

Towanda Borough Regular Council Meeting Minutes October 1, 2018

The **OCTOBER** regular meeting of the Towanda Borough Council was held on Tuesday, October 1, 2018, at the Municipal Building. Council President Sweitzer called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM, with a moment of silence followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL:

PRESENT: Mr. Christini, Mr. Klinger, Mr. Kovalcin, Mr. Long, Mrs. Miller, Mr. Roof, Mr. Sweitzer and Mr. Taylor

ABSENT: Mrs. Lacek

CITIZENS TO BE HEARD:

There were no citizens to be heard, however K-9 – HADES, 14-month-old was sworn in to the Police Department by Mayor Miller tonight.

APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MONTH'S MINUTES:

Motion to approve the September 4, 2018 regular meeting minutes with 2 corrections was made by Mr. Long and seconded by Mr. Taylor. Motion passed.

FIRE CHIEF REPORT:

Chief Roof stated that there were 18 calls in September. It was a busy month, and everything is working well. The tower was out for training and the guys are training every Tuesday and Wednesday night. The Fire Company personnel will be ready if we get a lot of rain again tomorrow (as predicted).

FIRE BOARD REPORT:

Mr. Klinger did not attend the meeting but Chief Roof did attend, and stated there is nothing new to report.

MAYOR'S REPORT:

Mayor Miller mentioned the new member of the police force, K9 HADES, who was sworn in tonight, is 14 months old and is now fully certified. Also, the Mayor reminded everyone of the Fire Department Annual Halloween Parade on Saturday, October 27th. After the parade, the Recreation Committee will be hosting an event with a Bonfire, Apple Cider, roasting marshmallows, hot chocolate, and the State Police will again this year hold a "Trunk or Treat", all taking place at Riverfront Park.

Mayor Miller stated that Trick-or-Treat in Towanda will be held on Wednesday, October 31st, from 6 PM to 8 PM.

POLICE CHIEF REPORT:

Chief Epler reported that the police department is giving out \$10 gift cards instead of traffic tickets to less aggressive than usual drivers in the Borough and to courteous behavior. These cards are sponsored by Dandy Mini Mart.

K-9 Hades is doing well at training, has completed a 40-hour school for narcotics, and has been certified for narcotics detection. Hades is continuing to train at the Southern Tier K-9 Association for other disciplines. Officer Hennessy and K-9 Hades attended the Independent Baptist Church family event at 3rd Ward Park on September 29th.

Body Cameras and in-car Camera system donations: To date the Police department has received \$14,120 in donations for the system. This includes the recent additional \$5,000 from D.A. Nolt LLC, \$1500 from the Kellogg Mountain Rod & Gun Club, \$1,500 from VFW Post 1568, and \$250 from borough resident Susan Geissler & Family.

Chief Epler stated that the target amount is around \$25,000, and there is an additional \$10,000 from the DA's office for property seized from a prior arrest/drug bust in the Borough (which makes the total \$24,120). Chief Epler said that the locked in price until the end of the year is \$22,500, without the data storage.

SEPTEMBER 2018 – Monthly Report

351	COMPLAINTS RECEIVED	0	JUVENILE PETITIONS
27	TRAFFIC CITATIONS	1	K-9 SERVICE (BORO)
14	NON-TRAFFIC CITATIONS	9	THEFT REPORTS
4	DUI ARRESTS	3	ANIMAL COMPLAINTS
84	DISTURBANCE CALLS	6	VEHICLE DOORS OPENED
10	VEHICLE ACCIDENTS	12	WARNINGS ISSUED
2	OUT OF TOWN ASSISTS	1	K-9 SERVICES
15	CRIMINAL ARRESTS		

POLICE COMMITTEE REPORT:

Mr. Taylor stated that the committee discussed the cameras with the Chief, and the committee would like to recommend Council move forward on the cameras to go out for bid before the year runs out (due to possible price changes). It could be advertised this month, and a bid decision made in the December meeting. After discussion, Mr. Taylor's motion was seconded by Mr. Long. Motion passed.

Also, Mr. Taylor stated there was discussion in the Police Committee meeting about getting an additional police car. They would then cycle one police car out, as TMA (Towanda Municipal Authority) needs another vehicle. Manager Lane said that there is a state contract for police cars, so there is no bidding war. This is also built in the budget.

And finally, Mr. Taylor said they discussed getting a camera for the new police vehicle, so there would be 3 camera cars instead of 2. Chief Epler will check on the price for another camera and if this would be affordable.

CODE ENFORCEMENT / PUBLIC WORKS REPORT:

There were 31 permits issued in September for a total YTD at 183
Permit fees paid amount in September were \$2,392 YTD - \$13,146
Code Inspections charges in September were \$1,000 YTD - \$5,190
The value of permit issued work in the borough YTD - \$3,481,562.15
Contractor's Registrations in September amounted to \$1,100 YTD - \$11,600

Mr. Haight reviewed the reports and asked if anyone had any questions.

In Compliance Action, Mr. Haight was asked what “unresolved” meant. He stated that it means they paid the fine but it is unresolved.

Mr. Christini commented about the Rental Inspections with a question, “Should we charge for the 2nd rental inspection (Currently, we charge for a 3rd rental inspection)?” He stated that many of the failed inspections are not new landlords, but are the same people who know the rules of compliance for rentals.

PARKING REPORT – SEPTEMBER 2018 **YEAR-TO-DATE**

# Green Tickets Issued:	-	7	48
# Yellow Tickets Issued:	-	2	11
# Green Tickets Forgiven	-	0	2
# Yellow Tickets Forgiven	-	0	1
# Green Tickets Excused	-	0	0
# Yellow Tickets Forgiven	-	0	0
# Paid W/N 48 Hrs @ ½ Cost	-	3	13
\$ Amount Paid w/n 48 Hrs	-	\$30	\$130
# Paid After 48 Hrs	-	4	18
\$ Amount Paid After 48 Hrs	-	\$80	\$360

PARKING REPORT – SEPTEMBER 2018 **YEAR-TO-DATE**

# Tickets to Magistrate as Citations	-	0	0
Amount Received from Magistrate	-	\$0	\$0
Delinquent Tickets before Citation	-	18	46
\$		\$280	\$840
Revenue from Reserved Parking Spaces	-	\$3,000	\$27,080
Hours on Parking per Month	-	40	370
Police - # of Tickets Written	-	10	157
\$ Amount Paid W/N 48 Hours	-	\$40	\$430
\$ Amount Paid After 48 Hours	-	\$80	\$490
<u>TOTAL MONTHLY REVENUE</u>	-	<u>\$3,510</u>	<u>YTD \$29,330</u>

BOROUGH MANAGER’S REPORT:

1. Downtown Revitalization Project-

E.R. Stuebner is working feverishly to finish the garage. The elevator is installed and 99% of the masonry is complete. The electrical is well past half way complete. They need to finish the concrete for the first floor (Ground Level), install stairs, restore Bill Sick Lane, and finalize site work. Stuebner has stated that It has been too wet to finish, but they also state they will be done by the end of the month.

2. USDA GRANT/LOAN – BACKHOE –

The Loan/Grant closed. We received the loan proceeds and ordered the new backhoe. Once the machine is here, the USDA will release the grant funds. Dave Warner, of Warner Tractor & Equipment Inc. was looking into when the backhoe will be here.

Also, Manager Lane stated that the Street Sweeper broke down and Dalton (borough mechanic) is working on it, but it is no easy task to fix the machine.

3. PennDOT Turnback -

The only update we have received on this project is “It is being reviewed in Harrisburg”. Manager Lane will keep everyone informed.

4. Union Negotiations

After two meetings the Union Subcommittee and the Teamsters have reached a tentative agreement. We are keeping the contract mostly the same. We have added an attendance policy which includes a progressive discipline policy. The committee has agreed to 55 cents per hour increase each year of the contract. Health insurance premiums will increase 1%, 1.7% and 1.2% over the duration of the contract. The current members will continue to pay 10% of the premium and new employees hired after January 1, 2019 will pay 15% of the premium.

Manager Lane asked that Council allow him to accept and ratify the union contract agreement. A motion to do this was made by Mr. Kovalcin and seconded by Mrs. Miller. Motion passed.

5. Trail Feasibility Study

Manager Lane met with the consultant to discuss the route through the Borough. The Wysox and Towanda Township routes are not looking very promising, as there are several private property issues for the trail when leaving town. The consultant is still in the process of putting together the public input meetings. There has to be 2 meetings held for the public.

6. Future Planning –

Manager Lane stated that we need to focus on handling heavy rains. He would like to begin putting together plans for future projects. Once the parking garage is complete he feels we should start to concentrate on updating our “SCI Master Plan” and also create a storm water/infrastructure master plan. If 2018 has been any indication of the weather patterns we will be dealing with in the future, our storm water infrastructure (or lack thereof) needs some serious attention. Cash Creek is the last location we will need to work on. Mr. Long stated that he saw a lot of water “gushing” into the river that came from Cash Creek just this past week during flash flooding. Manager Lane stated that in reality whatever we do will require the consulting of professionals and engineers.

7. BCVMPA –

Agreement was executed for funds to finish the park, and awaiting this money from DCED. Once cash is in hand, the association will advertise for bids to install the Rotunda.

8. 2019 Budget –

The personnel budget is complete, working with the insurance company for the 2019 rates. Manager Lane stated we usually receive assessment numbers from the county the first week of November.

9. Flood Insurance Rate Maps –

New preliminary maps were mailed to the Borough Office. A meeting for municipalities involved and FEMA was forced to be rescheduled due to the Hurricane in North Carolina. Manager Lane does not agree with the findings. He will keep Council informed when he receives more information.

OTHER BUSINESS for Manager Lane:

President Sweitzer stated that we need to deal with getting a street sweeper, and Council needs to make a commitment to buy it. Manager Lane stated that we need it, and can't do without one. He said after two weeks without the sweeper (One of the hydraulic motors broke down), Main Street looks dirty. We will have to take a loan out to purchase one, and even though we get the COSTARS (Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's Cooperative Purchasing Program) state contract purchase price, a brand new one will cost around \$210,000. Manager Lane stated that with using COSTARS a new police car and backhoe can be bought at good lower prices, but not a street sweeper. It may be because there is not a big demand for them. President Sweitzer stated that Manager Lane, Dalton (our garage mechanic), and the employees that will run it would be the best to select the appropriate street sweeper, and we probably should buy new. Manager Lane stated that he will do the new budget with the street sweeper, a new police car, and a new ladder truck if council wants them, however in general we have to remember we have a fixed income.

Mr. Sweitzer stated do we get a loan and put a new sweeper in the budget for next year? Mr. Taylor made the motion to pursue a new street sweeper and Mr. Kovalcin seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Mr. Christini stated that he had one more item he would like to address with Borough Manager Lane. He received a phone call from a person who had a situation on the sidewalks downtown. He asked council if they agreed that the sidewalks downtown should be fixed. If they are damaged by tree roots it would be at the borough's expense, and if they are caused by neglect, it would be the owner's responsibility and expense to fix. Mr. Christini does not want someone else to get hurt, and he feels it should be dealt with promptly and before winter.

Manager Lane stated there is a process for this and if they follow it, it will not happen this year. Concerning repairs which are to be accomplished by the owner of an individual property, the written notice shall be served not less than 90 days prior to the date by which such repairs are to be completed.

President Sweitzer stated that if the fault is the borough's (trees we planted that are causing problems), then we can fix the sidewalk problems right away. Manager Lane stated that he found 18 problems in total of which 11 are the borough's to fix. He said 7 are random drops with no trees near them. President Sweitzer asked if we want to act on the 11 now and have them completed by the end of October (time frame).

Mr. Christini stated that it would have to be contracted out, to which Manager Lane agreed. He does not have the borough crew (manpower) to do the project. Mr. Christini felt that we should contract it out now rather than later because it needs to be done. According to Manager Lane, the work should cost low enough that it will not have to be bid out.

Manager Lane said maybe we can get the real bad sidewalks fixed first. Mr. Christini commented that doing a couple before winter, would show people that we are working on this. It is ultimately the decision of the Borough Manager, and he hopes that we can do something before winter as he recently received a call from someone that fell, and he stated this has happened to 2 people that he is aware.

President Sweitzer said that once something like this is brought to council's attention we need to act on it. We can do a few now and bid out the remainder that are the borough's in the spring. He stated that the sidewalks that are not the borough's responsibility, but privately owned, should be sent a registered letter and given a phone call to let them know that the registered letter is coming because we are following a stringent protocol.

BOROUGH SOLICITOR'S REPORT:

Solicitor Smith talked about the Ron Ludlow zoning appeal for a rehearing that was filed by Mr. Ludlow's attorney. Solicitor Smith stated that he feels there is no additional evidence or rule to show cause for a rehearing. He said Attorney Sheets will appeal it and Solicitor Smith stated he will appeal it also.

BOROUGH SECRETARY REPORT:

Secretary Kulick announced a 5K Color Run for the benefit of the THS Senior Class, is to be held on Sunday, October 21, 2018, using Route #1.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT:

Included in packet.

UNION SUB-COMMITTEE REPORT:

New union contract agreed upon as stated earlier in the meeting.

FINANCIAL REPORT – A motion was made by Mr. Klinger and seconded by Mrs. Miller to pay the bills. Motion passed.

PLANNING COMMISSION REPORT:

Mr. Christini stated in the last meeting, they discussed farm animals, mainly roosters in general. The existing Towanda code does not directly cover specific issues with raising farm animals, and there has been several nuisance complaints about the noise of Roosters crowing in town. The board discussed chickens as a positive but not roosters.

The following is the result of the Planning Commission Meeting discussion:

- 1) A motion was made by Planning Commission's Jimmy Lacek and seconded by Diane Siegmund to suggest that Borough Council add to the existing Chapter 88. Animals, a new article called "**ARTICLE III – Other Animals**" and to prohibit all male fowl in the borough. Motion passed.
- 2) The Planning Commission also agreed that the fines be the same as in the current code Chapter 88. Animals, which is §88-5. Violations and penalties.
- 3) Add **definition for "Fowl"**. One definition was deemed acceptable by those present was the following:
Fowl – (as found in Google dictionary); a gallinaceous bird kept chiefly for its eggs and flesh; a domestic cock or hen. Any other domesticated bird kept for its eggs or flesh, e.g., the turkey, duck, goose, and guineafowl. The flesh of birds, especially of the domestic cock or hen, as food; poultry.

A motion was made by Mr. Taylor and seconded by Mr. Kovalcin to accept the Planning Commission's conclusions on prohibiting "Roosters" from the Borough. Motion passed.

RECREATION REPORT:

Mr. Kovalcin stated the committee is working on the event that will occur after the Halloween parade on Saturday, October 27th at Riverfront Park.

TMA/WMA/CBPA REPORTS:

Good news for TMA. They will receive a \$3 million-dollar award for the \$12 Million-dollar new water source project in North Towanda. Manager Lane stated that he received the permit for the project today.

MISC:

President Sweitzer expressed a concern on how we will enforce or get people into the new parking garage. A suggestion was to raise the current parking fines. He said council will have to be persistent.

Manager Lane stated that he would like to request that we eliminate the diagonal parking on Court Street and turn it back to parallel parking. It is too difficult to be able to get an emergency vehicle like the fire truck down the street. This will be addressed.

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Roof and seconded by Mr. Klinger. Meeting adjourned at 8:56 PM.



Towanda Borough Secretary