

Canton City Council Regular Meeting Minutes – July 8, 2020

The Canton City Council held its regular monthly meeting on July 10, 2020, at the Canton Town Hall. (Meeting site moved from Canton City Hall to provide additional spacing for participants due to the ongoing health pandemic.) Members present: Mayor Donivee Johnson, Carl Ernst, Randy Gossman, Cindy Shanks and Charlie Warner. City staff present: Brock Bergey and Jim Davis. Visitors present: Cathie Haynes, Deputy Jason Harmening, Barb Kerns, Russell Lehman and Nick Prestby.

Mayor Johnson called the meeting to order at 7 p.m. Motion by Warner, second by Ernst to approve the June 2020 meeting minutes; motion carried. Motion by Ernst, second by Gossman to approve the consent agenda (approval of monthly bills, approval of City of Canton COVID-19 Preparedness Plan, approval of rental fee waiver for American Cross Blood Drive on August 19); motion carried.

Public comments: Nick Prestby, Commander of Canton American Legion Post #400, informed the council the Legion continues to maintain the ball field and noted recent activity by area youth. He also provided an update on the proposed additions to the veterans memorial located in the gazebo area; a sketch was presented as a visual concept. Prestby also sought council support for a residential flag program. He explained the Legion would display flags in interested residents' yards during warm weather patriotic holidays. This would be a fundraiser for the Legion, similar to programs in other communities. The council gave its verbal support to the Canton American Legion to proceed. Russell Lehman addressed the council with concerns about the City's current practice of dealing with citizen complaints. Lehman had been recently contacted by the city clerk, who had received more than one concern about fireworks-related debris believed to originate from Lehman's property. Lehman said the complaints made to city hall were unsubstantiated. He urged the City to further investigate the credibility of complaints and suggested concerned residents deal with neighborhood complaints directly instead of going through city hall.

Reports: In his clerk report, Bergey noted approximately 9% of utility accounts were currently delinquent – totaling around \$1,600. Pet licenses for 2020 to-date total 45. Golf cart and UTV permits total 25. Ten nuisance property ordinance violation notices were mailed, and one notice regarding UTV use by a minor was issued as a matter of public safety. In legal matters, Danny Whalen's property compliance date was noted as July 15, with a review hearing for July 27. A jury trial for Joel Torgerson's nuisance property case is scheduled July 28-30. Lolly Melander has a settlement conference set for July 13, with a jury trial on the calendar for August 17-21. Steve Popplewell's nuisance property case will have its first hearing August 6. Filing for mayor and two city council seats will begin July 28 and close on August 11 at 5 p.m. Bergey reminded the council the City of Canton will ballot by mail for the upcoming primary election on August 11. Residents with questions should contact the Fillmore County Auditor's Office. The City of Canton is eligible for \$26,294 in federally-approved Coronavirus Relief Funds. Cities must certify to receive the funds, which can be used to cover costs incurred between March 1 and November 15, 2020. September 15 is the final date to certify with the Minnesota Department of Revenue. Bergey mentioned he was awaiting pricing information for security cameras at city hall and the brush dump, along with updated pricing for the City's contractual garbage and recycling services with Richard's Sanitation.

Public Works Director Jon Nordsving was absent, attending the annual Minnesota Rural Water Association's training in Rushford. Jim Davis briefed the council. He reported the new street signs on Minnesota Avenue and Veterans Drive have been installed. The previously approved culvert

replacement project at Second Street and Canton Avenue will likely require less work on the City's part. The fire hydrant at Hudson Avenue and West Street has been replaced, with additional dirt work needed in the area. The Hudson Avenue paving project is scheduled to be completed in July. Work is also slated to begin on East Prairie Avenue, dependent on the weather. Davis noted the street light at First Street and US 52 had been replaced with an LED fixture. It cost about \$250 and is expected to save the City about \$100 per year in electric costs. He suggested the council consider budgeting for additional LED replacements to achieve annual cost-savings.

There was no fire department report. The May police report showed 20 calls. There were no land use permits for council consideration.

Gossman and Warner noted Canton is in line with other neighboring cities when it comes to ordinances pertaining to limits placed on vehicles parked on a single property. In June, Jamie Knutson expressed his displeasure with the City of Canton's current ordinance limiting four vehicles parked outside on each property.

Unfinished business: Mayor Johnson presented additional information for the council's review relating to proposed utility rate adjustments. She asked for discussion at the August meeting, with plans to schedule a public hearing on the matter. Mayor Johnson reviewed communication from Fillmore County Engineer Ronald Gregg about the City's resolution (2020-04) to request crosswalks be installed on Main Street (County 21) at 10 designated locations. Gregg stated the Fillmore County Highway Committee would be reviewing the resolution at its July 21 meeting.

New business: Russell Lehman requested the installation of "Children at Play" signs in his neighborhood. He stated there are a number of young children living near the Catholic church, including his own. Lehman is concerned about the speeds at which vehicles travel on City streets and believes traffic signs can assist in getting drivers to slow down. No council action was taken, with discussion scheduled for the August agenda after the City has additional time to research the matter. Cathie Haynes, representing the Canton Historical Society, presented two price quotes relating to the electrical system at the Mitson Museum. Morem Electric of Harmony quoted a price of \$13,500 to redo the electrical configuration with surface wiring. Marso Electric of Decorah recommended first conducting an inspection of the electrical system, which would cost \$500. Motion by Ernst, second by Shanks to hire Marso Electric to conduct an inspection of the Mitson electrical system; motion carried. Additional structural concerns at the Mitson Museum were also discussed, including roof repairs and the addition of a front entrance ramp to make the building handicap accessible. Warner will follow-up with a local carpenter to discuss the projects. Mayor Johnson noted that Bergey and Deputy Bellock had completed the City's annual property inspections on June 23. Ten properties were identified as having ordinance violations. Notices were mailed to those property owners, advising them of violations and compliance dates. Bergey noted continued lack of compliance by Robroy Kelly (abandoned vehicle) and Rick Nelson (building maintenance and appearance) and was seeking guidance from the council about next steps. Motion by Mayor Johnson, second by Gossman to issue citations to Kelly and Nelson; motion carried. Mayor Johnson introduced resolution 2020-05 condemning hate speech directed toward a City employee. The resolution states the City of Canton supports the efforts of City Clerk/Treasurer Brock Bergey to enforce the City nuisance ordinances at the city council's discretion. It also condemns the recent acts of City of Canton resident Jamie Knutson, in posting "what can only be classified as hate speech" on social media. The resolution emphasizes the council's desire to encourage and nurture a welcoming community where all residents, City employees, and visitors feel safe and welcomed. Motion by Mayor Johnson, second by Warner to

approve the resolution; motion carried. Bergey noted his gratitude to the council for the sign of support. Mayor Johnson noted two memorials gifted on behalf of the City: flowers were given to the family of Henry Selden, who served on the city council for several years; a \$50 donation was made in memory of Cathy Hogue (Cindy Shanks' sister) to the Brain Tumor Network.

Motion by Ernst, second by Warner to adjourn the meeting at 8:12 p.m.; motion carried.