

The Tamaqua Borough Council held its first Regular Council Meeting for the month of August on Tuesday, August 18, 2020 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/88074140240> and by entering Meeting ID 880 7414 0240. Individuals who did not have internet access were able to participate by telephone by dialing 1-929-436-2866 and entering Meeting ID 880 7414 0240 #.

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

The meeting was called to order by President Mace. The invocation was given by President Mace. President Mace stated that since the borough is using a video conferencing platform, the Pledge of Allegiance was waived. The roll was called with six councilmembers present and one absent.

The reading of the minutes of the Regular Council Meeting held on July 21, 2020 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 Samuel W. Schaefer of 649 Arlington Street who expressed his concerns about parking issues on Hazle Alley. Mr. Schaefer stated that he has a serious situation with backing into his off-street parking and is requesting that council consider posting two "No Parking Between Signs" across from his property. A motion was made by Bowman and seconded by Linkevich to refer the matter to the Parking and Traffic Committee. President Mace asked for a recommendation from the Parking and Traffic Committee for the next meeting. Chairman Linkhorst of the Parking and Traffic Committee stated that his committee already reviewed Mr. Schaefer's request and has decided to deny his request. A letter was already sent to Mr. Schaefer. After some discussion, the motion and second were rescinded.

Communication was received from Gary J. Hess, Schuylkill County Commissioner and Board of Elections Chairman, extending a thank you for the borough and council's help and assistance with the June 2<sup>nd</sup> Primary Election with use of the borough facility as a polling site. Mr. Hess stated that looking to the November 3, 2020 General Election, the Election Bureau is again hoping to utilize the borough facility. A recommendation was made to grant permission for the County to use the Borough Hall as a voting precinct for the General Election on November 3<sup>rd</sup> with the same conditions of approval as stipulated for the Primary Election. The Primary Election approval was contingent upon the building being cleaned/decontaminated by the County. There was much discussion about the following: it puts the borough employees in the same position as the Primary Election with the office staff being awarded the day off; if COVID-19 continues, the borough must discuss an alternate voting precinct for the future with the County as the borough cannot continue awarding holidays to its employees; the borough currently does not have much of a choice regarding the polling site; the expense of cleaning the building; the County did pay the borough for cleaning after the Primary Election; the borough has purchased mobile decontamination equipment; requesting that the County reimburse the borough for its expenses for materials and

time; using the same cost that the borough paid the vendor for the Primary Election as a reimbursement cost for the General Election; and the staff situation would be handled the same as before and unless another solution comes up between now and the November 3<sup>rd</sup> election. 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.

Communication was received from Laughlin Sieger of 1280 West Penn Pike stating that he is a Life Scout with Boy Scout Troop 624 in Orwigsburg and a Tamaqua High School student from West Penn Township. Mr. Sieger is requesting permission to rehabilitate the Willing Memorial Park basketball court behind Boyer's Food Market for his Eagle Scout Project. A recommendation was made to approve a request from Laughlin Sieger to cleanup and paint the basketball court and backboards at Willing Park for an Eagle Scout Project. 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.

Manager Steigerwalt reported that he had a resolution extending the Mayor's Declaration of Disaster Emergency of March 20, 2020 for a sixth thirty (30) day additional period to terminate on September 24, 2020 to present for council's consideration:

**RESOLUTION NO. 2020-11**  
**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 that he had a resolution implementing and promoting a Fair Housing Program to present for council's consideration:

**RESOLUTION NO. 2020-12**  
**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.

Manager Steigerwalt reported that he had a resolution approving the budget amount of \$69,039.00 for Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding for grants to prevent, prepare for, and respond to Coronavirus (CDBG-CV Grants) to present for council's consideration:

**RESOLUTION NO. 2020-13**  
**APPROVING BUDGET FOR CDBG-CV PROGRAM**

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 also reported that he submitted a Blight Remediation Program grant in the amount of \$250,000.00 from the Commonwealth Financing Authority (CFA) to be used for demolition of blighted properties.

Manager Steigerwalt also reported that he received a notice from the Schuylkill County Tax Claim Bureau for the private sale of a property at 116 Schuylkill Avenue and a property at 125 Pitt Street. Both properties have overdue utility bills, both properties are either shut off or the accounts are suspended, have quality of life violations, and the property at 125 Pitt Street also has unpaid taxes. The bidder of 125 Pitt Street is Sara Williamson and there is no adverse history on her. The bidder of 116 Schuylkill Avenue is D&A Investment Properties of Southwest Florida (SWFL) and they also own 118 Schuylkill Avenue, a property on Elizabeth Street and a property in Minersville, PA. The utilities for the properties owned by D&A Investment Properties of SWFL are paid to date, and they owe the borough for one quality of life violation that was issued back in January. Solicitor Odorizzi stated that he doubts that the borough would be successful in objecting to the private sale and if both of the bidders have a history of compliance in paying their bills but defers the decision to borough council. There was some discussion about this matter. A recommendation was made to approve the Schuylkill County Tax Claim Bureau private sale of 125 Pitt Street, tax parcel number 65-11-0085.000, to Sara Williamson and the Schuylkill County Tax Claim Bureau private sale of 116 Schuylkill Avenue, tax parcel number 65-13-0012.000, to D&A Investment Properties of Southwest Florida. 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.

Manager Steigerwalt also reported that he had a proposal for professional engineering services from Alfred Benesch and Company for a retaining wall design and construction services located along Lincoln Street (rear of 524 Washington Street) at a cost of \$14,900.00 to present for council's consideration. There was some discussion about this matter. A recommendation was made to approve a proposal from Alfred Benesch and Company for a retaining wall design and construction services located along Lincoln Street (rear of 524 Washington Street) at a cost of \$14,900.00. 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.

Manager Steigerwalt also reported that the Department of Labor and Industry has approved the borough's application for Certification Renewal of its Workplace Safety Committee.

Manager Steigerwalt also reported that he has started working on the 2020-2021 insurance policy renewal with The Seltzer Group and the policy renews on October 1, 2020.

Director of Community Development Calabrese reported on the following: a final reminder that the Tamaqua Community Revitalization and Improvement Zone (CRIZ) annual reporting for businesses and tenants with businesses is due by August 31<sup>st</sup>; working with Solicitor Odorizzi to clean-up the Citizen's Advisory Committee files and new Bylaws; looking for a crew of adults to help with clean-up at the Bungalow after it closes and also at Kellner's Dam; the Wheel Restaurant ribbon cutting is now scheduled for September 3<sup>rd</sup>; and the OntheGrind Association has started making posts again for the Willing Park and are planning a community yard sale and basket raffle to benefit Willing Park at the end of August.

Chief Woods asked council to consider hiring Melissa Shaffer as a part-time police officer retroactive to August 17, 2020. A recommendation was made to hire Melissa Shaffer as a part-time police officer retroactive to August 17, 2020. 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.

Chief Woods also reported that there was a small drug raid yesterday and a total of ten people were arrested. Chief Woods stated that it involved a lot of hard work by the guys who do narcotics for us.

Chief Woods also reported that he received an actual acrylic memorial block for Benjamin Yost. The memorial block also contained the photo of Mr. Yost. It was used earlier this year in a memorial for fallen police officers. Chief Woods asked council to consider displaying the block at the borough hall.

Under the Owl Creek Oil and Chip Project, a recommendation was made to hire Singleton Harvey as a project consultant for the Owl Creek Road Oil and Chip Project at a cost not to exceed \$1,000.00. Councilman Bowman discussed the qualifications of Mr. Harvey. 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 Linkhorst, and unanimously approved.

Under the Neighborhoods, Downtown and Historic District Committee report, a recommendation was made to issue a Certificate of Appropriateness for window and door replacement and installation at 20 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 Bowman, 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 for sign installation and door replacement at 42 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 Bowman, seconded by Amentler, and unanimously approved.

Mayor Gerace stated that Melody Weicker, president of the Tamaqua Senior Citizens group, is asking if the borough would allow the group to store some of their items in the borough basement. The group had been meeting at the Tamaqua YMCA, which is now closed. The group is also looking for a meeting place. There was some discussion about this matter. Councilwoman Linkevich stated that as long the weather is nice the group can utilize the Bungalow Pavilion.

The meeting was opened to the floor.

With no one 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.

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.

A recommendation was made to hold an executive session to discuss personnel 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.

Councilman Connely left the meeting during the executive session.

The council meeting was reconvened at approximately 8:06 p.m.

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

A recommendation was made to approve a 38 cent per hour pay increase for Edith Moyer and Christine Zamudio, 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 Linkevich, and approved by a 5-0 vote.

A recommendation was made to advertise for part-time, seasonal workers for grass cutting, painting, general maintenance, etc. 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 Bowman, seconded by Amentler, and approved by a 5-0 vote.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:09 p.m. on motion of Bowman, seconded by Linkhorst, to meet again at the call of the President.

ATTEST:

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Georgia Depos DeWire, Borough Secretary/Treasurer