

## **Towanda Borough Regular Council Meeting Minutes September 8, 2020**

The Regular Meeting of the Towanda Borough Council was held on Monday, September 8, 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.

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

**Absent:** Mrs. Lacek, Mr. Roof

**CITIZENS TO BE HEARD:** Mr. Robert Archer of 179 Oak Ridge Drive, Towanda represented CHOP (Children's Hunger Outreach Partners). He stated that the Towanda based CHOP has expanded into the old Strickland Beverage building around the corner from their Elizabeth Street location. He stated that they plan on being there a long time, as they signed a 99-year lease.

He asked Council about naming the lane that connects Elizabeth and Washington streets. This lane borders both CHOP buildings, therefore they would like a CHOP related name. President Christini asked them to send a letter of request to Council and the board would discuss and vote on it.

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

Motion to approve the August 3, 2020, Regular Council meeting minutes as corrected was made by Mr. Sweitzer and seconded by Mr. Kovalcin. Motion passed.

**FIRE CHIEF REPORT:**

Monthly report of incidents was included in packet.

Chief Roof was attending another fire board meeting so he was not able to be present. Mr. Klinger stated that the Chief wanted him to talk about Halloween. The Firemen decided that the Halloween parade will be held on October 31st at 7 PM on the Merrill Parkway.

***They discussed Trick-or-Treat, if to have it on the 31st before the parade (the same day), after which Council voted on establishing the date. Motion was made by Mr. Sweitzer and seconded by Mr. Kovalcin to have it on Wednesday, October 28th from 6 PM to 8 PM, with a rain date of Thursday, October 29th. Motion passed.***

**FIRE BOARD REPORT:**

Mr. Klinger stated that he attended the meeting, but they did not have a quorum.

**MAYOR'S REPORT:**

Mayor Miller stated that Mr. Sluyter contacted him about the problems with Elizabeth Street and leading into the Washington Street public parking lot. There has been parking after hours with drug activity and also, we need the signs to match the parking ordinance. This way if someone is parking there after hours the police have more justification to do something about it. They do have "no loitering" signs up now. Also, the lighting in these lots does not cover the area very well. Manager Lane will assess the lighting situation there.

**POLICE CHIEF REPORT:**

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

Officer Smith was sent to, and successfully completed SFST Training (Standardized Field Sobriety Testing) in Kingston PA.

Officer Hennessy is back at the school with the restart of school being the last day of this month.

Officer Hennessy did 2 more YMCA day camp tours of our station.

I met with PSP Corporal Strauss about the number of pursuits and cooperation between PSP and Towanda PD.

**AUGUST 2020 – Monthly Report**

298	COMPLAINTS RECEIVED	0	JUVENILE PETITIONS
36	TRAFFIC CITATIONS	0	K-9 SERVICE (BORO)
16	NON-TRAFFIC CITATIONS	10	THEFT REPORTS
1	DUI ARRESTS	7	ANIMAL COMPLAINTS
107	DISTURBANCE CALLS	5	VEHICLE DOORS OPENED
3	VEHICLE ACCIDENTS	10	WARNINGS ISSUED
5	OUT OF TOWN ASSISTS	0	K-9 SERVICES
8	CRIMINAL ARRESTS		

**POLICE COMMITTEE REPORT:**

Mr. Lacek stated the Committee was asked about getting 2 more cameras for the cars that don't have one yet. The K9 vehicle has the funds to do this, but there is no funding for the other car. He will work on this with Manager Lane.

Also, Mr. Lacek stated our police department's tasers are around 14 years old now and they could be a liability and/or safety issue in the future, plus parts for these tasers are hard to find. Chief Epler stated that estimated cost of new tasers is around \$1,200 each, times 8 for our officers equals \$9,600 estimated total cost. Chief Epler will have exact cost available for next month's meeting.

Consensus is that the tasers are the #1 priority (before the cameras).

**CODE ENFORCEMENT / PUBLIC WORKS REPORT:**

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

Mr. Sluyter stated that he appreciated the efforts the police department did to address Washington Street problem with the loitering and drug activity.

Also, Mr. Sluyter was asked to grade 5 of the very worst properties for council.

President Christini stated that the Planning Commission is currently working on a vacant registry where-by the owners will be charged a yearly fee.

President Christini stated that a new home is being built on Orchard Street, which is good news for the borough.

**AUGUST 2020 SUMMARY – CODE ENFORCEMENT STATS**

<b>PERMITS &amp; CONTRACTORS</b>	<b>Month</b>	<b>YTD</b>
Permits Issued	24	63
Permit Fees Paid	\$2,130	\$7,782.80
Code Inspections Fees	\$1,670	\$5,330.00
Borough Total after Code Inspections Fees	\$460	\$2,452.80
Permit Work Value	\$155,225	\$451,535
Contractors Registered	12	75
Contractors Registrations Amount	\$950	\$5,900

**UCC Reportable Permits**

	<b>Month</b>	<b>YTD</b>	<b>Fees</b>	<b>Fees YTD</b>
#1 Residential – New	0	1		\$4.50
#2 Residential – Other	3	17	\$13.50	\$76.50
#3 Commercial – New	0	0		
#4 Commercial – Other	0	1		\$4.50
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>\$13.50</b>	<b>\$85.50</b>

**COMPLAINTS**

	<b>Received</b>		<b>Investigated</b>		<b>Resolved</b>	
	<b>Month</b>	<b>YTD</b>	<b>Month</b>	<b>YTD</b>	<b>Month</b>	<b>YTD</b>
Single Family Non-Rental	20	89	16	61	8	28
1 & 2 Family Rentals	12	96	10	84	6	26
Commercial Rental Units	5	43	4	35	3	8
Commercial Non-Rental	3	18	3	16	2	5
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>246</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>196</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>67</b>

**Rental Dwelling Unit Inspections**

	<b>Month</b>	<b>YTD</b>
1st Inspection	5	33
2nd Inspection	1	6
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	29
Paid	16
Dismissed	4
Abandoned	
Warning	2

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

3 Hour Limit	47
Expired Meter	
Parking Outside of Lines	
Permit Required	2
Non-Space	2

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

Main Street	25
Bridge Street	6
Park Street	12
Court Street	3
Towanda	
State Street	
Washington Street	2
Pine Street	3
Parking Garage	
John B. Merrill Pkwy	
Second Street	

**BOROUGH MANAGER'S REPORT - AUGUST 2020**

Manager Lane reported on the following:

1. **PennDOT Turnback SR 3020 –**

Sikora Brothers has completed the water and sewer main replacements for the project. They have finished the installation of the stormwater pipe under Third Street to the headwall of the drainage area, which is part of the turnback agreement with PennDOT. They are currently working on stormwater, concrete curbs and ADA sidewalk corners. The schedule at this point is up in the air while they wait for Valley Energy to finish moving their gas lines from the roadway to the tree lawn between Western Avenue and Third Street on Poplar Street.

2. **Flooding August 2018 –**

Sikora Brothers and Manager Lane have agreed to an amount for the FEMA portion of the Cash Creek stormwater project. This will be a single change order from Sikora Brothers to cover the replacement of the damaged stormwater system from Third Street to Second Street. The FEMA/PEMA allocation will cover the full cost as well as inspections, services and management costs. We are planning to repair the Fifth Street and Mulberry Street damage as time permits, and we will replace 370 feet of pipe with 4 catch basins. Manager Lane said we have until May of 2021; however, we would like to get to it as soon as possible. Also, he stated that there will be a new pipe installed by our crew near 8 Convent Avenue and Poplar Streets before Sikora paves.

3. **2020 COVID -19 Supplemental COPS grant**

Manager Lane received a call from Chief Popovich that our application was approved and we will be receiving the full amount applied for (which was \$17,600).

Also, we did receive notice that our "COPS" application was not awarded.

4. **COVID-19 Fire and EMS Funding -**

The application was submitted however Manager Lane has not heard any news. Hopefully it will be before the end of this year.

There is also a Fire Protection Grant to supplement the Fire Department's lack of fund-raising ability this year. Chief Roof and Manager Lane will be putting together an application where-by the fire company may be able to receive a \$30,000 grant.

5. **Redevelopment Authority**

Manager Lane met with Matt Williams at Bradford County Planning to discuss his vision and ask for Matt's assistance setting up the Land Bank. He feels confident Matt will be a good partner to work with on this project.

6. **Trail Project/Park Master Plan**

The grant is submitted and Manager Lane is waiting for a response from DCNR.

7. **2021 Towanda Police Pension MMO – RESOLUTION 2020-11**

Enclosed in the packets was the 2021 MMO for the Police Pension plan. The MMO for 2021 is \$132,946. This will mostly be covered by ACT 205 state aid. Manager Lane asked for a motion from Council to accept the 2021 MMO as required by Act 205.

**RESOLUTION 2020-11**

Minimum Municipal Obligation for 2021 in the amount \$132,946 for the Police Pension Plan.

A motion was made by Mr. Kovalcin and seconded by Mr. Sweitzer

The roll was called and recorded as follows:

AYE/YES: President Christini, Mr. Eberlin, Mr. Klinger, Mr. Kovalcin, Mr. Lacek,  
Ms. Saxon & Mr. Sweitzer

NAY/NO:

ABSTAIN:

ABSENT: Mrs. Lacek & Mr. Roof

**Resolution 2020-11 Carried unanimously.**

8. **Towanda Downtown Revitalization – RACP –**

Manager Lane stated the RACP audit for the Towanda Downton Revitalization Project is complete. We had zero findings and nothing to follow up on. The audit covered the grant period from July 2010 to August 26th, 2020. We will receive the retainage from RACP in the next several weeks. President Christini praised Manager Lane, Susan Miller and others for doing such a good job with running this project to completion.

Manager Lane is in the process of hiring a surveyor to conduct an as-built survey in order to close out the land development plan with Bradford County.

In addition to wrapping up the grant, construction, and permits, Solicitor Smith will be drafting an agreement for the 105 parking spaces the County is using. This agreement will cover the remainder of the construction spent on the parking garage.

9. **NTSWA – Inter-Municipal Agreement –**

Last week Manager Lane emailed Council the inter-municipal agreement drafted by NTSWA which would begin December 1, 2020. There are many changes to the agreement which include price increases for stickers and we will now pay for the four dumpsters at Borough and TMA owned properties. We received NTSWA 's request to terminate the current agreement on August 31, 2020. We will vote on this next month.

10. **Towing Lot Designation -**

***Solicitor Smith drafted the ordinance to amend chapter 298-4 in the Borough code to identify the location of impounded vehicles from the Borough to go to Jack Williams Garage, 224 Old Route 6 Road, Wysox, PA 18854. Manager Lane asked for a motion to have Solicitor Smith advertise this amendment. Motion was made by Mr. Klinger and seconded by Mr. Lacek. Motion passed.***

11. **Truck #3 Replacement –**

Manager Lane stated that it has become apparent that Truck 3 (Small Dump and Plow) needs to be replaced. The 2005 Ford Diesel will be put up for sale on Municibid.

The price tag for the replacement is \$69,750 though the Center Westmoreland COG & COSTARS.

The K-9 police car and the old street sweeper was sold on Municibid for a combined total of \$10,000. He asked to reallocate \$20,000 that we originally intended to use to pave the parking lot and \$25,000 that was budgeted for the trail study, to be used to purchase the truck. In addition, he asked to amend the budget to add \$15,000 to "Equipment Purchase" in the Capital Reserve Fund.

***A motion was made by Mr. Klinger and seconded by Mr. Kovalcin to amend the 2 budget allocations for the new truck and add \$15,000 in order to purchase it in full.***

***Manager Lane also asked for a motion to advertise for sale on "Municibid" the old 1989 Excavator. A motion to do this was made by Mr. Sweitzer and seconded by Mr. Kovalcin. Motion passed.***

**MISCELLANEOUS:**

**SOLICITOR'S REPORT:**

Solicitor Smith stated he is working on a plan for the borough's purchasing of the ditch behind 308 Bridge Street from the property's owner. This is part of the Cash Creek where new drainage pipe was installed. The owner has no use for that part of the property and has offered it to the Borough.

Solicitor Smith will be doing some property maintenance issues with Mr. Sluyter.

***Solicitor Smith had 3 amended ordinances he asked council for permission to advertise that will be acted upon at a regular meeting. They will also be sent to County Planning Commission for comment.***

1. ***Amend Chapter 112, Section 112-30 of the code of the borough pertaining to violations and penalties for violations of the uniform construction codes of the borough to***

*increase the minimum fine for any violation to \$200.00.*

- 2. Amend Chapter 221, Section 221-2 of the code of the borough as it pertains to the definition of "Family" to replace the current definition of "Family" with a new definition of "Family". This was missed in March when Chapter 325-81 "Family" definition was replaced and amended.**
- 3. Amend Chapter 298, Section 298-4 of the Towanda borough code to change the approved lot, as a pound, for the storage of such impounded vehicles.**

***A motion to advertise all 3 of the above ordinances was made by Mr. Klinger and seconded by Mr. Kovalcin. Motion passed.***

**BOROUGH SECRETARY:**

Secretary Kulick had nothing to report.

**ADMINISTRATIVE:**

**UNION SUB-COMMITTEE REPORT:**

Nothing to report.

**FINANCIAL REPORT:**

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

**PLANNING COMMISSION REPORT:**

The commission met again on August 18th. They are continuing to work on the establishment of an ordinance for Vacant Property registration in the borough.

**RECREATION REPORT:**

Mr. Kovalcin stated that the Recreation Committee will hold a Pumpkin Rolling contest again this year on Saturday, October 10th. The street will close at 1 PM with a start time of 3 PM and the pumpkin roll at 6 PM. Check the FB webpage.

**TMA/WMA/CBPA REPORTS:**

Included in packet.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

Motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Sweitzer and seconded by Mr. Eberlin. Meeting adjourned at 8:45 PM.



Diane M. Kulick  
Towanda Borough Secretary