

**Towanda Borough
Regular Council Meeting Minutes
February 6, 2023**

The Towanda Borough Council Meeting was held on Monday, February 6, 2023, at the Borough Municipal Building, 724 Main Street, Towanda, PA. The meeting was called to order at 7:05 PM by President Christini.

Present: Vice President Eberlin, Mrs. Miller, Mr. Roof, Mr. Saring, Mr. Kovalcin, Mr. Schulze, President Christini, Mrs. Hatch & Mr. Parks

Absent: None.

CITIZENS TO BE HEARD:

Mr. George Reifendifer, Assistant Highway Maintenance Manager with PENNDOT was present to extend the agility agreement between PENNDOT and Towanda Borough for another 5 years.

RESOLUTION 2023-4

RENEW THE 5-YEAR AGILITY AGREEMENT WITH PENNDOT

Motion made by Mr. Saring and seconded by Mr. Kovalcin

The roll was called and recorded as follows:

AYE/YES: Mr. Eberlin, Mrs. Miller, Mr. Roof, Mr. Saring, Mr. Kovalcin, Mr. Schulze, Mr. Christini, Mrs. Hatch, & Mr. Parks

NAY/NO:

ABSTAIN:

ABSENT:

RESOLUTION 2023-4 – Carried unanimously

APPROVAL OF THE PREVIOUS MONTH'S MINUTES:

The motion to approve January 3, 2023, Regular meeting minutes was made by Mr. Roof and seconded by Mr. Parks. The motion passed unanimously.

FIRE CHIEF REPORT:

Chief Roof's report was included. He stated that at the re-organization meeting, he was re-elected to be Fire Chief and Billy Sheets was elected Assistant Chief, and Jarrett Sheets was elected Second Assistant Chief. This is for a two-year term and Chief Roof related that Jarrett will take over the Fire Chief position after the two-year term is up. Chief Roof will be working with him until then.

Chief Roof did have maintenance work on the tanker. It was leaking water and he put a cap on a valve to hold the water back and someone took the cap off and there was water all over. He found the cap to be off and had a guy fix it.

FIRE BOARD REPORT:

Mr. Parks stated they had a meeting and everything is running fine and there is nothing further to report.

MAYOR'S REPORT:

- Mayor Miller stated that a meeting was held with Allied Services officials and officials from the County's Mental Health Services. Chief Epler and Officer Bellows were present also and asked some tough questions to both mental health groups. He feels that it opened a line of communication with them. Mayor Miller stated that the two groups will attend our Police Committee meetings a couple of times a year to keep up to date with information or concerns we may have. Also, they noted that some of their personnel do need further training and they will get it done.
- Mayor Miller stated that they are working on a meeting for next week with Futures and Concern officials.

POLICE CHIEF REPORT:

Chief Epler reviewed the report.

- Civil Service testing has been completed. The results have been given to the Civil service Board for a pending review and the creation of the list.

- Mayor Miller, Mrs. Hatch, Mr. Saring, and Mr. Kovalcin attended a meeting with the state of Mental Health in Towanda. I addressed the issue of the tripling of the number of Mental health calls for 2022 and the possible actions that could be taken. More meetings have been planned.
- I applied for and received a supply of Naloxone (Narcan).
As the Officers complete the online training, they will be issued Narcan.
- Several of the Officers are going to attend training in the future. The schools have been booked and seats confirmed.
- Lauren and I have been working on the grant and the required documentation and proposals. We are looking into an upgrade to our Watchguard/ Motorola system vs a T-Mobile solution.
- Officer Hennessy and K9 Hades did a Drug sniff at the BCCF (Jail) and a Sniff for PSP which led to an arrest of a Drug Trafficker.

JANUARY 2023 – Monthly Report

| | | | |
|-----|-----------------------|----|----------------------|
| 366 | COMPLAINTS RECEIVED | 8 | JUVENILE PETITIONS |
| 14 | TRAFFIC CITATIONS | 0 | K-9 SERVICE (BORO) |
| 10 | NON-TRAFFIC CITATIONS | 3 | THEFT REPORTS |
| 1 | DUI ARRESTS | 5 | ANIMAL COMPLAINTS |
| 69 | DISTURBANCE CALLS | 4 | VEHICLE DOORS OPENED |
| 2 | VEHICLE ACCIDENTS | 2 | WARNINGS ISSUED |
| 8 | OUT-OF-TOWN ASSISTS | 17 | MENTAL HEALTH CALLS |
| 6 | CRIMINAL ARRESTS | | K-9 SERVICE (OTHER) |

Chief Epler reviewed the 2022 Year-End Report including the following:

| | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 |
|-----------------------|------|------|------|
| Complaints Received | 3587 | 3587 | 3652 |
| Criminal Arrests | 93 | 95 | 99 |
| DUI Arrests | 10 | 16 | 9 |
| Traffic Citations | 217 | 195 | 262 |
| Non-Traffic Citations | 116 | 83 | 140 |
| Motor Vehicle Crashes | 57 | 47 | 59 |
| Vehicle Doors Opened | 49 | 34 | 45 |
| Warnings Issued | 90 | 91 | 82 |
| Thefts Reported | 86 | 78 | 100 |
| Disturbances | 882 | 861 | 987 |
| Juvenile Petitions | 882 | 861 | 987 |
| Animal Complaints | 76 | 40 | 44 |
| Mental Health | 87 | 54 | 159 |
| | | | |

POLICE COMMITTEE REPORT:

Mr. Saring gave a summary of the meeting tonight.

- Mr. Saring stated the committee discussed officer training
- Supply issues are hindering the purchase of a new police car.
- The Committee also discussed the Civil Service committee's action in the immediate future to hire another police officer will happen soon. The committee will be meeting again next week.

CODE ENFORCEMENT / PUBLIC WORKS REPORT:

There was no report this month.

BOROUGH MANAGER HOTALING REPORT:

Manager Hotaling reviewed her report.

1. Assistant Billing Clerk/Secretary

- a. After a lot of interest, and several interviews, we selected Andrea McLinko to fill the position of Assistant Billing Clerk/Secretary. Today was her first day on the job.

2. Property Maintenance & Rental Inspections

- a. Vicki Wells will be temporarily filling in with Property Maintenance and Rental Inspections for 5 to 6 hours each day on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday for up to 90 days doing rental inspections & property maintenance. We will also begin working with Code Inspections to do our residential permit approvals and inspections. In addition, we will begin advertising for a new Code Enforcement Officer this week.

3. Borough & Municipal Authority Logo

- a. We have received the final design for our logos (which were passed around the table).

4. PennDOT Liquid Fuels Auditor

- a. We had our Liquid Fuels yearly Audit in January with no findings.

5. Hallock & Shannon, PC

- a. Hallock & Shannon will conduct both the Borough and Municipal Authority Audits. They will be in our office on February 21st and 22nd.

6. PennDOT Street Tour

- a. John Miller, Chad, and Manager Hotaling toured Borough streets with Steve Kehoe to look at potential streets for paving in 2023. We have received an estimate back from him to review which streets we would like to put in the bid package for 2023.

7. 15 Mulberry Street

- a. She met with Darin Rathbun for a tour of the property from the exterior. A further assessment of the interior of the building will need to be completed.

8. DOT RAISE Grant

- a. Manager Hotaling is working on submitting a grant through the DOT RAISE program. The program can be used toward stormwater upgrades. They toured several concerning areas with HUNT to come up with an estimate and design. The grants are due February 28th.

9. PennDOT Agility Agreement

- a. Manager Hotaling asked Council to pass the resolution for the PennDOT agility agreement. Which is a 5-year agreement with PennDOT to swap services of equal value with an established work plan. Example: A street owned by PennDOT needs working on and it would be easier for Towanda Borough to do the work. Swap this with something the Borough may need done that would be easier for PennDOT to do.

BOROUGH SOLICITOR

- Solicitor Smith presented the following:

ORDINANCE 2023-1

Ordinance to Repeal Article III of Chapter 271 of the Code of the Borough of Towanda to Discontinue Imposition of a Per Capita Tax.

Motion made by Mr. Kovalcin and seconded by Mrs. Miller

The roll was called and recorded as follows:

AYE/YES: Mr. Eberlin, Mrs. Miller, Mr. Roof, Mr. Saring, Mr. Kovalcin, Mr. Schulze, Mr. Christini, Mrs. Hatch, & Mr. Parks

NAY/NO:

ABSTAIN:

ABSENT:

ORDINANCE 2023-1 – Carried unanimously

ORDINANCE 2023-2

Ordinance to Repeal Article III of Chapter 271 of the Code of the Borough of Towanda to Discontinue Imposition of a Per Capita Tax.

Motion made by Mr. Eberlin and seconded by Mr. Kovalcin

The roll was called and recorded as follows:

AYE/YES: Mr. Eberlin, Mrs. Miller, Mr. Roof, Mr. Saring, Mr. Kovalcin, Mr. Schulze, Mr. Christini, Mrs. Hatch, & Mr. Parks

NAY/NO:

ABSTAIN:

ABSENT:

ORDINANCE 2023-2 – Carried unanimously

- Solicitor Smith reviewed the proposed Vacant Storefront Maintenance Registry Ordinance for Towanda Borough and asked Council for approval to move forward with advertising this ordinance. President Christini stated that we have been looking at doing this for a long time and the Planning Commission worked on it for a long time. "If everyone is comfortable with it", we can authorize Solicitor Smith to advertise it for formal adoption. A motion was made by Mr. Kovalcin and seconded by Mr. Saring to have Solicitor Smith move forward with this ordinance. Motion passed.
- Solicitor Smith reviewed the proposed Quality of Life Ticketing Vacant Storefront Maintenance Registry Ordinance for Towanda Borough and asked Council if they want to approve and move forward with advertising this ordinance. Again, President Christini stated that we have been looking at this for a long time. A motion was made by Mr. Saring and seconded by Mr. Kovalcin to have Solicitor Smith move forward with this ordinance also. Motion passed.

BOROUGH SECRETARY

Borough Secretary Kulick asked Council to approve the yearly "Return of Tax Collector to Authority Levying Tax" information (2022 property owner(s) unpaid property taxes) that was verified by Tax Collector Kara Eberlin. President Christini and Mrs. Kulick both signed and she will return this to the Bradford County Treasurer's office as requested.

FINANCIAL & ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT:

- A motion for the bills to be paid for January was made by Mr. Roof and seconded by Mrs. Miller. Motion passed.

UNION SUB-COMMITTEE:

Mrs. Miller stated there was an official notification from the Teamsters Local 118 & verbally from Union Steward, Sergeant Lantz to begin the negotiations for the Police Department successor agreement.

PLANNING COMMISSION REPORT:

The minutes for January 17, 2023 meeting are included.

- **HIGHLIGHTS:** Solicitor Smith presented his edited draft ordinance last month after getting it from the Planning commission (everyone had a copy). He stated that some of the items in the draft were already covered in the current ordinances and he omitted them and has it ready to present to council. After some further discussion, Mr. Doupe' made the motion and seconded by Mr. Mize for Solicitor Smith to present it to council. Motion passed.
- Solicitor Smith is working on this and will draft it using Danville, PA's QOL as a template for our ordinance. Mr. Hatch made the motion seconded by Mr. Mize. Motion passed. Solicitor Smith will present the draft to council next month.
- Stiffler-McGraw was selected as the Consultant for the Parks Master Plan and they met in December to discuss a steering committee. They came up with twelve people and the consultant is working on compiling existing conditions of the parks and they will be meeting later in February and the public meeting to unveil existing conditions and the steering committee's ideas for the parks and ask for the public's feedback will be held in March.

Revitalization Plan

- The cost to do the study is about \$100,000. Manager Hotaling met with the BC Commissioners to also take part in this and they committed \$25,000 towards the plan. We were not awarded the \$25,000 from DCED, so Manager Hotaling is going to try other avenues. GTP, Gannons, Henry Dunn's office, and possibly Chesapeake (she is meeting with them tomorrow). These businesses want to see this project happen and are willing to donate towards it. She stated that it is difficult for a business to donate, as we are not a 501(C)(3). The Progress Authority is in the process of developing a 501(C)(3) where they can accept those kinds of donations and earmark the funds.

RECREATION REPORT:

Mr. Kovalcin stated that they will be meeting this month.

MISC:

Mayor Miller stated that he is getting information on fee structures for storage of towed vehicles, as storage is becoming a problem for Williams Garage.

Kevin Doupe', a Planning Commission member was present and stated that the recent event at the Keystone Theatre, "Dancing with the Stars" included two of the Towanda Police Officers. It was nice to see and it was a beautiful event.

TMA/WMA/CBPA REPORTS:

Included in the packet.

LIBRARY REPORT:

Included in the packet.

ADJOURNMENT:

A motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Kovalcin and seconded by Mr. Saring. The meeting adjourned at 8:10 PM.



Diane M. Kulick

Towanda Borough Secretary