

**Towanda Borough
Regular Council Meeting Minutes
December 4, 2017**

The **DECEMBER 2017**, regular meeting of the Towanda Borough Council was held on Monday, December 4, 2017, at the Municipal Building. Council President Paul Sweitzer called the meeting to order at 7:01 PM, with a moment of silence followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL:

PRESENT: Mr. Christini, Mr. Klinger, Mr. Kovalcin, Mrs. Lacek, Mrs. Miller, Mr. Roof, Mr. Sweitzer,
And Mr. Taylor

ABSENT: Mr. Long

CITIZENS TO BE HEARD: Mr. Tom Neilson, an Elder of the First Presbyterian Church in Towanda Borough stated that he has come to council once again to request them to have the planning commission revisit the church's request to be allowed to have an illuminated (LED) sign facing Merrill Parkway. He stated that it is so much easier to update signs via computer than going outside and changing lettering. He also stated they have limited volunteers to change an outside sign with the frequent church happenings. Mr. Sweitzer stated that the planning commission is going to be meeting on December 19th at 7 PM. Mr. Kacyon will be made aware to revisit the church's request for this meeting.

APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MONTH'S MINUTES:

The minutes of the November meeting were approved with a motion made by Mrs. Lacek and seconded by Mr. Kovalcin. Motion passed. Also, regarding Mr. Archer's address (page 1), it was noted to correct it as 4 **North** Third Street.

FIRE CHIEF REPORT:

Chief Roof stated that the fire company received the books for an open house community safety program for kids that will take place in late January or early February 2018. The borough matched the fire company's payment for these materials.

Mr. Taylor asked about the number of auto alarms (malfunctioning) that occur at the BC Courthouse, and Chief Roof stated that these are false alarms, and he was told the county is planning a new alarm system for the courthouse.

FIRE BOARD REPORT:

Mr. Klinger stated there was no meeting this past month due to training.

MAYOR'S REPORT:

Mayor Miller thanked the local Chamber of Commerce and Mrs. Pat Hoover and Vicki Wells for the planning of the downtown Christmas Parade. The Recreation committee also did an excellent job on their float, plus the theater showed the movie "Polar Express", which was a free movie. It was a much larger crowd attending this year which is good for the community.

POLICE CHIEF REPORT:

Chief Epler stated on his report the following:

All Officers successfully passed the annual firearms qualification.

He also stated that they had a very busy month, besides the normal amount of incidents there were 2 break-ins of businesses. Kambo's restaurant and Papa V's pizza were broken into by the same single male one week apart from one another. (PSP) Pennsylvania State Police also had multiple break-ins around the area for the last month.

Due to a coordinated effort with PSP and the large number of video surveillance that was involved with our break-ins, the suspect was caught on Wednesday the 22nd of November and had Thanksgiving dinner at Bradford County Correction Facility.

They also responded to a suicide on the 20th of November in a vacant top floor unoccupied area of 616 Main Street.

Also, the VFW Post 1568 donated \$250 to the K9 Fund, which they are very thankful.

November 2017 – Monthly Report

272	COMPLAINTS RECEIVED	1	JUVENILE PETITIONS
32	TRAFFIC CITATIONS	0	K-9 SERVICE (BORO)
12	NON-TRAFFIC CITATIONS	13	THEFT REPORTS
3	DUI ARRESTS	4	ANIMAL COMPLAINTS
66	DISTURBANCE CALLS	6	VEHICLE DOORS OPENED
2	VEHICLE ACCIDENTS	11	WARNINGS ISSUED
2	OUT OF TOWN ASSISTS	0	K-9 SERVICES
12	CRIMINAL ARRESTS		

POLICE COMMITTEE REPORT:

Nothing to report.

CODE ENFORCEMENT / PUBLIC WORKS REPORT:

Mr. Haight reviewed the report for November 2017.

There were 23 permits issued in November, 188 year-to-date.

Mr. Haight also stated the UCC fee increased from \$4.00 to \$4.50 (as of October 25, 2017).

Permit fees paid in November were \$1,881.

Code Inspections charges were \$675 for November, \$3,708.58 year-to-date.

The value of permit issued work in the borough year-to-date is \$1,426,055.

Mr. Haight reviewed the compliance actions, permits issued and rental inspections.

PARKING REPORT: November 2017

# Green Tickets Issued:	0
# Yellow Tickets Issued:	0
# Green Tickets Forgiven	0
# Yellow Tickets Forgiven	0
# Green Tickets Excused	0
# Yellow Tickets Forgiven	0
# Paid W/N 48 Hrs @ ½ Cost	0
\$ Amount Paid w/n 48 Hrs	\$0
# Paid After 48 Hrs	1
\$ Amount Paid After 48 Hrs	\$20

# Tickets to Magistrate as Citations	0
Amount Received from Magistrate	\$0
Delinquent Tickets before	3
Citations - \$	\$60
Revenue from Reserved Parking Spaces	\$3,010
Hours on Parking per Month	50
Police # of Tickets Written	2
\$ Amount Paid W/N 48 Hours	\$10
\$ Amount Paid After 48 Hours	\$0
TOTAL MONTHLY REVENUE	\$3,100

BOROUGH MANAGER’S REPORT:

Manager Lane reported on the following:

- Downtown Revitalization Project-** Manager Lane stated the construction continues on the Parking garage.

He is still waiting for the Office of the Budget to approve the “special conditions” package that was submitted in February. Once approved, he stated, we will start receiving reimbursements for phase II.

- College Run -**

Manager Lane is working with PEMA to close the project. The single audit is underway, and he expects the 2016 single audit report to be finished by the end of the month. Work will be begin on 2017 as soon as possible

- 2018 Budget –**

Manager Lane stated that a budget work session was held on November 16th. The matter of the shrinking general fund balance was discussed at length, and he was instructed to adjust the draft budget to include a 1-millage rate increase to the Borough’s General Fund tax rate. He did the adjustment at the requested increase, and asked for a **motion** to advertise the proposed 2018 budget to be adopted at the Borough Council year-end meeting on December 28th. At said meeting council would tack comments on the 2018 Budget and Real Estate Tax Ordinance, which will set millage rates as follows:

Tax Rate for General Purposes Fund	16.10 Mills
Tax Rate for Fire	1.00 Mills
Tax Rate for Street Lights	1.96 Mills
Tax Rate for Library	.50 Mills
Total Millage	19.56 Mills

At this time Mr. Christini made a comment about the reason for the tax increase for 2018. He stated that an article in the Daily Review last month implied that the 2018 budget would be increased due to costs going up. However, Mr. Christini stated, the main reason for the tax increase is due to the huge cut two (2) years ago (2014) to the Earned Income Tax (EIT) by over \$50,000. Council had hoped the EIT revenue would rise in 2017, but it did not, and they cannot keep depleting the fund balance.

Mr. Christini stated that council is being very responsible in lowering costs in some areas. One of the areas of savings is in the latest three (3) year approved police labor contract where a 10 percent reduction was made possible just by moving the full-time officers to a new health insurance plan for 2018. This new plan contains a health reimbursement account. In conclusion, Mr. Christini stated that we could talk about many reasons why the lower EIT happened, but many are aware of the how the economic downturn has affected local industry jobs.

Mrs. Lacek made the motion to advertise the borough's proposed 2018 budget with the 1 mill increase in the property tax and Mr. Klinger seconded. Motion passed.

4. CDBG

Manager Lane stated that the County Commissioners decided not to fund the demolition of the two properties on Mason Alley. They did however; approve the funding for the (handicapped) curb cuts on Park Street at the end of Bill Sick Lane. He stated this project should start in spring 2018.

5. Tourism Room Tax Grant –

Manager Lane stated that the application submitted to the Bradford County Tourism Promotion Agency on behalf of the Riverfest Committee was awarded \$2,000 for the annual event.

6. Police Pension -

Manager Lane stated the 2017 Actuarial valuation package is complete and was delivered to the Borough last week. A copy of the report is available upon request.

7. “Mini Casino”- PA General Assembly Legislative Act 42 of 2017 –

Manager Lane presented **RESOLUTION 2017-16 Prohibit Category 4 Casinos in the Borough of Towanda**. He stated that the Pennsylvania General Assembly recently passed a new gambling expansion law which provides local municipalities the authority to prohibit “mini casinos” from being located within the municipal boundaries.

The Pennsylvania Legislative Act 42 of 2017. 4 Pa.C.S. Section 1305.1 (a.1) entitled “Municipal Option” authorizing a municipality to prohibit, or opt-out of having a Category 4 casino located within its municipality. A Category 4 license will allow a mini-casino to operate between 300-750 slot machines and up to 50 table games; and it requires any municipality that wants to exercise the municipal opt-out enact a resolution if it is desired to prohibit a Category 4 casino within the boundaries of the Borough.

In order to prohibit a “Mini-Casino” to be located in the borough, council needs to pass a resolution stating such.

Manager Lane also stated that this decision is up to council but he does not think it is a good idea to allow a “mini-casino” to operate in the borough of Towanda. During discussion it was noted by Solicitor Smith that Council could rescind the resolution in the future if it so desires to allow a mini-casino to operate in the borough.

At this time Mr. Taylor made a motion to adopt RESOLUTION 2017-16 Prohibiting the Category 4 Casinos in the Borough of Towanda. This was seconded by Mr. Christini. The vote was as follows:

Aye/Yes: Mr. Christini, Mr. Klinger, Mrs. Miller, Mr. Sweitzer and Mr. Taylor

Nay/No: Mr. Kovalcin, Mrs. Lacek and Mr. Roof

Absent: Mr. Long

Status: Resolution 2017-16 carried with a 5-3 vote.

BOROUGH SOLICITOR’S REPORT:

Solicitor Smith asked if there was a fully functioning Planning Commission. Mr. Christini stated that we have 3 new members who are enthusiastic about being on the commission. It was also stated there will be a meeting held on December 19, 2018 at 7 PM to discuss the definition of “Single Housekeeping Unit”, and to address LED Light usage (internally illuminated) for the First Presbyterian Church.

BOROUGH SECRETARY REPORT:

Secretary Kulick presented the following resolutions:

RESOLUTION 2017-17 Approval that Walter Foley (GTP) be re-appointed to Central Bradford Progress Authority (CBPA) board of directors as the Towanda Borough representative.

Motion to approve this resolution was made by Mr. Kovalcin and seconded by Mr. Klinger.

The vote was as follows:

Aye/Yes: Mr. Christini, Mr. Klinger, Mr. Kovalcin, Mrs. Lacek, Mrs. Miller, Mr. Roof, Mr. Sweitzer and Mr. Taylor

Nay/No: None.

Absent: Mr. Long

Status: Motion carried.

RESOLUTION 2017-18 Bradford County Tax Committee Delegate Appointment. This is a required resolution for any borough imposing an Earned Income Tax (EIT) to appoint one voting delegate and one or more alternate delegates to be their Tax Collection Committee (TCC) representatives. The borough manager is primary, borough secretary is first alternate, and Mrs. Doreen Secor, Towanda Area School District Business Manager, is second alternate. These appointments are done each year in December or January, or as soon as possible thereafter. Motion to approve this resolution was made by Mrs. Lacek and seconded by Mrs. Miller.

The vote was as follows:

Aye/Yes: Mr. Christini, Mr. Klinger, Mr. Kovalcin, Mrs. Lacek, Mrs. Miller, Mr. Roof, Mr. Sweitzer and Mr. Taylor

Nay/No: None.

Absent: Mr. Long

Status: Motion carried.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT – Police Pension statement in packet.

UNION SUB-COMMITTEE REPORT –

FINANCIAL REPORT – Motion was made by Mrs. Lacek, and seconded by Mrs. Miller to pay the bills. Motion passed.

PLANNING COMMISSION REPORT – As stated earlier in this meeting, there will be a planning commission meeting held on December 19th at 7 PM.

ZONING – Nothing new.

RECREATION COMMITTEE – Mr. Kovalcin reported the Committee had a float in the Christmas parade and it went extremely well. Also, Mr. Kovalcin stated that the board had two people who helped the committee out and would like to be part of the Recreation Committee. Their names are Alicia Rider and Kayla Saxon. Mr. Kovalcin made a motion to add them to the committee and it was seconded by Mrs. Lacek. Motion passed.

Secretary Kulick will send a note out to both of them welcoming them to the recreation committee.

TMA – The minutes included in packet.

WTMA – The minutes included in packet.

CBPA REPORTS – None in packet.

MISCELLANEOUS – President Sweitzer asked council to think about supplying laptops for the police cars so that they would be able to work on administrative tasks such as filing incident reports while out in the field. This would also make their jobs much easier and also allow the officers to have more public exposure. President Sweitzer asked for this to be talked about in the Police Committee meeting.

ADJOURNMENT - Motion to adjourn was made by Mrs. Lacek and seconded by Mr. Klinger. Meeting adjourned at 8:05 PM.


Towanda Borough Secretary