

**Towanda Borough
Regular Council Meeting Minutes
Aug. 3 2026**

The Towanda Borough Council Regular Meeting was held on Monday July 6, 2026 7:00pm at the Borough Municipal Building, 724 Main Street, Towanda, PA.

Council Members Present: Mr. Eberlin Mr. Roof, Mr. Saring, Mr. Schultz, Mr. Kovalcin, Mr. Christini, Mrs. Miller, Mr. Parks, and Mrs. Hatch

Council Member Absent: None

Others: Fred Smith (Borough Solicitor), Code Enforcement Barry Thrush, Fire Chief Bill Sheets, Mr. Bradford, Daily Review reporter, Shane Mize, Kevin Doupe, Manager Stacy Schoonover, Secretary/Treasurer Leigh Lattimer

PUBLIC COMMENTS/CONCERNS

Kevin Doupe of Thomas Street spoke to voice his opinion regarding Council's decision to close Merrill parkway for a special event at the Flying Taco. His concern was primarily that attendees could be injured by traffic if they accidentally stepped into the roadway.

Council agreed that Kevin's safety points were largely valid. However, the request was the first time a private business/ private party as opposed to a community event such as Riverfest had asked for a complete closure of the Merrill Parkway. The Parkway is one of the two main transportation routes in the Borough and is heavily used by oil-field trucks, police vehicles and ambulances. Other large gatherings have been held at the Flying Taco in the past without closing the Parkway. Finally, the request came days before the event so it lacked prep and traffic control like big community events and there wouldn't be planned traffic control by police/ fire with PennDOT detour signage.

Council stressed liability and precedent. They were worried about borough liability and about setting a precedent for future private events. Alcohol was one factor among several; they acknowledge that existing alcohol-in-public spaces ordinance makes it illegal to have alcohol in the street which the police would need to enforce. The overall decision was framed as a broader mix of concerns.

Council thanked Mr. Doupe for his comments

Thomas Bradford of Means Street, provided a website resource for reasonably priced used fire truck equipment to assist the fire department in locating apparatus and related equipment.

Jacob Hoffman Chestnut Street letter to council regarding smoke from burning and open fire pits in the borough. Jacob, who has a smoke sensitivity, believes the current code falls short and requested that Council considers a total ban on burning. Council briefly discussed the difficulty of balancing one resident's concerns with widespread use of recreational fires and noted that many complaints involved lawful campfires where police have limited enforcement options. No formal action was taken at this meeting.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion to approve July 6, Regular Meeting Minutes was made by M. Christini, seconded by W. Kovalcin the motion carried unanimously.

FIRE CHIEF REPORT

Fire Chief Sheets reported

- Busy month with 20 calls, mostly non-serious

- Participation in regional water-rescue mutual aid (deploying with multiple departments and boat toward Westfield/Lawrenceville departments and boats toward Westfield/Lawrenceville during flooding)

FIRE BOARD REPORT

- Mr. Parks reported the board met and discussed the purchase of a new tanker truck, no other issues or concerns were raised, and everything with the fire department is “good” at this time.

MAYOR REPORT

- Mayor Miller announced the upcoming National Night Out/ National Law Enforcement Night Out event to be held on Park Street near the police station, including food trucks, vendors, K-9 demonstrations, and law enforcement vehicles on display. Encouraged council and public attendance and noted he is planning a “Mayor for a Day” activity to be scheduled in the next few weeks.

CHIEF REPORT

- Chief Lantz reported on preparations for National Night Out/ Law Enforcement Night Out on Park Street, noting the street is short, one-way segment with minimal impact on other traffic.
- Personal- Officer Vermilya has returned to duty, Officer Carpenter’s last shift will be August 12, triggering the need to activate Civil Service and open a police officer application period, with timing tied to the January police academy in Scranton. Noted a strong interest from potential candidates, many asking about sponsorship for Act 120 training, and explained that sponsored cadets can be partially reimbursed (approx. 75% tuition and 45% wages) with a multi-year service commitment.
- Reported an uptick in calls for service, especially disturbance-type calls typical of summer, and multiple.
- Community / public relation events involving the K-9 unit.
- Ongoing building issues, including significant roof leak at the police station with water entering through a light fixture, and additional building repairs are under review for possible grant funding.

POLICE COMMITTEE

- Mr. Saring reported the committee met and reviewed the matters covered in the Police Chief report including staffing changes, the need to activate Civil Service for hiring sponsorship options for new officer, and police building/roof issues. No additional recommendations or actions were presented beyond those discussed.

CODE ENFORCEMENT REPORT

- Parking ticket total is down due to the parking enforcement officer’s medical absence.
- Certificate of Occupancy issued for new Home Health Care business at 503 Main street.

BOROUGH MANAGER REPORT

- Borough staff applied a temporary patch to the police station leaking roof until a crew member with roofing experience could return to assess more permanent repairs
- YMCA roof repair (gym leak) is moving forward with a 50% down payment made to contractor (MR Maintenance).
- Recent phone and email outages caused by vendor server issues, possibly due to a suspected cyberattack, emphasizing that no servers are hosted on Borough premises.
- Paperback Maple Tree has been planted on the Parkway in Mr. James Lacek memory, a plaque will follow.

- Resolution **2026-09** Purchase of Alexis Fire Truck Tanker, motion made by Mr. Saring, second Mr. Parks motion carried.

BOROUGH SOLICITOR SMITH

- Reported working with Code Enforcement on ongoing zoning and property maintenance matters and noted upcoming September hearing/ meeting on a new application.
- Advised there were no additional legal issues to report.

SECRETARY

- Resolution **2026-10** Authorizing the Bradford County Progress Authority to issue/refinance certain revenue bonds relating to projects within participating municipalities. Motion made by Mr. Kovalcin, second Mrs. Hatch, motion carried.

FINANCIAL & ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

- Committee met and reviewed the proposed Fire Tanker financing in detail, including use of various fire-related funds for the down payment and 15-year leasing financing for the balance.
- Motion to pay the bill made by Mr. Kovalcin, second Mrs. Miller, motion carried.

PLANNING COMMISSION REPORT

- The Commission reviewed information on e-bikes and e-scooters and agreed not to draft a separate local ordinance, instead to rely on existing state regulations, seeing no need to “reinvent the wheel”.

RECREATION REPORT

- Reported several Concerts in the Park were canceled this season due to bad weather, extreme heat, and smoke, resulting in lower -then-expected turnout.
- Riverfest planning, indicating that vendors and sponsors are still coming in, with a few notable donations received. Mr. Kovalcin and Mayor Miller noted the Asylum VFW has already filed application to sell alcohol at Riverfest.

LIBRARY REPORT

- No July meeting.

TMA/WTMA

- Minutes enclosed

ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Saring. The meeting was adjourned at 7:58 pm

Respectfully Submitted,

Leigh Lattimer
Towanda Borough Secretary