

**Canton City Council Regular Meeting Minutes
March 10, 2021**

The Canton City Council held its regular monthly meeting on March 10, 2021, at the Canton Town Hall. Members present: Mayor Nick Prestby, Carl Ernst, Randy Gossman, Cindy Shanks and Charlie Warner. City staff present: Brock Bergey, Barb Kerns and Jon Nordsving. Visitors present: Sheriff John DeGeorge, Jennifer Dowling, Donivee Johnson, Commissioner Mitch Lentz, Josh Nordsving, Commissioner Marc Prestby, Melissa Vander Plas and Mike Wilder.

Mayor Prestby called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m. Motion by Shanks, second by Warner to approve the February 2021 meeting minutes; motion carried. Motion by Ernst, second by Shanks to approve the consent agenda (approval of monthly bills and purchase of \$325 bulletin board for city hall); motion carried.

Public comments: None

Reports: In his clerk report, Bergey noted there were six delinquent utility accounts, with no disconnections occurring. 34 pet licenses and 5 UTV/golf cart permits have been issued to-date in 2021. One resident was charged \$65 (second time this winter season) for failing to clear the sidewalk in front of his Main Street property in accordance with the ordinances. One resident was issued a letter about a dog running at-large. The 2020 audit review is moving forward by Hawkin Ash CPAs, with a state submission deadline of March 31. Bergey mentioned there have been some questions about previous year-end balances due to accounting practices performed by the previous city clerk/treasurer. Bergey stated former city clerk/treasurer Lolly Melander is scheduled for a jury trial set to take place March 24 to April 2. Melander faces 26 criminal counts of theft/embezzlement of public funds. In nuisance property-related legal matters, Robroy Kelly was given until May 8 to remove the abandoned vehicle on his property. It was reported that 19 of the 20 new LED street lights were installed, with the one in the park to be replaced when the ground firms up. The total project cost came to \$4,712, with \$4,500 being covered by a grant from the Arlin Falck Foundation. The old street light fixtures will be scrapped. The streets committee will meet March 11 to begin discussions on the future of Canton's streets system. Bergey explained the City would be eligible for a 10-percent reduction in its worker's compensation insurance premium, for fire department personnel, should 90-percent of firefighters certify as non-smokers. With a 20 member department, that would require 18 certifications; for 2021, the department falls one short of being eligible for the premium reduction, which would be around \$300.

Public Works Director Jon Nordsving had nothing to report. There were no updates from the fire department and no report was submitted for police calls in February. No land use permit applications were submitted for discussion.

Unfinished business: None

New business: Fillmore County Sheriff John DeGeorge gave a presentation on the jail needs study. Also in attendance were Fillmore County Commissioners Mitch Lentz (District 1) and Marc Prestby (District 5). Sheriff DeGeorge explained the current jail, which was built in 1969, is at risk of being shut down by the Minnesota Department of Corrections (DOC). He stressed jail space is not the issue and that the need for improvements has to do with compliance. According to the DOC, Fillmore County's jail is unable to separate inmates based on classifications; does not provide adequate space for programs and recreation; is composed of linear design; and is

an old building. The sheriff outlined the options being considered by the Jail Needs Study Committee, which include: total jail outsourcing; creation of a 72-hour book/hold facility; a 90-day book/hold facility; or a 365-day facility. The committee will report its recommendation to the Fillmore County Board this summer. Sheriff DeGeorge said potential project costs and funding options will be brought into the mix once the committee presents its findings to the board. Mike Wilder, representing the Canton American Legion, presented pricing information for possible electrical improvements to the softball field. For several years, the legion has contributed to the improvements at the city-owned property. Currently, the field lights are deactivated, which occurred after summer league play ceased in Canton a few years ago. Wilder presented three options to restore and improve the electrical services, in hopes of generating additional use of the ball field. Those projects would cost between \$2,000 and \$7,000. Wilder stated the legion does not have the funds necessary to cover the costs; however, the organization has applied for a grant. He also inquired about the possible use existing city funds earmarked for parks/recreation-related improvements, from a bequest to the City of Canton in 2017. No action was taken, with the matter set to be revisited in April, when there will hopefully be word on the legion's grant application. With the addition of the deputy clerk position, city staff are cramped for space in the office area at city hall. Currently, three staff share two computer workstations, which provides a logistical challenge. Staff presented a couple possible options to reconfigure the office to be more efficient and accommodate the new staff structure. The council requested additional information for presentation and discussion at the April meeting. Motion by Warner, second by Shanks to return the old church pews at the town hall to the Catholic church; motion carried. Motion by Gossman, second by Warner to approve an additional \$150 for the free little library project, to include construction of attached benches to the two units; motion carried.

Motion by Ernst, second by Shanks to adjourn at 7:46 p.m.; motion carried.