

Towanda Borough Regular Council Meeting Minutes April 6, 2020

The Regular Meeting of the Towanda Borough Council was held on Monday, April 6, 2020, at the Borough Municipal Building, 724 Main Street, Towanda, PA. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM by President Mark Christini with a moment of silence followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

Due to the current COVID-19 public health and safety recommendations, a quorum of five (5) council persons attended in person, two (2) council persons attended via telephone conference call, and two (2) council persons did not participate via the telephone conference call.

Present: Mr. Christini, Mr. Eberlin (telecon), Mr. Klinger, Mr. William Kovalcin, Mrs. Lacek (telecon), Mr. Long & Mr. Sweitzer

Absent via telecon: Mr. Lacek and Mr. Roof

CITIZENS TO BE HEARD:

President Christini asked if there were any residents or taxpayers who may have called in to the telecon, and want to be heard, to please state their name and street address. None were present.

APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MONTH'S MINUTES:

Motion to approve the March 2, 2020, Regular Council meeting minutes was made by Mr. Kovalcin and seconded by Mr. Klinger. Motion carried.

FIRE CHIEF REPORT:

Chief Roof was not available for the teleconference but the March 2020 incident report was included in the Council packets

FIRE BOARD REPORT:

Mr. Klinger stated there was a meeting held and the new ladder truck has been delivered and is in operation now.

MAYOR'S REPORT:

Mayor Miller was not available for the teleconference.

POLICE CHIEF REPORT:

Chief Epler was not available for the teleconference but the written report for March 2020 was included in the packet and listed below.

- Towanda Police have adjusted policies and guidelines to conform with the Governors mandates and the Pennsylvania State Police. Which include reduced contact with motorist and non-emergency calls.
- We have had one Officer off duty for a week awaiting COVID-19 test results, that are now in and were negative, although we our still proceeding with caution.
- All Police Departments County wide are cooperating with coverage, if needed, and information sharing. The Bradford County Justice System has been closed to all but the most serious cases. With live streaming video being used to conduct arraignments.
- No word on an ETA for our Tahoe.

MARCH 2020 – Monthly Report

320	COMPLAINTS RECEIVED	0	JUVENILE PETITIONS
15	TRAFFIC CITATIONS	1	K-9 SERVICE (BORO)
17	NON-TRAFFIC CITATIONS	13	THEFT REPORTS
0	DUI ARRESTS	3	ANIMAL COMPLAINTS
86	DISTURBANCE CALLS	5	VEHICLE DOORS OPENED
5	VEHICLE ACCIDENTS	6	WARNINGS ISSUED
1	OUT OF TOWN ASSISTS	0	K-9 SERVICES
10	CRIMINAL ARRESTS		

POLICE COMMITTEE REPORT:

There was no meeting held this month.

CODE ENFORCEMENT / PUBLIC WORKS REPORT:

Mr. Sluyter, Code Enforcement Officer, was not available for the teleconference but the written report for March 2020 was included in the packet and listed below.

MARCH 2020 SUMMARY

PERMITS & CONTRACTORS	Month	YTD
Permits Issued	7	17
Permit Fees Paid	\$631	\$1,118.00
Code Inspections Fees	\$450	\$705
Borough Total after Code Inspections Fees	\$181	\$413
Permit Work Value	\$56,600	\$68,550
Contractors Registered	9	21
Contractors Registrations Amount	\$750	\$1,650

UCC Reportable Permits

	Month	YTD	Fees	Fees YTD
#1 Residential – New				
#2 Residential – Other	2	5		
#3 Commercial – New				
#4 Commercial – Other				
TOTALS	2	5		

COMPLAINTS

	Received		Investigated		Resolved	
	Month	YTD	Month	YTD	Month	YTD
Single Family Non-Rental	3	11	3	11		4
1 & 2 Family Rentals	15	27	12	22		3
Commercial Rental Units	8	11	7	10		0
Commercial Non-Rental	4	5	4	5		0
TOTALS	30	54	26	48		7

Rental Dwelling Unit Inspections

	Month	YTD
1st Inspection	4	11
2nd Inspection	0	2
3rd Inspection	0	0
FEES PAID	\$0	\$0

ZONING CODES

PERMITS	Number Issued		Number Denied		Fees Paid	
	Month	YTD	Month	YTD	Month	YTD
RESIDENTIAL						
COMMERCIAL						
MANUFACTURING						
SIGN						
OCCUPANCY						
OTHER						
TOTAL						
Sign Permits Total:						

ZONING APPEALS

Name	Hearing Date	Address	Type	Fees Paid
Year-to-Date				\$0.00

PARKING

Tickets by Status (Last 30 Days)

Issued	12
Paid	16
Dismissed	5
Abandoned	2
Warning	7

Tickets by Violation (Last 30 Days)

3 Hour Limit	
Expired Meter	
Parking Outside of Lines	
Permit Required	
Non-Space	

Tickets by Street Location (Last 30 Days)

Main Street	20
Bridge Street	6
Park Street	3
Court Street	5
Towanda	1
State Street	1
Washington Street	
Pine Street	4
Parking Garage	
John B. Merrill Pkwy	

BOROUGH MANAGER'S REPORT

Manager Lane reported on the following:

He received a call from the Building Code

1. **2020 Corona Virus Action Plan –**

Manager stated that in the “best interest and safety of our customers and employees” we decided to lock the doors to the public on March 18th. The lobby area still remains closed to the public.

Also, he stated that on March 19th we closed all Borough Parks that have playground equipment and pavilions.

The Tommy Fairchild Walking Trail, Bradford County Veterans Memorial Park and the Roger Madigan Gateway Park remain open.

We have ceased parking enforcement until further notice.

Manager Lane stated the Borough Tax Collector, Mary Ann Harris, has cancelled office hours due to illness and our office personnel is currently handling tax collection duties. Tax Collection so far, is performing on par with previous years. He anticipates a drop in Earned Income Tax as people are being laid off and will continue to monitor the situation.

We have also created two shifts for employees, A & B. "A" shift works for one week then "B" shift comes in and works the following week. Manager Lane plans to keep this schedule for at least 3 more weeks. Employees that are here, are maintaining separation and have been provided gloves and disinfectant. Currently all employees are being paid regular wages and benefits. He is working on marrying the Collective Bargaining Agreement and the new laws that have recently passed regarding COVID-19 employer requirements. If the current situation continues, some difficult decisions will need to be made regarding reducing services and cost savings.

Enclosed you find (3) Resolutions that need to be "Ratified". All three are related the Corona Virus and Emergency Management.

RESOLUTION 2020-5 – (RATIFICATION OF)

To Adopt Bradford County 2020 Hazard Mitigation Plan.

Motion was made by Mr. Sweitzer and seconded by Mr. Klinger

The roll was called and recorded as follows:

AYE/YES: President Christini, Mr. Eberlin, Mr. Klinger, Mr. Kovalcin, Mrs. Lacek, Mr. Long & Mr. Sweitzer

NAY/NO:

ABSTAIN:

ABSENT: Mr. Lacek, Mr. Roof

Resolution 2020-5 Carried unanimously.

RESOLUTION 2020-6 – (RATIFICATION OF)

To Adopt 2019 Emergency Operations Plan Update.

Motion was made by Mr. Sweitzer and seconded by Mr. Kovalcin

The roll was called and recorded as follows:

AYE/YES: President Christini, Mr. Eberlin, Mr. Klinger, Mr. Kovalcin, Mrs. Lacek, Mr. Long & Mr. Sweitzer

NAY/NO:

ABSTAIN:

ABSENT: Mr. Lacek, Mr. Roof

Resolution 2020-6 Carried unanimously.

RESOLUTION 2020-7 – (RATIFICATION OF)

Towanda Borough DECLARATION OF EMERGENCY Pandemic Corona Virus Event.

Motion was made by Mr. Sweitzer and seconded by Mr. Klinger

The roll was called and recorded as follows:

AYE/YES: President Christini, Mr. Eberlin, Mr. Klinger, Mr. Kovalcin, Mrs. Lacek, Mr. Long & Mr. Sweitzer

NAY/NO:

ABSTAIN:

ABSENT: Mr. Lacek, Mr. Roof

Resolution 2020-7 Carried unanimously.

2. **PennDOT Turnback SR 3020 –**

Due to the current pandemic, the project is on hold until further notice. In the meantime, the contractor is executing documents and submitting material cutsheets for approval. They stated once they are cleared to return to work it will be 5 weeks from that time before they are able to begin our project. They had a project lined up to start in March that they need to finish before ours.

3. **Flooding August 2018 –**

FEMA has provided their cost of the repairs needed to the Cash Creek system. They are below what our Engineers estimate is, however; Manager Lane was advised by FEMA they will pay the actual cost of repairs, regardless of what they think it will cost at this time. He will go ahead and sign off on the project when they complete the information in the Grants Portal so we can move forward.

4. **Municipal Building Parking Lot –**

Manager Lane stated that he will need to contact another contractor. The original person he asked is not getting back to him.

5. **Ladder Truck – Fire Department –**

The new Ladder Truck arrived on March 21st. Chief Roof and his team are in the process of loading it with the necessary emergency tools.

6. **2020 COPS grant**

Manager Lane completed and submitted the 2020 COPS grant. It is his understanding we will hear something by September.

7. **Flood Insurance Rate Map Update –**

Manager Lane provided FEMA our current flood ordinance several weeks ago. He has not heard back from anyone yet.

8. **Route 6 Alliance Façade Program**

No information has been made available to me regarding the status of the application since the start of non- essential lockdown.

9. **Redevelopment Authority**

Manager Lane set up a meeting with Joe Chake, the Executive Director of the NEPA Land bank in Pittston, however; due to the pandemic we plan to reschedule when things get back to normal.

10. **Trail Project/Tommy Fairchild Riverfront Park**

The Trail Project is taking a back seat until the current pandemic situation and economic fallout has flatted out.

MISC:

There was a letter of resignation from Towanda Borough Council in the packet from Vice-President Keith Long, who has been a council member for 24 years, but has just moved out of his jurisdiction as a 1st Ward Council member.

Mr. Long stated, "It has been an honor and a pleasure to serve with you all on the Towanda Borough Council. Unfortunately, as required by law I need to resign due to relocating outside of the jurisdiction of Towanda Borough." Mr. Long will continue to be the part-time Parking Attendant for the Borough. He stated that he has enjoyed the experience and learned a lot about the phases of local government, and has been very happy to work with everyone throughout the years.

President Christini stated that we will miss Keith and that he personally valued his input. Mr. Sweitzer stated that Keith has been around a while and always kept a level head and it was good that we had someone like that on Council.

Mrs. Lacek stated that it was a pleasure to see him on the board and wished him good luck in the future.

Mr. Christini asked for a motion to (regretfully) accept Keith Long's resignation. Mr. Kovalcin made the motion and Mr. Sweitzer seconded the motion. Motion passed (regretfully).

President Christini stated that we will follow the procedure to appoint a new council person to fill behind Keith Long. He asked the newspaper reporter (Coy Gobble) who was on the telephone conference if he would put in his reporting article that Keith resigned and the borough needs a First (1st) Ward councilperson, and if anyone is interested to send a letter of interest to the Borough.

Mr. Christini stated that with Keith leaving we have a Vice-President vacancy. Mr. Kovalcin nominated Mr. Klinger seconded by Mr. Sweitzer to appoint Mr. Klinger as Vice-President. No other nominations were made; therefore, the floor was closed and motion passed.

Also, Mr. Klinger was Pro-Tempore prior to this, therefore; Mr. Sweitzer nominated Mr. Kovalcin and it was seconded by Mr. Klinger to appoint Mr. Kovalcin as Pro-Tempore. No other nominations were made; therefore, the floor was closed and motion passed.

UNION SUB-COMMITTEE REPORT:

Nothing new yet (and in light of the Coronavirus). The Police contract will be ending on December 31, 2020.

FINANCIAL REPORT:

Motion to pay the bills was made by Mr. Sweitzer and seconded by Mr. Klinger. Motion passed.

PLANNING COMMISSION REPORT:

The Planning Commission did not have a meeting in March 2020, and there is no meeting scheduled for April 2020, as there is nothing to discuss.

RECREATION REPORT:

Mr. Kovalcin stated that the bands and a magician are planned but we do not know what will happen due to COVID-19.

TMA/WMA/CBPA REPORTS:

Included in packet.

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Sweitzer and seconded by Mr. Klinger. Meeting adjourned at 7:40 PM.



Diane M. Kulick
Towanda Borough Secretary