

TONTOGANY VILLAGE COUNCIL

MEETING MINUTES FROM: September 16, 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, here; Lincoln Fox, absent; Paul Neal, here. Also present were Utilities Superintendent/Zoning Inspector/Meter Reader Chad Johnson and Fiscal Officer/Utilities Clerk Ryan Harnishfeger. Visitors present: Wood County Sheriff's Deputy T. Mosley. Minutes from the August 19th 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 Bergfeld seconded this motion. All were in favor; motion carried.

Mayor Shanahan did a third 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 the 2025 general fund is \$12,475.39. Councilman Bergfeld made a motion to adopt Resolution #977-24. Councilman Smith seconded this motion. The roll being called upon its adoption, the vote resulted as follows: Mackey-Aye; Mehring-Aye; Smith-Aye; Bergfeld-Aye; Neal-Aye. Motion carried.

Mayor Shanahan did a first reading, by title only, of Resolution #980-24, a RESOLUTION TO APPROVE THE WOOD COUNTY FINAL PLAN FOR IMPEMENTING AND OPERATING COUNTYWIDE 9-1-1 SYSTEM. Fiscal Officer Harnishfeger asked members if they preferred him to enter the optional word "approves" or "disapproves" in Section 1 of Resolution #980-24, referring to the Wood County Final Plan. Members agreed that the word "approves" should be entered in Section 1.

August Incident Reports were provided to everyone. Mayor Shanahan asked if anyone had anything to discuss with Deputy Mosley. Councilman Smith noted from the report that it has been busy in town lately. The mayor asked if Deputy Mosley had anything specific to share with Council. She answered that she did not. The mayor advised the deputy that this Friday and Saturday will be Homecoming weekend for Otsego Local Schools, and he suggested that it would be helpful to get a little more visual time of deputies in the village. Deputy Mosley asked what time the Homecoming events would take place. The mayor answered that the football game is at 7 p.m., but tailgating will probably start around 5 or 5:30 p.m. Councilwoman Mackey added that the Homecoming Dance is on Saturday evening; she guessed it would be from around 8 to 11 p.m. With nothing more to discuss, Mayor Shanahan thanked Deputy Mosley and she left the meeting.

Fiscal Officer Harnishfeger reported that he began working on the 2025 appropriations budget last week and he thought it would be helpful to get some input from everyone on any special projects or expenditures we would like to include in the budget. So, he prepared a form for each person to jot down their suggestions for 2025 expenditures, including estimated costs. He said he would like for Council to go over everyone's suggestions at the next meeting and choose what we realistically want to include in the 2025 budget. With this input, he will be able to finish putting together a complete 2025 appropriations budget ordinance, ready for the steps of final approval, reading, and adoption by Council.

Mayor Shanahan reported that Councilman Neal had texted him last week and said he would like to be on the committee that deals with technology and the website, and the mayor had told him he didn't think that would be a problem. Members expressed hearty agreement. The mayor suggested that he and Councilman Smith should get together with Councilman Neal to get an understanding of his background and see how we can leverage his experience toward improvements for the village. Mr. Neal said one of his questions was: what are we expecting of the website? He commented that the website can be made to do whatever we want it to do, but we first need to know what we want it to do. The mayor responded that he and Mr. Smith and Mr. Neal can look at the website together, pick Mr. Neal's

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brain for ideas, and give him a history of the website, how it got to where it is today, and what might make it better. The mayor said he would send out texts to find an evening that would work for the three of them to get together. Mr. Neal commented that he has looked over the website and it has a lot of information on it. He wondered how many people in Tontogany know what is on the website. He suggested that it would be helpful to communicate with the village to find out things like who accesses the website and for what purposes.

ZONING: Zoning Inspector Johnson reported that he talked with Tony Hafner. He is out of work and Mr. Johnson's son offered to help with some of his issues. He reported that he also issued a nuisance report to Derek Kramp for unlicensed vehicles and recreation vehicles, as well as an accumulation of unsightly vehicles and junk of an unsanitary nature on the property at 18052 Broad Street. He issued a nuisance report to Gutierrez at 18515 Lincoln Street for an inoperative vehicle with a flat tire and without a valid plate. He issued a nuisance report to Vollmar at 18605-½ Crom Street for an inoperative vehicle with a flat tire and no valid plate. Mayor Shanahan commented that, when going through the alley past Heckerman's, the rickety old wire fence on the right appeared to be gone where there is a dog like a pit bull or Rottweiler; he wondered if someone was replacing the fence. Nobody knew for sure. Mr. Johnson asked if the village had ever seen a zoning permit for the new addition being put on the house just north of Barb Miller's (Barb McMackin's) house at the edge of Harley Woods. Mayor Shanahan asked if it was the one with the construction sign. Mr. Johnson said it was. The mayor surmised that he might be in the township rather than the village, since it is outside of Harley Woods. The mayor reported that Brandt Corral mentioned that a street light is out across from his house on Main Street. The mayor also reported that Otsego coach McClory, who lives in the house across the alley from the funeral home, is concerned about a pole right on the alley that is leaning toward his house, with a possible potential for falling on his daughter's bedroom. He wanted the village to have it checked out. The mayor asked Mr. Johnson to have Bowling Green Electric look at it the next time they are in town, to see if it is something we need to be concerned about. He also commented that it is probably about time for pole inspections again, which we talked about earlier in the year. Mr. Johnson replied that he usually got a call from the contractor when they were going to check Bowling Green's poles, but they haven't called.

Councilwoman Mackey reminded members that we had discussed contacting Solicitor Skaff regarding Brandeberry's (Margaret Deluca's) dilapidated house on Main Street. Mayor Shanahan replied that, in order to classify it as a nuisance, we have to have video or photographic proof of rodents or wildlife going in and out of the house. When we have that, we can give it to Solicitor Skaff and he can write it up and declare it a nuisance. Councilman Smith suggested that we ask the neighbors to snap a little video of animals going in or out, if they happen to see them. Ms. Mackey noted that the problem isn't only about vermin, but the house itself is a safety issue with falling floors and other dilapidation. Councilman Neal asked if getting a video is difficult. Mr. Smith answered that it is not, but it is a timing thing that would require someone sitting outside the house all day waiting for activity to record. Mr. Neal commented that he has a camera in his backyard that is motion-activated and it provides him with a video of anything that comes into his backyard. Mayor Shanahan said he thought we had reached out to the Health Department in the past about this house and didn't get much help from them. Ms. Mackey agreed and said that she had also asked the neighbors to reach out to the Health Department, but we still received no help from them. Councilman Bergfeld asked if it would be legal for us to set up a trail camera there. Mr. Smith answered that we couldn't set up a trail camera on Ms. Deluca's property, but the neighbors would probably be happy to let us set one up on their property. Members agreed that this would be a good idea. The mayor said he would like to follow through on setting up a meeting with Ms. Deluca, as we had previously talked about. Mr. Smith commented that, if we want to get rid of this house by village action next year, we would probably need to budget at least \$25,000 for that purpose. The mayor ask how we would recoup that. Mr. Smith answered that you just don't recoup it. The mayor

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told Mr. Johnson that he would follow up with him after the meeting about how we want to move forward on this issue.

UTILITIES: Utilities Superintendent Johnson reported that he has continued working on the lead inventory. He has thirty days left to get it completed, which he should be able to do. The EPA requirements are pretty detailed for each individual house, including from the main to the meter pit and from the meter pit into the house.

Mayor Shanahan noted a \$5,600 bill on the invoices list from Feller, Finch for work on the backflow improvements project. He asked Mr. Johnson if we have an update on the progress of that project. Mr. Johnson replied that he would get ahold of them tomorrow about it.

STREETS and ALLEYS: Mr. Johnson reported that the alley near the new house where Richard Meek used to live is overgrown. He commented that, if there was an electrical emergency, you couldn't even get down through there. Councilwoman Mackey asked if a citation could be written for that. Mr. Johnson answered that, since it is right-of-way, it is probably ultimately the village's responsibility. Councilman Bergfeld agreed. Mayor Shanahan said he would take a look at it. He also reminded everyone that we should be having our regular fall brush pickup in October. Councilwoman Mehring asked about the possibility of getting someone to get rid of the weeds on the railroad property, since they won't do it. The mayor answered that he thinks we should talk that through a little more because, once the railroad sees that someone else is doing it, then we have lost all hope regarding them. Also, any damage caused in the process of getting rid of the weeds would not be paid for by the railroad. Ms. Mackey suggested that maybe this is something we need to talk with our commissioners about. Fiscal Officer Harnishfeger commented that a resident had asked him why we couldn't apply our tall grass and weeds ordinance to the railroad property, just as we do to residents' properties in town. The mayor responded that we tried to use our village ordinance to deal with the trailers problem on railroad property, but they found a way to shrug us off. He said he would like to see if it would be possible to set up an annual agreement with the railroad for, say, \$15,000, covering equipment and labor, to let us take care of maintaining the railroad property next to the tracks in the village. Councilman Smith asked if we had heard anything from other municipalities about how they handle similar issues with the railroad. The mayor answered that the only one who replied when he reached out to the other Otsego communities was Grand Rapids, and they don't have CSX railroad. Weston and Haskins did not respond. He said he would run it past Solicitor Skaff to get his thoughts and see if he has had experience with other communities dealing with similar railroad issues. The mayor also expressed a positive outlook that maybe we will be able to get some goodwill-cooperation from the railroad to clean up their property for Tontogany's 150th Celebration, and then build on that relationship to maintain it from year to year.

SIDEWALKS and TREES: Councilman Smith asked if members wanted to talk about planting any trees yet this year. Councilman Bergfeld said he thought it was a little late for that. Mayor Shanahan asked if there was any update on the tree by Current's. Mr. Smith asked Fiscal Officer Harnishfeger if we had received an estimate for work on that tree yet. Mr. Harnishfeger replied that we had not. Mr. Smith said he would follow up with Abe Rowe about it. Later in the meeting, Mr. Smith reported that he just received an estimate from Abe Rowe for the tree. The estimate is \$1,275 to cut the tree down, take all of the wood, and grind out the stump. Mr. Smith asked if we wanted to accept the quote of \$1,275. Members all agreed to accept the quote; there were no objections voiced. The mayor suggested asking Abe to take a look at the tree at Mackey's when he comes to do the tree at Current's. Ms. Mackey commented that it is not urgent.

DRAINS and SEWERS: Nothing to report.

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CITY HALL and PARKS: Councilwoman Mackey reported that the Wood County Park Grant applications are due in a month. She said she had been low on ideas for the next grant, but Councilman Fox had suggested a small piece of playground equipment to fit in the space left at Mehring Park when we took out the broken slide. She showed members a picture of a 2-seater spring rocker for kids that Councilwoman Mehring liked. Members voiced agreement that it would be a good addition to the park. The mayor asked if there would be room for two of them. Ms. Mackey answered that there would not. She went on to say that she had thought maybe Centennial Park could use a handicap swing like at Mehring Park, but for older kids. She said she thought maybe we could take one of the four regular swings off and simply replace it with the handicap swing on the same frame. She commented that the swing is only \$775, so maybe we could buy that ourselves and focus the grant application on a more costly item. Councilman Bergfeld suggested maybe something could be added at Centennial Park to make use of the unused sand pit. Ms. Mackey said that separate grant applications have to be written for each park, so we may want to pick one or the other, since she has found that we have had the best results when just applying for one grant at a time. With two or three grant applications, they might choose to award the least costly item and you may not get the item you really wanted the most. She asked if everyone was good with just doing the rocker grant this time. The mayor and members agreed with that.

Mayor Shanahan reported that the veterans' banners are in and he put them in the office. He asked if last year we did the ceremony before a meeting or on its own special night. Members said they thought it was on its own night, but then Councilwoman Mackey seemed to remember that it was on a meeting night, and, checking her records she found that we did it on September 18, 2023 (a meeting night). Councilwoman Mackey asked when Veterans Day was this year. Members said it would be on November 11. The mayor commented that we may not want to wait that long; if we do it earlier, we may still have time to hang them in town for a few weeks before taking them down for the winter. He asked Fiscal Officer Harnishfeger if we received the new banner brackets. Mr. Harnishfeger said we did. The mayor proposed doing it on Monday, September 30th this year at 6:00 p.m. He said that that would give family members of the banner honorees two weeks to invite whomever they wish to come to the ceremony. He said he would contact some of the family members and he asked council members to contact others.

Councilman Smith reminded members that we had talked about putting rubber on the bottom of the fence at Centennial Park, to keep pickleballs from escaping. He said that there is a man in Toledo with a conveyor belt for sale. However, looking at the fences at the park, Mr. Smith said he noticed that they are getting a little rough. He said he thought it might not be a bad idea next year to seek a park grant to get the fences replaced around the basketball area. Meanwhile, he said he would get ahold of the man with the conveyor belt and set a time to go look at what he has and find out what his prices are, and it may turn out to be a donation. Mayor Shanahan cautioned to watch the size of the donation and, if it gets to a certain size, make sure it gets turned in for reimbursement. He added that a quick temporary solution might be edging fastened onto the bottom of the fence with zip ties. Councilwoman Mackey commented that the basketball court has gotten a lot of use over the years. Mr. Smith added that maybe our grant request next year should be for a new fence and new lights for the basketball court. Councilman Neal suggested that the frisbee golf course could be made more challenging. The mayor agreed and commented that there have some suggestions about relocating a couple of the baskets and upgrading the tee pads, preferably to concrete. He added that, if we put in concrete tee pads, we want to be sure the redesign is only done once.

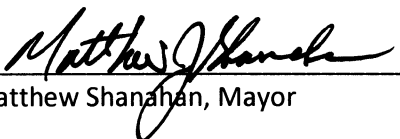
Mayor Shanahan reported that there will be a one-mile color run through the village, hosted by the PTO, on Friday, October 18th at 5:00 p.m. He said he advised the teacher to reach out to the fire department for any traffic help and he advised having volunteers at the openings of each of the alleys. He also advised them to be careful when they throw chalk, so it doesn't become a temporary coloring problem on people's property.

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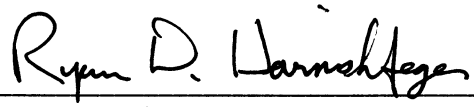
Councilman Bergfeld told the mayor and members that his wife, Hannah, just got a new job, probably working nights at the hospital. Therefore, he does not know how much longer he can do Council, depending on her work schedule, with the kids in sports and so on. Mayor Shanahan advised getting all of the information and then reevaluating and see whether Mr. Bergfeld is able to continue on Council or not. Councilwoman Mehring asked if we might think about changing meeting nights. The mayor answered that he is not opposed to that discussion, if it would be helpful for everyone. Councilwoman Mackey commented that she had thought about that before, with so many holidays falling on a Monday.

Councilwoman Mackey told the mayor and members that she will be absent at the next meeting.

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



Matthew Shanahan, Mayor



Ryan Harnishfeger, Fiscal Officer