

## TONTOGANY VILLAGE COUNCIL

### MEETING MINUTES FROM: May 6, 2024

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; Lincoln Fox, here. Also present were Zoning Inspector Brian Owens and Fiscal Officer/Utilities Clerk Ryan Harnishfeger. Visitors present: Deputy J. Zimmerman from the Wood County Sheriff's Office; Wood County Park District Director Chris Smalley (arrived at about 7:24 p.m.). Minutes from the April 15<sup>th</sup> 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. Councilwoman Mehring asked if the sheriff's deputies had received a raise in pay. Fiscal Officer Harnishfeger responded that they did receive a raise in pay this year, which had been discussed at a previous meeting. Noting the reimbursement to Jim Head for picnic table repair materials, Mayor Shanahan commented that the repaired tables look very nice. Members agreed. Copies of the April Bank Reconciliation, Fund Status, Revenue Status, and Appropriation Status Reports were given to the mayor and the Finance Committee to review.

Mayor Shanahan did a second reading, by title only, of Resolution #973-24, A RESOLUTION APPROVING THE WOOD COUNTY HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN.

Mayor Shanahan did a second reading, by title only, of Resolution #974-24, a CONTRACT TO FURNISH EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT BETWEEN WOOD COUNTY, OHIO AND THE VILLAGE OF TONTOGANY.

Copies of the April incident report were given to everyone to review. Mayor Shanahan asked if members had any issues or questions for Deputy Zimmerman. Members did not have anything to discuss, and the deputy did not have anything to report. Therefore, the mayor thanked Deputy Zimmerman and he left the meeting.

Fiscal Officer Harnishfeger reported that Councilwoman Mackey had forwarded to him a quote from Renewed Outdoors for playground mulch and for spraying playground weeds with post emergent herbicide. The mulch quotes were for 10 inches and 8 inches. 10 inches at Centennial Park would be \$8,967 and 10 inches at Mehring Park would be \$7,987, for a total of \$16,954. 8 inches at Centennial Park would be \$7,203 and 8 inches at Mehring Park would be \$6,370, for a total of \$13,573. Post emergent herbicide spraying of both parks would be \$285 (price per visit; more than one spraying may be needed before installation of mulch). Mr. Harnishfeger stated that we had budgeted a total of \$12,000 for park supplies and materials, so, accepting either of the quotes for mulch—10 inches or 8 inches—would require supplemental appropriation legislation to make more money available for this purpose and for other possible park needs. Councilwoman Mackey commented that we did not have them put that much mulch down when we did it previously. She also said that she asked the gentleman at Renewed Outdoors if putting in deeper mulch would eliminate the weeds, and he answered that it would not, because you always have weed seeds blowing in. She said she would look at her records when she gets home and see what the depth of mulch was the last time we had it put in. Also, the gentleman at Renewed Outdoors told her that Otsego would be getting new mulch this summer, so, if we order mulch, they would do ours at the same time. Therefore, there is no need for us to put a rush on it. However, having consulted with Mayor Shanahan, Ms. Mackey said she did tell them to go ahead and do the spraying right away, because it will probably be necessary to do another spraying later, right before mulch is put down. They estimated that they will be doing the spraying this week. Councilman Smith asked how necessary members think it is to put new mulch down this year. He noted that when he was on the mulch recently, it felt alright to him. He commented that we might be better off waiting

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until next year and try to cover the cost of new mulch with a park grant. Councilman Fox asked how much ground up rubber pellets would cost, compared to mulch. Mr. Smith responded that those are a giant pain to deal with. Plus, it would take a ton of money to take out all the mulch that is there already to replace it. The mulch decomposes over time, but the rubber does not, and we would be forever fighting to keep straying rubber pellets within the play area. Mr. Fox also proposed artificial grass as a possible alternative. Mayor Shanahan summed up by saying we would research the depth of mulch previously put down and see what current pricing would be, and then lean toward seeking a grant for mulching the playgrounds next year. For now, we can start doing sprayings that will prepare the playgrounds for new mulch later. Mr. Fox suggested having spraying done on a regular basis, maybe three or four times a year. Mr. Smith told members he had been thinking about this for next year. He said we have TruGreen this year, but there is a local company in Waterville, named GSI, that specializes in fertilizing and weed control. He suggested that we get a quote from them next year for the park lawns and also for spraying the weeds, and maybe have them do everything for us however many times a year we want it done. Ms. Mackey voiced her agreement with this idea.

Fiscal Officer Harnishfeger reported that we received the annual notice from the Regional Income Tax Agency (RITA), offering the opportunity to address non-filing taxpayers through participation in their non-filing delinquency program. The delinquency program consists of two parts: a letter campaign to non-filing taxpayers, followed by the issuance of administrative subpoenas to those who do not respond to the letters. There is no cost for sending the letter. The cost to participate in the subpoena part of the program is \$1 per subpoena issued. RITA gives members the options of participation in just the letter campaign, participation in both the letter campaign and the administrative subpoenas, or no participation in either. Mr. Harnishfeger said he thought we did both the letter and the subpoena the last time we participated and he recommended the same choice this time, since the cost is very reasonable. In order to participate in the 2024/2025 subpoena program, a completed authorization form must be submitted by June 1, 2024. Councilman Smith observed that even if we paid for fifty subpoenas and only one person's delinquent taxes were paid as a result, we would still be ahead. After a brief discussion, members decided to go with both the letter and the follow-up subpoena, and they approved Fiscal Officer Harnishfeger to sign the RITA authorization form and submit it.

Councilwoman Mackey asked if anyone had any luck approaching people about becoming a council member. Members answered that they tried, but didn't get any affirmative responses. Members discussed some other possible names that were suggested to them or that they had considered. Mayor Shanahan asked members to let him think about it and come up with some names to run by them as possible candidates.

Mayor Shanahan invited Wood County Park District Director Chris Smalley to speak to Council. Mr. Smalley thanked the village officials for Tontogany's participation in the Park District Local Park Improvement Grant Program, and said he was here to present Tontogany's 2024 park grant award check for \$9,340, as well as a small sign to display near the improvement that the park grant is financing. He also presented Council with a packet for the upcoming 2025 grant program, which Councilwoman Mackey took. He said they would be trying something different this year, by dropping the meeting requirements, since attendance has been declining over the last couple of years. The mayor commented that we had just been talking about ideas for the next grant application, and he told Mr. Smalley that we appreciate the Park District making money available for small municipalities like ours. He and members commented about how beneficial the park grant additions have been over the years, including playground equipment, swings, mulch, and the disc golf course. Ms. Mackey added that people use the disc golf course almost every day. Mr. Smalley told the mayor and members to give the Park District a shout if they every have any questions. Ms. Mackey responded that she did have a question. She told Mr. Smalley that we have a new area on the north end of town, purchased by the Black Swamp Conservancy, that might be considered as a park. She asked if it qualifies as a park in the county. Mr. Smalley answered that it is not technically a park. It is a gray area, but something might be able to be

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put together. Ms. Mackey said that she is on a committee, tasked with seeking funding to alleviate any school responsibility for upgrades. So, she had wondered if it would be possible to write a grant for it. Mr. Smalley asked who, at the end of the day, is technically the owner of the property. The mayor answered that it is the school. Mr. Smalley commented that, if the school partners with the village, then that could open some doors for considering a grant. He said that a joint program would be new territory for the Park District, but we could talk about it and figure it out. With nothing more to discuss, Mayor Shanahan thanked Mr. Smalley and he left the meeting.

**ZONING:** Zoning Inspector Owens reported that he received some calls, including a couple of proposed fences, but nothing on paper yet.

Mayor Shanahan reminded members that Fiscal Officer Harnishfeger had sent them a copy of Ordinance #287-67, an ordinance dealing with abandoned vehicles, legislation of which we were previously unaware. The mayor said that he would like for himself, Zoning Inspector Owens, and Councilman Smith to get together, look the ordinance over to fully understand what it covers, and then send out letters to people with vehicles in violation of the ordinance. They would walk through town to identify any unknown vehicles in violation. Councilman Fox asked if the ordinance applies to trailers too. The mayor and Mr. Smith replied that we would have to examine the ordinance more closely to see what all it covers. Councilwoman Mackey commented that she had been on Council long enough that she remembered that we always used to enforce that ordinance. The mayor added that, now that we have found the ordinance, we will consider whether we need to update it to penalties that are more in line with current pricing, as opposed to the \$50 maximum penalty in the 1967 ordinance. Mr. Harnishfeger commented that the penalty in the ordinance was for each day the vehicle remains in violation. Mr. Fox asked why we wouldn't just hire a tow company instead of fining violators, and the owner would have to pay the bill to get their vehicle back. The mayor and members answered that the person might not want their vehicle back, which would leave the village liable for the bill. Mr. Fox asked if we could just sell the vehicle for scrap. Mr. Smith responded that it really wouldn't pay us to scrap a vehicle. Scrap is \$130 per ton right now and a tow costs \$150, so we would still likely be out money, even if scrap proceeds might cover towing and storage. The mayor said that he would contact Mr. Owens and Mr. Smith to find out when they had free time to get together with him about this.

**UTILITIES:** Councilwoman Mackey stated that we need the water fountain turned on at Centennial Park, and we want to be sure it is not leaking. Councilwoman Mehring said she would tell Utilities Superintendent Johnson.

**STREETS and ALLEYS:** Councilman Fox reported that he noticed the stop signs were badly faded on both sides of Main Street at the alley by the church near Tontogany Creek Road. The signs probably just need to be switched out for new ones. Councilwoman Mackey added that there is a stop sign or a school sign on Tontogany Creek Road, across from the school, that someone evidently hit. Mayor Shanahan commented that we could take a look at them; if they just need switched out, we have some signs in the shed and it won't take much to switch them out.

**SIDEWALKS and TREES:** Nothing to report.

**DRAINS and SEWERS:** Councilwoman Mackey reported that everything seemed to drain well during the recent unusually heavy rain.

**CITY HALL and PARKS:** Mayor Shanahan reported that he noticed that the pickleball net is ripped. He researched and found replacement nets at \$74.95 each. He said he would like for us to order two of

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them, so we have an extra as a backup. Members agreed that this would be a good idea. The mayor asked Fiscal Officer Harnishfeger to go ahead and order two nets.

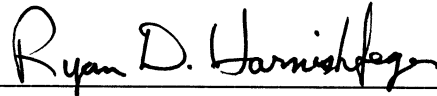
Mayor Shanahan reported that Brett Swanson planted something in the circular spot across the alley from the hall. Mr. Swanson also let Josh Heckerman know what he was planting. Councilman Smith asked if it would need mulch. Councilwoman Mackey asked if Brett was going to maintain it. The mayor answered that he wouldn't be surprised if Brett does maintain it.

Mayor Shanahan brought up the topic of veteran banners. Councilwoman Mackey reported that she had been talking with Ken and Brenda Haynes and it occurred to her that their son, Monty, grew up in town, went to school here, served in the Marines, came home, and shortly after that was killed in a four-wheeling accident. Ms. Mackey noted that the Haynes live about four doors out of town on Tontogany Creek Road, but she said she thought it would be very fitting for Tontogany to honor Monty as a hometown hero, since he lived his whole life here. She said she tried unsuccessfully to contact Ken and Brenda twice, so she will keep trying. Concerning Nicholas Myers, Ms. Mackey said she didn't contact anyone, since it was brought to her attention that he had not lived in Tontogany long enough to be considered a hometown hero. She said she did talk with Thelma Wires about her husband and Thelma was going to try to find a picture. Councilman Smith reported that he spoke with Bengy Wilford about the council position and about the hometown hero banner, and he was not open to either proposal. Mr. Smith said he would talk to him again about the banner. The mayor commented that we do not want to force the issue on him. Ms. Mackey reported that Chad Johnson got a picture and information about Melvin Johnson. Councilwoman Mehring stated that she thinks we should choose veterans who have lived here a long time and are from here. The mayor added that we also want to prioritize honoring as many as we can of those who are still living. We want to honor up to six per year. The mayor also told members that he would like to get the banners we already have put up soon. There was a brief discussion about when members might be available to help do that.

With nothing further to discuss, Mayor Shanahan declared the meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m.



Matthew Shanahan, Mayor



Ryan Harnishfeger, Fiscal Officer