

The Tamaqua Borough Council held its first Regular Council Meeting for the month of May on Wednesday, May 19, 2021 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, 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, Solicitor Anthony Odorizzi, Borough Secretary/Treasurer Georgia Depos DeWire and Zoning/Code Enforcement Officer Gregory Kurtz Jr.

The meeting was called to order by President Mace. The invocation was given by Councilman Connely followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by Councilman Hollenbach. The roll was called with all councilmembers present.

The reading of the minutes of the Regular Council Meeting held on April 20, 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 Justin McCarroll stating that he is resigning from his position as Head Mechanic and his last day will be May 19th. A recommendation was made to accept the resignation of Justin McCarroll. 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 Connely, and unanimously approved.

Communication was received from John Sienkiewicz, president of Safer Streets for Tamaqua's Little Feet, stating that the organization will host their 6th Annual Out of the Darkness Into the Light Overdose Awareness Candlelight Walk event at the Owl Creek Reservoir on July 17th from 12:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. The event will include vendors and nonprofit organizations, guest speakers, bands, free games with prizes, snow cones, popcorn, face painting and a butterfly release. The communication is requesting that the Tamaqua Fire Police assist with parking at the Owl Creek Reservoir from 12:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. A recommendation was made to grant the request and to authorize the Fire Police, if available, to assist with parking at the Owl Creek Reservoir. 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 Tammy Sienkiewicz of the Safer Streets for Tamaqua's Little Feet organization stating that Tamaqua will observe the 21st International Drug Overdose Awareness Day on August 31st. Mrs. Sienkiewicz is requesting permission to turn the light-up fountain purple at Depot Square Park starting August 27th through the following week. The communication is also requesting permission for the use of Depot Square Park for activities throughout the day on August 31st. Mrs. Sienkiewicz would like to turn the town purple for the day with purple flags in the parking meters, asking businesses to display purple to show Tamaqua is a recovery town and supports recovery. A recommendation was made to grant the requests. There was some discussion about this matter. 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 Dan Evans, chairman of the Tamaqua Community Revitalization and Improvement Zone (CRIZ) Authority, stating that CRIZ Authority members approved the addition of Daniel Yelito to the CRIZ Authority for a five-year term. A recommendation was made to appoint Daniel Yelito to a five-year term on 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 Hollenbach, and unanimously approved.

Communication was received from Micah Gursky of the Tamaqua Area Community Partnership stating that the Tamaqua Arts Center is requesting permission to hold the Big Benefit Concert outside on July 23, 2021 to keep their guests as safe as possible. The event will start at 7:00 p.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.

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 expire and terminate on June 21, 2021, unless further extended by resolution of the Borough of Tamaqua, or unless terminated earlier by the Borough Council, to present for council's consideration:

RESOLUTION NO. 2021-9

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 some discussion about this matter. 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 approved by a unanimous roll call vote.

Manager Steigerwalt reported on the 2021 Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Road Program as follows: the County would receive bids until May 17th; bids would be opened on May 20th; and the tentative award date is May 26th. Manager Steigerwalt stated that the project involves roadway milling, overlay, replacement of existing bituminous curb, and other associated roadway work on Market Street, Elm Street, Pitt Street, West Elm Street, Nescopeck Street and Clay Street. Manager Steigerwalt stated that he would be working with the Finance, Wage and Salary Committee.

Manager Steigerwalt also reported on the Lincoln Street Retaining Wall Project as follows: bids would be received online via the PennBid Program for Tamaqua Borough until June 10th; and bids would be announced June 15th at the council meeting.

Manager Steigerwalt also reported on the following: the Civil Service examination for the position of full-time police officer would be held on June 30th at 7:00 p.m.; a CDBG public hearing was held tonight prior to the council meeting; demolition projects at 130 Clay Street and 517 Washington Street; the pool has been cleaned and opening day is May 29th; the garbage schedule for the Memorial Day week; work on the Burger King sidewalk has started; and the Boyer's project is also underway.

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

Chief Hobbs reported that the annual Memorial Day Parade would be held on May 31st.

Chairman Linkhorst of the Parking and Traffic Committee reported that he had an ordinance establishing a stop intersection for westbound traffic on Brown Street at the intersection with Pitt Street to present for council's consideration:

ORDINANCE NO. 724

AN ORDINANCE OF THE BOROUGH OF TAMAQUA, SCHUYLKILL COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA, REVISING AND AMENDING SECTION 326-16 OF THE BOROUGH OF TAMAQUA CODE OF ORDINANCES ESTABLISHING REGULATIONS FOR VEHICLES AND TRAFFIC, ARTICLE II TRAFFIC REGULATIONS, SECTION 326-16 – STOP INTERSECTIONS ESTABLISHED.

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 Linkhorst, seconded by Amentler, and approved by a unanimous roll call vote.

Under the Parking and Traffic Committee report, a recommendation was made to approve a handicapped parking space application for 401 Hazle Street, Apartment 7. 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 Amentler, and unanimously approved.

Under the Parking and Traffic Committee report, a recommendation was made to approve a handicapped parking space application for 736 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 Linkhorst, seconded by Amentler, and unanimously approved.

Under the Neighborhoods, Downtown and Historic District Committee report, a recommendation was made to issue a Certificate of Appropriateness to install bollards and equipment on the structure's roof at 1 West Broad Street. There was no one from the floor wishing to address council about this matter. The recommendation was so ordered on motion of Hollenbach, seconded by Linkhorst, and unanimously approved.

Under the Neighborhoods, Downtown and Historic District Committee report, a recommendation was made to issue a Certificate of Appropriateness to install a seven-foot by seven-foot shed at 23 Market Street. There was no one from the floor wishing to address council about this matter. The recommendation was so ordered on motion of Hollenbach, seconded by Connely, and unanimously approved.

Under the Neighborhoods, Downtown and Historic District Committee report, a recommendation was made to issue a Certificate of Appropriateness to replace four fire-damaged windows and a door at 210 West Broad Street. There was no one from the floor wishing to address council about this matter. The recommendation was so ordered on motion of Hollenbach, seconded by Amentler, and unanimously approved.

Under the Neighborhoods, Downtown and Historic District Committee report, a recommendation was made to issue a Certificate of Appropriateness to install a twelve-foot by twenty-foot prefab garage at the rear of the property at 330 Mahanoy Street. There was no one from the floor wishing to address council about this matter. The recommendation was so ordered on motion of Hollenbach, seconded by Linkevich, and unanimously approved.

Under the Neighborhoods, Downtown and Historic District Committee report, a recommendation was made to issue a Certificate of Appropriateness to install an aluminum handrail and to repair broken stairs at 421 Hazle Street. There was no one from the floor wishing to address council about this matter. The recommendation was so ordered on motion of Hollenbach, seconded by Amentler, and unanimously approved.

Under the Neighborhoods, Downtown and Historic District Committee report, a recommendation was made to issue a Certificate of Appropriateness to install a porch divider at 650 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 Hollenbach, seconded by Connely, and unanimously approved.

Under the Recreation and Youth Committee report, a recommendation was made to hire part-time lifeguards at a pay rate of \$10.00 per hour plus an additional \$0.25 per hour for each year of service. The part-time life guards are as follows: Nicole Aguero-Ramirez; Caroline Balogach; Logan Hess; Emily Newton; Marcus Roseland; and Edward Zukovich. 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 hire Brynn Gigli as Head Lifeguard at a pay rate of \$11.00 per hour plus an additional \$0.25 per hour for each year of service. 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 hire Haley Macalush as a part-time pool clerk at a pay rate of \$9.00 per hour plus an additional \$0.25 per hour for each year of service. 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 Finance, Wage and Salary Committee report, a recommendation was made to hire Brent Confer as a part-time seasonal employee for general maintenance work at an hourly rate of \$12.50 per hour effective immediately. 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.

Under the Finance, Wage and Salary Committee report, a recommendation was made to hire Shane O'Neill as a part-time seasonal employee for general maintenance work at an hourly rate of \$12.50 per hour effective immediately. 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.

Mayor Gerace extended a thank you to council for purchasing the rifles for the Police Department.

Mayor Gerace reported that the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act, also known as the CARES Act, funding will come directly from the Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) but there are no formal guidelines yet. Mayor Gerace stated that he may possibly have a funding amount by the next council meeting.

The meeting was opened to the floor.

Michelle Mehallic of 411 North Lehigh Street expressed her concerns about the increase in the cost for zoning application fees. She wants to put a pool in her yard and said the price went up double. President Mace stated that the last time fees were increased was a few years ago.

Ms. Mehallic also expressed her concerns that she does not have access to her garage at the rear of her property. She stated that her deed says that she has access to the back. Solicitor Odorizzi stated that the deed says that it is a boundary but does not give her access. There was some discussion about this matter.

Zoning/Code Enforcement Officer Kurtz responded to Ms. Mehallic's concerns about zoning fees. The Pennsylvania Uniform Commercial Code (UCC) permit fee has been \$125.00 for years and zoning fees go off of square footage.

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

Solicitor Odorizzi requested an executive session prior to adjournment to discuss real estate and 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 Bowman, seconded by Linkhorst, and unanimously approved.

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.

Council recognized Kathy Nunemacher of 322 Mahanoy Street who asked where someone who comes into the area can go to find out about the borough's ordinances and fees. President Mace stated that the ordinances are codified and a link to the ordinances is provided on the borough's website. Zoning/Code Enforcement Officer Kurtz stated that some fees are on the borough website or if some of the fees are not available on the website you should call the code office.

Under New Business, Councilman Connely stated that he would like to form a task force to review blighted properties. There was some discussion about this matter. President Mace created a special ad-hoc committee consisting of Councilmembers Connely, Linkevich and Bowman, Solicitor Odorizzi, Zoning/Code Enforcement Officer Kurtz and Mayor Gerace.

A recommendation was made to hold an executive session to discuss personnel, legal 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 Amentler, and unanimously approved.

The council meeting was recessed at approximately 7:36 p.m. while council met in executive session.

The council meeting was reconvened at approximately 8:20 p.m.

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

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:20 p.m. on motion of Bowman, seconded by Linkevich, to meet again at the call of the President.

ATTEST:

Georgia Depos DeWire, Borough Secretary/Treasurer