

Towanda Borough Regular Council Meeting Minutes May 4, 2020

The Regular Meeting of the Towanda Borough Council was held on Monday, May 4, 2020, at the Borough Municipal Building, 724 Main Street, Towanda, PA. The meeting was called to order at 7:01 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 two (2) council persons attended via telephone conference call.

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

Mr. Christini stated that the first item on the agenda is to do a resolution to appoint a new council member behind Keith Long for the 1st Ward, (which was noted in a reported article for the April 6, 2020, Council Meeting in the Daily Review newspaper). Kayla Saxon, 105 Bridge Street was the only resident to send letter of interest, and she is a registered elector in the 1st Ward. Kayla will be sworn in to Council at the next meeting held on June 1, 2020.

RESOLUTION 2020-8

To appoint Kayla Saxon as First Ward Council Member behind Keith Long who moved out of the jurisdiction.

A 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, Mr. Lacek, Mrs. Lacek, Mr. Roof & Mr. Sweitzer

NAY/NO:

ABSTAIN:

ABSENT:

Resolution 2020-8 Carried unanimously.

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, street address and concerns or comments. No one responded.

APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MONTH'S MINUTES:

Motion to approve the April 6, 2020, Regular Council meeting minutes was made by Mrs. Lacek and seconded by Mr. Kovalcin. Motion passed.

FIRE CHIEF REPORT:

Chief Roof stated that they haven't used the new fire/ladder truck for any fires to date, but the fire company volunteers/members have been taking it out to get used to it. In addition, they have been doing some "drive-by" birthday celebrations for kids and some elderly nursing home residents. The fire company members enjoy doing this and it brightens the children's and the elderly people's day. It's something positive. President Christini, Mrs. Lacek, Mr. Eberlin and the rest of council thanked Chief Roof and the fire department volunteers for doing these parades as they are a big part of the community and the response is awesome and wonderful for the kids especially.

FIRE BOARD REPORT:

Mr. Klinger stated there was no meeting due to COVID-19.

MAYOR'S REPORT:

Mayor Miller was not available for the teleconference, however, Manager Lane stated that he received a call from the Mayor and he wanted Manager Lane to mention that the K9 fund received a very generous donation that was used to fully outfit the police department's Tahoe (our newer K9 vehicle) from a benefactor that has donated in the past but wishes to remain anonymous.

POLICE CHIEF REPORT:

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

Towanda Police have done a number of birthday drive by mini parades for kids stuck at home.

All Police departments county-wide are cooperating with coverage, if needed, and for 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.

We are taking advantage of the COVID-19 situation to do several online training sessions and trying to make the best use of our time.

Our Tahoe (K9) is back and in operation.

APRIL 2020 – Monthly Report

245	COMPLAINTS RECEIVED	0	JUVENILE PETITIONS
10	TRAFFIC CITATIONS	0	K-9 SERVICE (BORO)
6	NON-TRAFFIC CITATIONS	12	THEFT REPORTS
0	DUI ARRESTS	5	ANIMAL COMPLAINTS
72	DISTURBANCE CALLS	2	VEHICLE DOORS OPENED
0	VEHICLE ACCIDENTS	8	WARNINGS ISSUED
1	OUT OF TOWN ASSISTS	0	K-9 SERVICES
5	CRIMINAL ARRESTS		

POLICE COMMITTEE REPORT:

There was no meeting held this month.

CODE ENFORCEMENT / PUBLIC WORKS REPORT:

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

APRIL 2020 SUMMARY

PERMITS & CONTRACTORS	Month	YTD
Permits Issued	2	19
Permit Fees Paid	\$123	\$1,241
Code Inspections Fees	\$0	\$705
Borough Total after Code Inspections Fees	\$123	\$536
Permit Work Value	\$9,335	\$77,885
Contractors Registered	9	30
Contractors Registrations Amount	\$750	\$2,400

UCC Reportable Permits

	Month	YTD	Fees	Fees YTD
#1 Residential – New				
#2 Residential – Other	2	7	9.00	31.50
#3 Commercial – New				
#4 Commercial – Other				
TOTALS	2	7	9.00	31.50

COMPLAINTS

	Received		Investigated		Resolved	
	Month	YTD	Month	YTD	Month	YTD
Single Family Non-Rental	12	23		11		4
1 & 2 Family Rentals	3	30	3	25		3
Commercial Rental Units	3	14	3	13		0
Commercial Non-Rental	2	7	2	7		0
TOTALS	20	74	8	56		7

Rental Dwelling Unit Inspections	Month	YTD
1st Inspection	5	16
2nd Inspection	2	4
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 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 will remain closed to the public until May 11th, 2020. We have installed plexiglass in the window area to protect our employees and customers. We will require customers to wear a mask until further notice.

Administrative staff will also return to regular work hours starting May 11th.

The public works department began working at full complement on April 20th. In lieu of hiring additional help to mow this summer, we are using regular personal on a rotating basis in order to keep employees segregated as much as possible. In addition, we are not hiring a mowing crew this year, as we will have 1 employee from each crew doing it.

The Borough Tax Collector MaryAnn Harris is remains unable to collect taxes. Borough administrative staff have been picking up her mail, depositing and sending receipts.

We opened the gate to the Tommy Fairchild Park in order to allow river access for boats. We roped off the pavilion and hung closed signs. Third Ward and Memorial Park remain closed.

2. **PennDOT Turnback SR 3020 –**

Manager Lane also was informed Sikora Brothers Paving plans to tentatively begin the first week of June on the Poplar Street project. As of now, they plan to work on the sanitary sewer first, the water and stormwater second, and finally the road construction. They also stated, as it currently stands, they still anticipate to meet the completion date of September 18th, 2020.

3. **Flooding August 2018 –**

Still waiting for FEMA's final approval. Manager Lane was advised he should be seeing the approval within the next few weeks.

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

Manager Lane anticipates the 'Sub-Recipient' agreement in the mail next week. Once this is signed and delivered, we will begin to raze the two structures. He plans to rent a large excavator and use Borough personnel to complete the work. The CDBG grant award will cover in-house labor, equipment rental and landfill fees.

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**

Chief Epler brought it to Manager Lane's attention that because of COVID-19, Officer Hennesy's salary is not being paid by the Towanda School District, and federal funding has been made available for local PD's. He has been in contact with Derin Myres who is the State Administering Agent for the funds and has completed a needs survey. He is awaiting further information from him.

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

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

8. **Route 6 Alliance Façade Program**

Manager Lane stated that no information has been made available to him regarding the status of the application since the start of non- essential lockdown.

9. **Redevelopment Authority**

Manager Lane plans to reschedule the meeting with NEPA Land Bank, but this won't happen until business returns to normal.

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

This project is taking a back seat until the current pandemic situation and economic fallout has flatted out.

11. **Chemung Canal Bank Accounts –**

Manager Lane stated that Chemung Canal Trust Company is closing its Towanda Branch effective April 30th, 2020, and Towanda Borough currently has five (5) accounts with Chemung Canal Bank. His intent is to move the accounts to First Citizens Community Bank. He stated that he requested proposals from both First Citizens and Community Bank, and First Citizens offered the best deal.

Manager Lane asked Council for approval to move the five (5) borough accounts from Chemung Bank to First Citizens Bank. Motion to approve moving the following accounts to First Citizens Bank was made by Mr. Klinger and seconded by Mr. Kovalcin. Motion was approved unanimously.

The following accounts will be moved:

- a. **Fund 31 -Special Capital Reserve Fund**
- b. **Fund 30 - Special Fire Fund**
- c. **Fund 34 - Merrill Parkway**
- d. **Fund 35 – Liquid Fuels**
- e. **Fund 33 – Poplar Street Turnback**

SOLICITOR REPORT:

Solicitor Smith stated that he has a current case that Mr. Sluyter submitted to him on a contested fine. Also, he stated that the Magistrate court will be soon be held via ZOOM.

MISC:

UNION SUB-COMMITTEE REPORT:

Manager Lane stated he received a notice on May 1st from the union that they wanted to meet in June to discuss the new Police contract. He sent a letter back to the union verifying a meeting in June.

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 April 2020, and there is no meeting scheduled for May 2020, as there is no business to discuss.

RECREATION REPORT:

Mr. Kovalcin stated that the bands and a magician are planned but again, we do not know what will happen due to COVID-19. It was discussed and decided that the committee reach out to the entertainers and see how they feel about performing, and we need to find out what the social distancing rules will be beginning with the planned June dates. We may have to modify the schedule and start a couple weeks later due to the COVID-19 status and guidelines.

TMA/WMA/CBPA REPORTS:

Included in packet.

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion to adjourn was made by Mrs. Lacek and seconded by Mr. Klinger. Meeting adjourned at 8:00 PM.



Diane M. Kulick
Towanda Borough Secretary