

## **Towanda Borough Regular Council Meeting Minutes August 3, 2020**

The Regular Meeting of the Towanda Borough Council was held on Monday, August 3, 2020, at the Borough Municipal Building, 724 Main Street, Towanda, PA. The meeting was called to order at 7:03 PM by President Mark Christini with a moment of silence followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Present:** Mr. Christini, Mr. Eberlin, Mr. Klinger, Mr. William Kovalcin, Mr. Lacek, Mr. Roof, Ms. Saxon & Mr. Sweitzer

**Absent:** Mrs. Lacek

**CITIZENS TO BE HEARD:** None present.

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

Motion to approve the July 6, 2020, Regular Council meeting minutes was made by Mr. Sweitzer and seconded by Mr. Eberlin. Motion passed.

**FIRE CHIEF REPORT:**

Chief Roof's monthly fire incidents report is included in the packets. Chief Roof stated that it was quiet month and everything is in good working order. **He asked for a motion to accept Brandon McLinko as a driver of the Tanker and Engine, as he has obtained certification at the Tanker & Engine driver level and demonstrated the competency, knowledge and skills needed for driving them. Motion was made by Mr. Sweitzer and seconded by Mr. Kovalcin. Motion passed.**

**FIRE BOARD REPORT:**

Mr. Klinger stated they had a meeting, but he had nothing new to report.

**MAYOR'S REPORT:**

Mayor Miller was not present for the meeting.

**POLICE CHIEF REPORT:**

Chief Epler's monthly report was included in the packets and he reported the following:

He did a tour of the station and explained the job of a Police Officer to a great group of kids from Bradford County Action Summer Youth Group.

Officer Hennessy helped out with the Children's House Summer Camp in a bag event that they held at the Towanda Elementary School parking lot. Bags were handed out that contained sidewalk chalk, jump ropes, frisbees, puzzles and more. It was reported that a fun time was had by all.

The Police department had 2 DUI wrecks this month, both being severe. One was on the Merrill Parkway, the vehicle crossed lanes and struck a parked car turning it 180 degrees before the offending vehicle and driver went over the river bank and into a large tree, stopping it from going into the river. The other crash was on Convent Street when a DUI driver left the State Street roadway and passed between a tree and a house and then struck another tree spinning the vehicle 270 degrees, estimated speed, 65 mph. The vehicle was stolen out of Canton and the driver was life-flighted from the scene.

In addition, Towanda Borough Police were involved in a motorcycle pursuit last Monday evening. The pursuit ended on a dirt road off of Saco Road when the motorcycle was unable to negotiate a turn and was laid down in the road, ejecting both rider and passenger. After a short foot chase both were taken to jail in lieu of bail.

The Borough Crew came down and removed shrubs from the front of the Police Station that were out of control. Chief Epler stated that it looks a lot better, and they are discussing what they may want to plant there now.

He stated that they had to do maintenance on the body camera today and it was caused by Microsoft updates.

**JULY 2020 – Monthly Report**

325	COMPLAINTS RECEIVED	0	JUVENILE PETITIONS
39	TRAFFIC CITATIONS	0	K-9 SERVICE (BORO)
29	NON-TRAFFIC CITATIONS	5	THEFT REPORTS
3	DUI ARRESTS	9	ANIMAL COMPLAINTS
85	DISTURBANCE CALLS	3	VEHICLE DOORS OPENED
8	VEHICLE ACCIDENTS	11	WARNINGS ISSUED
3	OUT OF TOWN ASSISTS	0	K-9 SERVICES
12	CRIMINAL ARRESTS		

**POLICE COMMITTEE REPORT:**

Mr. Lacek stated the Committee did not meet this month.

**CODE ENFORCEMENT / PUBLIC WORKS REPORT:**

Mr. Sluyter, Code Enforcement Officer, was present and reviewed the written report for July 2020.

Compliance: There has been issues with 307 and 309 Pine Street. 18 people were living there and the property has had various types of service organizations (CYS, Futures, dog warden) there also. The property needed lots of cleaning up of garbage & grass mowing. Both addresses were condemned with citations in July.

**JULY 2020 SUMMARY – CODE ENFORCEMENT STATS**

<b>PERMITS &amp; CONTRACTORS</b>	<b>Month</b>	<b>YTD</b>
Permits Issued	18	63
Permit Fees Paid	\$2,889	\$5,652.80
Code Inspections Fees	\$525.00	\$1,992.80
Borough Total after Code Inspections Fees	\$2,364	\$3,985.60
Permit Work Value	\$273,650	\$451,535
Contractors Registered	11	63
Contractors Registrations Amount	\$950	\$4,950

**UCC Reportable Permits**

	Month	YTD	Fees	Fees YTD
#1 Residential – New	1	1	\$4.50	\$4.50
#2 Residential – Other	1	14	\$4.50	\$63.00
#3 Commercial – New		0		
#4 Commercial – Other	1	1	\$4.50	\$4.50
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>\$13.50</b>	<b>\$72.00</b>

**COMPLAINTS**

	Received		Investigated		Resolved	
	Month	YTD	Month	YTD	Month	YTD
Single Family Non-Rental	8	69	7	45	4	20
1 & 2 Family Rentals	12	84	12	74	4	20
Commercial Rental Units	10	38	8	31	2	5
Commercial Non-Rental	3	15	3	13	1	3
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>206</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>163</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>48</b>

**Rental Dwelling Unit Inspections**

	Month	YTD
1st Inspection	4	28
2nd Inspection	0	5
3rd Inspection	0	0
<b>FEES PAID</b>	<b>\$0</b>	<b>\$0</b>

**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	35
Paid	20
Dismissed	6
Abandoned	
Warning	1

**Tickets by Violation (Last 30 Days)**

3 Hour Limit	57
Expired Meter	4
Parking Outside of Lines	
Permit Required	
Non-Space	1

**Tickets by Street Location (Last 30 Days)**

Main Street	27
Bridge Street	11
Park Street	7
Court Street	8
Towanda	
State Street	
Washington Street	
Pine Street	4
Parking Garage	4
John B. Merrill Pkwy	
Second Street	1

## **BOROUGH MANAGER'S REPORT - JULY 2020**

Manager Lane reported on the following:

1. **PennDOT Turnback SR 3020 –**  
Manager Lane stated the project pace has been up and down. Valley Energy decided at the last minute to replace their entire gas main throughout the length of the project. This in turn has slowed the stormwater and curb work in order to provide Valley Energy with space to work. In the meantime, the contractor, Sikora Brothers has decided to start the "Big Dig" in Cash Creek stormwater system. The project overall is going well and the Water and Sewer main replacement is approximately 80% complete. The first payment to Sikora Brothers was made on July 28th in the amount of \$85,741.80.
2. **Flooding August 2018 –**  
Work to repair the damage to the Cash Creek Stormwater System is set to begin immediately. Manager Lane is piggy backing on the SR 3020 turn-back contract which will save a substantial amount of cost to the project. Unit pricing will be used to pay Sikora Brothers, and FEMA will cover the "change order" amount. The price that was provided to us is well below the FEMA allocation, although there could be some unknowns while digging, as we have already found out on the upper portion of the system. We plan to complete the much smaller repair to Fifth Street and Mulberry street this fall with our in-house crews.
3. **2019 Audited Financial Report –**  
The audited financial report for the Borough's 2019 fiscal year is complete and submitted to DCED for their review. Manager Lane emailed a copy to all Borough Council Members.
4. **2020 COVID -19 Supplemental COPS grant**  
Manager Lane stated that we are cautiously optimistic if we will receive the full amount requested from COVID-19 for police service funding. He is waiting to hear if we are approved or not. He submitted a letter to J. Popovitch, Bradford County Probation, requesting grant money in the amount \$17,600 to help cover SRO John Hennessey's salary during COVID-19. Probation Chief Popovitch has submitted the application.
5. **COVID-19 Fire and EMS Funding -**  
Manager Lane submitted an application for State funding made available through the "Cares Act" for Fire and EMS companies to assist with the lack of fund-raising abilities during the pandemic. He has been told all applicants will receive a minimum (\$12,000) amount and the normal annual allocation provided through the FDEMAS grant program.
6. **Redevelopment Authority**  
Manager Lane met with the Northeast PA Land Bank Executive Director to discuss the ins and outs of a land bank. There is a lot of information to take in and he is becoming more convinced we need the full support of the County. In order to have this type of Authority, we would need to have 10,000 residences. It would have to include Towanda Borough and surrounding townships. He plans to continue to gather information and when ready will present to the County Commissioners.
7. **Trail Project/Park Master Plan**  
With the assistance of Lauren Egleston from NTRPDC we submitted our application (on July 31st) to DCED Greenways, Trails and Recreation Program. In order to create a budget for the Master Plan (Memorial Park included), Manager Lane contacted Derck and Edson and

requested a quote. They are the firm that did the work on the "SCI Complex Master Plan" in 2003. The quote he received was for \$32,200. The local Borough match will be \$4,830.

**8. 2021-2023 Towanda Police CBA –**

Manager Lane received the Collective Bargaining Agreement for the Towanda Borough Police Department for the years 2021, 2022 and 2023. The agreement included only house-keeping and language type changes. The Borough Officers will receive a 2.25% annual raise throughout the term of the contract. There are no other changes. **He asked for a motion by Council to ratify the contract as presented and allow him to execute the necessary documents. In addition, he went on to thank the Officers and the Committee for taking their personal time to work through this matter. A Motion was made by Mr. Kovalcin and seconded by Mr. Klinger. Motion passed.**

**9. Towanda Downtown Revitalization – RACP –**

Manager Lane received notice that the closeout audit is currently scheduled for August 25th and 26th here at the Municipal Building. Once the audit is complete, we will receive the final \$140,000 reimbursement.

**MISCELLANEOUS:**

Manager Lane stated that we are in need of replacing truck #3 (the smaller blue dump truck). He would like to purchase a Ford 550 Gasoline Engine dump truck (approx. \$70,000), with a stainless-steel box. The cost would be split between the Borough (50%) and Sewer (50%). Currently, he is waiting on a quote. In addition, he will try to sell the old truck on "Municibid" (on-line auction).

Manager Lane also state that Mr. Richard Cook, who lives at the corner of Bridge and Fourth Street has asked him if the borough would like to buy it. It is a worthless lot to him but will have a new sewer main run through it. Manager Lane will make an offer to Mr. Cook.

Also, Mr. Christini stated that the "definition of family" was only changed in ordinance Chapter 325-81, but not in Chapter 221-2 of Towanda Code.

**SOLICITOR'S REPORT:**

Solicitor Smith stated he will not be pursuing an appeal that was voted on to move forward with at last month's meeting. He talked to other borough solicitors about it along with research and concluded not to appeal.

As far as the fee schedule, he will have a couple that may require ordinances also. He will be working on them for review at September's meeting.

Also, Mr. Christini stated that in order to raise the minimum fine to \$200, we will need an amendment for Chapter 112. Construction Codes, Uniform, Article VII. Property Maintenance §112.30 (minimum fine now reads "\$25").

In addition, Mr. Christini stated that the "definition of family" was only changed in ordinance Chapter §325-81 Definitions, but not in Chapter §221-2 Definitions of the Borough of Towanda Code (which reads "five" persons instead of "three" persons).

**BOROUGH SECRETARY:**

Secretary Kulick reminded the board of the borough Picnic this Friday (Aug 7th).

**ADMINISTRATIVE:**

Mr. Eberlin and Manager Lane discussed at the Administrative meeting the Northern Tier Solid Waste Authority's (NTSWA) first offer. NTSWA made a second offer that Manager Lane is still reviewing.

**UNION SUB-COMMITTEE REPORT:**

Nothing to report.

**FINANCIAL REPORT:**

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

**PLANNING COMMISSION REPORT:**

The Planning Commission discussed some different towns and boroughs vacant property ordinances, and the next meeting is July 21st.

The Commission will hold an informal work session tomorrow to give them more time to read through sample Residential and Commercial Property Registration ordinances from other boroughs. The next Planning Commission meeting will be held on August 18th at 7:00 PM.

**RECREATION REPORT:**

Mr. Kovalcin said the "concerts in the park" continues this Thursday night.

**TMA/WMA/CBPA REPORTS:**

Included in packet. Per Manager Lane, August 17th is the turn-on date for the new water system.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

Motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Sweitzer and seconded by Mr. Eberlin. Meeting adjourned at 8:23 PM.

  
Diane M. Kulick  
Towanda Borough Secretary