

TONTOGANY VILLAGE COUNCIL

MEETING MINUTES FROM: January 20, 2025

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, absent. Also present were Village Solicitor Paul Skaff, Utilities Superintendent/Meter Reader/Zoning Inspector Chad Johnson (arrived 7:14 p.m.), and Fiscal Officer/Utilities Clerk Ryan Harnishfeger. Visitors present: Nathan Strahm, for a scholarship application; Gail Christofferson, to give a Tontogany 150th Celebration Committee update. Minutes from the December 16th 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.

Mayor Shanahan did a third reading, by title only, of Ordinance #984-24, AN ORDINANCE ESTABLISHING SALARIES FOR ELECTED OFFICIALS. Councilman Bergfeld made a motion to adopt Ordinance #984-24. Councilman Smith seconded this motion. All were in favor; motion carried.

Mayor Shanahan did a first reading, by title only, of Resolution #985-25, A RESOLUTION ACCEPTING 5.773 ACRES OF LAND TO BE ANNEXED INTO THE VILLAGE OF TONTOGANY, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY. Fiscal Officer Harnishfeger reminded members that this was the annexation that Matthew and Natalie Lambert had petitioned for, and he passed around a copy of the petition, as well as a copy of Exhibit A (the legal description of the land) and Exhibit B (a copy of the map). Mr. Harnishfeger reported that on September 17, 2024, The Board of County Commissioners passed Resolution #24-01245, granting the annexation petition. After a required 30-day waiting period, the Clerk of the Board of County Commissioners mailed a complete transcript of the annexation proceedings to the Tontogany fiscal officer, which was received on October 23, 2024. Then there was another required 60-day waiting period before Tontogany could pass a resolution accepting the annexation. The end of the 60 days fell on December 22, about a week after Tontogany's final regular council meeting in 2024. Therefore, the resolution to accept the annexation into the Village of Tontogany needed to be put before Council at the next regular council meeting, which was tonight's meeting on January 20, 2025. Councilman Smith made a motion to suspend the rules and declare an emergency for Resolution #985-25. Councilman Fox seconded this motion. All were in favor; motion carried. Councilman Smith made a motion to adopt Resolution #985-25. Councilwoman Mackey seconded this motion. All were in favor; motion carried.

Mayor Shanahan reported that we received a quote from NWO Control, LLC for mosquito spraying in 2025. The price quoted for 2025 is \$219.84 per application, up slightly from the 2024 price of \$215.53 per application. The mayor noted that we usually have six sprays done per year: one spray the week before Memorial Day (which falls on May 26 this year), one spray in June, 2 sprays in July, and 2 sprays in August. The mayor told members that they could accept the quote with a motion or by assent. If accepted, he would sign it and give it to the fiscal officer to return the signed quote and an order for six sprayings to NWO. He also commented that we typically use our Suburban Gas grant to pay for mosquito sprayings. Councilman Fox made a motion to accept NWO's quote for 2025 sprayings. Councilwoman Mehring seconded this motion. All were in favor; motion carried.

Mayor Shanahan invited Gail Christofferson to speak to members about the progress of 150th Celebration planning. Ms. Christofferson reported that the 150th committee is in full swing and has been at it for close to a year. They thought it was time to update Council. She passed out sheets of information to everyone and then proceeded to explain the information on the sheets. She explained that the first page was an outline of 150th Committee projects they are working on. They are putting together a documentary, for which 10 local people have been interviewed and over 100 photos have been scanned. Bowling Green State University students are in the process of doing a rough edit. The

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documentary about Tontogany, including interviews and photos, will end up being about ten or twenty minutes in length. It will be shown several times during the Togany Fest weekend. Concerning the fundraiser-cookbook project, she reported that 100 cookbooks have already been sold and they are working on selling a second box of 100. Proceeds are over \$600 so far; the money will help fund other things that are planned. Another project they are working on is a Local Farm History presentation, which they will probably show at the village hall. Bernard Scott is in charge of this project and is gathering information on local farm families and their history. Another project in the works is a Murder Mystery interactive show about the Mrs. Peaney murder, which was a real murder 100 years ago that was never solved. This interactive show will take place at the Legion on May 9th and 10th at 7:30 p.m. In the first scene, attendees will learn about the characters. The second scene will be the courtroom. Then the attendees will get to be the jurors and decide who murdered Mrs. Peaney. There will be desserts and snacks, not a dinner. It will probably be BYOB and Muddy Waters brewery samples. Tickets will be \$5, purchased through Venmo or with cash. It will be limited to about 100 attendees per show because of the interactive nature of the event. Mayor Shanahan commented that we are not being charged rent for the use of the Legion for those two nights. Another project being planned is a Town Tour to guide visitors to prominent spots around the village. For the tour, Bernard Scott will provide trolleys, seating about 15 people, and a sound system. Some locals are helping decide what locations will be on the tour. Another project is Trivia Night. This event will be held at Doc's, but the date is yet to be determined. It will be trivia about Tontogany history, including back to 150 years ago—things like how much it cost for a dozen eggs. To promote the 150th Celebration they are doing lots of press releases to all local churches and social media. They may also do yard signs, similar to political yard signs.

Ms. Christofferson pointed out to members that the second page of the information sheets she gave them contained a tentative schedule for events. She noted that most events are being scheduled to happen during the Togany Fest weekend. The documentary will probably be shown at the fire hall, or possibly also once at the big tent after the mayor's opening statements. On Saturday, a 5K race is being organized by the cross-country team and parents. Mayor Shanahan added that his wife and Kylee Euler are heading that activity. They had communication with the cross-country coaches this past week and they will be getting together to finalize the details for the race. Ms. Christofferson went on to say that there will be a breakfast on Saturday from 8 a.m. to 11 a.m. at the village hall. Then the parade will be at 11 a.m. After the parade there will be a flyover and hopefully some local dignitaries. The mayor commented that, if any elected officials come, the hope is that they will walk in the parade, and they can give their presentation while there is a good crowd of people present, rather than trying to get them to come back in the evening, which would be difficult. Ms. Christofferson went on to say that from noon to 4 p.m. will be the Farm History and Memorabilia. Also, from noon to 4 p.m. on Main Street the Arts District will be open, offering a community mosaic of the 150th logo, to be installed at the village hall, plus live music, light refreshments, and sidewalk chalk. She said she had talked to the church that does kids games and they will coordinate with them to have bed races, kiddie tractor pull, hopscotch, jump rope, sack race, tug-of-war, and other games. Tours will also take place from noon to 4 p.m. She pointed out that there will be many opportunities for volunteers and she hoped that council members would consider volunteering their help where possible, such as selling cookbooks, helping with the Murder Mystery by managing snacks, setting up, tearing down, taking tickets, attending Trivia Night with a team, etc. She said that during the Togany Fest weekend she would have people take part in putting together the 150th mosaic logo. After the festival, it will be hung up on the village hall. Members thanked Ms. Christofferson for the update. She told them she would be back for another update before the festival. Mayor Shanahan said he would send Weston, Grand Rapids, and Haskins a challenge to put together a team for the bed race and tug-of-war. Ms. Christofferson added that they will be promoting the bed race to the schools as well. The mayor commented that Gail, Hannah, and he would be on the Otsego podcast in a couple of weeks, talking about the activities, which will be the first big promotion. Councilwoman Mehring asked if they needed 200 cookies. Ms. Christofferson answered that they need a

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lot of cookies, brownies, cupcakes, and snacks for the Murder Mystery, since they are not doing a dinner. With nothing else to discuss, the mayor and members thanked Ms. Christofferson and she left the meeting.

ZONING: Zoning Inspector Johnson reported that he spoke with Susan Grosjean's son, who lives in one of her apartments downtown, regarding the complaint from Brent Stewart about items by the side of the building making the area look junky. He said he would try to clean it up and he did clean up most of it. He keeps stuff there because there is no other place to put it except in front of the building, which would look worse. The mayor asked if he has a trash bin. Mr. Johnson replied that he has a couple of containers. He also reported that the camper that Brent Stewart complained about is not even on his lot. It is more like in front of the next house. The mayor asked if it is Mr. Grosjean's camper. Mr. Johnson answered that he thinks so and it is in the right-of-way. The mayor asked if he mentioned the camper to Mr. Grosjean to have it moved. Mr. Johnson replied that he did not talk to him about the camper because he didn't know of anything that could be done about it. The mayor noted that there are parking spots on Broad Street that he could put it in. He also asked if it is legal and registered. Mr. Johnson answered that he didn't look. The mayor said he thought the first thing would be to get it into a real parking space, preferably on Current's side where the parking spots aren't angled and wouldn't cause it to stick out into the street. Mr. Johnson said he would check on the registration and talk to him about moving it.

Mayor Shanahan asked Mr. Johnson if there was any update on letters sent out about other unregistered vehicles. Councilwoman Mackey asked if he sent a letter to the Fretters, because she thought the car in front of their place is now gone. Mr. Johnson answered that he did not contact them. He added that he likes to wait until after the holidays and bad winter weather to notify people about vehicles. He asked for a reminder again about what other vehicle was a problem besides the one in front of Fretter's home. Ms. Mackey reminded him of the black Camaro on Broad Street on public property. Mr. Johnson said he would get ahold of the owner. The mayor asked him to let the owner know that if it is not registered it will still be a problem, even if moved to another spot.

UTILITIES: Utilities Superintendent Johnson reported that when digging for the upgraded master meter pit on Kellogg Road, they found fiber optics, so there was no way they could put the meter pit where it was. Mr. Johnson said he had to locate the water line and the pit had to be moved down the road to a location where nothing was in the way. Now that they moved it, there will probably be a change order. Mr. Johnson asked Fiscal Officer Harnishfeger if he had seen a change order. Mr. Harnishfeger replied that he had not seen anything from the contractor yet. Mr. Johnson said that the necessary changes left them with two options. One option would be to drop down electric from a pole near Leann O'Brien's house and bring it under the road for \$3,000. The other option was \$6,000 to run electric from the old meter pit, but there would still be the fiber optics to work around. They decided to go the cheaper route for \$3,000.

Mr. Johnson reported that he installed a meter at Matt and Natalie Lambert's property, so they have electric now. Palmer also put in a meter pit for water there. Mr. Johnson noted that the weather report ten days out looks like cold weather and, if there is snow covering the water meters, it may be necessary to estimate meter readings. He reported that he checked on Thelma Wires' low water pressure problem. He found good pressure everywhere except the shower. He said he thinks the shower head may just need changed and he will get back with her about it.

STREETS and ALLEYS: Councilman Smith reported that there have been no complaints about the snow. The township has done a nice job for us. Mayor Shanahan reported that someone had slipped and fallen by the recycle bins after the last snowfall. He spoke with Isaac about it, who said he would watch the area and make sure there is salt on the ground there to keep it safe.

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SIDEWALKS and TREES: Mayor Shanahan reported that the Christmas Tree downtown was taken down and cleaned up in 35 minutes. A gentleman from just outside of town brought his chipper and his truck for the branches. The trunk is cut up and laying there for anyone who wants the wood, on a first-come, first-served basis.

DRAINS and SEWERS: Nothing to report.

CITY HALL and PARKS: Councilman Smith asked if members wanted to talk about pickleball. The mayor commented that we had received some suggestions from a resident. Mr. Smith said he thought we could alleviate the escaping balls problem by putting some treated lumber at the bottom of the fence. Councilman Fox suggested maybe using some of the yellow stuff that some ballfields use at the top of fences and put it on the bottom of our fence. He commented that it might be cheaper and easier to attach. Mr. Smith said his only concern about the yellow stuff would be that it might get shredded with a string trimmer. Mayor Shanahan said he had been looking at the park in consideration of a possible second pickleball court location. He said we would have enough room if we take out the horseshoe pits. Then people could switch in and out between the two pickleball courts being close together. He commented that we would probably have enough room at Mehring Park to put in two pickleball courts, but that would require two new courts, whereas at Centennial Park we would only need to add one pickleball court to have two. Mr. Smith commented that where the basketball court is would be a good spot for two pickleball courts, but we don't want to tear up a perfectly good basketball court. Councilman Fox commented that we have tons of options—do nothing, add one court, add two courts—it is just a matter of where we want to do it. The mayor commented that if we just put in one new pickleball court at Centennial Park, then people can play pickleball while others are playing basketball, and we have the shelter house for people who are waiting to get in on a game. He also said he thought the lights would shine on what is now the horseshoe area, if a pickleball court was placed in that area. Mr. Smith said he could see how a park grant would go a long way toward upgrading that whole area—fence, lights, another court.

Councilwoman Mackey, reported that our 2025 park grant that we applied for was not awarded. She said it was the first time we have been denied since she has been doing it. She said she thought maybe we were denied because the playground equipment we applied for this time wasn't considered a necessity.

Councilman Bergfeld asked about the new law that took effect regarding the forced dissolution of small Ohio villages, if we were okay. Mayor Shanahan answered that he and Councilman Smith had texted back and forth about it and the mayor said he thought we were fine for the requirements that we have to meet. We offer services and we typically have someone on the election ballot when seats are up for renewal. Solicitor Skaff commented that you have to provide 5 of 10 named services and at least one candidate for each open seat over the 10-year period. He added that the second part about candidates for open seats will be the one that trips up most villages. He asked if that had happened over the last 5 years. The mayor and members said they didn't think so. Mr. Skaff warned to not let it happen during the next 5 years. The mayor commented that we need to pay close attention that if someone is up for election and will be choosing not to run, we need to find someone to run on the ballot for that seat. He also reminded members that the period in question is a 10-year period, from census to census. A body of county officials evaluates all villages to determine their right to continue as a village, or to direct their dissolution if they fail to meet the minimum requirements in that 10-year period. If the body finds the village does not meet the minimum requirements, the issue of the village's continuance must go to the voters. Councilman Fox asked if that would be the voters of the village or of the county. Solicitor Skaff answered that the statute doesn't make it clear, but he is assuming it would be just voters within the village. The mayor added that if that should happen to any village, that village would become part of the

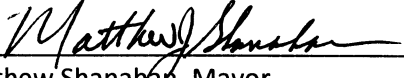
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township. Councilman Bergfeld said he thought that Councilman Damon Lee did not fill out his paperwork in time for reelection and had to run as a write-in. The mayor and members then remembered that and agreed that Mr. Bergfeld was correct. The mayor asked all council members to make it known well in advance of the next election, if they are not intending to run for reelection, so the mayor and members can have plenty of time to find another person to run on the ballot for the seat they will vacate. Councilman Fox asked Solicitor Skaff what the benefit would be for dissolving villages. Solicitor Skaff replied, "Income tax." Councilman Smith added that their concern is people paying income taxes and not getting anything out of it, which is why they want you to be providing various services to the taxpayers, such as water and sewer, police services, fire services, parks, trash, etc.

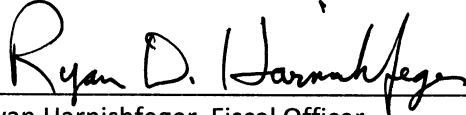
Mayor Shanahan told members that we typically go over committees at the first meeting of the year, but he said he wanted to wait until Councilman Neal was here to do that. He also told members that we usually discuss who will be President of Council at this meeting. Councilman Bergfeld stated that he nominated Mark Smith to continue as President of Council. All members were in agreement, with no one voicing opposition. Councilman Smith thanked everyone for their faith in him to carry out the duties of President of Council.

Mayor Shanahan asked Solicitor Skaff if he had anything he wanted to address Council about. He answered that he did not.

With nothing further to discuss, Mayor Shanahan declared the meeting adjourned at 7:50 p.m.



Matthew Shanahan, Mayor



Ryan Harnishfeger, Fiscal Officer