

The Tamaqua Borough Council held its first Regular Council Meeting for the month of July on Tuesday, July 20, 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, Jay Hollenbach Jr., Mary Linkevich, Ritchie Linkhorst and David Mace. Absent was Councilmember Brian Connely. Officials present were Mayor Nathan Gerace, Chief of Police Michael Hobbs, Borough Manager Kevin Steigerwalt, 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. The invocation was given by Councilman Hollenbach followed by the Pledge of Allegiance led by Grant Johns of Tamaqua Boy Scout Troop 777. The roll was called with six councilmembers present and one absent.

The reading of the minutes of the Regular Council Meeting held on June 15, 2021 was ordered suspended, and with no additions or corrections, the minutes were approved as written on motion of Bowman, seconded by Linkhorst, and unanimously approved.

Communication was received from Richard and Kathleen Fenstermacher of 634 Arlington Street stating that they are having a hard time getting their vehicles into their garage due to vehicles parked across from it. The Fenstermachers are requesting the placement of "No Parking Between Signs" across from their garage. Councilman Linkhorst stated that he had looked at the situation and that it would be tight getting into the garage with a truck and that there are other residents in the area with a similar issue. A recommendation was made to refer the matter to the Parking and Traffic Committee for further review. 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.

Communication was received from Secretary/Treasurer Georgia Depos DeWire asking council to consider a motion to open an escrow account for fire loss insurance proceeds received from Foremost Insurance Group for the property at 238 Orwigsburg Street. A recommendation was made to open a new account for the fire insurance proceeds for the property at 238 Orwigsburg Street. 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.

Manager Steigerwalt reported on bid results for the demolition of 307 East Broad Street and 252 West Cottage Avenue. Manager Steigerwalt stated that a contract was awarded by the county commissioners to AMC Enterprise in the amount of \$43,486.00 for the demolition of 307 East Broad Street. Manager Steigerwalt stated that only one bid was received for the demolition of 252 West Cottage Avenue and that was also from AMC Enterprise in the amount of \$63,886.00. Manager Steigerwalt stated that the county is asking the borough to manage the Cottage Avenue project, although the county will be paying for both projects from their demolition grant funds. A recommendation was made to award the contract for the demolition of 252 West Cottage Avenue to AMC Enterprise in the amount of \$63,886.00. 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.

Manager Steigerwalt also reported on a Schuylkill County Tax Claim Bureau Repository Sale for a property located at 525 North Railroad Street, tax parcel number 65-07-0050.000 and for a

property located at 319 Market Street, tax parcel number 65-08-0164-000. Manager Steigerwalt stated that there are no issues with the bidders. A recommendation was made to approve the Schuylkill County Tax Claim Bureau Repository Sale of a property at 525 North Railroad Street, tax parcel number 65-07-0050.000, to Sandra Valdez and to approve the Schuylkill County Tax Claim Bureau Repository Sale for a property located at 319 Market Street, tax parcel number 65-08-0164-000, to Andrea Torres . 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.

Manager Steigerwalt provided an update on the Lincoln Street Retaining Wall Project as follows: the project was awarded to Semmel Excavating, LLC; a pre-construction meeting on site is scheduled for tomorrow; and notice to proceed is tentatively set for August 16<sup>th</sup>.

Manager Steigerwalt also reported on the following: the paving project in the Dutch Hill and Northward sections of town is complete; PennDOT will pave Route 309 from the Center Street Bridge through the 5 Points intersection; a virtual pre-construction meeting for the PennDOT Route 309 paving project will be held on Friday with notice to proceed August 9<sup>th</sup>; the Burger King sidewalk project is complete; and an application for the Schuylkill County Cares Act (COVID) grant was submitted and recommended for approval by the County, and the Borough should be receiving a grant agreement shortly.

Director of Community Development Calabrese reported that at least 51% of Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) activities must benefit low-moderate income area of town, and asked Council for recommendations for CDBG fund allocations.

Director of Community Development Calabrese reported that she had a Fair Housing resolution to present for council's consideration:

**RESOLUTION NO. 2021-10  
FAIR HOUSING RESOLUTION**

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 Linkevich, and approved by a unanimous roll call vote.

Director of Community Development Calabrese also reported on the following: a meeting to be held with bankers, realtors and developers to provide an explanation of the Tamaqua Community Revitalization and Improvement Zone (CRIZ) so people have a better understanding of the program; a new flyer she created "CRIZ in a Nutshell"; the release of a Schuylkill County CDBG CV Assistance Program that will provide financial assistance to small businesses in the County that have been affected by COVID-19; and applications for the CDBG CV Assistance Program are available in the lobby at Borough Hall.

Under the Public Safety Committee report, a recommendation was made to hire Angel Abreu 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 Bowman, seconded by Linkhorst, and unanimously approved.

Under the Public Safety Committee report, a recommendation was made to accept a letter of resignation from part-time police officer Stephen Bekesy. 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 Public Safety Committee report, a recommendation was made to approve a request to send Corporal Thomas Rodgers and Patrolman Anthony Stanell to the 2021 Pennsylvania Narcotics Officers' Association Conference in Harrisburg from August 25th to August 27th. It was noted that the District Attorney's Office will cover the cost of the conference registration for both officers. 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 Parking and Traffic Committee report, a recommendation was made to approve a handicapped parking space application for 27 Hunter 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 Hollenbach, and unanimously approved.

Under the Parking and Traffic Committee report, a recommendation was made to approve a handicapped parking space application for 134 North Greenwood 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 Hollenbach, and unanimously approved.

Under the Parking and Traffic Committee report, a motion was made by Linkhorst and seconded by Bowman to prepare and advertise an ordinance prohibiting vehicles over 70,000 lbs on Pitt Street from Washington Street to West Elm Street except for local deliveries. After clarification of the affected streets, the motion and second were amended as follows: a recommendation was made to prepare and advertise an ordinance prohibiting vehicles over 70,000 lbs. on Pitt Street from Lafayette Street to West Elm Street except for local deliveries. 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 Bowman, 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 vinyl sign on the front window of a building at 237 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 Blighted Property Task Force Committee report, Councilman Bowman reported that the committee met on July 12, 2021 and copies of the minutes were provided to Council. Councilwoman Linkevich stated that one of the action items is for Code Enforcement Officer Kurtz to look into a software program that would allow for tracking of all rental properties, inspections, history, etc. Councilman Bowman added that the committee is trying to figure out ways to prevent sales of blighted properties that get little to nothing done to them.

Mayor Gerace reported that the Borough is in good order.

The meeting was opened to the floor.

President Mace welcomed Grant Johns and Jay Ahner, members of Tamaqua Boy Scout Troop 777, who were attending the meeting as part of a communications merit badge project.

Joseph Salla of 204 Owl Creek Road expressed his concerns about the following: a meeting with the Parking and Traffic Committee that was never scheduled; bald spots and no lines painted on Owl Creek Road; the service road to the pump station is washed out from a heavy downpour; trucks, motor homes and motorcycles traveling on Owl Creek Road; speeding on Owl Creek Road; sewer overflow; issues with borough employees; a condemned house, code violations, and unsafe conditions at 226 Owl Creek Road; and inability to access council meetings held via zoom. There was much discussion about these matters.

Agnes Versailles of 204 Owl Creek Road expressed her concerns about the following: code violations at 226 Owl Creek Road; traffic and speeding on Owl Creek Road; and the need for more police presence in Owl Creek. There was some discussion about these matters.

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

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.

Under Unfinished business, Manager Steigerwalt reported on a signed lease agreement with Northern Reading and Railroad for property on East End Alley and that a discussion will need to take place at some point regarding the tenants.

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 Amentler, and unanimously approved with Councilman Hollenbach abstaining from voucher number V44097.

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

The council meeting was recessed at approximately 8:15 p.m. while council met in executive session.

The council meeting was reconvened at approximately 9:12 p.m.

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

A recommendation was made to advertise for the position of Borough Secretary/Treasurer. 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.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:13 p.m. on motion of Bowman, seconded by Linkevich, to meet again at the call of the President.

ATTEST:

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Amy Macalush, Assistant Borough Secretary/Treasurer