

The Cannon Falls City Council met in a regular session on Tuesday, December 21, 2021, in the City Council Chambers. Present were Mayor John Althoff and Council Members Bill Duncan, Steve Gesme, Matt Montgomery, Mary Jill Bringgold, Laura Kronenberger, and Derek Lundell. Also present were Neil Jensen, City Administrator; Dan Howard, Public Works Director; Laura Qualey, Community & Economic Business Specialist; Tyler Johnson, Police Officer; and Sarah Schwarzhoff, City Attorney (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 in attendance.

Pledge of Allegiance Mayor Althoff 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 Althoff reviewed the public input procedure.

Ambulance Service member Erik Porten urged the City Council to vote against a vaccination and testing mandate for the City of Cannon Falls. He provided rationale for this position, stating that this would reduce the number of first responders. He also referenced the Nuremberg Code, a set of ethics principles in opposition to experimentation on human beings without their consent through the use of force, fraud, deceit, duress, over-reaching, or other forms of constraint or coercion.

Becky Youngmark urged the City Council to vote against discriminatory COVID-19 policies for City employees. She stated that she is neither for nor against vaccination but would like City employees to have the ability to make individual choices in this regard. She suggested that any testing or masking requirements be extended to all City employees, not just unvaccinated employees. She quoted information from the CDC, the FDA, and the World Health Organization relating to virus transmission and vaccination risks. She commented that medical mandates would adversely impact public safety staffing levels.

Consent Agenda

- A. Just and Correct Claims – Accounting Period Ending December 16, 2021
- B. Meeting Minutes for December 7, 2021, City Council Meeting
- C. Meeting Minutes for December 7, 2021, City Council Work Session
- D. Resolution 2597, Adopting 2022 Tax Levy and Budget

- E. Approve Goodhue County Communications System Subscriber Agreement
- F. Approve Minnesota Water Assistance Program
- G. Resolution 2598, Minnesota Opioids State-Subdivision Memorandum of Agreement
- H. Resolution 2599, Authorizing Budget Transfers for Funding of Water Tower Restoration Project

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

Council Business:
COVID-19 Policy
Update

City Administrator Jensen provided background information and summarized discussion during a recent work session. He reviewed communication from the League of Minnesota Cities relating to a recent court decision that reinstated a Federal vaccination and testing emergency temporary standard. It was noted that Minnesota OSHA will now be required to adopt this standard or an equivalent standard in order to protect Minnesota workers. It was noted that the new MNOSHA rule will apply to both public and private employers, with limited exceptions, and will go into effect upon publication. Administrator Jensen indicated that City Attorney Schwarzhoff will provide additional information during the next Council meeting. Council Member Duncan commented that the City's policy could be stricter than the MNOSHA guidelines and suggested drafting policy language in this regard. Council Member Gesme suggested following the MNOSHA guidelines. City Attorney Schwarzhoff commented that stricter policy language could potentially be challenged. She stated her understanding that the MNOSHA guidelines will mirror the Federal OSHA guidelines. Council Member Kronenberger requested clarification of the past Council decision in this regard, and additional information was provided.

Administrator Jensen suggested drafting a policy and procedure relating to testing in lieu of vaccination. Council Member Duncan expressed support for a vaccination mandate. City Attorney Schwarzhoff provided additional information in this regard. Potential consequences for noncompliance with the policy were discussed. The timeline and next steps were reviewed.

A motion was made by Council Member Montgomery, seconded by Council Member Lundell and unanimously carried, to direct City staff to work on draft policy language for discussion during the next Council meeting.

Resolution 2600,
Authorizing the
Submission of an
Application for the
Goodhue County
Broadband
Partnership Program

Community & Economic Business Specialist Qualey provided background information. She discussed a project to expand the water tower ring, which would allow additional communication equipment to be installed and services to be expanded to the surrounding townships. She reviewed a matching grant funding opportunity toward this project and discussed potential township participation. She requested permission from the City Council to submit the grant application. The benefits of expanded broadband services to the community were discussed.

A motion was made by Council Member Gesme, seconded by Council Member Duncan and unanimously carried, to authorize the submission of the grant application.

Reports:

Council Committees /
Commissions /
Nonprofit
Organizations

Cannon Falls Area Chamber of Commerce President Kyle Paulson reviewed holiday hours for the Chamber office. She discussed the successful Light Up Cannon Falls initiative, the children's gifting tree, and the scavenger hunt. She discussed an upcoming military care packaging event.

Council Member Bringgold discussed Library programming and reviewed holiday hours at the Cannon Falls Library.

Staff

Public Works Director Howard discussed the installation of a new raw wastewater pump.

Community & Economic Business Specialist Qualey summarized a recent EDA meeting, during which the 2022 Strategic Plan was further discussed.

Administrator Jensen discussed the need to replace a furnace in a Public Works building.

Mayor and Council

Council Member Montgomery referenced anonymous communication relating to the upcoming school referendum, describing this as a distraction. He suggested more open and focused community discussion.

Council Member Duncan urged everyone to get a vaccination or booster shot.

Council Member Bringgold expressed concerns about equating vaccine mandates to the Nuremberg trials.

Council Member Gesme relayed resident concerns about vehicles failing to stop at stop signs. Police Officer Johnson provided additional information.

Mayor Althoff and Council Members wished everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 7:24 p.m.

Adopted by the City Council of the City of Cannon Falls on the 4th day of January, 2022.

John O. Althoff, Mayor

ATTEST:

Neil L. Jensen, City Administrator