

## **Canton City Council Regular Meeting Minutes – September 9, 2020**

The Canton City Council held its regular monthly meeting on September 9, 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, Cindy Shanks and Charlie Warner; Randy Gossman was absent. City staff present: Brock Bergey, Jim Davis and Jon Nordsving. Visitors present: Barb Kerns.

Mayor Johnson called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m. Motion by Warner, second by Shanks to approve the August 2020 meeting minutes; motion carried. Motion by Ernst, second by Warner to approve the consent agenda (approval of monthly bills, approval of proclamation endorsing October 15, 2020 as Pregnancy and Infant loss Remembrance Day.)

**Public comments:** None

**Reports:** In his clerk report, Bergey noted approximately 15% of utility accounts were currently delinquent – totaling around \$2,900. Pet licenses for 2020 to-date total 46. Golf cart and UTV permits total 26. In nuisance property-related legal matters, Steve Popplewell has a plea hearing on October 13; Robroy Kelly's arraignment is set for October 14; Rick Nelson's arraignment is scheduled for November 3; Joel Torgerson filed an appeal on September 4, 2020 appealing the August 6, 2020 court order relating to two nuisance property ordinance convictions. Former city clerk/treasurer Lolly Melander has a pretrial conference hearing set for November 16, with her jury trial to take place March 24 to April 2, 2021. Fillmore County Sheriff John DeGeorge plans on attending the October meeting to discuss the policing contract. No update on the installation of the security camera system at city hall. The land survey of the gazebo area has been requested.

Public Works Director Jon Nordsving noted work continues on the shoulders of Hudson Avenue and manholes will also be addressed. The repair work to the alley between West Canton and West Fillmore Avenues by the Presbyterian church was revisited. Nordsving stated the previously approved pavement repairs approved by the council (to be paid for by the church) were more extensive than previously thought. Motion by Ernst; second by Shanks to rescind the motion for alley repairs; motion carried. Repairs to the alley surface will be revisited at a later meeting.

There was no fire department report. The August police report showed 9 calls. There were no land use permit applications.

**Unfinished business:** Proposed utility rate adjustments were once again reviewed, with no action being taken. Lengthy discussion played out over possible uses for the Coronavirus Relief Funds (\$26,294.00) awarded to the City, which must be spent by November 15, 2020. Motion by Ernst, second by Warner to approve the following purchases: laptop computers (2); hand sanitizer dispensers (3); bulletin board enclosures (2); 800hz radios for fire department (5); motion carried. Bergey noted the City is still waiting a price estimate for the Mitson Museum electrical projects recommended by Marso Electric. Councilmember Warner presented price estimates (labor: \$700.00; materials: \$830.00) from Kevin Scrabec for the roof and ramp projects at the Mitson House. Motion by Mayor Johnson, second by Ernst to accept the price estimates; motion carried. Mayor Johnson acknowledged the top finishers in the Adopt-A-Planter contest. First place went to the Fairchild family (\$100); second place was awarded to Marcia Huerkamp (\$75); and third place was given to Wayne Hall (\$50). Appreciation was expressed to all community volunteers for taking part in this year's contest.

**New business:** Bergey prepared four proposals for council discussion regarding the CY2021 General Fund preliminary budget and tax levy. After considerable discussion, the council approved a \$253,000 preliminary operating budget for CY2021, with a proposed 4% increase for the City's tax levy. Motion by Mayor Johnson, second by Shanks; motion carried. The final levy will be set by the council in December. Proposed expenditures for 2021 include:

- Creation of a deputy clerk position (16 hours/week, starting proposed wage of \$15/hour with PERA benefits) to oversee the utility billing program and handle front-of-office needs. The clerk/treasurer position transitions to an administrative role focusing on long-term planning/budgeting. Cross-training becomes an essential staff function. (An additional administrative employee has been recommended by the City's auditor.)
- Transition to a new fund accounting and payroll software system designed for municipalities. (Another recommendation by the auditor.)
- Elimination of General Fund dollars for street repaving projects. Shift switches toward planning for complete street reconstruction projects, funded through a combination of loans, grants and special assessments. A comprehensive streets improvement plan would be developed to be completed over a 20-year period.
- Inclusion of additional funds to make exterior repairs to the former school bus shed on Prairie Avenue (now used for City storage), replace the deteriorating wooden gazebo with a metal structure, replace streetlight fixtures on Main Street with LEDs, and additional equipment purchases for the streets department.

Because the second Wednesday in November is Veterans Day, an alternate meeting date is required. Motion by Warner, second by Ernst to hold the regular monthly meeting of the Canton City Council on Tuesday, November 10, 2020, with a public hearing on proposed utility rate adjustments beginning at 6 p.m. and the council meeting convening at 7 p.m.; motion carried. Mayor Johnson, councilmember Warner and clerk Bergey will be attending the annual joint meeting with the Mabel-Canton School Board and members of the Canton and Mabel city councils on September 23 at 6 p.m.

Motion by Warner, second by Ernst to adjourn the meeting at 8:40 p.m.; motion carried.