

The Tamaqua Borough Council held its second Regular Council Meeting for the month of March on Tuesday, March 17, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers at the Tamaqua Municipal Building, 320 East Broad Street, Tamaqua, PA.

Present were Councilmembers Robert Amentler, Ronald Bowman, Thomas Cara, Brian Connely, Mary Linkevich, and David Mace. Absent was Councilmember Ritchie Linkhorst. Officials present were Mayor Nathan Gerace, Chief of Police Henry Woods, Borough Manager Kevin Steigerwalt, Solicitor Anthony Odorizzi, Assistant Borough Secretary/Treasurer Amy Macalush and Director of Community Development Ann Marie Calabrese.

The meeting was called to order by President Mace. The invocation was given by Councilman Cara followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by Councilman Bowman. The roll was called with six councilmembers present and one absent.

The reading of the minutes of the Regular Council Meeting held on March 3, 2020 was ordered suspended, and with no additions or corrections, the minutes were approved as written on motion of Connely, seconded by Bowman, and unanimously approved.

Communication was received from the Tamaqua Area Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors requesting use of office space in the basement of the Tamaqua Borough building beginning on June 1, 2020. The communication stated that the Chamber would provide a desk, computer, filing cabinet, and a copier/printer. Additionally, the Chamber would provide a separate phone line and a post office box for mail, but would require access for the public to drop off items during regular business hours. Ann Ostergaard and Jennifer Drake of the Chamber were present at the meeting to address any questions or concerns. Ms. Ostergaard stated that the Chamber is basically looking for a work space for their new administrator and would be willing to negotiate the use of the office space in lieu of the \$8,500 annual appropriation from the borough. Ms. Ostergaard also stated that she felt it would be a good fit as the Chamber could then work together with the borough's Director of Community Development and Code Enforcement Officer. Councilman Connely expressed his concerns with public access to the basement and did not feel it was a good location. Councilman Connely also pointed out that the \$8,500 annual appropriation from the borough is not contingent on anything and could be stopped tomorrow. Councilman Cara stated that he did not feel the basement was a good location and that the Chamber should have a better spot. Council agreed to postpone any action until the matter was further discussed.

Communication was received from Andy Muller, CEO and Chairman of Reading Blue Mountain and Northern Railroad expressing his appreciation for Tamaqua's hospitality and willingness to work with the railroad. Mr. Muller stated that as agreed at the February 21st meeting, the railroad is accepting the initial \$20,000 as full payment for Tamaqua's share of the platform project, and there will be no further payment required by Tamaqua Borough. Mr. Muller also stated that over the next two years, the railroad will donate a total of \$20,000 to the Tamaqua Borough's charity of choice.

Communication was received from Robert Boyle, president of the East End Fire Company, stating that the East End Fire Company would be holding their annual block party on June 12th, 13th and 14th. The communication is requesting permission to close Broad and Columbia Street next to the fire company for the event. A recommendation was made to grant the request. 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. It was noted that the streets to be closed are East End Alley and Columbia, not Broad Street as stated in the communication.

Communication was received from David J. Meredith, adjutant of the C.H. Berry Post No. 173 of The American Legion, requesting permission to hold the annual Memorial Day Parade on May 25, 2020 beginning at 10:00 a.m. A recommendation was made to grant the request. 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.

Communication was received from Corey Smolar of Hiller's Hideaway requesting the 500 block of East Union Street be blocked off from 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. on Saturday, June 27, 2020 for a Bike Run Benefit to help raise funds for a wheelchair van for Marcello Rivera. A recommendation was made to grant the request. 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.

Communication was received from Derrek Koch stating that he is resigning from his position as a part-time police officer with the Tamaqua Police Department. A recommendation was made to accept the resignation of Derrek Koch. 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.

President Mace announced that the meeting agenda would be altered, per the recommendation of Councilman Cara and due to concern of the current pandemic, to allow the audience the opportunity to address council first so that they could leave the meeting early if they wished to do so.

The meeting was opened to the floor.

John Gorgone of 553 East Union Street expressed his concerns regarding the results of the recent Pool Feasibility study. Mr. Gorgone stated that he feels the pool can be salvaged and that he knows of someone, a friend, who could make the required repairs to the pool at a lower cost. Mr. Gorgone feels that the cost is too high to build a pool half the size. Mr. Gorgone discussed ways to renovate the pool and ways to avoid further damage. President Mace suggested that Mr. Gorgone's friend come to the next public meeting to discuss the study so that he can discuss the matter directly with the borough's consultant.

Michael Kurtz of 32 Nescopec Street asked if his permit to install signs at 30 Nescopec Street was approved. Council advised that it would be discussed later in the meeting.

George Boyle of 405 Pitt Street asked Council if the street signs that were placed on the northeast corner of Pitt and Jerome Street could be moved across the street to the southeast corner. Manager Steigerwalt stated that he would look into the matter.

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

Manager Steigerwalt reported on the following: an advertisement was placed for the oil and chip project in Owl Creek and there are three potential bidders; bids for the oil and chip project are due April 2nd and the project will be awarded at the meeting on April 7th; demolition of the properties at 209-211 Lombard Street is well underway and demolition of the properties at 200-202

Pitt Street will begin soon; and installation of new carpet tiles at the Magistrate office is almost complete.

Manager Steigerwalt also reported that the Planning Commission is requesting that council consider appointing an alternate person to serve on the Planning Commission in the event that they do not have a quorum. Manager Steigerwalt stated that the Planning Commission does have difficulty getting a quorum and it is an ongoing problem. A motion was made by Bowman, and seconded by Linkevich, to ask for applicants to serve as alternates on the Planning Commission. Councilman Connely commented that if someone is not doing their job, then they can be removed. Councilman Connely also asked if a list can be provided of members that are not attending so they can be removed. Manager Steigerwalt stated that he will request a list from Tim Stahl. The motion and second were rescinded. Councilman Bowman stated that further information is needed for Council to take action.

Manager Steigerwalt requested an executive session prior to adjournment to discuss real estate matters.

Under the Borough Manager's report, Councilman Connely asked if there are any concerns with access to the borough building in regards to the coronavirus pandemic. Manager Steigerwalt stated that the building is still open but that signs were posted on the doors asking residents to avoid personal visits and to call or email the office or use the drop box at the main entrance. Councilman Bowman suggested locking the middle doors to halt travel through the building. President Mace suggested Council take action to authorize Manager Steigerwalt to take appropriate measures as he sees fit as the coronavirus outbreak continues. A recommendation was made to authorize Manager Steigerwalt to make any changes necessary and as recommended to help mitigate the spread of coronavirus. 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. Council recognized Kathy Kunkel of 420 Spruce Street who suggested a robo call to inform residents of the changes.

Under the Borough Manager's report, Councilman Cara asked if there was any update on the sidewalk repair at Burger King. Manager Steigerwalt stated that he had no further update.

Director of Community Development Calabrese reported on the following: the annual Community Revitalization and Improvement Zone (CRIZ) report and audit which is usually due by April 1st is postponed until June 1st; any meeting or event postponements/cancellations should be forwarded to her as soon as possible so that she can get it on-air and on Facebook; a second public meeting regarding the results of the Pool Feasibility study will be held on April 2, 2020; the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) meeting has been rescheduled to March 31st; a Chamber of Commerce event to be held on April 2nd to talk about the Tamaqua Community Revitalization and Improvement Zone (CRIZ) has been postponed; a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) public hearing is scheduled for Tuesday, May 19th; and information regarding the 2020 Census was mailed, posted on Facebook and is also available in the lobby at the Borough Hall.

Chief Woods reported on altered police responses during the current coronavirus pandemic. Chief Woods stated that nonemergency police related issues will be handled by telephone and emergency calls for police service will be handled as usual.

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

Under the Finance, Wage and Salary Committee report, a recommendation was made to hire Tyler Shilko as a part-time, seasonal worker at a pay rate of \$10.00 per hour. There was no one from the floor wishing to address council about this matter. The recommendation was so ordered on motion of Cara, seconded by Bowman, and unanimously approved.

Under the Finance, Wage and Salary Committee report, a recommendation was made to advertise for part-time, seasonal workers at a pay rate of \$10.00 per hour. There was no one from the floor wishing to address council about this matter. The recommendation was so ordered on motion of Cara, seconded by Bowman, and unanimously approved.

Under the Neighborhoods, Downtown and Historic District report, a recommendation was made to issue a Certificate of Appropriateness for window replacement at 201 East Broad Street. There was no one from the floor wishing to address council about this matter. The recommendation was so ordered on motion of Cara, seconded by Bowman, and unanimously approved.

Under the Neighborhoods, Downtown and Historic District report, a recommendation was made to issue a Certificate of Appropriateness for installation of signs at 30 North Nescopec Street. There was no one from the floor wishing to address council about this matter. The recommendation was so ordered on motion of Cara, seconded by Linkevich, and unanimously approved.

Under the Neighborhoods, Downtown and Historic District report, a recommendation was made to issue a Certificate of Appropriateness for a storefront at 415 East Broad Street. There was no one from the floor wishing to address council about this matter. The recommendation was so ordered on motion of Cara, seconded by Bowman, and unanimously approved.

Under the Recreation and Youth Committee report, a recommendation was made to advertise a public meeting on Thursday, April 2nd at 6:30 p.m. to review the results of a Pool Feasibility Study. 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.

Under the Parking and Traffic Committee report, a motion was made by Cara, and seconded by Linkevich, to suspend parking meter operations until further notice. There was some discussion regarding permits for meter parking, rented spaces, concern of residents taking up spaces used for businesses and that most downtown businesses are currently closed. Council recognized Kathy Kunkel who asked why it has to be an official announcement when in the past, meter parking was suspended for the Holidays and it was announced by the Mayor. The motion and second were rescinded.

Under the Parking and Traffic Committee report, a motion was made by Cara, and seconded by Bowman, to place parking meters on the south side of West Broad Street in the vicinity of the former St. Jerome school and church. It was noted that there are five parking spaces available. The motion and second were amended as follows: a recommendation was made to place parking meters at five parking spaces located on the south side of West Broad Street in the vicinity of the former St. Jerome school and church. There was no one from the floor wishing to address council about this matter. The recommendation was so ordered on motion of Cara, seconded by Bowman, and unanimously approved.

Mayor Gerace requested an executive session prior to adjournment to discuss personnel matters.

Solicitor Odorizzi provided an update on Tamarack Square. Solicitor Odorizzi reported that the Open Space, Improvements, Storm Water Management and Emergency Easement Agreements were provided to the developer and engineer for review and that he should have a recommendation for Council at the next meeting.

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 Cara, seconded by Bowman, and unanimously approved.

Under Unfinished Business, Councilman Bowman asked about a prior request from the Tamaqua Area Chamber of Commerce for the use of two parking spaces in the Railroad Street Parking Lot to host a food truck during the Summer Concert Series Event. Councilwoman Linkevich stated that she spoke with the owner of the Train Station Restaurant and they do not have an issue with food truck service during the event. President Mace read the letter council received from Aimee Dotson, outreach and office administrator of the Tamaqua Area Chamber of Commerce, dated February 18, 2020. A motion was made by Linkevich, and seconded by Cara, to approve the request for the use of two parking spaces in the Railroad Street Parking Lot to host a food truck during the Summer Concert Series Event. After some discussion regarding solicitation permit requirements and fees, the motion and second were amended as follows: a recommendation was made to grant permission to the Chamber of Commerce for the use of two parking spaces in the Railroad Street Parking lot to host a food truck during the Summer Concert Series Event and for the Chamber to obtain a solicitation permit. 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 Cara, and unanimously approved. Council recognized Kathy Kunkel who stated that Council may want to look at solicitation permit fees and requirements at a later time.

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 Cara, seconded by Bowman, and unanimously approved.

A recommendation was made to hold an executive session to discuss legal, personnel and real estate 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 8:05 p.m. while council met in executive session.

The council meeting was reconvened at approximately 8:50 p.m.

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

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:50 p.m. on motion of Bowman, seconded by Linkevich, to meet again at the call of the President.

ATTEST:

Amy Macalush, Assistant Borough Secretary/Treasurer