

April 4, 2011

Towanda, PA

The regular meeting of the Towanda Borough Council was held at the Municipal Building, 724 Main St., Towanda, Pa. on Monday, April 4, 2011. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Council President Mark Christini followed by a moment of silent prayer and the reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance. The roll was called and recorded as follows:

PRESENT: Mrs. Clark, Mr. Christini, Mr. Klinger, Mr. Kovalcin, Mr. Long, Mrs. Miller, Mr. Sweitzer

ABSENT: Mr. McLinko, Mr. Roof

CITIZENS TO BE HEARD

Dick McGuire, Ann St., Towanda addressed Council regarding the increased traffic on Rt. 6 between Towanda and Wysox. He said he has to travel it quite often during the week and has talked to most of the people on the Wysox strip and a lot of them are pretty much out of business—people can't get there and won't go there. He said he has talked to the Police Chief about it and also read to letter that was in the newspaper regarding parking. Mr. said he called Mr. Christini and he suggested he (Mr. McGuire) come to the meeting. He said the problem is created by the Borough because of the traffic light. He asked if the Borough could manually control the traffic light at certain times without going through a long process with PennDOT. Mr. Fairchild said the only thing the Borough can do is put it on flash. Mr. McGuire asked if it could be overridden and Mr. Fairchild said not really. He said it can be reprogrammed but would need PennDOT approval and a traffic study. Mr. McGuire asked if a police office could be there and direct traffic. Mr. Fairchild said you would still need a PennDOT permit. Any change the Borough would make would be subject to PennDOT approval. Mr. Fairchild said he has spoken to PennDOT previously about this and they were not keen on the idea.

Mr. Manville, Towanda Emergency Management Coordinator, said one person could not handle it. He said the fire police have found that out.

Mr. McGuire asked Council to work toward a solution to this serious situation. Mrs. Clark asked if PennDOT could be contacted again.

Ken Bartholomew, Wysox businessman, said his business was up but the people that come to his business don't like the traffic. He too asked if this situation could be pursued with PennDOT.

Jon Kulich, Wysox Twp. resident and author of the letter that appeared in The Daily Review, told Council it was not his intent to have a police officer directing traffic all the time. He said safety is the issue with all the traffic. If all the lanes are full and there is an emergency it is almost impossible to get through. He said another concern is road rage. He said there is a lot of it. He suggested that the speed of the traffic light be increased. He said these lights are very long, too long. He said the light by the General Store is Wysox is too long also.

A suggestion was to also have signs placed letting people know when they can turn right on red because a lot of people don't realize that. Mr. Fairchild said that was a good idea.

Mr. McGuire said he has heard that the Merrill Parkway gets shut down at times for First Friday activities and Mr. Christini said yes, it is shut down at certain times for First Friday and River fest but said Council could take a harder look at the next request to close the street.

Mr. Fairchild told Council that the parkway can handle the weight of the water trucks and they cannot be prohibited from traveling on it.

Pat Taylor, Second St., asked if you can turn right on red as you come across the bridge to Towanda and Chief Osman said yes.

Mr. McGuire asked Council what it was going to do about the situation and Mr. Fairchild said when he talked to PennDOT about a study they say to just concentrate on this intersection would cause problems elsewhere—S. Main St., Parkway, etc. They see things regionally and this really is a regional problem. A study could be done locally but it would take some money and Towanda Borough does not necessarily have a lot of money. He said maybe the NTRPDC could get involved and provide some money.

Mr. McGuire asked about the bulk water sales money and Mr. Fairchild said that the Towanda Water System realizes the revenue from bulk sales and all that money will be reinvested in the water system. Towanda Borough has a small gas lease and that money is in a capital reserve fund and a lot of it is being used toward the SCI renovation project. There is not a lot of money here. He said since it is a regional problem maybe we could look to the other municipalities or the NTRPDC or to the Progress Authority for help. This is as much a Wysox problem as it is a Towanda Borough, Towanda Township and North Towanda problem.

Mr. Sweitzer said a study is needed. There is not a quick fix to the problem.

Mr. Bartholomew said the gas people are saying that 2011 is not going to be much different than 2010 but watch out for 2012—it is going to double.

Mr. Christini summarized the discussion by stating the Council would look into the “right turn on red” sign; ask those present from Wysox to talk to the township supervisors and PennDOT regarding the situation. Also, Council will refer the issues to the Police Committee for further discussion and plans. He thanked those in the audience for attending.

William Manville, Towanda Borough Emergency Management Coordinator, told Council that he has updated the Emergency Management Plan for the Borough. He said the only real changes that have been made are the contact persons. He said he has a few things to finish but hopes to bring it to Council for approval next month.

Mr. Sweitzer read a letter from the BCRAC inviting Council to attend an Appreciation Celebration on Thursday, May 5 at 5:30 p.m. at the Sayre Theatre.

PROPOSED ORDINANCES FOR ADOPTION

Mr. Sweitzer made a motion seconded by Mr. Kovalcin to approve, by resolution, Ordinance 2011-1 that was advertised last week in The Daily Review by way of summary description and was made available for inspection in its entirety at the office of the Borough Secretary, the Bradford County Law Library and the legal department of The Daily Review. The proposed ordinance 2011-1 repeals Section 68-15 of the Borough Code removing the “forgiveness clause” of the parking fine.

The Council was polled and vote recorded as follows:

YES: Clark, Klinger, Long, Kovalcin, Sweitzer, Miller, Christini
 NAYE: None

Resolution 2011-2 carried.

Mr. Long made a motion seconded by Mr. Klinger to approve, by Resolution, Ordinance 2011-2 that was advertised last week in The Daily Review by way of summary description and was made available for inspection in its entirety at the office of the Borough Secretary, the Bradford County Law Library and the legal department of The Daily Review. The proposed ordinance will place “Stop” signs before the northwest and southeast corners of William St. at Chestnut St.

The Council was polled and the vote recorded as follows:

YES: Clark, Klinger, Long, Kovalcin, Sweitzer, Miller, Christini

NAYE: None

Resolution 2011-3 carried.

APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MONTH'S MINUTES

Mrs. Clark made a motion seconded by Mrs. Miller to approve the minutes of the March Council meeting with the correction on page 3, paragraph 9 the word "no" should be "now". Motion carried.

FIRE CHIEF' REPORT

Chief Roof was not in attendance. No report.

FIRE BOARD REPORT

Mr. Klinger said there were no items to bring before Council.

MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor Miller reported that Chief Osman attended a Rotary meeting. He also reported that the SUV and the 2006 patrol car had mechanical work done this past month. He also noted that the officers gave a tour of the police station to a local Boy Scout troop. Chief Osman and Officer Lantz attended the annual Highway Safety Conference.

Mayor Miller noted that the flags on the bridge have been replaced. Mr. Fairchild said that the flags really take a beating on the bridge and they last just under a year. He said the flags are a Rotary sponsored project and Penelec donates its equipment and personnel to put them up. Chief Osman said the VFW and Rotary donate the flags.

POLICE CHIEF'S REPORT

Chief Osman reported that two vehicles went down at the same time. He thanked Moore's Auto who helped us out by towing the vehicle to where they have their work done and we got the work done at a fair price. He said that both vehicles are back in service. He said the department is still looking for a K-9 vehicle.

Chief Osman reported that Officer Hennessy and Moro attended the annual county-wide Boy Scout lock in at Sayre. They were well received.

Chief Osman told Council the department helped the State police locally with a drug sniff.

Chief Osman also reported that long-time part time police officer Paul Moyer has retired from the force. He said Mr. Moyer did a great job for the Borough.

Mr. Christini asked the Borough Secretary to write a letter to Mr. Moyer thanking him for his years of service to the Borough.

Chief Osman said he spent a lot of time last month working with Mr. Frawley on the police civil service rules.

POLICE COMMITTEE REPORT

Mrs. Miller said the Committee did not meet.

CODE ENFORCEMENT REPORT

Mr. Haight reviewed his written report with Council.

He noted that on the "Compliance" portion of the report, a lot of the issues are pending due to the weather—waiting for nice weather.

Item 4, Page 6—understand the property has been sold again. Mr. Haight said he will be looking into it

Mr. Christini said some of these items go back to 2008 and 2009 and he asked if these people could be reminded and Mr. Haight said some of them are working on a couple of the projects and the people will be reminded this spring.

Mr. Christini asked Mr. Frawley if there was any word from the County about the CDBG for the Michael's property and Mr. Frawley said not yet. Mr. Fairchild said the County gives it recommendation to the state and the state give the County the money.

BOROUGH MANAGER'S REPORT

Mr. Fairchild reported on the following items:

- Ian Whinnery has resigned from the Borough. Will need to be replaced. Have advertised and received some good applications. Will be interviewing shortly.

Council requested the Borough Secretary send a letter of appreciation to Ian Whinnery.

- Arbitration hearing held with the Teamsters and Police on March 15. Decision will not be expected for several months.
- James Bowen will resign his seat on the Police Civil Service Commission due to his position as a Deputy Coroner for the County.

Mr. Frawley said he discussed the situation with Mr. Bowen and he agreed to resign from the commission. Mr. Frawley said under the law Council has 30 days from the date of the resignation to appoint a replacement. Mr. Sweitzer asked if Mr. Bowen's resignation had been received and Mrs. Harris said she has not received the letter yet.

Mr. Frawley said Council should decide now that when it receives Mr. Bowen's resignation whether it wants to advertise for applicants.

Mr. Long said he would like to take care of it tonight. Mrs. Clark said she felt it should be advertised.

Mr. Sweitzer made a motion seconded by Mrs. Clark that upon receipt of the resignation of James Bowen from the Police Civil Service Commission that the position be advertised in The Daily Review. Interested applicants should send their request in writing to the Borough Secretary before the May 2, 2011 Council meeting. Motion carried.

- Finance/Administrative Committee discussed the Borough's current residency requirement policy for Borough employees. The Committee is recommending that TAP 29 be eliminated and no require a residency requirement for Borough employees.

Mr. Christini said the Committee's thinking is that it is better to have a qualified person who may have to drive 20 minutes or so than be limited by the residency requirement.

Mr. Sweitzer made a motion seconded by Mr. Kovalcin to rescind TAP-29 Residency Requirement effective immediately. Motion carried.

- Streetscape Phase 4 project has been rebid for the third time. Mid State Paving is the apparent successful low bidder. Ready to award a contract to them in the amount of \$350,016.70 subject to final PennDOT concurrence. Available grant money is \$350,500.

Mr. Sweitzer made a motion seconded by Mr. Kovalcin to authorize a Notice to Award be sent to Mid State Paving for the Streetscape Phase 4 project for a cost of \$350.016.70. Motion carried.

- Municipal Building roof needs to be replaced. It is 19 years old. Securing quotes at this time. Will tear off present roof and replace with a rubber membrane one. Committee discussed and we will probably look to borrow the money. Estimated cost is between \$30-40,000. Asked Council for authorization to begin process.

Mr. Sweitzer made a motion seconded by Mrs. Miller to authorize the Borough Manager to seek loan information and quotes for the replacement of the roof on the Municipal Building. Motion carried.

- RACP grant (\$5M) is still active. Have provided the Office of the Budget with additional information.
- SCI/YMCA project is about 90% complete.
- Received word for DCNR that they want us to create a new project completion date of June 30, 2013 instead of 2014 for Phase 1 of the project. Phase 1 grant is for \$200,000. Don't see a problem with this. When we received the executed grant agreement we can bring the design consultant on board and design the project as well as construct Phase 1 which would be the sidewalk, parking lot, benches, etc. The major part would still need to be constructed.
- With regard to the parking on Park St., when it was converted to one-way and created angle parking on both sides we knew there was enough space for standard size vehicles and we knew larger vehicles would not fit. The issue now is with signage. There does not seem to be a one-size fits all sign for this. A standard vehicle is a vehicle of 18 ft. or less.

Mr. Manville asked if when the street was designed did they take into consideration emergency vehicles getting through. Mr. Fairchild asked how much space is needed for a fire truck and Mr. Manville said he did not know the width. Mr. Fairchild said there is 12 ft. down through the center.

Mr. Klinger suggested a sign could read "Compact & Standard Vehicles Only--No Large Trucks, Vans or Cars". Other suggestions were also discussed.

Mr. Christini said we realize we need to do something with Park St. and the Police Committee was directed to work with Chief Osman and the Solicitor to come up with some ideas, solutions to the parking situation on Park St. and to report back to Council with its recommendations.

Mr. Christini asked if there was an update on the code revitalization project and Mr. Fairchild said no, not at this time but will be meeting with Chief Osman, Mr. Haight and Mrs. Harris shortly.

Mr. Christini asked if there was any update about the former Pedro property along the Merrill Parkway and Mr. Fairchild said Mr. Frawley has prepared a proposed agreement and he said he has had it surveyed and now it needs to go to the County Planning Commission for sub-division approval. After the approval we can advertise it.

Mr. Sweitzer asked if the other lot could be done at the same time and Mr. Fairchild said he did not have it surveyed and it will need to be surveyed.

BOROUGH SOLICITOR'S REPORT

Mr. Frawley reported to Council that he spent a lot of time during the past month working on the Police Civil Service rules. It is a major project. Attended a seminar regarding the subject that was very helpful. Also talked to experts in the field. The next step is for the Civil Service Commission to meet again to address some issues and hopefully they will be meeting at the end of April.

BOROUGH SECRETARY'S REPORT

Ms. Harris reminded those who had signed up to attend the Municipal Workshop at the airport that it is tomorrow.

Ms. Harris asked Council to approve the First Friday's request to hold a 5K run along the Merrill Parkway for this Friday because it had to cancel last Friday's race due to bad weather. Council had previously approved that request.

Mr. Sweitzer made a motion seconded by Mr. Kovalcin to approve the First Friday Committee's request to close the Merrill Parkway on April 8, 2011 from 5:15 to 7 p.m. for a 5K run. Motion carried.

FINANCE REPORT

Mrs. Miller made a motion seconded by Mr. Klinger to approve payment of the bills for the Towanda Borough General Fund and special Borough funds as presented in the "List of Bills". Motion carried.

PLANNING COMMISSION REPORT

No meeting.

RECREATION BOARD REPORT

No meeting.

TMA

Mr. Kovalcin asked when the Wysox water project was going to start and Mr. Fairchild said a lot depends on the Army Corp of Engineers and what they do with the water crossing but most likely early summer.

OTHER BUSINESS

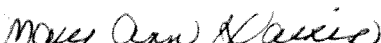
Mayor Miller said he received a request from the State Police to provide them a parking space near the magistrate's office. Chief Osman they are referring to emergency vehicles that would have to respond immediately from the magistrate's office.

Mr. Sweitzer said they should use one of the spaces provided in front of the magistrate's office.

Mr. Christini said when they started that project the Borough contacted the commissioners to put in additional parking and approached them about the State Street property. They did not respond. This is a County problem and they need to solve it.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Sweitzer made a motion seconded by Mrs. Clark to adjourn. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 8:46 p.m.


Borough Secretary