

The Tamaqua Borough Council held its first Regular Council Meeting for the month of February on Tuesday, February 16, 2021 at 7:00 p.m. through the Zoom video conference system. The public was able to participate in the council meeting using a computer, tablet or smart phone with an internet connection using the link <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84262015371> and by entering Meeting ID 842 6201 5371. Individuals who did not have internet access were able to participate by telephone by dialing 1-929-436-2866 and entering Meeting ID 842 6201 5371#.

Present were Councilmembers Robert Amentler, Ronald Bowman, Brian Connely, Jay Hollenbach Jr., Mary Linkevich, Ritchie Linkhorst and David Mace. Officials present were Mayor Nathan Gerace, Chief of Police Michael Hobbs, Borough Manager Kevin Steigerwalt, Public Works Director Robert Jones, Solicitor Anthony Odorizzi, Assistant Borough Secretary/Treasurer Amy Macalush, Director of Community Development Ann Marie Calabrese and Zoning/Code Enforcement Officer Gregory Kurtz Jr.

The meeting was called to order by President Mace. President Mace stated that the invocation and Pledge of Allegiance would be waived. The roll was called with all councilmembers present.

President Mace welcomed newly appointed councilman Jay Hollenbach Jr. to the meeting.

The reading of the minutes of the Regular Council Meeting held on January 19, 2021 was ordered suspended, and with no additions or corrections, the minutes were approved as written on motion of Bowman, seconded by Amentler, and unanimously approved.

Communication was received from Gayle Heath, Library Director of the Tamaqua Public Library, requesting the permit fees be waived for emergency repairs needed to the ceiling in the lobby area and the area in front of the circulation desk. A motion was made by Bowman and seconded by Linkhorst to waive the permit fees for the library for repairs to the ceiling. Code Enforcement Officer Kurtz stated that the library already paid for the necessary permits, which were offered at a greatly reduced rate. The motion and second were rescinded.

Manager Steigerwalt reported that he had a resolution extending the Mayor's Declaration of Disaster Emergency of March 20, 2020 for an additional thirty (30) day period to terminate on March 27, 2021 to present for council's consideration:

**RESOLUTION NO. 2021-3**  
**A RESOLUTION OF THE BOROUGH OF TAMAQUA, SCHUYLKILL COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA, PURSUANT TO SECTIONS 10A06 OF THE PENNSYLVANIA BOROUGH CODE, AND SECTION 7501 OF THE PENNSYLVANIA EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT SERVICES CODE, EXTENDING THE MAYOR OF TAMAQUA'S DECLARATION OF DISASTER EMERGENCY OF MARCH 20, 2020 FOR AN ADDITIONAL PERIOD OF THIRTY (30) DAYS.**

A recommendation was made to adopt the foregoing resolution. There was no one from the floor wishing to address council about this matter. The recommendation was so ordered on motion of Bowman, seconded by Amentler, and approved by a unanimous roll call vote.

Manager Steigerwalt reported on the following: a street resurfacing project which includes portions of Elm Street, Market Street, possibly Pitt Street, Nescopec Street and Clay Street; repairs to the Lincoln Street Wall; and he is working with Code Enforcement Officer Kurtz on specs for a demolition project at 517 Washington Street, 252 Cottage Avenue and 300-302 Race Street.

Manager Steigerwalt also reported that the Commonwealth of PA is currently accepting applications for a flood mitigation program grant. Manager Steigerwalt stated that he reviewed the grant guidelines and feels it is worth pursuing, particularly for repairs to the Wabash Creek culvert

that goes under South Railroad Street by the library. Manager Steigerwalt stated that the borough's engineer, Alfred Benesch, previously recommended repairs to the Wabash Creek culvert as work to be done within the next 5 to 10 years and estimated that project at a cost of \$250,000. Manager Steigerwalt stated that the program grant is available for up to \$500,000 with a 15% match and that there is enough money in the Wabash fund to cover the match. President Mace asked if only one project is being considered or if other projects can be included in order to max out the grant funds. Manager Steigerwalt stated that he will discuss the idea with the borough's engineer and report back to Council with his recommendation.

Director of Community Development Calabrese reported on the following: she is working on the final pieces to get to Maillie for the annual CRIZ (Tamaqua Community Revitalization and Improvement Zone) audit; and a resolution that will be taken care of later in the meeting under the Borough Solicitor's Report.

Chief Hobbs requested an executive session prior to adjournment to discuss personnel matters.

Under the Public Safety Committee report, a recommendation was made to hire Christopher Cordes as a part-time Police officer, effective immediately. There was no one from the floor wishing to address council about this matter. The recommendation was so ordered on motion of Connely, seconded by Bowman, and unanimously approved.

Under the Public Safety Committee report, a recommendation was made to approve a request to send Corporal Thomas Rodgers and Patrolman Corey Herring to a three-day "Tactical Carbine for Responding Officers" course at the State Police Northeast Training Center at no cost. There was no one from the floor wishing to address council about this matter. The recommendation was so ordered on motion of Connely, seconded by Bowman, and unanimously approved.

Under the Public Safety Committee report, a recommendation was made to approve a request to send Corporal Thomas Rodgers to a one-day "Taser Instructor Training" course in Hughestown, Pennsylvania at a cost of \$375.00. Chairman Connely noted that this instructor training is required and Corporal Rodgers will then train others in the department. There was no one from the floor wishing to address council about this matter. The recommendation was so ordered on motion of Connely, seconded by Bowman, and unanimously approved.

Under the Parking and Traffic Committee report, a recommendation was made to approve a handicapped parking space application for 263 Clay Street. Chairman Linkhorst stated that there are two other spaces in the block; however the block is over 600 feet long so an exception can be made for an additional space. There was no one from the floor wishing to address council about this matter. The recommendation was so ordered on motion of Linkhorst, seconded by Hollenbach, and unanimously approved.

Under the Recreation and Youth Committee report, Chairwoman Linkevich reported that the Recreation and Youth Committee recently met primarily to discuss the pool, which will open under the same COVID-19 guidelines as last year. A recommendation was made to hire Beth Jones as pool manager for the 2021 season at a pay rate of \$17.50 per hour. There was no one from the floor wishing to address council about this matter. The recommendation was so ordered on motion of Linkevich, seconded by Linkhorst, and unanimously approved.

Under the Recreation and Youth Committee report, a recommendation was made to advertise for part-time assistant pool managers, lifeguards and pool clerks for the 2021 season.

There was no one from the floor wishing to address council about this matter. The recommendation was so ordered on motion of Linkevich, seconded by Linkhorst, and unanimously approved.

Under the Recreation and Youth Committee report, a recommendation was made to open the pool on Saturday, May 29, 2021 and to close tentatively on Sunday, August 22, 2021 pending lifeguard availability. There was no one from the floor wishing to address council about this matter. The recommendation was so ordered on motion of Linkevich, seconded by Linkhorst, and unanimously approved.

Under the Recreation and Youth Committee report, a recommendation was made to maintain pool hours from 11:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. daily with the hours subject to change based on weather, number of patrons and/or lifeguard availability. There was no one from the floor wishing to address council about this matter. The recommendation was so ordered on motion of Linkevich, seconded by Linkhorst, and unanimously approved.

Under the Recreation and Youth Committee report, a recommendation was made to approve the season and daily pass fees for the H.D. Buehler Memorial Pool for the 2021 season. It was noted the fees are the same as last year. There was no one from the floor wishing to address council about this matter. The recommendation was so ordered on motion of Linkevich, seconded by Linkhorst, and unanimously approved.

The pool rates for 2021 are as follows:

	<u>SEASON PASS</u>
TAMAQUA AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT RESIDENTS	\$ 10.00 per person
OUTSIDE OF TAMAQUA SCHOOL DISTRICT	\$ 100.00 per person
TEMPORARY GUEST PASS (Visitors staying with season pass holders)	\$ 20.00 per person per week (2 weeks maximum)

	<u>DAILY PASS</u>
TAMAQUA AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT RESIDENTS	
Monday thru Friday (6 years and older)	\$ 5.00 per person
Saturday and Sunday (6 years and older)	\$ 6.00 per person
Pre-school (under 6 years old)	\$ 1.00 per person

Chairwoman Linkevich also stated that the Recreation and Youth Committee will be in touch with the Kellner’s Dam Association, who did a great job last year following COVID-19 guidelines with their derby’s and fishing, to encourage them to do the same again this year.

Mayor Gerace reported that people have contacted him during the recent snow storms and a lot of them are very pleased with the snow plowing and snow removal process, however a question came up regarding the snow emergency route signs, particularly in the Dutch Hill area, and the fact that the streets designated as such are not getting plowed all that well. Mayor Gerace asked for some insight regarding the snow emergency route signs. President Mace stated that the signs are very old as you can tell just by looking at them. Manager Steigerwalt explained as follows: snow removal priority is based on the emergency routes; the snow removal procedure is pretty much the same every time; the snow emergency routes are there to allow emergency vehicles and first responders to get to where they need to go in each ward; and that there are some exceptions to the rule, some emergency routes are not cleared and some of the narrow and congested streets are added here and there. Mayor Gerace asked if it would make sense to remove some of the snow emergency route signs on streets that are not regularly prioritized for snow removal just to help alleviate some

confusion. President Mace asked, in regards to the emergency routes, if there is a difference between making sure the lanes of travel are open and available versus snow in the parking spaces that is not being addressed at the same priority level. Public Works Director Jones stated that the snow emergency route was developed by the borough, the school district, the fire department and EMS and the main concern is keeping the lanes of travel open, not to provide parking. There was some discussion regarding the need for the snow emergency route signs, removing the signs, replacing old signs with new ones, taking another look at the emergency route plan as some things may need to be changed, and different types of snow emergency route signs. Public Works Director Jones stated that he is currently working with the school district and fire chiefs and there may be a different plan for next year. President Mace asked Public Works Director Jones to forward the revised plan to the Parking and Traffic Committee for review.

Mayor Gerace also reported that there was an incident in the borough today and Chief Hobbs, Officer Weaver, Officer Herring, Officer Seip and Officer Lahovski handled a bad situation very well. Mayor Gerace feels that the future success and growth of the borough falls on the shoulders of the police department as well as the code enforcement department. Mayor Gerace stated that the police and code enforcement are being very proactive and working well together, the educational classes are very valuable and he hopes that council will continue to be supportive of both departments moving forward.

The meeting was opened to the floor.

With no one wishing to address council, the meeting was closed to the floor.

Solicitor Odorizzi reported that the borough is required to update its Floodplain Management Ordinance by May 18, 2021. Solicitor Odorizzi stated that the borough recently received revisions from the Pennsylvania Municipal League and the most efficient way to proceed with the update is to restate the entire Floodplain Management Ordinance, Chapter 164. Solicitor Odorizzi stated that he prepared a new ordinance and is in the process of preparing a public notice and would like permission to post the notice. A recommendation was made to advertise the floodplain ordinance as prepared by the Borough Solicitor. There was no one from the floor wishing to address council about this matter. The recommendation was so ordered on motion of Linkevich, seconded by Bowman, and unanimously approved.

Solicitor Odorizzi also reported that the Tamaqua Community Revitalization and Improvement Zone (CRIZ) Authority met last night and resolved to amend the Articles of Incorporation to provide for an increase in board membership from five to nine (9) members. Solicitor Odorizzi stated that in order to do that requires a formal filing of the Articles of Amendment, which requires an ordinance on the part of borough council to advertise the text of their resolution. A recommendation was made to advertise the changes to the Articles of Incorporation as amended for the CRIZ Authority. There was no one from the floor wishing to address council about this matter. The recommendation was so ordered on motion of Bowman, seconded by Linkevich, and unanimously approved.

Solicitor Odorizzi requested an executive session prior to adjournment to discuss legal matters.

A recommendation was made to accept and file the various reports of borough officials. There was no one from the floor wishing to address council about this matter. The recommendation was so ordered on motion of Connely, seconded by Bowman, and unanimously approved.

Under Unfinished Business, Councilman Connely stated that he had an ordinance approving a new flat rate schedule and metered rate schedule for sewage collection and treatment to present for council's consideration:

**ORDINANCE NO. 721**

**AN ORDINANCE OF THE BOROUGH OF TAMAQUA, SCHUYLKILL COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA, REVISING AND AMENDING CHAPTER 260 ("SEWERS AND SEWAGE DISPOSAL"), SECTION 260-29 ("SEWER RENTALS AND CHARGES"), OF THE BOROUGH OF TAMAQUA CODE OF ORDINANCES ESTABLISHING SEWER RENTALS AND CHARGES TO INCREASE THE SEWER RENTAL OR CHARGE FOR DWELLING UNITS FROM \$105.00 PER QUARTER TO \$130.00 PER QUARTER.**

A recommendation was made to adopt the foregoing ordinance. There was no one from the floor wishing to address council about this matter. The recommendation was so ordered on motion of Connely, seconded by Bowman, and approved by a unanimous roll call vote.

A recommendation was made to pay all properly approved bills and claims against the borough. There was no one from the floor wishing to address council about this matter. The recommendation was so ordered on motion of Bowman, seconded by Linkhorst, and unanimously approved with Councilman Hollenbach abstaining from voucher #V43137 in the amount of \$477.00.

Under New Business, Councilwoman Linkevich stated that she has received complaints regarding properties that have not been cleared from snow and asked if citations have been issued. Code Enforcement Officer Kurtz stated that they have been issuing tickets to properties for lack of snow removal, but that it is hard to get everywhere. Code Enforcement Officer Kurtz asked that if there is a specific area that has not been cleared from snow, to let him know and they will make it a priority to get the area ticketed.

A recommendation was made to hold an executive session to discuss personnel and legal matters. There was no one from the floor wishing to address council about this matter. The recommendation was so ordered on motion of Bowman, seconded by Linkevich, and unanimously approved.

The council meeting was recessed at approximately 7:45 p.m. while council met in executive session.

The council meeting was reconvened at approximately 8:40 p.m.

President Mace announced that an executive session was held to discuss personnel and legal matters.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:41 p.m. on motion of Bowman, seconded by Linkhorst, to meet again at the call of the President.

ATTEST:

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Amy Macalush, Assistant Borough Secretary/Treasurer