

**Towanda Borough  
Regular Council Meeting Minutes  
April 1, 2024**

The Towanda Borough Council Regular Meeting was held on Monday, April 1, 2024, at the Borough Municipal Building, 724 Main Street, Towanda, PA. The meeting was called to order at 7:04 PM by President Eberlin.

**Present:** President Eberlin, Mr. Roof, Mrs. Miller, Mr. Saring, Mr. Kovalcin, Mr. Shulze, Vice-President Christini, Mrs. Hatch & Mr. Parks

**Absent:**

**CITIZENS TO BE HEARD:**

President Eberlin read a letter from Vince Valoroso, 18 Mulberry Street, requesting a handicap parking sign be placed in front of his residence for his mother who has a handicap placard for the car. She is 80 years old and feeble. Chief Epler stated that he has talked to Mr. Valoroso before and feels that placing the sign would be ok. He told Mr. Valoroso that if someone else happens to be visiting the neighborhood and has a handicap placard, they can use the space also (if it is empty), as it is not a reserved spot. Mr. Roof made the motion to approve the handicap parking sign, seconded by Mr. Kovalcin. Motion passed.

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

A motion to approve the March 4, 2024, Regular meeting minutes was made by Mr. Kovalcin, and seconded by Mrs. Miller. Motion passed.

**FIRE CHIEF REPORT:**

Chief Roof stated that the pumps on the engines, ladder and tanker trucks were serviced and will be recertified next month. Everything is in good working order.

**FIRE BOARD REPORT:**

Mr. Parks stated they had a meeting but had nothing to report.

**MAYOR'S REPORT:**

- Mayor Miller stated they have been very busy with Riverfest planning and Little League Opening Day will be held on the 27th of April.

**POLICE CHIEF REPORT:**

Chief Epler reviewed his report:

- A DUI Rove and Aggressive Driving Patrol was conducted in the Borough this month.
- Officers Hades and Hennessy were busy this month with sniffs for the Senior trip, the Junior trip, and a sniff at the Bradford County Correctional Facility Officer. They also did K-9 training in Scranton for 2 days which involved article search and tracking.
- 2 reconditioned X-2 Tasers have been ordered.
- Lauren and Chief Epler has been working on the camera grant and we have secured the three quotes necessary to forward the grant. The three companies involved were Axon, Motorola, and Pro Vision. The Officers have decided that they would like to go with the Axon system. Lauren is moving forward with the funding request Chief Epler will be placing the order for the system on her go-ahead.
- Officer Campbell is preparing for his military deployment to start in May and Chief Epler has interviewed a new potential part-time Officer to help fill the void of his absence. He is in the process of working with MPOETC (Municipal Police Officers' Education and Training Commission) to bring him aboard.

**MARCH 2024 – Monthly Report**

335	COMPLAINTS RECEIVED	2	JUVENILE PETITIONS
38	TRAFFIC CITATIONS	0	K-9 SERVICE (BORO)
8	NON-TRAFFIC CITATIONS	3	THEFT REPORTS
2	DUI ARRESTS	0	ANIMAL COMPLAINTS

54	DISTURBANCE CALLS	4	VEHICLE DOORS OPENED
3	VEHICLE ACCIDENTS	2	WARNINGS ISSUED
0	OUT-OF-TOWN ASSISTS	15	MENTAL HEALTH CALLS
5	CRIMINAL ARRESTS		

**POLICE COMMITTEE:**

Mr. Saring stated that he would like to get the IT issues fixed and the rest of the computers up and running. Chief Epler stated that the computer in the new Dodge is not connected to AT&T or T-Mobile. They don't seem to be able to find anyone to give them help on it. They have reached out to our government representatives and Stacy has been trying to get something done, but we are getting the runaround and now we have a new sales rep assigned to our account. We are still working on it for now; we have only one car with one computer.

**CODE ENFORCEMENT REPORT:**

Barry Thrush, Code Enforcement Report included.

- Permits are picking up this past month due to weather changes.
- The mentorship program started a couple of weeks ago. Mr. Thrush walked around town with the mentor person and they found a couple of properties to send letters to get them worked on. The mentor will be back for a second visit to view the progress at these addresses.

**PUBLIC WORKS/CODE ENFORCEMENT COMMITTEE REPORT:**

Manager Hotaling, Mr. Parks (Chairman), Mr. Kovalcin, and Mr. Hatch

Mr. Parks stated there was no meeting, and Solicitor Smith would review what the committee had drafted. Solicitor Smith stated that he has it ready and it is in Manager Hotaling's hands now.

**BOROUGH MANAGER HOTALING REPORT:**

Manager Hotaling was absent but her report included the following:

**1. Public Works Superintendent**

- a. Manager Hotaling was going to introduce our new Public Works Superintendent Matt Aikey to attend tonight's meeting so that all Council Members could meet him. Matt comes from Old Lycoming Township, with a lot of experience working in Municipal Government and she wrote that she was excited to have him on our team, and was looking forward to our future accomplishments together for Towanda Borough. Note: Mr. Aikey did not attend this meeting.

**2. Bradford County Emergency Management Plan**

- a. The updated Bradford County Emergency Management Plan has been signed by the County Commissioners. The Borough has an opportunity to adopt the County Plan as our own, which we have previously done. Manager Hotaling has updated the Notification and Resource Manual of the Emergency Operations Plan. President Eberlin asked Council to pass the **resolution** to adopt the Bradford County Emergency Management Plan.

**RESOLUTION 2024-9**

Adopt Bradford County 2024 Emergency Operations Plan Update

Motion made by Mrs. Hatch and seconded by Mr. Kovalcin.

The roll was called and recorded as follows:

AYE/YES: President Eberlin, Mr. Roof, Mrs. Miller, Mr. Saring, Mr. Kovalcin, Mr. Shulze, Vice-President Christini, Mrs. Hatch & Mr. Parks

NAY/NO:

ABSTAIN:

ABSENT:

**RESOLUTION 2024-9**

**3. DCNR Grant-SCI Pool Feasibility Study**

- a. Manager Hotaling is applying for funding through the DCNR C2P2 program for a Pool Feasibility Study. She is waiting to hear back on an updated price from the previous submission. The grant

will cover 50% of the costs for the feasibility study. Mr. Eberlin asked Council to pass the **resolution** to apply for the funding.

#### **RESOLUTION 2024-10**

Approve SCI-Pool Feasibility Study Grant through DCNR  
Motion made by Mr. Kovalcin and seconded by Mr. Parks.

The roll was called and recorded as follows:

AYE/YES: President Eberlin, Mr. Roof, Mrs. Miller, Mr. Saring, Mr. Kovalcin, Mr. Shulze, Vice-President Christini, Mrs. Hatch & Mr. Parks

NAY/NO:

ABSTAIN:

ABSENT:

#### **RESOLUTION 2024-10**

#### **4. Parks Master Plan Complete**

- a. Manager Hotaling received a copy of the completed Master Site Development Plan for the three Borough Parks by Stiffler McGraw. The plans are included in her report. The major improvements for each park are:
  - i. Memorial Park
    1. New Swimming Pool
    2. Moving Little League field to Memorial Park Drive
    3. Pickleball Courts, new Parking area, lighting
    4. Basketball Courts and Pavilions
    5. Playground Area and Play/Fitness Elements, Pavilion, and Retaining Wall
  - ii. Tom Fairchild Park
    1. New Vault Restroom
    2. New Pavilion
    3. Walking Trail extension
    4. Dog Park
    5. Terraced Riverfront
    6. Disc Golf Course
  - iii. Third Ward Playground
    1. New restrooms, new pavilion, Gaga Pit, cornhole, Chess Board
    2. New Playground Equipment/Climbing Structures

#### **5. 2024 Tour of Honor Motorcycle Ride**

- a. Our Bradford County Veterans Memorial Park has been selected as one of seven parks in Pennsylvania to serve in the annual Tour of Honor. Each year, seven Veteran memorials or monuments are selected in all fifty states. Registered riders begin visiting the locations between April 1st through October 31st. The parks are not announced until April 1st. Riders pay a \$25 fee to participate, and the funds will support the Fisher House Foundation, Gold Star Family Memorial Foundation, or Gary Sinise Foundation First Responders Outreach. Over 950 riders have registered so far! We have a banner to welcome Tour of Honor riders to our park, and we were also able to install the Outdoor Display Case with the Brick Plot layout. Manager Hotaling will also display lists of all of the engraved bricks in the next few weeks once the latest round of bricks and pavers are installed.

#### **6. Beautify Towanda Day**

- a. Our Second Annual Beautify Towanda Day will be held on Saturday, April 20th from 10 AM to noon with a rain date of April 21st. We will deploy volunteer groups from the Municipal Building with supplies. Volunteers are encouraged to assist with sidewalk and curb sweeping, painting, weeding, trimming, and general clean-up downtown. If interested in participating, please email [towardaboro@comcast.net](mailto:towardaboro@comcast.net) with your contact information so we can send any updated information as we get closer to the date. The Borough will provide garbage bags, gloves, paint, and brushes. If you can bring along shop/garage brooms, and leaf blowers, that would be extremely helpful! Hope to see everyone then!

#### **7. Central Bradford Regional Comprehensive Plan**

- a. We advertised an RFP for consultants to complete the Central Bradford Regional Comprehensive Plan and did not receive any bids. Manager Hotaling will readvertise, and share the RFP with consultants for more interest.

**8. Borough Paving Project**

- a. We will open bids to pave Fifth Street from Elizabeth Street to Bridge Street on April 18th.

**9. School Events**

- a. Manager Hotaling had Paul Ackley and Ian Whinnery join her at the Wyalusing Job Fair with high school students earlier this month. The event was created by the WASD Career Coach, and they talked with several students about different career paths in local government.
- b. Next month we will be meeting with the T ASD K-5 Classes to demonstrate some of our Public Works Equipment at the Fire Hall. Students will also be meeting with the Police Department and Fire Department.

**10. Brownfield Inventory Report**

- a. Manager Hotaling had a meeting with PADEP on Friday to discuss the draft of the Borough's Brownfield Inventory Report. The EPA defines a brownfield as a property where expansion, redevelopment, or reuse may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant. The report evaluated 40 properties as brownfields within the Borough limits and ranked the properties for economic favorability for redevelopment. The report also ranked properties based on low, moderate, and high environmental risks. The 40 properties were located in the following zoning districts: Commercial, Highway Commercial, Light Industrial, R1, and R4.

**BOROUGH SOLICITOR**

Solicitor Smith had two action item ordinances for Council to vote on.

**ORDINANCE 2024-1**

**Vacate the Entirety of Hospital Drive (Township RD T-590) in Towanda Borough as a public thoroughfare.**

Motion made by Mr. Saring and seconded by Mrs. Miller.

The roll was called and recorded as follows:

AYE/YES: President Eberlin, Mr. Roof, Mrs. Miller, Mr. Saring, Mr. Kovalcin, Mr. Shulze, Vice-President Christini, Mrs. Hatch & Mr. Parks

NAY/NO:

ABSTAIN:

ABSENT:

**ORDINANCE 2024-1                      STATUS: Carried**

**ORDINANCE 2024-2**

**Ordinance Amending Chapter 325 Zoning Ordinance, Providing for the Regulation of Oil and Gas Operations, of the Code of the Borough of Towanda.**

Motion made by Mr. Kovalcin and seconded by Mrs. Hatch.

The roll was called and recorded as follows:

AYE/YES: President Eberlin, Mr. Roof, Mrs. Miller, Mr. Saring, Mr. Kovalcin, Mr. Shulze, Vice-President Christini, Mrs. Hatch & Mr. Parks

NAY/NO:

ABSTAIN:

ABSENT:

**ORDINANCE 2024-2                      STATUS: Carried**

Solicitor Smith also talked about the revamping of street opening permit procedures. There are some PennDOT requirements that we may have to run by the borough engineer to see if he has everything correct, and how specific we should be because if PennDOT changes their requirements we would have to amend the ordinance. He stated we have some urgency since line painting season is near.

Solicitor Smith also is working on the Floodplain ordinance and has the template that we received from the state. We have until July 7th to approve this ordinance. He also is working on the abandoned vehicle ordinance amendments, and he has some old business with the Planning Commission to talk about at their next meeting on April 16th. They will also talk about a better definition of retail sales for guests. And, finally Manager Hotaling told him that we need to make some revisions to the TMA (Towanda Municipal Authority) because we have some new entities coming in.

**BOROUGH SECRETARY**

Secretary Kulick stated the Borough Clean Up will be held on Friday, May 17, and Saturday, May 18, 2024, from 9 AM to 6 PM at the Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Also, Manager Hotaling has included a flyer for a workday on Saturday, April 20th from 10 AM to Noon called Beautify Towanda. A community volunteer day to clean up the borough. The rain date is Sunday, April 21st.

**FINANCIAL & ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT:**

- A motion for the bills to be paid for March was made by Mr. Kovalcin and seconded by Mr. Schulze. Motion passed.

**UNION SUB-COMMITTEE:**

Mrs. Miller stated probably next month the committee should start to hold meetings.

**PLANNING COMMISSION REPORT:**

Vice-President Christini stated there was a meeting in February, and the new commission member Brianna Fischetti was present to introduce herself, and the commission members introduced themselves to her. We discussed the Vacant Store Front Ordinance, as the definition needs some tweaking. We lost 2 hearings over this ordinance. There were 2 property owners with storefronts who were not willing to do what we have been trying to do, which is to show some light to the vacant storefronts. We would like to tighten up the definition of "vacant" if it's possible.

**RECREATION REPORT:**

Mr. Kovalcin stated that they are continuing plans for the June Riverfest. They are bringing back the planes and flyovers and the sponsorships are coming in. They have paid the first half cost for the fireworks and the cost of the magician. Most of the bills are paid through the donations and solicitation and the rest will come from the ride company. We also won't need to supply any staffing.

Concerts in the Park will also still be held.

He said if June is better than August, they would like to hold Riverfest every year in June.

**TMA/WTMA/CBPA REPORTS:**

The February 26, 2024, TMA and the WTMA meeting minutes are in the packet.

**LIBRARY REPORT:**

The February 8, 2024, meeting minutes are in the packet.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

A motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Saring. The meeting adjourned at 7:42 PM.



Diane M. Kulick  
Towanda Borough Secretary