

TONTOGANY VILLAGE COUNCIL

MEETING MINUTES FROM: April 20, 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; Paul Neal, absent; Keri Hain, here. Also present were Utilities Superintendent/Meter Reader Chad Johnson, Zoning Inspector Brad Hain, and Fiscal Officer/Utilities Clerk Ryan Harnishfeger. Visitors present: residents Carol Martinez, Kim Witham, and Gary Santogrossi; Deputy M. Meyers from the Wood County Sheriff's Office. Minutes from the March 16th 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 March Bank Reconciliation, Fund Status, Revenue Status, and Appropriation Status Reports were given to the mayor and the Finance Committee to review.

Mayor Shanahan did a second reading, by title only, of Resolution #994-26, A RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE VILLAGE TO PARTICIPATE IN THE 2027 WOOD COUNTY PARK DISTRICT PARKS GRANT PROGRAM.

Mayor Shanahan did a first reading, by title only, of Resolution #996-26, CONTRACT TO FURNISH EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT BETWEEN WOOD COUNTY, OHIO AND THE VILLAGE OF TONTOGANY.

Mayor Shanahan asked if members had any questions or concerns for Deputy Meyers. Councilwoman Mackey told the deputy that she lives on North Street and much of the traffic to and from the school, particularly in the mornings, is very fast. She noted that the traffic going east is faster, which would indicate that it is the parents leaving after dropping their kids off at the school. Deputy Meyers responded that people do slow down when a deputy patrol car is stationed there, which may not be feasible every day at that time. The mayor commented that we have some students that walk on North Street. Deputy Meyers assured the mayor and members that the deputies do try to pay attention to it and he will put in another reminder to them. With nothing more to discuss, the mayor thanked the deputy and he left the meeting.

Mayor Shanahan invited the visiting residents to speak to Council. Mr. Santogrossi told the mayor and members that he and the other two ladies were here to report issues with uncontained and feral cats in the village. He said they have counted at least seven cats that are causing problems such digging in and using flower beds for toileting (which is also a health issue), spraying on porches and furniture, mating, howling, and running around wherever they want all day long. The ladies added that they are mean. Mr. Santogrossi passed around pictures and showed videos taken on his smartphone. He also read a message from Sherry Wallace Solether, who could not be in attendance, expressing her unhappiness about cats spraying her porch and ruining her seat cushions; she also suggested that Council adopt Bowling Green's cat leash law and other rules. Councilwoman Hain commented that she saw a cat in her back yard that was not in Mr. Santogrossi's pictures. Councilwoman Mackey said she occasionally sees a stray cat on North Street, but it is always just one. After a little more discussion, the mayor said he would be happy to call the county and file a complaint on behalf of our residents. He also noted that most private non-profit organizations perform a TNR (Trap-Neuter-Return) program, so, if you don't want the cats back, they are not the organizations to contact. Mr. Santogrossi replied that he has traps, but you are not supposed to trap them, so he doesn't know what to do. One of the ladies suggested posting something at the post office, on the web, and on social media about this issue. The mayor said he will look at the Bowling Green cat leash law and see what it says. There was a small discussion of what other communities have tried in dealing with this issue. With nothing more to discuss at this time, Mr. Santogrossi, Ms. Martinez, and Ms. Witham left the meeting. The mayor told members he would reach out to the county and at least let them know of the concern. Councilman Smith added

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that we can put it on social media and he would see that the 150th page and the Revitalization page mentions it too.

Fiscal Officer Harnishfeger reported that we received an email from the Regional Income Tax Agency (RITA), as we have in the past, offering participation in their non-filer follow-up program for the 2026-2027 season. This is an optional low-cost program performed by RITA to achieve greater compliance from delinquent taxpayers. The delinquency program consists of two parts: a letter campaign to non-filing taxpayers followed by the issuance of administrative subpoenas to those who do not respond to the letters. Participation in the non-filing letter program is free of charge and is performed every year. Participation in the administrative subpoena program costs \$1.00 per subpoena issued and is performed every other year. To participate, a Non-Filer/Subpoena Program Authorization form must be completed and submitted to RITA by June 1, 2026. Mr. Harnishfeger asked members if they would like for him to request Tontogany's participation in the free letter program or in both the letter and subpoena program at \$1.00 per subpoena. He recommended participating in both, as we have in the past, since the subpoenas are so inexpensive and even one compliance achieved could easily cover all subpoena costs. Members voiced agreement with participating in both parts of RITA's Non-Filer/Subpoena Program, with no one voicing opposition.

Fiscal Officer Harnishfeger reported that Ron Mackey came and put up a new flag at the hall because the old one was badly tattered, and the one he put up was the last of our large 5 ft x 8 ft flags for the hall, so we need to purchase some more. He said we last purchased six nylon 5 ft x 8 ft flags in April of 2022, four years ago, at \$62.75 each. The same nylon flags are now \$74.49 each. Mr. Harnishfeger told members that he discovered that Freedom and Glory (formerly Carrot-Top Industries), the company from which we buy our flags, recommends their polyester flags as more durable in high wind, and their nylon flags as good for normal wind conditions. He noted that the polyester 5 ft x 8 ft flags are \$81.99 each (\$7.50 more than the nylon ones), but he recommended trying the polyester flags, since there isn't a great price difference. Councilman Smith made a motion to have Mr. Harnishfeger order six polyester 5 ft x 8 ft flags at the price of \$81.99 each. Councilwoman Mehring seconded this motion. All were in favor; motion carried.

Fiscal Officer Harnishfeger reported that there is one hall rental still coming up in April, on Saturday, April 25th. He reported that there is currently one hall rental scheduled in May, on Saturday, May 2nd.

ZONING: Zoning Inspector Hain reported that he had a prospective buyer asking about a CRA (Community Reinvestment Area) program for the property for sale on Tontogany Creek Road. Mr. Hain commented that it is almost impossible to do. He explained that the CRA Program is an Ohio direct incentive tax exemption program benefiting property owners who renovate existing or construct new buildings. The program permits municipalities or counties to designate areas where investment has been discouraged as a CRA to encourage revitalization of the existing housing stock and the development of new structures. Mr. Hain said he doesn't believe the property in question qualifies, since investment and development has not been discouraged there and it is not a revitalization concern.

Zoning Inspector Hain reported that he and Councilman Smith went and talked with the man with the camper on Main Street. The man seemed to be expecting them. They gave him notice and told him he needs to take some action, but they would give him a little time. Mr. Hain said they would reach back out to him before long if he doesn't make any changes. Mr. Smith commented that the camper and the tow truck are the only things he owns and he is trying to be independent from his mother; he is an adult son or relative. He is trying to make it and has been living in the camper. Councilwoman Mackey asked if they gave him a timeline. Mr. Hain replied that they gave him two weeks. Mr. Smith added that if there is no action in two weeks, then we will give him an official letter.

UTILITIES: Utilities Superintendent Johnson reported that Derek Kramp, who is renovating the old downtown carryout building, has had someone living in one of the upstairs apartments for about a

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month or a month and a half. Mr. Johnson said he was wondering how someone was living up there without water, since there is currently no water service there because the water meter froze and broke years ago and has not yet been replaced. He said he called Mr. Kramp and asked him how someone was living there without water and Mr. Kramp replied that it is pretty much ready now to put in a meter, and he would give Mr. Johnson a call the next day. Mr. Johnson said he would have to meet with him and see what he says.

Zoning Inspector Hain asked Mr. Johnson if we had made any headway with the poles in the back behind his house. Mr. Johnson replied that he spoke with Amy, who had talked with Bowling Green Electric Superintendent John Stewart, who told her that they were waiting on the city to buy some material. Mr. Johnson commented that he didn't know what material Mr. Stewart was referring to. There was a brief discussion as to where our poles come from, concluding that we own our poles, but members didn't know where they come from. Mayor Shanahan commented that we have never bought poles ahead of time; Bowling Green has always acquired the poles for us and added the cost as part of their charges. Mr. Hain commented on the wiring situation also. Mr. Johnson responded that the last time he talked with Electric Superintendent Stewart, he responded abruptly that you need to trim all of the trees in Tontogany. Mr. Johnson said another person told him they talked to Mr. Stewart and he had said they were waiting for Tontogany to buy some materials. Mr. Johnson said he didn't know what Mr. Stewart was talking about. Mayor Shanahan asked Mr. Johnson if he had reached out to Mr. Stewart with that message. Mr. Johnson answered that he had not yet done so. Councilman Smith commented that, if we need to trim power lines again, we probably will have to call in Penn Line to do it for us. Mr. Smith said he hadn't noticed trees needing trimmed, but he did agree with Mr. Hain about the service line needing to be raised. He also commented that, if we can nail down exactly what Mr. Stewart needs, we will make it happen. The mayor added that in the mean time we can have Penn Line come out and drive around and give us an estimate for trimming around power lines, and then schedule it. The mayor said he would reach out to Penn Line and he asked Mr. Johnson to reach out to Mr. Stewart. Mr. Johnson suggested that it might be good to try to have Bowling Green Electric here when Penn Line comes. The mayor and members replied in favor of doing that, if possible. The mayor said he would ask Penn Line for a timeline for them to come, so he can give that information to Mr. Johnson to share with Bowling Green.

Utilities Clerk Harnishfeger reported that Muni-Link has contacted him to meet remotely on April 30th about beginning the implementation phase of moving to their utility billing software solution.

STREETS and ALLEYS: Councilman Smith reported that he sent an email to Morlock, asking for an estimate for crack sealing for North Street and Washington Street because those streets haven't ever been sealed. He told members that if they wanted anything else done, he could put that on the list as well.

Councilwoman Hain reported that the concrete patch on Tontogany Road in front of the Legion is starting to form another dip at the edge toward the center of the road. They didn't cut it out far enough and the old road surface is starting to crumble at the edge of the patch. Mayor Shanahan said he thought that if Palmer needs to correct the work they already did, they shouldn't charge us for it. He asked Mr. Johnson to reach out to Palmer about this, and he also commented that the patch they did on Tontogany Creek Road looked a little questionable to him, but the township is taking care of that one.

Councilwoman Mehring asked about plans to change the direction of the parking lines on Broad Street. Mayor Shanahan answered that the last time we talked about changing the direction of the parking, we thought we wanted to wait until we repaved Broad Street, and maybe repaving would wait until we replaced the water line there. Councilman Smith suggested that we could get an estimate to have a chip seal surface put on Broad Street. The mayor recalled that Mr. Johnson had proposed seeing if we could abandon the Broad Street water line and tie into another line to serve the customers, but he had found out that it would not really be feasible. Mr. Johnson added that there was a valve issue and

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the need to move five or six services. The mayor commented that he would be all for changing the parking direction on Broad Street, due to problems with the way it is. Members agreed. The mayor suggested that we could ask Stripe It Up for a quote. Councilwoman Mackey asked to know for sure what to include in the quote request to Stripe It Up, since Council had asked her to get a quote from them for other striping, such as on Main Street and lines at the stop signs. Mr. Smith suggested that we could ask Morlock what it would cost to chip seal Broad Street while they are here to do other work for us. He commented that a chip seal surface would last for five to eight years and we could have the new changed striping put on the street right after it is chip sealed. The mayor agreed that that would be a good idea. Members voiced no opposition. Mr. Smith said he would contact Morlock to add this to their quote. Ms. Mackey said she would hold up on the Strip It Up quote.

Councilwoman Mehring reported that she thought she saw some people working on the Wall Street Habitat for Humanity lot. Mayor Shanahan responded that they may be having the lot surveyed, but no physical work will be done on the Habitat project until 2027; they need to have a lot of conversations with the Wood County Engineer before they can do anything.

Mayor Shanahan reported that Washington Township Fire Chief Bill Gase called him to let him know that they are due for their hose testing. He is asking, sometime in May, to close off Broad Street to the alley behind the fire station, so they can string their hoses out and hook up to a fire hydrant. They had been doing it at the fairgrounds, but now they are starting to get questions about paying for the water and other things. The mayor commented that he has no issue with them using village water if it keeps the village safe, but he wanted to run it by Council. Councilman Smith asked if it could be done on a Monday, to make it easier for everyone. The mayor answered that he knows it was not intended to be on a Monday, because Chief Gase had originally asked to close off Main Street from Broad Street to the tracks, but the mayor had pointed out to him that that would hurt parking for Doc's and had asked if Doc's patrons would be able to park in the parking lot and walk across the street to Doc's. Then Chief Gase had suggested instead that they could use the alley behind the fire station and the township lot, and he then asked about Broad Street. Chief Gase had also asked the mayor if he thought he should go and have a conversation with the owners of Doc's, and the mayor said he answered that he thought that would be the right thing to do. The mayor told members that he would let them know what day is chosen for the hose testing when he finds out for sure. Mr. Smith commented that there is a hydrant at Centennial Park, and the school also has hydrants. Councilwoman Mackey added that they used to do it at Centennial Park.

Councilwoman Mackey reported that Jerry Asmus approached her one day about a stone alley behind the duplex apartments that he owns on Kellogg Road. She said she didn't know what alley he was talking about, but he said that some years ago Todd Buehrer, who worked for the township, filled in some ruts in the alley with stone, and he wondered if that could be done again. Members discussed the matter and no one was familiar with the alley Mr. Asmus was asking about. Mayor Shanahan suggested that we could look at it to get a better understanding of what is being talked about. It was determined that Mr. Asmus's tenants probably do use the alley, but members commented that we do not have the township employees and resources, and, since council members were not even aware of the stone alley being talked about, the village should not be responsible for repairing and maintaining it.

SIDEWALKS and TREES: Councilman Smith reported that he had been busy and had not got letters out yet to residents who would be potential sidewalk program participants. He asked members to let him know if they had any specific people in mind as possible sidewalk candidates. He said he did have some contractors lined up that he will be contacting. He estimated that we could be talking about doing about 700 feet of sidewalk that he had identified as places that need improvement. He commented that the big one will be on Broad Street between Becker's and Palmer's (basically, the whole block between North Street and Crom Street), amounting to about 400 feet, which will be at Village expense because we had agreed years ago to do that part. He said there would be about 180 feet in front of Logan's

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house, if she is interested. Councilwoman Mackey remarked that the sidewalk on Broad Street, from just at the back of Current's and down to the church parking lot or alley is really bad. She reasoned that, since we have been talking about downtown improvements, and since a lot of people stand along there for parades and festival activities, we should let replacing that stretch of sidewalk take precedent in our sidewalk improvements project. Mr. Smith agreed that she was right about that and he said he would add it to the list. He said he would keep working on it and keep getting ahold of people. There was a brief discussion about possible costs for the project. Mr. Smith reminded everyone that the last time we did it, it was \$38 per linear foot; he estimated that it would probably be more like \$45 per linear foot now. Councilwoman Mehring asked why the Village will be paying for sidewalks. Mayor Shanahan answered that this was the agreement that was set up a few years ago, that, for people with corner lots, the Village would pay for sidewalks down Broad Street, and the lot owner would pay for sidewalks down the side street. Ms. Mehring asked why we don't have ODOT come in to help us get sidewalks without using Village money for it. The mayor answered that, if we could get a grant to make that happen, it would be great, but grant searches take a lot of time and effort and we don't have anyone right now to do that.

Councilwoman Mackey asked if we had something for Otsego Serves Day, and if we needed to sign up early. She commented that she got the information last year, but she didn't receive it this year. Mayor Shanahan asked if we had anything for the students to do, and he said he thought we could still probably get on the list, but he didn't know if we would have anyone available to help oversee the students for village service activities. Councilman Smith stated that he would not be available that day. Ms. Mackey said that the main thing she was thinking about was having the students do sweeping and cleaning up downtown—sidewalks, leaves, gravel, etc. The mayor asked if that would be an all-day project. Mr. Smith recalled that last year they arrived around 9 a.m. and worked from 9:30 a.m. to lunchtime at noon; then they worked another hour or two after the lunch break, and that was it. They got several projects done in that time. He also commented that the Otsego Serves Day is not just for village projects, but is also intended to help individual residents with services. The mayor added that Jill Murphy is having a group of students do yard work for her. The mayor asked again if we would have anyone that could be around to help supervise. He said he himself would not be available. Ms. Mackey said she would not be available late in the afternoon, but she could be available in the morning. She commented that she didn't think it would take more than a couple of hours to do the downtown work she had suggested. She offered to call Mary and ask her if they would have some extra students available for us. The mayor agreed that that would be great, because initially we had said we weren't sure if we would have anything for the students, due to lack of someone to supervise them.

DRAINS and SEWERS: Mayor Shanahan reported that Jerry Asmus had informed him that the pooling of water at Centennial Park has gotten so bad that it is overflowing into his daughter's driveway. The mayor said he told Mr. Asmus that we just need to get into the gravel and create a channel down to the drain basin, and he had agreed that that was what was needed. Councilwoman Mackey reported that Ron Mackey had gone and created that channel to the drain basin on Saturday.

Utilities Superintendent Johnson reported that Rick Downs had told him that the catch basin in front of Phil Wenig's house on Main Street has been backing up and the catch basin between Mr. Downs' yard and Brad Hain's yard is not draining properly like it used to. Mr. Johnson said he was going to call Simon Gundy at the Northwestern Water & Sewer District to come and TV (video inspect) the catch basin. Councilman Smith told Mr. Johnson that, if the District won't do it, he knows a guy who has a sewer camera and we might be able to do it on our own for free. He suggested that Mr. Johnson ask them to bring a vac truck while they are at it and clean out the catch basins for us, which would also be helpful before running a camera down there.

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CITY HALL and PARKS: Utilities Superintendent Johnson reported that he received a call from Karen Current, asking what is going on downtown. There was a question about whether a restaurant from Grand Rapids is coming here. Also, he said Karen told him that she was worried because she saw Al Ferrell moving all of his stuff out of his building. Mayor Shanahan and Councilman Smith both said they were unaware of Ferrell moving stuff out of his building. The mayor commented that there is someone currently in active discussions with Al Ferrell about buying his place. He also said that Miss Lily's restaurant in Grand Rapids is looking for a new home; there have been discussions about her coming to Tontogany, but no sale has been completed yet on that. The mayor commented that we haven't heard much from the pizza guy after we made the introduction with him and Derrek Kramp; we left that up to them. Mr. Smith commented that Derek still has a lot of work to do on the downstairs of the carryout.

Councilwoman Mackey reported that the porta johns were installed at the parks last week; the shelter house rental board has been repaired and the calendars are up; the drinking fountain is on, but the faucet underneath is not working. Members discussed the faucet briefly and decided that we don't have to have it working and we don't want another \$800 bill to fix it again. Ms. Mackey continued her report, saying that the soccer nets are up and the brush in Mehring park has been removed. She said she gave Jim Head a list of things to do. She commented that the fencing around the basketball and pickleball court has a lot of places where it is coming loose. She said Jim could fix that and she asked him to check the fencing around the playground as well. She said she also asked him to even out the pile of dirt by the new pole. And she asked him to dig a channel to the catch basin, so maybe he will improve what has already been done on that by Ron Mackey. She said she also asked Jim to see if he could straighten up several leaning signs around town. Mayor Shanahan added that he noticed today that the street sign at Crom and Tontogany Creek Road has a leaning and rusted-out post and the signs are difficult to read. He said we may just want to do a tour of the village and see what street signs we should update. He also noted that as you come down Tontogany Creek Road, right at the edge of Brandon's property and the neighbor behind him, there used to be a yellow school sign. He said it looks like the post snapped off or was cut off and there is still a piece of it in the ground and the sign isn't there. He commented that it could do some serious damage to a lawnmower, so we need to get that remaining piece of the post pulled out of there. Members discussed some ways to pull it out of there. The mayor said he might spray some safety orange paint on the post and around it until we can get it pulled out.

Councilwoman Mackey reported that the new pickleball net and frame has arrived. She said she has the old frame pieces in her garage and they need to be moved to the village hall shed. She said it would be good to keep the old frame pieces as spare parts, but it would be nice to have a tall sturdy box to keep them in. The mayor replied that there is actually a carrying case for them in the shed; he said he would pull it out after the meeting. Ms. Mackey asked where the new pickleball net and frame were. The mayor answered that it was in the office and just needs to be assembled. He said it is easy to assemble in about five minutes. Councilwoman Mehring asked if it would be ready for use by next week. The mayor replied that we will get it up this week.

Councilwoman Mackey reported that the trash at Mehring Park needs emptied. She said she has tried putting it out on Wall Street and Rumpke won't pick it up. Councilman Smith said he would take care of it.


Councilman Smith reported that he and Hannah are buying a house outside of the village on Long Judson Road, and after about June 1st he will no longer be eligible to serve on Council. He said he wishes to continue to work with and for the village, so, if the mayor and Council will have him, he would like to become the village administrator, which Mayor Shanahan could recommend for Council to confirm. He suggested that Council may want to discuss it in an executive session with him absent, if they thought it necessary to do so. Mayor Shanahan told Mr. Smith that we would need to have him submit a resignation as council member, as part of the process. Then Council will vote to accept the resignation. Then the mayor appoints a person to the position with the majority vote of Council, according to the procedure written in the Ohio Revised Code (ORC). The mayor summarized that, after Councilman Smith

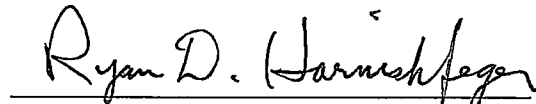
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submits his resignation and when he is ready to become administrator, the mayor will make the appointment to the village administrator position at a meeting and have Council do a roll call vote, so we will have a majority vote or not on record. The mayor commented that it is bittersweet, but it will most likely work out to our advantage, since we have been without an administrator for a long time. Although we have advertised the position year after year, it has been a challenge to try to find a person who can work during the day and do the things we are asking while still not retired from another job, or someone retired who will not lose their OPERS benefits by taking the position. The mayor told members that Mr. Smith has also offered a suggestion of a person to replace him on Council when his seat becomes vacant. The mayor reminded members that, per ORC, Council has 90 days to find a replacement to fill an open seat, after which the mayor can appoint a person to fill the seat, but he added that in the past he has not typically appointed anyone without Council's okay.

Councilwoman Mackey asked if we had advertised for a replacement for Mr. Harnishfeger. Mayor Shanahan answered that we have not, but he had intended to bring up that we need to get an accurate job description. Councilman Smith reminded the mayor and members that Mr. Harnishfeger had submitted an inclusive list of his job duties for both the fiscal officer and the utilities clerk jobs. He added that we need to get that out there and be advertising it as good jobs in a great town. The mayor told members that a person had made an indirect comment to Steve Powell that she would be open to learning more about the position. The mayor commented that we need to have respect for Mr. Harnishfeger and his requested timeline, by getting someone into training as his replacement.

With nothing further to discuss, Mayor Shanahan declared the meeting adjourned at 8:24 p.m.


Matthew Shanahan, Mayor


Ryan Harnishfeger, Fiscal Officer