



The Connection

May 2021

106 N. Main St. P.O. Box 92 Canton, MN 55922 (507) 743-5000

Autopay set to roll out in June

You asked for it and we listened. An enrollment form for monthly automatic payments is **included with this month's bill**. Complete the form, return it to city hall, and never worry about missing a payment due date. **It's that simple.**

Here's how it works. Based on the financial-related information you provide, you are authorizing the City of Canton to initiate monthly electronic debits, to either your checking or savings account, in the exact amount of your monthly statement. (No credits will be applied for the direct payment option.) A voided check must accompany your application, assuming you are selecting the checking account option. All of your information will be filed in a secured area of city hall and will only be accessible to administrative staff. On the 10th of every month, your direct payment will be applied. You do not have the option to pick a different date. Failure to have the necessary funds in your account will result in an administrative charge of \$25. Two NSF occurrences in a calendar year will result in discontinuation from the program. Once enrolled in automatic payments, you will continue to receive a paper copy of your monthly bill. It will include a notation indicating you are setup on autopay and that no physical payment is necessary. You can discontinue autopay, at any time, by written notice.

So, are you sold on this convenient way of handling future payments? If so, get this form back to us by noon on Friday, May 14. You will then be enrolled in autopay, with your first payment being pulled on June 10. (If the 10th falls on a holiday or weekend, your account will be debited on the next business day.) That means you still need to make a physical payment for this current billing. Enrollment forms received after May 14 will be processed for inclusion with the July 10 direct payments. Contact city hall with additional questions.

“Clean” audit presented to council

Hawkins Ash CPAs, the City of Canton's designated auditor, determined the 2020 financial statements presented fairly, in all material respects. The findings are included in two reports, which were presented to the city council on April 14.

According to Hawkins Ash:

- 2020 General Fund disbursements were under budget by less than one percent. Actual spending totaled \$297,176, which included more than \$26,000 in CARES Act funding. In comparison, the 2019 audit found General Fund disbursements over budget by less than one percent. In 2018, disbursements exceeded budget by more than \$64,000.
- 2020 Water Fund receipts totaled \$62,410, while disbursements totaled \$63,682. This \$1,272 shortfall justifies the council-approved increase to water rates in 2021. The redemption of a certificate of deposit, totaling \$25,098, was necessary in 2020 to keep the City's proprietary funds (water, sewer and garbage) operating in the black.
- In 2019, six advisory recommendations were made, dealing with business practices and accounting software. In 2020, one of those six recommendations remained; it pertained to service contracts with townships served by the fire department. This is an action item for 2021.

The city council approved a resolution to accept the auditor's reports for the year ended December 31, 2020. Cash basis reporting cities were required to file a copy of their financial statements, along with the annual financial reporting form, to the Office of the State Auditor under Minn. Stat. § 6.74, by March 31, 2021.

2020 marked the fifth year Hawkins Ash has conducted the City's audit. The cost for the 2020 review was \$10,000.

Annual audit reports are a matter of public record. Electronic copies of the 2019 and 2020 reports can be found on the city government page of cantonmn.com. Hard copies are available for public review at Canton City Hall, during regular business hours.

In addition to the 2020 audit findings, a presentation comparing audited General Fund spending, between 2015 and 2020, was also provided to the council during April's meeting. The presentation is included as a news item on cantonmn.com. ■

IN BRIEF...

- ✓ Please remember to include your remittance slip with your monthly payment.
- ✓ All dogs and cats, over six months, were to be licensed by January 1. Proof of rabies vaccination is required. Annual licenses are \$6. Failure to abide by this ordinance can result in a citation.
- ✓ All golf carts and UTVs operated on streets need to be licensed by May 1. An annual permit sticker costs \$10 and requires proof of insurance. ATVs are not permitted on Canton streets. Failure to follow this ordinance is also a citable offense.
- ✓ Weekly Monday morning compost collection has begun. Leaves, grass and other compostable trimmings must be contained in disposable bags or boxes. Loose materials will not be collected. Branches must be cut into small sections and easily moved by hand.
- ✓ The 2020 City of Canton Consumer Confidence Report for Drinking Water is available for public review at city hall or can be found on cantonmn.com.
- ✓ City Hall will be closed Monday, May 31 in observance of Memorial Day.

The City of Canton has established a wish list — specific items that can be gifted to our town. Think of it as an opportunity to remember a loved one through a memorial, or a way to honor someone for their community contributions. Possible wish list items include benches, picnic tables, art sculptures or statues, memory gardens, playground equipment, fire department equipment, etc. If you're interested in fulfilling a wish list request, please contact city hall. We'd love to hear your additional ideas, too. As always, acceptance of any donation requires city council approval.



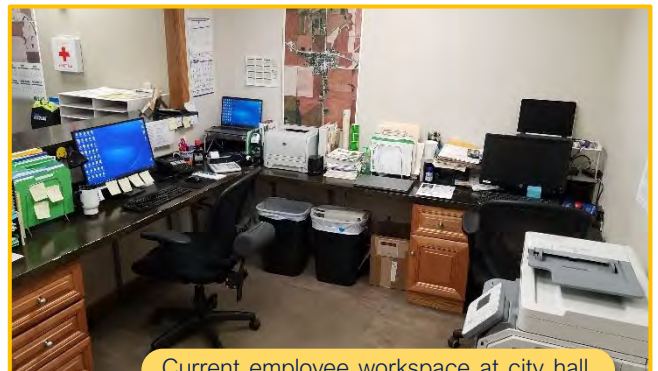
Lengthy agenda plays out in April

A nearly three-and-half hour Canton City Council meeting unfolded on April 14. All members and city staff were present, with 11 visitors in attendance.

- During public comments, one resident urged the council to revisit the current ordinance banning ATVs from being operated on city streets.
- Public Works Director Jon Nordsving presented the council with a streets update. He noted Fillmore County will be repairing three approaches with Main Street (County 21) this year. They include the east and west approaches with Canton Avenue and the north approach of Veterans Drive. Nordsving also gave price estimates for four possible city projects. One would piggyback off of the East Canton Avenue approach work; another addresses the intersection of Canton Avenue and Ash Street. The area in front of the town hall was also reviewed, along with a section of Oak Street. All four projects would cost \$35,000 to complete. The council tabled the matter for future discussion.
- Considerable discussion resumed on the Canton American Legion's March request for City funds to improve the electrical system at the ball field. Mike Wilder, representing the legion, noted the organization received a \$750 grant from MiEnergy to put toward the project. In 2017, the City of Canton received a bequest of \$20,000 for parks and recreation purposes. The council authorized contributing up to \$7,130, using these designated funds, for electrical improvements to the ball field, with the legion overseeing the project.

- Staff workspace at city hall was also revisited from the March meeting. At the request of the council, staff put together five options for council consideration. Currently, the designated office space is configured for two employees, with no additional room for a third workstation.

Costs associated with the five options were reviewed, ranging from \$0 (making do with the current configuration) to \$3,000 for the creation of a separate workspace for the deputy clerk. The possible use of



Current employee workspace at city hall, looking northwest. The station on the left is shared by the clerk and deputy clerk, with the public works director on the right.

additional coronavirus relief funds, yet to be allocated, was also discussed. This agenda item was also tabled by the council.

- Councilman Charlie Warner inquired about possible changes to existing ordinance language requiring proof of rabies vaccinations for all cats and dogs in the City of Canton age six months and older. In particular, Warner asked the council to consider refining the ordinance to create a distinction between indoor and outdoor animals, where indoor animals would be considered exempt from the current rabies vaccination requirement. After lengthy discussion on the topic, with feedback from the city attorney, there was no additional councilmember support voiced for Warner's proposal. ■

NEXT MEETING:

May 12 @ 6 p.m.

Canton Town Hall

- ✓ Face coverings required
- ✓ Public comments welcome
- ✓ Agenda on cantonmn.com