

TONTOGANY VILLAGE COUNCIL

MEETING MINUTES FROM: February 20, 2023

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; Mark Smith, here; Robert Bergfeld, absent; Damon Lee, here; Lincoln Fox, here. Also present were Utilities Superintendent/Meter Reader Chad Johnson and Fiscal Officer/Utilities Clerk Ryan Harnishfeger. Minutes from the February 6th 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.

Fiscal Officer Harnishfeger reported that there are currently no reservations for hall rentals in March.

ZONING: Nothing to report.

UTILITIES: Utilities Superintendent Johnson reported that, by October of 2024, we are mandated by the U.S. EPA to have a lead inventory of the whole village. Mr. Johnson said he estimated that roughly fifty percent of the town can already be verified that they do not have lead services, due to Craig Spoore putting in new water lines. However, under the EPA's rule, we have to verify everyone in town. This means we have to bring in a vacuum excavation truck and dig a large hole in front of the meter pit and on the other side of the meter pit for approximately ninety residents in the village. He said that the Wood County Commissioners are providing \$1 million dollars to implement a countywide lead service identification program. The Northwestern Water and Sewer District is involved and Mr. Johnson said he is a participant in their program and is hoping to get some of the money that is being made available. He said they will be having another meeting soon. The good news is that Main Street is done, so downtown doesn't have to be dug up.

Mr. Johnson told members that he had a small hand-operated pump that he used in the past to pump out meter pits and for working on flushing hydrants. Lately he has had incidents with meter pits leaking and the small pump was not sufficient for the job, so he had to call in Palmer. He asked members if they would approve him getting a battery-operated pump, such as Milwaukee brand, for all of his pumping needs, which would cost about \$300 or \$400. Members were in agreement to allow the purchase of a pump and any accessories needed with it, with no one voicing opposition.

Councilwoman Mackey reported that she saw a moving van and the people in the process of moving out of Hefflinger's apartment upstairs in the old Mason's building downtown. She asked if they had notified the town and settled up their utility account. Utilities Clerk Harnishfeger answered that no one had communicated with him about them moving out and he was unaware of it. The mayor and members asked Mr. Harnishfeger to contact the utility customer and the landlord, Mr. Hefflinger, to get an official word on whether or not the tenant has moved out and if the water should be turned off. Mr. Harnishfeger commented that he has no working telephone number for Mr. Hefflinger, but has to write letters to him, and he doesn't tend to respond to a letter, making it quite difficult to communicate with him. The mayor suggested writing a letter to him and requesting a working telephone number to communicate with him about his accounts and his tenant's accounts. The mayor also asked Mr. Harnishfeger to report at the next meeting what he finds out about the account in question. Councilman Lee asked how information, such as a phone number, is collected and stored for utility customers. Mr. Harnishfeger answered that he uses a form to record new-customer information, which they provide over the phone, by email, or in person, and then he enters the collected information into the utility software. Mr. Lee suggested we may want to think about having an application form online for setting

TONTOGANY VILLAGE COUNCIL

up utility services, with fields that require certain information, like a phone number, in order for the application to be accepted. Then the utilities clerk could access the already-completed application forms. Mr. Harnishfeger commented that that might work if you can get people to do it. Councilman Smith commented that there are some people who change their phone number about every three weeks.

Mayor Shanahan reported that the house at 18540 Main Street sold. Mr. Johnson added that it sold for \$94,000. The mayor reminded members that a lien for delinquent water utilities was placed on the property before the auction, so we should be able to recover that.

Councilman Fox asked Mr. Johnson if there is another required step that we have to do after the lead verification process, if lead pipes are found anywhere. Mr. Johnson replied that, if we identify lead pipes, we have to replace them, but, according to Craig Spoore, he never ran into a lead service in the whole town. So, we shouldn't find any lead service, but we still have to go through the process of verifying that there is none. Mayor Shanahan asked Mr. Johnson if the EPA will send us something to keep on file, validating that we are lead-free, if that is what the inspections determine. Mr. Johnson replied that we will be good with the forms he has to submit. Mr. Johnson also commented that he found out a couple of days ago that Bowling Green hired a contractor to go into every house and look at everything; it is supposed to be lead-free from the water line all the way into the house.

STREETS and ALLEYS: Councilman Smith reminded members that we will probably be getting a call from Morlock Asphalt sometime soon, seeking to fill their schedule for the summer. He asked members to be thinking about anything we need done, such as sealing cracks in the streets. Mayor Shanahan commented that it would be a good idea to take a stroll down the village streets and see what they look like.

SIDEWALKS and TREES: Councilman Smith reported that he spoke with Abe Rowe about the tree on Main Street, but he hasn't heard back about a date. When Abe gives him a date, he will get with the resident, but the resident definitely wants the tree gone. Councilwoman Mackey asked Mr. Smith to ask Abe Rowe to look at a leaning tree on the southwest corner of Mehring Park when he comes to the village, and to give us an estimate for taking it down. Ms. Mackey commented that the tree is in bad shape and she was concerned that it could fall into the playground. Mr. Smith agreed that it needs to come down.

Fiscal Officer Harnishfeger reported that the homeowner has fully paid their 50 percent share of the sidewalk bill for 18550 Wall Street.

DRAINS and SEWERS: Nothing to report.

CITY HALL and PARKS: Councilwoman Mackey reported that she received a revised estimate from Playground World for the new basketball goal, because we already had the old goal removed and hauled away, and that no longer needed to be a part of the billing. The revised estimate is \$4,146.97, which is about \$308.00 less than the original estimate. We need to submit a deposit payment of at least half of the total amount for them to order the new basketball goal and get us on their schedule to install it. Councilman Smith made a motion to authorize the fiscal officer to make a deposit payment of half of the estimated cost, so Playground World can order the product and get us on their schedule. Councilman Fox seconded this motion. All were in favor; motion carried. Mayor Shanahan asked how this would affect the grant, since the cost is now more than \$300.00 less than the grant and we have to spend all of the grant money. Ms. Mackey answered that we have to use all of the grant money or lose it. She said she would contact the Park District to see if we are allowed to use the leftover money for another park-related purchase. She suggested that maybe we could replace the backboard on the north basketball goal with an acrylic one, which is much sturdier. Councilman Fox asked how much an acrylic backboard

TONTOGANY VILLAGE COUNCIL

would cost. The mayor answered that we may have to put a little of the village's money with the grant money to pay for it, if it is over \$308.00. Mr. Fox suggested that maybe we could use the extra grant money for community Frisbees for the golf course. Ms. Mackey suggested that another possibility might be lining the basketball court for pickleball; the mayor added that that would be about \$400.00.

Mayor Shanahan reported that he recently noticed at the park that the fence opening on the Crom Street side has an unstable pole on the east side. This may be a project for Jim Head, perhaps to reset the pole in the ground. Councilman Smith said he would take a look at it.

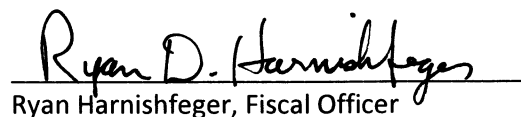
Councilwoman Mackey brought up the topic of a proposed chicken ordinance. Mayor Shanahan commented that he had not read completely through all of the materials yet. Ms. Mackey responded that she did, and her opinion was that we should go with the ordinance that is worded to not allow chickens or any farm animals at all in the village, so we don't have to deal with trying to enforce requirements on allowed chickens. Councilman Fox said that he 100 percent agreed with Ms. Mackey. He added that a chief reason for him is that any chicken or other farm animal is going to produce waste, and not everyone wants to live next to a chicken coop. Other members voiced agreement with the idea of just passing an ordinance that disallows all farm animals in the village. Councilman Smith voiced his personal preference to allow people to have chickens in town, as long as they were kept contained properly. Mr. Fox asked if there was a reason that Solicitor Skaff had drafted two different ordinances on this topic. The mayor answered that he had asked Mr. Skaff to draft two proposed ordinances for Council to consider—one allowing chickens and one not allowing chickens or other farm animals. Mr. Fox asked if we know what kind of ordinances other villages have on this topic. The mayor responded that he had emailed other mayors and the only response he received was from Grand Rapids. Fiscal Officer Kristel Beyer informed him that Grand Rapids did not pass an ordinance on this; in Grand Rapids, the only area allowed to have farm animals is in an agricultural district. Councilman Lee asked if there is any agricultural district in Tontogany. Mr. Johnson answered that there is not. Mr. Fox asked what the state has on the topic. The mayor said he had not had time to look up what the Ohio Revised Code has to say about this. Ms. Mackey asked what we needed to do about an ordinance concerning chickens. Mayor Shanahan answered that members need to choose one of the two proposed ordinances that Solicitor Skaff drafted—either the one disallowing chickens and all farm animals or the one allowing chickens, but no farm animals—and then begin with the first of three readings at the next meeting. Mayor Shanahan asked who was in favor of the ordinance disallowing chickens and all farm animals. Councilmembers Mackey, Mehring, Lee, and Fox voted aye. The mayor asked who was opposed. Councilman Smith answered that he was opposed. The ayes carried by a majority and the ordinance disallowing chickens and all farm animals will begin receiving readings at the next meeting. Fiscal Officer Harnishfeger asked for copies of the two ordinances, so he could prepare the chosen one for the next meeting, since he had not seen them yet. The mayor said he had thought Mr. Harnishfeger was on the original email. Mr. Fox said he would email copies to Mr. Harnishfeger.

Councilwoman Mehring reported that kids have been knocking on doors and then running away. She said Cathy Kirian, who lives across the alley from her, asked her about it and said the kids left a little pink bike on her porch. Ms. Mehring said she suggested that Cathy put the bike out front and maybe someone will come back and get it. The mayor said he had not heard about this.

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



Matthew Shanahan, Mayor



Ryan Harnishfeger, Fiscal Officer