

**Towanda Borough Council
March 3, 2025
Regular Meeting Minutes**

The Towanda Borough Council held its regular meeting at 724 Main Street, Towanda Borough Municipal Building on Monday, March 3, 2025. The meeting was called to order at 7:02 PM.

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

Absent: Philip Roof; Towanda Fire Chief William Sheets

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

Public: Thomas Bradford

PUBLIC COMMENTS/CONCERNS

T. Bradford thanked the Council members for the public meeting notice that the Planning Commission shared regarding the Non-conforming Use Ordinance.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

W. Kovalcin made a motion to approve the February 2025 regular meeting minutes, seconded by J. Saring. The motion carried unanimously.

FIRE CHIEF REPORT

The detailed monthly report was included in the March packet.

Chief Sheets was not present:

- February 2025 – responded to 11 calls.

FIRE BOARD REPORT

Mr. Parks had nothing new to report.

MAYOR REPORT

- Mayor Miller gave his condolences to the police officers that were killed in the line of duty in VA Beach and York, PA
- He also added that the Towanda Borough Police were doing an amazing job
- Mayor Miller and Manager Schoonover are going to the TASD high school this week for mock interviews

POLICE CHIEF REPORT

Chief Epler reported:

- A DUI Rove operation was conducted in the Borough with 16 arrests for the year; many are drug related
- A few officers are involved in the ARIDE school – Advanced Roadside Interdiction and Detection school.
- Continuing with meetings via Zoom for the Central Square project for the operating system. All officers have training scheduled this month for this at the Communications Center; June will be the go live date
- Officers Hades and Hennessy did K-9 training in Scranton for Narcotics, article searching, and tracking. While at training, Hennessy slipped going down the stairwell and broke his elbow; had surgery 3.3.25, will be off for a while.
- Officer Carpenter attended interview and interrogation school in Scranton.

**TOWANDA POLICE DEPARTMENT
MONTHLY REPORT - FEBRUARY 2025**

253	COMPLAINTS RECEIVED	0	JUVENILE PETITIONS
43	TRAFFIC CITATIONS	1	K-9 SERVICE (BORO)
6	NON-TRAFFIC CITATIONS	6	THEFT REPORTS
8	DUI ARRESTS	1	ANIMAL COMPLAINTS
35	DISTURBANCE CALLS	3	VEHICLE DOORS OPENED
3	VEHICLE ACCIDENTS	7	WARNINGS ISSUED
1	OUT-OF-TOWN ASSISTS	2	MENTAL HEALTH CALLS
12	CRIMINAL ARRESTS		

POLICE COMMITTEE

Mr. Saring stated the residents have commented about how great it is to see the ever-present police force around the borough.

CODE ENFORCEMENT REPORT

The Code Enforcement Report is included in the March packet:

- North Fourth Street that was abandoned just sold to USDA; 506 Second Street which Thrush alerted the Borough Police about some vagrants that were squatting there – drug charges were filed against many of them and Chief Epler stated that many of them are now residing in the BCCF.

PUBLIC WORKS/CODE ENFORCEMENT COMMITTEE REPORT

Mr. Parks had nothing to report.

BOROUGH MANAGER REPORT

1. RECOGNITION

Manager Schoonover recognized B. Thrush for passing his Residential Inspection exam.

2. PRWA

The PA Rural Water Association conference March 26-March 29, 2025.

3. TURNBACK

S. Schoonover did reach out to Steve Kehoe and let him know that Council is not interested.

4. THIRD WARD PLAYGROUND

Schoonover explained that she has been speaking with Chris Foster of Stiffler McGraw, about the grant that DCNR has to offer

5. YMCA

YMCA contacted B. Thrush about making the Little League field ADA accessible. Council asked if Manager Schoonover could hold off on contacting Little League until further information is given.

6. CHAMBER

The Chamber of Commerce asked for approval to close down Court Street from 4-9 p.m. for a mini-Farmer's Market. W. Kovalcin made the motion to approve the closing of Court Street, M. Hatch seconded it. The motion passed unanimously.

7. VOLUNTEER

Serve Inc. employees asked Schoonover if it was possible to bring their clients to the Borough to clean the streets, flower pots and parking garage within the next few weeks. Schoonover said yes, as long as Council agrees. Council gave their approval but did ask that the Borough to provide yellow vests that read "Towanda Borough" for safety reasons.

8. BIG BROTHERS/BIG SISTERS

They will no longer be renting the space in the Police Department building. S. Schoonover asked what Council wants to do with the space; M. Christini stated that if it could be revenue if rented out.

BOROUGH SOLICITOR SMITH

- Smith stated that the public hearing regarding the non-conforming use ordinance had to be postponed because the ordinance legal notice had not been submitted to Bradford County Planning in time. They will review it and send their comments back – it will then go to public hearing.
- Discussed home occupation permit fees. Smith believes that Thrush should have the discretion about the specifics. This could help economically and require those who work from home to keep their property looking suitable. This will go to the Planning Commission first then the Zoning Hearing board. W. Kovalcin made a motion to send this topic to the Planning Commission, J. Miller seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

FINANCIAL & ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

M. Hatch asked why the non-union employees get a \$500/employee clothing allowance. This will be revisited when the contract is re-negotiated.

J. Saring made a motion to pay the bills, G. Parks seconded the motion. The motion to pay the bills passed unanimously.

PLANNING COMMISSION REPORT

M. Christini mentioned that there are two vacancies on the Planning Commission board and shared that there is an interested party who will attend next months Planning Committee meeting to introduce herself. A. Oliver added that there is now another interested candidate for the second seat who will also introduce herself at the next Planning meeting, as well.

RECREATION REPORT

W. Kovalcin said Riverfest is back at the original date and people are happy about that. They have also procured a few food trucks and bands and he will keep Council updated on the progress.

TMA/WTMA/REPORTS

M. Christini stated there are projects that are being looked at from all standpoints.

LIBRARY REPORT

Minutes are included in the packet.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Council entered into an executive session at 7:37 pm to discuss personnel issues. Council adjourned the executive session at 8:11 pm.

ADJOURNMENT

A motion to adjourn was made by J. Saring. The meeting was adjourned at 8:20 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Angela L. Oliver
Towanda Borough Administrative Assistant