

## TONTOGANY VILLAGE COUNCIL

### MEETING MINUTES FROM: January 18, 2021

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, absent; Mark Smith, here; Robert Bergfeld, here; Damon Lee, 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 December 21 meeting were approved as submitted.

**FINANCE and CLAIMS:** A spreadsheet of the current invoices was reviewed and approved by members. Councilwoman Mehring made a motion that these bills be allowed and orders drawn for same. Councilman Smith seconded this motion. All were in favor; motion carried. Copies of the December Bank Reconciliation, Fund Status, Revenue Status, and Appropriation Status reports were given to the mayor and the Finance Committee to review.

Mayor Shanahan did a first reading, by title only, of Ordinance #927-21, AN ORDINANCE AMENDING 2021 APPROPRIATIONS FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31, 2021, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY. Fiscal Officer Harnishfeger explained that the ordinance was needed to create a Social Security line item for the mayor's payroll, which was missing in the original appropriations ordinance, and to reallocate \$250.00 to Social Security from the OPERS line item, which does not alter the overall amount of appropriations, but simply moves a little from one line item to another. Mr. Harnishfeger said he would try to make sure this correction is not needed again in the future. Councilwoman Mackey made a motion to suspend the rules and declare an emergency for Ordinance #927-21. Councilwoman Mehring seconded this motion. All were in favor: motion carried. Councilman Smith made a motion to adopt Ordinance #927-21. Councilwoman Mackey seconded this motion. All were in favor; motion carried.

Mayor Shanahan told members that he had asked the fiscal officer to provide copies to everyone of our current Village Council committees and contact information. He asked everyone to review the information and voice any desire or need for changes or corrections. He pointed out that committee chairpersons were denoted by an asterisk. FINANCE & CLAIMS: \*Brenda Mackey and Jamin Roe; UTILITIES: \*Damon Lee, Connie Mehring, and Jamin Roe; DRAINS & SEWERS: \*Robert Bergfeld, Connie Mehring, and Damon Lee; SIDEWALKS & TREES: \*Jamin Roe, Brenda Mackey, and Mark Smith; STREETS & ALLEYS: \*Mark Smith, Damon Lee, and Robert Bergfeld; CITY HALL & PARKS: \*Connie Mehring, Brenda Mackey, and Mark Smith. Councilman Lee asked what he would be in charge of as chairperson of the Utilities Committee. Mayor Shanahan responded that Utilities Superintendent Johnson would lead in most utilities matters and the committee would meet with him to discuss issues. Mr. Johnson commented that we would need to discuss electric rates real soon, which he would be reporting on later in the meeting. The mayor added that the committee would work with Mr. Johnson to develop a plan to recommend to Council. Members all agreed with leaving the committees as they are and no contact information needed to be changed, so the mayor said we would leave it as it is.

**ZONING:** Zoning Inspector Owens reported that he did a zoning permit for Ryan Braucksieck, a janitor at the school, who is building a house in the annexed property north of Scott Road on the west side of Tontogany Creek Road.

**UTILITIES:** Utilities Superintendent Johnson reported that Utilities Clerk Harnishfeger had brought to his attention a bill for about \$6,500 for the electric meter installation and underground work for Keith Peper's new home on Tontogany Creek Road. We only charge \$500 for an electric tap fee, so we went in the hole \$6,000 on that installation. In researching who requested the electric to be put underground, Mr. Johnson said he spoke with Craig Spoores and found that the Village had years ago passed a rule

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that every new electric connection had to be underground. It is a lot bigger price now, especially with bigger lots, to install the electric underground. Zoning Inspector Owens commented that, in the future, you can let homeowners know that the cost of running electric underground is their responsibility. Mr. Johnson replied that, for whatever reason, back then the Board of Electric said the Village was going to pay for it. Mr. Johnson told members it is time for us to raise our electric tap fee or we will be going in the hole every time a new home goes in. Mayor Shanahan asked Mr. Johnson to meet with the Utility Committee and come up with some suggested pricing to propose to Council. Members agreed that we need to get the tap fee updated quickly, due to more houses being built right now, and they asked how much Mr. Johnson thought the tap fee should be. He responded that he and Mr. Harnishfeger had discussed it a little bit. Mr. Harnishfeger commented that Mr. Johnson had suggested maybe a \$5,000 electric tap fee. Mr. Harnishfeger added that, like Mr. Owens had suggested, whatever the tap fee is, we need a clause built into the tap agreement that says any extra cost above the tap fee will be the homeowner's responsibility.

Mr. Johnson reported that Bowling Green Metering Specialist Dave Baus called him and told him that the amount of electricity that was sold back to Tontogany, because the school wasn't using a lot of electricity in the last eight months or so, amounts to a big chunk of money. Mayor Shanahan responded that we will not be writing them a check, according to an email from School Superintendent Adam Koch, but we are to credit them in 2021 for the power they sent to the Village in 2020. And the amount should not be as high in the future, due to COVID. Mr. Johnson asked if the Village has been raising electric rates at the same rate as Bowling Green has been raising our rates, which they do around 5% each year. He said he thought we were not raising the rates on our customers because the electric fund was very healthy in the past. The question was asked if the electric rates are raised automatically each year. Mr. Harnishfeger said they were not and he didn't know the last time they were raised, but they definitely need to be raised now. As an example, Bowling Green is now charging the Village more for demand than we are charging our own customers. The mayor commented that he didn't remember raising electric rates any time in the last four year. He asked the Utility Committee to schedule a time to meet and come up with a plan to present to Council for consideration. Councilwoman Mackey asked if we need to have an ordinance written for tap fees and rate increases, once we decide on amounts. The mayor agreed that we do need an ordinance. Councilwoman Mackey suggested we need to do that as quickly as possible. Utilities Superintendent Johnson suggested that we hire a firm, like Bowling Green does, to do an actual cost of service study on the electrical system, so it is done professionally and we know right where we are. Mayor Shanahan asked Mr. Johnson to reach out to Weston, which is about to put in a big solar field that will power most of their village. Maybe they have someone we can consult with and get some information. Mr. Johnson also commented that the representatives from Bowling Green that we wanted to come to this meeting decided not to come on their day off for the Martin Luther King Jr. Day holiday. He said he would try to get them here for the next meeting or so.

Utilities Superintendent Johnson commented that we may need some training on how to process the net metering. He asked Mr. Harnishfeger if he knew how he was going to calculate the credit due. Mr. Harnishfeger said he would have to look into it, but he is still heavily occupied with the accounting rollover process, the annual financial report, and tax filing with deadlines at the end of January. Mayor Shanahan asked Mr. Johnson if maybe Dave Baus would be able to give us some guidance on the net metering. Mr. Johnson replied that he had asked Dave to come to a meeting, but John Stewart shot it down. The mayor asked Mr. Johnson to talk to John Stewart about setting up a time to help us to know how to do the net metering process correctly.

**STREETS and ALLEYS:** Councilwoman Mehring reported that she received a call that the entrance into the Post Office from Broad Street needs some stone. Councilwoman Mackey commented that she had noticed that too. The pavement is coming out a little bit and needs filled. Mayor Shanahan said he would

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take a look at it and maybe have Scott put a little filler in there until later when we can get a proper patch done. Councilman Smith received a phone call and needed to leave the meeting at 7:19 p.m.

**SIDEWALKS and TREES:** Councilwoman Mackey reported that she will be getting with Councilman Roe to talk with him and see if they can get a letter ready to present to Council at the next meeting, concerning the 50-50 sidewalk program that we were intending to get going on at the beginning of the year.

**DRAINS and SEWERS:** Nothing to report.

**CITY HALL and PARKS:** Mayor Shanahan reported that he reached out to Schwind Electric before Christmas and emailed them questions about the various things we talked about at the last meeting, such as taking the Christmas tree lights down and what the fee would be, whether there was a fee for the work they did in putting the lights up, if they do LED street lights, and switching hall lights to LED. He said he had not heard back from them yet. He said he would follow up tomorrow.

Councilwoman Mackey asked if we have rentals for the hall in the coming month or two. Fiscal Officer Harnishfeger reported that we have one rental coming up in January and another one in February. He added that it has dwindled somewhat and some of the people that had reserved the hall cancelled, due to COVID concerns.

Councilman Bergfeld asked if we ever got paid for the street light damaged by a resident. Mayor Shanahan responded that he still has the invoice and has not seen the man; he understands that he took a third shift job at Amazon in Perrysburg, which makes their schedules not work well for getting together about this. The mayor asked Fiscal Officer Harnishfeger to send the gentleman another invoice by certified mail, so we have proof that he got it.

Mayor Shanahan reported that he took an hour and a half finance course online last Wednesday. They focused on all of the different links on ohio.gov to find grants. Some grants may require matching funds from the grantee, some not. He said what he would like to do is look through the grants and then funnel some possible ones to committee chairpersons to have their committees look into them and see which ones may be good for the Village to apply for.


Zoning Inspector Owens asked if there is going to be more COVID money this year. Mayor Shanahan answered that he asked Solicitor Skaff about that, because he keeps getting emails about an extension for the use of the COVID money. He told Mr. Skaff we had already returned our extra money and asked if we are able to get it back and use it. He said he did not get a clear answer out of Mr. Skaff. Fiscal Officer Harnishfeger commented that, once the unspent money was returned to the county, they distributed it to other entities.

Councilman Lee thanked the mayor and members for being understanding about his time away last month. He gave a quote from Martin Luther King Jr. that he said reminded him of the mayor and council members and how they work with the community: "Life's most persistent and urgent question is, 'What are you doing for others?'" Mayor Shanahan thanked him for sharing that quote.

With nothing further to discuss, Mayor Shanahan declared the meeting adjourned at 7:35 p.m.



Matthew Shanahan, Mayor



Ryan Harnishfeger, Fiscal Officer