

## TONTOGANY VILLAGE COUNCIL

### MEETING MINUTES FROM: January 17, 2022

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. Councilwoman Mehring then asked everyone present to say a silent prayer regarding the passing away of Wood County Sheriff's Sergeant Jody Swoap on Sunday, January 9, 2022. Roll call of members: Brenda Mackey, here; Connie Mehring, here; Mark Smith, here; Robert Bergfeld, here; Damon Lee, here. Also present was Fiscal Officer/Utilities Clerk Ryan Harnishfeger. Visitors present: Marissa Benschoter-Euler from Hylant Administrative Services.

Mayor Shanahan administered the oath of office to reelected council members Connie Mehring, Robert Bergfeld, and Damon Lee. The mayor then invited a motion to accept Lincoln Fox to fill the council seat vacated by Jamin Roe, who did not run for reelection. Councilman Smith made a motion to accept Lincoln Fox to fill the vacant council seat. Councilwoman Mackey seconded this motion. Roll call vote: Mackey-Aye; Mehring-Aye; Smith-Aye; Bergfeld-Aye; Lee-Aye. Motion carried. Mayor Shanahan then administered the oath of office to Councilman Lincoln Fox.

Minutes from the December 20<sup>th</sup> meeting were approved as submitted.

**FINANCE and CLAIMS:** A spreadsheet of the current invoices was reviewed and approved by members. Councilman Bergfeld made a motion that these bills be allowed and orders drawn for same. Councilwoman Mehring 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 reported that Solicitor Skaff sent an email to remind Council to adopt council rules for 2022, which can be the same as 2021. Councilwoman Mackey made a motion to adopt council rules for 2022 as previously adopted. Councilman Bergfeld seconded this motion. Roll call vote: Mackey-Aye; Mehring-Aye; Smith-Aye; Bergfeld-Aye; Lee-Aye; Fox-Aye. Motion carried.

Mayor Shanahan reported that we received a letter from the owner of Fresh Cut Lawn Service, who did our mosquito spraying, informing the village that he sold the mosquito spraying business to one of his employees, whom he recommends that we use for future spraying needs, since he will use the exact same services and treatment program as Fresh Cut Lawn Service used. The new business name is NWO Control, LLC, who sent us an agreement form to provide services for the village at the same rate as last year, \$184.85 per application, with a minimum of six applications for the year of 2022. Members all agreed, with no objections voiced, to accept NWO Control's offer and to use the same spraying schedule as previous years: one application the week before Memorial Day, one application in June, two applications in July, and two applications in August, for a total of six applications. If more are needed, we can contact the company to request more. The mayor reminded members that we pay for this with the community development grant from Suburban Natural Gas.

Mayor Shanahan did a third reading, by title only, of Ordinance #945-21, an ORDINANCE SETTING FORTH PROCEDURES FOR WATER UTILITIES SHUTOFF. Councilman Smith made a motion to adopt Ordinance #945-21. Councilwoman Mackey seconded this motion. All were in favor; motion carried.

Mayor Shanahan did a third reading, by title only, of Ordinance #946-21, an ORDINANCE SETTING FORTH PROCEDURES FOR ELECTRIC UTILITIES SHUTOFF. Councilman Lee made a motion to adopt Ordinance #946-21. Councilman Bergfeld seconded this motion. All were in favor; motion carried.

Mayor Shanahan asked if anyone was interested in becoming council president or thinks we need a change in that position. Everyone agreed that Mark Smith has served well in that position and there is no need for a change. Councilman Lee made a motion to retain Mark Smith as council president. Councilwoman Mehring seconded this motion. All were in favor; motion carried.

Mayor Shanahan invited Marissa Benschoter-Euler to speak to members about the Ohio Plan insurance renewal package for 2022. Ms. Euler passed out copies of the package proposal to everyone

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and then went through it, page by page, explaining coverages and deductibles for the various categories of property and liability insurance. There were no significant changes from last year's coverage. A 5% inflationary rate was added to property coverage. The package is \$4,346, minus an Advantage Premium Contribution of \$550 credit, for a net total annual premium of \$3,796 for 2022. A bonding fee of \$50 will be added to the invoice for the utility billing clerk's bond renewal. Ms. Euler asked if there were any questions for her. There were none. She concluded by saying that, once Hylant gets our approval of the proposed package, they will invoice us and get the updated bonds to us for the fiscal officer and the utility billing clerk. With nothing further to discuss, Mayor Shanahan thanked her and she left the meeting. The mayor asked if everyone was okay with the proposed Ohio Plan package. Members said they were and commented that they handled our claim for the damaged slides smoothly. Councilman Lee made a motion to accept the Ohio Plan package renewal proposal for 2022. Councilwoman Mackey seconded this motion. All were in favor; motion carried.

Mayor Shanahan told members he had asked the fiscal officer to print copies of the council committees for everyone, which he did. The mayor explained that, in the past, when a new council member replaces a former council member, we have simply let them take up the committee positions that the former member occupied. Then he asked members if anyone had a strong desire to switch committees with anyone, and he asked Councilmember Fox if he saw any committees that he especially would desire to be on. Mr. Fox answered that he didn't have any special preference, but he is pretty good with numbers, so finances would be a good fit for him. Councilwoman Mackey said she received Mr. Fox's phone number and email, so she will revise and reprint the council committees list for everyone, with Lincoln Fox on the committees that Jamin Roe was previously on. Councilman Lee said that he would like to see something about technology as a possible committee. Things have come up over the last couple of years, like email, the website, and informational videos. Councilwoman Mackey suggested starting a technology committee and making Councilman Lee the chairperson. Mr. Lee commented that it would be a fluid position. Ms. Mackey suggested that maybe Mr. Lee could coordinate information for the village website with Haley Wilkins. Mayor Shanahan said he had asked the fiscal officer to have Haley replace Jamin Roe's name with Lincoln Fox's name. Mr. Fox can look at the other members' entries and come up with a little bio and photo for his spot. Fiscal Officer Harnishfeger said he would need to continue to send the minutes and ordinances to Haley to post on the website, but perhaps Mr. Lee can work with Haley on any specialty items we want posted. The mayor agreed, and said things like brush pickup, leaf pickup and other events information could be handled by Mr. Lee. He added that Haley is very easy to work with. Mr. Harnishfeger reported that Haley had emailed him and told him her rate was increased to \$90 per hour in 2022, from the previous rate of \$80 per hour. Mr. Harnishfeger commented that he thinks she is worth it; she is fast and easy to work with. Councilman Smith made a motion to establish a technology committee with Councilman Lee as the chairperson. Councilwoman Mehring seconded this motion. All were in favor; motion carried.

Mayor Shanahan informed Councilman Fox that, because he replaced Jamin Roe, whose term was up at the end of December, his council appointment is for four years. He also reminded members that, in 2023, the mayor himself, Mark Smith, and Brenda Mackey would have to put themselves back on the ballot, if they wish to be reelected.

**ZONING:** Mayor Shanahan reported that Zoning Inspector Owens had nothing to report. However, the mayor said that he had noticed a bunch of stuff sitting out at the apartment that had the white van downtown. He said he would follow up with Mr. Owens to look into that.

**UTILITIES:** Mayor Shanahan reported that Utilities Superintendent Johnson did not have an update. The mayor said that he let Mr. Johnson know that Jamin Roe texted him today that the utility company that he had been communicating with about trimming around power lines declined to put in a bid because they only trim around secondary lines. So, we are back to reaching out to Bowling Green. Councilman

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Smith commented that, if we went with a company other than who services Bowling Green, we would probably have to pay an exorbitant amount. Councilman Fox suggested asking around to see if other towns may be using someone that we might also want to use. Mayor Shanahan said he has contact information for other towns and he will send them a message asking who they use. Fiscal Officer Harnishfeger commented that, if we are going to be doing a lot of trimming around power lines, it will be expensive and we will need to assess a lot more tree maintenance money than we have in the past.

Councilwoman Mackey asked what will happen about delinquent utilities, now that we just passed the two utilities shutoff ordinances. Utilities Clerk Harnishfeger answered that we will start dealing with delinquent utilities in accordance with those shutoff ordinances. Mayor Shanahan added that the ordinances will go into effect thirty days after adoption, which should give us time to finalize the village administrator job description, which will include assisting the Utilities Superintendent in turning off utilities and turning them back on again. The mayor said he will send the administrator job description that he has been working on to members for them to review it. It includes Ohio Revised Code wording, plus some wording pulled from Weston's administrator job description, minus what doesn't apply to us, as well as some desired skills. He said he had communicated with Brandt Corral and let him know we are working on a clear job description, which he had requested. Mr. Harnishfeger reminded members that it had been decided to have delinquent utilities customers come to the office and sign an agreement on how much they would pay per month on top of their current monthly bill, to pay down the previous overdue amount. He said he had not seen that agreement form yet. Mayor Shanahan said he thought Solicitor Skaff was working on that. Mr. Harnishfeger commented that he will probably need to confer with Council on some extremely high delinquent utility accounts, to decide upon an acceptable paydown plan. Councilman Fox asked if there was a way we could do an automatic withdrawal from a customer's bank account to make sure they are paying the monthly paydown amount, because they may pay the agreed upon amount for a while and then not pay it. Mr. Harnishfeger responded that the agreement will be that if they don't keep up the payments, they will be shut off. Also, speaking from experience, he cautioned that just because you place an automatic draft on a customer's bank account doesn't mean they have anything in the account. Then you run into a bounced payment situation, which takes, on average, an hour to straighten out in the utilities program, the accounting program, and notifying all parties affected. He commented that he thinks most of the delinquent problems will clear up when people realize we mean business on shutoffs. For the extreme cases, if they are not resolved, we may need to turn them over to our attorney to take legal action. Councilwoman Mehring asked about renters who have delinquent utilities. Mr. Harnishfeger reminded members that Attorney Wainwright had told us that we still can pursue the landlord for the delinquent utilities, for instance, if a renter skips town without paying their utility bill. However, we cannot certify delinquent electric utilities to be placed on the property owner's taxes any longer, so we would have to seek counsel from Solicitor Skaff on how to go about collecting from the landlord. Councilwoman Mackey commented that she thinks the ordinances we just passed are a step in the right direction, and we need to continue to pursue the resolving of this problem. Mayor Shanahan said that, when the thirty days is up, we want to have met together with the personnel who will be involved, come up with a plan of action based on the ordinances, and then begin to implement the plan on day thirty-one.

**STREETS and ALLEYS:** Nothing to report.

**SIDEWALKS and TREES:** Fiscal Officer Harnishfeger reported that we have received seven out of thirteen payments from property owners for their 50% share of the sidewalk construction costs. There are just six more payments due.

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

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**CITY HALL and PARKS:** Councilwoman Mehring said she was asked to report that on Saturday, March 12<sup>th</sup>, there will be a dinner at the American Legion. Dinner tickets are \$15 and bidding paddles are \$3. Donations of crafts or other items are welcome. The festival will be on August 12, 13, and 14 and they are having the same band as last year.

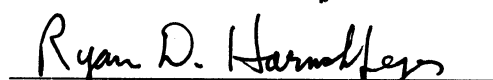
Councilwoman Mackey reported that the Village of Tontogany was awarded a grant of \$6,850 from the Wood County Park District, for playground equipment that includes swing replacement and new swings for Mehring Park. She said she emailed the lady at the playground equipment company today to let her know and she received a quick response, saying she would send the 2022 updated prices. Ms. Mackey commented that she had assumed the original quote was final, but apparently quotes don't hold very long these days. She told the representative that we will want to get moving on this quickly. Mayor Shanahan thanked Councilwomen Mackey and Mehring for their work on the grant application. He said we will now need to start thinking about what we will want to seek the next park grant for. Ms. Mackey suggested a new water fountain.

Councilwoman Mackey asked if we have received any update on the Fox property and its sale. The mayor answered that he has not heard anything new about it. He added that he hopes they will continue to communicate by letter or some other method with the people who live on the property line.

Mayor Shanahan said he would like to see us continue our conversation on security cameras this year for the parks and downtown. He said he thinks we need to do it to hold people accountable, due to things like the vandalized slides at the park and Christmas decorations downtown. Ms. Mackey asked if there were any issues with the recycling. The mayor answered that he had not heard of any issues lately.

With nothing further to discuss, Mayor Shanahan declared the meeting adjourned at 8:14 p.m.

  
Matthew Shanahan, Mayor

  
Ryan Harnishfeger, Fiscal Officer