

Canton City Council Regular Meeting Minutes August 10, 2022

The Canton City Council held its regular monthly meeting on August 10, 2022, at the Canton Town Hall. Members present: Mayor Cindy Shanks, Carl Ernst, Randy Gossman and Josh Nordsving. City staff present: Brock Bergey, Jim Davis, Barb Kerns and Jon Nordsving. Visitors present: Jennifer Dowling, Diane Drottz, Donivee Johnson, Vergene Kelly, Randeane Pastwa, Melissa Vander Plas and Kristy Ziegler.

Mayor Shanks called the regular meeting to order at 6 p.m., with the Pledge of Allegiance recited by all.

Mayor Shanks requested an addition to the agenda to include new business discussion on current councilmember and mayor wages. Motion by Ernst, second by Nordsving to approve the agenda, with Mayor Shanks' addition; motion carried. Josh Nordsving noted an error in the July 13, 2022 meeting minutes. On page 1, his name was erroneously recorded as Josh Gossman. Motion by Ernst, second by Josh Nordsving to approve the consent agenda, with the correction noted by Nordsving (approval of July minutes, approval of August disbursements; approval of \$250 cash withdrawal from Mitson Fund for Canton Day Off talent contest prizes sponsored by Canton Historical Society; approval of \$39 sponsorship for *Fillmore County Journal* emergency response team section); motion carried.

Mayor Shanks reviewed the State statute outlining the council's ability to appoint an individual to a vacated city council position. She indicated Kristy Ziegler had submitted a letter of interest for the appointment. Motion by Josh Nordsving, second by Gossman to appoint Ziegler to fill the council seat vacated by Cindy Shanks (Shanks was appointed mayor, last month, following the resignation of Nick Prestby.); motion carried. It was noted Ziegler's council appointment is through this calendar year, with the position appearing on the November 8 election ballot as a special question. Voters will determine who will fulfill the remaining two years of Mayor Shanks' vacated council seat. Mayor Shanks welcomed Ziegler to the council table and asked her to recite the oath of office, which she did. A signed copy of the oath is on file at city hall.

Motion by Gossman, second by Ziegler to name Ernst as acting mayor for the remainder of the calendar year; motion carried.

Public comments: None

Mayor's report: Mayor Shanks publicly thanked residents who keep their properties looking nice and in ordinance compliance. She also expressed appreciation to community members who adopted planters on Main Street and acknowledged Jim Richardson for watering them.

Clerk's report: Bergey informed the council of two active water service disconnections. Collectively, he noted the two accountholders owed more than \$1,000. He also provided communication updates on intended improvements to Ted Lord's property and the former school property now owed by Joel Pfeffer.

Public Works report: Jon Nordsving reported the ash tree in Main Street Park had been removed and additional earth work will be done. He informed the council the street sweeper had been returned to working order, with internal diagnostics performed. Streets will be cleaned prior to Canton Day Off.

Fire Department: None

Police: None

Planning Commission: None

Unfinished business: Gossman inquired to the remaining exterior repairs to be done at the former school bus shed. Jon Nordsving said they would be addressed as the lawn mowing season winds down.

New business: Josh Nordsving presented findings on the follow-up property inspections conducted on August 3. Of the 26 properties identified as having nuisance-related ordinance violations, during the first round of inspections in mid-June, Nordsving reported nine of those properties still had outstanding issues. Bergey noted one of the nine property owners had contacted city hall about ongoing efforts to improve their property. After lengthy discussion, motion by Josh Nordsving, second by Gossman to issue citations to the nine property owners who had not fully addressed ordinance violations; motion carried. Bergey will work with law enforcement to issue the citations, which will be handled as misdemeanor offenses in the criminal court system.

Resident Randean Pastwa requested time on the agenda to discuss her property on South Main Street, which includes an abandoned house. Pastwa said she knows the structure needs to be torn down; however, she told the council she doesn't have the financial means to make that happen right now. The council gave Pastwa a couple of months to explore her options, with a status report to be given at November's meeting.

Bergey asked the council for feedback on the 2023 preliminary General Fund budget. The proposed budget will be discussed during September's meeting, with the preliminary budget and tax levy needing to be submitted to Fillmore County by September 30.

The council discussed the draft version of the City's new personnel policy. The current policy dates back to the mid-1990s, with no revisions recorded. The proposed policy is modeled off of information provided by the League of Minnesota Cities. Bergey noted council direction was needed in the area of employee leave time. Currently, there are inconsistencies with annual leave policies for part-time employees. One part-time employee receives paid time off, while the City's other two part-time employees do not. Bergey, who is the part-time employee presently receiving PTO, as included in his hiring offer from the council, asked the council to offer feedback on how to proceed in developing a uniform leave schedule. Bergey provided current leave schedules from neighboring communities. He also explained that Jon Nordsving, who has served as the City's public works director for going on 20 years, hasn't received an increase to his annual leave for nearly 10 years. Under the current policy, an employee's maximum amount of leave is achieved after 10 years on the job. It was suggested the council's personnel committee – comprised of councilmembers Gossman and Ziegler – review the matter and report back with options in September. Gossman indicated he no longer wanted to serve on the personnel committee. Motion by Josh Nordsving, second by Ernst to table discussion; motion carried.

Mayor Shanks stated the application period for the Arlin Falck Foundation grant was October 1. Possible ideas will be discussed during the September meeting.

Mayor Shanks brought up a possible increase to annual wages for mayor and councilmembers. Currently, the mayor is paid \$900 a year, with each councilmember earning \$600 a year. No action was taken.

Motion by Josh Nordsving, second by Ziegler to adjourn at 8:02 p.m.; motion carried.