

TONTOGANY VILLAGE COUNCIL

MEETING MINUTES FROM: February 2, 2026

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, absent at roll call, but arrived at 7:01 p.m.; Paul Neal, here. Also present were Village Solicitor Paul Skaff and Fiscal Officer/Utilities Clerk Ryan Harnishfeger. Visitors present: Mark Ohashi and Justin Bytnar, from Habitat for Humanity of Wood County; Deputy Snider, from the Wood County Sheriff's Office. Councilman Neal asked for an amendment of the wording in the Zoning section of the January 19th minutes. Councilman Neal made a motion to approve the January 19th minutes as amended. Councilman Smith seconded this motion. All were in favor; motion carried and the minutes from the January 19th meeting were approved as amended.

FINANCE and CLAIMS: A spreadsheet of the current invoices was reviewed and approved by members. Mayor Shanahan reminded members that there was a water leak repaired over the weekend on Tontogany Road, and they should probably expect to see billing for that on the list of invoices at the next meeting. 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. 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.

Mayor Shanahan announced that Keri Hain had decided that she would like to fill the vacant council seat left by Lincoln Fox. With Council's approval to appoint her, the mayor administered the oath of office to Keri Hain.

Mayor Shanahan welcomed Sheriff's Deputy Snider and asked if members had any questions or concerns for him. Members had no questions or concerns. The deputy had nothing special to report to Council. With nothing further to discuss, the mayor thanked Deputy Snider and he left the meeting.

Mayor Shanahan reported that we received from the Safety Council of Northwest Ohio an invitation to nominate for the 2026 Hero Award. He offered the invitation document for members to review, if any member might wish to nominate someone for the hero award.

Mayor Shanahan welcomed Executive Director Mark Ohashi and Justin Bytnar from Habitat for Humanity to speak to Council. Mr. Ohashi passed out to the mayor and members a printed *Proposal for Tontogany Lots*. He then thanked the mayor and Council for allowing him to come and speak to them about seeking approval to re-split two Wall Street lots in Tontogany, to accommodate two Habitat houses. He commented that the two lots are currently owned by Mark and Kerrie Hoffman; they are up for sale and Habitat for Humanity is very interested in purchasing them. He said that the mission of Habitat for Humanity of Wood County is to help families to secure decent and affordable housing, and they serve all of the Wood County area. Habitat families pay an affordable mortgage after they purchase the Habitat home. He said there is a myth that Habitat gives away houses, which is not true; families are buying their houses, but they pay an affordable mortgage of \$700 to \$800 (escrow included). He gave some examples of appraisals of Habitat homes built in 2025, including two homes in Bradner valued at \$170,000 each, and one home built in Walbridge valued at \$187,000. He told members that the last time they acquired land and re-split it was in Bowling Green at the site of the former water tower. There were two lots there; they split it and put in three Habitat homes. He included pictures of the three homes in his handout. He commented that they are three-bedroom homes and he included in the handout an architect's drawing of a three-bedroom Habitat home, drawn by an architect who is also a professor at BGSU, and who sits on Habitat's board. Mr. Ohashi told the mayor and members that what he is asking Council to consider is a proposal for Habitat to acquire and re-split the lots on Wall Street, which are currently a 65-foot lot and a 35-foot lot. What they need is two 50-foot lots on which to build two three-bedroom Habitat homes, just like they did in Bowling Green—each a 28-foot-wide home with

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a 5-foot setback on each side and a 12-foot-wide driveway. He commented that survey work is very expensive, but they do have Garcia Surveyors, Inc. working with them to help with their survey work. He noted that there was a sample survey of Walbridge in the handout, which was performed by Garcia Surveyors. Mr. Ohashi shared with Council the three things they look at as the criteria for purchasing a Habitat house. The first criterion is to demonstrate that the applicant has a need for a Habitat home, which includes considerations such as overcrowding situations, exorbitant rent costs, housing costs exceeding 30% of income, or health and safety issues. The second criterion is to demonstrate the ability to pay. Habitat families are working families. Habitat does a financial review, looking at debt ratios and other factors to determine ability to reliably make payments. The third criterion is willingness to partner with Habitat in the homeownership program. Once in the program, the participant is required to volunteer a minimum of 200 hours of sweat equity, attend monthly homeowner workshops, and complete a financial management program. Mr. Ohashi told Council that Habitat serves families with anywhere from 30% to 80% of area median income. He commented that a lot of their families are in the range of 50% to 70% of area median income. He directed Council's attention to pictures in his handout of the exterior and interior of a house they just built in Bradner. He pointed out that they use recessed lighting and good name brands and good quality materials for cabinetry, flooring, appliances, and lumber for Habitat homes. He reiterated that they would love to pursue the opportunity to build the two proposed houses in Tontogany, but the key to be able to do so would be the ability to re-split the two aforementioned lots. Mayor Shanahan asked what Habitat's timeline would be. Mr. Ohashi answered that they would shoot for starting building in the spring of 2027, and both houses would be built in the summer, between the months of April and July. He added that they build the homes in partnership with Lakeside Interiors and Ridge Stone Builders, which is how they are able to build two houses simultaneously. The mayor asked when a family would be considered to be not in the Habitat program, and, once in the program, how long Habitat has found that a family stays in the home. Mr. Ohashi responded that a family is not in the program until they go through an application process and are approved in a selection process. An approval takes about three months from the initial application, including a homeowner selection committee going and meeting with the family and then submitting a report to recommend approval or not. Once approved, the family is in the program doing homeowner education classes and doing the financial management certificate until building is begun. After families move into their Habitat home, Habitat has generally seen them stay in their homes until they pay off the mortgage. However, some families have moved for one reason or another. Councilman Smith asked what happens if they move. Mr. Ohashi answered that Habitat has a right of first refusal on the Habitat homes. He said that they finance the homes in two ways now. One way is a Habitat-financed loan which is a zero-percent-interest loan. The other way is to have the family get a loan through USDA. If Habitat holds the note, then they have the right of first refusal, in which case they would make an offer on the house, purchase it back, and then put a new Habitat family into it. There have been times when Habitat was not in a financial position to buy a home back and it would be put on the open market, which happened recently in Walbridge. Councilman Bergfeld asked about the house in Walbridge and Mr. Ohashi gave a brief explanation. Mr. Smith asked what the 1,260-square-foot four-bedroom houses look like in comparison to the three-bedroom houses. Mr. Ohashi responded that they are slightly bigger, but there is not a huge amount of difference; they measure 30 feet wide by 42 feet long. Mr. Smith commented that he had considered that a single wider house on that property would work better than two smaller houses, especially because of the ditch eating up a lot of real estate on one of the lots. He added that he doesn't want to see another case of a house built right up against the ditch, like another one down the street. Mr. Ohashi responded that by making two 50-foot lots they should be able to build far enough away from the ditch. He commented that Habitat's goal is to purchase lots at \$15,000. The owner is selling the properties for \$30,000, and the only way to make it work for Habitat is to re-split the lots into two 50-foot parcels. Solicitor Skaff told Council how this would work, procedurally: The Planning Commission would hear a request to combine the two lots—the 35-foot lot and the 65-foot

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lot—into one lot, and then allow the split into two 50-foot lots. The Planning Commission would then issue its recommendation for approval, which would be put before Council. Council would either adopt the recommendation of the Planning Commission for approval or not. Assuming Council adopts the recommendation for approval, the deed process would then get recorded at the Records Office. Mr. Skaff commented that, as long as there are no zoning code violations, it is his opinion that the law states that you have to approve it. He added that he did not notice anything in Habitat's proposal that violates the zoning code. Councilman Bergfeld voiced concern about any possibility of packing too large of a family into a three-bedroom home. Mr. Ohashi explained that Habitat has a policy that makes sure families can fit into their homes with bedroom space enough for each family member, where different genders have separate bedrooms and same genders can share a bedroom. The mayor asked if, once the family takes the keys to the home, they are then responsible for things like mowing the grass and other types of upkeep to meet zoning code like any other village resident. Mr. Ohashi answered that, yes, they are responsible for all those things and Habitat's homeowner guidance impresses upon them the importance of upkeep of the exterior, cleaning the gutters, cutting the grass, etc. Councilwoman Mackey asked if Habitat homeowners are not permitted to add on, put on decks, or things like that. Mr. Ohashi responded that he had a family in Rossford that expanded their porch with a well-built deck. He said he also had a family in North Baltimore that built a detached garage. He mentioned a family that built a shed. He commented that it has happened, but it is up to them to acquire the proper permits for anything they may want to add. Mr. Smith noted that there were concrete driveways and he asked if Habitat would put in sidewalks as well. Mr. Ohashi replied that they absolutely put in sidewalks when they are required. Mr. Ohashi told the mayor and members that, no matter how they may decide on this proposal, Habitat also has a home repair program, designed to assist homeowners (not renters) with home repairs that they cannot afford, with a big focus on roofs. He asked to let him know if Tontogany has any such homeowners in need of roof repair and he can help them submit an application for that. Solicitor Skaff asked when the Planning Commission's next meeting would be. The mayor answered that the Planning Commission does not meet on a regular basis because there is no reason to do so. Mr. Skaff asked if the Planning Commission is set with members. Ms. Mackey answered that there are two standing members at this time. The mayor commented that he would have to fill the rest of the members, but he has some people in mind to ask. He added that he has Mark Ohashi's number and can call him directly to arrange for him to make a presentation of Habitat's proposal to the Planning Commission, without the need to go through Solicitor Skaff. Mr. Skaff agreed. The mayor and members thanked Mr. Ohashi and Mr. Bytnar for coming out to a meeting to share Habitat's proposal, and for the nice handouts with helpful photos and drawings. With nothing more to discuss, Mr. Ohashi and Mr. Bytnar left the meeting.

Mayor Shanahan pointed out that everyone had a copy of the latest council committees sheet. He told newly appointed Councilwoman Hain that, typically in the past, a new council member would just take over the committee spots previously filled by the former council member whose vacant seat they filled. For instance, Lincoln Fox was on Finance & Claims, Utilities, and Sidewalks & Trees, so Ms. Hain would take his place in those committees. However, this doesn't mean it has to remain this way. He told members that, since it is the beginning of a new year, he would open up the discussion for any committee changes members might wish to make. No one voiced a desire for a change at the moment. The mayor asked Ms. Hain for her email address and phone number to be listed under the Village Officials section of the committee sheet. The mayor told members that, if there is during the year a desire to make an adjustment to committees or if someone has input from one committee to another, that is always welcome.

Fiscal Officer Harnishfeger reported that there is another hall rental reserved for Sunday, February 8th. This is in addition to the rental previously reported, scheduled for Saturday, February 28th.

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ZONING: Mayor Shanahan reported that he received a voicemail from Tyler Jones, who lives on Crom Street (exact address not given), and who is interested in putting up a shed or a two-car garage in his back yard. He said he responded to Mr. Jones that he would basically need to set up a meeting with the mayor and council president to show them his plans, receive zoning information, and pay a \$50 zoning fee. The mayor reported that Mr. Jones said he is still months out from the project, so, when he contacts the mayor again about it later, the mayor said he would set up a time with Councilman Smith to take a walk and look at it and listen to what they are planning to do. The mayor commented that the last time they did this they printed off the zoning code and gave the resident a hard copy. He said he would reach back out to Tyler Jones and ask for his physical address.

Mayor Shanahan reported again that he and Councilman Smith did get a response from the resident on Broad Street with all of the vehicles and boats in his yard. The plan was to start getting some of those items moving. The mayor commented that winter and the deep freeze has probably prevented much of the process right now, but he said he thought he noticed a couple of things already removed. As for the resident on Lincoln Street, we have received no response other than the signing for our certified letter. Councilwoman Mackey asked, considering no response from the resident, at what time we can have the offending vehicle towed away. Solicitor Skaff counseled that, if they ignore the first notice, you give them a second notice. If they ignore the second notice, then you can enter the property, but he said he would suggest having a deputy present. The mayor asked if we would call the tow service ourselves, pay for the tow service, and assess the cost to the property owner. Mr. Skaff responded that you would not assess the property; you would be stuck with the cost of the towing, but the owner would have to pay the storage costs for the vehicle. The mayor asked if we would be welcome to include a statement in the second notice that payment for storage costs is on them. Mr. Skaff responded that, yes, you could include that warning. The mayor told Mr. Skaff that, like the first notice, he would send him a copy of the second notice, to make sure the wording is okay. Solicitor Skaff asked what the condition of the vehicle is. The mayor answered that it has been sitting in the driveway for probably multiple years, without proper registration, and with a flat tire. He commented that the homeowner has said that the vehicle is registered to her son. Mr. Skaff asked if we know who is the actual owner of the vehicle. The mayor answered that we know the property owner, but not the vehicle owner. Mr. Skaff said he would suggest that the second notice be sent to the vehicle owner as well as the property owner. The mayor asked if we could get that information from the deputy, based on the license plate. He clarified for Mr. Skaff that the vehicle has a plate, but the registration probably hasn't been updated. Councilman Smith commented that for anything over two years they throw the registrations away at the BMV, so, if it hasn't been registered since 2022, it probably won't show up. However, you can figure out who the title owner is by entering the VIN number in an auto-title search. The mayor commented that the title owner is the person we are looking for. Mr. Skaff explained that you want to send a letter to the vehicle owner so they can't claim later that they didn't receive notice.

UTILITIES: Mayor Shanahan reminded members that Fiscal Officer Harnishfeger had sent them some water rates information. Mr. Harnishfeger commented that the information he sent members described how a 7% water rate increase would affect customers' normal billing. He said he received communication from the mayor today, saying we would be talking about both water and electric rates. Not having prepared to talk about electric rates, he said he called Bowling Green Utilities and asked them to let him know what percentages of rate increases they have done on water and electric rates since our last water rate ordinance in 2019 and our last electric rate ordinance in 2021. They emailed him back the same day and said they had increased water rates by 6% in 2020, 6% in 2021, 6% in 2022, 7% in 2025, and would be increasing them another 7% in 2026; they said they have not increased the electric rates at all since 2021. Mr. Harnishfeger commented that the total of water rate increases from Bowling Green has been 32% that we have not matched with any rate increases of our own. He said, therefore, that he didn't think our original idea of just raising our rates 7% to match Bowling Green's

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2026 increase would be sufficient. He pointed out that he had supplied members with a sheet that showed the effect on an average household of 2.4 people using 3,600 gallons of water per month, for a 7% increase, a 10% increase, a 15% increase, a 20% increase, a 25% increase, and a 32% increase. He commented that it is really good news that Bowling Green hasn't raised electric rates since 2021, and he said our electric fund seems to be in good shape at the moment. Bowling Green said they will be doing an electric rate study to determine if they need to increase electric rates in 2026, but the result of that won't be known until later in the year. He said he didn't think we need to do an electric rate increase right now, but we definitely need to think about a water rate increase, probably no less than 15%. He pointed out that Bowling Green raises their water rates almost every year and when we don't raise our rates in response, our water fund has to absorb the extra cost and we are losing ground. Councilman Neal asked if that is true when we look at our receipts. He asked if costs justify more than a 7% increase. Mr. Harnishfeger responded that, just to match Bowling Green's rate increases on us, more than a 7% increase seems justified. He reminded members that he sends them quarterly reports that include data on utility revenues and expenditures. He commented that we are managing to pay the bills so far, but there is not sufficient revenue building up to pay for costly infrastructure upkeep, such as water line repairs and replacements, in part because of not keeping up with rate increases from our supplier. He reminded members that for these kinds of reasons the EPA had issued us a violation notice for not having raised our rates or done a rate study since 2019. He told members that the water fund is not in the red yet, but we need to implement a reasonable stopgap rate increase now, until we have an official rate study done, so we don't continue to fall further behind in the meantime. Mr. Neal commented that the overhead Bowling Green has in their utility operation is probably significantly greater than our overhead. He posed that our overhead may or may not have gone up 7%. He said that his point was that our rates should be a reflection of the difference between receipts and what the utility costs us to buy plus repair costs, and, if that indicates a need for a rate increase, we should do so. He added that he didn't think just following Wood County because they are doing 7% is doing our residents any good. Councilman Smith replied that we have not been following Bowling Green's rate increases; their rates have gone up 32% in the past few years while we have done no corresponding rate increases. Mr. Neal responded that he was certainly not saying that our rates should not go up, but he doesn't think simply raising our rates 7% when Bowling Green raises their rates 7% is the best way to do it, which may prevent us from passing a benefit to the people who live here, if we don't really need to exactly match what Bowling Green is doing. Mr. Smith agreed and said we don't need to match their 32% increase, but, although he doesn't like to do it, we need to do something like 15% or 20% to keep the business operating in the black and dealing with things like water breaks and the EPA breathing down our necks. Mr. Neal commented that we have been having water breaks every year, which is part of doing business, and it should be included in our decision of what rates to charge. Members agreed. Councilman Bergfeld acknowledged that Bowling Green has to offset the cost for new water lines and other things, but the bottom line is that we have been getting charged more for water while not charging our customers more for it. Mr. Neal commented that we have information available to know what Bowling Green is charging us and what we have had to pay for repairs over the last two or three years. Mayor Shanahan responded that sometimes we don't have information about what Bowling Green is doing, but they will share it with us after they do a rate increase, leaving us already behind. Mr. Smith noted that they didn't reach out to us this time to tell us they are raising their rates; he happened to see it in the newspaper. Councilwoman Mackey commented that she didn't remember them informing us of rate increases over the past several years. Mr. Neal commented that he doesn't want to make a profit on utilities; he said he didn't think that would be a wise thing for the Village to do. Members agreed that that is not the intention, but just to have enough extra in the fund to take care of emergency repairs and keeping the system up to date and in good working order. After a little more discussion, the mayor said he thought we were all in agreement that a rate increase has to happen. He said Council could make a decision and then also look into having a rate study done. Mr. Bergfeld asked

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if we had not previously talked about a rate study that we could get done for no cost. He added that he thought we should decide now to raise the rates some, and then have the rate study done to see if we need any further adjustments to the rates, rather than just raising rates blindly. Mr. Harnishfeger commented that he thought Councilman Neal had made a good point that Bowling Green's rate increases take into consideration their overhead expenses which would likely be way more than ours. Therefore, we probably do not need to fully match their rate increases each time. We don't want to make a profit, we just want to have enough to pay for the water we purchase, to keep the water system working properly, and to cover expenses like new water lines needed on Broad Street and on Tontogany Road from Main Street to Kellogg Road. Mr. Neal added that Utilities Superintendent Johnson had said that Harley Woods has relatively new water lines, but a significant part of the village has older water lines. Mr. Neal commented that this means our repairs are not going to decrease but increase, which should be considered in our forecast of future expenses, and can be related to the residents as part of the reason for a rate increase. Members voiced agreement. Mr. Bergfeld added that, if people don't see work being done, they may ask why the rates are increased; the answer is that we have to prepare for the future too, not just for today. Mr. Harnishfeger reminded members that part of what we are paying out of the water fund is annual debt service of about \$60,000 or \$70,000 on loans for previous water line projects, including one loan for over a million dollars. Mr. Neal said he thought the data needs to be looked at and that we need to recognize that we have repairs. He said he didn't realize we were paying off debt for previous water line work. The mayor commented that, the last time we did a rate increase, we sent a letter to the residents explaining the Bowling Green rates going up and how long it had been since we raised our rates. Mr. Smith added that we can use the information we have now received about all of the Bowling Green rate increases, to tell our customers that we have been absorbing all of those costs for the last six years. The mayor recalled that a few years ago, after Council had learned from Fiscal Officer Harnishfeger that the electric fund was suffering significant losses, he had asked for quarterly reports, comparing year to year, to help keep Council on top of the status of funds and avoid surprise problems. Mr. Neal suggested it might be a good idea to do a 1% or 2% rate adjustment each year to keep up with our own profile. Members agreed. The mayor reminded members that Bowling Green's 2026 water rate increase will go into effect on April 1st, which is a short amount of time to have Council decide on a rate increase, prepare a letter, and get the information out to the customers before they get hit with a higher bill. Mr. Smith asked everyone what they thought we should plan on for our new rate. Mr. Bergfeld said he was thinking of 10% as a minimum; then we get our rate study to determine where it should go from there. Councilwoman Mehring commented that she didn't think that was enough. Councilwoman Mackey said she was kind of thinking 15%. Mr. Harnishfeger commented that 10% or 15% would put us in a better position, and then the rate study would tell us more exactly whether or not further adjustment is needed. Mr. Bergfeld said he didn't think our overhead is as high as Bowling Green's, but we can't absorb the cost of their increased rates forever. Members agreed. Mr. Smith said he was good with 15%. The mayor suggested that someone make a motion on a percentage, to be followed by a roll call vote. Solicitor Skaff told the mayor and members that they didn't need to do a motion, but he will prepare an ordinance for them to vote on after three readings, which will then become effective around May 1st, 30 days after passage; or it could be done as an emergency measure. The mayor noted that, if we want it effective by April 1st, it would have to be done as emergency legislation; otherwise, it would be effective by May 1st. Mr. Skaff asked if it is just water or water and sewer. Mr. Harnishfeger answered that it is just water; sewer rates are taken care of by Northwestern Water & Sewer District. Mr. Skaff suggested that he could leave the amounts blank in the ordinance and Council could hash out the increase percentage over the course of three readings. Mr. Smith said he was of a mind to do 15%, and he said he would rather for the ordinance to receive three readings, to give people an opportunity to show up and ask questions, even though that would make it take an extra month to go into effect. Other members voiced agreement. Mr. Skaff asked if the intention was to send out a letter, giving people a chance to show up at a meeting if they wish. The mayor answered that it

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was. Mr. Bergfeld commented that he thought 15% is more realistic than his original proposal of 10%. The mayor added that then we can reach out to the company that does the rate study, which he said he would do tomorrow. Mr. Smith said he thought they will probably tell us we need to go up another 15% on top of the first 15%. Mr. Skaff asked if it was over the last five years that Bowling Green raised their rates 32%. Members answered that it was over a six-year period. Mr. Skaff commented that it is actually more than 32% because of each rate increase compounding on top of the previous increase, meaning the actual overall increase might effectively be closer to 40%. The mayor commented that Councilwoman Mehring said she thought the increase should be 20%. Ms. Mehring agreed. Ms. Mackey suggested doing 15% now, and then doing the rate study, which may show us that we need to raise the rates again next year. Mr. Neal reasoned that, if we have gotten behind in raising the rates, we should do incremental increases over the years, rather than hitting the customers all at once with a 32% increase, which would be ridiculous and a hardship on the customers. Mr. Bergfeld responded that we are not proposing matching Bowling Green's 32% increase right now, but we need to do something now and then have a rate study to see where we need to be after that. The mayor added that we are not in the red, so our conversation can be a little more conservative, and we can then follow the right processes of raising the rates some now and then having a rate study to put in our files and to justify possibly another rate increase next year if needed. He also commented that the rate study by a qualified outside company will satisfy the EPA's requirement, whereas Council simply discussing the matter does not qualify with the EPA as an official rate study. After a little more discussion, the mayor and members asked Solicitor Skaff to just write the ordinance with a 15% rate increase, instead of leaving the amounts blank.

Councilwoman Mehring asked if we have all of our utility customers paying their bills on time. Utilities Clerk Harnishfeger answered that he hasn't had to send out any notices recently. Ms. Mehring asked about the apartments downtown, formerly owned by Susan Grosjean. Mr. Harnishfeger replied that there is a new landlord/owner of those apartments now, a lady who lives in Portage, who herself currently pays utilities for three of the apartments there, and she makes sure all utilities are kept paid for all of the apartments.

Mayor Shanahan reported that Mr. Johnson told him that the property at Crom across from the park, Asmus's place, was sold. Mr. Harnishfeger added that it was purchased for storage by Patricia Burns, who lives in Harley Woods. Councilman Bergfeld commented that there is only electric service there. Mr. Harnishfeger agreed.

Councilwoman Mehring asked about the water situation at the Golf Shack. The mayor replied that he has not received an answer about that yet.

STREETS and ALLEYS: Nothing to report.

SIDEWALKS and TREES: Nothing to report.

DRAINS and SEWERS: Nothing to report.

CITY HALL and PARKS: Councilman Smith reported that GSI (Grounds Services, Inc.) does not do anything for cicada killers. Their basic recommendation was that we could use an off-the-shelf kind of treatment in their nest late in the evening. Therefore, he said we still need to decide if we want to approve their quote for 2026 services and prepay it to take advantage of the prepay discount. It is for the same services they did for us last year. The quote for Centennial Park was \$1,016.74, discounted to \$965.90 if prepaid. The quote for Mehring Park was \$462.10, discounted to \$439.00 if prepaid. Payment must be made by February 27th to get the prepay discounts. Councilman Smith made a motion to accept the prepay quotes from GSI. Councilwoman Mehring seconded this motion. All were in favor; motion carried. Members briefly discussed some ideas on how to treat the cicada killer problem. Mayor

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Shanahan suggested that we could move the gaga ball pit to a different location if the cicada killers continue to bother the children playing there.

Councilman Bergfeld asked if we ever got the other bid for mowing. Mayor Shanahan asked Fiscal Officer Harnishfeger if he received a quote from Josh Heckerman yet. Mr. Harnishfeger answered that he asked Josh for a quote, but didn't receive it yet. The mayor told members that he did get some preliminary numbers from the other person interested in doing mowing. The mayor said that, considering that he is a 16-year-old student, he intended to sit down with him and guide him through what a bid should look like. Councilman Smith commented that we have had other bids come in just on notebook paper. The mayor replied that he knows that, but it will be a good experience for him, and he will be made to understand that feedback is given without any assurance of Council accepting the bid.

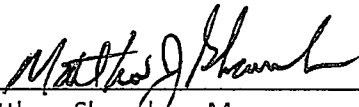
Councilman Neal said he would like to know if Council is interested in pursuing something he learned about called a quiet zone. He said you can actually file a request for the railroad to designate certain areas as a quiet zone, which means they don't blow their horns in that area. He said there is a lot of evaluation that takes place to be sure you are not increasing risk. He noted that we have crossings in Tontogany that are no further away than thirty yards, causing the trains to blow their horns again at the next crossing before they are even done with the previous crossing. Members commented that they didn't think they stop blowing the horn between crossings. Mr. Neal said that there is a commission you have to file paperwork with to work with the railroad and let them know that you would like to have a quiet zone. He proposed that that might be that they don't blow their horn when they cross Hannah Road and then cross Tontogany Road and work their way through the village. He said we could reduce the amount of noise for the residents. He said he thought we have a case for at least reducing the number of horn blowings in the village. He told members he would be glad to look into it if they were interested in pursuing it. Mayor Shanahan said he had two initial thoughts. First, he wondered if any other municipalities similar in size and makeup to Tontogany have done it, and if they had seen an increase in people going through the gates. Secondly, he wondered what added risk it might be for people leaving the bar, which is next to the tracks, having had some drinks, not hearing a train horn and going through the crossing. Solicitor Skaff commented that the school should be considered as an issue of concern with no train warning horns. He also remarked that Perrysburg did this and had to close off every other street and install double gates so you can't get around them. They also had to put posts in the median between the two lanes. He said those kinds of installations can be very expensive, but he commented that he would be more concerned about the school. Mr. Neal told members that the process involves making an application and then they start an investigation, which determines risks and possible solutions to risks. Councilman Bergfeld asked if the Village would have to pay for the special installations at crossings. The mayor answered that, based on what Solicitor Skaff has told us, yes, the Village would have to pay for it. Councilwoman Mehring commented that she thinks we should let them blow the horns, because kids hear the horns and know a train is coming and to stay away from the tracks. The mayor replied that he thought you could designate a time for no horns, like midnight to 3:00 a.m. Mr. Neal commented that we have a lot of crossings that are vehicle crossings but not pedestrian crossings. He said he thought we need the train horns on the northern part of town, especially because of the school. He also commented that most of the horn blowing is at night. Councilman Smith commented that it changes and he has noticed it changing over the years since he first moved into town. Mr. Neal said that he could do the next round of asking questions, if members wanted. The mayor responded that it doesn't hurt to ask.

Mayor Shanahan told Solicitor Skaff and members that he would move forward with setting up the planning committee to select a date for Habitat to come and go over their proposal. Councilman Bergfeld asked if Council has to agree with the recommendation after that, or if we can't say no. The mayor reminded members that, as Solicitor Skaff told us, if Council were to say no, it would have to be justified in the zoning code. Mr. Neal commented that it is a request for a change in zoning. The mayor responded that they are applying for a variance. Solicitor Skaff clarified that they are not applying for a

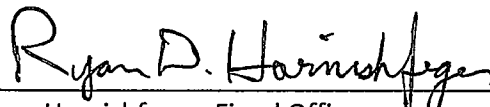
TONTOGANY VILLAGE COUNCIL

variance; they are applying for a combination and a new split of the two parcels. He added that the Village is responsible for approving splits and combinations of property in town. If it was in the county or township, then the county engineer would approve the split or combination. Habitat is applying to combine a 65-foot lot and a 35-foot lot, and then split the combined lot into two 50-foot lots.

With nothing further to discuss, Mayor Shanahan declared the meeting adjourned at 8:39 p.m.



Matthew Shanahan, Mayor



Ryan Harnishfeger, Fiscal Officer