

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

The Towanda Borough Council Meeting was held on Monday, March 6, 2023, at the Borough Municipal Building, 724 Main Street, Towanda, PA. The meeting was called to order at 7:01 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:**

Mrs. Charlotte Parks of Kali's Mission gave an update to Council. She stated that Dr. Robyn Terrel of the Wysox Animal Clinic is the new veterinarian for Kali's Mission. She offered a lower cost for spaying and neutering with a flexible schedule and she also owns/uses a traveling hospital. They plan on continuing to have the hot dog stand at Riverfront Park during Towanda's Summer Concert Series on Thursday nights. They are continuing the Got Sneakers fundraiser program in the fall season.

On April 3rd they will host the first trapping in Sheshequin-Rome Township. In addition, the Athens Police Department called them about a cat issue at an abandoned house in that town. Sometime this year a rabies clinic will be offered at the Wysox Animal Clinic.

Mrs. Parks also stated that she received calls about feral and stray cats on the 400 block of Chestnut Street in Towanda. They will plan a trapping there this year.

Also, a lady from Endicott, New York sent a check to them for \$100. She didn't know about them until a couple of years ago, as she attended school with Gary Parks and a friend of his, and heard about Kali's Mission and sent the donation. Mrs. Parks stated that the United Way of Bradford County will provide a grant to Kali's Mission this year and they will reapply for the same grant for 2024. The Dandy Canes program at the Dandy in North Towanda was able to raise over \$700.

In conclusion, Mrs. Parks stated that over the last two years, Kali's Mission has prevented approximately 5,000 kittens from being born homeless or in shelters and rescues.

President Christini stated that they do amazing work and their reputation is spreading out even in NY State. Council is glad to support them.

**APPROVAL OF THE PREVIOUS MONTH'S MINUTES:**

The motion to approve February 6, 2023, Regular meeting minutes was made by Mr. Eberlin and seconded by Mr. Kovalcin. The motion passed unanimously.

**FIRE CHIEF REPORT:**

Chief Roof's report was included. He stated that the fire company received a 2013, 2500 Crew cab truck donation from Chesapeake. They will use this as a utility vehicle and it is in good shape. It is a little rusty and has high mileage, but runs well. It is a combination of compressed gas and gasoline, and they are taking the compressed gas feature out of it. Also, they are starting to do more training.

**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 he recommends that they hire Derek Campbell as Full-Time Police Officer according to the process that the Civil Service Commission did along with Chief Epler. Mayor Miller stated that he is a fine officer and an excellent choice.

**RESOLUTION 2023-6**

**Approval to hire Derek R. Campbell from part-time to Full-Time Police Officer status effective March 6, 2023.**

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 2023-6 – Carried unanimously**

Mayor Miller also stated that he and the Police are looking into moving the "no parking" sign at the corner of Pine and Third Street back a little because it is hard to look around the cars so close to the corner when you stop to cross over Pine Street. Also, he received a request to install a light on a pole near 27 Kingsbury Avenue. There was a car broken into recently and the area is very dark in that section. Manager Hotaling will investigate.

**POLICE CHIEF REPORT:**

Chief Epler reviewed the report.

- Several of the Officers attended firearms and tactics training in the Valley this month. They reported that the training was very informative.
- Lauren and the Chief 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. To that, T-Mobile has sent us 2 demos to try out, and we are in the process of testing them out now.
- Kost Tire provided an Area Law Enforcement lunch at the Sheriff's Office as an appreciation of our service.
- Officers Bellows, Edsell, Hennessy, and K9-Hades did a presentation to a large group of Home School students. This group has for several years, come to the station and expressed their interest in having their children involved with the Police. They also make us a large tray of goodies at Christmas time.
- This past month the department had 37 mental health calls.

**FEBRUARY 2023 – Monthly Report**

349	COMPLAINTS RECEIVED	2	JUVENILE PETITIONS
12	TRAFFIC CITATIONS	1	K-9 SERVICE (BORO)
14	NON-TRAFFIC CITATIONS	8	THEFT REPORTS
1	DUI ARRESTS	5	ANIMAL COMPLAINTS
46	DISTURBANCE CALLS	2	VEHICLE DOORS OPENED
2	VEHICLE ACCIDENTS	2	WARNINGS ISSUED
8	OUT-OF-TOWN ASSISTS	37	MENTAL HEALTH CALLS
5	CRIMINAL ARRESTS		K-9 SERVICE (OTHER)

**POLICE COMMITTEE REPORT:**

Mrs. Hatch gave a summary of the meeting tonight.

- The Committee met with Allied tonight and plans on meeting with them every quarter in the future.
- If Officer Edsell is elected for the Magistrate position we have the next candidate in line that has passed the Civil Service testing requirements. We will need more part-time officers. Chief Epler stated that there is a new class starting soon (May) that would be concluding in November 2023.
- Futures has not met with the committee and they will work towards having a small meeting with them.
- Mrs. Hatch is resigning from the Committee Chair position and Mr. Saring has volunteered to be the new Chairman. She will still help with the committee when she can.

**CODE ENFORCEMENT / PUBLIC WORKS REPORT:**

The contractors' registration list is included in the packet.

Manager Hotaling stated that all the residential and commercial permits are being handled by Code Inspections. They are going out to inspect and approve them. She introduced Andrea McLinko, Assistant Billing Clerk who is helping with getting the registrations organized.

**PERMITS & CONTRACTORS**

		MONTH	YTD
Permits Issued		25	
Permit Fees Paid	\$	4,203.50	

Code Inspections Fees	\$		
Borough Total after Code Inspections Fees	\$		
Permit Work Value	\$		
Contractors Registered		153	
Contractors Registrations Amount	\$	15,300	

**UCC Reportable Permits**

	Month	YTD	\$ Fees	\$ Fees YTD
#1 Residential – New				
#2 Residential – Other	24		3,878.50	
#3 Commercial – New				
#4 Commercial – Other	2		325.00	
<b>TOTALS</b>				

**COMPLAINTS**

	Received		Investigated		Resolved	
	Month	YTD	Month	YTD	Month	YTD
Single Family Non-Rental						
1 & 2 Family Rentals						
Commercial Rental Units						
Commercial Non-Rental						
<b>TOTALS</b>						

**Rental Dwelling Unit Inspections**

	Month	YTD
1st Inspection	5	
2nd Inspection		
3rd Inspection		
<b>FEES PAID \$</b>		

**PARKING:**

**Tickets by Status**

	Month	Year-to-Date
Issued	31	
Paid	34	
Dismissed	13	
Warning	10	
Abandoned	10	
Citation		

Paid After Notice Sent		
------------------------	--	--

**Tickets by Street Location**

	Month	Year-to-Date
Main Street	22	
Court Street	21	
Bridge Street	7	
Park Street	6	
Pine Street	19	
Washington Street	2	
State Street	1	
Parking Garage	8	
John B. Merrill Pkwy	1	
Second Street		
Mix Avenue		
C&N Lot		
Poplar Street		
Other (Towanda)		

**Tickets by Violation**

	Month	Year-to-Date
Expired Meter, Non-Payment	43	
Expired Meter, Payment Expired	2	
3 Hour Limit	28	
3 Hour Free Parking, Moved Locations		
Permit Required	3	
Parking Outside of Lines, Direction of Travel	3	
Snow Emergency-Secondary Roads		
Handicap/Disabled	4	
Non-Space	5	
Loading Zone		

**BOROUGH MANAGER HOTALING REPORT:**

Manager Hotaling reviewed her report.

**Twin Tiers Community Foundation Agreement**

- a. Manager Hotaling met with Charity Field, the CEO of the TTCF earlier this week to discuss a partnership between the Borough and the TTCF to raise funds for our Downtown Revitalization Master Plan Project. TTCF is a 501©3 non-profit and allows businesses to donate funds to an account for this initiative for a tax break. The TTCF will administer the project once we've met our goal of \$115,000. She is very excited about this partnership, and thinks we will be able to continue this partnership for many of our future Borough projects! She asked the council to consider passing this resolution to enter into the Fiscal Sponsorship Agreement.

**RESOLUTION 2023-5**

Agreement between Towanda Borough & Community Foundation for the Twin Tiers (Foundation) partnership to Raise Funds for our Downtown Revitalization Master Plan Project.

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

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 2023-5 – Carried unanimously**

**2. Bradford County Veterans Memorial Park**

- a. The first run of the Bradford County Veteran's Memorial Park Digital Map is up and running. Rich Lasko with the Bradford County Planning & Mapping Department was able to create it for us. The survey, plot data, and drone imagery came from Butler Surveying this summer. Our intern, Erica Locke, spent some time populating the data this summer. The link is <https://bcmaps.bradfordco.org/portal/apps/instant/minimalist/index.html?appid=4f5529eda98a40f7bc48933d52ffdf68>. You can pull up the map, select an individual brick, and see what information has been engraved on it. The map also allows you to search for an individual or a brick number.

**3. Towanda Parcel Map of tax-exempt Properties**

- a. Manager Hotaling also asked Rich Lasko to create a map that illustrates tax-exempt properties throughout the Borough. The map totals 181 acres of tax-exempt properties of the 559 acres throughout the Borough. The total market value of these properties is \$40 Million, and all properties in the Borough have a market value of \$119 Million. So, essentially a third of the Borough does not pay real estate taxes.

**4. Bradford County Humane Society**

- a. Traditionally, the Borough enters into an agreement with the Humane Society to take in any strays from the Borough with a fee. In 2023, the BCHS is anticipating undergoing some construction to their building and didn't want to enter into agreements with municipalities if operations were to be disrupted throughout the year and unable to take in animals per the agreement. This year they are asking for \$871 from the Borough. In 2021, the agreement was for \$839.40 for the 2022 year. We haven't paid them for services for 2023. *Manager Hotaling requested that the Council make a motion to do a payment of \$871.00 as requested in lieu of the agreement to the Bradford County Humane Society so that they can continue their good work for this year for the Borough. Mr. Parks made the motion to approve giving the Humane Society this money seconded by Mr. Kovalcin. Motion passed.*

**5. Code Enforcement Job Position**

- a. We've advertised for the position in the Daily Review and through indeed online. We've requested that applications be sent to our office by March 9th. We hope to quickly begin interviewing candidates after the deadline.

**6. Dalton Maynard, Mechanic**

- a. Dalton Maynard submitted his resignation to me earlier this week. His last day with the Borough will be March 14th. He has been with the Borough since September 2015. We wish him well in his new position and he will be missed.
  - i. We will be advertising for his position within the Daily Review & Indeed.com

**7. Hallock & Shannon, PC**

- a. Hallock & Shannon came to our office for the Borough & TMA Audits. They will have to perform a single audit because of the TMA Monroeton water line project. This will take longer to complete, but they felt they collected all of the information that they needed while they were here.

**8. PennDOT Street Paving**

- a. Steve Kehoe, PennDOT District 3-0 provided paving estimates for several streets throughout the Borough. Upon review of the estimates, the list of roads that will be submitted for bid proposals next month includes the following:
  - i. Packer Ave from Williams line to Merrill Parkway
  - ii. Spruce Street from Packer to Williams Street
  - iii. Olive St from Second to Fourth St
  - iv. Kingsbury from Main to Merrill Parkway
- b. The bid documents along with advertisement and wages will be sent to me by March 17th to review and advertise to open for our April 4th Council Meeting.

**9. Quality of Life Ordinance**

- a. Manager Hotaling has contacted the company we use for our parking software with the handheld device that issues tickets. They have a similar module within their system to handle code violations for the Quality-of-Life Ordinance as it has been proposed.

**10. Vacant Storefront Ordinance-**

- a. Working on finalizing the Vacant Storefront Registration Form for property owners in the Commercial District.

**11. New Website**

- a. Working on obtaining some proposals from local web designers.

**12. Dallas Data Visit**

- a. We had two representatives from Dallas Data visit our office last week to train staff on our Accounting Software, Caselle. Our Accounts Receivable Module to invoice for the Borough & Authority is up and running. All staff has been trained on how to use it.

**BOROUGH SOLICITOR**

- Solicitor Smith presented the following advertised ordinances for adoption.

**ORDINANCE 2023-3**

Vacant Storefront Maintenance Registry Ordinance

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

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 2023-3 – Carried unanimously**

Mr. Schulze presented a cover letter to go along with the Vacant Storefront Maintenance Registry Ordinance registration form and shared some positive comments about this ordinance as he is a downtown store owner and supports it.

**ORDINANCE 2023-6**



**Quality of Life Ticketing Ordinance**

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 2023-6 – Carried unanimously**

Manager Hotaling is working on getting the ticketing side completed.

**BOROUGH SECRETARY**

Borough Secretary Kulick told Council that Mr. Reifendifer, PennDOT Assistant Highway Maintenance Manager stopped tonight with our copy of the PennDOT Agility Agreement that was completed by their officials.

**FINANCIAL & ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT:**

- A motion for the bills to be paid for February was made by Mrs. Hatch and seconded by Mr. Saring. Motion passed.

**UNION SUB-COMMITTEE:**

Mrs. Miller stated negotiations will begin soon.

**PLANNING COMMISSION REPORT:**

A meeting was held on January 17, 2023. President Christini stated that the Quality of Life did not include anything about vacant buildings. There wasn't a clear idea and it wasn't something Council talked about. They did talk about abandonment and termination of use (Code §325-58) and condemned and demolish. There is wording in the International Property Maintenance Code (IPMC) about that, and these are some things that Council may consider in the future in the opinion of the Planning Commission. There are at least 5 abandoned buildings in the borough, 4 condemned and 3 condemned by fire. The question is, "What do we want to do?" This has been a question of Council's for many years. There are terms in the IPMC that says one has 2 years to fix a condemned building and if you don't fix it in 2 years, you have to tear it down. President Christini does not know how it would hold legally but it is a possible approach.

He stated another possibility is abandonment. If you have a grandfather clause in your use, like an apartment house, and you stop renting it for six months and it's in R-4, you lose your grandfathered status after the 6 months. This may be something that Council might want to consider as well. There was no motion from Planning Commission but they thought that both of these items could help to restore Towanda's character to a more stable and family-friendly population.

The Commission is continuing to work on the Comprehensive Plan and the DCED Grant Program that Lauren is spearheading.

**RECREATION REPORT:**

Mr. Kovalcin stated that they are working on the music and June 15th is the planned start date.

**TMA/WMA/CBPA REPORTS:**

Included in the packet. Also, President Christini pointed out there was a delinquent account balance that was written off in the amount of \$18,614.92 in total for 2 accounts. This was never processed and they could only pursue the lien on file which was for \$1,961.92. He stated this will never happen again.

**LIBRARY REPORT:**

Included in the packet.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

A motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Roof and seconded by Mrs. Miller. The meeting adjourned at 8:05 PM.



Diane M. Kulick

Towanda Borough Secretary