

# **Towanda Borough Reorganization & Regular Council Meeting Minutes January 3, 2022**

A **Reorganizational Meeting** of the Towanda Borough Council was held on Monday, January 3, 2022, at the Borough Municipal Building, 724 Main Street, Towanda, PA.

## **ADMINISTRATION OF OATH OF OFFICE:**

Mayor-Elect Garrett Miller was sworn in by Bradford County District Justice Todd Carr.

District Justice Carr also administered the Oath of Office to the following Council Members Elect, Mrs. Miller, Mr. Saring, Mr. Kovalcin, Mr. Schulze, Mrs. Hatch and Mr. Parks, and Tax Collector Elect, Mrs. Kara Eberlin

District Justice Carr and Mayor Miller congratulated the newly elected Council Members and Official(s).

**Call to Order:** Mayor Garrett Miller called the meeting to order at 7:07 PM, followed by silent prayer and the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Roll Call:** Mr. Eberlin, Mrs. Miller, Mr. Roof, Mrs. Saring, Mr. Kovalcin, Mr. Schulze, Mr. Christini, Mrs. Hatch, and Mr. Parks.

## **NOMINATIONS & ELECTION OF COUNCIL OFFICERS**

1. Mayor Miller opened the nominations for Council President. Mr. Kovalcin made a motion to nominate Mr. Christini for President of Council, seconded by Mrs. Hatch. There were no other nominations; nominations were closed by Mr. Kovalcin and Mr. Parks. Mr. Christini is unanimously Borough Council President.

2. Mayor Miller turned the gavel over to President Christini and opened the nominations for Council Vice President. Mr. Schulze made a motion to nominate Mr. Eberlin for Vice-President of Council, seconded by Mr. Kovalcin. There were no other nominations; nominations were closed by Mr. Parks and Mr. Roof. Mr. Eberlin is unanimously Borough Council Vice-President.

3. President Christini asked for nominations for President Pro Tempore of Council. Mr. Eberlin made a motion to nominate Mr. Kovalcin for President Pro Tempore of Council, seconded by Mr. Parks. There were no other nominations; nominations were closed by Mr. Saring and Mr. Eberlin. Mr. Kovalcin is unanimously President Pro Tempore.

## **CITIZENS TO BE HEARD:**

President Christini said there was a letter in the packet that he just received from Attorney Christina Fleury. He asked Council members to review it and we will make the appropriate response to Ms. Fleury. Mr. Eberlin commented that we are still taking her concerns seriously and we will continue to do this as we review the parking situation in Towanda Borough.

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

Motion to approve the December 6th, 2021 regular meeting minutes was made by Mr. Roof and seconded by Mrs. Miller. Motion passed.

Motion to approve the December 29th, 2021 special meeting minutes was made by Mr. Kovalcin and seconded by Mr. Parks. Motion passed.

## **FIRE CHIEF REPORT:**

Chief Roof stated that they had a busy month. They had approximately 155 calls for the year. They are still waiting on a part (on order) for the ladder truck; however, they can still use the

truck here in town. They just don't want to take the truck for use out of town. They are looking at a new maintenance company out of Montrose to use that will come to the station and test the equipment.

**FIRE BOARD REPORT:**

Mr. Parks stated there was a meeting and there were no issues to report.

**MAYOR'S REPORT:**

Mayor Miller stated that he was looking forward to the new year with the council and the new borough manager. It is great to see the energy come alive in town and wished everyone good health and he looked forward to a great year.

**POLICE CHIEF REPORT:**

Chief Epler was absent and Mayor Miller reviewed the report.

**CHIEF EPLER REPORTED THE FOLLOWING:**

Chief Epler, received an email stating that we have been turned down for the grant. Manager Egleston stated that there were some critical pieces of information that they asked for and we will be more prepared the next time the grant becomes available.

The Drug Task Force has been active this month with many members of Towanda PD participating and having good results. Mayor Miller stated there are still active investigations going on concerning the criminal mischief that is going on around town.

Chief Epler is on vacation from Dec 23 thru Jan 4. He will be in Colorado visiting his son; therefore, Sgt. Lantz will be Officer-in-Charge until he returns.

Much of this report is a projection due to reporting on 12/22. Any corrected numbers will be added to the year-end report.

**DECEMBER 2021 – Monthly Report**

275	COMPLAINTS RECEIVED	2	JUVENILE PETITIONS
6	TRAFFIC CITATIONS	0	K-9 SERVICE (BORO)
1	NON-TRAFFIC CITATIONS	11	THEFT REPORTS
0	DUI ARRESTS	2	ANIMAL COMPLAINTS
59	DISTURBANCE CALLS	2	VEHICLE DOORS OPENED
3	VEHICLE ACCIDENTS	5	WARNINGS ISSUED
2	OUT OF TOWN ASSISTS	0	K-9 SERVICES
7	CRIMINAL ARRESTS		

**POLICE COMMITTEE REPORT:**

President Christini stated that he will be reviewing the borough committees and if anyone would like to be on a certain committee to let him know. Mr. Lacek will not be able to be on the Police Committee because he did not run for Council in the recent election. Therefore, there will be an opening for that committee.

**CODE ENFORCEMENT / PUBLIC WORKS REPORT:**

Mr. Sluyter, Code Enforcement Officer, presented the report to Council. President Christini asked about the garbage situation on the 400 block of Main Street that was not on the report. Mr. Sluyter stated that he does contact the landlord first before writing a letter to them. President Christini stated that this is one problem where adopting a "Quality of Life" ordinance may help. This way the violators can be issued a citation ticket right away.

Mr. Sluyter also stated that he did receive another application for the Curb Appeal program. This homeowner is seeking \$7,500.

**DECEMBER 2021 SUMMARY – CODE ENFORCEMENT STATS**

<b>PERMITS &amp; CONTRACTORS</b>		MONTH	YTD
Permits Issued		13	279
Permit Fees Paid	\$	1,695	31,648
Code Inspections Fees	\$	255	9,320.28
Borough Total after Code Inspections Fees	\$	1,440	22,327.72
Permit Work Value	\$	76,200	1,722,254.17
Contractors Registered		3	115
Contractors Registrations Amount	\$	300	9,050

**UCC Reportable Permits**

	Month	YTD	\$ Fees	\$ Fees YTD
#1 Residential – New				
#2 Residential – Other	2	47	13.50	211.50
#3 Commercial – New				
#4 Commercial – Other		10		45
<b>TOTALS</b>	2	57	13.50	256.50

**COMPLAINTS**

	Received		Investigated		Resolved	
	Month	YTD	Month	YTD	Month	YTD
Single Family Non-Rental	10	143		117		66
1 & 2 Family Rentals	12	167		139		79
Commercial Rental Units	8	82		61		33
Commercial Non-Rental	5	40		27		18
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>432</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>344</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>196</b>

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**Rental Dwelling Unit Inspections**

	Month	YTD
1st Inspection	5	74
2nd Inspection		8
3rd Inspection		
<b>FEES PAID</b>		<b>550</b>

**PARKING:**

**Tickets by Status**

	Month	Year-to-Date
Issued	54	152
Paid	35	556
Dismissed	13	130
Warning	17	56
Abandoned		5
Citation	10	271

**Tickets by Street Location**

	Month	Year-to-Date
Main Street	54	508
Court Street	7	144
Bridge Street	25	227
Park Street	6	107
Pine Street	7	94
Washington Street		24
State Street	5	24
Parking Garage	9	28
John B. Merrill Pkwy	3	9
Second Street		
Mix Avenue		
C&N Lot		
Poplar Street	3	6
Other (Towanda)		

**Tickets by Violation**

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	Month	Year-to-Date
Expired Meter	9	28
3 Hour Limit	95	1089
Parking Outside of Lines	7	23
Permit Required	4	11
Handicap/Disabled		4
Non-Space	2	13
Loading Zone	2	7

**BOROUGH MANAGER:**

Manager Egleston received news that Laurel Health signed a 20-year lease agreement today with Trehab for the street level of the Towanda Terrace building (in the 400 block). The 4 storefront spaces will be developed to provide family medicine/primary care services and they are looking at a possible dental clinic that may be there or elsewhere in the borough. She stated that we are happy to have this and it will bring 12 to 16 well-paid medical health care positions into the downtown.

She met with them in her former position at Northern Tier Planning and they were looking for some grant funding. They indicated that they always wanted to establish a facility in Towanda and the Terrace building is a great fit for them as they can model it to their specs. Manager Egleston is going to assist them as much as she can. They are looking to apply for an EDA Grant that would be 50% of 1.5 million.

1. **YMCA – Gymnasium Renovations-DCNR Grant**

The new flooring and lighting have been installed, there was one issue with the flooring bubbling, which will be repaired in the next few weeks by the installer. There is a small amount of funding left to top out the grant for the total of \$110,000 for the ceiling award, and we plan to use it for some benches in the gym.

2. **TextMyGov.com**

The Towanda Borough's TextMyGov program is operational as of today. The information will be located on our website and Facebook page, the phone number is 570-627-6277. To opt-in to our program, text "TOWANDA" to 91896. This will allow us to send out information and alerts to residents.

Residents may report:

Code issues-high grass, junk vehicle, abandoned vehicle, garbage, burning

Leak-water or sewer

Park

Roads-potholes, street lights, signs

Or inquire about:

Agendas

Concerts

Contact information

Contractors

Events

Fire

Ordinances

Parking

Permits  
Planning  
Police  
Recreation  
Recycling  
Riverfest

3. **Parking**

Manager Egleston, Mr. Sluyter, and the Sub-Committee met and have been strategizing some alternative parking options in the Commercial Business District. We have been in contact with ParkMobile to help us develop a contactless way (paying through an App) to receive payments for hourly, daily or monthly parking spaces.

4. **Facade Improvements at the Municipal Building**

Manager Egleston submitted a grant this month to help cover the composite siding costs, new doors along Main Street, a new Garage Door, an HVAC unit, and upgrading lighting for \$45,244.49. The grant is reviewed on a quarterly basis, and we should hear back in a few months whether or not we will be awarded.

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

DCED grant through the Greenways, Trails and Recreation approved for the Borough Park Master Plan for \$27,145. The grant will cover up to 75% of the costs to hire a consultant to develop a Master Site Plan for the Borough Municipal Parks and proposed Trail system. The Towanda School District would like to partner with us to include Memorial Park.

6. **Security Cameras**

We met with Teledair Communications and Security for a quote for Security Cameras for our building and parking garage. For a 16-channel system with 8 cameras for the building is \$8,949 (included in the grant application) and the Parking Garage for a 32-channel system and 18 cameras and installation will cost \$18,489. We are currently waiting for a quote from another company.

Manager Egleston also met with Chris Boggs of Boggs Hi-Tech Solutions and is waiting on a quote from him.

7. **USDA Community Facilities Grant**

Manager Egleston submitted a grant to purchase a new Chevy Silverado 3500HD Truck for the Borough sewer crew.

8. **Stormwater Report**

Manager Egleston, President Christini, Chad Strickland, and Roger Hatch (Towanda/Wysox Chamber of Commerce) met with Mike Sopinski (Civil & Environmental Consultants, Inc.), who reviewed the stormwater management system that discharges to Towanda Borough's Right-of-Way and is identified as a contributing factor to some of the flooding and erosion issues at 510 Ann Street. The report is included in your packet. The biggest finding was the stormwater retention pond being bypassed. The stormwater outlet pipe is installed at the bottom of the pond, not allowing for it to fill properly. Also, stormwater from the parking area is being discharged to the drainage ditch instead of the pond.

Mr. Christini suggests that we contact the Morman Church as a first step and let them know there is a problem. Over the years a parking lot and building expansion were added to the site. The site plans were viewed and there was a proposed new stormwater detention facility included.

Manager Egleston will notify the Morman Church by written letter. President Christini stated that hopefully the church will respond and make corrections on their end. After that is done the Borough can work on the stormwater flooding situation in the Third Ward and York Avenue areas.

Also, Mr. Strickland and the borough crew can work on the curbing issues. Manager Egleston stated that the ARPA allocation we received last year and in 2022 will be used toward storm-water management costs.

**BOROUGH SOLICITOR:**

- Solicitor Smith stated that the committee met on possible parking ordinance adjustments.
- There will be a hearing on parking tickets with the common appeals court this coming week.
- Concerning the Riverside Cemetery, Solicitor Smith discussed the acquisition with Attorney Mark Smith and there are certain provisions and state statutes that would apply to taking it over. They are still working on it.
- Waiting on a copy of the parking garage debt forgiveness terms agreement signed by the County Commissioners.

**BOROUGH SECRETARY:**

Secretary Kulick presented the following Resolution:

**RESOLUTION 2022-1**

Re-Appoint Michael Walsh and Fred Johnson TMA (Towanda Municipal Authority) Board for another 5-year term.

The motion was made by Mr. Roof and seconded by Mr. Kovalcin

The roll was called and recorded as follows:

AYE/YES: Mr. Eberlin, Mrs. Miller, Mr. Roof, Mr. Saring, Mr. Kovalcin, Mr. Schulze, President Christini, Mrs. Hatch, Mr. Parks

NAY/NO:

ABSTAIN:

ABSENT:

Resolution 2022-1 – Carried Unanimously

**FINANCE & ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT:**

President Christini and Council approved the following resolution to employ current Borough Manager, Lauren Egleston for the next 2 years (following municipal code).

**RESOLUTION 2022-2**

Approve Employment Agreement between Towanda Borough and Lauren Egleston for her to continue as Towanda Borough Manager for another 2 years.

The motion was made by Mr. Kovalcin and seconded by Mrs. Hatch

The roll was called and recorded as follows:

AYE/YES: Mr. Eberlin, Mrs. Miller, Mr. Roof, Mr. Saring, Mr. Kovalcin, Mr. Schulze, President Christini, Mrs. Hatch, Mr. Parks

NAY/NO:

ABSTAIN:

ABSENT:

Resolution 2022-2 – Carried Unanimously

**FINANCIAL REPORT:**

There were no bills to pay at this meeting, as they were paid at the 2021 year-end Special Meeting on December 29, 2021.

President Christini reviewed the Police Pension Plan Performance Summary report. The plan is currently showing good progress.

**PLANNING COMMISSION REPORT:**

The Planning Commission had a Special Planning Commission meeting on December 8, 2021, for a variance request for an accessory structure in the R-1 residential district at 25 Orchard

Street. The owners asked for a variance for front setback requirements (see Planning Commission minutes of 12/8/2021).

The Planning Commission did not recommend the homeowners' request be approved and the Zoning Hearing Board met on this variance on December 9, 2021. The Zoning Hearing Board granted the variance on the condition that the front of the shed be no closer to Orchard Street than the closest portion of the existing house to Orchard Street, estimated (not to scale) to be about 51 feet from the edge of the right-of-way.

President Christini asked for comments from Council on the draft for the proposed Vacant Property Ordinance that was given to them last month. Mr. Eberlin commented and suggested that the registration fee be \$50 (not \$100), and the fine be \$500 (not \$1,000). He also suggested that in #8. Maintenance Requirements could we include cleaning of all surfaces such as windows, doors, and maintain them in good condition, and any peeling, chipping, flaking, and abraded paint should be repaired.

Mr. Christini asked for a motion to change the fees and add additional wording to the maintenance requirements. Mr. Parks made the motion, seconded by Mrs. Hatch. Motion passed. The draft will be modified and brought back to February's meeting. If approved, it will be passed to Solicitor Smith for his legal review and feedback (if further changes are needed) before being advertised. This could take at least 6 months.

**RECREATION REPORT:**

Nothing to report yet.

**TOWANDA NO. 1 – Believe and Belong buttons**

Mr. Schultz bought a box of items and this button was in the box. He is not sure but it appears to be from the 1950s, maybe for an organization or a fire department. He thought it would be nice for borough officials to have some of them, and Manager Egleston and President Christini had over 100 of them made to hand out to Council members to share with the public.

President Christini stated that the Borough has made lots of strides over the years and there seems to be a new energy in Towanda. He encouraged us to think of ways to improve our town more, make it attractive, plus promote it.

**TMA/WMA/CBPA REPORTS:**

Included in the packet.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

Motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Roof and seconded by Mr. Kovalcin. Meeting adjourned at 8:10 PM.



Diane M. Kulick  
Towanda Borough Secretary