

TONTOGANY VILLAGE COUNCIL

MEETING MINUTES FROM: September 2, 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; Mark Smith, here; Robert Bergfeld, here; Lincoln Fox, absent; Paul Neal, here. Also present was Fiscal Officer/Utilities Clerk Ryan Harnishfeger. Utilities Superintendent/Meter Reader Chad Johnson arrived at about 7:40 p.m. Visitors present: Deputy Hite from the Wood County Sheriff's Office. Minutes from the August 18th 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. Councilman Smith seconded this motion. All were in favor; motion carried. Copies of the August Bank Reconciliation, Fund Status, Revenue Status, and Appropriation Status reports were given to the mayor and the Finance Committee to review.

Mayor Shanahan reported that we received from U.S. Senator Bernie Moreno a certificate, recognizing the Village of Tontogany Sesquicentennial Celebration. He then read Senator Moreno's message on the certificate: "I am proud to help recognize the Village of Tontogany upon commemoration of its 150th anniversary. It is truly a time for celebration and reflection. Reaching this milestone is a testament to the enduring spirit and resilience of Tontogany residents. This remarkable community continues to be shaped by the people who call it home and make it such a special place to live and raise a family. I extend my heartfelt congratulations to every citizen of Tontogany upon its sesquicentennial festivities. Best wishes for many more years of continued success."

Mayor Shanahan acknowledged the presence of Sheriff's Deputy Hite and asked if he had anything specific to report to Council. The deputy answered that he did not have anything specific from the sheriff's office. The mayor asked if members had any questions or comments for the deputy. There were none. With nothing more to discuss, the mayor thanked Deputy Hite and he left the meeting.

Mayor Shanahan asked Fiscal Officer Harnishfeger if he had an update on hall rentals. Mr. Harnishfeger replied that we have no committed hall reservations for September yet.

ZONING: Mayor Shanahan reported that Zoning Inspector Johnson intends to get back to attending the first meeting each month again, instead of the second meeting, now that the EPA work is done. The mayor added that Mr. Johnson must not have realized that the first meeting in September was changed to Tuesday, September 2nd, due to Labor Day falling on Monday, September 1st. The mayor told members that he wants to drive around the village with Mr. Johnson and make a list of things like cars and high grass or weeds that will need violation notifications. He encouraged members to make known any issues that they see that need to be addressed.

Councilman Neal reported that he came to the office, searching for a copy of the old ordinance that Councilwoman Mehring had submitted at a previous meeting. While at the office, he saw the briefcase of the previous zoning inspector. Mayor Shanahan clarified to Mr. Neal that the briefcase is used by whoever is the current zoning inspector—it was passed from Mr. Johnson to Mr. Owens, and then back again to Mr. Johnson when he took back the zoning inspector position again. Mr. Neal said he looked in the briefcase and found a big stack of papers and Tontogany ordinances. He said he asked for permission to make copies and Fiscal Officer Harnishfeger allowed him to do so. He said he was trying to figure out which ordinances were good and he ended up reading 184 ordinances, up to 2011, followed by reading a listing of all ordinances back to 1962. He told members he was trying to find out which of the ordinances in the zoning briefcase were valid. Mr. Neal then passed around a worksheet he had made, titled TONTOGANY ZONING ORDINANCES AUDIT. He pointed out some interesting facts from his audit. Firstly, he noted that we do have a nuisance ordinance, passed in 1991, for which he did not find

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any subsequent ordinance repealing or replacing it. The mayor asked what specific nuisances the 1991 ordinance addresses. Mr. Neal responded that it addresses trees, buildings, etc. Councilwoman Mackey commented that she has a copy of that ordinance at home. Mr. Neal said he listed active nuisance ordinances in the upper portion of his audit sheet. Then, in the lower portion of the audit sheet, he listed zoning forms used or requested. He remarked that he had designed a nuisance form last fall and Solicitor Skaff had also given us one, but it turns out we already had a nuisance form that was being used. He then passed out some copies of his ordinance audit, complete with copies of all of the ordinances and forms referenced in the audit, contained in 2-pocket folders with 3-prong fasteners. He told the mayor and members that he would like to submit this report to Solicitor Skaff to get his approval or for him to point out any mistakes or things that may need to be added. Members voiced no objections to him doing so. Mr. Neal showed members a copy of a nuisance form filled out and signed by Chad Johnson, proving that we previously had a form and were using it. The mayor commented that he thought we knew we had a type of form, because Mr. Johnson has delivered them in the past for things like weed violations and parking violations. Mr. Neal replied that the point he was trying to make was that we have used unnecessary redundancy in our efforts to help out, such as by creating new nuisance forms when we already had a form that was being used. He added that his research and the ordinances he compiled in his audit folder show that we don't really need to consult the Ohio Basic Code for a lot of the issues we have discussed, because we already have Tontogany ordinances that address those issues; we just didn't know we had them. He asked members, for instance, if they were aware that we have an ordinance banning massage parlors in the village. He also noted that he put on his audit how ordinances are repealed. He noted that in 1959 an ordinance was passed, requiring people to buy a peddler's license if they wanted to sell door-to-door in the village, but that ordinance was repealed by another ordinance in 2014. Councilman Smith reminded members that about three years ago a lady had requested permission to peddle something like insurance or financial management to Tontogany residents. The mayor commented that we had some folks riding around the village yesterday on stand-up scooters, offering insect and pest control. Councilwoman Mackey added that she had to ask him for his name and the company he worked for, because he did not provide either one up front. Mr. Neal told members that he called Solicitor Skaff, told him what he was going to do, and asked him if he was in agreement and if it fits in with some of the things Mr. Skaff has been thinking about. Mr. Neal said he thought it would be good to get Solicitor Skaff's view on the approach. He also commented that he hated to say it, but he has done a 180 on the Ohio Basic Code because he discovered that we already have a great deal of Tontogany code in force that we can use. The mayor responded that Solicitor Skaff had started putting together an updated book of zoning code for us; then COVID hit and we just haven't gone back to it yet. He added that it will be a complex process, probably taking a couple of 8-hour sessions to go through it and get the wording right and to make sure it covers everything we want. For instance, we may want to get something in writing about topics we have discussed before, such as whether or not to allow chickens in the village, or whether or not to allow rail containers to be used as storage sheds. We may want to update the wording of some of our current zoning code, especially older code dating back to 1959, 1991, and the early 2000s, so it will be applicable to today's world. And we may want to add code that will serve to help the village with other issues. Mr. Neal commented that the current zoning regulation, adopted in 1991, is in the packet he prepared, which he also had mentioned to Solicitor Skaff. The mayor agreed and added that that ordinance is on our website as well. Mr. Neal pointed out that the 1991 zoning ordinance was amended and the amending ordinance is also in his packet and on our website. He then reiterated his proposal that he would like to deliver a copy of his zoning code audit packet to Solicitor Skaff and, if Council is in agreement, he would be willing to do the work of developing a cross-reference of our existing ordinances by subject. The mayor asked if that would be something we could do by topic or title and put on the website. Mr. Neal answered that we definitely could. The mayor responded that he would say yes to that, since it would help people to not have to search through 35 pages of code to find a topic they are looking for. Mr. Neal commented that

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he hopes Zoning Inspector Johnson receives this as an effort of Council to be helpful to him, providing him an aid to make his searching for zoning code easier. He added that Solicitor Skaff has underlined the need for us to put things in writing, in terms of the nuisance process. Mr. Neal told the mayor and members that he thinks Council should be provided a regular nuisance log, similar to the sheriff's written log of incidents, something in writing to help keep track of complaints made and the status of actions taken and issues resolved, so Council is reminded of issues and is not playing a guessing game as to whether anything has been done about them or not. He said the log wouldn't have to have a lot of information on it, just things like the date the complaint was made and the current status. Councilman Bergfeld agreed that a nuisance log would be helpful. Councilman Smith commented that nuisance complaints are usually initiated by council members. The mayor remarked that Mr. Neal had made good suggestions that we all support. Members voiced agreement with the mayor. The mayor thanked Councilman Neal for his work.

UTILITIES: Utilities Clerk Harnishfeger reported that we got the new handheld meter reader working, so hopefully Meter Reader Johnson will be able to do all of the readings with it. Mayor Shanahan commented that he saw him out doing readings over the weekend. Mr. Harnishfeger said that he is supposed to call Tyler Tech if he has any problems doing utility billing with the upgraded billing software.

Mayor Shanahan asked Utilities Superintendent Johnson (having arrived at about 7:40 p.m.) if he had anything to report to Council. Mr. Johnson reported that he had been out doing meter readings with the new handheld. He said he had some hiccups, but for the most part it worked pretty well. One issue is due to poor reception in town. He said he called the technician, who told him to come back to the office and use the Wi-Fi. He went back out tonight and got 91 percent of the readings done, but for some reason the handheld started dying. He called the technician again, who had him plug it back in to charge it. Then he went out to get reads on Kellogg Road and it kept losing the signal. He said he is trying to get all the readings done so Mr. Harnishfeger can get with the technician tomorrow to get the handheld to send the meter readings to the cloud, so he can get started on utility billing. He told members that, overall, the new equipment is working well for the most part; he just needs call the technician about the hiccups until he gets the hang of using it. For some reason he couldn't get the handheld to send the meter readings to the cloud. The mayor asked if they don't automatically go up to the cloud when they have been read. Mr. Johnson answered that they don't, and when trying to send them the handheld says that there is no internet connection, so Mr. Harnishfeger will have to get the technician's help to connect the handheld to our Wi-Fi at the office to upload the readings to the cloud.

Mr. Johnson reported that the Ohio EPA survey was completed. He said that the lady from the EPA hit us about some water in the bottom of a meter pit, which is no big problem to get out. She also gave us a violation for not raising the water rates for too long of a period. The mayor and members responded with incredulity that the EPA would try to demand when we should raise our rates, especially if our water fund is in the black. Mr. Johnson agreed with them. He said that the lady also told him that he has to come up with a plan to install twenty or thirty new meters each year because some of our meters are over twenty years old. The mayor asked if both of those requirements are in writing anywhere. Mr. Johnson answered that they are in the violation letter. The mayor clarified that he knew it was in the violation letter, but he wanted to know if there is anything in writing anywhere else that would have let us know we were in danger of a violation concerning raising rates or installing new meters. Mr. Johnson answered that he didn't know of anything, but he thinks this has come about as a result of the EPA's focus on asset management in recent years, to keep water systems up to their standards. The mayor stated that, if we are getting hit with a violation, there has to be a rule that she can reference that we are violating. Councilwoman Mackey added that she would think they would have been obligated to let us know about such a rule. Councilman Smith asked what happens as a result of the violation. Mr. Johnson replied that he has to respond by the 12th as to when we are going to raise

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the rates or if we are going to get a company to look at the rates or what we intend to do. On the issue of installing new meters, he said he told the lady that he puts in ten or fifteen new meters each year, and she said he could just put that in writing. He explained to members that the EPA's concern about water meters is that after twenty years they start losing accuracy and show less usage than is actually going through the meter. Mayor Shanahan asked Mr. Johnson to email him a copy of the violation letter. He said he wanted to send it to Solicitor Skaff and ask him how we are getting a violation on our rates. Mr. Johnson told members that, as far as responding to the violation letter, he will come up with a meter plan to change out ten per year. He asked Utilities Clerk Harnishfeger how many new meters have been installed in the past five years, since he had said that he enters the installation date when entering the new meter in the software. Mr. Harnishfeger answered that he would have to check the meter installation dates on each account to find out how many were installed in any given year. He said it could be done, if needed, but it would take some time. The mayor suggested that we could look at the reports Mr. Johnson turns in for extra pay for installation of meters. Mr. Johnson commented that during the switch to the new handheld he discovered that he was giving Mr. Harnishfeger the wrong meter ID number for new meters he was installing. So, he knows which meters are the new ones because he always has to manually read those meters. Concerning rates, Mr. Johnson asked if we hadn't talked about raising the rates. The mayor answered that we had said we would have that discussion in November during the budgeting process. He also reminded Mr. Johnson that the last time we raised rates we had Mr. Johnson prepare a letter that we sent out to customers about the need to raise the rates, which we will want to do again this time, so people are forewarned. Mr. Johnson commented that he just wants to write an acceptable response that the EPA lady can put in her file; then she will be retiring next year and we will be good for three years. He said he intends to write that we had a council meeting tonight and we agreed that we will be looking at water rates for the budget for 2026. Mr. Smith suggested telling her that she can come to a meeting if she has any questions. Councilman Bergfeld asked Mr. Johnson to include the addresses of newly installed meters on his extra-hours sheet, so we have it as a record. Mr. Smith asked if we need to go to a radio-read system, if we are going to have to install new meters all the time. Mr. Johnson replied that we could do that but, from his experience, he has had a lot more trouble with radio-read meters than with touch-read meters. The mayor told Mr. Johnson to feel free to copy him and Councilman Smith on his email to the EPA lady. Mr. Harnishfeger told members that he could create a spreadsheet showing when each meter on each account was installed, if they wanted him to. Mr. Smith responded that Mr. Harnishfeger should not worry about doing that unless the EPA asks for specific information. Mr. Smith commented that the EPA's job is environmental protection, not enterprise protection. Councilman Neal said he agreed with the comments of the mayor about knowing what the rule is that we have violated, because our response should speak to the rule. Mr. Johnson responded that he could put that in his response letter, that Council wants to know what rule she is referring to that we are being cited for violating. The mayor added that we would like a specific reference to the rule, such as numbered references in Ohio Revised Code. Mr. Neal commented that rules are made and then someone interprets them.

Councilwoman Mackey thanked Mr. Johnson for coming on a Saturday and taking care of the water fountain at Centennial Park. She asked him what the issue was. Mr. Johnson answered that it was a problem we have had before where it wouldn't shut off. He said he didn't know if kids were messing with it or what. Mayor Shanahan commented that Scott Coon had said it broke off when he was down there trying to get some water for his dog; he put it back on, but the water didn't shut off. Mr. Johnson asked if Council wanted him to call Kellermeier to come and fix it, or just shut it down for now and fix it in the spring. Ms. Mackey asked if he shut the water off. Mr. Johnson replied that he shut it off that day. Councilman Bergfeld suggested just shutting it down for the rest of this year, since it is this late in the season. Ms. Mackey said that there are a couple of reunions coming up in September. Mr. Johnson commented that it might be three weeks or so before Kellermeier could get the parts. The mayor suggested just letting park renters know that the fountain will not be available anymore this year. Ms.

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Mackey stated that, if not this year, we will need to have them come in the spring to fix it. Mr. Johnson said he would call Kellermeier to see if they can do it. The mayor and members were in agreement with him doing so.

STREETS and ALLEYS: Nothing to report.

SIDEWALKS and TREES: Councilman Smith reported that he received a call from Rick Downs, asking us to thin out the canopy of a tree at his Main Street property. Mr. Smith said he would combine that with the tree at the end of the street. He added that if members know of any others that need thinned out, he will put it on the list for Abe Rowe and get an estimate from him. He commented that this is just to keep the trees healthy; we are not taking anything out. Councilman Bergfeld remarked that a couple of pear trees in his yard could come down, and he has trees to replace them. Mr. Smith replied that he could add him to the list.

DRAINS and SEWERS: Nothing to report.

CITY HALL and PARKS: Councilwoman Mackey reminded members that Karen Current had asked a couple of months ago about getting the floor in the hall kitchen and bathrooms cleaned and refinished, and she had told her we would wait until after the festival. Ms. Mackey said we had used Guarantee in the past for this, and she asked if she should call them to do it for us again. The mayor and members responded that we should do so, especially if we have no rentals coming up in September. Councilman Bergfeld asked if we need another estimate for that. Members answered that we do not for such a low-cost project as this.

Councilwoman Mackey reported that weeds and grass are coming up in the playground at Centennial Park again. She asked Councilman Smith to call in the company to take care of that, and she asked if they might be able to treat the cicada killer wasp problem at the same time. Mr. Smith said he did not know if they have an insect license. He added that there are seven different parts to Ohio commercial pesticide licensing and, generally speaking, people who do trees and grass and ornamental bushes don't necessarily do commercial pest removal; however, he can ask them. Ms. Mackey commented that we told Mr. Tussing at the last meeting that the wasp problem would be taken care of, although they don't seem to be very active now, since it is about the end of their season. Mr. Smith responded that we could get some wasp spray to treat them.

Mayor Shanahan reported that Brian Owens sent Councilman Smith and him a text that the City of Perrysburg will be in town this week to pick up the sand from the sand art on the hall lawn. The mayor commented that none of the other Otsego communities that he had contacted responded with interest in taking the sand. But within fifteen minutes of him posting it on Facebook, Mr. Owens texted that the City of Perrysburg will take it. The mayor said that if any is left, we will just rake it out into the grass.

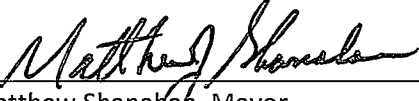
Mayor Shanahan reported that the Christmas tree lighting will be on Sunday, November 30th, which is the Sunday after Thanksgiving Day. He added that the Christmas Tree Committee will be meeting on Tuesday to kickstart some of the discussion about the event. He reminded members that the gentleman from the company that does our Christmas lights had promised to do the lighting this year at half of the normal \$3,750 price, in honor of the village's 150th celebration. On top of that, for every 5-star Google review they receive until October 1st, he will take another five percent off of our cost. The mayor said he would get the link out to members. Councilman Neal asked if the gentleman's business is a nursery. The mayor answered that the business is not a nursery; he is a guy out of Sylvania that created a company called Christmas Lights 419, and the business has grown from doing municipality Christmas trees to now also doing Christmas lights on people's homes and doing special LED rope lighting for businesses and entire downtown districts, with color choices for specific holidays or events. Mr. Neal asked if we should put his company on our website. The mayor responded that we can; it wouldn't hurt. He added that we

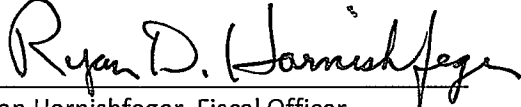
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have used them for the three years that we have had the downtown Christmas tree back. Mr. Neal asked if he is not located in Tontogany. The mayor answered that he is not, but we can do a shout-out for him. Councilwoman Mackey commented that she forgot about the five percent off for every 5-star review. She asked the mayor if he had already sent that link to council members. The mayor replied that he sent it to the Christmas Tree Committee, but he still needs to send it to Council.

Councilwoman Mackey noted that Halloween falls on Friday this year and she assumed that trick-or-treat will be on that day. Mayor Shanahan agreed that trick-or-treat will be on October 31st as usual, from 5:30 to 7:00 p.m. Ms. Mackey commented that she thinks the school does theirs from 4:00 to 5:00 p.m. The mayor commented that Haskins always has theirs on the Saturday before Halloween, but he prefers to have trick-or-treat on the actual Halloween holiday. Ms. Mackey commented that quite a while ago in the past we did move trick-or-treat to Saturday, if Halloween fell on a Sunday. The mayor asked Fiscal Officer Harnishfeger to have Haley post our trick-or-treat schedule on the website.

With nothing further to discuss, Mayor Shanahan declared the meeting adjourned at 7:56 p.m.


Matthew Shanahan, Mayor


Ryan Harnishfeger, Fiscal Officer