

TONTOGANY VILLAGE COUNCIL

MEETING MINUTES FROM: November 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. Roll call of members: Brenda Mackey, here; Connie Mehring, here; Jamin Roe, here; Mark Smith, here; Robert Bergfeld, here; Damon Lee, absent. Also present were Zoning Inspector Brian Owens and Fiscal Officer/Utilities Clerk Ryan Harnishfeger. Visitors present: Joseph Pemberton, President and COO of Suburban Natural Gas Company. Minutes from the November 2 meeting were approved as submitted.

FINANCE and CLAIMS: A spreadsheet of the current invoices was reviewed and approved by members. Mayor Shanahan explained that the invoices included a \$425 bill from Ace Plumbing for a new toilet for the ladies' room in the hall. The old model we had sprang a leak, for which replacement parts were no longer available, so we need to replace the whole toilet. The mayor said he gave the fiscal officer permission to go ahead and have a new toilet installed right away, since we had hall rentals coming up within a few days. Councilman Roe made a motion that these bills be allowed and orders drawn for same. Councilwoman Mehring seconded this motion. All were in favor; motion carried.

Mayor Shanahan invited Mr. Pemberton to speak to members. Mr. Pemberton started his annual overview, stating that their main emphasis is safety. As far as major projects for 2021, they do not have anything on the slate right now. However, there have been some inquiries about the 80 acres north of Scott Road off of Tontogany Creek Road. Suburban is optimistic that they will be able to service new homes as they are added there. However, nothing has been formalized yet. They had a leak survey in 2019 and everything checked out. This is done every three years. As far as a public awareness message, they want to continue to emphasize to everyone to call 8-1-1 a minimum of two working days in advance of any kind of digging. Also, they want people to be alert to the smell, sights, or sounds that may indicate a gas leak, to get safely away upwind of it, and then call the local gas company or 9-1-1 for emergency response. Mr. Pemberton urged members to ask anyone they see digging, even for something like a mailbox, to call 8-1-1. Mayor Shanahan asked Zoning Inspector Owens if we talk to people about this when they apply for a zoning permit. Mr. Owens responded that Chad Johnson would probably be the one who would want to talk to them about this, in regard to utilities. The mayor suggested that Mr. Owens might still want to remind anyone, especially people new in town, to call 8-1-1 before putting in things like a fence or a deck. Councilwoman Mackey noted that a lot of companies working in town automatically call 8-1-1 before digging. Mr. Pemberton gave Fiscal Officer Harnishfeger an Application for Community Development Funds. Suburban gives \$2 per billed gas meter to municipalities each year for uses they may choose for the good of the community. Mr. Pemberton offered to come, if the village ever needs him for any kind of a public forum to pass along public safety awareness information. With nothing more to discuss, Mayor Shanahan thanked Mr. Pemberton and he left the meeting.

Mayor Shanahan reported that Bernie Scott gave him some old business checks from the 1930s, which the mayor framed to put in the village office. Three checks are from The Royce-Coon Grain & Seed Co., and three checks are from The Clover Farm Stores Co. He also reported that a lady by the name of Rhonda Bovia donated an old historic picture of the Tontogany Volunteer Fire Department, which the mayor said he will take and give to the fire department.

Mayor Shanahan pointed out that members each had a copy of previously written job descriptions for the village administrator and the utilities superintendent, which Councilwoman Mackey had provided. The mayor asked members to look the job descriptions over and see if we may need to add or remove or change anything. Then he will ask Chad to list what he does for each of these jobs. The goal is to put together an updated description of the administrator and utilities superintendent jobs going into the new year, so everyone knows what is expected.

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Mayor Shanahan reported that we received two quotes from Jim Palmer Excavating that Utilities Superintendent Johnson had requested for the Village. One quote is \$2,789.60 to excavate and tap the existing 8" water main and install a new 1" waterline to come in the backside of the Corner Carryout, and then backfill with topsoil. The other quote is \$1,860.00 to excavate and remove the drinking fountain at the southwest corner of Main Street and Broad Street, cap and abandon the waterline, haul debris away, and backfill the area with topsoil. Councilwoman Mackey had been absent when the removal of the drinking fountain was discussed, so she asked the reason for removing it. The mayor explained that Mr. Johnson had said it can't be shut off, and with the coronavirus pandemic, people are hesitant to drink out of a public fountain, so we thought it would be a good idea to just remove it. The mayor asked the fiscal officer if we have the money available for both of these projects. Mr. Harnishfeger answered that we do. After a brief discussion, Councilwoman Mehring made a motion to accept both quotes from Jim Palmer Excavating: \$2,789.60 for the Corner Carryout Waterline Project, and \$1,860.00 for the Drinking Fountain Removal Project. Councilman Bergfeld seconded this motion. All were in favor; motion carried. Fiscal Officer Harnishfeger pointed out that the wording of both of these quotes states that a 50% payment is required prior to the start of work, so he will send 50% payment to Palmer along with the signed quotes. Members voiced no objection.

Mayor Shanahan did a third reading, by title only, of Ordinance #922-20, an ORDINANCE ESTABLISHING A FOUR-WAY STOP SIGN AT THE INTERSECTION OF BROAD STREET AND MAIN STREET. Councilman Smith made a motion to adopt Ordinance #922-20. Councilman Bergfeld seconded this motion. All were in favor; motion carried. Zoning Inspector Owens asked if we are getting flashers. The mayor answered that we are, but we have to order the flashing lights to use with the stop signs Scott Alexander has. Also, Scott does not have the equipment to do the drilling into the cement, so we will have to contract that out.

Mayor Shanahan did a second reading, by title only, of Ordinance #923-20, AN ORDINANCE APPROVING THE RE-PLAT OF THE HARLEY WOODS SUBDIVISION.

Mayor Shanahan did a second reading, by title only, of Ordinance #924-20, AN ORDINANCE APPROVING VILLAGE SOLICITOR.

ZONING: Zoning Inspector Owens reported that he has been working for a long while with Village Solicitor Paul Skaff on the matter of cleaning up the railroad property. It has been a long and tedious process that is still ongoing. All information has been given to Paul and he has contacted the railroad. It is probably going to get ugly. Mayor Shanahan commented that the conversations with the railroad flipfopped; they are now saying Hefflinger is not in violation of his lease with them, whereas they originally said he was in violation. So, the mayor and Brian thought the best thing to do was to turn all of the information we had over to Solicitor Skaff and let him fight for the Village, which is what he is there for. Solicitor Skaff reached out to the railroad and they came back with some more questions. Brian emailed to Paul all of the offences that violate our ordinances and copies of the ordinances as well. Paul will put the information together to present to the railroad. Mr. Owens commented that whoever owns the property can't just store stuff there. Tires on the trailers there are rotted. It is basically being used as a junk yard. He said he also took photos of everything there and sent them to Solicitor Skaff. Mayor Shanahan commented that Brian has put in a lot of work dealing with this situation. It is not going as quickly as we would like, but we want to do it right and present it right. When the time comes, Hefflinger will get a letter from the Village stating the violations on that property, which Brian will be working on. Mr. Owens commented that Mr. Hefflinger is taking it personal, but he is just trying to do his job for the town as zoning inspector. Mayor Shanahan added that he and Brian discussed all things on a Zoom call with Solicitor Skaff and sought to make sure that they are representing the village and its interests properly and in a blameless manner. It seems that nobody in the past was willing to deal with this issue, but it is time for something to be done about this area that is an eyesore and safety hazard in Tontogany.

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Zoning Inspector Owens reported that someone called him about a white S10 Blazer sitting for a while. He investigated it and talked to the young man who owns it. He said he would take care of it, so no further formal action was taken at this time.

Councilwoman Mackey asked about Isaac Puffer who lives on Washington Street on the alley, and who she thinks does car repair out of his garage. She wondered if we need to clarify what he is doing and possibly charge him a business rate for his utilities, like other businesses in town. The mayor and members agreed that we should talk with Mr. Puffer about this.

Mayor Shanahan reported that he had a conversation with Ivan Woodbury. He is not planning on selling his two buildings downtown, at least for a couple of years. He is interested in repainting and fixing the grout in the brick on the front side of the building, and he asked if anyone knew of someone who could do that outdoor painting job, going as high as needed for the apartment. He will also be doing some repair of damage on the inside.

Mayor Shanahan reported that he reached out again to Randy Cunningham by text, asked him if he has made any headway on listing the old carryout building on Main Street, and reminded him that Council would like to see some "For Sale" signs and contact information in the windows. Mr. Cunningham did not respond.

UTILITIES: Nothing to report.

STREETS and ALLEYS: Councilman Roe asked if we should put a message out to the public that there is going to be a new four-way stop at the intersection of Main Street and Broad Street. Mayor Shanahan answered that we will do that, probably in various ways. It can be put on the utility bills, posted on the mayor's social media pages, a video by the mayor, a notice at the post office, or other methods. Zoning Inspector Owens suggested painting "STOP" on the road as well.

On the topic of painting the streets, Mayor Shanahan reported that he and School Superintendent Adam Koch met last Friday, walking the school zone. The new signs they are getting have been ordered. The mayor mentioned to Mr. Koch that Council is planning to have our streets and parking lots restriped. Mr. Koch said that they have the manpower and machinery that they use for striping their parking lot, which the school could provide for our street striping, if the village supplies the paint. Councilwoman Mackey commented that she has not heard back from Stripe It Up about our request for a quote to do all of the striping in town. She said she would tell them to do the basketball court only, if members were in agreement. No one voiced opposition to this. Mayor Shanahan told members that there was a second part to Mr. Koch's proposal. He would like to see the school crosswalk lighted for the kids that cross on dark mornings. He has a quote of \$7,000 for lighting the crosswalk. He would like the village to go half and half, partnering with the school on the cost of lighting the crosswalk. Councilman Roe suggested that we might want to get another price quote from Bowling Green or somewhere. The mayor said he would ask Mr. Koch where he got his quote and let him know Council would like to seek a second quote. He asked members if he could tell Mr. Koch that the village will accept his offer to provide manpower and machinery to do all of our street and parking lot striping, with the village providing the paint and going half on the cost of lighting the school crosswalk, with the understanding that we will seek a second quote on pricing. Members agreed with no one voicing opposition. Mr. Owens suggested having the parking lot by the fire department sealed before striping it.

Councilwoman Mackey reported that she received a complaint from a resident about the ratty looking flags downtown. Mayor Shanahan responded that they have been taken down and placed in the recycle bin at the Legion. Ms. Mackey also reported that the flag at Centennial Park needs replaced. Fiscal Officer Harnishfeger commented that we have new flags in the office.

SIDEWALKS and TREES: Councilwoman Mehring reported that a tree in the village right of way on Lincoln Street fell down during the recent high winds. Fiscal Officer Harnishfeger added that Orville

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Buehrer also reported that that tree fell over and needed to be removed. Councilman Smith asked if it hit anything. Ms. Mehring answered that it did not. Mr. Smith said he would send a text to Abe Rowe to come and look at it. Or he may cut it up himself.

DRAINS and SEWERS: Nothing to report.

CITY HALL and PARKS: Councilman Berfeld reported that he spoke with his uncle, who is very busy and will not be able to help us with a bucket truck for the tree lights. Mayor Shanahan said he spoke with Bowling Green Mayor Aspacher and asked if he could refer us to anybody for this purpose. He gave us the name of an electrician who has his own truck, Schwind Electric in Bowling Green. Mayor Shanahan said he would call him tomorrow, let him know that Mayor Aspacher referred him to us, and ask if he could help us out. The mayor said he had told Mayor Aspacher that the village would be open to paying a fee to have this done. Councilman Smith commented that he had not heard back from Abe Rowe on this topic, so he is probably more interested in cutting and trimming trees than hanging lights. Mr. Smith also did a search and found that it is \$150 to rent a lift for five hours. He commented that we could rent a lift if we can't find anyone to do it. Councilwoman Mackey requested that we ask whoever puts the lights on the tree to put up our wreath too. Councilman Roe suggested asking Schwind about possibly doing our street light repairs and finding out what they would charge. Mayor Shanahan said he would call Schwind about all of this and he asked if members were okay with either having Schwind do it or renting a lift. Members were okay with it and voiced no opposition.


Mayor Shanahan reported that Fire Chief Bill Gase texted him and said they are good with riding Santa through the village at 6:30 p.m. on Saturday, December 5 and dropping him off at the hall by 7 p.m. for the Tree Lighting event. Both pastors will be here. The mayor said he emailed the choir director at Otsego and asked him if we could have some choir members come and sing some carols for us. Bill Gase told him that the fire department will still bag up an apple and some candy to give out; they will put it together safely and staple it shut, so Santa can hand out some goodies to the kids.

Mayor Shanahan reported that he talked with Adam Koch about the metal beams in back of the hall that the poles were on. He asked Mr. Koch if there were any kids that could use a disassemble project for school credit. Mr. Koch said he would ask. If not, he can have someone come and disassemble it. The mayor said he told Mr. Koch they could have the scrap and recycle it or sell it if they like.

Councilman Roe asked if there was something wrong with the hall heating system, since it was cold in the hall. Fiscal Officer Harnishfeger answered that, previously, when the hall furnace wasn't working properly, Craig Spoores took a look at it and found the heat pump outside turned off. We turned it back on and the hall heated up fine. Then it seemed to malfunction again after a while, so Mr. Harnishfeger checked the heat pump and it was not turned off this time. He said he set the thermostat extremely high today to see if he could force the furnace to produce heat. It raised the temperature to about 60 degrees in the hall and then quit producing heat. So, we need to call in a professional to look at our heating system and get it working properly. Members agreed.

With nothing further to discuss, Mayor Shanahan declared the meeting adjourned at 7:54 p.m.


Matthew Shanahan, Mayor


Ryan Harnishfeger, Fiscal Officer