

TONTOGANY VILLAGE COUNCIL

MEETING MINUTES FROM: December 19, 2022

Council called to order in regular session at 7:02 p.m. with Mayor Matthew Shanahan presiding. Opening ceremony: Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag, led by Boy Scout Troop 347. Roll call of members: Brenda Mackey, absent; Connie Mehring, absent; Mark Smith, here; Robert Bergfeld, here; Damon Lee, here; Lincoln Fox, here. Also present were Utilities Superintendent Chad Johnson, Zoning Inspector Brian Owens, and Fiscal Officer/Utilities Clerk Ryan Harnishfeger. Visitors present: Nathan and Melissa Vollmar with Boy Scouts from Troop 347, to complete part of their communication merit badge requirements; Otsego School seventh-graders Travis Vollmar, William Krupp, and Brooklyn Martinez for a Leadership assignment to make a presentation to Council; Otsego Leadership Class teacher Brandon Floro; Otsego students Calista Wilkins and Ashton Coon for Government Class assignment. Minutes from the December 5th meeting were approved as submitted.

FINANCE and CLAIMS: A spreadsheet of the current invoices was reviewed and approved by members. Councilman Fox made a motion that these bills be allowed and orders drawn for same. Councilman Lee seconded this motion. All were in favor; motion carried.

Mayor Shanahan invited Travis Vollmar, William Krupp, and Brooklyn Martinez to take the floor to make their presentation to council. The three students passed out full-color presentation guides to members and then proceeded to take turns speaking and making their presentation to council about the problem of speeding in the village and ways they recommended to alleviate that problem. They noted that they had observed people exceeding the speed limit daily. They pointed out how speeding increases the likelihood of accidents that could involve hitting children crossing the road, especially in inclement weather and icy road conditions. They said they would like to see the problem resolved to keep the community and its pedestrians safe, and so children can play without parents worrying about speeding vehicles. They offered a list of ideas to solve or mitigate speeding problems, including radar speed signs, police presence, children-at-play signs, solar light speed signs, speed bumps, and semi-truck caution signs. Of these, their top budget-friendly recommendations were children-at-play signs at \$20 to \$50 each (especially near the parks), radar speed signs at \$3,599.99 each, speed bumps at \$1,000 to \$1,500 each (in certain alleys), and semi-truck caution signs at \$30 to \$60 each (near the elevator or wherever tractor-trailers frequent). Wrapping up their presentation, they asked if there were any questions. Councilman Fox commented that the village council had discussed all of these items before the school year started, and they thought they were all good ideas, but they all come with drawbacks. For instance, speed bumps present a problem for plowing in the winter. So, speed bumps would have to be put in and taken out, over and over again. Radar speed signs are great technology, but the problem is how to pay for them. Even though there are drawbacks that have to be considered, Mr. Fox praised the students for doing a great job of identifying a significant problem and coming up with excellent ideas as possible solutions. Mayor Shanahan agreed that they did a great job. He added that he has spoken with School Superintendent Kevin O'Shea and Deputy Brian Ruckstuhl about doing a safety speed video for the community. He commented that maybe they could get Travis, William, and Brooklyn to be a part of that video. The mayor also thanked Mr. Floro, the Leadership Class teacher, for helping the students to get involved like this at an early age.

Fiscal Officer Harnishfeger reported that there is another paid hall rental reservation for Saturday, January 14, 2023.

Fiscal Officer Harnishfeger asked council members to confirm a meeting schedule for 2023, to be posted on the village website as well as the hall front door, and published as a news brief in the Bowling Green Sentinel-Tribune. He proposed that the schedule should be as follows: the first meeting of the year on Monday, January 16th at 7:00 p.m. at the village hall. All subsequent regular meetings would be on the first and third Monday of each month at 7:00 p.m. at the village hall, with the exception that the meeting on Monday, September 4th would be cancelled in observance of Labor Day. Mayor Shanahan

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reminded everyone that we had discussed not meeting on Martin Luther King Jr. Day. Members discussed this and other dates that could be questionable. The final decision was to leave the meeting schedule as Mr. Harnishfeger had proposed, except to change the first meeting of the year to Tuesday, January 17th, in order to observe Martin Luther King Jr. Day on January 16th.

Fiscal Officer Harnishfeger asked members for approval to pay any bills that may come due before the first meeting in 2023. Councilman Smith made a motion to approve and authorize the fiscal officer to pay any bills that may come due before the first meeting in 2023. Councilman Fox seconded this motion. All were in favor; motion carried.

Fiscal Officer Harnishfeger reviewed the 2023 salaries and compensations for employees and elected officials, reflecting some salary adjustments established with Ordinance #956-22, passed on December 5, 2022: mayor's salary is \$300 per month; council member's compensation is \$64 per month, conditioned upon a member attending at least one council meeting monthly or being excused for nonattendance by council (see Ordinances #807-10 and #847-14); village administrator's pay is \$20 per hour, not to exceed 60 hours per month unless additional hours are approved by council; fiscal officer's salary is \$2,000 per month; utilities superintendent's salary is \$900 per month (split \$650 from the water fund and \$250 from the electric fund), plus \$20 per hour for extra work, subject to approval by council; utilities clerk's salary is \$1,750 per month (paid in equal parts from the water fund and the electric fund); meter reader's salary is \$250 per month (paid in equal parts from the water fund and the electric fund), plus \$20 per hour for installing meters, subject to approval by council; zoning inspector's salary is \$150 per month; village laborer's pay is \$20 per hour. Members voiced no objections or corrections to these amounts.

ZONING: Nothing to report.

UTILITIES: Utilities Superintendent Johnson reported that Palmer dug up and relocated a meter pit at 18710 Main Street. They had to be called in because a tree had grown over the top of the pit, making it impossible for Mr. Johnson to change out the bad meter there. After talking to a park person in Fremont, Mr. Johnson had Palmer dig up the meter pit at Centennial Park and install a drain on the line to the fountain. Now we can turn it off in the winter and it will drain automatically, so we won't have any problems with it like in the past. Mr. Johnson reported that there were two or three power outages at homes, for which he called in Bowling Green Electric. One of them they said they had fixed, but he observed no lights on, so he called them back in. It turned out to be a pole issue on Tontogany Creek Road between North Street and Crom Street. Mr. Johnson reported that there were two water line breaks. One was at the corner of Tontogany Road and Kellogg Road, which wasn't too bad; they put a band around it and repaired it. The other break was a little way up Tontogany Road from the first break. For it they had to cut a ten-foot section out. He had to go and get two bands for it. They put in ten to twelve feet of plastic pipe. The water line breaks cause boil alerts; samples have to be sent to Bowling Green and it takes twenty-four hours to get the results. Mr. Johnson commented that we had only had one water line break in the past five years, prior to these two in the last month. We have talked before about the two sections of old water line that need to be replaced, the one on Broad Street and the other on Tontogany Road from Main Street to Kellogg Road. Mr. Johnson said that the mayor had asked him to contact Dave Kuhn from Feller, Finch about backflow prevention on the master meter pits, so he contacted Mr. Kuhn and he was intending to come to tonight's meeting at around 7:30 p.m. Mayor Shanahan reported that he had followed up with Mr. Johnson about the patching of the road where the water line repairs were done, because the county had asked when we were going to get the two spots paved, due to concerns about their snow plows. A temporary patch will be put on the spots for the winter.

Councilman Fox reported that he met with a gentleman who does solar panels, who was asking what type of light fixtures are on the street lights. Mr. Johnson replied that they have been replacing the

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old lights with LED fixtures when doing repairs, so a number of them are now LED. Mr. Fox said the solar company representative also wanted to know how many street lights we have. Mr. Johnson answered that he did not know, but he could find out. Mr. Fox asked Mr. Johnson to text him when he found out the number. Mr. Fox explained that the solar company has a unit that allows you to put a solar panel on top of a light pole with a wire going down to a storage battery. The battery uses the energy collected in the daytime from the solar panels to power the street lights in the evening hours. Mr. Fox said he did not know if that would be part of the power purchase agreement or if that would be an additional cost. He also commented that it could be something where you could decide to do a few of them, all of them, or none of them. He said the name of the company he has been talking to is Stoneacre, located in the Swanton-Monclova, Ohio area. The representative intends to come to a meeting in January or February, once we have more information, so council members can ask any questions they may have. Mr. Fox said we would talk about the cost benefit of the power purchase agreement versus paying for it ourselves. Mayor Shanahan responded that we would want to know when the representative was coming, so we could ask Solicitor Skaff to attend that meeting. Mr. Fox told members that the solar representative was recommending putting in solar panels on the lawn behind the village hall and in the triangular area beside the railroad north of Mehring Park. They make solar panels that come in groups of six or eight that are attached to a pole, about ten feet high; they follow the sun like a sunflower would, to harness the most sunlight. The solar representative is also recommending putting solar panels on the roof of the village hall, the roof of the shelter house, plus three or four pole-mounted panels at Centennial Park. He cautioned that you should not install more solar panels than for the amount of energy you will be using, because, if you go with the power purchase agreement, you can't produce more energy than you are going to use because you will have to buy that electricity and we have no way of storing it. The power purchase agreement is an agreement to buy the electricity from the company who installs the equipment at a reduced price from what we are paying now, over the course of thirty years. The mayor commented that the school had the same issue to deal with in considering how large of a solar array to install. Mr. Fox commented that the solar energy production is also seasonal, producing more in the summer months. He said the representative also talked about potential co-op programs for the village residents with discounts on installation and panels. Utilities Superintendent Johnson asked Mr. Fox if they said anything about what would be done about the current power on the poles. Mr. Fox answered that they did not. Mr. Fox commented that, if residents or businesses installed solar, they would have to have a bi-directional meter. The representative said that Napoleon is a nearby city that has a program like this. He also said that municipalities typically buy the electricity back from the residents who install solar panels at a fifty-percent rate of what they are being charged. And carryover amounts are not carried over from year to year. The mayor asked if the representative had a village comparable in size to Tontogany doing this. Mr. Fox answered that Napoleon was the closest one the representative knew of. Councilman Bergfeld commented that we had a nightmare with the whole school solar installation, agreement, and billing matter, which may have left council members with a bad taste for solar companies. Utilities Clerk Harnishfeger also voiced his concern that our expensive utility billing software program does not handle the billing complications that are created with behind-the-meter solar installations. He said it takes him about an hour and a half extra time on billing day to hand-calculate and produce special custom solar net billing invoices for the two school accounts that use the school's solar array. Mayor Shanahan commented that, having experienced the school adding solar, we would be in a better position to ask the right questions of a solar company, including if they have software as part of the package that the village could use to save time in the billing process. Mr. Fox said he thought it would be up to us as a community whether or not we wanted to buy back excess electric from customers. The mayor responded that that would be a question for Solicitor Skaff. He also said it doesn't hurt to gather information and he thanked Councilman Fox for his research work.

STREETS and ALLEYS: Nothing to report.

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SIDEWALKS and TREES: Mayor Shanahan reported that a severe weather system with 50-60 mph winds has been forecasted at the end of the week, which could affect the Christmas tree in the intersection downtown. The mayor said he texted the light company today and told them that he didn't think council would approve paying someone to put the tree back up if the storm system blows it down. Members agreed and said we should cut the tree up and get it out of the road if it falls down. The mayor reported that there are three juniors at Otsego High School who have expressed interest in helping take the tree down, cutting it up, removing it, and helping clean it up for us. Members voiced agreement with allowing the students to do this volunteer work. The mayor said he knew the students who asked, and he would have no issue with them making sure things were done right. Councilman Fox asked about the lights. The mayor responded that he has not heard back from Josh at Christmas Lights 419, so, at this point we would probably just remove the lights, set them aside, and the company would come and pick them up at some agreed-upon time. If some lights get broken, they will replace them at no extra charge as part of the agreement. Mr. Fox asked when we are planning to take them down if the tree doesn't come down in a storm. The mayor answered that it was to be sometime after the new year begins, but he has asked for a more specific date so we can make plans for it. Mr. Fox suggested the 2nd or 3rd of January. The mayor said he would pass that suggestion on. He also commented that he did not get a return call from the N.A.T. Transportation trash hauling company who had called the office with a concern that their truck might catch a low-hanging wire going to the Christmas tree while driving through the intersection. He concluded that they must have found a solution, so we are good there.

DRAINS and SEWERS: Nothing to report.

CITY HALL and PARKS: Mayor Shanahan reported that Councilwoman Mackey had texted him that we were awarded a Wood County Parks District grant of \$4,454 for a new basketball hoop and pole. It will not be an adjustable one, which we talked about getting away from and sticking to just regulation height, because the adjustment cranks keep getting broken. Councilman Fox asked if this is an annual grant program. The mayor answered that it is and we have been awarded grants in the past for things like the disc golf course, new mulch, and new swings. He also reported that before Ms. Mackey left town, she emailed the basketball goal company to get us onto their schedule. Councilman Lee asked how long the basketball goal lasted and if there is maintenance that goes along with the grant. The mayor responded that maintenance is all on us; the grant does not cover that, which is typically the way all park grants work for anything we put into a park. The mayor added that there may be a warranty that comes with the basketball goal for the first year or so. We took down the old goal because the backboard was shattered.

Councilman Fox asked about the status of the request from the school to put a gaga pit in at Centennial Park. Mayor Shanahan answered that he has spoken with Scout Troop 347 leadership about that. They had a Scout reach out to the mayor, who is interested in putting a gaga ball pit in at the park as an Eagle Scout project. The mayor said he told him we needed to get the tree out of the way first and then we would be in touch with him probably after the first of the year. Speaking of Eagle Scout projects, the mayor reported that Nathan was out again a week or so ago to attempt to apply the river rock onto the sign pillars at Centennial Park. The weather was not cooperative, so that part of the project is postponed until later when the weather will allow the application of river rock to set properly. Nathan is still in contact with Cody Donaldson about doing the sandstone caps for the pillars. The mayor said he told Nathan that the project was refurbishing the sign and council is happy with that; the pillars are an added bonus. He also told him that if he needed council to submit a letter saying we were pleased with what is there, we would do so. The mayor said he submitted a letter of reference for him today on the project.

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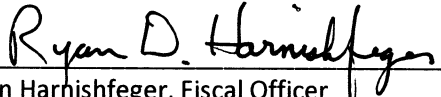
Mayor Shanahan reported that we had a village administrator for about twenty-four hours and then we didn't, so we are starting out the year without an administrator again. The mayor explained that Brandt Corral, who was considering the administrator position, found out that he would lose his medical coverage through OPERS if he took the position, so he decided not to do so. Members asked if there was a certain threshold of hours worked that would cause a person to lose the OPERS medical benefits. The mayor explained that his conversations with Fiscal Officer Harnishfeger and others informed him that the number of hours worked is not a factor, just whether or not you go back to work as a public employee. Mr. Fox asked if résumés should be sent to the mayor. Mayor Shanahan responded that they could be sent to him or council members. He also commented that we would place another ad in the paper after the first of the year. And he suggested that maybe Brandt knows someone who may be interested.

Mayor Shanahan wished everyone a Merry Christmas and that they would enjoy their family time.

With nothing further to discuss, Mayor Shanahan declared the meeting adjourned at 7:47 p.m.



Matthew Shanahan, Mayor



Ryan Harnishfeger, Fiscal Officer