

The Tamaqua Borough Council held its second Regular Council Meeting for the month of January on Tuesday, January 19, 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/81258648721> and by entering Meeting ID 812 5864 8721. Individuals who did not have internet access were able to participate by telephone by dialing 1-929-436-2866 and entering Meeting ID 812 5864 8721#.

Present were Councilmembers Robert Amentler, Ronald Bowman, Thomas Cara, Brian Connely, 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, Borough Secretary/Treasurer Georgia Depos DeWire, 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 Cara. President Mace stated that since the borough is using a video conferencing platform, the Pledge of Allegiance was waived. The roll was called with all councilmembers present.

President Mace announced that an executive session was held on January 13, 2021 at 7:00 p.m. to discuss personnel matters.

The reading of the minutes of the Regular Council Meeting held on January 5, 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 Major Gayle Luby, Captain John Luby, The Tamaqua Salvation Army Advisory Board and Staff, and Development Associate/Program Coordinator Dina Depos stating that The Tamaqua Salvation Army was able to make the 2020 Christmas season happier for 190 families and 360 children in our community. Ms. Depos thanked Manager Steigerwalt, Chief Hobbs, Secretary/Treasurer DeWire and the entire staff of the Tamaqua Borough for their support and hard work at their holiday distribution and throughout the years; and for helping to make our town a safe place to live and work.

Manager Steigerwalt reported that he had a resolution extending the Mayor's Declaration of Disaster Emergency of March 20, 2020 for an eleventh thirty (30) day additional period to terminate on February 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. 2021-1  
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 Connely, seconded by Linkevich, and approved by a unanimous roll call vote.

Manager Steigerwalt also reported on a Schuylkill County Tax Claim Bureau Repository Sale for a property located at 160 West Spruce Street, tax parcel number 65-16-0036.000 and a

property located at 5 Cherry Street, tax parcel number 65-16-0272.000. Manager Steigerwalt stated that there are no issues with the bidders. There was some discussion about this matter.

A recommendation was made to approve the Schuylkill County Tax Claim Bureau Repository Sale of a property at 160 West Spruce Street, tax parcel number 65-16-0036.000, to Edward Boerner and to approve the Schuylkill County Tax Claim Bureau Repository Sale of a property at 5 Cherry Street, tax parcel number 65-16-0272.000, to RSK Flipper, LLC. 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 also reported on the following: the COSTARS Energy Procurement Program; the Penn State Facilities Engineering Institute (PSFEI) works in conjunction with the Pennsylvania Department of General Services Bureau of Procurement (DGS-BOP) on an energy procurement program; the borough is currently enrolled in the program and is set to expire at the end this year; and Penn State is asking if the borough would like to participate in their next Request for Quote (RFQ) that will be going out this spring. A recommendation was made to authorize the Borough Manager to potentially enroll the borough in the energy cooperative program offered by Penn State. Manager Steigerwalt stated that the borough began participating in the energy procurement program in 2018. 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 Amentler, and unanimously approved.

Manager Steigerwalt also reported on the following: the new Tamaqua Police Department Collective Bargaining Agreement; a new dental plan for all full-time employees; no longer dealing with Benecon; successfully moved all benefits to ETA Benefits; and Christmas tree collection would take place throughout the month of January.

Director of Community Development Ann Marie Calabrese reported on the following: the annual CRIZ audit for 2020 was started; the CRIZ reminders will be happening between now and June 15<sup>th</sup> to get the most participation we can; for the second year in a row, the dollar figure that gets returned to the borough is higher than the dollar figure the borough submits to the CRIZ; and the reimbursement to the borough for administrative costs will be approximately \$26,949.00.

President Mace left the meeting at approximately 7:14 p.m.

Vice-President Connely presided over the meeting.

Under the Neighborhoods, Downtown and Historic District Committee report, a recommendation was made to issue a Certificate of Appropriateness to install a six-foot white vinyl fence at 47 Market 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.

President Mace returned to the meeting at approximately 7:15 p.m. and presided over the meeting.

Under the Neighborhoods, Downtown and Historic District Committee report, a recommendation was made to issue a Certificate of Appropriateness to demolish the rear addition to the structure at 517 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.

President Mace interrupted the agenda when pizza was delivered to Councilman Cara as a token of council's appreciation for it being his last meeting.

Under the Parking and Traffic Committee report, a recommendation was made to approve a handicapped parking space application for 327 Lafayette 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 Amentler, and unanimously approved.

Chairman Connely of the Ad Hoc Historic Ordinance Committee reported that he had an ordinance exempting non-profit emergency service providers from the sign regulations in the Historic Preservation Ordinance to present for council's consideration:

**ORDINANCE NO. 720**

**AN ORDINANCE OF THE BOROUGH OF TAMAQUA, SCHUYLKILL COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA, REVISING AND AMENDING CHAPTER 192 OF THE BOROUGH OF TAMAQUA CODE OF ORDINANCES ESTABLISHING REGULATIONS FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION, TO EXEMPT NON-PROFIT, EMERGENCY SERVICE PROVIDERS FROM THE REQUIREMENTS OF SECTIONS 192-10 "SIGNS" AND 192-11 "APPLICATION REVIEW PROCEDURE".**

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.

Mayor Gerace stated that new part-time Police Officer Anthony Vaillant will be sworn in tomorrow.

The meeting was opened to the floor.

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

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

Solicitor Odorizzi stated that the proposed increase in the sewer rate should be done by ordinance and not by a resolution. A recommendation was made to have Solicitor Odorizzi advertise an ordinance for the proposed sewer rate increase. 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 Connely, and unanimously approved.

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 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 Cara, seconded by Bowman, and unanimously approved.

Under New Business, President Mace turned the meeting over to Councilman Cara who read his "As I See It" letter. Councilman Cara reflected about his time on council and highlighted some of his accomplishments, some things that did not work out and some items scheduled to be done in 2021. Councilman Cara also commented on some Borough Councilmembers, the Borough Solicitor and some Borough office staff. Councilman Cara stated that as he reflected on his time on Council, he is proud to see Tamaqua thriving, expanding, and getting better all the time; these men and women help make that happen; and be thankful for their leadership. Councilman Cara stated that he will miss being a part of this group.

Councilman Connely stated that he spent fourteen years with Councilman Cara sitting next to him. When they first took on this adventure, things were not as civil and nice as it should be and they spent a lot of time trying to bring that to where it is today and they will definitely keep that going forward. He stated that Tom always kept them grounded, always spoke his mind and always said the truth. Councilman Connely showed a plaque that was being presented to Councilman Cara on behalf of the Tamaqua Borough Council. The plaque has the borough logo on it and he read the inscription on the plaque as follows: Presented to Tom Cara for your service to the residents of Tamaqua as a member of Borough Council. You have served your community well and have inspired many to do good things for the community. Councilman Connely stated that it has been a pleasure serving with him and he will make sure Councilman Cara receives the plaque. Councilman Cara thanked everyone.

Under New Business, Councilman Bowman stated that he had a resolution to adopt appointing Kathy Kunkel as a member of the Borough Council to fill the vacancy that will be left by Thomas Cara. A motion was made by Bowman, and seconded by Amentler, to adopt a resolution appointing Kathy Kunkel to fill the vacancy that will be left by Thomas Cara. There was no one from the floor wishing to address council about this matter. The motion failed on a 2-4-1 roll call vote with Councilmembers Connely, Linkevich, Linkhorst and Mace opposed and Councilman Cara abstaining.

Under New Business, Councilman Connely stated that he had a resolution to adopt appointing Jay Hollenbach Jr. as a member of the Borough Council to fill the vacancy that will be left by Thomas Cara. The following resolution was presented for council's consideration:

**RESOLUTION NO. 2021-2  
A RESOLUTION OF THE BOROUGH OF TAMAQUA,  
SCHUYLKILL COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA  
TO FILL A VACANCY OF A MEMBER OF COUNCIL**

A recommendation was made to adopt the foregoing resolution. Councilman Bowman made the following statement: There is no ill way against Jay Hollenbach and he believes he is going to serve well on Tamaqua Council; he is willing to work with him in any way; but on the same note, he would hope that after interviewing the two candidates, that everyone on council would leave this meeting tonight with a clear conscience that they have made the right decision based on the interviews to the best interest of the borough. Councilman Connely made a comment as follows: he agrees and echoes Councilman Bowman's sentiment and he is spot on; and as they looked to fill this position, it is one that has be run for, so if there was an interview or not, if anyone expressed an interest they are welcome to sign their name to the paper and run, as we have a lot of talented folks in the borough. Councilwoman Linkevich stated the following: she spent a lot of time thinking about this, and she thought she asked possibly the most questions during the interview process; she also did not know Mr. Hollenbach very well and made a point to meet with him to make sure he had the time and willingness it takes to put into this position; she wanted to point out one thing that really impressed her about Kathy Kunkel was her interest in unions because we have a union negotiating committee and she does not have experience with that; she is also thinking about local businesses; someone with experience with unions and someone who runs a business would both be great candidates; and when Dan Evans vacated his seat on council she brought to the table an individual who she thought was an excellent candidate with outstanding union negotiating experience and at that time council did not feel the need for that type of individual which made her

select the person with the business background. 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 Linkhorst, and approved by a 4-2-1 roll call vote with Councilmembers Amentler and Bowman opposed and Councilman Cara abstaining.

A recommendation was made to hold an executive session to discuss legal matters. Councilman Cara left the meeting at approximately 7:44 p.m. 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 6-0 vote.

The council meeting was recessed at approximately 7:44 p.m. while council met in executive session.

The council meeting was reconvened at approximately 8:47 p.m.

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

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:48 p.m. on motion of Bowman, seconded by Linkevich, to meet again at the call of the President.

ATTEST:

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Georgia Depos DeWire, Borough Secretary/Treasurer