

Canton City Council Regular Meeting Minutes December 9, 2020

The Canton City Council held its regular monthly meeting on December 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, Randy Gossman, Cindy Shanks and Charlie Warner. City staff present: Brock Bergey, Jim Davis and Jon Nordsving. Visitors present: Barb Kerns, Fire Chief Ryan Lange and Kristy Ziegler.

Mayor Johnson called the meeting to order at 6 p.m. Motion by Shanks, second by Warner to approve the November 2020 meeting minutes; motion carried. Motion by Ernst, second by Gossman to approve the consent agenda (approval of monthly bills); motion carried.

Public comments: None

Reports: In his clerk report, Bergey noted there were two pending water disconnections due to delinquent payments. Former city clerk/treasurer Lolly Melander has a settlement conference set for March 8, with her jury trial to take place March 24 to April 2, 2021. In nuisance property-related legal matters, Steve Popplewell will return to court for a pre-trial conference on January 12, 2021. Robroy Kelly has a pre-trial hearing scheduled on February 9, 2021. Bergey mentioned city hall would be closed December 25 (Christmas Day). December projects include training for the new computer software, office preparations for the new deputy clerk and year-end financial reporting.

Public Works Director Jon Nordsving presented a price estimate from Utility Logic for a ferromagnetic locator totaling \$985. Motion by Warner, second by Shanks to approve the purchase; motion carried. Nordsving noted the flag pole at the fire hall is in need of repair or replacement. A flag pole also needs to be installed outside city hall. It was offered that there may be interest from community members in donating flag poles in memory of a loved one. No action was taken.

Fire Chief Ryan Lange notified the council of the fire department's selection for a \$36,000 grant from the Gary Sinise Foundation. Chief Lange submitted the grant request for a new "jaws of life" rescue unit. The council thanked Chief Lange for his work on the grant and congratulated him on the financial award. Thanks was also expressed to Randy Mayer, with Pioneer Seed, for a \$1,000 contribution to purchase a grain rescue system. Chief Lange requested approval to purchase an auger and drill to accompany the system. Motion by Ernst, second by Shanks to OK the purchase at a cost of \$1850; motion carried. Motion by Warner, second by Gossman to approve the addition of Brenden Kerns to the fire department roster, effective January 1, 2021; motion carried. Motion by Gossman, second by Shanks to accept a \$2,000 donation from the fire department, payable its Fire Relief Account; motion carried. Motion by Warner, second by Gossman to contribute \$2,000 to the fire department's PERA account; motion carried.

There was no police report submitted for the December meeting.

Ernst expressed concern about parking at the town hall. He stated some users do not follow the designated street parking rules (angle parking on Canton Avenue and parallel parking on Ash Street). Signs and pavement markings are planned for spring. Additional educational outreach will occur to make the community aware of the parking rules.

Ernst also expressed concerns about excessive noise – caused by power tools – originating from 200 East Canton Avenue during the overnight hours. Bergey indicated he would reach out to the new tenants to inform them of the City's noise ordinance.

Unfinished business: Bergey presented a final spending report of the City's \$26,294 in Coronavirus Relief Funds. All awarded funds were appropriately spent and reported to the State of Minnesota by the November 15 deadline. Motion by Gossman, second by Ernst to approve the replacement of five light fixture boxes at the Mitson House, with costs not to exceed \$500; motion carried. Motion by Gossman, second by Ernst to approve Resolution #2020-09 to certify the 2021 final operating budget at \$257,945; motion carried. Motion by Ernst, second by Warner to approve Resolution #2020-10 certifying the 2021 tax levy, collectible in 2021, at \$159,157 – which represents no increase to the 2020 tax rate; motion carried. Bergey provided updated photos of Joel Torgerson's property at 200 West Hudson Avenue. He failed to satisfactorily meet the court ordered cleanup compliance deadline of November 15, 2020. Bergey reviewed an email from Fillmore County Attorney Brett Corson regarding possible courses of action in the matter. Motion by Mayor Johnson, second by Warner to begin by sending a follow-up letter to Torgerson outlining the conditions remaining to be addressed; motion carried. Bergey also noted he would invite Attorney Corson to attend a future council meeting to allow direct discussion about nuisance properties.

New business: Motion by Gossman, second by Warner to adopt Ordinance #2020-01 outlining the 2021 fee schedule; motion carried. Motion by Ernst, second by Shanks to approve publishing a summary version of the fee ordinance in the *Fillmore County Journal*; motion carried. Motion by Ernst, second by Gossman to approve Resolution #2020-11 to consolidate bank checking accounts for revised accounting practices; motion carried. Warner spoke on behalf of the hiring committee (Bergey, Shanks and Warner) for the new deputy clerk position. He explained four candidate interviews were conducted in mid-November. The committee recommended hiring Barb Kerns to fill the part-time position of 16 hours per week, at a starting wage of \$15 per hour. Motion by Mayor Johnson, second by Gossman to approve the hire of Barb Kerns, effective January 5, 2021; motion carried. Bergey presented revised city hall hours for council review. Beginning January 4, 2021, the office will be open Monday through Thursday, from 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12 p.m. to 2 p.m., and Friday from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. Bergey will work Monday through Thursday, with Kerns working 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. Tuesday through Friday. Motion by Mayor Johnson, second by Warner to approve the 2020 audit agreement with Hawkins Ash, with the anticipated cost associated with the annual financial review to total \$10,000; motion carried. Warner spoke on behalf of the council in recognizing Mayor Johnson for her 24 years of service as the City's top elected official. The council presented her with an engraved ceremonial gavel. Mayor Johnson expressed her appreciation and wished the council well moving forward. She asked for the council's permission to continue working on the electronic conversion of past meeting minutes and continued access to files relating to the Melander court case; the council granted both requests.

Motion by Warner, second by Ernst to adjourn at 8:19 p.m.; motion carried.