

TONTOGANY VILLAGE COUNCIL

MEETING MINUTES FROM: July 1, 2019

Council called to order in regular session at 7:00 p.m. with Mayor Todd Buehrer presiding. Opening ceremony: Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag, led by Mayor Buehrer. Roll call of members: Brenda Mackey, here; John Heckerman, here; Connie Mehring, absent at roll call, but arrived at 7:06 p.m.; Jamin Roe, here; Jason Benedict, here; Matthew Shanahan, here. Also present were Village Administrator/Utilities Superintendent/Meter Reader Chad Johnson and Fiscal Officer/Utilities Clerk Ryan Harnishfeger. Visitors present: Brian Owens seeking to fill the zoning inspector position; Deputy Martha Villegas from the Wood County Sheriff's Office. Minutes from the June 17 meeting were approved as submitted.

FINANCE and CLAIMS: A spreadsheet of the current invoices was reviewed and approved by members. Councilman Roe made a motion that these bills be allowed and orders drawn for same. Councilwoman Mehring seconded this motion. All were in favor, except Councilman Heckerman abstained from voting on Josh Heckerman's mowing invoice; motion carried. Copies of the June Bank Reconciliation, Fund Status, Revenue Status, and Appropriation Status reports were given to Mayor Buehrer and the Finance Committee to review.

Fiscal Officer Harnishfeger provided each member with a copy of the Estimate of Revenues for budget year 2020, which he had prepared, and which must be submitted to the Wood County Auditor on or before July 20th. Mr. Harnishfeger described briefly how the coming year's revenue estimates were calculated, taking into consideration beginning balances of the current year, revenues received so far this year; monies encumbered by appropriations, and any other known factors. Mr. Harnishfeger pointed out that no special assessments for street lighting have been charged since 2013. He asked if members wanted to start building up the street lighting fund again in 2020 with special assessments of \$4,000.00 as we did annually in the past. Members did not want to do so yet. Mr. Harnishfeger commented on the water fund estimates that they show our water fund is in trouble and needs more revenue, which would only be obtained by raising rates. The estimated water revenue for 2020 is less than we appropriated for 2019, which means we could run short if we don't raise rates to increase revenues. The electric fund, which has always been strong, is losing some ground too, although we don't know yet how much affect the decreased revenues from the school will have on the electric fund overall. Utilities Superintendent Johnson pointed out that the village had invested a lot in replacing water lines in the past, for which we are paying a huge debt service each year, so it is not surprising that the water fund would be somewhat depleted. After a brief discussion, Councilman Roe made a motion to adopt the 2020 Estimate of Revenues as prepared by Fiscal Officer Harnishfeger. Councilwoman Mackey seconded this motion. All were in favor; motion carried. Mayor Buehrer said he thought we should have a rate study done to see how our rates may need adjusted to keep up with expenses. Feller Finch should be able to do that for us, since they already have a lot of our information. Members thought that would be a good idea. Mayor Buehrer said he would contact Dave Kuhn to get an estimate of how much it would cost to have Feller Finch do a rate study for us.

Copies of the June incident report were made available for members to review. Councilman Shanahan reported that he had noticed a lot of speeding incidents going on in the village. With nothing else to discuss, members thanked Deputy Villegas and she left the meeting.

Mayor Buehrer mentioned that everyone had copies of a letter from Brian Owens, expressing interest in the zoning inspector position for the village. Fiscal Officer Harnishfeger reported that he had communicated with Ken Taylor, the zoning inspector for Weston, and Mr. Taylor had informed him that he didn't think the zoning inspector position would be a good fit for him, since his inability to come to every meeting was an issue. Mr. Harnishfeger reported that he had also invited Edward Jacobs, the zoning inspector of Haskins, to come to tonight's meeting and to submit a resume, since Solicitor Skaff had emailed us that Mr. Jacobs was interested in the position. Mr. Harnishfeger said he received no response from Mr. Jacobs. Mayor Buehrer invited members to ask Mr. Owens any questions they may

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have. Mr. Owens told members of his history and experience working for the City of Perrysburg, making sure all water and sewer utilities run well, and interacting with residents on issues of concern. He said he has never held a position in zoning, but he has worked closely with people and matters pertaining to zoning. Chad Johnson commented that he has been doing zoning for 20 years. He expanded over the years to doing zoning for a number of entities. He said he was not worried about Mr. Owens not knowing zoning details starting out; he told him that if he has any questions, to just ask him. After a little more discussion, the mayor and members decided they had no problem with hiring Mr. Owens for the zoning inspector position, and, since no response was received from Edward Jacobs, they would put it to a vote. Councilwoman Mackey made a motion to hire Brian Owens as zoning inspector. Councilman Benedict seconded this motion. All were in favor except Councilman Shanahan, who abstained because of a personal friendship with Mr. Owens; motion carried.

ZONING: Chad Johnson reported that he had told the people at 18423 Broad Street that nobody can live in the shed there. The owner came to the last meeting and talked to Council about it, but Mr. Johnson said his fear is that, if you let them do it, there will be a lot more people demanding to do likewise. Members recalled that Mr. Fox wanted to make a mother-in-law suite out of the shed, update the electric, and run water and sewer to it. Mayor Buehrer said he spoke with Solicitor Skaff about it and our question about what constitutes an “attached” living space. Mr. Skaff had come across this issue before. To be considered “attached,” it has to have a common wall with the main house. And if the zoning board should decide to make a hardship allowance, they can stipulate that it is only in effect until the mother-in-law passes away. Mr. Johnson stated that the building is an accessory structure and it would be illegal to convert it to a second residential building on the same lot. Councilman Roe pointed out that there is a property on Wall Street being advertised for sale as including a mother-in-law suite in the back. He asked what the difference is between that and what Mr. Fox wants to do. Mr. Johnson said there is nothing in the Tontogany zoning code about a mother-in-law suite, but they can’t rent it out. The mayor and Mr. Johnson explained that the zoning was changed to disallow more duplexes; ones already in place were grandfathered in. Councilman Shanahan asked what would happen if they decided to not run water and sewer to the building and just made it livable for the mother-in-law, but she had to go to the house for water and sewer. The mayor pointed out that it would still be considered a livable space at that time. Mr. Johnson answered that the building was originally filled out legally as for an accessory building, to be used as such. What Mr. Fox wants to do is change that into a separate living space. Councilwoman Mackey reminded everyone that all of this would have to go through the zoning board of appeals anyway. Mayor Buehrer agreed that that is the course they would have to go, if they decide to use a hardship case. But if the zoning board approved it, they could stipulate that when the mother-in-law dies it returns to an accessory building. The zoning board can also disapprove and recommend that it not be allowed. Mayor Buehrer said he will contact Mr. Fox and let him know what Solicitor Skaff said and what constitutes an “attached” building; then he can decide what he wants to do.

Fiscal Officer Harnishfeger reported that he received a call on June 12 from a resident registering a complaint about 3-foot tall grass in the back yard of 18505 Main Street. Mr. Harnishfeger said he called the property owner and told them they were violating the town’s tall grass and weeds ordinance and needed to get it cut or we would have to go through the official process of posting a notice and possibly mowing it for them at \$150 per hour and charging it to their property taxes. He noticed that they got it mowed. Councilwoman Mackey reported that the new owner of the former Moser’s carryout needs to be contacted because the grass and weeds there are overgrown; it is an eyesore. Mr. Harnishfeger answered that he has contact information for the new owner, so he will contact him and let him know he needs to keep the grass and weeds trimmed there.

UTILITIES: Utilities Superintendent Johnson reported that he had put flags and marking paint at Hefflinger’s place because they were doing construction. While reading meters over the weekend, he

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found that they totally destroyed the meter pit there. Mr. Johnson said he is going to call Palmer and have them come and fix it and then charge Hefflinger for everything. We have been losing money left and right on damaged meter pits. Some good news is that he was able to get 98 percent of the meters read this month, which is an improvement over what we used to get. The handheld meter reading wand broke, so it will have to be sent in for repairs or replacement. Mr. Johnson said he talked to Brett Palmer because we have to do a line exercise. He also talked with Craig Spoores. We have to do a round table discussion and spend part of a day or a full day doing line exercises, so he is trying to get that scheduled because he was contacted by the Ohio EPA. We have to do our sanitary survey this year. They will be on us for valve exercise plans, asset management, and contingency plans. Last month when he read the meter in the pit on Tontogany Road, he opened the lid and the sump pump was blowing water all over. The main sump pump quit working, so the backup kicked on and blew the connection apart. He had Kellermeier fix it. The meter pit on Kellogg Road keeps filling up with water. He had Palmer pump it out once, but he is going to have Kellermeier fix that one too in the next week or two. The bus garage had a meter four-by-four in the ground with the meter read on top. Somebody fell over it, so apparently the maintenance person grabbed the four-by-four and yanked the wire and everything out, and there is no way to read the meter now.

STREETS and ALLEYS: Mayor Buehrer reported that he got in touch with a state representative about our CSX problem; they emailed back and forth. The state representative got in touch with CSX, who was supposed to contact Mayor Buehrer about our roads. That was last Monday. To this day the mayor has not been contacted by CSX. He will wait until the end of this week and then contact the state representative again, because he wanted the mayor to keep him informed about the situation.

Councilwoman Mackey reported that the signs in front of the school are still leaning. Mayor Buehrer responded that we may have to have the county fix those for us. He spoke to Scott about them; he will say something to him again.

SIDEWALKS and TREES: Councilman Shanahan asked if anything had been done about grass seeding at the church, mentioned at previous meetings. Mayor Buehrer answered that he has decided that he will do the seeding himself within the next week. Councilman Shanahan said he had been working on getting the brush removed that Jim Head cut down on North Street by the park, because Scott would need another week before he could get to it. Councilwoman Mackey responded that Jim Head was intending to do that; he was just waiting to get his trailer back.

Councilman Heckerman reported that the tree by Moser's old carryout needs to come down. Josh intends to cut down the bad tree at the park. He mentioned some other trees looking sick and dying in town as well. Councilman Roe asked if members would like to have EnviroCare come and check to see if there is something causing village trees to be sick and dying. Mayor Buehrer said he knew of a bug hitting hardwood trees, but he was not sure if it had reached this area yet. The mayor and members agreed that it would be a good idea to have someone come in and see what the problem is before having Abe Rowe come and start cutting bad trees down.

DRAINS and SEWERS: Nothing to report.

CITY HALL and PARKS: Councilman Shanahan reported that the park committee is going over ideas to try to get the grant process for next year moving forward. The disc golf course is planned and mapped out on paper. They still need to get some fast-setting concrete for the disc golf course out of the grant money for that project. Mr. Shanahan asked Fiscal Officer Harnishfeger what was the best way to pay for it. Mr. Harnishfeger responded that we are set up as a tax-exempt purchaser at Home Depot. If we know the exact amount to purchase the concrete needed, we can write a check from the Village for it and link it to the park grant appropriations line item. Or it could be purchased out of pocket and then a

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reimbursement check could be written. We want to use all of the grant money for the disc golf course and be able to document it for reporting to the county. If we use all of the grant money and need a little more, we have extra park money appropriated that we can use. Mr. Shanahan commented that they wanted us to put up signage that says the disc golf course was funded with grant money from the Wood County Park District, and we are allowed to use some of the grant money for that purpose. It only costs about \$20-\$25.

Councilwoman Mackey asked if members wanted to pursue having the basketball court redone this year before we have drainage work done, or do we want to pursue drainage as an option on next year's grant. Mayor Buehrer commented that we need drainage on the sides of the court, but not under it, which might make it settle. Ms. Mackey said she had not heard anything from Morlock, so she will call them and see where we stand for the basketball court on their schedule. The mayor and members agreed that we do want to pursue having Morlock replace the basketball court this year. The drainage can be put in afterwards. Ms. Mackey asked if we should get estimates for drainage for one of our park grant applications; the mayor responded that we should. She also asked if there were any other suggestions for park grant applications. A walking path was suggested.

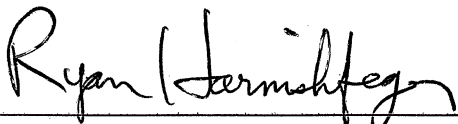
Councilwoman Mackey asked the fiscal officer about his concern about money available to pay Jim Head to do jobs for the town. Mr. Harnishfeger responded that he created a spreadsheet to track what money has been appropriated and what has been spent for that purpose, so he now knows exactly where we are on money for Jim's work. If he runs low, he will say something. Ms. Mackey said she has a number of places in town where she would like for Jim to do trimming of shrubs and trees. Councilman Roe stated that we need to have a way to get rid of the trimmings right away. Mayor Buehrer commented that Jim could take the brush to Inspired by Nature on Route 6 and 235.

Councilman Roe reported that he contacted Firelands Supply Company about our posts project at the park. He explained that it is an Eagle Scout project for the village. In light of that, they gave him a quote of \$5 per post, instead of \$7, and they said they would deliver them to the park for a \$150 delivery fee. So, 60 post delivered to the park would cost just \$450. The mayor and members were very glad to hear this and agreed that we should take this deal. Mr. Roe said he would call Firelands in the morning and let them know that Council approved the quote and that Fiscal Officer Harnishfeger will be calling them to make arrangements to pay them. Mr. Roe said he will find out when the posts will be delivered so he can give the green light for the project to begin. We just need to figure out how to dispose of the old posts, since they are treated wood and hazardous.

With nothing further to discuss, Mayor Buehrer declared the meeting adjourned at 8:39 p.m.



Todd Buehrer, Mayor



Ryan Harnishfeger, Fiscal Officer