

**The City of Towanda, Kansas  
City Council Meeting Minutes**

**Towanda City Hall  
110 S 3<sup>rd</sup> St.  
July 12, 2023 at 7:00 PM**

**Governing Body**

**Present**

Mayor – Jennifer Shaults  
Council President – Mike Hayes  
Council Member – Darrell White  
Council Member – Kendall Pierce  
Council Member – Bill Wolf  
Council Member – Jeff Banks

**Staff**

**Present**

City Administrator – Andy Newbrey  
City Attorney – Rob Lane  
Superintendent – Sam French  
Planning/Zoning Administrator – Lisa Long  
Court Administrator – Rachel Cain

**1. Call To Order**

- Mayor Jennifer Shaults, 7:03pm

**2. Roll Call**

**3. Approval of Minutes & Claims**

- *Motion by Kendall Pierce to approve the minutes from the June 14, 2023 regular council meeting. Second by Bill Wolf. Motion carried (5-0).*
- City Administrator Andy Newbrey presented the statement of activities from January 2023 through June 2023, the fund balance report, budget execution report, and monthly claims report. Mr. Newbrey noted an income discrepancy in the city's previous software, that the software shorted the city's income compared to what was in the bank. An adjustment had been made in the new accounting software and funds should now continually show harmonized. Mike Hayes inquired as to the wide variety of differences month-to-month in franchise fees. Mr. Newbrey noted that it is due to the timing of receipts. Kendall Pierce inquired into the low percentage expended of the loan payment on the budget execution report. Mr. Newbrey noted it was due to the schedule of payments and that he believes the next due date is in October.
- *Motion by Kendall Pierce to approve Appropriations Ordinance 06-2023 in the total amount of \$169,129.66. Second by Jeff Banks. Motion carried (5-0).*

#### **4. Police & Court Reports**

- No representative from the Sheriff's Department was present in reference to the monthly activity report for the Sheriff's Department.
- Court Administrator Rachel Cain presented the monthly activity report for the Municipal Court.

#### **5. Presentations and Guest Speakers**

- None

#### **6. Public Comment**

- City business owner Nicole Mandina noted differences in the agenda of the city council compared to agendas of other agencies she had viewed or been a part of, particularly with some other agencies including "old business" and "new business" sections. Ms. Mandina also noted that in her experience, if an item was under "old business" for a certain length of time, some sort of action would be taken to move it forward or remove it. Council responded and will keep that in consideration.

#### **7. Planning/Zoning**

- Planning and Zoning Administrator Lisa Long presented the monthly activity report for the Planning and Zoning Department.
- Ms. Long presented the active code enforcement list.
- Ms. Long noted the Planning Commission's recent decision regarding the special use hearing for the meat processing facility and that their recommendation would come before council at the August 9, 2023 meeting.
- Darrell White inquired into the remaining debris after the structure demolition at 214 N 3<sup>rd</sup>. City Attorney Rob Lane advised a notice to appear should be issued for court.

#### **Fire Department**

- Acting Fire Captain Jacob Storm presented the monthly activity report for the Fire Department.
- Mike Hayes asked for a ballpark cost to completely repair the two questionable trucks. Mr. Storm estimated Engine 3 itself would be around \$150,000.
- In response to the last question on the report, Mayor Shaults noted that the fundraising events had at least brought the community together.
- Mr. Storm reminded council of the Nut Fry fundraising event occurring on September 16, 2023.
- City resident, Sue Coble, commented and spoke highly of the fire department's response for her garage fire earlier in the year.

#### **8. Maintenance**

- Superintendent Sam French presented the monthly activity report for the Maintenance Department.

- Mr. French noted that he would like to sell a few big unused pieces of equipment in order to put funds toward replacing items the department uses frequently. Mr. French will provide a proposed list soon.
- Mr. French and City Administrator Andy Newbrey presented updates regarding the electronic water meters, primarily with new information received from one town about the unreliability of Metron meters. Mayor Shaults requested Mr. French and Mr. Newbrey contact other cities to see what companies they use and how satisfied they are with them. Mike Hayes requested city staff contact USDA's water meter representatives for nation-wide reliability reviews. Mike Hayes also requested formal contracts from the top two options and a formal recommendation by the city administrator, as well as the city attorney's and city superintendent's recommendation of the contracts and warranties. Mr. Newbrey proposed the item be tabled until the next meeting for such information. Council agreed.

## 9. Administration

- City Administrator Andy Newbrey summarized the testing and evaluation of the ground where the gas tanks had been removed at 322 Main St. The city is awaiting testing by KDHE to find out if any action is required.
- Mr. Newbrey noted that the 2021 audit is complete and that he hopes to receive the 2022 audit shortly. He has been in contact with the proposed new auditor.
- Mr. Newbrey presented information regarding the 2024 city budget. Mr. Newbrey recommended the city keep/match the Revenue Neutral Rate at 41.541 for 2024, continue to tighten up expenditures in 2024, and plan large expenditures for 2025. Mike Hayes asked if the city would be two years behind on large projects at that same revenue rate. Mr. Newbrey replied that without the large payroll payouts expended in 2022 and 2023, more funds would be reserved in 2024 with the same neutral rate. Mayor Shaults noted that she does not want to increase taxes without an established reason to do so.
- *Motion by Kendall Pierce to keep the Revenue Neutral Rate from 2023 at 41.541. Second by Darrell White. Motion carried (5-0).*
- Mr. Newbrey noted that he should receive multiple trash contract bids by the first week of August, including rates for trash only without a recycle option. Mr. Newbrey will provide those bids at the next meeting or at a workshop when received.
- Mr. Newbrey updated council regarding the industrial land on SW River Valley Rd. Mr. Newbrey and Mayor Shaults should have a Zoom meeting with Lange Realty shortly to formulate a formal bid.

## 10. Executive Session

- *Motion by Kendall Pierce to recess into executive session to discuss non-elected personnel matters for a length of twenty minutes. The session to include the Mayor, Governing Body, City Administrator, and City Attorney. Second by Jeff Banks. Motion carried (5-0).*
- Entered into executive session at 9:09pm.
- Resumed open meeting at 9:26pm.

## 11. Items To Consider

- *No action taken.*

**12. Adjourn**

- *Motion by Mike Hayes to adjourn at 9:26pm. Second by Kendall Pierce. Motion carried (5-0).*

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Andrew Newbrey  
City Clerk

*Approved the 9<sup>th</sup> day of August 2023 by the City Council, City of Towanda, Kansas.*