

**Towanda Borough
Regular Council Meeting Minutes
MAY 2, 2022**

The Towanda Borough Council Meeting was held on Monday, May 2, 2022, at the Borough Municipal Building, 724 Main Street, Towanda, PA. The meeting was called to order at 7:05 PM by President Christini.

Present: Mrs. Miller, Mr. Roof, Mr. Saring, Mr. Schulze, Mr. Christini, Mrs. Hatch, Mr. Parks

Absent: Mr. Eberlin & Mr. Kovalcin

CITIZENS TO BE HEARD:

We received a phone call and a follow-up email from Denise Dodd about safety issues when crossing the crosswalks of Merrill Parkway to get to the pedestrian walkway. She asked that Council approve "caution" signs to get drivers' attention to watch for people and to slow down or stop to let them cross. Chief Epler stated that they had new lines painted and have stepped up enforcement already on the parkway. Chief Epler and Manager Egleston will work on signage to be put in the main crosswalk areas for better safety.

APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MONTH'S MINUTES:

Motion to approve the April 4, 2022, Regular meeting minutes was made by Mr. Roof and seconded by Mrs. Miller. Motion passed.

FIRE CHIEF REPORT:

Chief Roof stated that the department was busy after the last snowstorm on April 19th with downed trees and branches in roadways. Also, the part (DEF-Diesel Emissions Fuel Sensor) for the new fire truck is not in yet, but they have the part number and are trying to find a faster way to get it. Everything is in good working order.

FIRE BOARD REPORT:

Mr. Parks stated there was a meeting but there was nothing new to report.

MAYOR'S REPORT:

Mayor Miller thanked all the volunteers and coaches that participated in the Little League Opening Day this past Saturday.

"Mayor for a Day" was also part of the winnings again this year at the Black Knight Bash online auction that was held in April. This includes a tour of the new water plant, the sewer plant, the police department, the borough building, and attending a borough council meeting.

POLICE CHIEF REPORT:

Chief Epler gave his report.

- The Drug Taskforce was again active this month. Several suspects have been arrested this last month for drug activity and the Task Force is continuing to work on targets. I attended a meeting with other Police Chiefs and the Drug Task Force Managers to cover upcoming operations.
- I have been meeting with District Attorney Al Ondrey about recovering monies seized in the drug bust last summer. Mr. Ondrey has OK'd the turning over the cost of the 2 new in-car computers. Those computers have been ordered with expected delivery in approximately 3 weeks.
- Along with the new computers, Towanda Borough Police has entered into a contract with the State to receive the TraCS (Traffic & Criminal Software) system for E-filing citation and crash reporting.

- The shotguns are being upgraded to meet the requirements of the Police Department. They are missing 1 part for all three guns that are on back-order.
- Officer Thomas Roberts has tested and is going to be hired full-time with Sayre Police Department starting July 1st. Sayre PD is going to reimburse Towanda for 1/2 the cost of the body armor (they are going to buy it from us) that he just received. In addition, Sayre PD is going to allow Roberts to continue working part-time with Towanda PD, with priority to the Sayre PD schedule.
- Chief Epler provided the 2021 year-end report to Council.

APRIL 2022 – Monthly Report

291	COMPLAINTS RECEIVED	0	JUVENILE PETITIONS
25	TRAFFIC CITATIONS	0	K-9 SERVICE (BORO)
10	NON-TRAFFIC CITATIONS	15	THEFT REPORTS
0	DUI ARRESTS	3	ANIMAL COMPLAINTS
68	DISTURBANCE CALLS	4	VEHICLE DOORS OPENED
1	VEHICLE ACCIDENTS	9	WARNINGS ISSUED
3	OUT OF TOWN ASSISTS	0	K-9 SERVICES
7	CRIMINAL ARRESTS		

POLICE COMMITTEE REPORT:

Mrs. Hatch gave a summary of the meeting tonight.

- Mrs. Hatch added that the 3 guns (\$250 each) Chief Epler talked about were purchased locally for \$750 vs a quote of \$950, for a savings of \$200. This purchase was a good buy and it supports local businesses.
- The new computers are ordered and should arrive within the next couple of weeks. The software is in the works and when it arrives, and the new computers are up and running, someone from the State Police will come in and train them.
- The 2 new tasers are working fine.
- Mayor Miller and Mr. Saring will be meeting with the Neighborhood Watch Program group within the next couple of weeks to work on people placement and plans. They will meet again at June's police committee meeting.
- Ms. Egleston added that the police department will be getting a new server in June, and she and Chief Epler will get together to discuss a new police vehicle.
- Mrs. Hatch received an email from Mr. Eberlin concerning a document with part-time police officer rates across the state of Pennsylvania. He wanted the committee to discuss the document and come up with a recommendation to bring forward a pay rate increase for our part-time officers. The committee recommended a rate of \$16 to \$22 per hour. The lower end is a start point for officers that come out of the academy with no experience, and the Chief can give them increases as they gain experience.
A motion was made by Mr. Parks and seconded by Mrs. Miller to adjust the salary range for part-time officers to be from \$16 to \$22 per hour. Motion passed.

CODE ENFORCEMENT / PUBLIC WORKS REPORT:

Mr. Sluyter, Code Enforcement Officer reviewed the report.

- Mr. Sluyter also is concerned with the wording in the Rental Properties Code, **Chapter 221. Rental Properties § 221-3. Duties of owners and/or managers of residential rental property. A. # (8) Schedule**, through the Borough Code Enforcement Office, a date and time for an inspection of the rental dwelling unit whenever a change in tenants occurs unless a satisfactory inspection has been completed within the previous six months, in which case the inspection may be waived at the discretion of the Code Enforcement Official. [Amended 12-6-2010 by Ord. No. 2010-10]
- Mr. Sluyter stated that he would like to see Council amend the code to make it clear that the property needs to pass inspection prior to a new tenant moving in.
- In addition, Officer Bellows talked to Mr. Sluyter adding a check box option to the parking tickets for “Abandoned Vehicles”. He will talk to Solicitor Smith about it.
- Mr. Sluyter also told Council that 36 Elm Street was being demolished and the lot will be leveled. A new home may be going in there.

APRIL 2022 SUMMARY – CODE ENFORCEMENT STATS

PERMITS & CONTRACTORS		MONTH	YTD
Permits Issued		23	61
Permit Fees Paid	\$	2,740	8,053.30
Code Inspections Fees	\$	875	2,723.30
Borough Total after Code Inspections Fees	\$	1,865	5,330
Permit Work Value	\$	196,127	492,044.34
Contractors Registered		12	29
Contractors Registrations Amount	\$	1,200	2,900

UCC Reportable Permits

	Month	YTD	\$ Fees	\$ Fees YTD
#1 Residential – New		1		4.50
#2 Residential – Other	3	11	13.50	49.50
#3 Commercial – New	3	3	13.50	13.50
#4 Commercial – Other	1	2	4.50	9.00
TOTALS	7	17	31.50	76.50

Borough Council Meeting Minutes
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COMPLAINTS

	Received		Investigated		Resolved	
	Month	YTD	Month	YTD	Month	YTD
Single Family Non-Rental	15	49	12	41	10	24
1 & 2 Family Rentals	16	52	13	42	5	26
Commercial Rental Units	8	29	7	27	2	11
Commercial Non-Rental	4	14	4	12	2	8
TOTALS	43	144	36	122	19	69

Rental Dwelling Unit Inspections

	Month	YTD
1st Inspection	8	27
2nd Inspection		
3rd Inspection		
FEES PAID \$	50	200

PARKING:
Tickets by Status

	Month	Year-to-Date
Issued	64	116
Paid	27	125
Dismissed	17	46
Warning	5	38
Abandoned	4	5
Citation	0	44

Tickets by Street Location

	Month	Year-to-Date
Main Street	47	141
Court Street	9	36
Bridge Street	18	57
Park Street	8	35
Pine Street	8	35
Washington Street		9
State Street	3	13
Parking Garage	18	35
John B. Merrill Pkwy	2	3
Second Street		7
Mix Avenue		
C&N Lot		
Poplar Street		
Other (Towanda)		

Tickets by Violation

	Month	Year-to-Date
Expired Meter	20	38
3 Hour Limit	70	262
3 Hour Free Parking, Moved Locations	5	19
Permit Required	2	4
Parking Outside of Lines, Direction of Travel	2	14
Snow Emergency-Secondary Roads		7
Handicap/Disabled	2	11
Non-Space	6	15
Loading Zone		

Borough Manager Egleston reported the following:

1. **Parking**

We have provided ParkMobile with the necessary information to begin with our metered streets and parking garage signage and ordered the signs. The streets to be metered include: Washington Street from Seebick Alley to Merrill Parkway, State Street from Main Street to Merrill Parkway, and Court Street from Main Street to Merrill Parkway. This will add 51 metered parking spaces to the CBD at \$0.50/per hour, Monday-Friday from 8 a.m. through 5 p.m. Customers can pay via their phone, or computer through ParkMobile’s website or app, or by calling a 1-800 phone number. If people don’t own a “smartphone”, they can pay by either calling the 1-800 phone number or if they have texting capability, they can pay that way. There will also be a QR code they can scan with their phone to pay for their spot. Customers will need to list their license plate number to reserve their spot. ParkMobile does charge an additional fee to customers per transaction.

In addition, Ms. Egleston, Mr. Sluyter, and Solicitor Smith discussed a visibility issue of concern when turning onto Bridge Street (between Main Street and Merrill Parkway). The area is very tight and difficult to turn into, and there have been accidents and near-accidents. *After discussion, Council voted to remove 2 parking spaces. A motion was made by Mrs. Hatch and seconded by Mr. Saring. Motion passed.*

2. **USDA Community Facilities Grant**

On Friday, April 22nd, USDA approved our grant for \$27,600 towards the new Borough Truck. The Borough will cover the balance of \$22,675.00 for the total purchase cost of \$50,275.00 through Bob Fisher Chevy. The new truck arrived on Monday, April 25th. Talk about perfect timing! The following Resolution was approved:

RESOLUTION 2022-7

Authorization to approve a grant from the USDA for \$27,600 toward the purchase of a 2022 Chevy Silverado 3500 for the borough sewer crew.

The motion to approve was made by Mr. Saring and seconded by Mrs. Hatch.

The roll was called and recorded as follows:

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

NAY/NO:

ABSTAIN:

ABSENT: Mr. Eberlin, & Mr. Kovalcin

Resolution 2022-7 – Carried

3. **Paving**

Bishops Brothers Construction, Inc has been awarded our paving project for the summer. We have been working on stormwater work that we need to complete before paving. We do not have a schedule at this time from Bishops but will coordinate with residents once we do. We have also completed the work needed on Means Street and Second Street to College Ave, so that we may consider including these two streets for paving. We initially had these two on the list to pave, but were afraid we wouldn't be ready in time, (also unsure where costs would come in). And, John Miller to the rescue, and his inability to sleep at night until the job was done! He installed new stormwater catch basins and piping, replaced the sewer lateral to our building, and the water crew completed a new sprinkler system valve for our building.

4. **Towanda Borough Parks Master Plan**

We received two proposals for the Parks Master Plan. One came from Stiffler & McGraw for \$74,820, and the other from Delta Engineers, Architects, and Surveyors for \$47,252. The Borough has been awarded approximately \$27,500 in funding through the DCED's Greenways, Trails, and Recreation Program. Speaking with our grant consultant, it was advised to readvertise the RFP and request specific line items for the inclusion of the T ASD Memorial Park and the Riverside Cemetery, as these were added to the approved scope of work in the grant. Manager Egleston will redraft the RFP and will work with our DCED consultant to approve and she will readvertise it again.

5. **EDA Success Story**

In 2018, the EDA provided \$3 Million in grant funding towards the construction of our new water treatment plant. The NE Director of EDA reached out to me to feature a Success Story of the grant funds. A copy of the article is included in the packet.

6. **DCED Municipal Assistance Program Grant**

In February, we submitted a grant on behalf of Towanda Borough, North Towanda Township, and Towanda Township to update our Central Bradford Comprehensive Plan. We received a quote for \$38,000 to complete the update. We requested \$19,000 in grant funds (50%), and the three municipalities will split the other half if awarded the grant. The DCED grant analyst reached out to me to discuss our application and felt we submitted a very strong case for the funding and should hear (hopefully) favorable results soon.

7. **Mowing**

We solicited bids for mowing to Riverside Cemetery, Wysox Municipal Authority, and Towanda Municipal Authority areas. The following were awarded:

- Riverside Cemetery-Smiley's Cleaning Service, Inc @ 790.00/per month (as needed)
- WMA-Black Knight Quarries @ \$720.00 for three (3) times/per month
- TMA-M&R Maintenance and Rentals-\$642 per cut

We are also seeking 1-2 Seasonal Groundskeepers for the Borough at \$12-14/per hour M-F from 7:00 to 3:30. We placed an advertisement in the Daily Review and posted it on our Facebook page.

8. **New Electric Contract Signed**

Our Electric Contract with AEP ends in November 2022. Manager Egleston has been working with Amerex Energy on new pricing for a new contract. It isn't the best news, as rates have drastically increased. We will be taking a hit for the newest contract beginning on 12/1/2022 for 24-months with AEP at \$0.07415/kWh, and then beginning 12/2/2024, entering into another 36-month contract at \$0.0615/kWh. After spending months reviewing rates, and witnessing a drastic rate increase over the last month or so, this became the best option, and the lowest rates we had seen in some time.

9. **Towanda Lions Club & Merrill Parkway**

Manager Egleston spoke at the Towanda Lion's Club meeting on April 26th. The Club is interested in partnering with the Borough on a project. A suggestion to seal/pave the cracks on the Merrill Parkway Path was made, and the Lion's Club could assist us with the purchase of material and maybe rental equipment for us to complete the job. Once we get some pricing and estimates, we will re-connect with the Lion's Club and their generous offer.

10. **TASD K-5 Classes to Visit the Borough**

Five K-5 classes will visit the Borough during their Community Helpers Field Trip on May 11th. We plan to show them our street sweeper, and TMA's new Vacuum Truck. Manager Egleston has also ordered more "Towanda No. 1 Believe & Belong" pins for them.

11. **Mural Projects**

Vicki Wells is working on a Butterfly Mural at the Third Ward Playground. She has a few volunteers to complete the project and she requests donations of latex paint in various colors. If interested, please reach out to her directly.



While Manager Egleston visited with businesses downtown to discuss our Parking, she also met with Mark Beauchemin, Co-Executive Director of the Main Link on Pine Street. She told him about our "Towanda Pin" and how we wanted to have a mural done on a building downtown. He offered the back of their building as a spot. She has been in touch with Renae Chamberlain, the Arts in Education Program Director, and local Art Teachers to complete the project. Ed Boardman photoshopped a picture of what it could look like, see below!



BOROUGH SOLICITOR

Borough Solicitor Smith reported the following:

- Solicitor Smith stated he heard something about the loading zone time issue. Manager Egleston stated that the Knight Out II owners feel that the 15-minute loading zone time is not quite enough time for them to unload. Solicitor Smith stated that we authorized this loading zone in the April Council meeting, however, this was not part of Chapter 305, Article IX Commercial Zone amendment. *Council discussed changing the time limit to 30 minutes, and a motion was made by Mr. Saring and seconded by Mr. Parks to increase the loading zone time limit to 30 minutes. Motion passed.*
- Solicitor Smith had a draft of Chapter 305, Article IX Commercial Zone Parking where changes were made last month to the metered parking section of the code. There were changes to the number of spaces on streets in Section 305-71. A.(2) (j), (k), (l), (m) & (n). *A motion was made by Mrs. Hatch and seconded by Mr. Saring to have Solicitor Smith move forward and advertise this Chapter to be amended. Motion passed.* Solicitor Smith will move forward on getting this readvertised.
- Solicitor Smith had a drafted letter that he will send to Mrs. Candace Chilson, 103 York Avenue in answer to the Mercur Alley drainage issue that affects her property. He reviewed the Borough and public records as to whether Mercur Alley is a public way that is to be maintained by the borough. He concludes that it is not. He provided a copy of a subdivision plat of "Kirby & Moody's Estate" dated August 1883 that is recorded in the Bradford County Recorder of Deeds office. The subdivision lays out a 20-foot-wide alley which became known as Mercur Alley. As a subdivision of private property, all persons who purchased land out of the subdivision would have the right to use the alley and the duty to maintain it. The only servicing of the alley by the borough has been snow plowing so that emergency vehicles can access the alley when necessary. He has found no record of any other consistent maintenance of the alley by Towanda Borough. Also, he stated there have been no events that occurred that would make the alley a public thoroughfare.

BOROUGH SECRETARY

Borough Secretary Kulick reminded everyone that the Borough "Spring Clean Up" will be held on Friday, May 13th, and Saturday, May 14th. Information has been in the newspaper and online also.

FINANCIAL & ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT:

The motion to pay the April 2022 bills was made by Mr. Roof and seconded by Mrs. Hatch. Motion passed.

UNION SUB-COMMITTEE:

Mrs. Miller stated there was nothing to report at this time.

PLANNING COMMISSION REPORT:

- President Christini briefed Council on the April 19th meeting. Roger Hatch, the new member behind Jimmy Lacek was unable to attend due to traveling out of town.
- There were a couple of things that were discussed at the meeting. Manager Egleston was present at this meeting and updated us on the Regional Comprehensive Plan grant status and the companies that produce these plans.
- Also, she talked about the Site Master Plan project. It will be rebid, as the 2 bids that we received had a wide range of difference between them. She will continue the work on that.

RECREATION REPORT:

Mr. Kovalcin stated the Committee has the entertainment list completed and the first performance will be on June 16th at 7 PM at Tommy Fairchild Park (formerly Riverfront Park).

TMA/WMA/CBPA REPORTS:

Included in the packet.

LIBRARY REPORT:

April Maynard is on the Library Board and will include the meeting minutes when available. President Christini gave a big thank-you to April for doing this, as it keeps Council in the know.

ADJOURNMENT:

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



Diane M. Kulick
Towanda Borough Secretary