

The Cannon Falls City Council met in a regular session on Tuesday, November 17, 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, Mary Jill Bringgold, Matt Montgomery, and Steve Gesme. Also present were Neil Jensen, City Administrator; Jeffrey McCormick, Police Chief; Laura Qualey, Community and Economic Business Specialist (remotely); and Nicole Miller, Library Director (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 the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance.
- Presentation Mayor Althoff presented Mike Gesme with a plaque from the City of Cannon Falls for 23 years of service. He congratulated Mr. Gesme and stated that the City will miss his services. Mr. Gesme thanked the Mayor and City Council for the recognition
- Approval of Agenda A motion was made by Council Member Duncan, seconded by Council Member Gesme and unanimously carried, to approve the Agenda.
- Consent Agenda
- A. Just and Correct Claims – Accounting Period Ending November 12, 2020
  - B. Meeting Minutes for November 5, 2020, City Council Meeting
  - C. Resolution 2520, Authorizing 2021 City License Renewals
  - D. Resolution 2521, Accepting a Monetary Donation from Invenergy Cannon Falls LLC for \$1,500 to the Fire Department
  - E. Approve 2021 Goodhue County State Building Code Administration Agreement
  - F. Approve Donation of VHF Radios to a Wisconsin Fire Department
  - G. Resolution 2522, Accepting a Transfer of CARES Act Money (\$2,000) from Stanton Township for the Ambulance Department
- A motion was made by Council Member Duncan, seconded by Council Member Lundell and unanimously carried, to approve the Consent Agenda.
- Council Business:
- Police Officer Position Police Chief McCormick reported that Officer Fluhrer has left employment with the City and requested approval to replace his position.
- Chief McCormick stated that he would like to look first at an internal hire, either a part-time officer or from the reserve ranks. Chief

McCormick noted these two options have been successfully used in the past.

Council Member Gesme requested clarification that Chief McCormick had previously stated he was comfortable with the number of officers at that time, even though Officer Fluhrer was on a leave of absence. Chief McCormick commented that there is a difference between being okay with a temporary situation and okay with a permanent situation. He noted that a position will be left open in 2021 resulting from Officer Ekstrom's retirement. He stated that the plan is not to use part-time personnel in a full-time capacity. He noted that he and Lieutenant Berg are going to try to fill in on patrol duty in addition to their regular duties. Chief McCormick commented that if Officer Fluhrer's position is not replaced, they will have to fill two positions using part-time personnel along with himself and Lieutenant Berg.

Council Member Duncan requested clarification of Police Department scheduling. Chief McCormick stated that Lieutenant Berg is currently working to cover one of the two vacant positions. Council Member Duncan suggested that instead of hiring a full-time officer, perhaps another part-time officer would be adequate. Chief McCormick noted that a part-time officer costs the same amount of money to hire and train, and then often they immediately look for another job. He reviewed the advantages of hiring a full-time position and encouraged the City Council to approve a full-time position at this time.

Council Member Gesme asked whether part-time personnel have been approached about increasing their hours. Chief McCormick noted that one officer has a full-time job working for Washington County and the other one is running a business.

A motion was made by Council Member Montgomery, seconded by Council Member Bringgold, to hire a full-time Police Officer.

Council Member Gesme asked how this hire would impact the Police Department budget. Chief McCormick noted that this is a fully funded 2021 position. He commented that there could potentially be a cost savings if an officer is hired at a lower step. Council Member Gesme asked whether part-time personnel would lose any hours with the hire of a full-time officer. Chief McCormick commented regarding part-time officer scheduling, noting that both part-time officers are willing to commit to more hours when they were needed for emergencies.

Council Member Duncan reiterated his opposition to the hire of a full-time officer and commented that the hiring of a part-time position should be sufficient. He stated his opinion that the Police Department's budget is too large.

Council Member Montgomery commented that the Police Department should be supported now more than ever and spoke against significantly reducing the number of officers.

Mayor Althoff commented that whether the City hires a part-time or full-time officer, the process needs to begin, as this could take a sufficient amount of time.

A roll call vote was requested. Council Members Bringgold, Gesme, Lundell, Mattson, and Montgomery voted aye; Council Member Duncan voted nay. The motion carried by a vote of 5:1.

Reports:

Council  
Committees/  
Commissions

Kyle Paulson, President of the Cannon Falls Area Chamber of Commerce, provided an update regarding upcoming events. She reviewed the changes that have been made to the Deck the Falls events. Ms. Paulson provided details of the Toys for Tots program. She noted that the Cannon Falls Chamber is assisting the Northfield Chamber of Commerce with a fundraising raffle and provided details.

Council Member Lundell expressed appreciation to Ms. Paulson for all the work that she has put into planning the Deck the Falls activities, but he commented he did not feel this event should take place this year with school closures, bars and restaurant closures, and other restrictions due to the pandemic. He stated his opinion that it would not be prudent to have a parade, in light of everything that is going on currently.

Council Member Montgomery commented that he felt the lighting of the tree and the fireworks could be done safely, expressing agreement that the parade is probably not a real safe thing to do. Ms. Paulson stated that she will relay the Council Members' comments during an upcoming Chamber Board meeting.

Staff

Library Director Miller noted that the Library will have Toys for Tots box and provided details with regard to how the public can drop off toys. She discussed a virtual community Christmas concert on December 12.

Community and Economic Business Specialist Qualey reported that the CannonBelles cheese plant construction will be on hold until spring.

Ms. Qualey reported that all of the CARES Act money received by the City has been allocated and highlighted how these funds will be utilized. Ms. Qualey stated the Goodhue County CARES Act grant program for small businesses and nonprofit organizations has completed. She provided a summary of how the \$2.2 million in funding was allocated, including 59 Cannon Falls entities.

Ms. Qualey reported that Cannon Falls was part of a multi-state showcase hosted by a University of Michigan extension group on the topic of connecting entrepreneurial communities. She provided a summary of information she presented during the showcase.

Ms. Qualey noted that The Feast event, typically held the first weekend in December in Rochester, has been cancelled. She encouraged members of the public to pick up a copy of *Feast* magazine and shop locally.

Ms. Qualey noted that Artisan Plaza has announced that Oly's Roadhouse will be closed until most likely spring and that the deli will be open until the end of the month and is still taking orders for their Thanksgiving Take 'N Bake.

Administrator Jensen expressed appreciation to Council Members for submitting their score sheets for the civil legal services RFP. He stated that he will set up interviews during the November 30 work session. He noted that the new Public Works Director will start on December 14. He stated that City staff is working on a City Hall pandemic plan, in the event that staff will need to work at home in the future. Administrator Jensen expressed appreciation to Ms. Qualey for all of the work she put in on the CARES Act funding distribution.

Mayor and Council

Council Members expressed appreciation to Mike Gesme for his hard work behind the scenes and his many years of service to the City.

Council Member Montgomery also expressed appreciation to all the teachers and the administration for their hard work trying to figure out how to get through this pandemic situation.

Mayor Althoff noted that Mike Gesme will be missed at City Hall. He expressed appreciation to Ms. Qualey for all of her work regarding the CARES Act funding distribution.

Mayor Althoff also expressed appreciation to Council Members Duncan and Mattson and Administrator Jensen for their work on the labor agreements.

Mayor Althoff issued a reminder regarding the November 28 Deck the Falls event. He also encouraged everyone to shop locally and wished good luck to the Cannon Falls Bombers football team.

Public Input

Mayor Althoff reviewed the public input procedure. There was no public input.

Adjournment

A motion was made by Council Member Gesme, seconded by Council Member Duncan and carried unanimously, to adjourn the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 7:12 p.m.

Adopted by the City Council of the City of Cannon Falls on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of December, 2020.

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John O. Althoff, Mayor

ATTEST:

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Neil L. Jensen, City Administrator