

## TONTOGANY VILLAGE COUNCIL

### MEETING MINUTES FROM: March 16, 2020

Council called to order in regular session at 7:00 p.m. with Mayor Matthew Shanahan presiding. Opening ceremony: Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag, led by Mayor Shanahan. Before proceeding with the meeting, Mayor Shanahan spoke a little bit about the COVID-19 coronavirus situation. He reported that he met with Councilwomen Mehring and Mackey this week and discussed it. He noted that we have a lot of elderly residents in the village, so he encouraged everyone to keep an eye on their neighbors. If they have no family to help them, maybe give them a phone call or knock on their door. If they are afraid to go to the store, offer to go for them. Offer to take out their garbage. The mayor said he will be participating tomorrow on a conference call with the Wood County Commissioners, the Health Department, and the EMA. He said he has also been in contact with Ben Batey, the Director of the Wood County Health Department. Right now, there is not much more we can do except take care of each other, be patient and try not to overreact. The mayor mentioned that Zoning Inspector Owens had told him that Perrysburg had closed their office to the public, and we can think about whether or not we may want to do likewise, although we do not have many people who come to our office. If we want to limit people to only using the office drop-box, we could post a notice around town saying so. In general, we are following the governor's orders as well as guidance from the Health Department. Currently, the president of the United States has requested that people limit social interaction to groups of no more than ten people.

Roll call of members: Brenda Mackey, here; Connie Mehring, absent; Jamin Roe, absent; Jason Benedict, here; Mark Smith, here; Robert Bergfeld, here. Also present were Village Administrator/Utilities Superintendent/Meter Reader Chad Johnson, Zoning Inspector Brian Owens, and Fiscal Officer/Utilities Clerk Ryan Harnishfeger. Minutes from the March 2 meeting were approved as submitted.

**FINANCE and CLAIMS:** A spreadsheet of the current invoices was reviewed and approved by members. Councilwoman Mackey made a motion that these bills be allowed and orders drawn for same. Councilman Smith seconded this motion. All were in favor; motion carried. Mayor Shanahan informed members that there were three charges on Solicitor Skaff's billing statement for February that he did not know about previously or understand: 0.7 hours on 2/1/20: "Review Police Reports; State v. Ward." 1.1 hours on 2/2/20: "Preparation Re: Dustin Ward." 0.8 hours on 2/5/20: "Conference with Attorney Striker; Terms of Plea Re: Dustin Ward." The mayor asked if anyone knew what this was about and who Dustin Ward is. Members thought it was the person living in the apartment and having to do with the bus downtown. Councilman Benedict told members he had noticed Paul Skaff quietly asking the sheriff's deputy questions when he was here, which he assumed may have been about this. Members asked why we are being billed for that and what exactly it was about. Mayor Shanahan answered that we can question Mr. Skaff about it before paying the bill and make sure we have a good understanding about it. The mayor and members asked Fiscal Officer Harnishfeger, before paying the bill, to contact Solicitor Skaff and ask for clarification on the billing regarding Dustin Ward, and then to share his answer with everyone by email. If there are more questions, members will let Mr. Harnishfeger know; otherwise we will go ahead and pay the bill.

Mayor Shanahan did a second reading, by title only, of Ordinance #911-20, AN ORDINANCE ESTABLISHING SCHOOL ZONE TRAFFIC REGULATIONS. Then he did a first reading, by title only, of Ordinance #912-20, AN ORDINANCE ADOPTING RECORDS RETENTION POLICY. The mayor reminded everyone, regarding the office cleaning project, that we had questions about how long we should keep various kinds of records. He contacted Solicitor Paul Skaff about it, who provided us with an ordinance and 26 pages of proposed retention times for about any kind of document imaginable. Fiscal Officer Harnishfeger offered to email a copy of the proposed retention policy to each member; the mayor and members agreed that they would like for him to do so.

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Mayor Shanahan reported that Lake Erie Electric came to look at our hall lighting. They gave us two quotes for possibly changing our main hall lights to LED. Option 1, costing \$1,100, would be to retrofit the 6 eight-foot existing fixtures and convert them to LED fixtures, disconnecting ballasts and installing LED lamps with drivers. Option 2, costing \$1,800, would be to remove the existing 6 fixtures and replace them with new LED fixtures. We could also leave the lights and fixtures as they are and just replace the bad ballasts in the one that went out. They said that the cost to change the ballasts would be about as expensive as a new light and fixture. Councilwoman Mackey asked if the Option 2, changing to all new LED fixtures, would necessitate also repainting the ceiling. Mayor Shanahan answered that it probably would require some touch up, since the new fixtures would not be the same size as the old ones. The mayor told everyone that a decision was not needed tonight, but members could think about it, perhaps do some research of their own, and we will table it until the next meeting.

Fiscal Officer Harnishfeger asked whether we should discontinue renting the hall during the coronavirus pandemic, or if he should tell people there is a limit to the amount of people who can gather at the hall for an event. The mayor answered that the president has asked for groups no larger than 10, while the Ohio governor has asked for groups no larger than 50. Ben Batey had told him that, if a room is large enough for people to distance themselves from each other, even while talking, you are probably okay. The problem comes when people are packed too close to each other in less roomy spaces. The mayor asked Mr. Harnishfeger if we normally ask how many are expected to attend a hall rental event and if we have any hall rentals scheduled for the near future. Mr. Harnishfeger answered that he tells people that our capacity is about 100 at most and they sometimes tell him about how many people they are expecting. We had one person cancel a hall rental scheduled for Sunday, March 22. We also have two hall rentals scheduled in April. The mayor asked Mr. Harnishfeger to call the April renters and explain to them that we are following the governor's orders to not have more than 50 people come together, and to give them the option to cancel and receive a refund, or to reschedule for a later date. Zoning Inspector Owens added that it will take our housekeeper longer to clean the hall too, because she will need to disinfect all surfaces possibly touched by people. So, for the little we make on a hall rental, will it really be worth it? The mayor commented that Mr. Owens made a good point. After a little more discussion, Mayor Shanahan stated that what he was hearing was that we should consider the two April rentals a "no go." We need to call them and offer a refund or to reschedule for a time after the coronavirus crisis is past.

Fiscal Officer Harnishfeger reported that he received a notice from the Department of Commerce, Division of Liquor Control, stating that all permits to sell alcoholic beverages in our political subdivision will expire on June 1, 2020. In order to maintain permit privileges, every permit holder must file a renewal application. Ohio Revised Code provides the legislative authority with the right to object to the renewal of a permit and to request a hearing. Or, if there are no permit premises that you wish to object to, you do not need to take any action. Members voiced no objections to the renewal of the current liquor permits in Tontogany.

**ZONING:** Zoning Inspector Owens reported that he received an email from Cale Swanson on Wall Street wanting to put up a storage shed, asking for information about a permit. Mr. Owens said he would follow up on it. The mayor asked if Chad Hartman had received his permit for a pole barn. Mr. Owens answered that he had.

**UTILITIES:** Utilities Superintendent Johnson reported that he got us back on the meter exchange program, where the company takes back old meters and gives us a reduced price on new meters. The new meters will be about \$100 each. It will work like it did in the past. They will pick up 25 meters and then come back with 25 new meters. He talked to the company and got a price list from them today. So, we will be able to start getting some of our problem meters changed out. Mr. Johnson said he spoke with John Stewart today about repairing street lights. He said everything is done on the list provided.

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Mayor Shanahan said there was still one out on North Street. Councilman Smith reported that one is still out at the corner of the alley and Wall Street. Mr. Johnson said he would give an update about those two lights to Mr. Stewart. He also said they had asked for approval to change three of the lights to LED, which he allowed them to do, since the old ones were shot. We should probably just switch bad ones to LED in the future; it would save us money in the long run. Mayor Shanahan commented that we should ask them for a price list to compare and decide if we want to switch to LED in the future or not. If so, we could tell them to do so. Mr. Johnson replied that we will get a pretty good idea of the prices when they send us the bill for what they did this time.

Councilman Benedict asked Mr. Johnson if Bowling Green Electric had said anything about the electric poles they are supposed to replace. Mr. Johnson replied that they had not mentioned it and he doesn't think they have done anything on that yet. Mayor Shanahan asked Mr. Johnson to tell them Council is asking about it again.

Utilities Superintendent Johnson reported that in Lorain, where he works through the week, they had a police officer who tested positive for the coronavirus. Three others are also suspected as having it too. Mr. Johnson said that, if something happens to him, our contingency plan is for his son to take over for him, because he already knows what is going on and has done the job in the past. As far as meter reading, if it should happen that he would get locked down in Lorain, the village might have to estimate meters. The mayor asked if we might not be able, in a situation like that, to reach out to Haskins or Weston and see if whoever reads their meters could read ours. Mr. Johnson answered that that might work or we could pay Brian Owens to go around with him a month or two when he reads meters, to learn where they are, so he could fill in if needed. Councilman Benedict said we may need to send out a letter telling the customers we have to estimate the meters. Councilwoman Mackey suggested a note could be added to the bills, saying the meters have been estimated. Mr. Harnishfeger agreed that a message on the bills would be possible. Mr. Johnson also suggested that he could teach Mr. Owens how to use the radio-read meter reader, with which he could pick up about 90 percent of the electric readings. Mayor Shanahan asked Mr. Owens if he would be willing to become an emergency backup for meter reading. Mr. Owens answered that he would. The mayor asked members if they would be comfortable with Mr. Owens becoming a backup meter reader. Members agreed that they would. Mr. Owens advised that Council should be considering what to do during the coronavirus crisis, if some customers can't make a utility payment. Mayor Shanahan said he would like for them to contact us on a case-by-case basis to work something out. Administrator Johnson asked what we would do if two or three council members are sick. Could we approve bills to be paid? Councilman Benedict asked if members could authorize the fiscal officer to pay the bills if such a situation should occur. Mayor Shanahan answered that we can do that. Councilman Smith made a motion to give the fiscal officer permission to pay the bills indefinitely, if the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic creates an emergency situation where Council is unable to meet. Councilman Bergfeld seconded this motion. All were in favor; motion carried. Councilman Smith suggested we may, in an emergency, do a conference call. Councilwoman Mackey suggested perhaps a Zoom Meeting, which is a kind of video and/or audio conferencing. The mayor questioned whether Council could legally vote on matters with such a conferencing method. He also pointed out that anytime we meet in another location besides the hall, we have to post a notice in five places.

Meter Reader Johnson reported that the Grosjean apartment downtown on Main Street had a water usage of over 35,000 gallons for February usage, billed in March. He followed up on it and found that the meter gave a correct reading. Utilities Clerk Harnishfeger added that he sent a letter with the bill to the customer, advising them to check for a water leak. Mr. Johnson said they told him they had it checked and found no water leak, so the water was used. Brandon Johnson had told him that the same thing happened once before at that address. Mayor Shanahan concluded that, since nothing was wrong with the meter reading, they will have to pay the bill.

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**STREETS and ALLEYS:** Councilman Bergfeld reported that Crom Street has some bad potholes. Mayor Shanahan agreed that the street is falling apart. Members discussed a problem in town with school busses and trucks contributing to the breakup of streets, even though the streets in town are “no truck” streets. Councilman Smith suggested asking the county sheriff to talk to violators about using the proper roads for trucking. Councilwoman Mackey added that the school is good about letting their delivery truckers know when we tell the school they are causing problems driving on village streets.

Administrator Johnson asked if anyone knew how we go about evaluating the condition of a street, perhaps with an engineer, to see if it needs repaving. Does Feller, Finch do something like that, or should we get the county to come and tell us whether a street needs milled and repaved or not? Councilman Smith answered that he has some contacts he could talk to about that. He will ask his father-in-law what his thoughts are on how to go about it.

Mayor Shanahan asked if we need diagonal parking in the village any longer. When Doc’s is busy, they cause a visibility problem at the stop so a person has to go to the middle of the intersection to see who may be coming over the railroad track. Members recalled that we previously were intending to change from diagonal parking to parallel parking on the west side of Broad Street to alleviate a problem there, but we were waiting for Broad Street to be repaved. Zoning Inspector Owens advised that we might want to think about putting in a 4-way stop and not reduce the parking. Councilman Benedict remembered that we used to have a 4-way flashing red light there. Members expressed that they thought a 4-way stop might be the safest solution. The mayor asked if we have to do anything besides putting up more stop signs to make it a 4-way stop. Members thought it may need to be approved by the county engineer. The mayor said he would give them a call. As far as parallel parking, we can do what we want with that. Councilman Smith commented that he looked into it and found that we can pass an ordinance to put up a sign that disallows parking, for instance, between 1 a.m. and 6 a.m. Members thought that would be helpful to get rid of permanently parked vehicles as well as leaving the street open for easier plowing in the winter.

**SIDEWALKS and TREES:** Nothing to report.

**DRAINS and SEWERS:** Councilman Benedict reported that he had been at Thelma Wires’ place a couple of times regarding her drain issue. He was not able to talk to her yet about it, but he did not see a danger.

**CITY HALL and PARKS:** Councilman Smith reported that the trash can is overflowing at Mehring Park. He questioned how and when it gets emptied. Administrator Johnson said he thought the trash pickup service picked up the trash from the large barrel at the hall and at Mehring Park regularly. Fiscal Officer Harnishfeger said he pulls the bag from the one at the hall and sets it out for pickup when it gets full, but the one at Mehring Park may only get picked up once a month or so by the pickup service. Mayor Shanahan asked Mr. Smith to pull the bag from the Mehring Park can and put it out for Paul’s Refuse Pick-up to pick up tomorrow. Fiscal Officer Harnishfeger explained that we have some special bags in the shed for the Mehring Park can that are different than the bags we use at Centennial Park, and he will give some to Councilman Smith. Councilwoman Mackey said she also needed some more bags for use at Centennial Park. Mr. Harnishfeger said we have plenty of them. A suggestion was made that we might want to get dog waste dispensers to accommodate pet owners that use the parks. Councilman Smith reported that he noticed rotting wood on one of the picnic tables at Mehring Park. Mayor Shanahan asked if that might be covered in our park grant. Councilwoman Mackey answered that she would think so, and there is enough money in the grant to include that. The mayor commented that we don’t have to wait for the park grant check; we can have the work done now and then reimburse ourselves when the grant check comes.

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Mayor Shanahan reported that he saw benches, more than once, placed on the court and dragged across the court at Centennial Park and he would like for that not to be done. He also reported that the new porta john enclosure at Centennial Park is tottering. It is not anchored well. Someone put a rope across it to pull it together. Councilwoman Mackey suggested we need to contact the person who installed it and get some warranty work done on it to make it right at no additional charge.

Mayor Shanahan noted that we do not have a sign at Centennial Park that says, "do not climb on the roof of the shelter house." The structure of the shelter house is not very sound. Councilman Benedict commented that it needs braces added. The mayor said he realized that a sign wouldn't protect us one hundred percent, but it would help cover us if someone were to climb on the roof and fall while we had a sign warning them not to do so. We should spend a little money for signage that would protect us in the long run. Zoning Inspector Owens made a suggestion that we could bolt down the tables so they couldn't be moved to be used for climbing up to the roof. Mayor Shanahan said he would ask for a quote on making us some signs and bring it up for a vote by members.

Councilwoman Mackey asked if we might not want to order the porta johns put in a little early this year, since we have kids out of school and a lot more kids playing at the park right now. She usually orders them for about April 15. Mayor Shanahan and members thought we should get the porta john enclosure fixed first. The mayor asked Fiscal Officer Harnishfeger to find out who installed the enclosure and email the information to him so he can call them, explain what is wrong, and ask them to come and fix it.

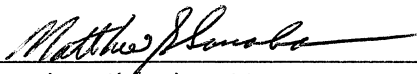
Councilwoman Mackey reported that the handle and the handle apparatus is missing from the drinking fountain at the park. Mr. Mackey found it that way. He looked around it and did not see the parts laying there. Mr. Johnson said he did not take them off, but he will call Kellermeier to come and take a look at it.

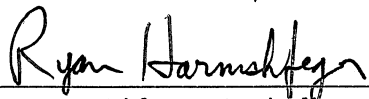
Mayor Shanahan reported that Administrator Johnson had proposed that we put up a fence structure behind the recycling bins, to catch debris and keep it from being blown into neighbors' yards on windy days. People have even put items between the bins, which can easily get blown away. We still pay the boy scouts \$50 a month and they have a volunteer schedule to come and clean the area. The mayor suggested that, when he speaks with the person about the porta john enclosure, he can bring him to the recycling area and ask him about doing a fence for us. We can also get other quotes for the job.

Councilman Benedict reported that he called Eric Palmer today. He was surprised that two weeks had passed already, and he wasn't ready yet on the park drainage project.

Mayor Shanahan reported that he spoke to Councilman Benedict about being on the planning commission as the person filling the "anybody in Wood County" position. He agreed to do so. The mayor also asked members to be thinking about choosing a new president of council when Councilman Benedict leaves. The position is like a vice president; when the mayor is not here the president of council runs the meeting.

With nothing further to discuss, Mayor Shanahan declared the meeting adjourned at 8:03 p.m.

  
Matthew Shanahan, Mayor

  
Ryan Harnishfeger, Fiscal Officer