

## **Canton City Council Regular Meeting Minutes – February 12, 2020**

The Canton City Council held its regular monthly meeting on February 12, 2020, at Canton City Hall. Members present: Carl Ernst, Randy Gossman, Cindy Shanks and Charlie Warner; Mayor Donivee Johnson joined via telephone. City staff present: Brock Bergey, Jim Davis and Jon Nordsving. Visitors present: Pailey Gordon, Barb Kerns and Fire Chief Ryan Lange.

Acting Mayor Cindy Shanks called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m. Motion by Warner, second by Ernst to approve the January 2020 meeting minutes; motion carried. Motion by Warner, second by Ernst to approve the consent agenda (approval of monthly bills and 2020 mileage reimbursement rate of \$0.58 per mile); motion carried.

**Public comments:** None

**Reports:** In his clerk report, Bergey complimented Nordsving and Davis on their efficient and effective snow clearing operations during recent weather events. He updated the council on several legal issues. Danny Whalen was convicted of public nuisance misdemeanor. Per court order, he must have his property in compliance with the City's ordinances by May 15, 2020. Failure to do so may result in jail time. The City is to keep the Fillmore County Attorney's Office informed. Former city clerk/treasurer Lolly Melander has an omnibus hearing scheduled for March 9. Joel Torgerson's trial, for nuisance property violations, has been continued to March 10. Bergey reported he is preparing financial documents for the City's annual audit with Hawkins & Ash CPAs. Materials will be delivered to La Crosse in late-February, with the audit report due to the State by March 31, 2020. Bergey reminded the council there will be no poll voting in the City of Canton on March 3 for the Presidential Primary Election. Registered voters should have received a ballot via mail. Unregistered voters, or voters wishing to vote in-person, may do so at the Fillmore County Auditor/Treasurer's Office on March 3. Questions regarding the election should be directed to the County. Bergey noted there were 19 delinquent utility accounts (12% of all accounts) totaling \$2,179.54. In addition, 27 dogs and cats have been licensed for 2020. Two property owners have been charged for not clearing sidewalks in timely manner (\$65 each), and no alternate side parking citations have been issued by police this winter season.

Nordsving reviewed documentation from the Minnesota Department of Health stating the cause of October's E. coli contamination issue was likely due to a plumbing issue. Regarding snow removal, the council inquired about alternate side street parking compliance. Nordsving stated residents living along First Street have been good at following the rule; the rest of the town – not so much. He noted as of late, there were no warnings being placed on windshields of violators. The council instructed Bergey to follow-up with the Fillmore County Sheriff's Office.

Lange addressed the council regarding a change of plans for the department's intended application for a FEMA grant. Originally, the department planned to seek funding for new turnout gear; however, it was learned applicants seeking turnout gear must be in dire need to be considered for the funds. The department now intends to apply for funding for a new grass rig. Lange presented visuals for the council's review, with truck pricing between \$100,000 and \$200,000. The current Canton trucks are model years 1986 and 2001. Lange asked the council to authorize a grant application for \$145,000 (the same amount previously approved for turnout gear). If awarded all but 5% would come from FEMA, with the fire department and city splitting the remainder of the costs equally. Motion by Gossman, second by Warner to approve the fire department's grant application request; motion carried.

Deputy Logan Brand was present to introduce himself to the council. He is part of the Harmony-Mabel-Canton policing contract through the Fillmore County Sheriff's Department. The monthly police report showed 13 calls for service in January.

**Unfinished business:** None

**New business:** Bergey shared written communication with the council from Laurie Balata with USDA Rural Development. The city has two loans through Rural Development for the wastewater treatment facility. Balata expressed primary concerns. The first being the existing structure of the city's Water/Sewer/Garage Fund. The city is required to provide the USDA with annual reports regarding the sewer portion of the fund. However, since sewer is part of the larger Water/Sewer/Garbage Fund, it is currently difficult to provide accurate sewer-specific data. According to Balata, she has been advocating for this accounting change for a few years now, with no action on the city's part. Her second concern deals with the city's current sewer rates. Given the limited data available for 2020, based on the city's existing budgeting software, sewer revenue collected will not meet projected expenses for the year. Balata recommends a rate increase to keep the sewer fund sustainable. Balata's recommendations lead to additional discussion about the status of the Water/Sewer/Garbage Fund and why its balance has depleted over the years. No action was taken, with Bergey to report back with additional information for discussion in March.

Bergey informed the council that city employees have asked about direct deposit for payroll purposes. First Southeast Bank does not provide this service to employers with fewer than five people on their regular payroll. ADP is a payroll provider that offers direct deposit, along with other payroll and tax reporting services. It would cost the city approximately \$2,000/year. The service also includes an online employee timecard system, which would eliminate the need for manual data entry. Discussion lead to additional software needs, such as utility billing and fund accounting, and the service options available to small cities. Motion by Warner, second by Ernst to table discussion to March. Bergey will follow-up with additional information.

The council reviewed options for replacement holiday streetlight decor. Display Sales out of the Twin Cities provided clearance sale pricing information for four LED designs. Motion by Warner, second by Ernst to purchase eight 5-foot snowflake decorations at a total cost (including \$158 for shipping and handling) of \$3,150; motion carried.

Motion by Gossman, second by Ernst to utilize the talents of Mabel-Canton industrial arts students for construction of two "Little Libraries." The city would cover the cost of the materials, expected to be around \$350. The project will be completed in the spring, with the students assisting with installation; motion carried.

Warner expressed thanks to Bergey for his efforts in streamlining the city's financials and providing transparent reports for council review.

Motion by Ernst, second by Gossman to adjourn the meeting at 7:45 p.m.; motion carried.