

Towanda Borough Regular Council Meeting Minutes June 1, 2020

The Regular Meeting of the Towanda Borough Council was held on Monday, June 1, 2020, at the Borough Municipal Building, 724 Main Street, Towanda, PA. The meeting was called to order at 7:02 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, Mrs. Lacek, Mr. Roof, *Ms. Saxon (sworn in tonight) & Mr. Sweitzer

**Kayla Saxon, 105 Bridge Street, was sworn in as a council member tonight representing the 1st Ward. All gave a warm welcome to Ms. Saxon.*

CITIZENS TO BE HEARD:

Mr. Kevin Doupe' 10 Elliott Street, who is on the planning commission stated that since the end of March (COVID-19 period), he has been performing music twice weekly on-line on Facebook (his "porch fest"), and it caught the attention of the Daily Review who did an article. There were about 2,000 to 2,500 people that it had reached, so he decided to do "Taking it to the Streets Tour" where he performed in front of "locally owned" businesses to draw in more people. Two shows were rained out, so he had 6 shows that he played at in this way. From that he had reached just under 13,000 people.

At this time there are still over 10,000 people on his Facebook music page. He spoke to some people in this area about the idea and he proposed having an annual "Spring Event", of a streets tour that he would be involved in. The purpose would be to draw people into town with the music by using the "porch fest" type model. He asked that Council and the Recreation Committee give their assistance in the logistics and support to enable this to happen as an event next year. "Where would the venue be?" was asked by President Christini. Kevin stated that his model is the "porch fest" model, only it would be held outside of participating businesses not homes (if environment is feasible). Mr. Christini stated that there is no need to vote on this for Council's approval as it is a family friendly event and thanked Mr. Doupe'.

Mr. Christini stated there is a Kali's Mission update included in the packets this month and the group planned to start trapping feral cats throughout the borough next Wednesday, June 3rd.

APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MONTH'S MINUTES:

Motion to approve the May 4, 2020, Regular Council meeting minutes was made by Mr. Klinger and seconded by Mr. Sweitzer. Motion passed.

FIRE CHIEF REPORT:

Chief Roof stated that it was quiet this past month. Everything is in working order and he took the boat out for testing on the river this past weekend and it worked fine. Also, he stated that the new fire truck was used in parades and birthday events and in the first fire it was called to on the Burlington Turnpike. The fire company plans on doing an official presentation of the fire truck to the town as soon as they can do this safely. He has some ideas and he will let Council know.

FIRE BOARD REPORT:

Mr. Klinger stated they had a meeting, but it was uneventful.

MAYOR'S REPORT:

Mayor Miller stated that graduation was going to take place like normal due to moving to the GREEN phase.

POLICE CHIEF REPORT:

Chief Epler's monthly report was included in the packets.

Towanda Pd was involved in a high-speed pursuit that resulted in a crash near the CVS this month. The actor was caught and charges are pending DUI results.

We also had a stolen car that was involved with a hit and run. The car has been recovered and the investigation is continuing, the suspect has not been identified at this time.

Looking forward to getting back to normal Court Operations in the coming month as we switch to green.

They had been doing ZOOM meetings for court which is approved statewide now to use for the least serious crimes.

Also, the person who did the damage to BCVMP (Bradford County Veterans Memorial Park) received 14 to 36 months in state prison and will have over \$4,000 due to the borough in restitution.

Also, Mr. Klinger asked about the egging's and vandalism incidents that have been happening in the Borough. Chief Epler stated that they have been investigating these incidents and we do have an age-based curfew for kids under 19 years old. The officers have been doing car and foot patrols at night, and there were lots of contacts and names given to investigate.

The car break-ins have been occurring between 9 PM and 7 AM. They have put notices out on Facebook asking residents to lock their car doors and remove personal property from inside the vehicle that would be visible from outside the car. Residents were also advised to keep their property well-lit and report any suspicious activity by calling 911, and to also save a copy if they have surveillance video to give to the officers.

MAY 2020 – Monthly Report

260	COMPLAINTS RECEIVED	0	JUVENILE PETITIONS
21	TRAFFIC CITATIONS	0	K-9 SERVICE (BORO)
5	NON-TRAFFIC CITATIONS	4	THEFT REPORTS
2	DUI ARRESTS	3	ANIMAL COMPLAINTS
75	DISTURBANCE CALLS	4	VEHICLE DOORS OPENED
2	VEHICLE ACCIDENTS	5	WARNINGS ISSUED
2	OUT OF TOWN ASSISTS	0	K-9 SERVICES
8	CRIMINAL ARRESTS		

2019 Towanda Police Department Year End Report

	2017	2018	2019
Complaints Received	3988	4195	4554
Criminal Arrests	113	119	99
DUI Arrests	28	26	14
Traffic Citations	411	277	282
Non-Traffic Citations	133	124	135
Motor Vehicle Crashes	54	62	67
Vehicle Doors Opened	77	78	60
Warnings Issued	132	108	98
Thefts Reported	82	94	90
Disturbances	616	836	881
Juvenile Petitions	8	4	16
Animal Complaints	63	87	75

POLICE COMMITTEE REPORT:

Mr. Lacek stated there were some things they went over with Manager Lane. One being the borough hall needing a new condenser for the AC unit, as this will hurt the budget. The other being purchasing new computers for the police cars. Mr. Lacek stated the average computer costs around \$5,000. Chief Epler is working on getting some cost down on them. However, COVID-19 has delayed the Athens Township police department from testing the one they have right now. Sayre police have another type of equipment, and Chief Epler would like to look at both systems and compare them.

CODE ENFORCEMENT / PUBLIC WORKS REPORT:

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

ADMINISTRATIVE

The “Quality of Life” ticketing ordinance is being worked on with Mr. Christini and Manager Lane where there are time sensitive issues that need to be addressed. They are going to visit Danville Borough with Mr. Sluyter to see what that borough has done. Also, Danville Borough was able to shorten the time it takes to resolve property maintenance violations and enforcement issues like high grass and un-shoveled sidewalks, so their citations have gone down.

Visitor Mr. Doupe’ stated that he recommended that “vacant buildings registration” ordinance be looked into by the Planning Commission last year, and with that said, a motion was made by Mr. Lacek and seconded by Mr. Kingsley to work on this beginning with the next Planning Commission meeting on June 16th. Motion passed.

MAY 2020 SUMMARY – CODE ENFORCEMENT STATS

PERMITS & CONTRACTORS	Month	YTD
Permits Issued	12	27
Permit Fees Paid	\$430	\$1,671
Code Inspections Fees	\$0	\$705
Borough Total after Code Inspections Fees	\$430	\$966
Permit Work Value	\$25,300	\$103,185
Contractors Registered	13	43
Contractors Registrations Amount	\$950	\$3,350

UCC Reportable Permits

	Month	YTD	Fees	Fees YTD
#1 Residential – New				
#2 Residential – Other	4	11	18.00	49.50
#3 Commercial – New				
#4 Commercial – Other				
TOTALS	4	11	18.00	49.50

COMPLAINTS

Received Investigated Resolved

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	Month	YTD	Month	YTD	Month	YTD
Single Family Non-Rental	26	49	17	28	6	10
1 & 2 Family Rentals	22	52	20	45	8	11
Commercial Rental Units	10	24	6	19	1	1
Commercial Non-Rental	4	11	2	9	2	2
TOTALS	62	136	45	101	17	24

Rental Dwelling Unit Inspections	Month	YTD
1st Inspection	4	20
2nd Inspection	1	5
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 – Due to COVID-19 the parking attendant was not working.

Tickets by Status (Last 30 Days)

Issued	
Paid	
Dismissed	
Abandoned	
Warning	

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	
Bridge Street	
Park Street	
Court Street	
Towanda	
State Street	
Washington Street	
Pine Street	
Parking Garage	
John B. Merrill Pkwy	

BOROUGH MANAGER'S REPORT

Manager Lane reported on the following:

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

Manager Lane stated that we opened the lobby for regular Borough and TMA business transactions on May 11th, 2020. We have installed plexiglass in the window area to protect our employees and customers. We are requiring customers to wear a mask until further notice or otherwise advised.

As you may already be aware, Bradford County Officially moved to the “Green” phase of reopening Pennsylvania on May 29th, 2020.

2. **PennDOT Turnback SR 3020 –**

The pre-construction meeting was held on site on May 20th, 2020. The contractor has provided a tentative schedule for the duration of the project. The contractor will begin with the water main replacement on Convent St. and Poplar St. heading east. As it stands now, the contractor is not asking for a time extension.

3. **Flooding August 2018 –**

Manager Lane is awaiting a response from FEMA regarding an attempt to plan this project to be in line with the SR 3020 project. If FEMA moves a little quicker, we should be able to realize some cost savings with Sikora Brothers who will be replacing a section of pipe above the “FEMA” site. In addition, we would like to finish Cash Creek with an extra 300 feet down to 2nd Street, all in this year. This will result in a “change order” when approved.

Manager Lane also submitted a time extension of one year for the project.

4. **CDBG Demolition Project Mason Alley -**

Manager Lane stated that we have scheduled the demolition of 12 & 13 Mason Alley to begin on June 8th. We will be renting a large excavator from Bradco, using NTSWA roll off dumpsters and our own manpower to complete the project. All work and labor will be reimbursed through the CDBG program.

5. **Municipal Building Parking Lot –**

Project currently put on hold until financial clarification regarding COVID-19 is available. It may not be until late summer before we see what the damage to revenues will be.

6. **2020 COVID -19 Supplemental COPS grant**

Manager Lane has not received any further information from the Commonwealth regarding the availability of the funding they received for local departments. He will continue to contact them.

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

There has been no news from FEMA. Manager Lane is assuming this is on hold during the pandemic.

Also, he provided FEMA our current flood ordinance several weeks ago and has not heard back from anyone yet.

8. **Route 6 Alliance Façade Program**

Manager Lane has contacted the program administrator and she stated “All of the awarded projects have been contacted and waiting to confirm they are able to financially move forward. Once this list is finished, he can then notify the denial projects as well “She added she will send him a list of awarded grantees once all notifications and confirmations have been sent.

9. **Redevelopment Authority**

Manager Lane is working on re-scheduling a meeting with the NEPA Land Bank in Pittston. Once logistics are figured out and we have gathered more information, he will schedule a meeting with the County Commissioners to get this back in motion.

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

Manager Lane will continue to keep this project on the radar, however status of recreation funding at this point is unknown. When things return to normal, he will reengage the effort to lockdown funding for the trail system.

11. **Towanda Borough Fee Schedule –**

Manager Lane and Mr. Christini have been working on updating the Borough Fee Schedule for some time. We discussed in detail at the Finance and Administration meeting and the consensus is the proposed fees are more than appropriate. Manager Lane has enclosed a draft copy for your review. The last time the Borough updated the schedule was in 2010. Then, Mr. Christini reviewed the proposed new fee schedule with council. We need to keep in mind, it is necessary to recover the costs of our services and we would like to have Solicitor Smith look this over before doing a resolution.

12. **2020 Riverfest –**

Manager Lane stated that it is very sad to announce that the 2020 Riverfest is going to be postponed until 2021. The carnival operator is unable to make the event given the economic hardship they have endured. The committee also had concerns about the ability to obtain corporate sponsorships during these difficult economic times. There is a sample letter Manager Lane distributed for council to review that will be submitted to the Daily Review informing the public that this year's Riverfest is cancelled.

SOLICITOR REPORT:

Solicitor Smith was not here tonight.

MISC: Mrs. Kulick stated that the annual Borough Picnic is going is set to be held tentatively on August 7th at the Fire Hall. Chief Roof will recheck the fire hall booking schedule to confirm this date.

UNION SUB-COMMITTEE REPORT:

Manager Lane stated that on June 17th the committee will meet with the police union to discuss the new contract.

FINANCIAL REPORT:

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

PLANNING COMMISSION REPORT:

The Planning Commission did not meet in May, but there will be meeting on June 16th to discuss developing a "Vacant Building Registration" ordinance that was motioned to do earlier in the meeting.

RECREATION REPORT:

Mr. Kovalcin stated that the "Concerts in the Park" will start on June 25th and Nate the Great will be the first night act.

TMA/WMA/CBPA REPORTS:

Included in packet.

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Sweitzer and seconded by Mr. Kovalcin. Meeting adjourned at 9:05 PM.



Diane M. Kulick
Towanda Borough Secretary