

Canton City Council Regular Meeting Minutes – October 14, 2020

The Canton City Council held its regular monthly meeting on October 14, 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, Jim Davis and Jon Nordsving. Visitors present: Sheriff John DeGeorge, Barb Kerns and Marc Prestby.

Mayor Johnson called the meeting to order at 7 p.m. Motion by Ernst, second by Warner to approve the September 2020 meeting minutes; motion carried. Motion by Ernst, second by Shanks to approve the consent agenda (approval of monthly bills); motion carried.

Public comments: None

The agenda was amended to allow Sheriff DeGeorge to speak earlier to accommodate his schedule. The Sheriff was on the agenda to discuss the policing service agreement between the City of Canton and Fillmore County. He explained the current contract is a joint agreement with the cities of Harmony and Mabel; the three communities share three full-time deputies, with 19 hours of service each day. In addition to preventative patrols, Sheriff DeGeorge explained other benefits of the contract include ordinance enforcement, community relationships and access to other services offered through the sheriff's office. Without a policing contract, he said the City would receive minimal law enforcement services beyond emergency situations. He further noted that such contracts should represent actual costs as opposed to operating on a profit/loss system. Currently, the City of Canton pays \$24,000 (\$6,000/quarter) to the sheriff's office. The Sheriff reported that price will remain the same in 2021; however, he told the council to anticipate a "reasonable contract cost increase" in the near future. The council had no questions for Sheriff DeGeorge and thanked him for his presentation.

Reports: In his clerk report, Bergey noted approximately 10% of utility accounts were currently delinquent – totaling around \$1,700. Pet licenses for 2020 to-date total 47. Golf cart and UTV permits total 27. In nuisance property-related legal matters, Steve Popplewell rejected terms of an agreement to comply with a demolition schedule for the former school property; it should be noted the agreement was based on information Mr. Popplewell provided to the City. Mr. Popplewell will return to court for a pre-trial conference on January 12, 2021. Robroy Kelly entered a not guilty plea on October 14 and has a pre-trial conference set for December 8; Rick Nelson's arraignment is scheduled for November 3; Joel Torgerson's court ordered compliance deadline is November 15, 2020. 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. Bergey reiterated that the November 3 General Election will occur by mail ballot only. There will be no in-person voting in Canton. Voters wishing to cast their ballots on Election Day must go to the courthouse in Preston. Appreciation was expressed to Fillmore County and Commissioner Prestby for the pavement patching done on the north end of Main Street.

Public Works Director Jon Nordsving presented the council with a proposal to purchase a 1984 Elgin Streetsweeper from the City of Mabel for \$2,000. Nordsving stated the vehicle was in good operating condition and would meet the City's current needs. Bergey added that additional funding for streets-related equipment was included in the preliminary 2021 budget and suggested the sweeper be purchased as a 2021 budget item. Motion by Ernst, second by Gossman to approve the streetsweeper purchase with 2021 funds; motion carried. There was no fire department report. The September police report showed 7 calls. One land use permit

was presented by Ernst on behalf of the planning commission. Motion by Gossman, second by Shanks to approve a 8' x 20' deck permit for Josh Nordsving; motion carried.

Unfinished business: Bergey provided a spending update on the CARES Act funds. As of the meeting date, \$4,669.14 has been spent, with \$21,624.86 remaining. Of that amount, another \$6,183.00 has been allocated for approved purchases (fire department radios and security cameras at city hall). Motion by Warner, second by Ernst to approve additional fund use on an audio/visual system for the town hall (\$11,364.80) and electrical upgrades to the town hall (up to \$1,000); motion carried. Motion by Gossman, second by Shanks to apply any remaining funds toward the purchase of additional folding chairs for use at the town hall; motion carried. No updates were available on the electrical projects at the Mitson House. Warner noted work on the entrance ramp was underway. The council discussed utility rate options to present for discussion at the November public hearing on the issue. Three proposals were agreed upon for potential water rate increases:

- 1) A monthly water service charge of \$25.00 and a usage charge of \$5.86 per thousand gallons.
- 2) A monthly water service charge of \$28.50 and a usage charge of \$4.84 per thousand gallons.
- 3) A monthly water service charge of \$32.00 and no usage charge increase.

A small adjustment to the sewer rate will also be considered: a monthly sewer service charge of \$2.44 per thousand gallons used. Motion by Mayor Johnson, second by Shanks to present the rate increase information at the public hearing to be held on November 10, 2020, at 6 p.m.; motion carried. Motion by Shanks, second by Gossman to move forward with the previously-discussed purchase of utility billing, payroll and fund accounting software offered by Banyon Data Systems; motion carried. Bergey noted the \$10,340.00 purchase would be a 2021 budget item, with the costs split evenly between the General, Water and Sewer Funds.

New business: Motion by Warner, second by Gossman to approve the 2021 preliminary fire department budget at \$26,350.00; motion carried. Motion by Gossman, second by Ernst to approve the job announcement for the deputy clerk position; motion carried. Bergey stated applications would be available at city hall or on the website, with a November 6 application deadline. Bergey, Shanks and Warner will serve on the hiring committee. Motion by Warner, second by Gossman to approve liquor licenses for Pauly's Canton Pub (on sale) and ZZ Tap (on- and off-sale) for 2021, with no fees due to the COVID-19 pandemic; motion carried. A utility base mapping agreement from WHKS was reviewed. Bergey explained it involved locating, identifying and mapping water- and sewer-related infrastructure prior to anticipated street reconstruction projects. Nordsving noted his desire to wait on such a project until reconstruction occurs, due to the staff time investment and lack of existing map documentation. Bergey will follow-up with WHKS. The council agreed that the City should promote CDC-recommended guidelines for Halloween trick-or-treating, and leave participation up to residents. Motion by Mayor Johnson, second by Gossman to allow the Canton Community Association to proceed with its annual truck-or-treat event on October 31, with a County-approved COVID-19 preparedness plan; motion carried. Motion by Gossman, second by Shanks to approve Resolution 2020-07 to endorse the Mabel-Canton School District referenda on the General Election ballot; motion carried. An offer from Mabel-Canton superintendent Gary Kuphal, to house the Canton High School graduation photo composites in the Mabel school building, was discussed. While appreciated, the council agreed the photos should stay in Canton. Motion by Gossman, second by Shanks to forego membership with Southeastern Minnesota League of Municipalities (SEMLM); motion carried.

Motion by Ernst, second by Warner to adjourn the meeting at 9:12 p.m.; motion carried.