

TONTOGANY VILLAGE COUNCIL

MEETING MINUTES FROM: August 7, 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, absent at roll call, but arrived at 7:01 p.m.; Mark Smith, here; Robert Bergfeld, absent; Damon Lee, here; Lincoln Fox, here. Also present was Fiscal Officer/Utilities Clerk Ryan Harnishfeger. Visitors present: Gail Christofferson, Cody Donaldson of Powell Creek Tree Service and an anonymous village resident. Minutes from the July 17th 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. Copies of the July Bank Reconciliation, Fund Status, Revenue Status, and Appropriation Status Reports were given to the mayor and the Finance Committee to review.

Copies of the July incident report were given to members to review, but no sheriff's deputy was present to discuss it.

Mayor Shanahan did a first reading, by title only, of Ordinance #962-23, AN ORDINANCE TO PROVIDE FOR THE COST AND EXPENSE OF PROVIDING FOR THE REMOVAL AND SPECIAL TREATMENT OF SHADE TREES FOR THE PURPOSE OF CONTROLLING THE BLIGHT AND DISEASE OF SAME; AND FOR PLANTING, MAINTAINING, TRIMMING AND REMOVING SHADE TREES IN AND ALONG THE STREETS AND WITHIN THE PUBLIC RIGHT OF WAY OF THE VILLAGE. Mayor Shanahan asked members to decide how much the assessment for 2024 tree maintenance would be. Fiscal Officer Harnishfeger reported some tree fund statistics to help members in their decision: \$10,000 was assessed in 2022 and again in 2023 (in previous years we were assessing \$5,000); The current tree fund balance is \$34,860.38; \$16,550 was appropriated for 2023 tree expenses, of which \$1,045.67 has been spent; \$13,454.33 is available for tree expenditures; \$2,050 is earmarked for labor on trees by Jim Head. If we need more money for tree expenses this year, a supplemental appropriations ordinance will need to be passed. Councilman Fox asked if these statistics included any billing for recent tree work. Mr. Harnishfeger answered that they do not; we have not been billed yet by Cody Donaldson or Abe Rowe for any recent work. Councilman Smith reminded members that last year we were greatly concerned about potential high costs to trim around utility lines and therefore decided on an assessment of \$10,000. Then we found out that the cost would not be as high as we had anticipated. In light of this, Mr. Smith reasoned that we should go back to assessing \$5,000 for tree maintenance. Other members agreed with Mr. Smith. Councilwoman Mehring made a motion to assess \$5,000 on Ordinance #962-23 for tax year 2024. Councilman Fox seconded this motion. All were in favor; motion carried.

Mayor Shanahan invited a visiting resident, who requested to remain anonymous, to speak to Council about her concerns. The resident said she was here about some zoning concerns having to do with private fireworks. She had called the village hall and came to the assumption that Tontogany is not exempt from private citizens having fireworks displays. Mayor Shanahan responded that, typically, we have always followed State of Ohio laws, and, if someone thinks use of fireworks has gone too far and has become a nuisance, we encourage them to call the sheriff's office and file a complaint. The resident went on to report that the dogs were hypersensitive to the fireworks and she sustained damage to the paint on her car from her neighbor's fireworks—about \$750 in paint damage. She said she did not make a police report, due to the situation with her neighbor. She did call her insurance company and they covered the damage, but there is a \$100 deductible. She talked to her neighbor and said that she would call the sheriff if it happens again. She said she is hesitant about calling the sheriff, because she called the sheriff in the past about a problem with a different neighbor and found her car the next morning with a key scratch costing \$1,600 to repair. She mentioned that Haskins and some other municipalities

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are exempt from private fireworks. She asked if there was any possibility for Tontogany to become exempt, and, if so, how it would be done. Councilman Fox answered that we would have to pass an ordinance to do that, but the problem with passing laws that prohibit certain things like this is how to enforce the law. We don't have our own police force here to enforce it. Councilman Smith added that we have a similar problem with enforcing snow removal from sidewalks. Mr. Fox recommended that she install a security camera that would record someone who might try to key her car or do other damage in retaliation for her calling the sheriff.

The resident said she had another question about whether or not the village has an ordinance about trash cans. Mr. Smith answered that we have nothing specific because people have the ability to contract with whomever they want to contract with for trash removal. The resident explained that the problem she was talking about was a neighbor who leaves their trash cans out all the time, not just on the pickup day. Animals get into it; trash gets strewn around, and it is not cleaned up until the afternoon. It has been this way for a couple of years. Mr. Fox explained that we can't pass a rule to only have cans out on a certain day, because people are on various schedules for trash pickup. Mayor Shanahan told the resident that we would have Zoning Inspector Owens stop by and have a talk with the person who has this trash problem.

Gail Christofferson took the floor to speak to Council. She reported that we previously had misinformation about the cost of SurveyMonkey. It was actually \$300 per administrator and they make you do three, so the cost would be \$900, which would be too much. Therefore, she found a different survey company, Survey Maker Essentials, that was only \$228 per year, which she paid, and she gave a copy of the invoice to the Village, with the understanding that we intended to reimburse her. She also gave the Village a copy of a sample report that we can get with Survey Maker Essentials, as well as login information. She talked about promoting the survey with QR codes, where people can just scan the QR code and go to the survey; she has a bunch of them and she can print out more. She said she was under the impression that a councilmember might be willing to promote the survey during Togany Fest, like at a table or something. She said she thought the festival would be our chance to really get going on the survey. She said she can hand out survey information at her studio during the festival, because she will be doing an open house. She can put up posters with QR codes at the Post Office and at Doc's. She asked members to be thinking about how we can promote it at the festival. She said she doesn't think everyone will use the QR code to go to the web to do the survey, so she thinks we need to have some hard copies of the survey where people can pick them up to fill out, such as in her studio. Mayor Shanahan said he could print some survey hard copies for that purpose.

Ms. Christofferson next talked to members about the plans for the Tontogany 150th Celebration. She reported that they had several meetings. She and Hannah had an initial meeting and then they had a committee meeting. She provided a copy of the minutes Hannah had written up from the July 19th meeting and she gave a few highlights of what they had talked about. They had talked about recipe books as a fundraiser, with favorite family recipes from people all over town. If there is a story that goes with the recipe and/or a photo, they would like to include that. They had discussed an oral history project about Tontogany. Gail asked Councilman Lee if she had heard correctly that he was an audio guy. Mr. Lee responded that he is and he would be happy to help out any way he could; just let him know where and when. Gail said they were thinking of recording people and then doing about a ten-minute audio-visual at the festival in 2025. And then the full interviews would be available possibly on the website. She said they think social media is a good way for people to share what is going on in town, but she doesn't personally have the time to share the 150th information. She suggested maybe the mayor or a councilmember could share what is going on through social media, including seeking photos, memorabilia and recipes from people. Councilman Lee told Gail he could help with the social media. Gail said they are also thinking of a pancake breakfast for a fundraiser and a square dance in the hall. She asked if they could do a BYOB. Mayor Shanahan responded that any group that has alcohol in the hall has to provide their own liability insurance. Fiscal Officer Harnishfeger added that they have to name

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the Village as additionally insured on their policy. Gail asked if anyone has ever done it and if it costs a lot. Mr. Harnishfeger answered that some hall renters have done it and he doesn't know how much it cost them. A councilmember suggested it might be about \$150. Gail said they were thinking that it might help to bring out more people, if they knew it was a BYOB event. Gail said they might also do a murder mystery fundraiser, based on the Mrs. Peony murder that happened a hundred years ago. They are also thinking of a book club, incorporating the school library and topics like reading about the Black Swamp. Gail announced that November 1st is the next scheduled meeting for the 150th committee at Gail's art studio, and they are looking for photos and recipes. They will take pictures of the photos and return the originals to the owners. Gail said that the industrial arts teacher is willing to do signage that will show what was in each building downtown throughout its history. She also reported that T-Mobile has a hometown grant of up to \$50,000 for projects like the corner carryout downtown. She said she thinks that, if we can get the owner onboard, we can get some money for that building as a community enhancement. The survey should help with getting that grant, and she said they intend to have a business-owner meeting after the survey brings in more information. They will invite the carryout owner as well as neighboring business or building owners. Councilman Fox asked if there is a catch with the T-Mobile grant, such as requiring a cell tower or something like that. Gail answered that they did not say anything about a requirement like that in the grant application description. With nothing more to discuss, Mayor Shanahan thanked Gail and she left the meeting. The anonymous village resident left at the same time.

Mayor Shanahan invited Cody Donaldson to speak to members. Mr. Donaldson presented the invoice for tree and sidewalk work he did on Washington Street. He said he still has a little bit of grass seed and straw to put down before Togany Fest. He said that there is no rush on getting him the payment, but, if we do have it available during Togany Fest, he could pick it up at that time, because he intends to come to the festival. The mayor told Cody that the residents are happy with their sidewalks and that people who have had tree or sidewalk work done by him were impressed with the professionalism and quality of his work. Cody informed members that he intends to finish the concrete blocks on the sign at Centennial Park. He also said that, if there is enough interest, he would be open to coming to the village for a week or two to do tree trimming work for residents. With nothing more to discuss, the mayor thanked Cody and he left the meeting.

Fiscal Officer Harnishfeger reported that there is currently one hall rental reservation in September—Saturday, September 30. He also reported that he gave everyone an updated village officials contact list, since Chad Johnson's phone number had changed.

ZONING: Nothing to report.

UTILITIES: Utilities Clerk Harnishfeger reported that the commercial utility customer who had delinquent utilities of over \$15,000 has paid the full amount off. They began a payment plan agreement on 10/26/22 and finished paying off their entire debt and current billing as of 7/20/23. Mr. Harnishfeger said that, to avoid confusion, he wrote a letter to the customer each month, calculating for them exactly what the payments should be to keep their payment agreement. And since that worked so well with this customer, he has begun writing similar letters each month to everyone on a payment plan, to let them know the exact amount due to keep their agreement. Councilwoman Mehring asked if there are any other customers behind. Mr. Harnishfeger answered that there are people behind on their payments, but nothing like that case. We serve them with disconnection notices when they are 30 to 60 days behind. He said that we just issued about 16 notices last week. Mr. Johnson was unable to serve the notices in person, due to a gout flare-up, so Mr. Harnishfeger said he reprinted them with new dates and mailed them out to the customers. He said most customers just quickly pay the amount listed on the disconnection notice. Others may decide to get on a payment plan. The mayor and members thanked Mr. Harnishfeger for his extra efforts.

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STREETS and ALLEYS: Nothing to report.

SIDEWALKS and TREES: Councilman Smith read from the invoice delivered by Cody Donaldson for tree and sidewalk work. Tree removal and tree trimming on Washington Street came to \$1,900. Sidewalk replacements at 18625 and 18720 Washington Street came to \$2,790, bringing the total bill to \$4,690. Mr. Smith told members that they had decided not to replace the whole sidewalk at 18625 Washington Street, because only a portion of it was actually bad enough to need replacing. Most of it was still in great shape. The problem area was right around the tree. The tree was ours and it is now removed, but Mr. Smith said he was still trying to figure out how to do the billing for the work. Councilwoman Mackey asked if there was any way we could just accept the resident's down payment as sufficient and not bill them for anything further. Mr. Smith said he thought that would probably be acceptable with the resident. Mayor Shanahan added that Cody had told him he didn't think that whole sidewalk needed replacement. Ms. Mackey commented that she appreciated that. Mr. Smith added that Cody had talked with Karen and Jennifer about it and gave them his suggestion. Mr. Smith said he fully supported saving them some money by not replacing sidewalk that didn't need it. Councilman Fox asked how much of the sidewalk bill from Cody was for 18625 Washington Street. Mr. Smith answered that the 25 feet of sidewalk there would come to about \$870. He then handed Cody's bill to Fiscal Officer Harnishfeger.

DRAINS and SEWERS: Nothing to report.

CITY HALL and PARKS: Councilwoman Mehring reported that she discovered cobwebs underneath the chairs in the hall, while she was involved with an event recently at the hall. She also said she found mold on some of the padded stacking chairs that are covered in vinyl. She said she thought maybe someone washed them, stacked them, and put them away while still wet. Councilman Smith suggested opening the closet doors to get more air flow where the chairs are stored. Mayor Shanahan suggested that Karen could use a duster under the chairs when she cleans the hall, to remove the cobwebs.

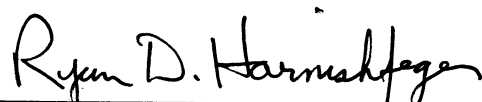
Councilwoman Mackey reported that the trash downtown needs to be taken care of before the festival. She said she would be willing to help and we could put it in the big bin at the hall. There are big bags in the hall office. She also reported that she took care of the trash at the park, making it ready for the festival.

Mayor Shanahan reported that he received a call, and, if anyone has some time on Thursday around 6 p.m., the Togany Fest Committee has asked for help stringing the lights in the tent. They also wanted the trash bins from the shed and the mayor said he had told them they would be ready for them. Councilwoman Mehring asked about the trains being slowed down for the festival. The mayor answered that he did a reminder email today and he had done it two weeks ago as well. He said he didn't get a response yet, but he had emailed them twice to be sure they got the message. He said he also confirmed two deputy sheriffs for the beer tent Friday and Saturday night. So, there should be some overtime on our invoice from the Wood County Sheriff's Office.

With nothing further to discuss, Mayor Shanahan declared the meeting adjourned at 7:59 p.m.



Matthew Shanahan, Mayor



Ryan Harnishfeger, Fiscal Officer