

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

The Towanda Borough Council Regular Meeting was held on Monday, July 1, 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. Saring, Mr. Kovalcin, Mr. Shulze, Vice-President Christini via telephone, Mrs. Hatch & Mr. Parks

Absent: Mr. Roof

CITIZENS TO BE HEARD:

President Eberlin stated we received an email letter from Mr. Joe Yarzebinski, Pennsylvania Tour of Honor sponsor, who gave an update on the seven-month tour that visits veterans memorials all over the nation. Our BCVMP (Bradford County Veterans Memorial Park) is a part of this tour this year. He stated that our memorial has been visited 83 times.

A letter that the school district received from us concerning the motorcycle training course noise on Lombard Street was sent to the training company, and they decided to cancel all classes at this time. They were very cordial and said they appreciated the use of the school's facility over the years.

Kevin Doupe' of 9 Thomas Street was present on behalf of the 2nd Annual Porchfest. He said last year they had an estimated 550 to 600 people attend, and about 30 musicians performed, and included several vendors. They had lots of sponsors and community members taking part in this event. They are now a little over 2 months out from this year's Porchfest, and they currently have about 25 musicians, and a dozen porches for hosting. He feels that they are going to get a lot more. Also, they do have some food vendors and are going to do a vendor village this year with arts and crafts. Mr. Doupe' also stated with the work of Roger Hatch, they have now become a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. In addition, for the handicapped people who have a hard time getting up the hills during this event, they are working on possibly getting BeST Transit to go to the senior center in North Towanda, downtown to Towanda Terrace to Porchfest locations, and repeating this route throughout the day. They are really hoping this will work out. Mr. Doupe' gave a thank you to the Borough for all they did last year for making it a huge success again.

Mr. Hatch of 101 York Avenue stated there are a few things that were done for Porchfest on behalf of the Borough last year, and they wanted to make sure that the Borough would be ok to do these things this year. Mr. Hatch reviewed the items/requests to Council. He also reviewed the borough funds that are in the Porchfest bank account, and stated that they would like to use them to open their own checking account. The ending fund balance was \$2,377.65 and he understands that \$2,000 has to stay with the Borough account. They had left after-expenses of \$2,100 left from last year's Porchfest. There were a few motions made for this event to happen. Number 1: Waive the borough's vendor fee. A motion was made by Mr. Kovalcin, seconded by Mrs. Hatch to do this. Motion passed.

Number 2: Give the balance of the earned 2023 Porchfest donation in the amount \$ 2,102.65, to the 2024 now a 501(c)(3) nonprofit Porchfest organization. A motion was made by Mr. Saring and seconded by Mr. Kovalcin to do this. Motion passed.

Number 3: Approve the sewer credits to Bishop's in exchange for the use of their porta-potties (normally a rental) for the event. A motion was made by Mr. Kovalcin and seconded by Mr. Saring to do this. Motion passed. Lastly, President Eberlin stated that the Borough would take care of any garbage that is collected from this event.

Ms. Katrina Murray of 204 William Street was present to state that the intersection of Kingsbury and William Street cars are going through there without stopping at the stop sign (mostly the ones heading north). She asked if the borough could paint STOP on the pavement. Chief Epler stated that he will send a detail there to patrol at different times of the day. Hopefully, after a couple citations given out, it will help people to come to a full stop in the future.

Mr. Hatch stated that the Planning Commission would like to see the storefront ordinance move forward with the art. Maybe they could have Council (in the absence of a Borough Manager) take these ideas and move forward because the planning commission has taken it as far as it can in making the storefront window art happen. President Eberlin stated that Council does realize that they have to move forward on the storefront art and appreciates it.

Mr. Hatch stated that the commission is still working on the definition of vacant storefronts. Mr. Tom Bradford, of Means Street asked about the definition and when the Planning Commission was working on it. He was told that the next meeting is scheduled for July 16, 2024 at 7 PM.

APPROVAL OF THE PREVIOUS MONTH'S MINUTES:

A motion to approve the May 6, 2024, Regular meeting minutes was made by Mr. Kovalcin, and seconded by Mr. Christini. Motion passed.

A motion to approve the May 21, 2024, Special meeting minutes was made by Mr. Parks, and seconded by Mrs. Miller. Motion passed.

A motion to approve the June 12, 2024, Special meeting minutes was made by Mrs. Hatch, and seconded by Mr. Saring. Motion passed.

FIRE CHIEF REPORT:

Chief Roof was absent, but his report was in the packet.

FIRE BOARD REPORT:

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

MAYOR'S REPORT:

- Mayor Miller asked that Council approve (via certification from the Police Civil Service Commission) the promotion of Bryan D. Bellows' to Corporal of the Towanda Police Department. A motion to do this was made by Mr. Kovalcin and seconded by Mr. Saring. Motion passed. Officer Bellows was present and congratulated. Corporal Bellows was given the Oath of Office by Mayor Miller.
- Mayor Miller thanked Corporal Bellows, Sargeant Lantz and Officer Vermilya for taking part in the dunking booth at Riverfest.

POLICE CHIEF REPORT:

Chief Epler reviewed his report:

- A DUI Rove and Seatbelt enforcement patrols were conducted in the Borough this month.
- Police presence was a mixed bag this year for Riverfest. Officers' vacation was already scheduled so I had asked the Sheriff's Office and Probation for a presence, PSP also came in for a while, as well. No major issues were reported.
- Officers Hades and Hennessy did K-9 training in Wilkes-Barre for narcotics.
- I attended several more workshops for the new Suite One operating program. I also had a Zoom meeting with Axon about our body-worn cameras in anticipation of our start-up date.

JUNE 2024 – Monthly Report

285	COMPLAINTS RECEIVED	0	JUVENILE PETITIONS
58	TRAFFIC CITATIONS	0	K-9 SERVICE (BORO)
3	NON-TRAFFIC CITATIONS	6	THEFT REPORTS
0	DUI ARRESTS	1	ANIMAL COMPLAINTS
50	DISTURBANCE CALLS	1	VEHICLE DOORS OPENED
3	VEHICLE ACCIDENTS	9	WARNINGS ISSUED
1	OUT-OF-TOWN ASSISTS	10	MENTAL HEALTH CALLS
5	CRIMINAL ARRESTS		

POLICE COMMITTEE:

Mr. Saring stated that they were able to get the K-9 police SUV re-inspected. It needed a motor mount and an injector. Also, they ordered 2 more tasers that were essential to the department.

CODE ENFORCEMENT REPORT:

Barry Thrush, Code Enforcement Report included.

- Mr. Thrush also included the Parking tickets issued year to date.
- President Eberlin stated that the old Mulberry Street school sold recently and we should be proactive in letting the new owner understand the zoning code. We don't know what the intent is for the property, and we

don't want to get in a situation where the owner is moving forward with a plan that doesn't correlate with the zoning code. President Eberlin suggested that maybe a phone call or a letter to the new owner would be in order. He feels that this property needs hundreds of thousands of dollars of work unless someone is going to knock it down. It was noted that the property is still condemned and the new owner should know this but still be contacted.

PUBLIC WORKS/CODE ENFORCEMENT COMMITTEE REPORT:

Consists of Borough Manager (Open), Mr. Parks (Chairman), Mr. Kovalcin, and (Mr. Hatch?). Mr. Parks stated that there is a need for new members to be on the committee. President Eberlin will look into getting another participant which may be Superintendent Aikey.

BOROUGH REPORT:

The report included the following:

1. **Paving Fifth Street Between Elizabeth & Bridge Street**
 - Glenn O Hawbaker paving to start the 2nd week of July depending on the weather.
2. **Bank Accounts**
 - Add Stacy Schoonover & Matt Aikey to Towanda Borough, Towanda Municipal Authority.
 - Add bank Account for Act 13 Funds \$88,808.84.
3. **Porchfest**
 - The Committee would like to close out the Borough Porchfest account and open their own. Would like approval to write check out of account to them.
4. **Municipal Bid**
 - Side Dump loader bucket with is no longer used is now advertised for bids.
5. **Bridge Street Sidewalk**
 - Resident fell on the wood that is warping on Bridge Street. This is state property. PennDOT is aware and will be repairing.
6. **Riverfest**
 - Thanks to all the employees had Parkway all cleaned by noon.
7. **Garden Club**
 - Flower Pots - Stacy has planted the flowers and watered them. Garden club can't do this anymore.
8. **New Business**
 - New business downtown – 52 Designs, 506 Main Street.

BOROUGH SECRETARY

RESOLUTION 2024-13

Approve PEMA-DAP-1 designation of Ryan P. Eberlin as agent for Towanda
Motion made by Mrs. Hatch and seconded by Mr. Saring

The roll was called and recorded as follows:

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

NAY/NO:

ABSTAIN:

ABSENT: Mr. Roof

RESOLUTION 2024-13 - Carried

BOROUGH SOLICITOR

- Solicitor Smith stated that he is still working on tightening up the definition of "guest."
- Solicitor Smith also stated that he was looking out his window and saw the Borough crew mowing grass across the street (on Wilmot Drive). This strip of property is just a paper street (Fifth Street) and the 2 bordering property owners are responsible for mowing each of their sides of this strip. Solicitor Smith is going to keep an eye on it and said for the Borough not to mow it. If it doesn't get mowed either he will send a letter or he will compose a letter for Mr. Thrush to send out to the property ow. We should tell them it is their responsibility, and if the Borough crew has to mow it, they both will be charged.

- Solicitor Smith also has the Street Opening Ordinance done and it was suggested that he present it to Mr. Aikey for his review and input.
- President Eberlin has a concern about disclosure of personal & confidential information by employees. Could we have some employees in certain positions sign non-disclosure agreements? Solicitor Smith will have a conversation with President Eberlin concerning this.

FINANCIAL & ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT:

- Mrs. Hatch mentioned the cost of the cleaning company. We will look around for different quotes.
- A motion for the bills to be paid for was made by Mr. Kovalcin and seconded by Mrs. Hatch. Motion passed.
- President Eberlin also stated that the Borough Manager position is now posted on Indeed and Facebook.

UNION SUB-COMMITTEE:

Mrs. Miller stated that she is waiting to hear from the union on starting negotiations.

PLANNING COMMISSION REPORT:

Mr. Hatch earlier in the meeting identified that we are stalemated with getting artists for the windows and working on the vacant storefront definition.

RECREATION REPORT:

Mr. Kovalcin stated that he will have the final numbers for Riverfest next month. He thinks the numbers were down this year due to the heat and so many other events going on throughout the area. The committee is thinking about moving the event back to late August in 2025. He thanked Borough employee James Kithcart for helping out with setting up and anything that needed done, and Bengal Gave, Borough Mechanic for the use of the boat for the duck race.

TMA/WTMA/CBPA REPORTS:

The April and May TMA and WTMA meeting minutes are in the packet.

LIBRARY REPORT:

The April meeting minutes are in the packet.

ADJOURNMENT:

A motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Kovalcin. The meeting adjourned at 8:12 PM.



Diane M. Kulick
Towanda Borough Secretary