

Towanda Borough Council
January 6, 2025
Regular Meeting Minutes

The Towanda Borough Council held its regular meeting at the Towanda Borough Municipal Building on Monday, January 6, 2025. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM.

Council Members Present: President Ryan Eberlin, Vice President Mark Christini, Jean Miller, Philip Roof, Joseph Saring, William Kovalcin, Jonathan Schulze, Michelle Hatch, and Gary Parks.

Others: Mayor Garrett Miller, Fred Smith (Borough Solicitor); Borough Officer Randy Epler, Code Enforcement Officer Barry Thrush, Borough Manager Stacy Schoonover, Administrative Assistant Angie Oliver, Fire Chief Bill Sheets

Public: Adam Brooks, Thomas Bradford, Charlotte Parks

PUBLIC COMMENTS/CONCERNS

- Charlotte Parks informed the board of how well Kali's Mission is doing with the area feral cats and gave great numbers and positive feedback to the Borough and thanked them for starting the campaign and funding it years ago. She let the Council know how far this program has reached and about the clinics and grants that the mission is applying for.
- Adam Brooks questioned the NTSWA contract and why a landowner has to pay for a dumpster that is more money than one of their choosing. Council replied that this helps residents afford Spring and Fall Clean-up, not to mention it was difficult to sign on with a company that would pick up the garbage within the borough. Mayor Miller stated that former Borough Manager, Tom Fairchild, priced garbage removal extensively in the past and NTSWA was the only company that would sign up to remove the garbage for the residents. The previous company did not clean up the garbage and that's when NTSWA took it on and no other refuse removal facility has stepped up to provide services. Brooks asked the members of Council if they pay for the stickers and M. Christini stated that yes, he has for the past twenty-five years. It was noted that the pink stickers are cheaper because of the signed contract between NTSWA and the Towanda Borough. Brooks then asked how many signatures he would need to remove one of the council members from their seat. Members of the board noted that you must be a resident of the borough and reside in the ward in which you represent. Eberlin listed the length of terms and the year in which his seat will come up for re-election and wished Mr. Brooks luck, as well as reiterating the terms and conditions with NTSWA and expressing there was not much to be done before the contract is to be reviewed and renewed or canceled.
- Tom Bradford related that he attended the TMA meeting in December 2024 in which Fred Johnson suggested raising water/sewer rates to help offset the \$7.5 million project that will be taking place in the near future. He said his concern is about how an item on the agenda that directly affects the public can be voted upon without the public having time to comment on the issue and why it couldn't wait a month for public concerns to be heard. M. Christini stated that this was a valid issue and even though the agenda is posted, that doesn't mean the public will have time to voice their concerns. M. Christini stated that he will check into this issue. R. Eberlin stated that he will take this comment seriously and he will look for various options, even if that means having another meeting to allow for further resident's comments prior to the final vote being cast.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

W. Kovalcin moved to approve the December 2, 2024 minutes, seconded by M. Hatch. The motion carried unanimously.

J. Saring moved to approve the December 30, 2024 special meeting minutes, seconded by J. Miller. The motion carried unanimously.

FIRE CHIEF REPORT

The detailed monthly report was included in the December packet.

Chief Sheets reported:

- December 2024 – responded to 18 calls – evenly split between the township and borough.
- The departments tanker is 20+ years old and the department is getting quotes for a new tanker and will submit this information to the Finance committee
- R. Eberlin stated that anything the department needs, Sheets can reach out

FIRE BOARD REPORT

Mr. Parks stated there was nothing new to report.

MAYOR REPORT

- Mayor Miller thanked the Chief for his years of service
- Miller stated that Charlotte Parks gave him the esteemed honor of judging doors downtown that were decorated for Christmas
- Miller attended a Zoom meeting with a company that has sporting goods available to their residents and he will be meeting with the Recreation Board to talk about funding, etc.

POLICE CHIEF REPORT

Chief Epler reported:

- A DUI Rove operation was conducted in the Borough with 4 arrests.
- Continuing with meetings via Zoom for the Central Square project for the operating system.
- Officers Hades and Hennessy did K-9 training in Scranton for Narcotics, article searching, and tracking.
- The 2023 Dodge patrol car was damaged when a driver backed into it while the officers were outside of it. Claim will be submitted.

**TOWANDA POLICE DEPARTMENT
MONTHLY REPORT - DECEMBER 2024**

250	COMPLAINTS RECEIVED	4	JUVENILE PETITIONS
20	TRAFFIC CITATIONS	0	K-9 SERVICE (BORO)
12	NON-TRAFFIC CITATIONS	3	THEFT REPORTS
4	DUI ARRESTS	3	ANIMAL COMPLAINTS
46	DISTURBANCE CALLS	4	VEHICLE DOORS OPENED
1	VEHICLE ACCIDENTS	7	WARNINGS ISSUED
1	OUT-OF-TOWN ASSISTS	7	MENTAL HEALTH CALLS
7	CRIMINAL ARRESTS		

POLICE COMMITTEE

Mr. Saring had nothing to report.

CODE ENFORCEMENT REPORT

The Code Enforcement Report is included in the January packet

- B. Thrush provided the end-of-year reports and totals to the council
- ParkMobile amassed \$9,624.65 in revenue
- Council hopes that residents will understand that the Code Enforcement officer’s time is valuable and if they keep having to pay these fines and fees, they will not violate the codes and laws, etc.
- Mr. Brooks spoke up and let council know that even though he was not happy about the dumpster issue, that Mr. Thrush did an amazing job and was great to work with each time he came to speak to him about the issue. He commended his work ethic and attitude all the while conducting a very difficult job.

PUBLIC WORKS/CODE ENFORCEMENT COMMITTEE REPORT

Mr. Parks stated that they only meet as needed.

BOROUGH MANAGER REPORT

1. DECEMBER

A retirement party was held at the Villa Sena for long time Borough Secretary, Diane Kulick December 13. The employee Christmas party was December 20.

2. JANUARY

Superintendent Aikey and Borough Manager Schoonover are holding mandatory monthly meetings..

3. 2024 AUDIT

Hallock Shannon will be conducting the 2024 audit; engagement letter has been signed and sent.

4. IT

All computers are up to date. No major foreseeable purchases for IT until 2026

5. PURCHASE

A backhoe was purchased from Warner Tractor for \$154,356.80 which will be reimbursed through the LSA Grant.

6. EMPLOYEES

Ice and snow have kept the Public Works crew busy with clearing snow off streets and sidewalks and with water main breaks

BOROUGH SOLICITOR SMITH

Smith mentioned the Planning Commission and the Non-Conforming clause. He asked that those interested attend the meeting.

BOROUGH ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Handed out a letter from PEMA regarding G. Parks as being appointed the Towanda Borough Emergency Management Coordinator.

FINANCIAL & ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

A motion was made to pay the bills by G. Parks and seconded by W. Kovalcin. The motion passed unanimously.

UNION SUB-COMMITTEE

R. Eberlin stated there was nothing further to report.

PLANNING COMMISSION REPORT

M. Christini stated they are continuing work on amending the non-conforming use ordinance.

RECREATION REPORT

W. Kovalcin said there was no meeting but they will start in January and he will keep everyone updated.

RESOLUTION 2025-1

Adopt Resolution Broadband Ready Communities Application

The motion to adopt Resolution 2025-1 was made by W. Kovalcin and seconded by J. Saring.

The roll was called and recorded as follows:

AYE/YES: R. Eberlin, P. Roof, J. Miller, J. Saring, W. Kovalcin, J. Shulze, M. Christini, M. Hatch & G. Parks

NAY/NO:

ABSTAIN:

ABSENT:

RESOLUTION 2025-1 – Carried unanimously

TMA/WTMA/REPORTS

There was nothing to report.

LIBRARY REPORT

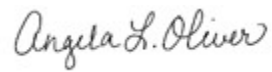
There was nothing to report.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Council entered into an executive session at 7:57 pm. They adjourned the executive session at 8:06 pm.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn was made by W. Kovalcin. The meeting was adjourned at 8:07 pm.



Angela L. Oliver
Towanda Borough Secretary