

The Cannon Falls City Council met in a regular session on Tuesday, May 19, 2020, at 6:30 p.m. in the City Council Chambers. Present were Mayor John Althoff and Council Members Morris Mattson, Bill Duncan, Derek Lundell (remotely), Mary Jill Bringgold, Matt Montgomery (remotely), and Steve Gesme (remotely). Also present were Neil Jensen, City Administrator; Jeffrey McCormick, Police Chief (arrived at 6:52 p.m.); Greg Anderson, City Engineer (remotely); Wes Anway, Interim Public Works Director (remotely); Nicole Miller, Library Director (remotely); and Laura Qualey, Community and Economic Business Specialist (remotely).

- Call to Order Mayor Althoff called the City Council meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.
- Roll Call 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 Bringgold and unanimously carried, to approve the amended Agenda.
- Consent Agenda A. Just and Correct Claims – Accounting Period Ending May 15, 2020
B. Meeting Minutes for May 5, 2020, City Council Meeting
~~C. 2020 Senior Recognition at John Burch Park~~
 This item was pulled by Council Member Mattson
D. Refunding Bonds G.O. Series 2011A and 2013A
~~E. Reclassification of Finance Department~~
 This item was pulled by Council Member Mattson
F. Resolution 2479, Accepting a Grant for \$77,400 from MN Department of Health for Planning, Preparing, and Responding to COVID-19 Pandemic for the Ambulance Department
~~G. High School Graduation Requests~~
 This item was pulled by Council Member Mattson
H. Resolution 2480, Accepting a Grant for \$1,000 from Renewing the Countryside for the Farmers Market
I. Approve Signage for Compost Site
~~J. Resolution 2481, Approving MnDOT Snow Joint Powers Agreement~~
 This item was pulled by Council Member Duncan

A motion was made by Council Member Bringgold, seconded by Council Member Duncan, to approve the Consent Agenda minus Items C, E, G, and J.

Mayor Althoff provided background information relating to Item D, noting that the bond rates are very good at the current time. He reported that if the East Side and West Side street reconstruction

project bonds were refinanced, it would save the City approximately \$257,000. He expressed appreciation to City Administrator Jensen for his efforts in this regard.

Mayor Althoff also expressed appreciation to EMS Chief Tim Malchow for his efforts in obtaining the grant from the Minnesota Department of Health.

A vote was taken, and the motion unanimously carried.

Council Business:
Swimming Pool
Closure

City Administrator Jensen reported that on May 7 the Public Works Commission met to discuss closure of the swimming pool. He commented that this was a very difficult decision. He stated that the general consensus of the Public Works Commission was to close the pool for the season. He commented that this was felt to be necessary in order to keep people safe. He provided details of the vote in this regard.

Administrator Jensen reported that the Park Board met on May 12, and the closure of the pool was also discussed at this meeting. He stated that it was also the consensus of the Park Board to close the pool for the season. Council Member Montgomery commented that an official vote was not taken due to the fact that the Park Board was missing a member, as he had moved out of town. He noted that the consensus was unanimous. He expressed agreement that this was a difficult decision and stated that he wanted the public to know that this decision was made not only for safety purposes due to the pandemic, but also due to the age of the pool and the amount of time and effort that it would have taken to get it up and running.

Council Member Gesme commented that he felt that if the pool would have been opened and attendance kept to a certain number of people, there would have been no good way to accomplish this.

Council Member Duncan asked if the lifeguards who were present wished to comment regarding this matter. They stated that they had just come to listen.

A motion was made by Council Member Duncan, seconded by Council Member Gesme and unanimously carried, to close the City Pool for the 2020 season.

Request for Proposals
- Engineering
Services

Administrator Jensen provided background information with regard to this item. He noted that SEH has been the engineering firm that the

City has used for the past several years. He stated that he has been informed of several concerns with regard to the services provided by this firm. He commented that he felt it would be a good idea to request proposals to see what other firms may be available to provide services.

Mayor Althoff stated that a motion could be made to keep SEH, or a motion could be made to request proposals from other engineering firms.

Council Member Duncan stated his opinion that proposals should be sought for engineering services, as the City has not had a contract with SEH for approximately 14 years. He stated his opinion that contract is needed for engineering services.

A motion was made by Council Member Duncan, seconded by Council Member Gesme, to request proposals for professional engineering services for the City of Cannon Falls.

Council Member Bringgold expressed agreement that any outside professional services should be bid out occasionally to ensure the City is getting the best prices and the best service.

Council Member Montgomery requested clarification that if the motion passes this would not be rejecting any current agreement, it would be to evaluate proposals for services. Council Member Bringgold clarified that there is no formal agreement in place currently.

A vote was taken, and the motion unanimously carried.

2020 Senior
Recognition at John
Burch Park

Council Member Mattson provided details regarding the proposed recognition and stated his opinion that this is a good idea. Council Member Duncan expressed agreement with the recognition but asked who would be responsible for cleanup. Council Members commented that the organizers of the recognition would be responsible for cleanup activities.

A motion was made by Council Member Mattson, seconded by Council Member Bringgold, to approve a Class of 2020 recognition at John Burch Park.

Council Member Montgomery commented that the lights will again be turned on at John Burch Park on Wednesday, June 3, to honor the seniors, with proper social distancing encouraged.

Council Member Montgomery offered a suggestion that the Class of 2020 recognition be allowed to remain up through at least June 3. There was a consensus that this would be a good idea.

A vote was taken, and the motion carried unanimously.

Reclassification of
Finance Department

Council Member Mattson indicated that he would need to abstain from discussion or action regarding this item.

Mayor Althoff noted that several positions are being reorganized, resulting in savings for the City of approximately \$100,000 to \$125,000. He noted that staff members have expressed agreement with these changes.

A motion was made by Council Member Duncan, seconded by Council Member Lundell, for reclassification of the Finance Department. A vote was taken. Council Members Lundell, Bringgold, Duncan, Montgomery, and Gesme voted aye; Council Member Mattson abstained. Five ayes; one abstention, motion carried.

High School
Graduation Request

Council Member Mattson requested clarification of the status of this request. It was discussed that if the City Council approves the request, the City will work with the Police Department and the School District on a graduation cruising event.

Police Chief McCormick provided additional background information, noting that he has discussed this activity with the Cannon Falls School District Superintendent and Principal. He stated that he has reviewed Executive Order #56 and referenced language in Section 6 regarding gatherings. He provided a summary of the options that have been discussed.

A motion was made by Council Member Mattson, seconded by Council Member Montgomery and unanimously carried, to approve the Cannon Falls High School graduation celebration request, with the City working with the School District on a cruising event.

Resolution 2481,
Approving MnDOT
Snow Joint Powers
Agreement

Council Member Duncan referenced past discussion by the City Council regarding this agreement. He stated his understanding that a contract had been entered into with the Metro District for a portion of the snowplowing. He noted that the amount of that agreement was much more reasonable than what District 6 is offering. He asked Interim Public Works Director Anway to provide comparison information. Interim Director Anway provided details regarding the number of snow events and the employee and equipment time,

totaling \$2,325 for snow removal last winter. He commented that this had been a pretty light year in terms of snow removal.

Council Member Duncan asked for clarification of whether that amount was comparable to the rate District 6 is offering. Interim Director Anway discussed his concerns with the District 6 proposal, noting that the end result is always unknown. He provided an explanation with regard to how the Metro District contract is billed.

Mayor Althoff asked for clarification of the area that is maintained by District 6 and the area that is maintained by the Metro District. Interim Director Anway provided additional information in this regard.

Council Member Duncan provided an explanation of the reasons he had pulled this item from the Consent Agenda, noting a difficult working relationship with District 6 in the past.

A motion was made by Council Member Duncan to reluctantly approve Resolution 2481, approving a MnDOT snow joint powers agreement. The motion was seconded by Council Member Bringgold.

Interim Director Anway provided additional background information, noting that these agreements are not required. He commented with regard to timely snow removal.

Council Member Mattson offered a suggestion of making this a one-year agreement, as opposed to a five-year agreement. Administrator Jensen provided an explanation of why this would not be feasible.

A vote was taken, and the motion carried unanimously.

Reports:
Council
Committees/
Commissions

Kyle Paulson, President of the Cannon Falls Area Chamber of Commerce, expressed appreciation to City staff members Mike Gesme and Laura Qualey along with Council Member Montgomery for their production of a video entitled, "Collectively Cannon Falls." She provided a list of the various places this video could be viewed. Ms. Paulson reported that the flower baskets will be hung very soon. She expressed appreciation to the nearly 40 flower basket sponsors.

Ms. Paulson provided an update with regard to the business reopening process. She encouraged the community to be patient during this time and express their appreciation to local businesses.

Council Member Gesme noted that the primary discussion topic during the recent Public Works Commission was the pool closing.

Library Director Miller provided a summary of the stages that are planned for reopening the Library. She stated that she was unsure of the exact date that the Library will be able to reopen. She noted that curbside service is still available along with virtual programming. She commented that the number of views for virtual programs is comparable with program attendance at the Library.

Council Member Bringgold noted that the bond refinance and the reorganization of the Finance Department were discussed during the Finance Committee meeting along with preliminary budgets. She commented that there are so many unknowns at this point, and this will need to be discussed during future meetings. She stated that efforts will be made to be as fair as possible, adding that everyone should be prepared for a very conservative budget. Administrator Jensen noted that he will have a discussion with the department heads in early June to get the process started. Budget challenges and the potential for a decrease in State LGA revenue were discussed.

Council Member Bringgold also noted that a discussion was conducted regarding tabling the search for a Public Works Director at this time.

Council Member Montgomery reported that the primary discussion during the Park Board meeting pertained to the closure of the pool, adding that they also discussed the proposed park on the west side of town. Interim Director Anway stated this matter will be brought back to the Public Works Commission for further input. Council Member Montgomery noted that the Park Board has one vacancy and invited anyone who is interested in serving on the Park Board to contact him. He also noted that there is not yet an official name for the west side park. He reviewed several suggestions that have already been made and invited further ideas to be submitted.

Staff

Community and Economic Specialist Qualey provided an EDA update in terms of property marketing strategies. She discussed the making of the "Collectively Cannon Falls" video and expressed appreciation to Mike Gesme and Council Member Montgomery for their efforts in producing this video. She provided a summary of the different businesses that were highlighted in the video. She noted that it was great seeing the optimism and energy on display in Cannon Falls. She reiterated the different communication channels where the 10-

minute video can be viewed. She commented that the full version of the video, which will probably be about an hour long, is currently being worked on and invited everyone to view this when it is available.

Ms. Qualey discussed a recent meeting with representatives of the Blandin Foundation, during which projects that have been completed along with those on the horizon were discussed. She noted that there are considerable resources available and invited anyone in the community to contact her regarding ideas for how these funds could be utilized to connect the community. She provided a summary of things that have already been accomplished in this regard.

Administrator Jensen provided an update regarding progress on the Cannonball project and the costs thus far. He noted that the projected date for completion of demolition, well sealing, and site preparation is August 31, after which the property will be available for redevelopment.

Administrator Jensen reported that the Vehicle License Center reopened earlier in the day and was quite busy. He discussed plans to ensure the safety of the public.

Mayor Althoff commented that more than \$300,000 had been allotted for the Cannonball project, which is expected to come in at a little over \$200,000.

Interim Director Anway reported that he discussed bids for the mill and overlay project with SEH. He noted that more information will be provided during the next Council meeting on June 2.

Interim Director Anway referenced the City staff reorganization and asked about future plans for the Public Works employee who is currently working out of City Hall. He commented that training activities have been challenging. Council Members suggested further discussion of training needs.

Interim Director Anway recommended that the Public Works Commission resume meeting every two weeks, as opposed to once per month. Council Members expressed agreement with this recommendation.

Library Director Miller commented that she has had discussions with other library directors regarding their concerns about public safety as libraries are reopened. She noted that one concern relates to the

ability to provide the use of computers to the public and the librarians' inability to assist patrons due to social distancing guidelines. She stated that she found some free remote desktop software that she had installed on the computers, which will allow Library staff to assist patrons in a safe manner once the Library is open. Council Member Bringgold asked how this program will work, and Director Miller provided additional information in this regard.

Mayor and Council

The Mayor and Council Members offered condolences to Council Member Bringgold with regard to the passing of her father.

Council Member Gesme commented that the location of the new west side park had previously been known as Paradise Plains and in later years Snob Hill. He offered these as potential considerations for names of the park.

Council Member Gesme suggested reopening the discussion of the Downtown Farmers Market. He referenced a letter that was sent to him by Tim Mahle. He stated that Downtown Farmers Market vendors are proposing to run the market themselves as a separate entity and have developed a plan for doing so. He stated that the City may have to consider rezoning the property to allow this use. He expressed concerns about the Facebook advertising being taken down. He stated that Mr. Mahle has asked about the distribution of grant funding. Council Member Mattson and Mayor Althoff provided information relating to agricultural grants.

Council Member Duncan expressed concerns about the market being operated as a private entity from a liability standpoint. Council Member Bringgold noted that laws have changed in recent years. It was suggested to conduct further research in this regard.

Council Member Montgomery referenced discussion of potential LGA funding cuts. He suggested that the Finance Committee plan the budget in accordance with current revenue projections, as opposed to planning out of fear, adding that adjustments could be made later on.

Mayor Althoff asked whether the Cannon Falls Bears will be using John Burch Park. Council Member Montgomery indicated that things are still in limbo for amateur baseball at this point. Interim Director Anway reported that he received a request to use Archie Swenson Fields for softball leagues. Social distancing challenges were discussed. It was suggested to add this topic to the next Council meeting agenda. Mayor Althoff commented that more information may be available from the Governor's Office at that point.

Council Member Lundell commented that closing the pool was not something that the City wanted to do, but safety needs to be the first consideration. He suggested using this time to further discuss a new pool, versus repairs to the old pool.

Council Member Mattson expressed appreciation to Ms. Qualey, Council Member Montgomery, and Mike Gesme for their efforts on the video.

Council Member Bringgold expressed appreciation for the kind words regarding her father. She commented regarding the budget planning process. She referenced Finance Committee discussion of planning for modest growth. She commented that it is easier to add things to the budget, as opposed to making budget cuts. She noted that the exact amount of LGA funding may not be confirmed until November, based on the economic climate of Minnesota at that time.

Mayor Althoff noted that he had been contacted by Chris Larson from Tilion Brewing, who stated that the brewery is making plans to reopen on June 1. He noted that Mr. Larson has requested that the Council consider allowing Tilion Brewing to install a temporary patio on the west side of the building, which is City property. He noted that the brewery's liability insurance policy would be updated to include this outdoor seating area. It was suggested to add this topic to the June 2 City Council meeting agenda, during which a formal plan could be presented by Tilion Brewing.

Mayor Althoff noted that the State of Minnesota received more than a billion dollars from the Federal CARES Act. He referenced discussion by the Minnesota Legislature related to funding assistance to local governments, noting that the Legislature adjourned prior to passing an agreement.

Mayor Althoff provided an update regarding the Cannon Valley Fair, noting that the Fair Board has decided to wait until June 1 to make a final decision.

Public Input

Mayor Althoff reviewed the public input procedure.

Bill Hoyt, Cannon Falls, introduced himself as a Board Member with the Cannon Valley Senior Center. He provided an update on the current situation at the Senior Center. He noted that the center provides services to many other areas of the community besides seniors. He provided a summary of these different areas of outreach.

He commented that the COVID-19 pandemic has been very difficult for the Senior Center, as revenue sources have decreased dramatically. He summarized some of the ways that the Cannon Valley Senior Center Board is being proactive in terms of revenue streams, including an approved application for \$4,100 from the CARES Act Payroll Protection Program. On behalf of the Cannon Valley Senior Center Board, he requested that the City Council consider an additional \$2,000 contribution from the City this year. He commented that this additional funding would help immensely.

Mayor Althoff inquired regarding the current contribution from the City, and Mr. Hoyt indicated that the Senior Center currently receives \$5,000.

It was suggested to add this request to the agenda for the next City Council meeting.

The Cannon Valley Fair was further discussed. Mayor Althoff reported that it was been suggested to use the City's financial contribution to the Cannon Valley Fair to put on a fireworks display, if the fair is cancelled.

Tim Mahle, Cannon Falls, spoke regarding the Cannon Falls Downtown Farmers Market and referenced discussion during the last City Council meeting. He reported that the Cannon Falls Downtown Farmers Market has taken steps to form an LLC. He noted that this will resolve the City's liability concerns and eliminate decisions regarding which market to eliminate or retain. He noted that the formation of an LLC will provide market vendors within the organization a layer of protection along with their own individual coverage, especially in relation to COVID-19 issues and safety concerns. He reviewed additional expenses relating to recommendations made by the State, noting that so far the Downtown Farmers Market has received no funding from the City. He provided a summary of the benefits that creating this LLC will provide, such as the ability to apply for and receive grant funding. He provided information relating to the process that needs to take place for anyone wishing to participate in this market. He stated that he is requesting an annual permit for the Downtown Farmers Market.

Mayor Althoff commented that he would like to see everyone take time to remember those who made the ultimate sacrifice to their country on Memorial Day.

Council Member Gesme inquired regarding the cost of asbestos abatement on the Cannonball property. Administrator Jensen noted that the bid included asbestos abatement and demolition, at a cost of \$74,000.

Interim Director Anway noted that a member of his staff was approached by a Council Member and was told to buy local at a certain store. He commented that he did not feel this was proper procedure. Council Member Duncan expressed agreement that this was not proper.

Adjournment

A motion was made by Council Member Duncan, seconded by Council Member Mattson and carried unanimously, to adjourn the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 8:09 p.m.

Adopted by the City Council of the City of Cannon Falls on the 2nd day of June, 2020.

John O. Althoff, Mayor

ATTEST:

Neil L. Jensen, City Administrator