

TONTOGANY VILLAGE COUNCIL

MEETING MINUTES FROM: September 15, 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 Village Solicitor Paul Skaff and Fiscal Officer/Utilities Clerk Ryan Harnishfeger. Visitors present: Jackson Shanahan, for government class; Crosby Brewer and his dad, Derek Brewer, for an Eagle Scout project. Minutes from the September 2nd meeting were approved as submitted.

FINANCE and CLAIMS: A spreadsheet of the current invoices was reviewed and approved by members. Mayor Shanahan pointed out two bills on the list from Jupmode for reorders of 150th Year t-shirts—one order for 34 shirts and another order for 4 shirts. He explained that the second order for 4 shirts was because they forgot to order a particular size on the first order. He said this should be the last 150th Year t-shirts that we will purchase. Councilman Smith 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 first reading, by title only, of Resolution #990-25, a RESOLUTION ACCEPTING THE AMOUNTS AND RATES AS DETERMINED BY THE BUDGET COMMISSION AND AUTHORIZING THE NECESSARY TAX LEVIES AND CERTIFYING THEM TO THE COUNTY AUDITOR, AND DECLARING AN EMERGENCY. The mayor read from SCHEDULE A that the amount approved by the Budget Commission for the 2026 general fund is \$12,527.24. He noted that the amount approved last year for 2025 was \$12,475.39, which was \$51.85 less than the amount approved for 2026. Councilman Bergfeld made a motion to suspend the rules and declare an emergency for Resolution #990-25, forgoing three readings for the reason that there are an insufficient number of meeting dates in order to hold three readings of this resolution before the county-imposed October 1, 2025 deadline for the authorization of necessary tax levies. Councilman Smith seconded this motion. The roll being called upon this motion, the vote resulted as follows: Mackey-Aye; Mehring-Aye; Smith-Aye; Bergfeld-Aye; Fox-Aye; Neal-Aye. Councilman Bergfeld made a motion to adopt Resolution #990-25. Councilman Smith seconded this motion. The roll being called upon its adoption, the vote resulted as follows: Mackey-Aye; Mehring-Aye; Smith-Aye; Bergfeld-Aye; Fox-Aye; Neal-Aye.

Mayor Shanahan acknowledged the presence of Jackson Shanahan, attending the meeting for his government class.

Mayor Shanahan acknowledged the presence of Crosby Brewer, and he told members that Crosby had emailed him this week, asking if he could come to a meeting to present some updates of his plans for his Eagle Scout project for the village. The mayor invited Crosby to speak to Council. Crosby told members that he has been working on details of his project and he passed out copies of drawings and pictures of fence options for an L-shaped fence to help retain loose recycling-bin debris and keep it from blowing across the lawn. He told members that their research showed that most fence panel options were six feet tall. He commented that they intend to go with six feet tall, unless Council wants seven feet tall, which would create a lot more work. Solicitor Skaff asked if village zoning code would allow a seven-foot fence. The mayor responded that we would have to look into that. Crosby noted that his pictures of fencing panels showed a few options of styles and types of wood. Councilman Neal asked if the fence will be sitting on the ground or if there will be a space at the bottom. Crosby answered that the intention is block the wind so the trash doesn't get blown away. Councilman Fox commented that he thought the fence needed to be on the ground, because a space at the bottom would defeat the purpose by letting debris escape and blow away. Councilwoman Mehring asked if the fence will need to be stained or painted. Crosby answered that that is a big question because there are various options for staining or painting it. He added that he will also be refurbishing the signs at Centennial Park and he remembered that the desire was to have them be a little more vibrant, which he intends to do. He also

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mentioned that the "Please Pick Up After Pets" message is kind of small and could be enlarged. Councilman Bergfeld responded that the size is fine, as long as the lettering stands out. The mayor lamented that we only have one sign that requests people to pick up after their pets, although he said he didn't mean that Crosby should add more signs to his project. Councilman Smith commented that he thought we were good to maintain the signage we already have, and he added that he hasn't heard any complaints about dog waste at the park. Councilwoman Mackey remarked that there is quite a bit of dog waste in the trash barrels, which shows that people are picking up after their pets. The mayor added that people frequently play disc golf at the park and he hasn't heard any complaints from them about dog waste. Crosby asked if Council wanted the same style for the signs. The mayor answered that, yes, the dark brown with the white lettering is good. Members voiced agreement. Mr. Fox told Crosby that he could use the same color to stain or paint the fence for the recycle bins. Mr. Smith pointed out that that would save Crosby on materials and it would give the village a cohesive color theme. Mr. Fox commented that he personally likes the traditional dog-ear fencing style. Other members agreed. Mr. Bergfeld said he didn't think we need the cedar wood; just regular pressure-treated pine would work. Other members agreed. Crosby pointed out that his pictures showed examples of the dog-ear pine fencing from Home Depot and Menards, and Menards had the lower price. Mr. Fox advised Crosby that, if he shows Menards' price to Home Depot, they will match it, which would save him from running around to buy materials from different places. The mayor added that Home Depot is pretty good at working with scouts, especially if they know you are working on an Eagle Scout project. Mayor Shanahan asked Crosby if he had a fundraising plan. Crosby answered that they were thinking about maybe doing something with Euchre Night at the Legion. They will give it more consideration once they get all of the pricing details for what funding they need for the project. The mayor asked if Crosby had contacted the Legion. Crosby answered that he had. Ms. Mackey told Crosby to let Council know his fundraising plans, so we can help get the word out for him. Crosby and Derek told Council that the cost of everything for the project may be around \$1,000 or \$1,100. The mayor asked if we need to call OOPS for digging. Derek replied that we should. Mr. Smith commented that Utilities Superintendent Johnson will take care of that for us. He also asked if they were going to do the signposts in concrete. Crosby answered that he wasn't sure. Derek asked what Council would like. Mr. Smith answered that we would definitely want the fence posts installed in concrete, but the park signs wouldn't have to be in concrete. Mr. Bergfeld cautioned that there should be enough space between the recycle bins and the fence so that the fence does not get hit in the process of emptying the bins; he suggested at least 2 to 3 feet off of the asphalt. The mayor asked if Crosby had a timeline for the project. Crosby answered that he hopes to begin the fundraising soon. Derek added that, if all things go perfectly, they might be able to get things done before the snow flies; otherwise, it will be in the spring. Derek asked, just to be sure, what kind of wood Council preferred. Mr. Bergfeld answered that we do not want the cedar. Derek commented that the cheapest fence panels at Home Depot looked a little ratty, so they would go for the better-quality ones, if purchased at Home Depot. Mr. Fox asked if they will be able to use whole fence panels or if they have to trim any of the panels down. Derek replied that the panels are 8 feet, so they will have to do some trimming to fit the completed fence dimensions; they could use 8-foot sections and then trim the end pieces, or they could trim every panel to make equal sections all the way. Mr. Fox and Mr. Bergfeld suggested that they use full sections from the outer ends, and then trim the corner sections as needed. Mr. Smith commented that he has found that some fence panels are put together with two-by-fours and some with two-by-threes. He said the ones with two-by-fours are preferable, if you can find them, because the ones with two-by-threes tend to sag over time. Derek asked for clarification on whether Council would prefer stain or paint. Mr. Bergfeld answered that either is okay but, whichever they use, just make them match. Mr. Smith agreed that he doesn't have a problem with either paint or stain; he added that he likes the colors that are there currently. Derek told Council that the next step would be for Crosby to officially fill out all of the details of the plan. Mayor Shanahan told Crosby that, when the

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plan is ready, he will proof it and sign off on it. He thanked Crosby for his update to Council. With nothing more to discuss, Crosby and Derek left the meeting.

Fiscal Officer Harnishfeger reported that on September 9th Councilwoman Mackey brought to the office \$57.50 in quarters that she pulled from the park lights vending box. He said he deposited the cash in the bank the following day and receipted the money into the general fund.

Fiscal Officer Harnishfeger pointed out a bill for \$300 from Kellermeier Plumbing & Heating for a partial repair of the drinking fountain at Centennial Park. Then he told members that they were each given a copy of an estimate from Kellermeier for \$606.25 for further repairs of the fountain, to come back and install a new specialized spigot at the bottom of the fountain to replace the broken spigot. Mr. Harnishfeger said he called Kellermeier about this estimate and he was told that it is only an estimate and they will do nothing unless it is approved by the Village. He asked members if they wanted him to give approval for Kellermeier to do this extra work or not. Members discussed the matter a little and decided to have Mr. Harnishfeger tell Kellermeier that they are not approving this repair right now, but will reevaluate it in the spring. Councilwoman Mackey reported that she has told everyone who is reserving the shelter house about the condition of the fountain, that the fountain works but the spigot does not.

Fiscal Officer Harnishfeger reported that we currently have three hall rental requests this month and into October, but payments have not yet been received on two of them. Friday, September 26th has been requested, but not yet paid for; Saturday, October 4th has been paid for; and Saturday, October 18th has been requested, but not yet paid for. As a side note, Mr. Harnishfeger reminded the mayor and members that there are items left from the festival in the freezer, the refrigerator, and on the kitchen counter, which will be in renters' way if not removed. Mayor Shanahan replied that we can make that happen. Councilman Neal said he could stop out and see if anything in the freezer is from the pancake breakfast. The mayor added that there may be ice cream in the freezer from the movie premiere. He suggested that we could put anything unwanted in the garbage for Thursday pick-up.

Fiscal Officer Harnishfeger reported that on Thursday, October 9th, he will be away from the office all day at the annual Fiscal Officer Training, hosted by the Ohio Auditor of State, which will take place in Perrysburg. Mayor Shanahan commented that we will put a note either on the website or on the website and the office door that the office is closed for training.

ZONING: Councilwoman Mehring reported that her neighbor's new fence looks nice, but it is quite tall, and she still wasn't sure they got a permit for it. Mayor Shanahan responded that we will have Zoning Inspector Johnson look into the matter to see if they got a permit, and to make sure they know the zoning rules and the allowable height for a fence. If the fence is higher than the allowable six feet, Mr. Johnson will have to tell them that the fence won't work. The mayor said he would text Mr. Johnson to have him look into it sooner rather than later.

UTILITIES: Mayor Shanahan reminded members that Utilities Superintendent Johnson had reported at the last meeting about the results of the EPA assessment of our water system and that they had given us some violations, including about our water rates. We discovered that the EPA can dictate that we do a water rate assessment. The mayor said that we had decided we would ask Solicitor Skaff about it, which he did, and he copied Councilman Smith and Mr. Johnson on it. Mr. Skaff looked into it and then responded in detail after a couple of days, explaining what the EPA violation meant, what they were requesting the Village to do, and how to go about doing it. The mayor said that doing a water rate assessment is something we will have to do, and there was a discussion about the expense of having a company come out and do a water rate assessment. The mayor told members that he was in the board meeting of the Northwest Mayors & Managers today and he brought up the EPA violation and the need for a water rate assessment. The mayors of Pemberville and Marblehead, and the village administrator of Oregon, all told him to use RCAP (Rural Community Assistance Partnership). They told him that all

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three of their communities have used RCAP for their water rate assessments, and RCAP didn't charge anything and they were great and easy to work with. The mayor said that he sent the RCAP website to Mr. Smith and Mr. Johnson. The mayor also said that the mayor of Pemberville shared with him her contact that she uses with RCAP. He said he sent that number to Mr. Johnson and asked him to reach out and start the discussion, and to let them know that three other communities recommended them to us and we are interested in finding out what all is involved in getting them here to do a water rate assessment. The mayor also told members that he responded to Solicitor Skaff's email, letting him know that we would probably submit a relatively generic letter to the EPA saying that we are working on a plan to address the violations. Then he sent a copy of the violations, received from Mr. Johnson, with a response in red from the Village, describing what we are doing regarding each violation. He said he sent the same to Mr. Smith and Mr. Johnson to review it. He offered to send a copy to Solicitor Skaff, if he wanted it. He said he hoped to send this response from the Village to the EPA while we are getting some of our other ducks in a row. He said he would follow up with Mr. Johnson to see if he had reviewed the letter and if he had anything to add to our response. Then it will be sent to the EPA. He added that, when he sends our response to the EPA, he would mention RCAP as someone we are consulting with. The mayor asked Solicitor Skaff if he had anything to add. Mr. Skaff responded that he was curious as to how RCAP gets paid (since they provide these services without charge). The mayor responded that he hadn't had a chance to take a close look at the RCAP website yet. Councilman Fox remarked that he didn't understand why the EPA was asking us to raise our water rates; he wondered why it is any of their business. The mayor answered that he had explained to Solicitor Skaff that our water fund is in the black, we have been able to pay for repairs we have had, and we weren't behind in the budget. He said, after considering Solicitor Skaff's comments and some other information, he thinks it is not so much the EPA necessarily saying you have to raise your rates, but instead saying that you should at least be doing assessments to see if you need to raise the rates. The mayor told members that he had asked Solicitor Skaff if our normal budgeting process for the coming year, with Council approving each line item for appropriation, would not constitute an assessment of our water fund, but it turns out that an acceptable assessment is not that simple. Solicitor Skaff added that he thinks the EPA just wants you to justify your rates. Councilwoman Mehring asked why we couldn't raise the rates a little now and then again at the first of the year to get caught up with what the EPA wants. Councilman Smith replied that the EPA is not looking for a rate amount; they want us to go through our system and justify what we are charging; it is not enough for us to just be in the black. Solicitor Skaff commented that they most likely have run into many examples of small villages who thought their water fund was sufficient until they suddenly had a need for a large repair and didn't have the money for it because they didn't plan for it; they just want you to show that you are doing prudent planning. The mayor commented that we are in a position to pay for leak repairs on our newer lines, but if we were to get a major leak on the Broad Street line (our oldest water line), we would experience costs that we probably are not prepared for. The mayor also addressed the question about the possibility of raising the rates a little now and then again at the first of the year. He said he, as a consumer, would really be upset with that; raising the rates once in a year would be acceptable, but not twice. Other members agreed that most utility customers would feel the same way. Mr. Smith commented that it would not be enough of a gain in a couple months to be worth angering customers with another rate increase at the first of the year. He said we will definitely need to discuss rates in December. The mayor added that the extra costs that we have already discussed, involved in the necessity of moving to a new utility billing solution, will need to be part of our consideration and will most likely require a rate increase to cover those extra costs. He told members that we all are pretty aware that a rate increase will be needed; we just have to take steps to find out what it should be and be able to justify it and explain it to the residents. We will notify customers ahead of the rate increase with a letter similar to the one we used at the last rate increase, where Mr. Johnson explained the need to raise the rates because of things like the increased cost of utilities from our supplier, Bowling Green.

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STREETS and ALLEYS: Nothing to report.

SIDEWALKS and TREES: Councilwoman Mehring reported that the trees at Mehring Park need to be trimmed. Councilman Smith responded that he had met with Abe Rowe last week for an estimate, but he would have him come back again and give us an additional estimate for the Mehring Park trees. Councilwoman Mackey asked if Ms. Mehring was talking about the big branches hanging down. She answered that she was and they are hanging down over the sidewalk. Ms. Mackey commented that the tree at the fence entrance there also needs trimmed. Mr. Smith told members that Abe came out and looked at the trees he had mentioned at the last meeting—the one across the street from the hall and the one at the corner of Washington Street and Tontogany Creek Road—but Abe has not given him an estimate yet for those trees. Mayor Shanahan asked Mr. Smith to have Abe also trim the two trees by the church that are hanging low again, while he is in town to do other tree work. Mr. Smith said he asked Abe about when is a good time for him. He answered that he likes business in the winter. A lot of people aren't thinking about trees in the winter. The mayor suggested letting the church know that we are having their trees looked into.

Councilman Smith reported that he reached out to CSX and asked them about the Main Street crossing and putting a sidewalk in there, and the prospect of working together on it. He said he made a point to mention that it is the only crossing in town served by sidewalks. He also pointed out to them that it was a link between the downtown, the park, and the village hall, and all we are asking for is about forty-five feet of concrete. He said he also told them that the way it sits right now is kind of dangerous, because it doesn't direct the pedestrians in any way through where the railroad wants people to cross. He said he has not heard back from them yet. He commented that we may just end up doing a bootleg sidewalk and let them complain about it later, but at least he reached out to them. Councilwoman Mackey told Mr. Smith that we appreciate his efforts. Mayor Shanahan asked Mr. Smith to let us know at the next meeting whether he has heard an update or not.

DRAINS and SEWERS: Nothing to report.

CITY HALL and PARKS: Councilwoman Mehring reported that she arranged with Charles Kazmaier to have him bring his lift to the hall, while he has it in town for another job, and raise her up to paint the flagpole. She said she told him she was going to paint it with a brush, but he told her an easier way to do it is to use gloves dipped in paint and apply it to the pole that way. Mayor Shanahan commented that what we were hoping was to time the acquiring of a lift so that we could use it for both the flagpole and for Gail to hang the mosaic on the side of the hall. He added that, if the timing isn't right for Mr. Kazmaier, we will just have to rent a lift for hanging the mosaic. The mayor asked Ms. Mehring to mention the mosaic when she talks to Mr. Kazmaier. He said that Gail's goal is to have the mosaic up before the tree lighting. Councilman Bergfeld asked if the mosaic is done. The mayor answered that it is well over seventy-five percent done.

Councilwoman Mackey reminded members that Councilman Smith had texted everyone about the electronics recycling to take place on Saturday, September 20th. She said she thought we should get on that and use it as an opportunity to get rid of the pile of old electronics in the hall office, as well as any other electronics members may want to add. She said she would be willing to haul some of it in the back of her vehicle, and she asked if anyone else would be willing to help haul it. Councilman Bergfeld replied that he has a van and could throw a bunch of the equipment in the back of the van. Mr. Smith told members that he will be at work on Saturday and won't be here, but all of the electronics should fit in Mr. Bergfeld's van. Mayor Shanahan said that he also will be unavailable on Saturday, but he could loan someone his office key. Mr. Smith told members that he will be here on Friday to help, if we want to come in on Friday afternoon or evening to load the stuff up. Ms. Mackey said she understood that the

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place to take the electronics is the parking lot of the senior center in Bowling Green. Councilman Neal asked if anyone considered the protection of sensitive information on hard drives in computers. Members suggested drilling through hard drives. Fiscal Officer Harnishfeger told members that the State Auditor uses a program to wipe and overwrite the hard drives of our retiring UAN computers, so no sensitive information is left on them and the hard drive is like factory fresh. Mr. Neal commented that a lot of people think they can erase files that they can see; he said he wasn't talking about those files but information in RAM and the operating system that you can't see and don't have any way to change. Mr. Bergfeld responded that we will get it taken care of. He also said that he will load the electronics up on Friday and then take it to the drop off first thing on Saturday.

Councilwoman Mackey reported that Guarantee will be here Wednesday, September 24th, in the morning to strip and clean the floors in the hall kitchen and restrooms. She added that Mr. Harnishfeger knows about it and he will be here. Councilman Bergfeld asked if the floors will be ready by the time of the rental on September 26th. Ms. Mackey answered that they will be fine by then.

Councilman Smith reported that he reached out to GSI and they are going to come out and spray for weeds at the park. Councilwoman Mackey asked if they said anything about dealing with the cicada killer wasps. Mr. Smith answered that he did not ask them about that. Ms. Mackey commented that it is the end of the season for them, but we will need to think about what we are going to do about them next year.

Councilwoman Mackey asked the status of banners. Mayor Shanahan responded that he emailed the gentleman after our last meeting, who said the mayor needed to resend four of them because they didn't scan properly, which he did. The gentleman answered back today that there is one name that he needs a clarification on, which, the mayor said he will send to him tomorrow. Ms. Mackey commented that we aren't really ready, then, to set a date for the ceremony. The mayor answered that we are not. Ms. Mackey noted that the ceremony last year was on September 18th. She also asked if we, as a village, participate when flags are flown at half-staff in memoriam. She noted that the school does. The mayor responded that our flag was at half-staff and he put it back up today because the half-staff order ended yesterday.

Councilwoman Mackey reported that the park grant application is due October 17th and she has nothing for it so far. She said we had talked about drainage, but someone else will need to handle it if we want to do that, because she has no knowledge of what to do on that. Councilman Smith recalled that we had talked about drainage at Centennial Park, possibly a new fence at the basketball court, and maybe even some new lights. Councilman Bergfeld agreed that we definitely had talked about the fence and the drainage. He asked Ms. Mackey what we would need for that. She answered that we would need quotes from everyone who would be involved in providing supplies or labor for the project. Mr. Smith suggested that we could seek a quote from Palmer and one or two other companies for a drainage project. Mr. Bergfeld asked if more than one quote is needed. Ms. Mackey replied that no more than one quote is required, and she added that we can apply for up to three different projects, but she hasn't done that for the past few years because she thought we might have a better chance of being awarded a grant if we just ask for one thing. Mr. Bergfeld offered to call Palmer and get them to come out and explain what we would need for a drainage project, if Mr. Johnson can give him a contact number for them. Mr. Smith offered to contact one or two fencing companies for a quote, if we want to find out what it would cost to replace the fence. Ms. Mackey told members that the grant instructions say that project requests may be submitted in the following three categories: up to \$5,000; \$5,000 to \$10,000; and \$10,000 and up. She commented that we wouldn't be able to get a fence or drainage project for \$5,000.

Councilman Neal reminded members that he had presented an audit of zoning ordinances at the last meeting, from this year and all the way back to 1962. The conclusion of that audit showed that there are several ordinances still in effect, and it identified zoning notification forms that we can use. He reminded members that he received their concurrence that he could present the information to Solicitor Skaff, so

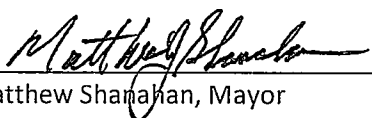
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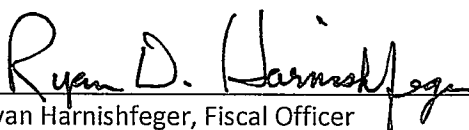
he delivered it to Mr. Skaff a few days after the council meeting, who is now in the process of reviewing it. He said that we are asking two questions of Mr. Skaff. The first question is about these ordinances being in force and usable to enforce compliance. The second question is about introducing a log that would be the way we would provide a status report from the zoning inspector on where we stand on complaints. Mr. Neal said he wrote a note to Zoning Inspector Johnson asking for him to let him know if he has any questions about this.

Mayor Shanahan asked Jackson Shanahan if he had any questions for Council or for Solicitor Skaff. Jackson answered that he did not.

Councilman Neal asked if we have a fall schedule. Mayor Shanahan responded that Otsego Superintendent Kevin O'Shea texted him and asked about Halloween. He said he told Mr. O'Shea that we had discussed it and decided that Halloween trick-or-treat would be on October 31st. Mr. O'Shea told the mayor that that would potentially be the first round of high school football playoffs, so the school will probably do their Halloween trick-or-treat the week before or the week after October 31st. The mayor said that Mr. O'Shea asked if the village might want to follow suit and he answered him that we traditionally keep Halloween on Halloween, regardless of what else is going on. The mayor told members that if they wished to change that, we would do so. No one voiced a desire to change from October 31st, as previously planned. The mayor stated that we would not say no to the school doing it on a different night.

With nothing further to discuss, Mayor Shanahan declared the meeting adjourned at 8:13 p.m.


Matthew Shanahan, Mayor


Ryan Harnishfeger, Fiscal Officer