

The Cannon Falls City Council met in a regular session on Tuesday, October 19, 2021, in the City Council Chambers. Present were Council Members Bill Duncan, Steve Gesme, Matt Montgomery, Mary Jill Bringgold, Laura Kronenberger, and Derek Lundell; Mayor John Althoff was absent. Also present were Neil Jensen, City Administrator; Dan Howard, Public Works Director; Mitch Althoff, Police Officer; Laura Qualey, Community & Economic Business Specialist; and Nicole Miller, Library Director (remotely).

- Call to Order Mayor Pro Tem Gesme called the City Council meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.
- Roll Call Roll call was conducted. Council Members Bringgold, Duncan, Gesme, Kronenberger, Lundell, and Montgomery were in attendance. Mayor John Althoff was absent.
- Pledge of Allegiance Mayor Pro Tem Gesme led 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 as presented.
- Public Input Mayor Pro Tem Gesme reviewed the public input procedure.
- Dawn Lanning, Cannon Falls, expressed support for City employees. She requested clarification of the Small Cities Development Program in terms of eligibility to access grant funding toward rehab projects. She expressed appreciation for fundraising efforts by the Cannon Falls Fire Relief Association. She referenced recent Council discussion of COVID-19 policies and vaccination mandates. She quoted Council Member Duncan's comment that a person's personal freedom cannot impinge upon another person's health or safety. She stated her opinion that a person's personal fears cannot impinge upon another person's health or safety. She stated that there are verified risks associated with the COVID vaccines, including death. She noted that the current vaccines are being administered under an emergency use authorization, with only one vaccine being FDA approved, which is not currently available. She cited Council Member Duncan's disregard for City employees' medical freedom as an example of his contempt for those whose opinions who differ from his. She stated that he dismissed the explanation provided by first responders that a vaccine mandate is not wanted, needed, or warranted, and dismissed their serious concerns that a vaccine mandate will put City services in jeopardy.
- Ms. Lanning commented that vaccinated people can still get and spread COVID-19. She voiced concerns about potential liability.

Belinda Kuhn, Cannon Falls, offered her time to allow Ms. Lanning to provide additional comments. Ms. Lanning provided statistics relating to breakthrough cases. She stated that the decision to weigh the benefits versus the risks of vaccination should be a personal choice, with no coercion, bullying, shaming, financial penalties, threats of loss of employment, or mandatory testing. She urged the City Council to reconsider its decision in this regard.

Diane Johnson, Cannon Falls, stated her understanding that the City Council did not vote to approve a vaccination mandate for City employees. She spoke in support of the Council's effort to protect the safety of everyone. She stated that vaccines have been proven to work for most people.

Consent Agenda

- A. Just and Correct Claims – Accounting Period Ending October 14, 2021
- B. Meeting Minutes for September 27, 2021, City Council Work Session
- C. Meeting Minutes for October 5, 2021, City Council Meeting
- D. Approve Use of Parking Lot for Cannon Rivers Senior Living Fundraiser
- E. Resolution 2579, Accepting a Monetary Donation of \$3,240.74 from the Cannon Falls Fire Relief Association to the Fire Department

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

Council Business:

Artisan Plaza Tax
Increment Financing
Discussion

City Administrator Jensen stated that Artisan Plaza owner David Olson requested discussion of the Artisan Plaza TIF District and TIF Plan. Mr. Olson commented that he and others have lost pride in the community over the last couple of years. He suggested a progressive approach to conducting City business. He referenced recent comments about a Public Hearing that he did not attend, stating that he was not notified that a Public Hearing had been scheduled. He stated that he had submitted an application for a business license, which was denied. He stated that Council Members have ethical and fiduciary responsibilities to the community. Mr. Olson stated his intention to repay the TIF funding and lower the tax base for his property. He spoke in opposition to the Keller-Baartman project.

Small Cities
Development
Program

Administrator Jensen referenced past discussion of this topic and introduced Karen DuCharme from SEMMCHRA.

Ms. DuCharme reviewed the results of a recent survey. She reviewed a map of the survey results, indicating respondents who are income eligible and interested in the program. She noted that, as the population of Cannon Falls is less than 5,000, the entire city could be considered for the program. She discussed how the survey was conducted. She stated that at least 90 households met the income guidelines and expressed interest in participating in the program. She noted that each household that is approved would receive up to \$25,000 in rehab funding through this program. She stated that the funding would be structured as a ten-year deferred loan. She reviewed a preliminary proposal, through which at least 21 homes would receive rehab funding. She suggested focusing on owner-occupied properties for this application, with rental properties to be considered for future grant applications. Ms. DuCharme reviewed the next steps in the process. Program eligibility was clarified. Ms. DuCharme commented with regard to how the program would be marketed, if the City's application for funding is approved.

A motion was made by Council Member Montgomery, seconded by Council Member Bringgold and unanimously carried, to approve the submission of an application for the City of Cannon Falls to participate in the Small Cities Development Program.

Resolution 2580,
Approving
Modification #1 of the
Tax Increment
Financing Plan for
Tax Increment
Financing District No.
2-10

Community & Economic Business Specialist Qualey provided background information about the project and discussed a proposed change in the project schedule. She stated that a TIF Plan modification is requested that would indicate that construction would begin by July 1, 2022, and be substantially completed by December 31, 2023.

A motion was made by Council Member Duncan, seconded by Council Member Lundell and unanimously carried, to adopt Resolution 2580.

Resolution 2581,
Authorizing
Administrative Budget
Amendment
(Modification #2) of
the Tax Increment
Financing Plan for
Tax Increment
Financing District No.
2-10

Ms. Qualey discussed a proposed change to the TIF Plan that would amend the type of construction project costs that can be reimbursed. She stated that the total capital project costs would remain the same.

A motion was made by Council Member Bringgold, seconded by Council Member Duncan and unanimously carried, to adopt Resolution 2581.

Resolution 2582,
Authorizing Execution
of a Development
Agreement with
Keller-Baartman
Properties XIV, LLC

Ms. Qualey discussed the proposed development agreement for the Keller-Baartman project.

A motion was made by Council Member Montgomery, seconded by Council Member Bringgold and unanimously carried, to adopt Resolution 2582.

Reports:

Council Committees /
Commissions /
Nonprofit
Organizations

Cannon Falls Area Chamber of Commerce President Kyle Paulson discussed the Chamber's Halloween Treat or Treat Trot event, a free book buggy activity, a school carnival on October 29, and other Halloween weekend events. She discussed the Deck the Falls event on November 27.

Community & Economic Business Specialist Qualey reported that the John Burch Park rehab project will be discussed during the upcoming Minnesota House Bonding Committee tour.

Council Member Montgomery commented regarding ongoing discussion of a request to install lights at Don Mensing Park.

Staff

Library Director Miller discussed Library Board activities, including completion of a Strategic Plan.

Public Works Director Howard discussed hydrant flushing and other activities.

Administrator Jensen discussed the interview process for the Public Works Maintenance I position.

Mayor and Council

Council Member Lundell clarified that the Pfizer BioNTech vaccine has been approved by the FDA.

Council Member Kronenberger summarized recent discussion by the Sandstone Committee and reviewed next steps.

Council Member Montgomery expressed appreciation to the Cannon Falls community, stating that there is much about which to be proud.

Mayor Pro Tem Gesme reviewed the upcoming meeting schedule.

Adjournment

A motion was made by Council Member Bringgold, seconded by Council Member Duncan and unanimously carried, to adjourn the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 7:15 p.m.

Adopted by the City Council of the City of Cannon Falls on the 2nd day of November, 2021.

John O. Althoff, Mayor

ATTEST:

Neil L. Jensen, City Administrator