

**Towanda Borough  
Regular Council Meeting Minutes  
February 5, 2024**

The Towanda Borough Council Regular Meeting was held on Monday, February 5, 2024, at the Borough Municipal Building, 724 Main Street, Towanda, PA. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM by President Eberlin.

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

**Absent:** Mrs. Hatch

**RESOLUTION 2024-4**

Approve Civil Service Commission and Police Chief, Randy Epler's recommendation to hire Trevor Wills as a Full-time Police Officer.

Motion made by Mr. Kovalcin and seconded by Mr. Saring.

The roll was called and recorded as follows:

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

NAY/NO:

ABSTAIN:

ABSENT: Mrs. Hatch

**RESOLUTION 2024-4 - Carried**

**CITIZENS TO BE HEARD:**

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

A motion to approve the January 2, 2024, Re-Organization and Regular meeting minutes was made by Mr. Kovalcin, and seconded by Mr. Parks. Motion passed.

**FIRE CHIEF REPORT:**

Chief Roof's incident report is included. He stated that they are starting to look at new tanker trucks. The current tanker truck is old but still in working condition. They were thinking maybe a year or two out to replace it.

**FIRE BOARD REPORT:**

Mr. Parks stated they had a meeting and had nothing new to report.

**MAYOR'S REPORT:**

- Mayor Miller stated that the Veteran's Memorial Park was selected as a 2024 Tour of Honor site to visit. Manager Hotaling will talk about this tonight.
- Mayor Miller acknowledged the hiring of Officer Wills to Full-time status as he is coming along well.

**POLICE CHIEF REPORT:**

Chief Epler reviewed his report:

- Towanda PD dealt with a threat this month at the high school. The threat is still being investigated.
- Officer Hennessy did K-9 training in Wilkes-Barre for 2 days which involved drug sniffs and tracking.
- The new Dodge patrol car is finished and in service. The 2014 is being taken out of service.
- Officer Trevor Wills is ready to move to full-time status.
- Officer Hennessy and I attended rural school incident training at the 911 Center in North Towanda, along with staff from the School District. The training was sponsored through FEMA.
- Towanda PD handled a case this month that started with 2 missing juveniles and ended with both being found in another state with multiple criminal violations. Our department did an excellent job with moving quickly on getting info out via NCIC (National Crime Information Center) and working with other out-of-state departments to bring the situation under control. They are going to be charged in NY State, but it was a well done all hands-on deck, and my officers did a super job. Hats off to all my Officers.

**JANUARY 2024 – Monthly Report**

342	COMPLAINTS RECEIVED	2	JUVENILE PETITIONS
15	TRAFFIC CITATIONS	0	K-9 SERVICE (BORO)
7	NON-TRAFFIC CITATIONS	2	THEFT REPORTS
0	DUI ARRESTS	2	ANIMAL COMPLAINTS
57	DISTURBANCE CALLS	0	VEHICLE DOORS OPENED
2	VEHICLE ACCIDENTS	1	WARNINGS ISSUED
1	OUT-OF-TOWN ASSISTS	17	MENTAL HEALTH CALLS
5	CRIMINAL ARRESTS		

**Chief Epler reviewed the 2023 Year-End Report including the following:**

	2021	2022	2023
Complaints Received	3587	3652	3907
Criminal Arrests	95	99	83
DUI Arrests	16	9	8
Traffic Citations	195	262	217
Non-Traffic Citations	83	140	169
Motor Vehicle Crashes	47	59	35
Vehicle Doors Opened	34	45	29
Warnings Issued	91	82	38
Thefts Reported	78	100	60
Disturbances	861	987	827
Juvenile Petitions	25	11	21
Animal Complaints	40	44	50
Mental Health	54	159	215

**POLICE COMMITTEE:**

Mr. Saring stated that he wanted to check on 302 (Involuntary Commitment) warrants for mental health, as these group homes are calling our police department to handle these individuals and transport them to a facility. He stated that he thought that one of the Mental Health officials told him that the police don't necessarily have to transport the 302'd individual. She was going to check on this and Mr. Saring will follow up on it. Vice-President Christini asked if the committee had found any direction on the ACT 120 removal and Mr. Saring stated that Solicitor Smith was looking into it.

**CODE ENFORCEMENT REPORT:**

Barry Thrush, Code Enforcement Report included.

- Mr. Thrush stated that there have been more indoor permits this past month.
- Mr. Thrush stated that the Code Appeals Board has two members and he feels that there should be a third member on it. Manager Hotaling will touch base with the two people currently on it if they want to continue and, possibly look for a third board member.

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

Manager Hotaling, Mr. Parks (Chairman), Mr. Kovalcin, and Mr. Hatch  
Mr. Parks talked about using Wysox's Street Opening Ordinance as a template for our Borough. They tweaked it to fit our needs and turned it over to Solicitor Smith to have him review it.

**BOROUGH MANAGER HOTALING REPORT:**

Manager Hotaling reported on the following:

1. **Public Works Superintendent & Utility Maintenance Technician Positions**
  - a. Chad Strickland, Public Works Superintendent has resigned in his position effective February 6th, as well as Mike Tabor, our Utility Maintenance Technician position effective February 9th. I would like to thank both for their time at the Borough and recognize the big shoes we must fill. I would also like to thank our team and their willingness to step up to assist us with their roles in the interim. The Public Works Superintendent Position has been posted on Indeed and I am reviewing applicants currently.
2. **SR 1039 Turnback Project-PennDOT - Resolution # 2024-5**
  - a. Eric Casanave and I spoke about the concerns he had regarding the PennDOT Turnback project for SR 1039, and his biggest concern was that PennDOT would not allow for reimbursement for interest accrued during the project. I believe moving forward with this project would be in the Borough's best interest, especially if PennDOT plans to move its operations to Wysox and vacate the York Ave facility. TMA did receive the PA DCED Small Water and Sewer Projects Grant for replacing sewer mains and manholes along this route. TMA will pursue a grant towards the water main replacement project to reduce costs to Borough & TMA Customers as the project will likely not go out to bid until 2026. The following resolution is requested.

**RESOLUTION 2024-5**

Approve PennDOT SR 1039 – North Main/William Street TURNBACK PROJECT Agreement

Motion made by Mr. Saring and seconded by Mr. Kovalcin

The roll was called and recorded as follows:

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

NAY/NO:

ABSTAIN:

ABSENT: Mrs. Hatch

**RESOLUTION 2024-5 - Carried**

3. **Law Enforcement Officer Recruitment Grant**

- a. I was notified that the grant I applied for will be awarded, and am working on the modifications requested. We will receive a grant to assist with Officer Recruitment through the PCCD to provide a \$5,000 sign-on bonus for new officers. This is another tool that will help them and us to recruit future officers.

4. **Parks Master Plan**

- a. Chris Foster is finalizing our Parks Master Plan and I will be able to distribute it to our Steering Committee for any final comments. Hopefully, we will get the costs of all the different improvements that he's recommended that we want to have in it all three parks.

**5. Borough & TMA Audits**

- a. We have Hallock and Shannon PC coming to meet with us from February 26th through February 28th to review our accounts.

**6. Public Works**

- a. Snow Storms have sent our crews out after hours for plowing/salting, and we have included the Parking Garage through storm events.
- b. Pat Maynard began his position as a Laborer, has been cross-training amongst several employees, and has already saved the day 18x.

**7. Public Works Committee Meeting**

- a. We briefly met to review the proposed Street Opening Ordinance which Gary mentioned. Chad made a few minor changes and I sent the draft to Fred for review. Fred is going to have some comments for us.

**8. Parking Committee Meeting**

- a. We met to discuss several items from the January meeting regarding the Parking issues.
  - i. Bridge Street-3 Hour Parking, Community Cup & Knights Out  
There are no good options for what is requested from people who want some additional slots. There is nothing we can do there.
  - ii. Abandoned Vehicle Ordinance – Chief Epler asked us to look at Sayre’s Abandoned Vehicle Ordinance, as we definitely need to update ours.

**9. Upcoming Training**

- a. Barry and I are signed up to hear the Redeveloping Blighted Properties seminar with PSAB.
- b. The DCED mentorship program will begin this month for Barry
- c. Numerous trainings for TMA employees regarding water and sewer are coming up. Tobias Nagle (Stiffler McGraw) will be here February 12-14th to train staff on the Water Filtration System
- d. LB Water will be here on February 7th to train numerous employees on Meter installation. Our current needs are to install approximately 55/per month to stay on track with the grant.
- e. Dallas Data will be at our office to assist with any Caselle Training, which is especially important during the interim. 2023 was the first year we used the Accounts Receivable module, and we want to be sure that all records are in order.

**10. Dancing with the Stars**

- a. I was honored to be a part of the BCRAC’s Dancing with the Stars event on January 27th. The event sold out and raised nearly \$30,000 for the Arts Council. I would like to thank everyone who came and contributed to Adam and me as “Straight Outta BC” for our dance to “Uptown Funk.” It was a great experience, and I enjoyed befriending our competition and all involved with the event. Hopefully, Mayor Miller will be dancing next year! It was a good time and everyone enjoyed themselves.

**BOROUGH SOLICITOR**

- Solicitor Smith was on vacation.

**BOROUGH SECRETARY**

Secretary Kulick stated that she has had a busy month with DCED Municipal & Pension reporting and Actuary reporting for the Police Pension Plan and a Workers' Compensation Audit. Also, Manager Hotaling signed the contract with NTSWD (Northern Tier Solid Waste Disposal) for the Spring Cleanup which will be May 17 & 18, 2024.

**FINANCIAL & ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT:**

- A motion for the bills to be paid for January was made by Mr. Kovalcin and seconded by Mrs. Miller. Motion passed.

**UNION SUB-COMMITTEE:**

Mrs. Miller stated that there will be meetings starting in a couple of months for the Public Works & Clerical Agreements.

**PLANNING COMMISSION REPORT:**

Vice-President Christini stated there was a meeting in January. The main action item was the open seat on the Commission. There were two candidates and they were both discussed for a length of time. A motion was made by the Planning Commission to recommend to Council that Ms. Brianna Fischetti be appointed to the Planning

Commission. Mr. Kovalcin made the motion to appoint Ms. Fischetti, seconded by Mr. Schulze. Motion passed. Manager Hotaling will contact her with the news.

**RECREATION REPORT:**

Mr. Kovalcin stated that they found a tentative carnival ride company. He also stated that they were hoping to have some different games & features such as a big fishing tank for kids where the handler teaches kids how to fish, and brings live fish. Also, Mr. Kovalcin stated that there is a guy who is an escape artist that we can't get this year but may be able to get next year (2025). One of his biggest escapes is a water escape.

**TMA/WMA/CBPA REPORTS:**

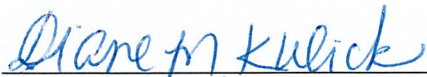
Included in the packet.

**LIBRARY REPORT:**

The December 14, 2023, meeting minutes are in the packet.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

A motion to adjourn was made by Vice-President Christini. The meeting adjourned at 7:47 PM.



Diane M. Kulick  
Towanda Borough Secretary