

TONTOGANY VILLAGE COUNCIL

MEETING MINUTES FROM: August 19, 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, absent at roll call, but arrived at 7:40 p.m. Also present was Fiscal Officer/Utilities Clerk Ryan Harnishfeger. Visitors present: Village resident Paul Neal, to be sworn in as a new council member; resident Jennifer Fretter; Municipal Sales Specialist Blake Austin from Rumpke Waste & Recycling Services. Minutes from the August 5th meeting were approved as submitted.

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

With the supporting approval of council members, Mayor Shanahan appointed Paul Neal to fill the council seat left vacant by Damon Lee, who had resigned due to moving out of Tontogany on March 13, 2024. The mayor then administered the oath of office to Paul Neal.

Councilman Neal remarked that the texting group of officials that he is now part of is kind of like taking a drink from a fire hydrant when you find yourself on it; it is a very active group. Mayor Shanahan explained that we don't vote or approve anything; we just keep each other updated on current topics of interest discussed at meetings.

Mayor Shanahan invited Jennifer Fretter to speak to Council. Ms. Fretter asked about the status of the banner for her grandfather. The mayor answered that the company has the information and he is waiting for them to show him the proofs, but they have not yet given him a date.

Ms. Fretter reminded members that she had previously talked to Council about a permit for putting up a new shed behind her old shed. She then asked if she needs to do another permit if she tears down her old shed and puts up a replacement; it would be in the same place as the old one, but just a new shed. The mayor answered that he thought she would need another permit if she will be rebuilding on a slab, but she would need to check with Zoning Inspector Johnson to be sure; he added that there is a differentiation, based on what it sits on. Ms. Fretter commented that they are intending to make it the same size as the new shed they put up a couple of years ago, and then attach the two sheds together into one large shed.

Ms. Fretter reported that there is a caved-in spot that needs to be fixed by her sidewalk where excavation was done for the lead testing. Mayor Shanahan responded that we are finding that a number of residents had the same issue after the lead testing, and Mr. Johnson has been working on getting those spots filled in. Ms. Fretter stated that the sand that has been used to fill up the holes is not a satisfactory fix for her. She asked if she could do it on her own and charge the village for the dirt. The mayor responded that the whole project was paid for with a grant. Ms. Fretter said that that was fine and she was just checking.

Ms. Fretter asked if she could cut the branches back on the little village tree on the corner by her house, so she doesn't hit her head when she mows. Members agreed that she could do so. The mayor thanked her for asking first. With nothing further to discuss, Ms. Fretter left the meeting.

Mayor Shanahan welcomed Rumpke Municipal Sales Specialist Blake Austin, whom he had invited to the meeting. The mayor made it clear that this was not intended as an opportunity to attack Mr. Austin and Rumpke. He explained that Tontogany, like some other small communities, had experienced multiple weeks in a row of trash not being picked up. He told Mr. Austin that we would like to have a better understanding of what is happening to cause delayed or missed trash services; and we would like to know what kind of communication we can get from Rumpke when there is a problem, so we can get word out to our residents. Mr. Austin responded that the company is aware that the level of service has not been up to expectation in the last few weeks. They had a situation where a bunch of drivers left, all

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at the same time, for one reason or another—some on previously approved vacations, some on disability—causing a shortage in CDL drivers, which caused trash pickup disruptions in multiple communities that they serve. The mayor noted that Grand Rapids has been very vocal about it and some residents there have switched companies for their trash pickup. Councilwoman Mackey commented that we understand that Rumpke took on all of Paul's Refuse Pick-up customers, which takes some adjustment. Mr. Austin gave an example of their current staffing shortage problem: they have ten residential routes to pick up today, but they only have five drivers. Stretching the drivers to the limit, they can only run 60 hours per week, so those five drivers can only cover seven of the ten routes in that time. Then it begins to snowball because the next day those five drivers have another ten routes plus the three they missed the day before, but they can only do seven routes, now leaving six routes undone, and so on. The whole situation started about six weeks ago. They have been bringing in some drivers temporarily from other cities to help out, but it has not been consistent. They have some drivers coming back and two more in training. They should have the problems sorted out in the next two to three weeks. Mayor Shanahan stated that to him the important thing is to receive communication from Rumpke if there is going to be a delay, so we can let the residents who have Rumpke service know what is going on. Each resident is free to choose their preferred trash service company. Mr. Austin agreed that better communication would be helpful, but he explained that in the current staffing situation they are not always assured of staff coverage and they do not want to tell a community that they will be there the next day, but then can't fulfill that promise, making customer relations even worse. Mr. Austin gave his business card to everyone and invited village officials to reach out to him if something happens like the whole community is missed or one street is missed; he can try to work with management to get a nearby truck to swing by and do the missed pickup. If it is only one customer that has a problem, it is best for them to call customer service. Ms. Mackey asked if customers can use their own trash cans. Mr. Austin answered that they can, or they can rent a container from Rumpke for a very small monthly fee. The mayor and members thanked Mr. Austin for coming out to a meeting to discuss these issues. Councilman Smith commented that it is helpful for Council to be able to say to residents that the problem is being worked on, rather than having no answer for disgruntled residents. With nothing further to discuss, Mr. Austin left the meeting.

Councilman Neal asked if Rumpke sends out cards to customers, if they are going to change their pickup schedule to honor a holiday or something like that. Councilwoman Mackey responded that she received a letter when she signed up for Rumpke's services, stating what holidays they honor and that services will be delayed one day on those holidays. Mr. Neal said he was just trying to get an idea of how Rumpke communicates with customers. Mayor Shanahan commented that, when a holiday is near, he just gets on Rumpke's Facebook page for updates; it will tell you something like if your service is on Tuesday, it will be bumped one day. Mr. Neal asked if Rumpke services the entire village. The mayor answered that we are not exclusive to them; there are at least two companies that service Tontogany. Ms. Mackey added that several weeks ago she inquired about changing to N.A.T. and found that they are not taking new customers. Mr. Neal said he was familiar with N.A.T. and they have not been taking new customers for a year. Concerning communicating with customers, he added that N.A.T. sends out a card to each customer every holiday, telling them that service will be a day late. He wondered why Rumpke doesn't do something similar, since lack of communication seems to be one of the biggest things that frustrates customers. Councilman Smith noted that Rumpke is more online-oriented than N.A.T., which hardly has any online presence.

Councilman Fox (having arrived at 7:40 p.m.) reported that he had made some phone calls today, researching what other options the village has for trash removal. Stevens Disposal, a company in Michigan, is going to give him quotes of how much per each individual, and the representative said he wanted to talk to us about servicing the whole village because it would be a lot cheaper for the residents. Mr. Fox said he told the representative that it sounds like Weston and Grand Rapids might also be interested; they are already doing some in Grand Rapids. The company has a hub in Gibsonberg;

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they took over the Buckeye route in Gibsonberg. The representative said he would email the information to Mr. Fox this week. Mr. Fox commented that this would give us another option, in case residents are unhappy with Rumpke and don't want to pay Waste Management prices or Republic prices. He added that Stevens also asked about curbside recycling and he told them residents might be interested in that as well, so he asked them to include a quote for that. Councilwoman Mehring asked if Mr. Fox had asked how many containers a customer gets. Mr. Fox replied that his guess is that if you want more than one container, you ask for it and you pay more for it. Mayor Shanahan thanked Mr. Fox for his research and report.

Fiscal Officer Harnishfeger reported that he received an email today that the biennial audit of 2022 to 2023 is now in the wrap-up stage.

Councilman Smith asked if everyone had watched their required fraud-reporting training video. Some members said they had not done so yet. Councilwoman Mackey asked if something has to be printed out after watching the training video. Fiscal Officer Harnishfeger answered that there is a certificate of completion that can be printed and given to him, or the PDF file can simply be emailed to him and he keeps the records for the auditors. Once every four years, the fiscal officer needs to remind all employees and elected officials to take the training again.

Mayor Shanahan did a second reading, by title only, of Resolution #977-24, 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. The mayor read from SCHEDULE A that the amount approved by the Budget Commission for Tontogany's general fund in 2025 is \$12,475.39.

Mayor Shanahan did a first reading, by title only, of Resolution #978-24, a RESOLUTION ADOPTING A STATEMENT OF SERVICES FOR A PROPOSED ANNEXATION OF 5.773 ACRES FROM WASHINGTON TOWNSHIP TO THE VILLAGE OF TONTOGANY, CONSENTING TO THE PROPOSED ANNEXATION, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY. Councilman Smith made a motion to suspend the rules and declare an emergency for Resolution #978-24. Councilwoman Mackey seconded this motion. All were in favor; motion carried. Councilman Smith made a motion to adopt Resolution #978-24. Councilwoman Mehring seconded this motion. All were in favor; motion carried.

Mayor Shanahan did a first reading, by title only, of Resolution #979-24, A RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE WOOD COUNTY HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY. Councilwoman Mehring made a motion to suspend the rules and declare an emergency for Resolution #979-24. Councilwoman Mackey seconded this motion. All were in favor; motion carried. Councilman Smith made a motion to adopt Resolution #979-24. Councilman Neal seconded this motion. All were in favor; motion carried.

ZONING: Mayor Shanahan reported that Orville Buehrer has submitted a complaint about out-of-control thistles and other weeds at the Deluca property next to his property. Mr. Buehrer asked the mower of Deluca's property why they weren't weed-whipping and they told him they weren't being paid to weed-whip. Thistle seeds, which quickly take root, are blowing into Mr. Buehrer's yard. He is upset because he pays a lawn service out of Perrysburg to take care of his yard and make it nice, but the spread of thistles is ruining his yard. Councilman Smith clarified that Mr. Buehrer is paying to have his lawn sprayed and treated; he does his own mowing. The mayor continued with Mr. Buehrer's complaint: his kids are getting tired of pulling thistles for him; he is tired of the situation; he has complained before but nothing is getting done. Councilwoman Mackey reminded everyone that we have a tall grass and noxious weed ordinance that allows the village to have problem properties mowed and put the cost on the property owner's taxes. Fiscal Officer Harnishfeger added that the zoning inspector needs to notify the property owner first and give them so many days to get it taken care of, after which the village can step in if it has not been done. Councilman Smith suggested having Zoning Inspector Johnson deliver a letter, giving two weeks to get it cut down. The mayor added that Mr. Johnson should send two letters to Ms. Deluca, one

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about the weeds and another about the vehicle, both by certified mail. He also said that Tony Hafner should get a letter or letters about his weeds, his truck, and his camper. He said he would follow up with Mr. Johnson tomorrow.

UTILITIES: Councilwoman Mackey informed newly appointed Councilman Neal that the village purchases its electric power from Bowling Green, who generally raises their rates each year. Consequently, the village needs to continue to raise our rates to keep the electric fund out of financial trouble; and the water rates likewise. Councilman Smith commented that our water and electricity is substantially lower priced than from other utility providers. Councilman Neal responded that he understands that this is the way things work and rising costs are an ongoing reality we all have to deal with.

STREETS and ALLEYS: Councilman Smith reported that striping of Tontogany Creek Road had been discussed. Mayor Shanahan added that they said the cost would be roughly \$600 per mile. Councilman Neal asked if it is just the center stripe being talked about. The mayor answered that it is. Councilwoman Mackey remarked that we really need to have it done, especially with the school there. Councilwoman Mehring made a motion to have Wood County do the striping of Tontogany Creek Road at \$600 per mile. Councilwoman Mackey commented that they will put the walking stripes across as well. Councilman Smith seconded the motion. All were in favor; motion carried. The mayor said he would let them know Council's decision after the meeting tonight and he would also ask for a timeline.

Councilman Fox reported that he talked to Tony Hafner about the bush that was overgrown into the alley, who said he was going to trim it up and he had already done part of it. Mr. Fox asked if members had discussed the couch sitting outside there too; it is not a huge issue, but it might help if someone says something to him about it. The mayor said he would look at it on the way home and we will still be sending him a letter about issues we spoke about earlier.

SIDEWALKS and TREES: Councilman Smith reported that he reached out to Abe Rowe about the tree we discussed at the last meeting and he is supposed to put an estimate in the drop box at the hall office. Councilwoman Mackey added that in the mean time Karen Current had told her that she wasn't wanting the whole tree cut down, because it is the only way for her to get some shade on the west side of her house. She didn't respond to Karen, but she later saw Abe Rowe who told her that he didn't see any other good choice but to take the tree down, and it will continue to heave the sidewalk if left there. Ms. Mackey commented that it is the town's tree, so it is not up to Karen what is done with it. Mr. Smith said he would be glad to explain it to Karen if she has a question, but topping a tree is not something you do.

DRAINS and SEWERS: Nothing to report.

CITY HALL and PARKS: Mayor Shanahan asked if we have looked at any options or pricing for fixing the pickleball fence problem. Councilman Smith answered that he hasn't looked into the rubber strip solution yet, but he doesn't think it would be very expensive. Councilwoman Mackey remarked that the gaga ball pit looks great; the only issue is that the balls are blowing away. The mayor said he would be taking care of that by getting a couple of balls that will be slightly heavier. Councilman Fox asked if the mayor passed on information to the Eagle Scouts who were looking for projects. The mayor answered that he had not given them a list of projects after texting with council members. Mr. Fox suggested that a divider on either side at the Fox-Shank property would be helpful for privacy for the neighbors, and it would corral the kids walking over from the school and keep them out of people's yards. The mayor commented that that would make a good Eagle Scout project.

Councilwoman Mackey told members that her husband (a retired fireman) had come up with an idea for a scout project: the village fire hydrants need to be lubricated and painted, which, if interested, a scout or scouts could do with guidance from Fire Chief Bill Gase. Mayor Shanahan responded that we

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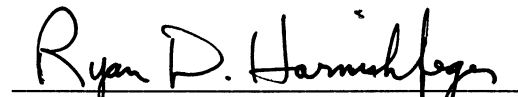
had previously kicked around the idea of school groups adopting a hydrant and painting it for their group, but Bill Gase wanted to keep them all the safety-yellow color, so Chad Johnson just went ahead and painted them at that time. Councilman Fox commented that he has seen where some villages paint them in different themes, for instance a Disney theme. Councilman Smith remarked that keeping the hydrants a standard color is a mutual aid thing, so that if you have a situation where fire responders are called in from another community, they can easily find the hydrants. Mr. Smith also commented that painting fire hydrants is a good leadership project for kids. The mayor added that a teacher at the school will be looking for service projects in the village, and hydrants might be a good one. Ms. Mackey suggested that the birdhouse at Centennial Park might possibly be another scout project; she said it needs to be reconstructed. Mr. Fox suggested that a good project for English students might be to learn how to write a sternly-worded letter or how to write a letter about something in the village that needs to be corrected.

Councilwoman Mackey reported that she had been in touch with Renewed Outdoors. They did spray the playgrounds a week ago last Friday, and they said it would take a week to ten days for the weeds to die off. After a week, she still saw grass, so she contacted them again and they said they would come and look at it and would spray again if necessary, but they were looking to put down mulch sometime in the next couple of weeks. Ms. Mackey said that, looking ahead, we should get them on our calendar for spraying again early in the spring. Councilman Smith agreed and said he thought we should have them come and spray on a regular basis. Mayor Shanahan said he wondered if Renewed Outdoors would have any suggestions about spraying the sand for cicada killers. Ms. Mackey responded that she would ask them the next time she talks to them.

Councilwoman Mackey said she had a positive thing that she wanted to share with Council. She reported that two days ago four kids, about 12 or 13 years old, came to the Mackey's door with a debit card they had found in the shelter house. They asked if the Mackey's knew the person on the card, because they wanted to find them and get their debit card back to them. Ms. Mackey told them that she did not know the person, but she would take the card and see if she could locate them. The Mackeys commended the kids and gave them some cookies. She managed to locate the owner of the card, who came a got it and she wanted to know who the kids were. A couple of hours later Ms. Mackey saw the kids again and she went and thanked them and commended them and told them they were awesome for doing what very few kids would do. She inquired who they were and found that three of the four kids live in Tontogany. Mayor Shanahan agreed that they had done a very commendable deed and that they had possibly saved the owner from a situation of identity theft.

With nothing further to discuss, Mayor Shanahan declared the meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.


Matthew Shanahan, Mayor


Ryan Harnishfeger, Fiscal Officer