

TONTOGANY VILLAGE COUNCIL

MEETING MINUTES FROM: February 3, 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, absent at roll call, but arrived at 7:13 p.m.; Mark Smith, here; Robert Bergfeld, here; Lincoln Fox, here; Paul Neal, here. Also present was Fiscal Officer/Utilities Clerk Ryan Harnishfeger. Visitors present: Deputy Shaffer from the Wood County Sheriff's Office. Minutes from the January 20th meeting were approved as submitted.

FINANCE and CLAIMS: A spreadsheet of the current invoices was reviewed and approved by members. Councilman Bergfeld 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 January Bank Reconciliation, Fund Status, Revenue Status, and Appropriation Status Reports were given to the mayor and the Finance Committee to review.

Copies of the January Incident Report were provided to all for review. Mayor Shanahan asked if members had any concerns or questions to discuss with Deputy Shaffer. They did not. With nothing to discuss and nothing new from the deputy, the mayor thanked him and he left the meeting.

Fiscal Officer Harnishfeger reported that he received a call last week from Chad Fitch, who is interested in doing lawn care work for the village. He said he asked Mr. Fitch to email an estimate of his prices, which he did, and members were each given a copy of the estimate. For comparison, a copy of Josh Heckerman's 2024 lawn care quote was attached to Mr. Fitch's quote (since we did not have a 2025 quote from Mr. Heckerman yet). Mr. Harnishfeger asked members to review Mr. Fitch's quote and get back to him with what they would like to do, so he can give an answer back to Mr. Fitch. He also commented that he had told Mr. Fitch that council members have been very pleased with the work done for the village by our regular lawn care person, and they would need a pretty good reason to change to a different provider. The mayor and members said they would like to wait until they get a new quote from Josh for 2025. Councilwoman Mackey commented that she had talked to Josh about three weeks ago, who told her that Jake was looking forward to doing the job again in the summer, and there would probably be little, if any, increase in charges. The mayor commented that we are pleased with the work done by Josh and Jake, but it doesn't hurt to have a backup provider to turn to, if Josh's services should become unavailable for any reason. He added that he liked that Mr. Fitch's estimate included a two-year price lock. Ms. Mackey offered to text Josh for a 2025 quote. The mayor agreed that he would like for her to do so.

Fiscal Officer Harnishfeger reported that there are no hall rentals currently scheduled for February. There are two paid rentals in March: one on Saturday, March 8th, and one on Saturday, March 22nd. A third rental in March has been requested for Saturday, March 15th, but not yet paid for.

ZONING: Mayor Shanahan reported that Zoning Inspector Johnson had texted some minor updates and thoughts about the camper on Broad Street. The mayor told members that he himself had spoken with a deputy this afternoon about the black Camaro on Broad Street. The deputy responded that he heard from the owner, who said he would get the registration up to date and current, and he intends to move it to a different spot, in front of his shop, probably to one of the diagonal spots. The mayor commented that we will keep an eye on it and see if there is movement anytime soon. The mayor added that the camper is now gone that was in a resident's yard near the mayor's home. He said that we had asked Mr. Johnson to send a letter about the Camaro, which he had sent to that resident, who responded that it has nothing to do with them. The mayor said he had asked the deputy if we could just tow it and have the bill sent to the registered owner, since the registration was out of date for two years. The deputy acted quickly to check into it. Councilman Fox asked where it would be towed to, if we were to have it towed. Councilman Smith answered that, if we tow it, it would be taken to the impound yard of

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whoever we contract with to have it towed. They hold onto it, kind of like a repo yard. After a few weeks, a month, or whatever, when the impound fees go up over the value of the vehicle, they take possession. The mayor added that when we had the abandoned vehicle towed from Mehring Park, we called to have it towed and we never got billed for it. Councilman Neal asked if this is something Mr. Johnson follows up on or if Council should follow up on it. The mayor responded that the information about it was given to Mr. Johnson as well as to council members, so he is aware of it and we can just ask him to keep an eye on it.

Councilwoman Mackey asked if members wanted to discuss the camper in front of Jake's that Mr. Johnson had mentioned, which is also blocking a speed limit sign. Mayor Shanahan answered that Mr. Johnson had thought that we should be able to notify the deputy about that and they could act on it. The mayor added that he could send a picture of it to the deputy tomorrow and get his feedback on it.

Councilman Smith reminded the mayor and members of an email received today about trash blowing into the ditch from the property on the north side of the street at the corner of Tontogany Road and Lincoln Street. Mayor Shanahan responded that this was the second correspondence we have received on that particular issue. He said the home owner there seems to be putting piles of recycling in their back yard and it is blowing into the ditch because it is not contained properly; it is an issue we can give to Zoning Inspector Johnson to address. Councilman Neal asked if we have talked to the individual. Mr. Smith answered that the notification about the issue just came this afternoon. The mayor added that when we got the notification the previous time, he just drove by after work and took a look at the location; there is no fenced-in yard there, so the debris is just blowing over into the ditch. He said that, for now, we just need to have Mr. Johnson send them a letter advising them of either village code or Ohio Revised Code about the issue and reminding them that there are recycling bins available in town for proper disposal of recycling materials. Councilwoman Mackey added that they also may need to be reminded that the EPA disallows trash burning in town.

Councilman Neal asked if we had heard anything about the old downtown corner carryout and what Wood County Building Inspection is doing about it. Mayor Shanahan answered that he had not heard anything, but he would follow up with Zoning Inspector Johnson to see if he has heard anything; if not, he will ask him to get us an update.

UTILITIES: Fiscal Officer Harnishfeger reported that, as Utilities Superintendent Johnson warned us, we did receive a change order for the special electric hookup needed for the Kellogg Road Backflow Preventer. The change order, which the mayor signed on behalf of the Village, increased the contract with Unilliance by \$5,358, from a previous total of \$59,780 to a new total of \$65,138. Councilwoman Mackey asked why the engineer, Feller, Finch, didn't find that problem before the project was put out for bid. Mr. Harnishfeger answered that that was a good question; the discovery happened when they actually started excavating. Mayor Shanahan commented that Mr. Johnson was there when they discovered the problem, so maybe he can answer why Feller, Finch hadn't detected it beforehand. Mr. Harnishfeger added that, even if Feller, Finch had detected that problem beforehand, the extra cost would have been added to the project up front, rather than later as a change order. Members discussed briefly the possible options of dealing with the electrical hookup problem and concluded that we are probably lucky it didn't cost more than \$5,358.

Mayor Shanahan asked Utilities Clerk Harnishfeger how we are doing on delinquent utilities. Mr. Harnishfeger responded that the shutoff notification program is working fairly well, but it is a constant struggle. He lamented that we have to "twist the arm" of some customers to get them to be responsible about paying their utility bill. Shutoff notices need to be served upon about six to ten delinquent customers at a time, not always the same customers, but certain customers show up again and again on the shutoff notices. If they don't respond to the shutoff notice with payment or by contacting the office to arrange for a payment plan, then Mr. Harnishfeger gives a list of those customers to Utilities Superintendent Johnson to disconnect their utilities. He also gives the customers' phone numbers to Mr.

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Johnson. What usually happens is that Mr. Johnson or Mr. Harnishfeger calls the customer to tell them they are about to be disconnected and they then come up with a payment to keep their utilities connected. For instance, the last batch of shutoff notices left four customers due for disconnection. Under threat of immediate shutoff, each of those four customers came up with a payment to avoid being shut off. Mr. Harnishfeger commented that the large commercial account that had a delinquency problem got back on track and has kept up their payments each month without fail, maintaining a zero balance on their account. Councilman Fox asked if Meter Reader Johnson did actual readings this time or if estimates were used. Mr. Harnishfeger replied that the readings were actual readings, because the meters were accessible. When there is snow cover and the meters can't be located is when water meters have to be estimated. However, for reasons Mr. Johnson could explain, there are always about ten to twenty water meters that don't get read and have to be estimated. Mayor Shanahan wondered out loud if we could deal with repeat delinquent utilities offenders, who may be just holding out each time to the last second, by making any notice to them as a final notice before shutoff. Councilman Fox commented that he didn't think we could do that. Mr. Harnishfeger answered that our shutoff notification method is governed by ordinance. He also recalled that Solicitor Skaff had said that, if a person fails to keep their payment plan agreement with the Village, we have to again give them a 14-day shutoff notice before disconnecting them.

Councilman Neal asked if we will get any input from RITA about the tax collection issue, since they told us they had 50 or so subpoena notices that they sent out to delinquent taxpayers. Mayor Shanahan answered that they let us know the number of letters they send out, but we never hear back afterwards about the results. Fiscal Officer Harnishfeger added that we depend on RITA to take care of pursuing delinquent taxpayers for us and we don't have to get involved in the process. Mr. Neal asked if we can anticipate the loss in revenue from that. Mr. Harnishfeger answered that we don't know enough details about what the delinquencies are to anticipate possible loss of revenue, but he said he didn't think it was a significant amount. The mayor added that RITA is going to get their money, one way or another; they keep after taxpayers relentlessly.

STREETS and ALLEYS: Nothing to report.

SIDEWALKS and TREES: Nothing to report.

DRAINS and SEWERS: Councilwoman Mackey reported that it is not draining at the corner of North Street and Tontogany Road. Mayor Shanahan agreed that he had noticed the same thing. Councilman Bergfeld said he thought it used to have a way to drain there, but then they put in rocks that raised it up and now it doesn't flow properly for drainage. Councilman Smith asked if we need to have someone cut a new swale there for it to drain. Members agreed but said that would be a springtime project. Mr. Smith suggested getting someone with a Bobcat to excavate it for us. The mayor commented that he thought that would be the inexpensive way to take care of the issue. Councilman Fox noted that there are places where we could rent a Bobcat. The mayor said he would text Isaac and suggest a little more salting of that corner due to the build up of water there and the freezing rain in the forecast.

CITY HALL and PARKS: Councilwoman Mackey reported that the anchor came loose on the surround for the porta john at Centennial Park, causing it to be tilted on the north side. She suggested maybe we could ask Jim Head to take a look at it and fix it in the springtime. Councilman Smith agreed that that would be a good springtime project.

Councilman Neal asked about Councilwoman Mackey's take on why we didn't get approval for our park grant request for 2025. Ms. Mackey responded that she didn't know exactly why we were denied this time. She said that a committee of five people each get a copy of the applications and then they judge who to approve for grants. She said her thinking was that maybe it was because for the last two or

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three years we have asked for playground equipment and they thought we should do something different or ask for something more necessary, or spend our own money for the requested item.

Councilman Smith asked if we have an agreement with TruGreen for fertilizer this year. He said he thought this would be a good time to ask around for estimates from different companies for lawn treatments, weed control, or whatever we may want for the parks' grass and for the playgrounds. Councilwoman Mackey asked if Renewed Outdoors does lawn treatment. She said she could contact Brad there and find out. Members said they thought GSI (Ground Services, Inc.) in Waterville would be a good company to get a quote from for lawn and weed treatment, perhaps with better pricing and better results. Mr. Smith asked how many treatments we wanted, so he could use that information in asking for a quote. Councilman Fox said he thought we should have weed control on the playgrounds once a month from May through July or August, but that we may want to ask the company to give us their professional recommendation for how many applications are needed and at what time. Ms. Mackey commented that she had told Renewed Outdoors last fall that we definitely would be having them come back and do weed control on our playgrounds. Members decided that we should ask for quotes to do several applications of weed control on the playgrounds from May through August, as well as weed and feed treatment of the lawns of both parks in spring and fall, as was previously done by TruGreen. Fiscal Officer Harnishfeger commented that TruGreen's prices seem high, so he would like to see quotes from other companies. Mr. Smith said he would seek a quote from GSI. Ms. Mackey said she would seek a quote from Brad Hanson at Renewed Outdoors.

Councilwoman Mackey reported that she received a call the other day from a lady representing GOBA (The Great Ohio Bicycle Adventure). They are planning to come through Tontogany on Sunday, June 15th, and the lady wanted to know if they can rent the shelter house at Centennial Park, just as a stop. Up to 800 riders will be arriving sometime between 9 a.m. and 2 p.m. She asked for permission to bring in four porta johns. They will bring their own water hose to hook up to our spigot so their riders can fill their water bottles. The lady representing GOBA offered Tontogany the option to invite any organizations in town that would like to come and sell refreshments to the riders or have a bake sale at the park on that day to do so. If no local organizations want to do that, then GOBA will plan to have one or two food trucks come in to serve their riders. Councilman Fox asked what is the planned path of the riders, for the purpose of informing the citizens. Ms. Mackey answered that they will be coming from the Waterville area and coming down Tontogany Creek Road and then North Street to the park. After Tontogany, they will head for Poe Road and will be staying overnight at the fairgrounds. Mayor Shanahan asked if it would be beneficial to close North Street from Tontogany Road to Broad Street on that day to give the riders access. Members discussed it and decided that, if we close North Street for the event, we should just close it all the way from Tontogany Creek Road to Tontogany Road. Ms. Mackey said she also told the lady from GOBA that this year is the 150th anniversary of the Village of Tontogany and we would be glad to have them be a part of the celebration. The mayor commented that it would be nice to have a 150th backdrop of some kind that the riders could take selfies in front of. Mr. Fox reminded members that the Legion does a chicken dinner that weekend, so he suggested that we might want to insist that the riders use only Tontogany Creek Road when heading out, rather than Tontogany Road, so the people in town aren't hindered by the bikers on Tontogany Road. The mayor and members agreed. Ms. Mackey said she told the GOBA lady that we would make sure our local sheriff's department is aware of the event, and the lady remarked that they had probably already taken care of that.

Councilman Neal asked about the matter of the necessity of having a candidate on the ballot for any open seats of elected officials, to avoid the possible dissolution of a village, emphasized at the last meeting by Solicitor Skaff. Mr. Neal noted that he is new at this and does not know the procedure he needs to follow to run for election at the end of his current term that he was appointed to. Mayor Shanahan asked Fiscal Officer Harnishfeger to contact the Board of Elections for a current list of Tontogany elected officials and their term dates. Members told Mr. Neal that filing to run for a council

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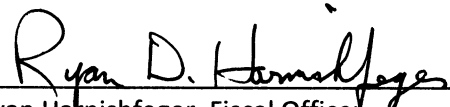
seat must be done by the first week in August. The mayor and members explained to Mr. Neal that he would need to go to the Board of Elections at the Courthouse and tell them what seat he wants to run for. Then they will tell him what the fee is (\$30) and give him a form to collect 10 or 12 signatures. However, they will advise him to get 24 signatures, because they will vet the signatures and throw out any signatures of non-registered voters. Councilman Smith advised Mr. Neal to ask the Board of Elections to go over the form with him, because anything that is not right will result in them throwing it out and he will have to do it over again and pay the fee again until it is done right. On the same topic, Mayor Shanahan advised Mr. Neal to actually file in July, rather than just by the deadline in August, so there is time to correct anything that may be found wrong and refile before the deadline.

Councilman Neal reported that the testing of the website is complete. He met with Haley on December 18th and tested it to see that it is operating properly. Therefore, when a business wants to submit something to the website, there is a form they can fill out. The form then goes to Haley and she sends it to Mr. Neal. After reviewing it to make sure there is nothing unacceptable, it then goes online. He said they already put up model listings on the website for Doc's Rib Cage and for the Presbyterian Church. When a person is interested in information about a community business, they can click on it and it will bring up the information the business has submitted, including possibly pictures and video, plus a map showing the location of the business. Mr. Neal said he was trying to merge things with the revitalization project. A letter that he worked on with Mayor Shanahan, and has been approved, will be sent to each of the downtown property owners. He needs to get with Gail Christofferson to discuss who is and who is not on the Revitalization Committee. They intend to divide up the businesses and then have a member of the Revitalization Committee make a personal visit to each business to let them know what is going on, what they are trying to do, and to inform them about the 150th celebration, the website, and everything in the letter. They want to encourage each business to celebrate the 150th with the village. The goal is to send out the letter by the 13th of February, which is dependent on getting volunteers lined up on the Revitalization Committee so they can assign each person to one of the businesses. Finding addresses of businesses on Main Street has been particularly difficult, as to finding out who is the owner so the letter can be sent to them. Some of the buildings on Main Street do not have an address displayed, which is needed to look them up on the County Auditor's website. Mayor Shanahan thanked Councilman Neal for the update.

With nothing further to discuss, Mayor Shanahan declared the meeting adjourned at 8:04 p.m.



Matthew Shanahan, Mayor



Ryan Harnishfeger, Fiscal Officer