommends purchasing a New Holland Tractor/Loader/Plow for multiple uses and selling the grader.

An absorption attachment for the skid-steer for snow removal should be considered as it protects both the operator and equipment from jarring upon impact during snow removal. Forklifts are also needed for heavy lifting. The approximate cost for these attachments is \$5000.

2014 Proposed Budget and Levy

The preliminary budget for 2014 has proposed revenues that project taxes to be paid in full and Local Government Aid is certified and will increase over 2013 as the state formula has been revised.

The presented general fund budget primarily covers operating expenses for the city. Major capital projects need further review and grant opportunities considered. Budgeted project funds are designated separately from operating expenses to avoid substantial increases to the tax levy.

A preliminary levy increase of 7% will be proposed to the council. The proposed 2014 levy amount would be \$371,040.

2012 LEVY \$327,138 Final

2013 LEVY \$340,080 Final

2014 LEVY \$371,040 Preliminary

PROPOSED REVENUES	\$492,039
PROPOSED EXPENSES	<u>\$513,972</u>
Deficit	\$(21,933)

GENERAL FUND	\$(21,933)
LEVY 7%	<u>\$ 24,274</u>
	\$ 2,341

Miscellaneous

The North River Street Bridge Project remains idle as St. Louis County needs to meet with city officials to discuss the project in detail.

The September budget study session will review the Library and Parks and Beautification budgets.

Motion by Storm, second by Brunner to adjourn the special study session meeting at 5:50 PM.

CITY OF COOK – Cook, MN 55723

Harold Johnston, Mayor

Recorder: Cindy Palm, Deputy Clerk/Treasurer

Attest: Theresa Martinson, Administrator-Clerk/Treasurer