

## TONTOGANY VILLAGE COUNCIL

### MEETING MINUTES FROM: August 21, 2023

Council called to order in regular session at 7:13 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, absent; Connie Mehring, here; Mark Smith, here; Robert Bergfeld, here; Damon Lee, here; Lincoln Fox, here. Also present was Fiscal Officer/Utilities Clerk Ryan Harnishfeger. Minutes from the August 7<sup>th</sup> meeting were approved as submitted.

**FINANCE and CLAIMS:** A spreadsheet of the current invoices was reviewed and approved by members. Councilman Fox asked about the reference to getting Al Ferrell's water turned on in Chad Johnson's extra hours submitted for payroll. Fiscal Officer Harnishfeger explained that Mr. Ferrell had asked to get his water service working again downtown at 18000 Main St., which had been out of service and not used for many years. In order to get it working, Utilities Superintendent Johnson had to call in Palmer to remove some sidewalk, replace the curb box, and then replace the sidewalk. Councilman Smith made a motion that these bills be allowed and orders drawn for same. Councilman Fox seconded this motion. All were in favor; motion carried.

Mayor Shanahan did a second 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, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY. Councilman Smith made a motion to suspend the rules and declare an emergency for Ordinance #962-23. Councilwoman Mehring seconded this motion. All were in favor; motion carried. Councilman Fox made a motion to adopt Ordinance #962-23. Councilman Smith seconded this motion. All were in favor; motion carried.

Fiscal Officer Harnishfeger reminded members that no meeting is scheduled for Monday, September 4<sup>th</sup>, in observance of Labor Day. Mayor Shanahan added that our next meeting will be on Monday, September 18<sup>th</sup>.

At Councilman Smith's request, Fiscal Officer Harnishfeger explained to members that he believed a refund of \$64.06 was due to Jennifer Sheeks for the sidewalk put in at 18625 Washington Street. Only 25 feet of sidewalk was needed there, which came to \$871.88 total. The resident's half of that would be \$435.94, but Jennifer had made a down payment of \$500.00, which was an overpayment of \$64.06. Members agreed that a refund of \$64.06 should be given to Jennifer, with no one voicing an opposition to this.

**ZONING:** Mayor Shanahan reported that Zoning Inspector Owens had a conversation about a fence permit for the new house on Washington and Tontogany Creek Road. The mayor said that he had asked Mr. Owens to stop by the house on Washington Street to speak to the people there about the garbage cans, which Mr. Owens had agreed to do. The mayor said he also asked Mr. Owens to talk to the people in the house on Crom Street, across from the park, who have not been keeping up on mowing their grass. He added that he noticed today that the grass had been cut.

**UTILITIES:** Mayor Shanahan reported that, while setting up and cleaning up for Togany Fest, he and Councilman Smith had discussed some ideas about cleaning out the shed. But they wanted to consult with Mr. Johnson before throwing anything away, because he would know better what needs to be kept and what does not. He could perhaps use spray paint to mark anything that can be discarded. They thought about setting up a grill and scheduling a couple of hours to grill some hotdogs and burgers and have a clean-out session for the shed. The mayor commented that the shed had been a fire station at one time in Tontogany's history, so he would like for it to be more presentable for the upcoming 150<sup>th</sup>

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Celebration, with signs being planned to be put up identifying historical uses of buildings in town. The mayor and members briefly discussed some ideas of what to do with various types of items in the shed.

**STREETS and ALLEYS:** Councilwoman Mehring reported that the junk sitting out in front of the apartments downtown on Main Street needs to go. Councilman Fox agreed; he said there was a fridge, a sink, and parts sitting there. Mayor Shanahan said he would walk down there and look at it.

Councilman Fox asked about getting the speed sign we had talked about, since school is about to start up. The mayor responded that he would email them and see what their plan is. The mayor also said that he talked with Otsego School Superintendent Kevin O'Shea today and he is good Wednesday, Thursday, or Friday for him, the mayor, the school resource officer, and the school safety director to redo the Drive Safe video and get that out. Mr. Fox asked if the school has any better ideas than with the current situation with incoming and outgoing traffic. The mayor answered that he hasn't met the school's new SRO yet, but he did meet with the safety director last week. The school now has a school resource officer and a safety director. Mr. Fox commented that he would challenge them to come up with a better way to organize traffic than the current way. The mayor responded that he spoke with the safety director last week and told him one of the biggest challenges for the village is speeders. He said he would also suggest that they consider traffic patterns. Mr. Fox commented that staggered start times might be helpful, for example, junior high starting at 7:30 and high school starting at 7:45. Members also briefly discussed other traffic issues, including school buses.

**SIDEWALKS and TREES:** Councilman Fox reported that nobody seems to be taking the limbs that we asked to be left from trees recently cut down. He asked if we want to continue the practice of leaving wood from trees cut down or just have it ground up and removed, if people don't seem to have enough interest in taking the wood. He said he posted pictures and put it on Facebook. The mayor responded that the wood usually goes pretty quickly. Councilman Bergfeld stated that some pretty big chunks were left with the recent cutting. The mayor said that he thinks there is interest in taking the wood, but maybe we need to address problems with the size of the chunks left. Councilman Smith said he would talk to Abe about the size of the chunks the next time he removes a tree for us. He also suggested that maybe we need to put up a plywood sign that says, "Free Firewood; Please Take," so people are not uncertain about whether or not they can take it.

Councilman Bergfeld brought up the topic of tree replacements and asked how we might go about seeing if people want replacement trees in the right of way where we have had bad trees removed. He suggested maybe putting up a flyer. Councilman Smith said he thought posting a flyer at the Post Office and other places and having the mayor put something on social media would work. Mr. Bergfeld commented that we would make the final decision on people's requests for trees and he said he was pretty sure Randy Becker would like a replacement tree. Mr. Fox agreed that Randy said he definitely wanted another tree. Mr. Fox also suggested putting something on our website that lets people make a request for a tree. Mr. Bergfeld suggested that we give them a list of acceptable trees to choose from. Mr. Fox proposed being consistent by planting the same or similar types of trees on a street for the sake of aesthetics, so it would be more pleasing to the eyes. Mr. Smith commented that a disease can wipe out all of one kind of tree. Mr. Fox asked Mr. Bergfeld if there was a price for trees given in the email. Mr. Bergfeld responded that the cost was \$300 to \$400 per tree plus \$267 for installation, with an optional warranty. Members discussed thoughts about where to put trees in proximity to sidewalks. Mr. Smith noted that there are recommendations for certain trees that stay small and would not pose a threat to sidewalks. Mr. Bergfeld said he would try to make a brochure with pictures of maybe five or six optional trees to take and show residents, once we get a list of interested people. The mayor commented that he will trust Mr. Bergfeld's judgment.

Councilman Smith reported that he was contacted by Derick Mobus a couple of weeks ago about a walnut tree that leans into the street at his place at 18515 Main St. The tree belongs to the village and

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he asked if we would be willing to get rid of it, since it leans into the street and it makes a mess. Mr. Mobus had talked to Abe Rowe about it, but Abe referred him to the village, since the tree is in the right of way. Mayor Shanahan said he would take a look at the tree after the meeting, but he asked Mr. Smith to get a quote from Abe Rowe on what it would cost to remove it.

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

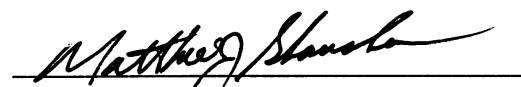
**CITY HALL and PARKS:** Councilman Fox asked about the damaged slide at Mehring Park. Mayor Shanahan stated that we just have to take it down, so someone doesn't get hurt on it and we become liable, having known it was damaged. The mayor said he would be available anytime after 3:30 p.m. to help out, if we can pick a time to get together and work on getting it out of there. Mr. Fox suggested maybe asking the Scouts or the school shop class to help us with it. The mayor said he would take a look at it on his way home, to see what needs to be done. He also commented that we could set it behind the shed temporarily, if necessary.

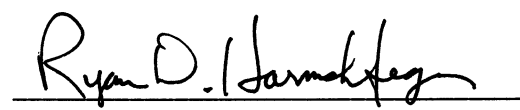
Mayor Shanahan reported that the Christmas Tree Committee met for the second time about a week ago and they are asking Council to approve Christmas Lights 419 to do the tree lights again this year at the same cost as last year, \$3,750. The cost includes them putting the lights on the tree, removing the lights, and storing the lights. Everything else for the event is donated, including the tree; we are just waiting on an answer on the crane, which we asked to be donated this year. The fire department will handle the doughnuts and hot chocolate again, as well as Santa. Gail is going to do another craft mosaic. The Tree Committee will have another meeting on September 19<sup>th</sup>. Councilwoman Mehring asked if we have the money for the lights. Fiscal Officer Harnishfeger answered that we do, and the mayor added that we would use park money again like last year. Councilman Lee made a motion to approve Christmas Lights 419 to do the lights for \$3,750. Councilman Bergfeld seconded this motion. All were in favor; motion carried.

Mayor Shanahan reported that we still need to decide who will be the honored guest to light the Christmas tree. The mayor read from a list of proposed honorees and asked Councilwoman Mehring and others to try to recall whether or not they had been the chosen guest previously. The mayor also suggested that we may want to widen the criteria for choosing an honored guest, since many of our older citizens have already been chosen in the past. Councilman Smith commented that we are intending to start getting a little more publicity out for whoever the honored person may be, such as a Sentinel-Tribune article and a podcast at the school, so people can learn more about their story. The mayor said that Doc's will be open and have half off on appetizers again. Some other ideas being considered include fire pits with s'mores and adding a countdown to the tree lighting ceremony. Sunday, December 3<sup>rd</sup> will be the tree lighting date. Councilman Fox proposed maybe having a holiday parade along with the tree lighting with a competition on floats. Councilman Lee asked if we do anything for Thanksgiving. The mayor answered that we do not. The mayor and members briefly discussed some other thoughts about things that might be added to the tree lighting event.

Mayor Shanahan reported that Lydia Mihalik, the Director of the Ohio Department of Development, will be in the village on Thursday this week, to walk around, look at things downtown, and sit down and talk about potential funding opportunities to help us with projects in the village.

With nothing further to discuss, Mayor Shanahan declared the meeting adjourned at 8:12 p.m.

  
Matthew Shanahan, Mayor

  
Ryan Harnishfeger, Fiscal Officer