

## TONTOGANY VILLAGE COUNCIL

### MEETING MINUTES FROM: November 4, 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, here; Paul Neal, here. Also present was Fiscal Officer/Utilities Clerk Ryan Harnishfeger. Minutes from the October 21<sup>st</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 Fox seconded this motion. All were in favor; motion carried. Copies of the October Bank Reconciliation, Fund Status, Revenue Status, and Appropriation Status Reports were given to the mayor and the Finance Committee to review.

Copies of the October Incident Report were provided to all for review, but no deputy from the Wood County Sheriff's Office was present to discuss the report.

**ZONING:** Mayor Shanahan reported that Zoning Inspector Johnson had a conversation with the property owner of the dilapidated house at 18705 Main Street. The property owner has left town for the winter. She expressed intentions to sell the property, before which she intends to make some updates to it. The mayor told members that he and Councilman Smith had discussed the matter and feel that Mr. Johnson's conversation with the owner was a good first step, as Solicitor Skaff had advised that the process needed to be started by the zoning inspector. And the fact that the owner will be gone for the winter will provide some extra time for Mr. Johnson to carefully go through the zoning code to compile a list of violations that the Village wants to have remedied. They spoke with Mr. Johnson about this and he was agreeable to this plan. When the owner returns, we will have a written list of violations, with which we can expand the conversation. Then we can ask her what she intends to do, within an acceptable timeline. And we will let her know that, if she doesn't remedy the issues within that timeline, the Village intends to serve her with an official letter of violations and an imposed timeline to remedy those violations, followed by court action to abate the nuisance, if necessary. Councilman Fox asked if anything was said about letting us inside the house to check it out. The mayor answered that nothing was said about that. Councilman Neal asked when the property owner will be back in town. Councilwoman Mehring responded that she should be back in March. The mayor added that this will give Mr. Johnson time to check through our ordinances and Ohio Revised Code to come up with a list of violations. Ms. Mehring asked if Solicitor Skaff will help with compiling the list of violations. The mayor answered that he is sure our attorney will be a big help, if the search involves the Ohio Revised Code.

Councilman Neal reminded the mayor and members that he had suggested a nuisance report be provided to council members to keep them up to date on the progress being made on nuisance issues in town. Mayor Shanahan responded that he had talked with Zoning Inspector Johnson about that, and he had asked him to start keeping track of that information. Mr. Neal asked if, since he is on the Utilities Committee, it would be appropriate for him to call Mr. Johnson and offer him some helpful ideas to get the nuisance report going. The mayor responded that there would be no problem with him doing so. Members agreed.

**UTILITIES:** Councilman Bergfeld asked if all of the agreements are being met by utility customers with past-due accounts. Utilities Clerk Harnishfeger answered that all agreements have not been kept perfectly. Some customers with payment plan agreements have gotten off track, occasionally missing a payment. When that happens, a letter is sent to them, notifying them that they have breached their agreement with the Village and that they need to get back on track to avoid a shutoff per village ordinance. This seems to be working, but it is a constant struggle.

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**STREETS and ALLEYS:** Mayor Shanahan reported that he did not yet follow up with Isaac about the hole in the alley that was reported at the last meeting.

Councilwoman Mackey reported that she noticed that they striped Kellogg Road and they did the middle stripe on Tontogany Creek Road, but they did not do the white lines on the sides. She asked if we had been billed for it yet. Fiscal Officer Harnishfeger replied that we had not received a bill yet. Mayor Shanahan commented that he had spoken with Jason Sisco at Wood County regarding the striping and only talked with him about the yellow lines, which may be why the white lines were missed. The mayor said he would follow up with them. Ms. Mackey said she thought it was a safety issue and we need the edge lines. She also noted that they didn't do the crosswalk for the school. Councilman Smith commented that it might be in the school's best interest for them to take charge of painting the crosswalks, for the safety of the students, and since the school has painting equipment.

**SIDEWALKS and TREES:** Councilman Smith reported that we received the bill for removal of the tree downtown. He thanked members for approving that invoice.

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

**CITY HALL and PARKS:** Councilwoman Mackey reminded members that we had talked about extending the normal time for the porta john at Centennial Park. She asked if we wanted to have the one at Mehring Park removed for the winter or keep them at both parks for another month. Members voiced a desire to keep them at both parks for another month; there was no opposition to this.

Councilman Smith reported that the 150<sup>th</sup> Committee went out and acquired cookbooks and recipes, which his wife, Hannah, has been working on. The books have arrived and Hannah needs the Village to reimburse her for the cost of \$361.69 for 100 books, until the fundraiser raises money for the Village from the sale of the cookbooks. Mayor Shanahan reminded members that we had budgeted \$5,000 for things like this for the 150<sup>th</sup>. Councilwoman Mackey asked if a selling price has been decided. The mayor said he believed it was \$10 per cookbook. Mr. Smith commented that there is already a ton of interest in the books. The mayor added that the intention is to sell them at the Tree Lighting on December 1<sup>st</sup>. Councilman Neal suggest also putting a flyer on the website. The mayor noted that a lot of time and work was invested in this project by Hannah Grohowski, Ann Bader, Barb Vollmar, and his wife, Katie Shanahan, compiling, organizing, typing, spell-checking, and proofreading the cookbooks before sending them to the cookbook publishing company. He asked Mr. Smith to let Hannah know that most council members want one cookbook and one council member wants twelve books. Mayor Shanahan asked for a motion to reimburse Hannah for the cost of the cookbooks. Councilman Neal made a motion to reimburse Hannah Grohowski \$361.69 for out-of-pocket costs for publishing the cookbooks. Councilwoman Mehring seconded this motion. All were in favor; motion carried.

Councilwoman Mackey asked if we were going to talk about the Tree Lighting. Mayor Shanahan responded that December 1<sup>st</sup> is the date for the Tree Lighting. Nicole Vollmar will be the honored person to light the tree, as a way of saying thanks to her for all of her time and effort on the Togany Fest Committee. The choir will start at about 5:40 p.m. Tree Lighting will start at 6:00 p.m., with a thank-you to the sponsors. The tree is being donated by Abe and Kylie Euler. Pastors will be here to do prayer. The fire department will host Santa and drive him up and down the streets, and they will provide hot chocolate and either donuts or cookies. Artist Gail Christofferson will have ornament-making for kids again at her Animal House Glass shop downtown. Doc's will be open with ½-off on appetizers. Councilman Bergfeld asked what time Gail would be starting the ornaments. The mayor answered that he didn't have an exact time, but she will be open before 6:00 p.m. Councilman Fox asked if the mayor had mentioned anything to State Representative Haraz Ghanbari or State Senator Theresa Gavarone. The mayor answered that he has not yet, but he will get a note out to them. Councilwoman Mackey

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asked if Damon Lee will provide the sound again this year. The mayor replied that he will. The mayor added that we will have the fire pits and the S'mores station again this year—all donated. We will have the party confetti poppers again. The mayor said he would work with Isaac and get some road-closed signs. The tree will be delivered on Wednesday, November 27<sup>th</sup>. The trailer to transport the tree is donated. The crane will be very significantly discounted and we have a donor to cover the cost of the crane service. Lights should go on the tree on Saturday, November 30<sup>th</sup>. The mayor said he will be putting promotions on Facebook and Twitter over the next week or so to let the community know about the Tree Lighting schedule. He said he also gave information to Fiscal Officer Harnishfeger to send to Haley to post on the Village website.

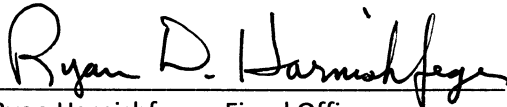
Councilman Neal reported that he met with our website maintenance lady, Haley Wilkins, today. He passed out to members a list of items they dealt with during their meeting. He told members that he probably used about \$27 worth of Haley's time to have her make various corrections on the website. Members voiced their approval of this expense. He said he also talked with Haley about website enhancements that he will be suggesting for our 2025 budget, and he asked Haley to provide an estimate of the cost to do that work. He said he is interested in promoting three main projects for the Village: the 150<sup>th</sup> Celebration; the Downtown Revitalization Project; and a remodeling of the Community page to include a place for all of the businesses in Tontogany to be able to freely advertise their businesses, with phone numbers provided for people to be able to contact the businesses. Mr. Neal commented that this would be one more thing to help encourage new businesses to open in Tontogany. He said he found out that the site activity is recorded, so he will be seeking to find a way to not only know how many people access the site, but what they look at while at our website, which will help us determine what they are interested in. He added that that information is readily available without charge. He said that Haley had noticed that there wasn't anything new added to our zoning information, so he and she were concerned that the information might not be current. He commented that the worst thing you can do on a website is have expired or erroneous information on it; then the site begins to lose credibility. He gave an example of an ad seeking an administrator, dated a year ago. He had asked someone if they thought they would be interested in that job and they responded, based on the date, that it was probably filled by now. Mayor Shanahan thanked Mr. Neal for his work on this. He added that it is nice to have someone with some knowledge and background in this area who can help us know what needs to be improved on the website.

Councilwoman Mehring reminded the mayor and members that we need to get the wreath taken down from the outside of the hall, so Gail can start measuring and cutting the 150<sup>th</sup> glass logo to go up in that spot. Councilman Smith said that his ladder that is good for that is at the other house right now.

Councilman Neal said he was working on his appropriations suggestions and he wondered how much it might cost for a streetlight. He added that a Google search indicated prices of around \$2,000 or \$3,000 per streetlight. The mayor responded that Fiscal Officer Harnishfeger should have a record of the price for streetlights on the last invoice when we bought them. Mr. Harnishfeger asked if Mr. Neal was talking about just lights or if he was talking about new decorative streetlight poles to dress up the downtown area. Mr. Neal answered that he was talking about poles. Mayor Shanahan asked members to be ready to go deeper into appropriations and the budget at the next meeting.

With nothing further to discuss, Mayor Shanahan declared the meeting adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

  
Matthew Shanahan, Mayor

  
Ryan Harnishfeger, Fiscal Officer