



The City of Towanda

City Council Meeting Minutes
Towanda City Hall – 110 S 3rd St.
Wednesday, May 13, 2026, 7:00 PM

Governing Body

Present Not Present

☒	☐	Mayor – Mike Hayes
☒	☐	Council President – Jennifer Watkins
☒	☐	Council Member – Kit Williams
☒	☐	Council Member – Drew Shaults
☒	☐	Council Member – Chris Hunt
☐	☒	Council Member – Angel Ramsey

Staff

Present Not Present

☒	☐	City Administrator – Sarah Gooding
☒	☐	City Attorney – Rob Lane
☒	☐	Planning/Zoning Administrator -Lisa Long
☒	☐	Deputy City Clerk – Cami Jones
☐	☐	

REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING:

1. Call To Order

Meeting was called to order by Mike Hayes at 7:00 pm.

2. Roll Call

3. Adopt Agenda

Drew Shaults motioned to adopt the agenda. Kit Williams seconded the motion. Motion carried 4-0.

4. Consent Agenda

A. APRIL 2026 REPORTS

i. Minutes

1. April 8, 2026 Council Meeting
2. April 22, 2026 Special Meeting

ii. TREASURERS' INFORMATION REPORTS APRIL 2026

1. Statement of Activities
2. Fund Balance Report
3. Budget Execution Report
4. Water Loss Report

iii. Claims

1. Claims Reports
 - a. Appropriations Ordinance 04-2026

iv. STAFF/DEPARTMENT INFORMATION REPORTS

1. Sheriff's Office Report
2. Court Clerk's Report
3. Planning and Zoning
4. Code Compliance Report
5. Towanda Maintenance Department
6. Towanda Public Library Report

Motion by Jennifer Watkins to approve consent agenda. Seconded by Drew Shaults. Motion carried 4-0.

5. Public Comment Time

N/A

6. Presentation and Guest Speakers

A. 309 Main Updates – City Administrator

Sarah Gooding City Administrator stated that Mr. Perry Jones, the owner of the braced building at 309 Main, is applying for a Community Development Block Grant to rehab the building. The applicant/grand administrator must be a city or county, so for the City of Towanda to serve in this role Mr. Jones needs to submit his portion of the grant to the City by May 22. He will need a business plan and any other required documents for staff to proceed with the grant.

Chris Hunt asked what the timeline for demolition looks like. Sarah Gooding said staff would know more by the July meeting, but it looks like late summer to early fall. Drew Shaults asked if anything with fixing the building has moved forward? Sarah Gooding stated nothing that she knows of has happened. Chris Hunt asked if the grant would be viable. Mr. Jones stated that it is viable. Drew Shaults asked if Mr. Jones gets the SCKEDD grant when will he receive it? Sarah Gooding stated that she will know more about the grants by the June Council Meeting. The grant will take 30 to 45 days to for review by the Kansas Department of Commerce. Staff will continue with the demolition process timeline as well.

7. Old Business

A. Sales Tax Updates – Ballot Language

Background/Analysis

Council has discussed renewal of a sales tax, with an emphasis on sustained and enhanced funding for law enforcement and City streets. Council must approve final wording in May to meet the June 1 deadline for submitting the question to the Butler County Clerk.

Staff have developed two concepts for ballot language, and at this time Staff recommend the generic language for the following reasons:

1. Generic language provides the greatest opportunity to meet evolving community needs and desires over the next 10 years.
2. Towanda has not yet completed community engagement to determine community priorities. A community survey has been discussed and is anticipated later in the year, and outcomes from this survey may provide clearer insight into how best to allocate sales tax revenue.
3. The political landscape in Kansas is creating uncertain conditions around local government revenues. While we will be obligated to use the tax solely for the purposes outlined, generic language provides greater flexibility to meet local needs.
4. Generic language allows the City to be responsive to needs and gaps. For example, law enforcement will come with greater start-up costs early in the process, but as we

go forward many street grants will require a 20% local match. This allows funds to be allocated more heavily where needed on a year-by-year basis.

Administrator Sarah Gooding said she is committed to developing public transparency tools to document income and expenditure of all Towanda sales taxes.

Drew Shaults asked how much we budget for Sheriff services currently. Sarah Gooding stated that our 2026 law enforcement budget is \$145,000, but spending is on track to be closer to \$65,000. Drew thinks the 2% proposal is too much but 1.5% works. Drew does not believe we should have our own police force right now and would prefer to focus on funding water and street repairs. Chis Hunt and Jennifer Watkins both stated they believe that we do need our own police. They stated that people's cars and homes are being broken into and the residents do not call the Sheriff due to the Sheriff not getting there in time before the perpetrator leaves.

Chris Hunt made a motion to pass generic language on the sales tax with a percentage of 1.5%. Second by Kit Williams. Motion carried 4-0.

8. New Business

A. Safe Streets for All Contract Award

Background/Analysis

The City of Towanda applied for a Safe Streets for All (SS4A) and was awarded a grant in the amount of \$140,000 from Fiscal Year 2024 Federal Funds. The grant requires a 20% cost match, for a City of Towanda share of \$35,000, to assist the City in planning for safe and inclusive streets that prioritize the well-being and mobility of all residents.

In December 2025 the City issued a Request for Proposals. Two proposals were received, from Garver and JEO Consulting Group. A review committee consisting of the City Administrator, Public Works Foreman, and a representative Council Member reviewed the proposals and determined that both proposing firms were highly qualified, with thoughtful and thorough proposals and strong project staff teams. The review committee conducted interviews with both firms to better evaluate proposals for the following selection criteria:

- Past Performance on similar projects (40%)
- Qualifications and capacity of personnel (40%)
- Project understanding, issues, and approach (20%)

Following interviews, each reviewer scored each firm in all areas, and the committee unanimously recommends awarding the project contract to JEO Consulting Group.

Financial Impact

The total Safe Streets for All project will be built on a not-to-exceed budget of \$175,000, including \$140,000 in Federal funds and \$35,000 in City of Towanda funds.

The project is administered on a reimbursement grant basis, and the City may submit for reimbursement up to monthly. It will be important for the City to maintain a balance adequate for pre-payment of expenses out of its Streets O/M Fund (current balance \$12,764.57) and Street Reserve Fund (current balance \$246,885.99). General Fund transfers into the Street Reserve Fund also can assist with maintaining cash flow.

Completion of the Transportation Safety Action Plan will identify priority projects and provide information needed to apply for additional grants in the future for project construction, with the goal of reducing the City's long-term costs.

Sasha Haehn with JEO stepped up to talk about the Safe Streets for All grant. She stated that they will assist the City in planning for safe and inclusive streets that prioritize the well-being and mobility of all residents. Including areas such as South 6th street, school zones, and railroad crossings. Chris Hunt stated to Sasha that David with JEO had told Chris there is nothing they can do about the railroad. Sasha stated that it's not for a street or sidewalk but could be more about education or signs for the railroad.

Motion by Chris Hunt to award the Safe Streets for All contract to JEO Consulting Firm in an amount not to exceed \$175,000.00 and authorize the City Administrator to negotiate the final project scope and sign the contract. Second by Kit Williams. Motion carried 4-0.

B. Code Enforcement Contract

Background/Analysis

Code Enforcement is a key concern in the City of Towanda, and for the past two years the City has contracted Pierce Code Compliance (PCC) for code enforcement services. Following two years under the initial contract terms, the contract has been reviewed and enhanced for clarity and to better reflect data desired by the City to track code enforcement success and ensure communication between staff and PCC.

Financial Impact

Contract terms set the City's fee for service at \$1,100 per month. The City also may be billed for fees necessary for regular or certified mailing postage expenses.

Kendall Pierce shared about the work PCC has done to clean up properties around Towanda. Kendall stated they recently had five individuals summoned to court, four showed up and one cleaned up their yard. Drew Shaults stated that he thinks Pierce Code Compliance has done a wonderful job recently. Mike Hayes asked if they could start stating what happened with the cases that are taken off the report they have for properties that need cleaned. Kendall stated that the new system they have should help out with this issue and other issues.

Motion by Drew Shualts to approve renewing the contract for Nuisance Code Compliance Services with Pierce Code Compliance, as presented. Second by Kit Williams. Motion carried 4-0.

C. Mower Purchase

Background/Analysis

The current mower was purchased in 2006 and has had significant downtime this season, with several repairs needed this spring. The mower is used to maintain parks, rights-of-way, and for nuisance abatement. Staff have received four quotes from three local vendors for gas-powered mowers with 60-inch decks and Tweel Rear tires.

Financial Impact

Bids range from \$12,772.45 to \$15,797.25, and staff recommend approving the bid for a 2026 STTII-61V-38CH-EFI-Model #842F from Hoover Mower Sales, LLC in Benton for \$13,088.94. This model includes features that provide belt access for simplified maintenance. Additionally, staff recommend purchasing the optional 5-year extended warranty for \$965.30, due to the nature of work performed by the City and its impact on the mower unit. This brings the requested purchase total to \$14,054.24

Chris Hunt asked Public Works Foreman Rylan Rose why the mower they recommended was so easy to work on. Rylan Rose explained to him that all the belts were in a box on top of the mower instead of underneath. Chris Hunt also asked Rylan Rose if we work on the mower in-house will it void the warranty. Rylan Rose stated he doesn't believe so, based on past experience.

Motion by Chris Hunt to approve purchase of a mower and extended warranty for a total of \$14,054.24. Second by Jennifer Watkins. Motion carried 4-0.

D. Ordinance Updates

i. Community Building Weekday Rentals

Background Analysis:

From time to time, the city receives requests to rent the Community Building during weekdays for part of a day for smaller events. Currently, we do not have a fee established for a ½ day weekday rental of the Community Building.

Council asked if we already had something like this and Lisa Hamilton said no.

Motion by Drew Shauls to approve the proposed Ordinance 732 establishing fees for half-day weekday rentals for the Wilbur Weins Community Building. Second by Kit Williams. Motion carried 4-0.

ii. Special Event Ordinance

Background Analysis :

From time to time the City is asked to close a street or is made known of an event to be held on the downtown streets at the last minute. Currently the city has no Ordinance in place authorizing such events or requirements for doing so. This would allow staff to verify proper permits, sales tax, insurance, etc. is in place, as well as having an Indemnification Statement on file for the event.

Financial Impact:

A fee of \$25 is recommended to cover basic Administrative costs to review additional fees for various city services that require city staff time, equipment, utilities etc. that may be needed at such an event.

Chris Hunt doesn't agree with the \$50.00 permit fee. Council agreed to only charge the \$50.00 fee if the permit is filed 21 or less days prior to event.

Motion by Chris Hunt to approve Ordinance 733 to establish a fair and equitable policy for these events if the fee is changed to \$50.00 fee only if the permit is filed 21 days prior to event. Second by Kit Williams. Motion carried 4-0

iii. Food Vendor Ordinance

Background Analysis:

The City does not currently have a Permit requirement in place for licensing Mobile Food Vendors.

Financial Impact:

The fee for this permit is listed in the Fee Resolution as \$100 per year. This is comparable to fees being charged by other nearby cities. The fee is necessary for administrative and staff time.

Council asked why Food Vendors need to provide Driver Licenses and discussed concerns about whether this was an appropriate level of regulation.

Motioned by Jennifer Watkins to table this subject until the June 10, 2026 Council Meeting. Seconded by Chris Hunt. Motion carried 4-0.

E. Master Fee & Fine Schedule Resolution

Background Analysis:

The City does not have a current Fee and Fine Schedule in place. Having an organized Fee and Fine Schedule in place would organize fee and fine information in one document for easy access to all.

Financial Impact:

Organizing fees and fines in a single document ensures staff and residents have access to the correct information for accurate collection.

Jennifer Watkins motioned to approve the proposed Resolution to adopt the Master Fee and Fine Schedule, with edits to the schedule based on other actions taken at this meeting. Seconded by Chris Hunt. Motion carried 4-0.

F. Annual Appointment of City Officers and Designations

Background/Analysis

Towanda's City Code Section 1-301 provides that each May the Mayor and Council may appoint a city clerk, city treasurer, municipal judge, chief of police and fire chief and other such officers may be deemed necessary for the best interest of the City.

The following Officers and Designations are currently appointed for the City of Towanda and are presented for 2026 appointments:

- City Clerk: Sarah Gooding
- Deputy City Clerk: Cami Jones
- City Treasurer: Stetson Diveley
- Planning / Zoning Administrator: Lisa Long-Hamilton
- Code Enforcement Officer: Lisa Long-Hamilton
- City Attorney: Rob Lane
- Municipal Judge: Doyle White
- Nuisance Code Compliance Officer: Pierce Code Compliance
- Law Enforcement Officer: Butler County Sheriff's Office
- Fire Service: Butler County Fire District No. 11
- Official City Newspaper for Publications: Butler County Times-Gazette
- City Depository: Vintage Bank Kansas

Motion by Jennifer Watkins to appoint the 2026 City of Towanda Officers and Designations, as presented. Second, by Drew Shault. Motion carried 4-0.

G. 2026 Wage Authorization

Background/Analysis

Towanda's City Code provides that the Mayor, with consent of the Council, may appoint officers, and it also requires that the duties and salaries of all appointed officers shall be fixed by resolution.

Historically, Council has passed a resolution each year setting wages for all City employees. The last time this resolution was passed was in December 2023, and several changes in employees and wages have been made since that time.

The attached resolution provides a list of all current employees and wages, including a requested increase of \$1 per hour for two Public Works employees who recently earned their CDL licenses. This increase will be backdated to the time the CDL licenses were earned. This resolution formalizes wages for 2026.

Financial Impact

Employee wages are a large driver of the City's budget, as employees carry out day-to-day operations and services of the City. Having a defined process or procedure for pay, wage increases, promotions, or other actions affecting wages provides checks and balances to ensure employees are treated well and that costs are managed.

Motion by Chris Hunt to approve the Resolution 2026-05 setting 2026 City of Towanda Employee wages. Seconded by Kit Williams. Motion carried 4-0.

9. Other Business & Announcements

City Administrator Sarah Gooding provided the following updates:

- Public engagement sessions on police and storm shelters will take place Saturday, May 16, and Monday, May 18 at City Hall.
- The City has received grant funding to hire a water intern for the summer.
- The Recreation Commission will hold an open house for its new workout facility the evening of May 19
- Restoration of the City Pool is complete, and the anticipated opening date is on or around June 1.

10. Executive Session

A. None Scheduled

11. Adjourn

Motion by Kit Williams to adjourn at 9:15 pm. Seconded by Chris Hunt. Motion carried 4-0.



Sarah Gooding
City Administrator/Clerk

Approved the 10th day of June 2026 by the City Council, City of Towanda, Kansas.