

The Cannon Falls City Council met in a regular session on Tuesday, April 21, 2020, at 6:30 p.m. in the City Council Chambers. Present were Mayor John Althoff and Council Members Morris Mattson (remotely), Bill Duncan, Derek Lundell (remotely), Mary Jill Bringgold, Matt Montgomery (remotely), and Steve Gesme (remotely). Also present were Neil Jensen, City Administrator; Laura Qualey, Community and Economic Business Specialist (remotely); and Tim Malchow, EMS Chief (remotely).

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

Roll Call Roll call was conducted. All members were present.

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

Approval of Agenda A motion was made by Council Member Duncan, seconded by Council Member Lundell and unanimously carried, to approve the Agenda.

Consent Agenda

- A. Just and Correct Claims – Accounting Period Ending April 16, 2020
- B. Meeting Minutes for March 17, 2020, City Council Work Session
- C. Meeting Minutes for April 7, 2020, City Council Meeting
- D. Resolution 2477 – Accepting a Grant for \$30,000 from the Minnesota Department of Health for Purchase of Supplies and Reimbursement of Wages due to the COVID-19 Pandemic for the Ambulance Department

A motion was made by Council Member Bringgold, seconded by Council Member Mattson and unanimously carried, to approve the Consent Agenda.

Council Business:

2020 On-Sale Liquor
License Prorated
Refund

City Administrator Jensen provided background information. He noted that Council Member Lundell had requested that this item be placed on the agenda. He referenced a proposal for a 3-month (25%) refund to be given for each on-sale liquor license.

Council Member Lundell stated that there are restaurants and bars in town that have been forced to close or are struggling. He commented that he felt this was one thing the City could do to assist these businesses. He stated this would result in about a \$700 refund for most businesses, which would perhaps supply a small amount of relief and would also show some goodwill from the City.

Council Member Mattson expressed support for the proposal.

Council Member Gesme asked how the 3-month time period had been decided upon, as it is yet unknown how long the shutdown may last. He suggested waiting and perhaps adjusting the amount at renewal time.

Council Member Bringgold expressed agreement that this was a great sentiment and is something that the City could do for these businesses, but she also expressed agreement that the time period is unknown. She added that in retrospect the 25% amount may look rather small. She also commented that there are a lot of other businesses that cannot be open at this time and would not benefit from this refund. She suggested waiting and either reducing the amount that businesses pay in 2021 or providing refunds at the end of the year.

Council Member Lundell noted that the 3-month period was suggested just to be able to come up with a specific amount. He expressed agreement that it may make sense to wait until the businesses reopen.

Council Member Duncan expressed agreement with Council Member Gesme's suggestion. He noted that Governor Walz just issued an executive order for businesses to be allowed to sell a bottle of wine or a 6-pack of beer with food orders. He stated his opinion that waiting until the renewal period to provide a refund would be a better idea.

Council Member Montgomery asked if the refund proposal could be passed at this time and then adjusted further if necessary. He stated that waiting until the end of the year for renewal would be far too long. He commented that providing refunds at this time would show the businesses in Cannon Falls that everyone is in this together.

Council Member Bringgold commented she felt that \$700 is a very minimal amount and would not help the businesses very much. She stated that she would agree to adopting a resolution in favor of providing some relief in the future, but commented that she did not want to commit to 25% if the amount really should be 50%, with the City then having to do this twice.

Council Member Montgomery expressed understanding with the comments, noting that this is a very unique situation. He stated that the City should try to help businesses as soon as possible.

Council Member Bringgold asked what can be done to help other businesses that are not being allowed to conduct any business at all.

Council Member Duncan cautioned against being selective.

Council Member Lundell noted that the reason he had brought this up for these businesses specifically was because they pay the City for licenses, so the City is in a position to refund some of these payments.

Council Member Bringgold expressed her understanding that these businesses have suffered a loss in revenue, but commented that they can at least open their doors to sell takeout, whereas other businesses cannot conduct any business.

Mayor Althoff commented he felt something should be done at this time to assist these businesses.

A motion was made by Council Member Montgomery, seconded by Council Member Lundell to adopt Resolution 2477, providing a 25% refund on liquor license fees. A roll call vote was requested. Council Members Lundell, Mattson, and Montgomery voted aye; Council Members Bringgold, Duncan, and Gesme voted nay, suggesting to wait and take action at a later time. Mayor Althoff was called upon to break the tie and voted aye; motion carried.

Reports:

Council
Committees/
Commissions

Kyle Paulson, President of the Cannon Falls Area Chamber of Commerce, reported that the Chamber Board is scheduled to meet on April 23. She noted that decisions will be made at that time with regard to Fun Fest events and the golf tournament. She stated that the 2020 Discover Cannon Falls guides are now available at the Chamber office, suggesting that people call ahead to make sure the office is open. Ms. Paulson noted that on the Chamber website there is a Cannon Falls Community Resources link that can be used to access information regarding local, state, and federal agencies. She referenced a link called Quick Clicks, which lists Chamber businesses that have adjusted their services and/or hours of operation.

Mayor Althoff reported the EDA met on April 8. Administrator Jensen provided a review of the topics that were discussed, which included a land sale of the CannonBelles Cheese property along with a Public Hearing on this topic. He noted that 90-day deferral requests on EDA loans were approved for Tilion Brewing Company and Raw Bistro.

Staff

Administrator Jensen provided an update regarding the former Cannonball property, noting that bids will be requested in the near future to demolish the building.

Administrator Jensen reported that the EDA discussed the federal PPP program and other types of assistance available to small businesses.

Administrator Jensen noted the hiring of Laura Qualey.

Council Member Bringgold reported that the Library Board met on April 10. She noted that the Library has started curbside service. She stated that the Library Board will meet again on May 1, noting that she will provide further updates during the next City Council meeting.

EMS Chief Malchow reported that an application was submitted for another grant through the Minnesota Department of Health in the amount of \$200,000. He stated that he has requested new ventilators and funding assistance toward maintenance of the current ventilators. He stated that that Public Safety Department is keeping abreast of the situation daily. He noted that an order was placed for surgical masks, with delivery anticipated by the end of the month.

Mayor Althoff expressed appreciation for all of EMS Chief Malchow's efforts.

Mayor and Council

Council Member Mattson requested an update regarding the Highway 19 reconstruction project, scheduled for 2021. Administrator Jensen indicated that he will follow up on this request. Council Member Mattson relayed concerns from residents pertaining to plans for the sidewalks.

Council Member Lundell asked if there were still plans to build a park on the former hospital site. It was suggested to add this to the agenda of next week's Public Works Commission meeting.

Council Member Montgomery reported that the Pool Commission and the Park Board will meet in the near future, along with the Public Works Commission, and that decisions will be made regarding the opening of the pool. He thanked everyone who attended the meeting remotely. He suggested that in-person attendees obtain and wear a mask to set a good example for the citizens. He encouraged everyone to be cautious, be safe, and stay healthy.

Council Member Gesme extended a welcome to Laura Qualey. He also expressed appreciation to Mike Gesme for the great job on the meeting set-up. Mayor Althoff also expressed his appreciation to Mike Gesme for his work.

Council Member Bringgold noted she has received several messages regarding people wondering where they can obtain mulch. She asked if there would be a pile placed near the Public Works building, as had been done in the past. It was suggested to check with Interim Public Works Director Anway regarding this question.

Council Member Duncan expressed concerns regarding the decision about opening of the pool in terms of expending time and resources. He suggested that pool staff be notified as soon as possible, so they would have time to seek other summer employment if necessary.

Mayor Althoff reiterated that the pool will be discussed during the upcoming Public Works Commission meeting.

Mayor Althoff suggested discussion of whether the \$130,000 mill and overlay project should be completed at this point, or should be put on hold.

Public Input / Other
Discussion

Mayor Althoff reviewed the public input procedure. No one was in attendance to provide public input.

Mayor Althoff noted that the City is awaiting direction from Governor Walz with regard to the shutdown. He expressed concerns about testing and opening too soon. He referenced the loss of revenue for the City and noted that he has requested that Administrator Jensen compile a report for the next meeting regarding how the decline in water usage will impact City revenue.

A discussion was held regarding the differences in residential and commercial utility usage and rates and how this will affect the City.

Mayor Althoff commented, in addition to the loss of revenue from utility payments, combined with the fact that the Cannon Falls Vehicle License Center is closed and there is the possibility the pool will not open, that these factors could result in a budget shortfall that would need to be addressed in the future.

Adjournment

A motion was made by Council Member Duncan, seconded by Council Member Lundell and carried unanimously, to adjourn the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 7:03 p.m.

Adopted by the City Council of the City of Cannon Falls on the 5th day of May, 2020.

John O. Althoff, Mayor

ATTEST:

Neil L. Jensen, City Administrator