

## TONTOGANY VILLAGE COUNCIL

### MEETING MINUTES FROM: October 16, 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, here; Damon Lee, here; Lincoln Fox, here. Also present was Fiscal Officer/Utilities Clerk Ryan Harnishfeger. Visitors present: Otsego School Superintendent Kevin O'Shea and Treasurer Steve Carroll; Deborah Hefflinger. Minutes from the October 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting were approved as submitted.

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

Mayor Shanahan did a third reading, by title only, of Resolution #963-23, a RESOLUTION ACCEPTING THE AMOUNTS AND RATES AS DETERMINED BY THE BUDGET COMMISSION AND AUTHORIZING THE NECESSARY TAX LEVIES AND CERTIFYING THEM TO THE COUNTY AUDITOR. Councilman Smith made a motion to adopt Resolution #963-23. Councilwoman Mehring seconded this motion. All were in favor; motion carried.

Mayor Shanahan did a second reading, by title only, of Resolution #964-23, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE VILLAGE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE 2024 WOOD COUNTY PARK DISTRICT PARKS GRANT PROGRAM, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY. Councilman Smith made a motion to suspend the rules and declare an emergency for Resolution #964-23. Councilwoman Mackey seconded this motion. All were in favor; motion carried. Councilman Smith made a motion to adopt Resolution #964-23. Councilwoman Mehring seconded this motion. All were in favor; motion carried.

Copies of the September Incident Report were given to everyone to review. No sheriff's deputy was present to discuss the report.

Mayor Shanahan introduced Otsego Superintendent Kevin O'Shea and Otsego Treasurer Steve Carroll to the council members. Then he asked the members to introduce themselves to Superintendent O'Shea, since he might not know them. After introductions, the mayor turned the floor over to the school officials, having explained that Mr. O'Shea and Mr. Carroll were visiting the four communities and answering any questions anyone might have about the upcoming November levy for the school.

Mr. O'Shea thanked Council for the opportunity to speak to them. He began by stating that they were not allowed to promote or sell anyone on the levy, but they came to answer questions and to explain how increased costs have justified putting a levy on the November ballot, asking for ½ percent income tax. They want to be transparent with the taxpayers, so they are visiting the communities that make up their school district, to answer questions about why a levy is needed and what they plan on spending the money on. It has been over twenty years since the Otsego School District has received money and they have fought to avoid coming to this point, but now the point has come when extra funds are needed. Councilman Fox asked if the ½ percent will be in addition to the current 1 percent, making the total school tax 1.5 percent. Mr. O'Shea answered that, yes, it would be an additional ½ percent. Councilman Bergfeld asked what it would pay for. Mr. O'Shea replied that, as experience by everyone else, the cost of everything has risen over the past twenty years. A unique problem for the school is that costs have exponentially skyrocketed for the mandated provision of special education services for all sorts of mental, social, emotional, and behavioral issues of students. Therefore, they have been required to provide counseling for students and there are now 41 individual aids in the classrooms. On top of these and other costs related to helping students get the best results from their education, there are campus improvements that are needed as the school gets a little older: the parking lot needs to be redone; the elementary playground needs updated; roof repairs are needed; a hallway in the elementary school needs to be ripped out due to a bowed pipe underground. Another big area with extra costs is school safety and required security measures. Mr. O'Shea said that the school received a

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\$400,000 grant in the spring of last year and they have begun using it to make major improvements. Councilman Fox asked what made the school decide to go with an income tax levy versus a property tax levy. Mr. Carroll explained that the aim was to create more equity. Mr. O'Shea summed up by saying that the most important thing to them was the trust they have built up with the communities, that they are transparent and approachable, so people can come to them with questions and suggestions. The vote on the levy is a personal decision for everyone to make. Mayor Shanahan commented that there is an opportunity, if we can recommend a community member who would be willing to sit on the committee between now and election day, to help get a positive word out. However, Village Solicitor Skaff advised that the mayor and council members not be on that committee, so that the influence of their positions would not be pushing a vote. The mayor thanked Mr. O'Shea and Mr. Carroll for coming to the meeting. Councilwoman Mackey remarked that she thinks that it speaks so well of Otsego not to have had a levy for 20-plus years. Members agreed. Mr. O'Shea offered that, if Council should want one of them to come to a meeting every so often, they would be willing to do so. With nothing more to discuss, Mr. O'Shea and Mr. Carroll left the meeting.

Mayor Shanahan invited Deborah Hefflinger to speak to members. Ms. Hefflinger said that she came to get clarification about the problem with hooking up electric at 18660 Wall Street, since a county inspector had inspected and approved the electrical hookup there. The mayor responded that the Village was trying to get some clarification as well, since it appeared to us that the location where electric was requested was a different parcel address than the parcel where the county had done their inspection. Ms. Hefflinger responded that several parcels can fall under one address, as many property owners may have noticed at their own home addresses. The mayor responded that Utilities Superintendent Johnson had shared that same consideration with some of us today, which we were previously unaware of; we had supposed that a different parcel meant a different address. He also told Ms. Hefflinger that the Village at no point meant to say no to the request for electric hookup, but we were just confused about the situation and trying to figure out the right way to deal with the various parcels. We understand that there is a potential buyer for the property. Ms. Hefflinger responded that it is a done deal; the sale went through after the electrical permit that the Village requested was received. But then the Village told the buyer that the electric still could not be hooked up. The mayor reiterated that we were just trying to get clarification on the question about the various parcels involved. Fiscal Officer Harnishfeger explained that, not being experts, we were thrown off by the fact that the County Auditor's website shows separate parcels, with addresses of 0 Wall Street and only one parcel designated as 18660 Wall Street. However, Mr. Johnson has now made us aware that more than one parcel is often included under one street address. Mr. Johnson is now okay with hooking up the electric and he said that he will install a new meter and we can set up an electric utility account for the new owner. Mr. Harnishfeger added that we will just need to get some information from the new owner for setting up the account. Councilman Fox asked if Ms. Hefflinger was here on behalf of the new buyer. She explained that she was here to get clarification about the problem with hooking up electric for the new owner, since getting approval for electric hookup was a selling point which was met, and then the Village denied electric service to the buyer. Mr. Fox asked why the new owner wasn't here instead of Ms. Hefflinger. Mayor Shanahan commented that Ms. Hefflinger was just seeking information to relay back to the buyer on why the Village is denying the electric hookup. Ms. Hefflinger added that they didn't want to sell the property under false pretenses; they thought the electric matter was resolved, but then the Village denied hookup. Mr. Harnishfeger told Ms. Hefflinger that we will get the electric hooked up for the new owner as quickly as possible. Councilwoman Mehring asked what the new owner will be putting in on the property. Mayor Shanahan answered that we were told some type of storage. He also told Ms. Hefflinger that we expect the new owner to contact Zoning Inspector Owens for permits for anything new being put on the property. With nothing more to discuss, Ms. Hefflinger thanked Council and left the meeting.

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Fiscal Officer Harnishfeger reported that he would be attending the 2023 Village Fiscal Officer Training in Perrysburg all day on Tuesday, October 17<sup>th</sup>. He told members that during the Covid emergency the annual required training was done through things like webinars, but this year they started having the in-person training events again. The cost is \$100.00, as shown on the list of invoices, which Mr. Harnishfeger said he paid with his personal VISA card, since they will no longer accept checks as a method of payment.

**ZONING:** Councilman Bergfeld reported that Hefflinger's trucks and tanker have been parked on the road without plates on Broad Street. Councilwoman Mackey remarked that she has seen a tanker on Main Street.

Members and the mayor briefly discussed what the new owner of the property on Wall Street might do with it. It was concluded that whatever they intend to do, they must get it approved through Zoning Inspector Owens. Also, they will have to apply to the zoning board if they wish to combine parcels there. Councilwoman Mackey asked if anyone knows who purchased the property. Fiscal Officer Harnishfeger replied that the new owner is DGB Irrigation, LLC and the person's name is Ben Bonnough. The mayor asked Mr. Harnishfeger to contact the new owner and let them know that they need to communicate with Zoning Inspector Owens about any new construction they may intend to do on the property.

**UTILITIES:** Mayor Shanahan reported that he spoke with Utilities Superintendent Johnson last week and asked him to follow up with Bowling Green about getting our street lights fixed. He said he asked Mr. Johnson to emphasize that trick or treat is coming up and we want the streets to be safe for the children. Councilwoman Mehring reported that they came and did six of the lights. Members discussed lights still needing fixed. The mayor said he would drive up and down the streets on the way home and check what is still needed.

**STREETS and ALLEYS:** Councilman Smith reported that he received a bid today from Morlock for crack sealing. The bid is for Lincoln, Wall, and Main Streets, from Tontogany Road to Tontogany Creek Road, but nothing on Broad Street. The work includes sweeping, clearing out cracks, and filling the cracks ¼-inch or larger with specified filling material. Lincoln Street would cost \$1,633.00. Wall Street would cost \$2,340.00. Main Street would cost \$1,568.00. The total cost to do all three streets would be \$5,541.00. Mayor Shanahan asked if they mentioned any priority. Mr. Smith answered that no priority was actually specified, although they mentioned Main Street a couple of times and Wall Street seems to be the worst, having the highest price; it is really up to Council what we want to do. Councilwoman Mehring asked if we have enough money for this project. Fiscal Officer Harnishfeger answered that we do have plenty of money available to easily cover the cost of doing all three streets. He commented that he thought it would be good preventative maintenance. Councilman Bergfeld stated that he thought we should do all three streets, especially before winter. Then he made a motion to accept Morlock's bid of \$5,541.00 to seal the cracks on all three streets. Councilman Lee seconded this motion. All were in favor; motion carried. The mayor asked Mr. Smith to follow up with Morlock to let them know the project is approved and can be put on their schedule.

**SIDEWALKS and TREES:** Councilman Smith reported that Abe Rowe came today and cut down the leaning walnut tree on Main Street. He left some firewood. He should be back tomorrow to grind out the stump. Mayor Shanahan asked Mr. Smith to ask Abe Rowe to go over and snip some branch ends at Jack Hain's place, which are blocking the view of his banner. The mayor also mentioned that the bolts broke on one of the new banners about a week ago, but they got it fixed. Councilwoman Mehring asked if, when we take banners down and put them up again next year, we could try to place them on the streets where the veterans on the banners live. Mr. Smith answered that we had put banners up at the beginning of the summer and we didn't want to play musical banners with them now, but we will try to

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do what she is suggesting in the spring. The mayor commented that we wanted to put the banners in a high-visibility area, and we have received a lot of compliments on their placement.

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


**CITY HALL and PARKS:** Mayor Shanahan reported that Cody Donaldson was down at Centennial Park today putting the finishing touches on the village sign with decorative rock on the posts. He left some spacers that need to be there for four or five days and then they can be taken out. Councilwoman Mehring commented that she told Cody that it looks nice. The mayor added that Cody was in touch with the Eagle Scout and his dad, so they know the sign is being finished.

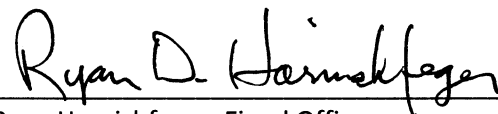
Fiscal Officer Harnishfeger reported that a ceiling light is out in the hall kitchen again—the same one that was out previously and we had repaired. Mayor Shanahan asked Mr. Harnishfeger to contact the company that did the repair of the light before and ask them for a quote for fixing the light again, and a comparison quote for replacing the light with LED lighting. He also asked Mr. Harnishfeger to enquire whether there is any warranty on the original repair job, if it has been less than a year since it was done.

Mayor Shanahan reported that Councilwoman Mackey, Fiscal Officer Harnishfeger, and he met with and interviewed the applicant for the village administrator position. Nothing has been decided yet. The mayor pointed out that each member was given a packet of information about the village administrator's powers and duties, so that members can become familiar with the information and be able to speak to inquirers or applicants about the position.

Mayor Shanahan reminded members that November is budget month, so he asked them to be thinking of any project monies needed or salary changes that they might want to propose for the coming year. We want to have the budget hammered out by December so we can adopt the permanent appropriations ordinance before the end of the year. Councilman Smith thanked Fiscal Officer Harnishfeger for sending members the third quarter report on the status of village funds. The mayor commented that he thinks those reports have helped us to stay on top of some things.

With nothing further to discuss, Mayor Shanahan declared the meeting adjourned at 7:58 p.m.

  
Matthew Shanahan, Mayor

  
Ryan Harnishfeger, Fiscal Officer