

The Cannon Falls City Council met in a regular session on Tuesday, June 13, 2017, in the City Council Chambers. Present were Mayor Robby Robinson and Council Members Morris Mattson, Cedar Abadie, Mike Dalton, Ken Carpenter, LeRoy McCusker, and John Althoff. Also present were Ron Johnson, City Administrator; Dave Maroney, Community Development Director; Tom Bergeson, Public Works Director; Greg Anderson, City Engineer; Todd Anderson, Fire Chief; and Jeffrey McCormick, Police Chief.

Call to Order Mayor Robinson called the City Council Meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Roll Call All members were present.

Pledge of Allegiance Mayor Robinson led in the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Agenda A motion was made by Council Member Carpenter, seconded by Council Member Abadie and unanimously carried, to approve the Agenda as submitted.

Public Input Karen Adell, Cannon Falls resident, requested that the City consider contributing funds to help cover the cost of resurfacing the eight tennis courts located just east of Cannon Falls High School. She commented that many community members use these courts for recreational tennis. She indicated that the courts are in bad shape and will further degrade if they are not resurfaced. She added that, if the courts are not repaired, the high school and middle school tennis teams will no longer be able to host matches on these courts, which bring many visitors to Cannon Falls. She described the benefits of playing tennis. Mayor Robinson indicated that this request will be further discussed.

Police Chief Badge Pinning Presentation Police Chief McCormick introduced Officer Christine Good, the newest member of the Cannon Falls Police Department. He discussed the badge pinning ceremony and described Police Officers as guardians of the community who serve with honor, integrity, and courage.

Shepherd's Center Presentation Mayor Robinson administered the Oath of Office for Officer Good, and Officer Good's husband participated in the badge pinning ceremony. Officer Good was welcomed by the Mayor and Council Members.

Rod Johnson, Executive Director of Shepherd's Center of Cannon Valley, expressed appreciation to the City for supporting the Shepherd's Center. He indicated that one of the goals of the Shepherd's Center is to help make Cannon Falls a community that is attractive to Seniors. He referenced discussions with Mayo Clinic

with regard to providing valet parking at the hospital and a project to provide bicycles for use on the trail system. He announced a verbal agreement to offer a concert by Larry Gatlin and the Gatlin Brothers on September 24 as a fundraiser for Shepherd's Center.

John Hobert, Past Chairman of the Shepherd's Center Board of Directors, introduced himself and described programs and services offered by Shepherd's Center. He discussed activities of the Education, Fundraising, and Service Committees. He reviewed recent and future Adventures in Learning programs. He discussed veterans recognition and the Book Buddies program offered through Cannon Falls Elementary School. He discussed educational workshops, day trips, travel opportunities, games, and physical activities offered to area Seniors. He discussed the purpose of the TRIAD program to promote Senior safety. He discussed periodic Open Houses at the Shepherd's Center, free summer concerts in the park, and coordination of volunteers to assist with the Meals on Wheels program. He discussed the Cannon Falls Area News radio program and working with AARP to schedule tax preparation assistance for Seniors. He discussed the Shepherd's Center Health Fair and other service projects. He reviewed fundraising activities, including annual community concerts, Family Fare receipts collection, and other fundraising programs. He expressed appreciation to the City Council for their support of the Shepherd's Center.

Public Hearing:
Resolution 2283,
Establish Utility Rate
Changes

City Administrator Johnson provided background information and referenced recent utility rate discussions. He summarized the proposed utility rate changes, including a recommended 5% increase in water and sewer rates through March of 2018, a 5% increase through the end of 2018, and a 5% increase in 2019, followed by proposed 1% increases in 2020 and 2021. He also reviewed proposed increases in stormwater utility rates. Mayor Robinson opened the Public Hearing at 7:03 p.m. No one came forward to speak. Mayor Robinson closed the Public Hearing at 7:04 p.m.

A motion was made by Council Member Abadie, seconded by Council Member Carpenter, to adopt Resolution 2283, setting utility rates for 2017, 2018, and 2019. Council Member Abadie discussed the impact of past Council decisions with regard to utility rates and described the need for larger increases over the next three years in order to achieve the recommended utility fund goals. She stated her opinion that, although this may be an unpopular position, it is the responsible Council action.

Council Member McCusker discussed his request to schedule another workshop for discussion of other possible alternatives. He expressed appreciation for the information provided by Ehlers. He questioned the need to establish utility rates for the next three years as opposed to annually, as has been done in the past. Administrator Johnson provided rationale for the three-year proposal.

Council Member McCusker expressed concerns with regard to charging the same rates for commercial / industrial accounts and residential customers. He discussed the fact that the more water a family uses, the more it will be charged. He discussed the impacts on properties with sprinkler systems. He expressed understanding with regard to the circumstances that led up to this proposal, including installation of infrastructure for Sandstone Ridge, a development that was never completed, but stated that the citizens of Cannon Falls should not be penalized for this decision.

Council Member McCusker recommended a 10% increase for commercial and industrial accounts for one year, followed by a review next year. He suggested further discussion with regard to the process of collecting delinquent utility payments with taxes.

Council Member Dalton expressed confusion with regard to Council Member McCusker's comment that a larger family should not pay more for water when they use more. Council Member McCusker clarified his concerns related to an increase in water rates when a certain threshold is reached. Public Works Director Bergeson commented that in 2013 the State of Minnesota mandated that the City adopt a conservation rate system as a way of incentivizing water conservation. Council Member McCusker expressed disagreement with penalizing larger families for their need to use more water, describing this practice as unfair. Director Bergeson discussed recommended changes to the tiered system that would result in more penalties for higher consumption as a way to draw attention to the need for water conservation. Council Member Abadie described this as seeking compensation from bigger water consumers as opposed to penalizing families. The impact of a leaking toilet on water usage and water charges was discussed.

Council Member Carpenter referenced information included in the report with regard to utility charges for average residential users. Council Member McCusker provided additional information, based on his experience in the plumbing business. Water usage for residential gardening purposes was discussed. Council Member Abadie and Director Bergeson clarified that irrigation rates pertain to commercial

enterprises.

Council Member Abadie questioned Council Member McCusker's position that commercial users should pay more than residential users for higher consumption. Council Member McCusker reiterated his concerns with regard to penalizing residents for infrastructure investments and charging the same rates for residents and businesses. Council Member Carpenter commented that the City does not have control over water use by families. The current tiered rate system was clarified. Council Member McCusker commented with regard to operating expenses.

A vote was taken, and Resolution 2283 carried by a vote of 5:1, with Council Member McCusker dissenting.

Consent Agenda

- A. Just and Correct Claims – Accounting Period Ending May 31, 2017
- ~~B. Meeting Minutes for May 16, 2017, City Council Meeting~~
This item was pulled by Council Member Carpenter.
- C. Approve Final Payment for 2016 Street Improvement Project
- D. Resolution 2284, Supporting Three Rivers Community Action Development Proposal
- E. Resolution 2285, Accepting a Monetary Donation in Memory of Joan Risty to the Library
- F. Second Reading and Adoption of Ordinance 353, Amending Chapter 152 of the Cannon Falls City Code Concerning Dynamic Display Signage Locations

A motion was made by Council Member Dalton, seconded by Council Member Althoff and unanimously carried, to approve the Consent Agenda, minus Item B.

Resolution 2281,
Accepting a Monetary
Donation for the Fire
Department

Fire Chief Anderson commented that the funds from this donation would be allocated toward infrared camera equipment. The use of this equipment was discussed.

Charter Commission
Discussion

A motion was made by Dalton, seconded by Council Member McCusker and unanimously carried, to adopt Resolution 2281.

Administrator Johnson referenced information provided by the League of Minnesota Cities with regard to Charter Commissions. He discussed the recommendations of City Attorney Roger Knutson with regard to the process of reestablishing a Charter Commission. Council Member Abadie discussed the requirement for a Charter City to have a Charter Commission. Council Member McCusker

described past and current Council Members as having the best intentions for the City.

Mayor Robinson commented that the Cannon Falls Charter was established in 1905. Council Member McCusker commented with regard to the complicated nature of a Charter City. Council Member Abadie indicated that Cannon Falls is a Charter City and that the topic of discussion relates to the requirement for a Charter Commission. She reviewed the roles and responsibilities of a Charter Commission. The process of amending or eliminating the Charter was discussed. The process involved with reestablishing the Charter Commission was discussed. Council Members Abadie and Carpenter expressed support for reestablishing a Charter Commission.

A motion was made by Council Member Dalton to reestablish the Charter Commission.

Meeting Minutes for
May 16, 2017, City
Council Meeting

It was clarified that the Charter Commission would make recommendations with regard to amending the Charter, which would need to be approved by the voters. Council Member McCusker referenced a list of disadvantages of a Charter City. The process of abandoning the Charter was reviewed. Council Member Althoff inquired with regard to legal fees, and the process of reestablishing the Charter Commission was reviewed.

A motion to reestablish the Charter Commission was seconded by Council Member Abadie, a vote was taken, and the motion carried by a vote of 4:2, with Council Members McCusker and Althoff dissenting.

Council Member Carpenter inquired with regard to a clerical error on Page 14 indicating that Council Member Abadie both made and seconded a motion. Mayor Robinson recommended tabling approval of the minutes in order for this issue to be further investigated. Council Members unanimously expressed agreement with this recommendation.

Staff Reports

Community Development Director Maroney provided updates with regard to construction projects relating to the GrandStay Hotel, Alexander Court, the Strike Tool addition, and Artisan Plaza. Mayor Robinson commented with regard to demolition of the former Hardee's Restaurant building.

City Engineer Anderson provided additional information with regard to the Alexander Court street project.

Director Bergeson expressed appreciation to the Public Works staff for their hard work over the past couple of weeks.

Chief McCormick discussed the upcoming North Star Grand Prix Bike Race event and traffic considerations.

Administrator Johnson discussed recent meetings with Hiawatha Broadband Communications related to the schedule for the installation of fiber to the public works facility, the public safety building and city hall.

Administrator Johnson discussed plans for an upcoming meeting with representatives of SEH and S.M. Hentges for discussion of concerns related to Limestone Road.

Administrator Johnson provided an update with regard to work on the Highway 52 interchange, indicating that the interchange is expected to reopen on Friday morning, June 16.

Administrator Johnson reported that he will be attending the upcoming League of Minnesota Cities Annual Conference.

Mayor and Council
Reports

Council Member Dalton reported that the Trail Board approved the final draft of the Master Plan.

Council Member Dalton referenced discussion by the interim Farmers Market Board, in light of plans by David Olson to open a farmers market at the new Artisan Plaza. Community Development Director Maroney provided an update with regard to Planning Commission discussion of this project, indicating that the Planning Commission has recommended approval of a Conditional Use Permit, which among other things would allow outside sales.

Council Member Abadie provided additional information with regard to the proposed tennis court resurfacing project, stating that the School Board has scheduled a special meeting for further discussion of this matter.

Council Member Althoff referenced discussion of the Artisan Plaza project during the Planning Commission meeting, during which farmers market vendor concerns were voiced.

Council Member McCusker expressed appreciation to the Risty family for their donation. He discussed Library activities.

Council Member Carpenter discussed a recent trip to Washington DC and meetings with legislators, during which transportation and other concerns were discussed.

Mayor Robinson also commented with regard to legislator meetings, stating that legislators were receptive to the Highway 52 overpass project.

Adjournment The meeting adjourned at 8:09 p.m.

Adopted by the City Council of the City of Cannon Falls on the 18th day of July, 2017.

Lyman M. Robinson, Mayor

ATTEST:

Ronald S. Johnson, City Administrator