

TONTOGANY VILLAGE COUNCIL

MEETING MINUTES FROM: March 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, here; Mark Smith, here; Robert Bergfeld, here; Lincoln Fox, here; Paul Neal, here. Also present was Fiscal Officer/Utilities Clerk Ryan Harnishfeger. Visitors present: Derek Brewer and son Crosby Brewer, regarding an Eagle Scout project; Laurie Manning, from Hylant Administrative Services, to talk about the Ohio Plan Renewal Package; and a deputy from the Wood County Sheriff's Office. Minutes from the February 17th 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. Councilwoman Mackey seconded this motion. All were in favor; motion carried. Copies of the February Bank Reconciliation, Fund Status, Revenue Status, and Appropriation Status Reports were given to the mayor and the Finance Committee to review.

Mayor Shanahan did a first reading of Ordinance #986-25, AN ORDINANCE APPROVING, ADOPTING AND ENACTING AMERICAN LEGAL PUBLISHING'S OHIO BASIC CODE, 2025 EDITION, AS THE CODE OF ORDINANCES FOR THE MUNICIPALITY OF TONTOGANY, OHIO, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY. Councilman Neal made a motion to suspend the rules and declare an emergency for Ordinance #986-25. Councilman Smith seconded this motion. All were in favor; motion carried. Councilwoman Mackey made a motion to adopt Ordinance #986-25. Councilwoman Mehring seconded this motion. All were in favor; motion carried.

Mayor Shanahan reported that we received an open invitation to the Wood County Economic Development Commission's 30th Annual Dinner on Thursday, April 17, 2025, at the Hilton Garden Inn, 6165 Levis Commons Blvd., Perrysburg. Cash bar networking will be from 6:00-7:00 p.m. and the dinner and program will be from 7:00-9:00 p.m. in the Commodore Ballroom. The mayor said he did not intend to attend the dinner this year, but if any members wished to go, they should let the fiscal officer know so he could get the tickets paid for, which are \$50 per person.

Mayor Shanahan reported that we received a 2025 landscaping quote from Josh Heckerman. He then read through the quoted prices: \$875 for 7 cubic yards of mulching at the hall and Mehring Park; \$450 for 6 hours of pruning and cleanup of bushes at the hall; \$75 per mowing of the hall lawn; \$100 per mowing of Mehring Park; \$300 per mowing of Centennial Park; \$35 per mowing of the Kellogg Road triangle (all mowing includes trimming and blowing as needed); \$300 for 4 hours of fall leaf cleanup at Mehring Park; \$150 for 2 hours of fall leaf cleanup at the hall; \$225 for 3 hours of spring stick and trash cleanup for all village properties. The mayor commented that he didn't think the prices were much different from last year. Councilwoman Mackey said she thought the only price that was increased was for mowing Centennial Park, which was increased from \$225 to \$300 per mowing. She also noted that Josh broke down the quote so that Council could choose to not have him do certain items, for example, if we might prefer to have kids do the brush pickup. The mayor asked members if they wanted to make a motion at this meeting to accept a quote, or if they would like to take some time to compare Josh's quote with the quote received previously from Chad Fitch, before making a decision. Councilman Fox answered that he thought we should look at both quotes again as good stewards of the town's money. The mayor asked Fiscal Officer Harnishfeger to scan both quotes and email them to council members, so they can be ready at the next meeting to make a decision on which to accept.

Copies of the February Incident Report were provided to all for review. Mayor Shanahan asked if members had any questions for the deputy. Members had no questions. The mayor reported to the deputy that there is an RV on Main Street, just west of the four corners downtown, which is blocking a speed limit sign. The mayor asked the deputy if that would be something we should be concerned about, and if it is something to deal with through zoning or if the sheriff's department can do something

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about it. The deputy answered that he would speak to the owner about it. With nothing else to discuss, the mayor thanked the deputy and he left the meeting.

Mayor Shanahan introduced prospective Eagle Scout Crosby Brewer and his father, Derek Brewer, and told members they were here to discuss what Council might desire to have Crosby take on as an Eagle Scout project for the benefit of the village. He noted that a fence for the recycle bins had been discussed, but other ideas were welcome to be offered by members as well. The mayor asked Crosby to tell members a little about himself. Crosby told members he was in Troop 347, he is 15 years old, and he is looking for Eagle Scout project ideas because he wants to get at it and get it accomplished. The mayor asked members for suggestions of other potential projects besides the recycling fence. Members offered ideas, including a small shelter structure at Mehring Park that could be used for barbeques, etc., repainting of the flagpole at the hall, replacement and upgrading of the Centennial signs at the park, and taking out the horseshoe pits. The mayor also mentioned that residents have requested a fix for the pickleball fence at Centennial Park, where balls escape through a gap at the bottom of the fence. Derek Brewer told members that there is some question as to how much work constitutes an Eagle Scout project, so, if necessary, two or more projects can be combined to fulfill a complete Eagle Scout project. Mayor Shanahan told Crosby and Derek that they should not feel committed or obligated to Tontogany for their project; if they find something that works better for them in another community, there will be no hurt feelings here; they should do whatever works best for their Eagle Scout project. Derek asked who Crosby should contact with his project ideas. The mayor answered that Crosby could call him anytime with his ideas, and he is always welcome to come to a meeting. Once a project is picked, the mayor said we would like for Crosby to come and present the plans to Council for a final sign-off. With nothing further to discuss, the mayor and members thanked Crosby and Derek and they left the meeting.

Mayor Shanahan invited Laurie Manning to give Council an overview of the Ohio Plan Insurance Package Renewal Proposal for 2025. Ms. Manning passed out copies of the Package Proposal to each member and then she went through it, page by page, explaining coverages and deductibles for the various categories of property and liability insurance. She noted that we did not have a lot of changes from year to year, which is very common for a village of our size. She said they are adding a three percent inflation increase this year, which is lower than they have done in the last two years. She pointed out that our four-year loss ratio was 45 percent, meaning that over the past four years they have paid out 45 percent of our premium; this caused a slightly greater percentage of premium increase than if the loss ratio was below 40 percent. However, our historical loss ratio is only 25 percent, across the whole history of our membership. Councilman Fox commented that he was curious about coverage for playground equipment, since it is getting more and more expensive. Ms. Manning asked if the Village had any playground equipment that is close to \$15,000 in value. Councilwoman Mackey answered that the big climber at Centennial Park would be an example. Ms. Manning stated that, if the Village were to lose that or other equipment in a tornado, we would have access to \$1.2 million coverage. She offered to increase the coverage for any one item to more than \$15,000, if Council would like. She said she would look into it, and even an increase of \$45,000 coverage might not raise the premium. For example, adding \$1,000,000 to the schedule would add \$500 to the premium. Ms. Manning then said she would just go ahead and raise coverage to \$60,000 on park equipment, which shouldn't even produce an extra invoice, since they don't invoice for less than \$50. Mr. Fox suggested that she should also add the equipment at Mehring Park to the property schedule with \$20,000 coverage. Other members agreed. Ms. Manning said she would update the property schedule with these changes, and resulting invoicing should still be nothing or very minimal for these increases in coverage. Councilman Neal noted that the four-year loss ratio of 45 percent for the past four years was significantly higher than our overall historical loss ratio of 25 percent. He asked if we were actually averaging 45 percent loss ratio per year, or if there was one year that pushed the average up for the whole period. Councilman Smith commented that there was one of those years when we had a large claim, which pushed the average up.

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Mr. Neal said he was thinking that, if our losses are higher each year, maybe we should start looking at adjusting our deductibles up. Ms. Manning replied that a lot of people ask that question, but in the Ohio Plan deductibles don't seem to make a huge difference, since it is not profit driven the way other insurance companies are. She also reiterated Councilman Smith's point that the 45 percent average for the last four-year period was due to a large claim in one of the years, and it does not mean that the Village is at a 45 percent loss ratio every year. Mr. Neal commented that the deductibles are low and we could probably afford to increase some of the deductibles. Ms. Manning answered that she could raise deductibles so the Village could pay more of its claims, if we wanted her to do so, but the Ohio Plan purposely has low deductibles because most public entities don't have a lot of extra money in their budgets. Mayor Shanahan commented that he didn't think we had much extra cash, and if we had to replace damaged playground equipment at our own expense, we would definitely buy something much smaller. Ms. Manning offered, since the Village already renewed in January, that next year she would give the Village quotes with various deductibles on property and liability, and let members see how it would affect the premium. Ms. Manning asked if the Village has bonds for certain individuals, such as the fiscal officer. Fiscal Officer Harnishfeger replied that we have bonds for the mayor, the fiscal officer, and the utility billing clerk. Ms. Manning stated that the legislation changed a couple of years ago and it now allows you the choice of having bonds or including coverage in the insurance plan for individuals, instead of bonds. She noted that a lot of entities are choosing to switch to insurance coverage instead of buying bonds for their people. She also pointed out that the person named on a bond can be held personally liable, but if they are put on the insurance policy, they are not liable for anything. She said she could put everyone on the policy—normally bonded individuals as well as council members and the mayor—so everyone is covered and protected. She asked if we wanted to do that. Everyone agreed that we should do so, with no one voicing opposition. She said she would endorse and add everyone and then as each current bond comes up for renewal, we simply won't renew the bond. Mr. Neal asked if this will save money. Ms. Manning answered that it will cost less to put you on the policy, rather than on a bond. Mr. Fox suggested that we wait until next year for this, since his and several other council members' terms end on 12/31/25. Other members agreed. Ms. Manning said she would do so and next year everyone's names will be listed on the policy. Ms. Manning pointed out that our summary of coverage includes liability coverage, cyber coverage, terrorism coverage, and malicious act coverage. The package premium is \$5,525, minus a \$750 Advantage credit, for a net total annual premium of \$4,775. She said she would have Steven send the policy endorsement and she will have him include with that a comparison of different deductibles. The policy can be changed at any time and prorated, if Council should wish to make changes. Fiscal Officer Harnishfeger asked if he should go ahead and pay the current invoice or wait for possible changes. Ms. Manning answered that it would be less confusing to go ahead and pay it, since it was dated for January; they are super flexible about payments but they would not want to make changes to the original January invoice. With nothing else to discuss, the mayor and members thanked Ms. Manning and she left the meeting.

Fiscal Officer Harnishfeger reported that there are now three hall rentals scheduled in March: one on Saturday, March 8th; one on Saturday, March 15th; and one on Saturday, March 22nd.

Fiscal Officer Harnishfeger reported that we had another change order on the Kellogg Road Backflow Preventer Project, this time decreasing the total contract price by \$626.26 to a new total of \$64,511.74. This was mainly due to better pricing on a newer backflow preventer model. Mayor Shanahan added that they sent us the change order update and he came to the office and signed it for the Village.

Fiscal Officer Harnishfeger reminded members that we have had a separate commercial insurance policy covering our power lines and poles for many years through First Insurance (recently renamed Risk Strategies). The policy gives coverage for up to \$1,050,000 with a \$25,000 deductible. For the last three years we have paid a premium of \$2,598 per year. This year the premium jumped to \$10,579. Mr. Harnishfeger said he called Risk Strategies and talked with a representative, who informed him that very

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few companies will do policies on power lines and the company they work with for our coverage, Cincinnati Insurance Company, offers the lowest prices available. He also told Mr. Harnishfeger that our previous premium was abnormally low, due to a calculation error. This, on top of steep rate increases in the industry, caused our premium to jump to over \$10,000. They are working on correcting the pricing error in two three-year periods. So, after another three years, the premium is likely to be raised to over \$20,000. Mr. Harnishfeger said he asked the insurance rep to research what the premium would be with the deductible raised to \$50,000 or \$75,000, and what it would be for only \$500,000 coverage instead of \$1,050,000. The rep said he would research it and get back to Mr. Harnishfeger. Mr. Harnishfeger told members he had called former Administrator Craig Spoore to get his take on the situation. Mr. Spoore had suggested getting quotes on different deductibles and different coverage amounts. He had also suggested that, if insurance premiums are too high, the Village could instead create a fund for self-insurance and build it up over the years. At \$10,000 per year, you would have \$50,000 in five years, but the money would not be available for other expenditures. Councilman Fox asked if we could use one of our CDs for that. Mr. Harnishfeger responded that we only have one CDARS account with \$180,000 in it. We have a three-year plan with good interest right now. There is a penalty for dipping into that money, but it would be possible to use some of it for an emergency, if we chose to. Mr. Fox said he thought plan A would be to wait to hear back from the Risk Strategies rep; plan B would be to contact Laurie Manning to see if the Ohio Plan could cover our power lines and poles and at what premium; plan C would be to look into self-insurance. Mr. Harnishfeger commented that if the Ohio Plan would cover our power lines, he would definitely rather have all of our insurance through them. Councilman Neal asked if it would be possible to join with the City of Bowling Green and include our electric into their coverage. Mr. Harnishfeger answered that he didn't think so. Mr. Fox asked Mr. Harnishfeger to reach out to Laurie Manning and let her know our situation. He observed that, even if it would double our Ohio Plan premium, it would still be cheaper than the Risk Strategies plan. Mayor Shanahan asked if there is someone who can tell us the value of our electric infrastructure, even if we have to pay them to do so. The mayor and members discussed where the boundaries of our electric infrastructure are. Mr. Harnishfeger suggested that Utilities Superintendent Johnson would probably know who to contact in Bowling Green about getting a valuation of our electric infrastructure and what it would cost if we had to replace it all. Mr. Neal commented that he thinks the CD is an opportunity to self-insure part of this catastrophic coverage. Members briefly discussed the pros and cons of using the CD money as self-insurance, and decided first to see what we find out from the Risk Strategies rep and Laurie Manning.

ZONING: Mayor Shanahan reported that he didn't have anything new from Zoning Inspector Johnson. He reminded members that Mr. Johnson had said he would say something to the RV owner and that he would reach out for an update on the old Corner Carryout building downtown.

UTILITIES: Councilman Fox reminded the mayor that we want to have Utilities Superintendent Johnson seek assistance from Bowling Green for finding out the value of our electrical infrastructure.

STREETS and ALLEYS: Mayor Shanahan reported that he has not followed up with the trustees yet about the plowing issue. He said he would see if he could be placed on the agenda at their March meeting.

SIDEWALKS and TREES: Nothing to report.

DRAINS and SEWERS: Councilman Bergfeld asked if we wanted to contact Palmer about the drainage problem at Centennial Park. He added that it wouldn't hurt to add more drainage, since there is standing water in places like the gaga pit. Mayor Shanahan answered that we can certainly ask. Mr. Bergfeld offered to give Palmer a call. The mayor said he would be okay with that, and he suggested that we try to get them to look at it after a rain, or he suggested we get some photos after a rain.

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CITY HALL and PARKS: Councilwoman Mehring reported that the Fire Department is having a breakfast at the Legion from 8:00-11:00 a.m. on April 5th. Mayor Shanahan added that it is a free-will donation event.

Councilwoman Mehring offered five names to be considered for veteran banners in 2025. Councilwoman Mackey said she thought we should give priority consideration to veterans who lived in town. Mayor Shanahan said his question was how easy it would be to connect with family members to get pictures and information. Ms. Mehring responded that they are all Legion people, so the Legion would probably have some information on them. The mayor asked members if they had any objections to any of the names offered by Ms. Mehring. Members were mostly favorable to the list, except for a question about one person who may not have been from town. Since members were a little uncertain, the mayor said that we will hold the five names until the next meeting and then decide if any other names should be substituted. If not, we can go with the five suggested names.

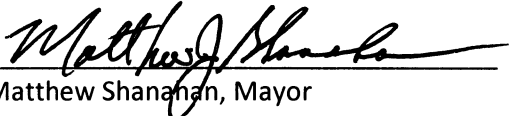
Mayor Shanahan reported that he has some long pieces of 2x4 lumber in his garage. He said he could drill holes in the 2x4s and zip-tie them to the bottom of the pickleball fence for a temporary fix. He commented that it would at least show the pickleball players that we didn't forget their request. Councilman Bergfeld suggested putting 2x12s on the fence with U-bolts, which would close the gap and not be a problem for a weed whacker. The mayor said he would take a look at it when he puts a new net up in preparation for warm weather coming. Mr. Bergfeld said he would get the materials for fixing the fence and do it, if he has time, and then get reimbursed for the cost of the materials. The mayor reminded him that the Village has tax-exempt status at Home Depot.

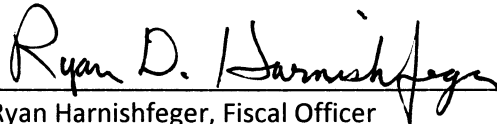
Mayor Shanahan gave a brief update on the 150th planned events, including the Murder Mystery, and Trivia Night on April 9th at Doc's. He also said he ordered two selfie backgrounds for \$48 each. He said we will put the backgrounds on stands and have them at events for people to take their pictures in front of them. They should arrive by the end of the week. He said that he and Katie also bought some selfie speech-bubble props, like "I didn't do it!", etc., that people can hold up when taking their selfie. The mayor said that the 5K race is getting put together. He said that Councilman Neal's wife has agreed to lead the charge on the pancake breakfast, and the mayor is preparing to send out some letters to local businesses for sponsorships to help offset the cost of the pancake mix, and a request has been made for a donation of the sausage.

Councilwoman Mackey reported that she has started a list of things we can consider asking Otsego students to do on their Otsego Serves day, May 2nd. The mayor suggested that she email her list to everyone and we can talk about it at the next meeting.

Councilwoman Mackey reported that she and Ron came and spackled and painted the bare spots on the hall walls, due to renters pulling the paint off with taped decorations. She also told Fiscal Officer Harnishfeger that he could ask council members to inspect the hall for paint damage after rentals, before he sends the renters their security deposit refund. Mr. Harnishfeger commented that there were a lot of variables that might complicate the inspection process, such as back-to-back rentals where one renter leaves at midnight and the next renter comes in early the following day. Councilman Fox suggested asking renters to take pictures of the hall when they are done and email them to us, as proof that they didn't cause any damage.

With nothing further to discuss, President of Council Smith declared the meeting adjourned at 8:41 p.m., (Mayor Shanahan having left at 8:38 p.m., due to his work schedule).


Matthew Shanahan, Mayor


Ryan Harnishfeger, Fiscal Officer